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Press Release

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Norwegian Employers maintain pace of payroll increases: ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey 1Q 2019

Employers expect a moderate hiring pace to continue in the first quarter of 2019. Payroll is expected to grow in all nine industry sectors and four of five regions during the forthcoming quarter, according to ManpowerGroup's quarterly survey of hiring plans.

“Talent acquisition has made its way to the top of strategic priorities. We see employers all over Norway identifying skill gaps, and making changes to their talent strategies accordingly,” says Managing Director in ManpowerGroup Norway, Maalfrid Brath.

Norwegian employers report modest hiring prospects for the first quarter of 2019, with a seasonally adjusted Net Employment Outlook of +5%. Hiring intentions are unchanged when compared with the previous quarter, but decline by 4 percentage points in comparison with last year at this time.

Among employers surveyed, seven percent are planning to staff up. Three percent are planning to downsize. 86 percent are planning to retain the size of their current staff, an increase of six percentage points since the first quarter of last year.

“Most estimates say the Norwegian economy will keep growing through 2019. It seems an increasing number of employers want to support this growth by building the skills of their existing staff, rather than scaling up,” says Brath.

Investments are paying off in Mining and Quarrying

“Pundits have been closely monitoring the investment outlooks of Norway's Mining & Quarrying sector. With reports of increased investment plans coming in over the last two quarters, employers in the sector are now sporting the strongest Outlook of all sectors in the survey. Their upbeat Net Employment Outlook of +17% marks an increase of five and six percentage points from 4Q 2018 and 1Q 2018, respectively,” added Brath.

Optimism seems to be prolonged in the Electricity, Gas & Water, with fair hiring intentions of +10%. Similar Outlooks are also reported in the Manufacturing sector. Payrolls are also set to increase in the Construction sector and the Wholesale, Retail, Restaurants & Hotels sector. Their Outlooks are reported at +9% and +8%, respectively. Meanwhile, the weakest labor markets are expected in the Public & Social sector and the Transport, Storage & Communications sector with Outlooks standing at +2%. Employers in the latter report a decline of 4 and 10 percentage points in comparison with the previous quarter and the first quarter of 2018, respectively.



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Cooldown in the capital

Outlooks for 1Q 2019 remain positive in four of the five surveyed regions. The strongest hiring plans are reported in Eastern Norway, where the Outlook stands at +7%. The hiring intention is unchanged from 4Q 2018, but a decline of 6 percentage points compared to 1Q 2018. The Outlook stands at -2%, a decline by 2 percentage points quarter-over-quarter and 14 percentage points year-over-year.

However, when compared with this time a year ago, hiring plans weaken in four of the five regions. Employers in the Greater Oslo region are looking to trim their payrolls, as they report their first negative Outlook in three years.

“Finance and construction are key components in the Greater Oslo labor market. Both sectors are reporting a slowdown in payroll growth, which partly explains the cooldown in the capital,” says Brath.

In Mid-Norway, hiring intentions decline by a considerable margin of 12 percentage points when compared with the previous quarter. While optimism seems to be rising in the South-West, where employers report an improvement of 7 percentage points from the previous quarter.

Large employers maintain momentum

Employers across all four organization size categories expect payrolls to increase during 1Q 2019. The most optimistic Outlooks of +23% are reported in Large-size categories, doubling their Outlook from the first quarter of last year. While Small and Medium-sized businesses both are sporting double-digit Outlooks, Micro employers report a cautious Outlook of +1%.

The ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey for the first quarter 2019 was conducted by interviewing a representative sample of 756 employers in Norway. All survey participants were asked, “How do you anticipate total employment at your location to change in the three months to the end of March 2019 as compared to the current quarter?” The Net Employment Outlook is derived by taking the percentage of employers anticipating an increase in hiring activity and subtracting from this the percentage of employers expecting a decrease in hiring activity.

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