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Common Mistakes

Skills Development Fund Capital Stream Application

Application Eligibility and Submission

1. Application is not submitted to the correct funding pathway.

SDF Capital Stream offers two funding pathways: SEED and GROW. The SEED Pathway supports Recipients with funding for early-stage planning for Capital Projects that aim to expand or improve training infrastructure for in-demand sectors in Ontario. The GROW Pathway supports Recipients with funding for ready-to-implement Capital Projects that directly enhance training delivery capacity in in-demand sectors in Ontario.

Please review Section 2.0 *Program Description* in SDF Capital Stream SEED and GROW Guideline for further distinctions between the two pathways. Applying to the correct pathway from the outset helps avoid delays caused by having to withdraw and resubmit your application to the Ministry, saving time and effort.

2. Applicant does not meet eligibility requirement.

Make sure your organization is eligible for SDF Capital Stream funding before submitting an application.

Eligible organizations which may apply as Primary Applicants, are Ontario employers (excluding certain educational organizations), approved non-college apprenticeship training delivery agents, non-profit organizations (including Indigenous band offices and Indigenous Skills and Employment Training agreement holders), professional/industry/employer associations, trade unions/union-affiliated organizations, municipalities, district social services administration boards, hospitals and consolidated municipal service managers.

Eligible organizations must be a legal entity, be authorized to operate in Ontario, have a physical presence, and be actively operating in the province.

Educational organizations that are ineligible to apply as Primary Applicants include school boards, publicly funded colleges, universities and Indigenous Institutes, career colleges, and private universities. These organizations can apply as a Partner with a Primary Applicant.

Ensure your organization meets the eligibility criteria before applying to avoid delays or disqualification.

3. Legal name doesn't match Canada Revenue Agency number, or it is missing.

Please ensure your organization's full legal name is used when registering your organization and opening your case in the Transfer Payment Ontario system (TPON), and your Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) number is included. Using an incorrect name or omitting your CRA number can delay the review of your application or render the application incomplete. The application assessment cannot proceed until this information is provided.

The legal name of the Primary Applicant must be the same as the legal name of the Recipient that will sign the TPA. In addition, other application documents must consistently use the same legal name (e.g., financial statements, bank reference letter, proof of property control).

4. Application is not fully completed or is missing supporting documents.

Ensure all sections of your application are fully completed before you submit it in TPON. Once submitted, you will not be able to upload or edit any documents.

Additionally, please review the program guidelines for the list of mandatory documents required to be submitted with the application. Please refer to **Section 8.1, Table 7 of the GROW Pathway Guideline or Section 9.1 Table 4 of the SEED Pathway Guideline** depending on the pathway you are applying to.

If your application is missing responses to application questions and/or missing mandatory supporting documents it will be considered incomplete, which may delay the application review process, or the application may be deemed ineligible.

Project Information & Consistency

5. Conflict or unclear project details.

Make sure that information provided is consistent across all sections of the application and supporting documents, especially regarding key project details such as project address, training space square footage, budgetary information, funding amounts requested, and key performance indicators (KPIs). Inconsistencies may lead to confusion, and result in the application being assessed based on incorrect or unintended information. This may delay the review process if the Ministry needs to contact the applicant to confirm information, or may result in the application being deemed ineligible.

6. Confusion about Training Volume, Training Capacity, and Participant Groups.

Make sure to clearly distinguish between: **1.** how many people will be trained (training volume) **2.** how many people can be trained at one time (training capacity) **3.** who the training is for (participant groups).

It is important to clearly define each of these indicators to help the Ministry understand the scale and reach of your project. Unclear or inconsistent information can cause delays or impact application assessment. Please refer to **Section 3.4, 3.6,** and **Appendix B of the GROW Pathway Guideline** or **Section 9.1 Table 4, Project Implementation Plan of the SEED Pathway Guideline** for more information**.**

7. Land and/or building acquisition costs requested without a third-party appraisal.

For applicants requesting funding to acquire land and/or building, please ensure to include an independent third-party appraisal of the land and/or building with your application. The appraisal must be prepared within one (1) year of the application submission date by a professional who is accredited by and in good standing with the Appraisal Institute of Canada – Ontario (AIC-ON). For further information, please review **Appendix E of the GROW Pathway Guideline.**

8. Incomplete details about project partners.

A Project Partner is an organization that plays a formal role in helping to deliver the GROW Pathway project but is not the Primary Applicant. This could include helping with delivery of the Skills Development Activity or offering advice through a committee or other structure, providing financial support, or acting as a guarantor.

If you identify any Project Partners in your application, be sure to include:

- Their contact information,
- A clear description of each partner's role and,
- Letters of support from each partner on a letterhead.

9. Project proposal lacks clarity regarding the proposed Skills Development Activity.

Make sure to clearly explain what Skills Development Activities will be delivered during the Intended Use Period (5-year mandatory training period). Be sure to describe the training activities in detail—such as the courses that will be provided (including training content), any certifications or skillsets participants will earn or acquire, and how the training activities will benefit the target occupations or sectors. Missing or unclear information can delay the application review process, or the application may be deemed ineligible.

Additionally, if the Skills Development Activity includes apprenticeship training, please include all relevant training details, including confirmation or evidence of the Primary Applicant's status as a Ministry-approved Training Delivery Agent (TDA) to deliver any in-class trainings. Please refer to the Skilled Trades Ontario website for further information about apprenticeship and in-class training, if required, prior to submitting your application: Trades information - Skilled Trades Ontario.

10. Project proposal lacks clarity regarding the details of the Capital Project.

Make sure to clearly explain all components of the construction activities and design that comprise the Capital Project, including the size, use, and configuration of the finished space(s).

In addition, applicants are responsible for explaining how each space that will be built or improved through the Capital Project will support and facilitate the intended Skills Development Activity.

Financial & Legal Requirements

11. The costs and activities identified in the application are not eligible.

It is important to understand Eligible Costs and Ineligible Costs when applying to either the SEED or GROW Pathways. This ensures that your funding request meets program requirements and helps to avoid delays, rework, or rejection of the application. Each pathway has distinct Eligible Costs.

SEED Eligible Costs include planning-related expenses, while GROW Eligible Costs include capital-related expenses, such as construction and design development. Reviewing these details carefully will help you prepare an accurate budget and submit a proposal that includes costs that will be eligible for the program.

Please review **Section 3.8 Eligible Costs** and **Section 3.9 Ineligible Costs of the GROW Pathway Guideline** or **Section 3.3 Eligible Costs** and **Section 3.4 Ineligible Costs of the SEED Pathway Guideline** for a detailed list of Eligible Costs and Ineligible Costs.

12. Capital Cost Supporting Documents and Sources and Uses of Funding Documents do not have an itemized breakdown of costs.

Providing detailed Capital Cost Supporting Documents (cost estimate or quotes) and a detailed Sources and Uses of Funding Document (project budget) that includes an itemized breakdown of costs are essential. These documents help demonstrate that your project is financially sound, well-planned, sustainable, and your costs are aligned with the program's eligibility and funding parameters.

Each Eligible Cost must be noted as either a hard cost or a soft cost.

Any Ineligible Costs will not be considered for funding. Submitting Ineligible Costs as part of your proposal and may delay the review process, or cause your application to be deemed ineligible. Please refer to **Section 8.1, Table 7 in the GROW Pathway Guideline** or **Section 9.1, Table 4 SEED Pathway Guideline.**

13. The applicant did not demonstrate control over the capital asset identified in application.

Primary Applicants for both SDF Capital Stream GROW and SEED Pathways are required to provide supporting documents that demonstrate control over the capital asset identified in the application. If the Primary Applicant owns the applicable property, they are required to provide documentation that demonstrates that ownership, such as a Parcel Register. Primary Applicants who lease the applicable property must submit a long-term leasehold agreement (joint or shared) for the property with a term length that meets or exceeds the Project Term.

The legal name shown in the documents submitted must match the legal name of the Primary Applicant that intends to sign the TPA with the Province.

Note, for Primary Applicants that do not yet have a long-term lease but intend to enter a lease as part of the proposed project, they must submit an unexecuted long-term lease agreement as part of their application. Prior to execution of the Transfer Payment Agreement, an executed long-term lease will be required. Please refer to **Section 8.1, Table 7 for Application Requirements in SDF Capital GROW Pathway Guideline,** or **Section 9.1 Table 4 for Application Requirements in SDF Capital SEED Guideline.**

Project Planning & Documentation

14. Lack of detail provided in Project Plan (GROW) or Project Implementation Plan (SEED).

It is critical to provide a detailed Project Plan/Project Implementation Plan that covers all content outlined in the applicable template included in the program guidelines (see **Appendix B in the GROW Pathway Guideline** and **Appendix C in the SEED Pathway Guideline**).

Following the template ensures your Project Plan or Project Implementation Plan has all the information the Ministry will need to review your application. The standardized format helps highlight key details—such as timelines, budgets, activities, risks, and outcomes—required to assess your project against program criteria. This reduces the risk of delays or requests for additional information and strengthens your overall application.

Ensure that your plan provides sufficient details on all planned activities during all stages of the project, and includes a clear and thorough Risk Management Plan, which includes the following: identification of risks, likelihood of occurrence, and mitigation strategies.

15. Incomplete Risk Management Plan.

Make sure to submit a detailed Risk Management Plan as part of your application. Be sure to identify possible risks during both the construction phase and the 5-year Intended Use Period, explain how likely they are to happen, and describe how you plan to manage or reduce those risks. Missing this information can impact application assessment results, and cause delays during the review process, or cause the application to be deemed ineligible.

16. Design Drawings

All components of the Capital Project (and associated square footage) must be easily identifiable in the associated design drawings. The total square footage associated with the Capital Project must be consistent across all application materials (project plan, design drawings, application form, etc.).

Inconsistency will cause delays in the application assessment.

17. Cost Estimate and/or Fixed Price Quote

If submitting a cost estimate (± 20% accuracy), please ensure it is signed by a qualified Cost Consultant or Quantity Surveyor.

If submitting a fixed price quote, please ensure it is prepared by a qualified contractor and is acquired under competitive tension.

All line items must perfectly match the project budget within the application.

Organizational Capacity & Labour Market Relevance

18. Not enough detail about training experience.

Make sure to provide sufficient information about the Primary Applicant and/or their Partner’s experience delivering skills training. Be sure to include details like how many years’ experience your organization has in delivering training, how many people your organization has trained, the types of program(s) offered, any certifications or achievements, and examples of past training projects.

This information is an important part of the application process. It helps the Ministry assess the Primary Applicant’s ability to administer the proposed Skills Development Activity successfully.

19. Missing evidence that the occupations and sectors targeted by the project are in high demand.

Make sure to include the necessary data to show the occupations and sectors your project is focusing on are in high demand regionally. To support your case, include the relevant NOC (National Occupation Classification) and NAICS (North American Industry Classification System) codes, along with data or research with sources that demonstrates the need for workers in those occupations or sectors. The Ontario Labour

Market website has a relevant tool that produces indicators of future demand through a 5-year regional occupational outlook.

Providing this information is an important part of the application process. It helps the Ministry assess the impact and relevance of your project to provincial and regional economic priorities.

20. Unclear training outcomes.

Make sure to clearly explain how participants will benefit from the training that will comprise the Skills Development Activity. It is important to describe the expected outcomes, such as new skills, certifications, or job opportunities and how these outcomes will support the targeted occupation or sector. Providing this information is an important part of the application process. It helps the Ministry assess the future impact of the training that will be supported by the Capital Project.

21. No evidence of a training gap.

Provide a clear rationale explaining why the proposed Capital Project and the training it supports are needed. It is important to provide clear evidence—supported by credible sources—that there is a gap in available training options with existing infrastructure. Data such as labour market reports, community consultations, or sector-specific studies can help validate your case and ensure your project is aligned with the program's objectives. This demonstrates the need for your proposed project and demonstrates that it addresses a real and unmet demand.

22. No explanation of how KPIs were determined or how they will be achieved.

Ensure your proposed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (e.g., Training Volume, Training Capacity) are listed and explain how they were determined or how the project will successfully achieve them. It is essential to provide KPIs that are clearly defined, achievable, and directly linked to the project's outcomes. Selected projects will be required to meet their KPI obligations throughout the project's 5-year training period.

The rationale behind each KPI, KPI baselines (e.g., existing training volume), the methods for tracking progress, and the specific actions the applicant will take to meet these targets must be clearly articulated. Providing this information is an important part of the application process. It helps the Ministry assess the project's potential impact and likely success in improving the training infrastructure in the province.