

Training The Future

The International Fibre Centre's funding strategy for training and education



The Victorian textiles and fibre industry is a vital part of the State's social and economic fabric. Effective training programs, sustainable business growth, better-skilled staff and sharing more industry intelligence are key elements of the IFC's funding mandate.

Designed for the Victorian textiles and fibre industry, the IFC's funding strategy can provide the industry with the ability to develop advanced capabilities, knowledge and skills that will support growth into new and emerging fields as well as traditional textile and fibre applications.



Chairperson's message

Creating a path for our future

As the only organisation in Australia that provides funding for skills and knowledge development specifically for the textile and fibre industry, the IFC commissioned a detailed analysis of the industry to assess future directions and opportunities in the fibre and textiles sector.

This comprehensive study identified areas in which the IFC could best invest in the Victorian industry through training and education. The result is three programs that are outlined in this brochure.

There is considerable potential in the Victorian textile and fibre industry and I urge business, training organisations, industry bodies and service providers to take advantage of the funding available to strategically develop capabilities for the future growth and profitability of their business and the industry overall.



Peter Loney
Chairperson
International Fibre Centre

Overview

The IFC funding programs:

- Provide funding for the development and delivery of training resources to meet the skill and workforce development needs of organisations in the textiles and fibre industry
- Encourage collaboration between training providers and other relevant organisations in the development and delivery of training for the fibre and textile industry
- Support the development of new training resources and reference materials and, where appropriate, the dissemination of those materials
- Support activities and events that raise awareness of new developments in the fibre and textile industry and associated industries
- Encourage innovation and promote workforce and skills and knowledge development
- Support cooperation between organisations, higher education institutions, and other entities engaged in the development and commercialisation of new fibre and textile products and applications.

Funding programs

IFC has established **three** programs under which funding will be allocated.

1. Innovative industry

2. Sustainable industry

3. Value chain

When making applications, businesses seeking IFC funding must ensure that proposed activities fit within the objectives of **one** of the programs. Summary details of these programs and the project application, approval and development process are outlined on the opposite page.

How is this funding strategy different?

It is linked to objectives that support industry in key areas that have been identified as important for the future growth and profitability of the industry

Previously, different programs supported different types of activities. Under this strategy, any training activity can be funded within each program, as long as it fits with the objectives of that program

No matching funding or in-kind contribution is expected for any program. However, understanding what companies are prepared to contribute to the project will assist in prioritising applications.

There is an emphasis on building organisational rather than individual capability, aligned to organisational strategy.

No budget or project plan needs to be worked out when submitting an EOI, minimising the work that applicants need to do before they find out whether their training concept is accepted.

The turnaround for acceptance will be much quicker than in the past and the aim is to work towards full electronic submission of EOIs.

Once accepted, the emphasis is on achieving successful implementation and measurable benefits.



1. Innovative Industry Program

The Innovative Industry Program aims to support innovation and growth at the company level through skills and knowledge development that will assist in the development of new and innovative products and processes to support future industry growth. Proposals to be considered under this program may include those relating to:

- The fundamentals of fibre and textile knowledge
- Product development
- Commercialisation of new products and processes
- Specialist textile techniques (particularly those creating added value to new and existing processes)
- Intellectual property issues

2. Sustainable Industry Program

The Sustainable Industry Program aims to support fibre and textile organisations to improve existing products and processes, introduce more efficient and cost-effective work practices and develop more strategic approaches to workforce and skills development.

Training proposals to be considered under this program may include:

- Enterprise-wide approaches to product and process improvement such as the implementation of 'lean systems' and eco-manufacturing processes
- Targeted programs that address specific knowledge and skill needs that will support the sustainability of the industry.

3. Value Chain Program

The Value Chain Program aims to build greater knowledge and awareness of the value chain of textile and related industries and of best practice approaches to business in these value chains.

The IFC believes that where genuine value is created for anyone in this chain, a 'best practice' culture must be fostered.

This can be based on knowledge of what is already being achieved by other organisations, both locally and overseas. Training proposals under this program may include those concerned with:

- Creating awareness of global best practice
- Supply and value chain linkages within textiles and related industries
- Current and prospective industry and technological developments.

All programs have the same project application process, complemented by IFC support through to implementation.

Project application, approval and development process

KEY STAGES

Step 1

Lodge expression of interest to International Fibre Centre by monthly closing date

Board considers applications

- Projects must meet strategic objectives of the program
- Provides a quick turnaround (will or will not support) – within two weeks of monthly board meeting if application received by closing date or within six weeks if deferred to the following month's board meeting

Step 2

Successful applicants advised

- Independent training implementation advice given
- Budget range provided
- Applicants accept or reject advice (by rejecting, application is withdrawn)

Step 3

Full project implementation plan developed

- Applicant and training provider assisted by the Fibre and Textile Provider Network (at IFC cost) to maximise chances of project success

Step 4

Contract development including:

- Timelines
- Milestones
- Implementation plan

Contract execution

Step 5

Project implementation

Monitor progress against plan

Step 6

Project close-out

Outcomes and outputs

Deliverables

Financial acquittals

Training: a long-term approach to skills

IFC's funding strategy recognises textiles and fibre organisations have diverse workforce development and skill needs, including some that are highly specialised and specific to the organisations.

Decisively, IFC has collaborated with TAFE to deliver training capabilities that are not generally traditional areas offered by Victorian TAFEs.

The IFC's support for the creation of a Fibre and Textile Provider Network is significant.

The network, which is a collaboration of five major TAFE Institutions and a specialist textile training provider (Kangan Batman TAFE (Convenor), Swinburne (TAFE Division), Chisholm TAFE, Box Hill TAFE, Gordon TAFE and TexSkill), delivers enterprise-based training to fibre and textile processing organisations, including technical, supervisory and higher level management training for company personnel.

This network can deliver a program of training that simply could not be delivered by any single TAFE Institution operating alone.

Applying for funding: The next steps

Interested parties can submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) to IFC at any time. Forms can be obtained and completed online from www.ifc.net.au

EOIs will be assessed by the IFC Board against program goals and against:

- A description of outcomes the applicant is seeking
- A description of what is proposed and the specific deliverable (i.e. new training materials, new course, strategic document, report etc.)
- Alignment with funding program objectives selected by applicant and
- Expected benefits.

The strategic questions you will need to answer on your EOI (maximum 300 words for each question) are:

- Describe the training project you are proposing.
- How does your proposed training align with the objectives of the program you have selected?
- Describe what success looks like for your organisation, if this project is implemented.
- What alternative approaches to achieving this outcome have you considered?
- What do you believe to be the strategic consequences to your organisation of not implementing this project?

Once EOIs are accepted by the IFC, an Independent Training Implementation Report will be commissioned (at IFC cost) to provide advice to support project plan development and implementation, with the aim of achieving implementation success and capturing any benefits that can be shared for broader industry benefit.

Using this advice - and at no cost to applicants - a representative of the Fibre and Textile Provider Network will be assigned to support applicants and training providers to design a quality training implementation plan from their project EOI as well as providing a single point of reference and support during project implementation.

Applicants are free to nominate a training provider of their choice or seek advice from the network on a suitable provider with appropriate capabilities.

To be eligible for IFC funding, businesses must have an Australian Business Number and be based in Victoria.

More information

For more information, log on to www.ifc.net.au or call the **International Fibre Centre** on **03 5227 2379**.

