



Critical Skills Investment Fund

Critical Skills Investment Fund in focus

The following examples illustrate how the Critical Skills Investment Fund might be used to support enterprises to meet their workforce skills needs.

Example 1

A number of small employers are looking to expand their drilling workforce. Each employer has identified in its workforce planning a demand for drillers assistants, drillers, driller supervisors and senior drillers, and they have placed advertisements with Australian JobSearch and other related recruitment websites. A Job Services Australia (JSA) provider recognises the demand in the sector and undertakes the role of 'Lead Organisation'. They approach all of the local companies that have placed advertisements for drillers, offering them a labour and training solution with the help of the Critical Skills Investment Fund.

Recognising that local Indigenous job seekers make up a disproportionate number of local unemployed, the Lead Organisation works with Participating Employers and selected registered training organisations (RTOs) to prepare an Application that includes job-entry training for Indigenous unemployed job seekers.

Further workforce planning identifies career progression as a key retention strategy while each Participating Employer agrees to support its current workforce to undertake further training. A number of workers agree to gain qualifications that will enable them to fill higher-level positions, leaving a further number of entry-level positions vacant. When preparing the Project Workforce Plan (PWP), the Lead Organisation adds up all of these positions and then contracts an RTO to deliver the different levels of certificate training and all relevant occupational health and safety and site induction training to new workers.

The Lead Organisation then contacts other employment service providers in the area and asks them to screen job seekers who would be suitable to undertake a Certificate II in Exploration Drilling for the job's entry-level positions.

One JSA provider is selected to screen a number of Indigenous job seekers who are then interviewed by the employers. Each employer agrees to employ the selected people when they complete their initial training with the remaining competencies to be delivered on the job. As the Participating Employers all have fewer than 100 staff they will fund 10 per cent of the training and the Australian Government will fund 90 per cent. The JSA provider may receive an administration fee as the Lead Organisation.

Example 2

To address persistent skills shortages, a construction company decides to increase the proportion of women in its workforce. The company recognises that there are opportunities at all qualification levels, ranging from semi-skilled positions through to trade and degree qualifications.

In preparing an Expression of Interest (EOI) in partnership with their trade union, a local RTO and a JSA provider the company decides that it will set a target of 30 per cent women for its intake of new workers (this is stipulated in the EOI). The PWP identifies a total of 36 people for training delivery, linked to 24 job-entry positions and up-skilling for 12 existing workers. Training delivery and support arrangements are agreed with the RTO and JSA provider.

In recognition that there are a range of factors that need to be addressed to attract and retain eight women to their company, the training proposed for job seekers will be backed by a mentoring program and supported by a women's network funded by the employer. Flexible work arrangements to coincide with school hours will also be implemented. The training will be delivered part time so that the learners can begin part-time work immediately and receive concurrent work experience and mentoring.

The trade union coordinates the EOI and submits the Application as the Lead Organisation. The Application is successful and the trade union is paid an administration fee equivalent to 7.5 per cent of the Australian Government contribution to the project. The Participating Employer has 109 employees and pays 25 per cent of the cost of training to the Lead Organisation.

Example 3

A Local Employment Coordinator in Cairns, working with a company managing a wind farm in the Atherton Tablelands identifies the need for skilled workers in renewable energy. The Local Employment Coordinator and the local Chamber of Commerce identify that several other local enterprises that service the wind farm are also looking to up-skill their workers. The PWP identifies opportunities for new workers on the wind farm with a Certificate III in ESI Generation (Systems Operations) and a Certificate IV in ESI Generation (Operations) as well as workers with a Diploma of Maintenance Management looking to up-skill.

Additional opportunities exist to support enterprises to provide cabling, electrical reticulation, and metering services across the Tablelands and Cape York. These opportunities provide a critical mass of 41 learners for the local delivery of work-based technical training at two sites.

The Local Employment Coordinator assists the wind farm company (Lead Organisation) to approach a local JSA provider to attract suitable job seekers, and an RTO based in Cairns to deliver training at the two sites. Through the JSA, a mentoring plan is also developed to ensure the success of the training and ongoing employment of the job seekers.

The company submits an EOI and is invited to submit an Application, which is supported by letters of commitment from the Participating Employers, costed training solutions from the selected RTOs, and an undertaking from the JSA to work with partners to select and support suitable job seekers. The Application is successful. Because each Participating Employer has fewer than 50 staff members, each is required to contribute 10 per cent of the cost of training, with the Australian Government contributing the remaining 90 per cent.

Example 4

An Industry Skills Council is approached by a number of small businesses within the construction sector with an identified need to provide management training for selected staff so they can make a career move to supervisor and management positions.

The Industry Skills Council acts as the Lead Organisation and works with each Participating Employer on workforce planning. During this process a number of experienced workers in some of the businesses indicate that they are willing to move to these new roles. The planning also identifies the need to fill a range of job-entry positions in several of the businesses.

The Lead Organisation adds all of the training positions into the PWP and approaches RTOs to develop training solutions to deliver Certificate IV in Frontline Management qualifications to the selected staff, and provide Certificate III level training through e-learning and on-the-job training for new workers. The Lead Organisation and Participating Employers review the proposed training solutions and select those that best fit their business needs and offer the best value for money.

The Lead Organisation then contacts a local recruitment organisation to identify and prepare suitable job seekers interested in working in the available jobs who can be referred to the businesses to interview for these positions.

The Lead Organisation submits an EOI and is invited to submit an Application. Supporting evidence includes the enterprise workforce gap analysis and the training quotes from the selected RTOs. The Application is assessed, ranked and recommended for funding by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) assessment team, and the Fund Delegate approves funding.

DEEWR negotiates a Funding Agreement with the Lead Organisation, which includes support for administration costs based on 10 per cent of the Australian Government contribution.

The Lead Organisation arranges for the 10 per cent of the training costs to be paid into the project account by each of the small businesses, and manages the Australian Government contribution to the training costs (paid in accordance with the project milestones). The Lead Organisation also pays the participating RTOs, as agreed in their contract.

Example 5

A mining company with a workforce of more than 200 workers, including contractors and subcontractors, submits an Application as Lead Organisation in partnership with an RTO and a JSA provider to:

- up-skill workers and contractors for more environmentally sustainable processes through Training Package Skill Sets
- provide Certificate IV Training and Assessment qualifications through Recognition of Current Competency and gap training for mature-age tradespeople, to allow them to move into a role as a workplace trainer and assessor or mentor for apprentices and
- train job seekers in Certificate II and III level qualifications for entry-level positions at a particular mine site.

As the mining company has a workforce of more than 200 employees it will contribute 50 per cent of the cost of training and the Australian Government will provide the remaining 50 per cent.