Workforce Training Innovation Fund (WTIF) Guidelines to Seed Funding

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 enhance workplace productivity.

Innovative thinking and approaches will allow industry and training providers to challenge existing practices in skills development, training methods and product design. This will result in the improved relevance of training for students, generate outcomes for employees and industry and support economic growth.

A key focus of WTIF is strengthening partnerships between industry and the training and TAFE system to better respond and adapt training courses and materials for existing, new and emerging industries and the Victorian Government priority sectors found in this link.

The fund will improve the flexibility and responsiveness of the training and TAFE system to strengthen the relevance of training to industry and workforce needs; ensuring students develop the high-quality skills that are *crucial to industry.*

OBJECTIVES

- Improve the efficiency, flexibility and responsiveness of the training and TAFE system in meeting industry skill needs and business training requirements

- Encourage partnerships between industry bodies, businesses, TAFEs and other training organisations to improve workforce productivity through innovative training programs and modes of delivery

- Build industry productivity and contribute to broader social and economic gains in Government priority sectors

- Build new insights and evidence to support the design, adoption and implementation of sustainable innovation across the wider training and TAFE system.

OUTCOMES

- The training and TAFE system delivers high-quality skills training that is relevant and responsive to evolving industry needs and business training requirements

- Workforce training innovation is achieved through sustainable collaboration between training providers and industry

- Workforces are equipped with the skills needed for identified priority sectors and industry productivity is

- The training and TAFE system is equipped with the evidence, knowledge and support to drive innovation and realise the Education State Agenda.

INNOVATION

Definition:

Innovation in WTIF is defined as change that adds value, transforming the lives of Victorians and drives economic growth, through introducing new or diverse concepts, models, services and products; that disrupts, challenges, and advances existing practices for our future workforces, and enriches the learner experience.

Types:

Incremental

Minor changes to existing services, products, concepts and/or models that have significant impacts.

Radical

Major changes to existing/ or creates new services, products, concepts and/or models that have significant impacts.

Systemic

Major new creations that have significant and far-reaching impacts.

FUNDING TYPES

Two types of funding are available across four categories. Applicants can elect to apply for seed funding in advance of grant funding or directly apply for grant funding. For more information, visit this link.

SEED FUNDING

Funding up to $50,000 for a project idea that is responding to an identified and defined problem and requires 'seeding activity' (*duration of up to four (4) months*) to support the preparation of a complete application for grant funding.

GRANT FUNDING

Funding up to $5 million for collaboration between industry and training providers to deliver innovation in training, workforce development and applied research (*duration of up to two (2) years*).

What does the WTIF program fund?

WTIF CATEGORIES

Project activities across four categories:

NEW TRAINING, PRODUCTS AND METHODS

Innovation in course development, product design and training delivery, supporting training and TAFE system improvements that drive social, economic and global success.

APPLIED RESEARCH

Research solving 'real world' industry and business productivity challenges and the study of innovation in training design and delivery and product development.

WORKFORCE TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Improving accessibility, relevance and delivery of workplace skills to support business productivity and learner employability.

PRIORITY SECTORS

Design of skills development approaches for new and emerging industries, key priority growth industries, and the Victorian Government priority sectors.

What is the purpose of Seed Funding?

The purpose of seed funding is to support the development of an application for grant funding. Conclusions from the findings of the seed funding will be documented in an Outcomes Report forming the evidence base for the grant proposal.

The length of seeding activity is up to four months unless otherwise negotiated.

A successful application for seed funding does not constitute automatic approval of grant funding. Where the seed funding successfully evolves into a grant application, this will be assessed in accordance with funding rounds.

SEED FUNDING METHODOLOGY

Seed Funding must include the following activity if this has already not been established:

- Partnership development activity to establish and secure project structure

Seed funding may include one or more of the following activities:

- Scoping studies for training or course development
- Workshops to test and confirm project logic
- Workshop paper (summary of workshops / consultations)
- Research paper (summary of primary qualitative & quantitative research, including surveys)
- Consolidation of other evidence (e.g. literature review, data/ options analysis, business case etc.)
- Technical specification paper (technology scoping, documentation and piloting)
- Environmental scanning and research to identify a project idea or define a problem/ opportunity
- Other development support activity (e.g. return on investment analysis, or evidence for value for money)

IMPORTANT NOTES

1. Stakeholders are advised that the Seed Funding activity, *Partnership development activity to establish and secure project structure*, is critical for the development of a Grant Funding Proposal. This activity should be developed when submitting a Grant Funding Proposal.

2. Should fund recipients determine that findings of their seeding activities do not support the proposed project innovation, and that it has limited applicability to the training and TAFE sector, recipients may negotiate with the Department to exit out of the WTIF program.[1]
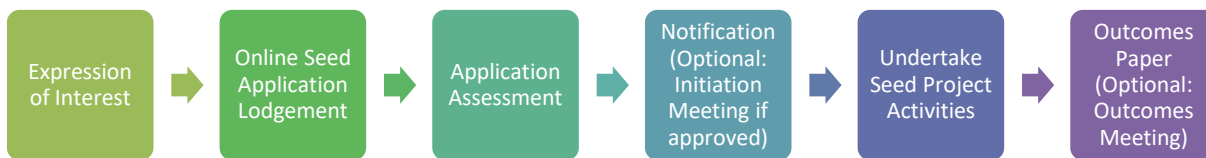
The conclusion of Seed Funding Activities is an Outcomes Report, which should reflect the following:

- Findings of the Seed Funding, including partnership development; *and*
- Recommendation *to progress*, or, *not to progress* into a Grant Funding Proposal.

---

[1] Should an early completion of the Common Funding Agreement be agreed, unspent funds will be retained by the Department.

How do you apply for WTIF Seed funding?

WTIF SEED FUNDING APPLICATION PROCESS

Expression of Interest → Online Seed Application Lodgement → Application Assessment → Notification (Optional: Initiation Meeting if approved) → Undertake Seed Project Activities → Outcomes Paper (Optional: Outcomes Meeting)

WTIF FUNDING ROUNDS

1. When a WTIF funding round is open, submit your Expression of Interest.
2. Expression of Interest - Lodge your interest in developing a Seed funding application here. Include in your email primary contact, organisation details, phone number, address and a four-line statement of your Seed funding idea.
3. A Principal Regional Advisor (PRA) from the Department will contact you within 5 (five) business days to discuss your proposed application and suitability for the fund.
4. Should your Expression of Interest be deemed appropriate, the PRA will send you a link to an online Seed Funding application form.

ONLINE SEED APPLICATION LODGEMENT

5. Complete the online Seed Funding application form and submit to the Department's online portal.
6. On submission of your online form, you will receive an automated response to acknowledge receipt of your application.
7. PRAs are available to provide advice in the development of applications for seed funding. This may include consultation with industry groups on training needs, possible projects, partnerships, and activities to connect appropriate partners and establish collaborative relationships in support of grant funding proposals.

APPLICATION ASSESSMENT

8. The Department will review and undertake an assessment of your application, and you may receive requests for further information.

NOTIFICATION & SEED FUNDING INITIATION MEETING

9. Notification of the outcome of your application will be a minimum of 20 working days from the date of your submission.
10. Once the Department's Delegate has made a decision on the outcome of your application, you will be formally notified of the outcome through a letter from the Department.
11. Should you be successful, you will receive a successful notification letter, draft Common Funding Agreement (CFA) and be invited to an optional Seed Funding Initiation Meeting.
12. PRA advice will be available throughout the life of your Seed Funding project.

SEED PROJECT DELIVERY & NEXT STEPS

13. Progress and Outcomes Reports are required in accordance with the dates set out in the CFA, and you will be invited to an optional Outcomes Meeting to discuss the next steps.

What is the assessment criteria for WTIF seed applications?

WTIF SEED ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. Need and case for change- 30%

2. Alignment to WTIF objectives - 35%

3. Innovation- 35%

The Department will also consider the geographic spread, mix of project types and sizes, and sectors covered of grant projects already funded under WTIF.

In the event that the Department receives an application that has the potential to duplicate an existing submission or project, the Department may recommend that applicants collaborate on the project/idea to obtain the best outcome for the project.

Applications for seed funding will be assessed against the eligibility and assessment criteria. The Department may seek further information, clarification or evidence as required.

WTIF SEED ASSESSMENT CRITERIA CHECKLIST

Criteria 1: Need and case for change

	CRITERIA QUESTIONS	INFORMATION REQUIRED
1.1	What is the current situation/ issues that your project responds to?	☐ Include a statement and evidence (such as publications, previous research, surveys) that explains the nature and scale of the problem/opportunity. (250 words or less)
1.2	What is your project/idea?	☐ Describe your project/idea. Include a summary of any work/activity you have completed that relates to your project/idea. (250 words or less)
		☐

Criteria 2: Alignment to WTIF objectives

	CRITERIA QUESTIONS	INFORMATION REQUIRED
2.1	Which WTIF objectives does your project respond to? How does your project align?	☐ Select the appropriate WTIF objectives provided ☐ Provide a statement/ rationale that explains how your project aligns to WTIF objectives. (100 words or less for each objective)
2.2	Which funding category\s does your project focus on?	☐ Select the appropriate funding category/s provided ☐ Provide a statement/ rationale that explains how your project aligns to the funding categories. (100 words or less for each funding category)
2.3	How does your project provide new learnings for the training and TAFE sector?	☐ Provide a statement/ rationale that explains how your project will provide new learnings for the training and TAFE sector. (250 words or less)

Criteria 3: Innovation

	CRITERIA QUESTIONS	INFORMATION REQUIRED
3.1	What is your project innovation?	☐ Select the appropriate innovation change type – incremental, radical, systemic ☐ Provide a statement that explains what is new/different and currently not available that your innovation is offering. What evidence do you have to support the innovation – include relevant references/citations. (250 words or less)