

## **Action Plan for Implementing the Recommendations of the Auditor General's November 2008 Report "A Major Renovation: Trades Training in British Columbia"**

### **General Comments:**

The following action plan has been prepared jointly by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development (Ministry) and the Industry Training Authority (ITA), as follow up to the November 26, 2008 report by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) entitled "A Major Renovation: Trades Training in British Columbia".

The plan is a comprehensive summary of the actions taken to date to address each of the OAG's 12 recommendations, which we believe indicate significant progress. It also lists additional actions the Ministry and Industry Training Authority plan to complete in the next year.

As noted in our respective management responses, published in the body of the OAG's report, we remain committed to working collaboratively with our system partners to ensure that the province's industry training system continues to grow and improve in order to meet the needs of British Columbians.

We would like to once again thank the Office of the Auditor General for the constructive review of the trades training system in British Columbia, and the resulting recommendations. The following Action Plan is evidence of our commitment to continual improvement.

### **Specific Actions by Recommendation:**

**OAG Finding: CURRENT LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION EFFORTS NEED TO BE MAINTAINED.**

**Recommendation 1:** *The Industry Training Authority (ITA) should develop an action plan in consultation with key stakeholders to address issues identified in the report.*

***Actions Taken To Date:***

- Canvas of key stakeholders on report recommendations.

***Actions Planned:***

- Circulate action plan to key stakeholders (March, 2009).
- Report to key stakeholders on progress against action plan (Sept, 2009; March, 2010 – if required).

**OAG Finding: THE INDUSTRY TRAINING ORGANIZATIONS REQUIRE CLEARER DEFINITION OF RESPONSIBILITIES AND AN ASSESSMENT OF FUNDING NEEDS.**

**Recommendation 2:** *The Industry Training Authority should consult with Industry Training Organizations (ITO) and industry to clarify roles and responsibilities and revise its policies and guidelines accordingly.*

**Actions Taken To Date:**

- ITA Board planning session to discuss ITO roles and responsibilities (July, 2008).
- Consultation with ITOs on roles and responsibilities (August – October, 2008).
- Draft revised ITO policy and guidelines circulated to ITO Boards for input November (December, 2008).
- Discussion with Crown Agencies Secretariat, Office of the Comptroller General and Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development on ITO roles and responsibilities (January, 2009).

**Actions Planned:**

- ITA Board approval of draft revised ITO responsibilities outlined in Enterprise Partnership Framework (March, 2009).
- Circulate draft Enterprise Partnership Framework to ITO Boards for input (March/April, 2009).
- Final ITA Board approval of revised Enterprise Partnership Framework (April, 2009).

**Recommendation 3:** *The Industry Training Authority should work with Industry Training Organizations and industry to determine the costs associated with each required responsibility and to ensure the funding model is appropriate and sustainable.*

**Actions Taken To Date:**

- ITOs were consulted on costs associated with responsibilities identified in revised framework (August, 2008).
- Proposed new funding framework was developed (September, 2008).
- ITOs were consulted on proposed new funding framework (October, 2008).
- Provision was made in 2009/10 ITA budget to accommodate new funding framework should it be approved by the ITA Board.

**Actions Planned:**

- ITA Board approval of budget allocation for ITO services delivered to the ITA (March, 2009).
- Implementation of new budget allocation (April, 2009).

**OAG Finding: QUALITY ASSURANCE NEEDS TO BE STRENGTHENED.**

**Recommendation 4:** *The Industry Training Authority should develop a comprehensive quality assurance program to help safeguard the quality of trades training. This should include good practice guidelines on how to develop occupational analyses, program outlines and program profiles.*

**Actions Taken To Date:**

- A Program Development Lifecycle Overview document is under development in consultation with ITOs and training providers. An independent consultant has been retained to coordinate the project, which will provide a comprehensive and transparent blueprint for ITA program development and modification processes.
- A comprehensive review of Program Standards development processes and tools has been initiated to streamline systems and embed quality assurance milestones. Deliverables will include updated guidelines and templates for developing program standards documentation such as occupational analyses, program outlines and program profiles in addition to standardized document templates.
- A system of Program Development project management and quality assurance checks and balances has been developed including:
  - *A Program Development Worksheet and Checklist*, which documents the steps required to develop a program from intent to implementation;
  - *Monthly ITO Program Standards Reports*, which track programs that have been updated against new National Occupational Analyses, and the number of apprentices in these programs – broken down by ITO;
  - Streamlined the protocols and procedures for the ITA Standards Review Committee which conducts final review and approval of program documents and implementation plans, prior to launch.

**Actions Planned:**

- Completion of the ITA *Program Development Lifecycle Overview* document (August, 2009).
- Update of *Guidelines for New/Modified Programs* document to ensure it is current and consistent with all relevant ITA policies (August, 2009).
- Program development lifecycle supporting documentation review (August, 2009).
- Planning for the Common Exam Initiative, in collaboration with all key stakeholders (2009/10).
- Update of all program standards document templates (2009/10).

**Recommendation 5:** *The Industry Training Authority should strengthen its compliance monitoring mechanisms to provide greater assurance that training providers and apprenticeship sponsors are following program standards.*

**Actions Taken To Date:**Training Provider Quality Assurance:

- Monitoring of “Red Seal” (interprovincial) apprenticeship program pass rates. For BC apprentices writing Red Seal exams, the pass rate is 78 per cent compared to a national rate of 71 per cent. (Approximately 82% of BC apprentices are in Red Seal programs.)
- Monitoring results of certificate of qualification exams (administered at the completion of apprenticeship programs).
- ITA’s designation review process for non-public training providers ensures that a comprehensive review of learning resources, facilities and delivery of program standards is conducted before the program and training outcomes will be recognized by ITA. Training providers are evaluated against standards developed by industry. Shortcomings identified during the review must be rectified before an institution will be recognized as an ITA Designated Training Provider for a particular program and at a specific location.
- Attestation by public trainers, by program, that training content follows the Program Outline; instruction will be provided by a qualified individual; and, appropriate equipment and facilities are in place to provide instruction in areas outlined in the Program Outline.
- Annual stakeholder survey was conducted.
  - 91% of apprentices satisfied with work-based training experience; 91% satisfied with technical training experience.
  - 79% of employers satisfied with usefulness of skills and knowledge taught during apprenticeship technical training; 95% feel their apprentices make a positive contribution to their business.
- Development of common exams for different levels of apprenticeship training. These exams are developed independent of training providers and will allow for monitoring of pass rates and for identifying issues for resolution.

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***Actions Planned:***

*Training Provider Quality Assurance:*

- Monitor and continue to refine programs currently in place (ongoing).
- Consult with stakeholders on developing a quality assurance framework for technical training (May/June, 2009).
- Expand the development of common exams for apprenticeship level training (timeframe currently under discussion with training providers).
- Expand analysis of level, qualification and Red Seal exam results to facilitate addressing issues associated with compliance to program standards in training delivery (2009/10).
- Develop a business case for a Quality Assurance framework for technical training and work with government to identify any resources required (July, 2009).

*Apprenticeship Sponsor Quality Assurance:*

- Consult with stakeholders on developing a quality assurance framework for work-based training (May/June, 2009).
- Develop a business case for a Quality Assurance framework for work-based training and work with government to identify any resources required (July, 2009).

**OAG Finding: INFORMATION NEEDS TO IMPROVE TO ENSURE GOOD RESOURCE ALLOCATION.**

**Recommendation 6:** *The Industry Training Authority, the Industry Training Organizations, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development and the colleges should work together to produce high quality information for assessing demand for trades training.*

**Actions Taken to Date:**

- The Ministry is currently developing a business plan for a BC Labour Market Information (LMI) System to ensure that BC can anticipate labour market challenges and opportunities and has the analysis necessary to support competitive, innovative labour market strategies and investments.
- Government has revised the Shareholder's Letter of Expectation for the Industry Training Authority (ITA) which includes a government commitment to consult with the ITA in developing labour market information resources, in order to consider the information requirements of the ITA.

**Actions Planned:**

- The Ministry has arranged to include ITA representatives in the monthly Cross-Ministry Labour Market Information Roundtable (March 2009).
- The Ministry is currently developing a made-in-BC Labour Market Supply-Demand Forecasting Model to help guide labour market investments and decisions throughout all regions of the province. Initial forecasts are anticipated in May, 2009. Internal and external consultation based on these initial forecasts will follow through the summer and fall 2009.
- Labour market information products will be made available to stakeholders via a single LMI portal. Phase one of the portal project is expected to be completed by September 2009.
- The Ministry will develop innovative labour market information products that are up-to-date, accurate, and meet the needs of diverse stakeholders. This work has been initiated through various projects with BC Stats and data will be continually updated to maintain accuracy and relevancy.
- The ITA and public post-secondary institutions will continue to work together to refine apprenticeship waitlist definitions, methodology, and reporting (March 2009).

**Recommendation 7:** *The Industry Training Authority, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development and the training providers should work together to periodically assess the capacity of the trades training system to meet demand, and address any issues or opportunities identified.*

**Actions Taken To Date:**

- Government has revised the Shareholder's Letter of Expectation for the ITA which includes a government commitment to consult with and continue to work with the ITA on periodic reviews of facility capacity and requirements for effective delivery of trades training.
- The ITA and the post-secondary institutions have formed a Joint Leadership Committee to address policy and strategic issues that affect the success of B.C.'s trades training system. The Committee has established a joint Economic Recovery Working Group to gather and analyze training demand information and related capacity issues to maximize training opportunities during the economic downturn.
- In addition to the annual update from institutions regarding facility utilization, the Ministry, in consultation with the ITA, conducted a review of the public post-secondary trades training facility capacity in 2007. Following the review, the Ministry, ITA and the public post-secondary institutions initiated and/or completed a number of actions related to enhancing system capacity and utilization:
  - Improved the accuracy of apprentice waitlist data.
  - Developed and implemented a central web page to provide apprentices and employers with information on training availability.
  - ITA announced a \$6 million investment into its new E-PPRENTICE initiative to develop flexible delivery options to increase trades training access and capacity. The project is supported by the Ministry through the Labour Market Agreement funding.
  - In March 2008, the Ministry provided \$8.75 million for trades training equipment to enhance trades training in public institutions.
- In 2008, to further assess progress in addressing challenges and opportunities and for planning and budget allocation purposes, the following actions were taken:
  - The Ministry, ITA, and the public post-secondary institutions jointly conducted a follow-up survey to determine post-secondary institutions' progress in addressing training capacity.
  - The Ministry conducted a further review of the use of trade facilities in the summer months to determine institutions' current summer training capacity and their options for increasing capacity. The results of this review were shared with the ITA.
  - ITA conducted a survey of public and private training institutions to determine the additional training capacity for 2009/10.
- The ITA develops annual Training Plans for each training institution through consultation between individual training providers and the ITA to annually adjust to the evolving training needs of apprentices and employers in the province.

**Actions Planned:**

- The Ministry, the ITA and post-secondary institutions will continue to conduct periodic capacity reviews that focus exclusively on trades training facilities. The timing of such reviews will be determined through on-going consultation with the ITA and public post-secondary institutions.

- In 2009, to further address challenges and opportunities, the following steps will be taken:
  - Inventory the capital equipment in each institution to determine the age of the equipment and recommend a replacement cycle.
  - ITA, through BC campus will be seeking partnerships between public and private post-secondary institutions, secondary school districts and new media companies to lead the development and province-wide delivery of the E-PPRENTICE programs.
  - The ITA and the public post-secondary institutions will continue to monitor the need for additional apprentice registration supports and will take action as required.
- The ITA will work with Industry Training Organizations and the Industry Training Economic Recovery Working Group during the development and on-going management of the 2009/10 Training Plans to ensure the training needs of apprentices are met through the current economic environment (2009/10).

**Recommendation 8:** *The Industry Training Authority and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development should work with the colleges to ensure funding decisions are informed by a proper understanding of what it costs to deliver trades training.*

**Actions Taken To Date:**

- The ITA is currently working with the post-secondary institutions to ensure that funding decisions are informed by a full understanding of what it costs to deliver trades training (e.g., instructional, administrative support, library, registration, student services, and overhead costs).

**Actions Planned:**

- Information on the costs associated with trades training will be used to inform future funding policies.

**Recommendation 9:** *The Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development should ensure that its funding allocations to public colleges for the purposes of supporting trades training are coordinated with the Industry Training Authority.*

**Actions Taken To Date:**

- Staff from ITA and the Ministry met in December, 2008 to discuss the funding allocation processes for both the ITA and the Ministry.
- The Ministry consulted with the ITA on the Ministry's allocation of the trades training (Skills Development) seats, to reduce Foundation training program waitlists.

**Actions Planned:**

- The Ministry will consult the ITA prior to the Ministry finalizing the allocation of the 2009/10 Foundation program spaces to address waitlists.
- The Ministry will consult with and seek input from the ITA on relevant programming when considering proposed capital expansion at public post-secondary institutions.



**OAG Finding: PERFORMANCE REPORTING NEEDS TO BE ACCURATE, TRANSPARENT, AND SUPPORTED BY EFFECTIVE RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

**Recommendation 10:** *The Industry Training Authority should improve the internal controls it applies to the calculation of its performance measures.*

**Recommendation 11:** *The Industry Training Authority should clearly and explicitly disclose its performance reporting definitions, sources and calculation methodologies.*

**Actions Taken To Date:**

- Implementation of a new apprentice information system (ITADirectAccess) to replace the legacy system (AIMS) which will enhance the range and accuracy of performance reporting (February, 2009).
- Alignment of the key performance measures with the ITA's strategic and service plans.
- Progressing through documentation of existing performance measures (definition, reporting frequency, data source and methodology).
- Performance measure reporting is available on the ITA website.

**Actions Planned:**

- Complete the alignment of monthly performance reporting to the strategic and service plans; documentation of definitions; confirmation of reliable data sources; and, development of repeatable methodology (2009/10).

**Recommendation 12:** *The Industry Training Authority should improve its records management to ensure it can easily access key participant information when needed.*

**Actions Taken To Date:**

- Implementation of a new apprentice information system (ITADirectAccess) to replace the legacy system (AIMS) which will enhance access to and accuracy of key participant information and will enable participant management of their information (February, 2009).
- Development of a 'draft' document management policy.

**Actions Planned:**

- Finalize, approve and implement document management policy (June, 2009).