# **Workforce Training and Innovation Fund (WTIF)**

# Application Guidelines

## **What is WTIF?**

The Workforce Training Innovation Fund (WTIF) is a targeted, *Skills First* funding stream. WTIF creates opportunities for the joint exploration of new ideas and solutions to support enhanced workplace productivity and employment growth in priority industries identified by the Victorian Government, in collaboration with industry partners and skills education providers.

The Victorian Government recognises there are areas of labour market shortages and industry skills demands that require innovative and collaborative thinking and approaches to challenge existing practices in skills development, training methods and product design.

WTIF supports training providers, industry, employers, peak-bodies and industry associations to collaboratively identify and address the complex barriers to training through the development of innovative solutions.

### Objectives

* Improve the efficiency, flexibility and responsiveness of the training and TAFE system in meeting industry skill needs and business training requirements in areas of Victorian Government’s economic growth priorities.
* Encourage partnerships between industry bodies, businesses, TAFEs, and training organisations to collaboratively address complex or cross-sectoral issues facing the skills sector that require innovative thinking and modes of delivery to address.
* Build new insights and evidence to support the design, adoption, and implementation of sustainable innovation that addresses priority challenges across Victoria’s training and TAFE system.
* Identify new approaches to skills development to improve the capability and adaptability of participants/students.

**What is Innovation?**

Innovation in WTIF is defined as change that adds value, transforming the lives of Victorians through better developed or delivered skills training approaches and drives economic growth. Eligible innovation projects include (for example):

* Introducing new or diverse concepts, models, services, and products
* Disrupting, challenging, and advancing existing practices for our future workforces

While innovation as a concept can be broadly defined, the Victorian Government is seeking to fund projects that specifically solve complex and cross-sectoral issues facing the Victorian economy. Innovation projects will enable the skills system to respond better and faster to employment needs and find new and improved ways to get students skilled and employed in high priority occupations and industries that drive economic growth in Victoria.

**Funding Categories**

* New training, products and methods
* Workforce training and skills development

### Project or activity types not eligible for funding

Project activities that will **NOT** be considered for grant funding under the WTIF program include:

* projects which have an expectation or are dependent on ongoing funding in the future
* ongoing training delivery
* ongoing service provision and licensing arrangements
* duplication of funding received via other grant programs
* ‘Business as usual’ or professional development of an organisation/association, staff or members
* projects that do not lead to employment or workforce upskilling or cross skilling
* travel and accommodation
* capital works

### Eligibility – who can apply?

Applications are considered from a range of organisations. There are 2 potential roles an organisation may have in a WTIF project – lead or partner. The lead role will have ultimate responsibility for the project and will be signatory to the funding agreement with the department. Please refer to the ‘Who can apply’ guide/table on the WTIF website.

## **Duration**

Funded projects are expected to be completed within a 24-month period.

**Priority Areas**

| 1. Priority regions |
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| The Victorian Government is committed to supporting communities across regional and rural Victoria to participate in education and training. Applications that seek to support regional communities to participate in training and support regional employers to address skills needs will be prioritised for funding in the current round of WTIF. |

| 1. Priority industries |
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| The target industries that will be prioritised for funding in WTIF include:   * Advanced manufacturing * Agriculture * Clean economy * Digital technologies * Health * Infrastructure * Social services |

| 1. Priority cohorts |
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| Applications that support the following priority cohorts to access training will be prioritised for funding in the current round of WTIF:   * students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities * students experiencing barriers to employment (e.g., long-term unemployed) * students from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse groups * students with disabilities * students facing gender-based barriers to training (e.g., women seeking to work in traditionally male industries) * students from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds |

## **How to apply**

There are two streams for applications to WTIF:

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| **Stream 1: Direct application stream**  **A. (TAFE only)**  Eligible applicants can submit applications in line with the Program Criteria as set out in this document.  **Stream 1-A** applications for WTIF are only available to TAFE providers, however applications MUST include industry participation as a core feature of the proposal. All TAFE applicants will have access to guidance and resources to develop applications in line with Government priorities. Once a pre-application is completed, a Department of Jobs, Skills Industry and Regions (DJSIR) representative will call or email the nominated contact to discuss the proposed project and provide guidance on next steps.  The pre-application can be accessed from the Training, Skills and Higher Education (TSHE) website [here](https://deecd.my.site.com/gems/s/open-forms) (*click on Available grants)*  **B. (all *Skills First* training providers)**  Eligible applicants can submit applications in line with the Program Criteria as set out in this document.  **Stream 1-B** applications are available to any *Skills First* training providers; however, applications MUST include industry participation as a core feature of the proposal. Once a Pre-application is completed, a DJSIR representative will call or email the nominated contact to discuss the proposed project and provide guidance on next steps.  The Pre-application can be accessed from the TSHE website [here](https://deecd.my.site.com/gems/s/open-forms) (*click on Available Grants)* |

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| **Stream 2: Participatory design stream**  For each round of WTIF, DJSIR will identify high priority issues or sectors facing complex and cross-cutting issues and invite stakeholders to participate in a joint stakeholder approach to developing WTIF project concepts.  The process will be updated in each round of WTIF, but will proceed according to the following general steps:   1. DJSIR communicates the priority issues or sectors for the round of funding. 2. The Victorian Skills Authority will provide guidance as well as access to a comprehensive data dashboard, titled ‘Employment Forecast Dashboard’ for applicants to ensure alignment to the identified Victorian Government priorities and gaps that underpin the Victorian Skills Plan. 3. Stakeholders participate in co-design workshops, led by the VSA, and develop applications in line with the outcomes of the workshops. 4. Prior to submitting the online application form, all parties must approve the content of the application form including the key deliverables and budget. 5. **For Noting:** An outcome of the meeting is to agree on a governance structure which would include identification of the lead of the project who will/would become the signatory to a common funding agreement (should the project be approved by the Minister).   *All Stream 2 applications are to be lodged using DJSIR’s online application form. A link to the application form will be provided following consultation at the workshops.* |

## **Key dates**

The WTIF funding Round 2 will open **31 March 2023**, **ONLY for Stream 1a and 1b.**

*Stream 2 WTIF applications will not be accepted for this round. Any parties interested in applying for WTIF funding through Stream 2 should contact the VSA directly by emailing VSA.WTIF.Stream2@education.vic.gov.au*

The timeline for WTIF Round 2 is as follows:

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| **Pre- Applications open** | **Pre- Applications close** | **Applications open** | **Applications close\*** |
| **31/03/2023** | **26/04/2023** | **Post 31 March 2023 (and prior to 19 May 2023) contingent on pre-application endorsement.** | **19/05/2023**  *Submissions must be lodged before 23:59 pm*  *\*Late applications will not be considered* |

## **Funding approach**

## If your application includes components that are eligible for funding under other Victorian Government grant programs, the components can still be considered as part of your WTIF application. However, you must outline in your application at the relevant section any funding requests (you have applied for or received), to avoid duplication of funding and ensure transparency.

## **What are the assessment criteria for WTIF grant applications?**

Applications will be assessed by DJSIR against the eligibility and assessment criteria, noting that applications should address the economic priorities identified by the Victorian Government.

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| Assessment Criteria (AC)  The following 3 assessment criteria are weighted as follows:  Criterion 1: Strength of innovation (40%)  Criterion 2: Alignment to state government economic growth priorities (40%)  Criterion 3: Outcomes (20%)  **AC1: Strength of Innovation – 40%**  AC1.1  Outline how this project provides an innovative solution that addresses a significant issue or problem facing the Victorian skills and training system?  **AC2: Alignment to State Government Economic Recovery priorities – 40%**  AC2.1  How does the project create opportunities for Victorians to build their skills and find safe, secure and fair employment?  AC2.2  How does the project address structural barriers to employment for particular cohorts and regions, and support more Victorians to participate in the labour market?  AC2.3  How does the project support growth industries, sectors and businesses to access the workers they need and benefit from new opportunities?  AC2.4  How does the project support industries, sectors and businesses to innovate, grow, adapt or transition?  **AC3: Outcomes – 20%**  AC3.1  Describe the proposed short term, medium term and long-term impact of your project.  *\*Including submission of a program logic / or using the suggested ‘project plan on a page’ template*  Additional Information (AI)  Applications will also need to clearly demonstrate the following to be considered for a grant:  **AI1: Capability and Capacity to deliver the project.**  AI1.1  Provide evidence of your capability and capacity to deliver the proposed impact of the project.  **AI2: Governance & Risk Management**  AI2.1  Provide an outline of your proposed project governance structure and terms of reference, including risk management strategy with clearly defined contingencies.    **AI3: Clearly outline, budget and justification of proposed expenditure**  *\*Including submission of a comprehensive budget using the WTIF budget template*  AI3.1  Include a description of how your submitted budget demonstrates value for money.  **AI4 Evaluation**  AI4.1  Include an evaluation plan for your project which includes your project objective, a definition of success and the measures you intend to use to demonstrate outcomes.  *\*Including submission of an evaluation plan*  **AI5 Sustainability**  AI5.1  Describe your strategy /approach to sustain your project post funding which outlines the future of the project post grant funding.  **AI6 Sharing best practice**  AI6.1  Describe how you will share your learnings from the project  AI6.2  Indicate if your proposal includes the development of an accredited course  AI6.3  Indicate if your proposal includes the development of learning resources  AI6.4  It should be noted that if you are seeking funding to develop learning resources, you will be required to upload these onto the Department’s VET Shared Learning Resources (VSLR) portal. |
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