



INDUSTRY TRAINING AUTHORITY • SERVICE PLAN 2006/07-2008/09

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

To: The Honourable Colin Hansen

Minister of Economic Development and

Minister Responsible for the Asia-Pacific Initiative and the Olympics

On behalf of the board of directors, management and staff of the Industry Training Authority (ITA), I am pleased to submit this Service Plan for fiscal 2006/07 – 2008/09.

Industry training has assumed a heightened profile and importance in the current economic climate, and this plan defines strategies and actions that respond to both current and anticipated needs. It is based on a strong foundation, given that we have already exceeded several key targets and become a catalyst for significant change.

Our priority program areas and initiatives during 2005/06 included:

- approval and rollout of new training programs in high-priority sectors;
- increased youth participation in industry training, primarily through the Secondary School Apprenticeship (SSA) and Accelerated Credit Enrolment in Industry Training (ACE IT) programs;
- \$2.3 million in additional funding to reduce waitlists for apprenticeship technical training;
- an agreement-in-principle with colleges regarding a financial and accountability framework;

- a mechanism to standardize credit for entry level trades training and apprenticeship technical training;
- updates and enhancements to training program standards;
- completion of a major stakeholder awareness and opinion survey; and
- a partnership with Thompson Rivers University, through which Canada's first undergraduate degree programs for the trades are being launched.

We also launched the first three Industry Training Organizations (ITOs). ITOs are sector-based, and are initiated and operated by industry with ITA co-funding. They are the key mechanism through which industry will assume a training leadership role, and they represent a fundamental directional change.

The ITA's activities are a vital response to the challenges presented by a combination of economic conditions and demographic trends. There is vibrancy and growth in many sectors, low unemployment across the country, and heightened recognition of the value of training. At the same time, many of the members of BC's current workforce are approaching retirement, often with relatively small cohorts of younger workers to take their places.

The ITA's success to date is reflected in continued strong growth in training participation. There were already more than 20,000 active trainees/apprentices at the beginning of 2005/06, and we are forecasting 25,000 by the end of the fiscal year, surpassing our target of 24,000. We are committed to maintaining this momentum, while also upholding and improving training quality.

This plan describes a vision for a more flexible, accountable and industry-led training system in BC, and establishes performance goals and targets. The goals and targets are largely consistent with those in the most recent update of our service plan, while also reflecting changing circumstances and a refined understanding of client needs.

Our activities over the next three years will be guided by the following five goals:

1. Expand industry training participation on the part of both trainees/apprentices (supply-side) and employers/sponsors (demand-side).
2. Provide the infrastructure – primarily in the form of effective ITOs – that will assure active leadership of industry training by industry itself.
3. Implement a financial and accountability framework ensuring efficient use of funding on the part of training providers.
4. Ensure high-quality program standards and high levels of client satisfaction with services provided by the ITA.
5. Ensure stakeholder awareness of the industry training system and increase intent to participate by target groups, through communications and marketing.

We are confident that the pursuit of these goals will advance the interests of industry training participants and of British Columbia as a whole.

This Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the contents of the plan, including the selection of performance measures and targets. The plan is consistent with government's strategic priorities and overall Strategic Plan. All significant assumptions, policy decisions, and identified risks, as of January 2006, have been considered in preparing the plan. I am accountable for ensuring the Industry Training Authority achieves the specific objectives identified in the plan and for measuring and reporting on actual performance.

Sincerely,



Bev Briscoe
Chair, Board of Directors

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

The ITA became operational in early 2004, and has a province-wide mandate to govern, expand and improve the industry training system. The organization is working to create a more flexible, accountable and industry-led system. It seeks to better align training outcomes with current labour market needs, and to meet the province's skilled training needs now and in the future. Its activities support continued economic vibrancy, and are expanding the range of available career advancement opportunities.

The ITA provides services to two primary client groups:

Industry – any employer, group of employers or sector requiring workers with credentials obtained through formal programs with industry training attributes; and

Trainees or Apprentices – individuals who participate in industry training programs with intent to obtain a credential and employment in a given occupation.

The ITA is focused primarily on governance of the industry training system, including program and credentialing standards, funding, and related policy matters. It has 13 full-time staff whose core responsibilities include: operations, finance and administration, program standards, client interests, policy and research, and communications and marketing.

Program development, training delivery, and client services are executed largely through partnerships and third-party service delivery arrangements. Industry itself is assuming primary responsibility for training program development and maintenance, and for program delivery standards. At this stage, the ITA is working largely with industry associations and ad hoc groups of subject-matter experts. Increasingly, however, this role is being assumed in a more formalized way by ITA-approved and sector-based Industry Training Organizations (ITOs).

The ITA provides funding to and works closely with an expanding network of public and private training providers that deliver the technical training components of industry training programs. A financial and accountability framework is being implemented, which will include the development of detailed annual training plans by each provider.

Service delivery – on the part of training providers and the system as a whole – is further monitored through an annual customer satisfaction survey.

The ITA's accountability to its shareholder (the Government of British Columbia) and its governance structure are defined by the *Industry Training Authority Act*, the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*, the *Financial Information Act* and the *Financial Administration Act*. Further accountability is provided by a Shareholder's Letter of Expectations, executed by the ITA and the Minister of Economic Development.

A nine-member board of directors – made up of individuals drawn from diverse industry backgrounds and appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council – provides guidance and oversight. The board approves policy and strategic direction, and monitors performance against goals and targets. Directors act in the best interests of the ITA, and not on behalf of a particular interest or constituency. Standing board committees have specific responsibility for Finance, Human Resources and Governance, Standards and Policy.

The ITA is located in Richmond. Service to apprentices and employers is provided province-wide through the 60 offices of Service BC.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Industry Training Authority is guided by a vision, mission statement and set of core values that were defined by its board at the time of the organization's inception.

Vision

British Columbians have affordable access to quality, responsive, integrated and accountable industry training that will meet the needs of industry and learners.

Mission

The Industry Training Authority provides effective governance for British Columbia's industry training system, thus assuring a timely supply of skilled labour for industry and career development opportunities for British Columbians. The ITA facilitates industry leadership in the training system, thereby assuring the relevance and effectiveness of training outcomes.

Values

Quality: Our standards will be clear, measurable and outcomes-based. Training will be current and relevant. We will use competitive training sources, while maintaining the highest standards of training.

Skill Development Opportunity: Training will be accessible to British Columbians and we will recognize skills obtained in other jurisdictions. British Columbia credentials will be portable throughout the province and other jurisdictions. The system will be flexible and offer multiple paths and timeframes. We recognize the trainee's obligation for personal development and life-long learning.

Accountability: We will respond to customer needs and be considerate of other stakeholder inputs. We will answer to the shareholder and the public with integrity and openness. We will be performance based and meet our shareholder expectations, continuously assessing our training programs to ensure they meet the needs of our customers – employers and learners. We will also operate with fiscal responsibility, using criteria-based decision making, and achieve positive outcomes from the training dollars invested.

FUNDING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

As noted, the ITA has reached an agreement-in-principle (AIP) with public trainers regarding a financial and accountability framework. This will help ensure that training delivery is consistent with our strategic imperatives and specific training requirements.

The framework establishes prioritization among different types of training delivery, focusing first on apprenticeship training, followed by youth programs, newly approved ITA programs, expansion of local training availability, and standardized Entry Level Trades Training (ELTT) programs.

Standardized program lengths and outcomes for ELTT are expected to create some efficiencies that will be used to offset part of the increased demand for apprenticeship technical training.

This framework is the focal point of one of the goals defined below.

PLANNING CONTEXT AND STRATEGIC ISSUES

The Industry Training Authority is mandated to expand the scope and increase the flexibility of industry training, in response to varied and often rapidly changing marketplace needs. This involves working with a diverse range of stakeholders – among whom there is a consensus that an appropriately skilled workforce is critical to continued growth, competitiveness and prosperity.

A variety of strategic issues impact the ITA's planning and have been assessed in the process of formulating goals and performance measures. These issues are both external and internal in nature. This section speaks briefly to the key considerations and identifies the ITA's responses, which are elaborated on in the following section.

The strategic issues have been identified over the course of the ITA's ongoing consultations with its client and stakeholder audiences; on the basis of direction from government and dialogue with other public agencies; and through the ITA's own analysis of training and labour market developments in BC and other jurisdictions. Their significance is verified by demographic and other data. Their potential impacts on the training system and the BC economy, if not effectively responded to, are deemed to be highly significant.

External Risks and Opportunities

1. Growing Labour Market Demand

BC has had the fastest-growing job market in Canada for the past two years, and is scheduled to outperform the national growth average over the next two years, according to the Canada West Foundation. New job openings in the province between now and 2015 have been projected at more than one million, with particularly high growth in industry training-dependent sectors such as construction. Recent research confirms that recruitment challenges extend across regions and impact employers of varying sizes. Provincial and national unemployment rates are at the lowest levels in 30 years.

ITA Response: The first goal defined in this plan focuses specifically on expanded participation in industry training and various performance measures explicitly address labour market demand. This includes, most particularly, the measure relating to the number of registered trainees, and the other measures defined in connection with the expanded participation goal.

2. Labour Supply Challenges

Demographic trends are reducing the size of the labour pool and exacerbating the challenges associated with growing labour market demand. By 2010, the combination of a declining birthrate and aging population is expected to shrink the BC workforce. Some sectors and trades will be

uniquely impacted by these trends, due to particularly low numbers of new entrants in recent years. At the same time, misperceptions regarding the nature of trades-related work inhibit many from considering industry training. Anecdotal evidence and assessments such as the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum's *Assessing and Completing Apprenticeship Training in Canada* indicate a variety of attitudinal and other barriers to participation, particularly on the part of under-represented groups such as aboriginal people, women and immigrants.

ITA Response: The first goal defined in this plan focuses specifically on expanded participation in industry training, and the ITA will maintain a particular focus on attracting more youth into industry training. Additionally, a goal relating to stakeholder awareness and intent to participate (goal 5) has been included in an effort to address perception issues.

3. Expanded Sectoral Interest

A growing number of industry sectors – beyond those employing significant numbers of workers within the traditional trades – are expressing interest in formal participation in industry training. They are doing so in recognition of benefits relating to workforce qualifications and productivity, and recruitment and retention.

ITA Response: The first goal defined in this plan focuses specifically on expanded participation in industry training, and this will include some expansion into non-traditional sectors. The ITA will engage with such sectors on a prioritized basis and at varying levels, from credential approval to ITO formation (the latter being the focal point of the second goal defined in this plan).

Internal Risks and Opportunities

1. General Organizational/Systemic Capacity

In recognition of the central importance of effective industry leadership, the ITA has been intentionally constituted as a policy-focused organization with a lean staff complement. While participants have assumed greater individual responsibility for their training progress, there is a clear need to ensure sufficient infrastructure and program development and implementation capacity. Much of that capacity will be created within ITOs. Such an approach will best facilitate flexible, timely and industry-led responses to emerging training needs. At the same time, it is dependent on the dedication of a significant degree of resources, and assumption of ownership on the part of industry.

ITA Response: Prioritized rollout of the ITO framework across all sectors with the ability to support it is the key element of the ITA's strategy to assure adequate system capacity. The performance measure under the industry leadership goal (goal 2) relates to ITO formation and operation.

2. Service Quality and Access

Closely related to the concept of organizational and system capacity are the important issues of service quality and access, for which the ITA retains responsibility notwithstanding the reliance on third-party delivery arrangements. Timely and efficient service to participants is a vital element of the overall productivity of the training system. Improved regional accessibility is also key to enhancing participation levels and minimizing disruption for participants.

ITA Response: Client service satisfaction is one of two key components of a broader goal (goal 4, which also encompasses program standards). A customer satisfaction index and other performance measures address this issue. Changes to the service delivery model will also be made, as may be appropriate. A financial and accountability framework (goal 3) will be the key means by which prioritized, efficient and high-quality training delivery will be assured.

3. Standards Maintenance

Equal in importance to the strategic imperative of increasing training participation is the importance of maintaining training quality. BC has defined commitments with reference to inter-provincial Red Seal standards – which provide important worker mobility benefits – and a responsibility to ensure rigorous standards maintenance with respect to recognized programs as well. Occupational standards expertise is one of the organization's core strengths, yet it must also of necessity work closely with industry and training providers to ensure effective standards maintenance.

ITA Response: High-quality program standards are one of two key components of a broader goal (goal 4, which also encompasses client satisfaction), and an associated performance measure focuses on program updates. The rollout of the ITO framework will also enhance capacities in this regard.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Industry Training Authority has established five goals, and associated strategies and performance measures, which will guide its activities over the next three years. This performance management framework is closely derived from the ITA's vision and mission statement, and aligns well with organizational values and government's strategic plan. Collectively, these goals, strategies and performance measures comprise the overall intended results of this Service Plan, and progress will be reported in subsequent annual reports.

Changes to the Framework

In addition to refining the relationship between specific goals and measures, the ITA's performance management framework has evolved in the following ways since its last Service Plan was published in September 2005:

- a focus on expanded training participation in terms of both demand (employers/sponsors) and supply (trainees/apprentices);
- re-statement of the industry leadership goal to better reflect the progress made in the rollout of ITOs;
- a more encompassing goal addressing training funding and delivery;
- an explicit focus on quality, both in terms of training program standards and client service; and
- a stronger focus on communications and marketing, and stakeholder awareness.

ITA GOALS: 2006/07–2008/09

1. Expand industry training participation on the part of both trainees/apprentices (supply-side) and employers/sponsors (demand-side).
2. Provide the infrastructure which will assure active and effective leadership of industry training by industry itself.
3. Implement a financial and accountability framework ensuring efficient use of funding on the part of training providers.
4. Ensure high-quality program standards and high levels of client satisfaction with services provided by the ITA.
5. Ensure stakeholder awareness of the industry training system and increase intent to participate by target groups, through communications and marketing.

Rationale for Goal Selection

The selection of goals and performance measures has been informed by the ITA's ongoing consultations with its client and stakeholder audiences. This included the inaugural survey of key audiences that established baseline measures of customer satisfaction and stakeholder awareness, and provided data that enables the ITA to more accurately identify current issues and priorities.

The goals are responsive to what are widely agreed to be key challenges facing industry training (both in BC and more broadly): the need to expand training participation; the need for effective industry leadership and responsiveness to labour market demands; the need for accountable and effective training delivery; the importance of ensuring more current and rigorous program standards; and the need to address perception issues.

Accordingly, the ITA is confident it has selected the most critical and outcome-focused goals for the coming fiscal years.

Performance Management Systems

The reporting and tracking necessary to assess progress against various performance measures is done by means of the Apprenticeship Information Management System (AIMS). It relies on manual data entry carried out primarily by Service BC staff. AIMS has inherent statistical tracking limitations, and project planning for the design of a replacement system will take place during 2006/07.

However, the ITA has made various short-term improvements to AIMS to enhance its data-tracking and reporting capacities. Clear criteria have been established with respect to key performance measures (such as registered trainees) and data-verification exercises have been completed. Accordingly, the ITA has a high level of confidence in the accuracy of the data that underlies its performance management framework.

The data necessary to measure progress against customer satisfaction and stakeholder awareness measures are obtained through surveys conducted by expert third-party suppliers, using industry-standard market research methodology.

GOALS, STRATEGIES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

GOAL 1: Expand industry training participation on the part of both trainees/apprentices (supply-side) and employers/sponsors (demand-side).

Strategies:

- Continue to address barriers to participation on the part of both trainees/apprentices and employers/sponsors
- Continue to work with school districts, training providers and employers on the provision and expansion of the ACE IT and SSA youth programs
- Continue to work with industry on the development and approval of new programs and re-alignment of existing programs to ensure relevance to labour market needs
- Ensure efficiency of training delivery, and appropriate harmonization of entry level trades training with apprenticeship trades training
- Measure current completion rate and work with stakeholders to improve
- Improve regional accessibility to Industry Training Programs

Performance Measure	Baseline		Targets		
	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Forecast	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Number of registered trainees/apprentices in programs leading to ITA credentials	20,050	25,000	33,000	35,000	TBD based on ITO forecasts
Youth participation: registered trainees/apprentices in ACE IT and SSA programs	1,341	3,000	3,000	4,000	4,000
Number of registered employers/sponsors with an active trainee/apprentice on staff	7,863	8,500	9,500	10,500	TBD based on ITO forecasts
Number of provincial and inter-provincial credentials awarded	2,378	2,414	2,700	3,500	4,000
Trainee/apprentice program completion rate	n/a	Establish measure and baseline	TBD	TBD	TBD

GOAL 2: Provide the infrastructure – primarily in the form of effective ITOs – which will assure active and effective leadership of industry training by industry itself.

Strategies:

- Continue to develop and refine policy framework and operational guidelines relating to establishment and operation of new ITOs
- Work with three initial ITOs to expand and refine their operations (in part on basis of feedback from their client groups)
- Proactively target priority industry sectors for launch of additional ITOs
- Implement performance framework to measure effectiveness of ITOs

Performance Measure	Baseline		Targets		
	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Forecast	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Number of Industry Training Organizations in operation	0	3	6	10-15	10-15

GOAL 3: Implement a financial and accountability framework ensuring efficient use of funding on the part of training providers.

Strategies:

- Effectively communicate with training providers (public and private) regarding the underlying funding principles – e.g. program prioritization, pricing formulas
- Work with all training providers to facilitate alignment of delivery with ITA priorities as reflected in the financial and accountability framework

Performance Measure	Baseline		Targets		
	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Forecast	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Work with training providers on development of individual institutional training plans consistent with financial and accountability framework <i>New Measure</i>	n/a	Agreement-in-Principle with colleges regarding framework	Training plans in place – substantial consistency with framework	Training plans in place – consistency with framework	Training plans in place – consistency with framework

GOAL 4: Ensure high-quality program standards, and high levels of client satisfaction with services provided by the ITA.

Strategies:

- Continue to update program standards and curriculum and assessment tools, in cooperation with ITOs and other industry representatives
- Continue with annual and independently conducted Customer Satisfaction Index measures, analyze results and develop action plans as necessary
- Make changes to service delivery model as appropriate
- Complete assessment of key industry training business processes (e.g. registration turnaround times) and establish customer-focused service level standards

Performance Measure	Baseline		Targets		
	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Forecast	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Number of Industry Training Programs updated to established industry, provincial and Red Seal standards	0	5	10	15	30
Customer Satisfaction Index measure (independent survey of trainees/apprentices, employers/sponsors and industry associations)	62 (July 2005)	68	72	76	80
Service level standards for key business processes	n/a	Establish standards and baselines	TBD	TBD	TBD

GOAL 5: Ensure stakeholder awareness of the industry training system, and increase intent to participate by target groups, through communications and marketing.

Strategies:

- Continue with annual and independently conducted Stakeholder Awareness Index survey, analyze results and develop action plan to maintain high awareness
- Partner in and leverage communications and marketing efforts on the part of other groups as appropriate (e.g. Canadian Apprenticeship Forum campaign)
- Re-develop ITA website to provide a one-stop source of information on industry training for all customer and stakeholder groups
- Introduce recognition and scholarship programs for training participants and prospective participants
- Implement targeted, research-based youth communications activities

Performance Measure	Baseline		Targets		
	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Forecast	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Stakeholder Awareness Index (independent survey of training participants, training providers, industry associations, unions)	n/a	81	Maintain or improve	Maintain or improve	Maintain or improve
Implement strategies to increase intent to consider trades as a career on part of youth <i>New Measure</i>	n/a	Establish baseline measure	TBD	TBD	TBD

ALIGNMENT WITH GOVERNMENT'S STRATEGIC PLAN

The Industry Training Authority's vision, mission and values – and the means by which it is putting them into practice – are fully consistent with and will support achievement of the government's overarching vision, which is:

To be a prosperous and just province, whose citizens achieve their potential and have confidence in the future.

In discharging its mandate and carrying out its specific activities, the ITA conducts itself in a manner that is consistent with government's core values of integrity, fiscal responsibility, accountability, respect and choice.

More specifically, there is a clear alignment between many of the goals, strategies and performance measures set out in this Service Plan, and two of government's Five Great Goals for the decade ahead:

Government Goal	ITA Activities
<p>Make BC the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent</p>	<p>Enabling growing numbers of British Columbians to enhance their skills and attain formal educational credentials is central to the mandate of the ITA. This government goal will be advanced by the pursuit of all organizational goals and performance measures outlined in the preceding section. Measures such as the number of registered trainees, completion rates, and credentials awarded align very closely with this government goal.</p>
<p>Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada</p>	<p>A skilled workforce is one of the key pre-requisites for effective job creation. It attracts investment, and enables employers to maximize their productivity and pursue growth opportunities. Accordingly, there is a very close alignment between the organizational goals and performance measures outlined in the preceding section – which are collectively aimed at improving skill levels within the BC workforce – and this government goal as well.</p>

SUMMARY FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

F 05/06 – 08/09

(\$000's)	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 (forecast Dec. 31/05)	2006/07 (forecast)	2007/08 (forecast)	2008/09 (forecast)
REVENUE					
Contributions from the Province ⁽¹⁾	78,054	77,908	90,966	90,836	90,281
Other Income	533	599	429	449	469
Total Revenue	78,587	78,507	91,395	91,285	90,750
COSTS					
Costs of General Operations & Admin					
Salaries & Benefits	1,174	1,400	1,870	1,870	1,870
General & Admin	845	1,326	1,100	1,100	1,100
Professional Services	369	480	325	325	325
Depreciation	102	120	200	200	200
Total General Operations & Admin	2,490	3,326	3,495	3,495	3,495
Program Operations Costs					
Training Program Delivery	70,368	72,191	80,400	80,400	80,400
Participant Services	1,815	2,105	2,200	2,200	2,200
Training Program					
Development & Maintenance	1,582	2,481	3,800	3,690	3,155
I/Os	–	600	1,500	1,500	1,500
Total Program Operations Costs	73,765	77,377	87,900	87,790	87,255
Total Costs	76,255	80,703	91,395	91,285	90,750
Projected Net Income (loss) ⁽²⁾	2,332	(2,196)	0	0	0

⁽¹⁾ Contributions from the Province

Ministry – General Funding	77,281	77,281	90,281	90,281	90,281
ACE IT – Directed Funding	773	427	–	–	–
Trades Awareness – Directed Funding	–	200	685	555	–
	78,054	77,908	90,966	90,836	90,281

⁽²⁾ Approval to incur a deficit in F 05/06 was received from the Ministry in August 2005.



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