Construction and the grid need 103,000 people before 2029

In healthcare the projected shortfall reaches 155,000 by 2032.

Summary

Construction needs 75,000 new full-time workers between 2026 and 2029, of which education can supply roughly 50,000 and 25,000 must come from lateral entry. Grid operators need 28,000 technicians by 2029, 23,000 of them at contractors. Healthcare projects a shortfall of 155,000 by 2032, against 37,000 in 2021. These are the three sectors where the vacancy rate barely fell after 2022.

Scarcity in general is a difficult argument to sell. A concrete number of people a sector needs, and by when, is not. For three sectors that number exists.

Construction: 75,000 people in four years

The Dutch construction economics institute projects that 75,000 new full-time workers are needed between 2026 and 2029 to deliver the production planned.

Of those 75,000, education can supply roughly 50,000. The remaining 25,000 have to come from lateral entry, meaning people doing something else today.

That last figure is the interesting one. A third of the required intake consists by definition of people who do not work in construction now and were not trained for it. That is not a recruitment problem a job advert solves.

Grid operators: 28,000 technicians, and where they sit

Grid operators need 28,000 technicians by 2029, based on the investment plans of the regional operators and the national transmission operator. That demand breaks down:

- 23,000 technicians at contractors
- 3,000 installers
- 1,200 site supervisors
- 800 engineers

More than 80% of the demand therefore sits not with the grid operators themselves but with the contractors working for them. Approach this market through the operators and you miss most of it.

The wider context the sector cites: 86,250 technical vacancies in 2022, and research projecting a shortfall of 100,000 to 150,000 full-time equivalents across infrastructure by 2030.

Healthcare: from 37,000 to 155,000

Healthcare projections vary most of the three, and they are also the largest. On unchanged policy the shortfall reaches 155,000 workers in 2032, against 37,000 in 2021. A fourfold rise in eleven years.

The cause is demographic rather than cyclical. The same ageing that drives demand for care takes people out of the labour force. Extended to 2040, roughly one in four workers would need to work in care to meet demand.

Why these three

These are not three sectors picked at random. They are the sectors where the vacancy rate barely fell between mid-2022 and mid-2025, while nationally it dropped from 5.1% to 4.2%.

- Construction: from 7.5% to 7.4%
- Healthcare: from 4.4% to 4.3%

For comparison, information and communication went from 8.2% to 5.1% over the same period.

The pattern underneath is consistent. Demand in these sectors comes from programmes that do not move with the economy: housing, the energy transition, and an ageing population. When the economy cools, that demand does not cool with it.

The arithmetic underneath

Construction and the grid operators want 103,000 people between them before 2029. Healthcare projects 155,000 by 2032. That is three sectors, and the total runs toward a quarter of a million people within seven years.

Over that same period the Dutch labour force barely grows. So this demand cannot come from growth. It has to come from reallocation: people who work somewhere else today.

That makes it a recruitment question rather than a demographic one, and therefore something an agency can actually affect.

What this means for agencies

- **Quote the sector figure, not the national one.** Telling a construction firm the market is cooling is factually wrong for their market.
- **Lateral entry is the main route here, not a fallback.** In construction a third of the required intake is lateral by definition. Presenting candidates from adjacent trades sells the answer.
- **Look at the contractors, not the client.** 23,000 of the 28,000 technicians in the grid sector are needed at contractors.
- **This demand is not cyclical.** A client waiting for a calmer market is, in these three sectors, waiting for something that does not arrive.

Method and sources

Construction figures come from Trends op de bouwarbeidsmarkt 2025-2029 by the Dutch construction economics institute, covering 2026 to 2029. Grid figures come from Netbeheer Nederland, based on the investment plans of the regional operators and the national transmission operator, with a 2029 horizon.

The healthcare projection of 155,000 by 2032 against 37,000 in 2021 originates with ABF Research and the health ministry, taken here from the DNB analysis of labour scarcity of February 2024. That publication is under copyright and is summarised, not reproduced. The AZW programme publishes the underlying healthcare data.

Vacancy rates come from Eurostat, dataset jvs_q_nace2, not seasonally adjusted, comparing second quarters throughout.

One sector is missing here: private security. Its trade body publishes annual core figures, but they sit only in per-year PDF reports and could not be verified at the time of writing. Better to leave a sector out than quote a figure we have not checked.

Shortage, Sectors, Construction, Healthcare, Energy, All markets

Sources

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- Netbeheer Nederland, feiten en cijfers
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