



INFRASTRUCTURE WORKLOADS KEEPS CANADIAN CONSTRUCTION POSITIVE DESPITE SEVERAL CHALLENGES

RICS / CIQS Construction Monitor, Q4 2023 – Canada results

- Infrastructure continues to be the driving force for construction activity
- Skills shortages both for professionals and trades remain challenging
- Credit conditions seen as likely to improve through the year

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) / Canadian Institute of Quantity Surveyors Construction Monitor Q4 2023 revealed that infrastructure projects are keeping Canada's construction sector in growth overall. The construction industry demonstrated resilience in the face of economic challenges with overall construction remaining positive in Q4 (+12%).

There are however deep differences between the performance of each sector. Infrastructure is by and far away leading the way, with it reporting a +25% result, although this is down a touch on the +33% recorded in the previous quarter. Within infrastructure, the transport, social, and energy subsectors are pushing the strength that sector. On the other hand, other sectors are recording weaker figures, notably private non-residential slipped from +8% to a broadly flat -3% this quarter, while private residential stood at -10% - improving ever so slightly from -11%.

A note of caution is found in the proportion of respondents stating that insufficient demand is hampering construction activity. This figure stands at 36% - the highest reading since the pandemic.

Understandably, interest rate rises have negatively impacted activity, and while inflation has reduced, it is still some way from reaching the Bank of Canada's 2% target. There is rising belief that a rate cut will occur towards the end of 2024, with +18% believing that this will happen over the next twelve months, compared the -20% result reported in Q3.

Meanwhile, like much of the global construction industry, skills shortages continue to significantly hamper activity. There is a particular shortage of quantity surveyors, with around 50% of respondents noting a lack of professionals with that skillset.

"A shortage of labour and skilled trades professionals continues to be a permeating problem for a substantial percentage of the respondents of the Construction Monitor report, as well as other reports, such as one produced by BuildForce Canada which forecasts that over 245,000 workers are expected to retire between 2023 and 2032," said Sheila Lennon,, CIQS Chief Executive Officer. "It is encouraging to see that the Government of Canada and provincial governments such as Ontario are taking the shortage seriously and actively promoting the benefits of building a career within the construction industry and other skilled trades sectors to the younger generation. Similarly, CIQS is doing its part in addressing the labour shortage through the impending creation of a program to educate secondary students about the career paths in the quantity surveying profession, and how, as a quantity surveyor they can help shape Canada of the future."

Overall, Canada's construction sector remains robust in the face of several economic challenges, mostly due to the relative strength of industrial workload demand. Optimism is rising, albeit cautiously, amid hopes of a rate cut, indicating a brighter picture in the longer-term outlook.

Read the complete report [here](#).

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About RICS

We are RICS. Everything we do is designed to effect positive change in the built and natural environments. Through our respected global standards, leading professional progression and our trusted data and insight, we promote and enforce the highest professional standards in the development and management of land, real estate, construction and infrastructure.

Our work with others provides a foundation for confident markets, pioneers better places to live and work and is a force for positive social impact.

About CIQS

The Canadian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (CIQS) was founded and registered under the Dominion of Canada Act in November 1959. It currently represents over 2,000 national and industry professionals. The office is located in Markham, Ontario, with six regional chapters representing BC & the Yukon; the Prairies (AB, SK, MB & NWT); ON; QC; the Maritimes (NS, NB, & PEI); and Newfoundland and Labrador, which offer member events on the local level.

CIQS works on behalf of its members to promote the profession to the construction industry, its allied professions and government officials. It has developed reciprocal agreements with a variety of industry organizations and is a member of the International Cost Management Standard (ICMS). ICMS is a group of over 40 professional and not-for-profit organizations from around the world working towards global consistency on construction cost analysis.

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