



FRDC

FISHERIES RESEARCH &
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Implementation of FRDC People development program

FRDC internal report

October 2013

FRDC Project No 2007/319

Executive Summary

This project was established to manage implementation of the people development program 2008-2013. It is a project managed by the FRDC secretariat.

Background

In 2005, the FRDC board identified that current and historical stakeholder-initiated applications and FRDC-initiated activities were not adequate in terms of overall number and focus to address the people development challenges identified in the R&D Plan. In 2006, total investment in targeted people development projects was less than 5% of research and development expenditure. (FRDC 2006 Annual Report)

In response, the FRDC commissioned a review of the FRDC'S people development strategies and programs to assess whether they met current industry needs and how they could be enhanced to support future industry directions. The review found that while, the FRDC had demonstrated a longstanding commitment to investing in people development to support the fishing industry (commercial, recreational and Indigenous sectors), to date, investment had lacked a strategic focus, and had been largely limited to sponsorship of leadership development and research scholarships.

In response to the recommendations, in June 2007, the FRDC recruited a projects manager for people development, to implement and manage recommendations from the review through a focused people development program.

Objectives

1. To develop and implement a framework that maximises benefit to industry from the FRDC's investment against Challenge 4.
2. To encourage quality funding applications that address FRDC's Challenge 4 - Develop people who will help the fishing industry to meet its future needs.

Methodology

The People development program has differed from other FRDC programs in that it is internally managed, and operates a discrete budget through an annual operational plan as well as investing through normal competitive funding processes. The rationale behind this approach was to overcome market failure where FRABs and other investment advisors ranked people development applications as low priority; but at the same time consistently stated that people development was of the highest priority. Over the past five years, the Program has been guided by an advisory group and managed by an employee of FRDC. Its annual investment has been around \$2 million, or approximately 10% of RD&E expenditure.

The key steps for this FRDC managed project were:

1. Development and approval of a 5 year plan

In February 2008, the FRDC Board approved a five year Plan for the People Development Program. To ensure that the FRDC's investment is directed strategically and effectively, an Advisory Group was appointed by the FRDC to guide and support the work of the Program manager, and activities undertaken within the People Development Program.

KEY DOCUMENT: People Development Program STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-2013

2. Formation of the People Development Advisory Group (PDAG)

The Program was guided by an advisory group for the period to February 2013, and managed by an employee of FRDC. The inaugural Advisory Group Chair and members were appointed July 2007. PDAG met at least twice a year annually to plan for next financial year through development of an annual operational plan (approved by FRDC board in Feb of each year); and to evaluate applications to provide advice to the FRDC secretariat.

KEY DOCUMENT: People Development Advisory Group Terms of Reference

3. Development and approval of annual operation plans

Program investment includes: PDAG/FRDC initiated investments and Application-driven investment.

PDAG/FRDC initiated investments had budget approved by the FRDC Board through People Development Program annual operating plans. Once approved, these activities were actioned and managed internally by the FRDC People development program manager.

Other projects were generated by parties outside of the FRDC through the open-call and Tactical Research Fund application rounds. These were managed as any other project in those rounds.

KEY DOCUMENTS: People development annual operational plans 08-09, 09-10, 10-11, 11-12, 12-13

4. Quality management processes established

KEY DOCUMENTS:

PP – 05 People Development Program management procedure (superseded September 2013)

PP-07 Development Awards procedure (reviewed and superseded 4 September 2012 and then again 10 October 2013)

5. Evaluation of program

In late 2012 a review, inclusive of a stakeholder survey was undertaken by Inovact Consulting. The review looked at program outputs and outcomes; current methods of management, and considered the focus and management of its investment in people development for the next five years.

The reviewer's report recommended that the FRDC's People Development Program continue over the next five years as a distinct RD&E program with an appropriate budget that can invest in targeted activities that will significantly advance people development across the industry and/or leverage increased value from people development investments made by other FRDC programs and sub-programs.

KEY DOCUMENT: Inovact Consulting report

Results/key findings

Over the life of the 5 year plan, the program manager and People Development Advisory Group (PDAG) oversaw a wide range of people development initiatives, and annual investment as a proportion of RD&E roughly doubled.

The program's annual investment has been around \$2 million, with projects funded via competitive application rounds and FRDC-initiated activities, including professional development awards and commissioned work.

The People development program differs from other FRDC programs in that it is internally managed, and operates a discrete budget through an annual operational plan as well as investing through normal competitive funding processes. The rationale behind this approach was to overcome market failure where FRABs and other investment advisors ranked people development applications as low priority; but at the same time consistently stated that people development was of the highest priority.

An important component of the Program has been an annual round of Development Awards. Another area for investment has been to partner with other agencies and RDCs to promote awareness of primary industries and associated sciences to schools through the Primary Industries Education Foundation (PIEF) and the Primary Industries Centre for Science Education (PICSE).

The 2012 stakeholder review found that the Program has performed well to develop the people needs of the seafood industry and is well respected by its stakeholders. There is a broad awareness of the Program, with the majority of stakeholders reporting that they are satisfied with the Program. Furthermore, the Program's

people development investments are well aligned to those investment priorities reported by stakeholders. A selection of program initiatives is highlighted below.

Select activities addressing theme 11: Leadership development

- FRDC funds selected high level and industry-wide leadership development including the National seafood Industry Leadership Program (NSILP), Australian Rural Leadership Program (ARLP), annual Nuffield Farming Scholarship, Governance Scholarship for Women, Emerging Leader Governance Scholarship, Indigenous Development Scholarship, and WINSO Professional Development Scholarship. A number of industry boards have improved their governance through one-day whole of board training with the AICD.
- Sixty industry representatives have received high level training in communications, interview techniques and media relations. This training has built capability for a stronger voice for the Australian seafood industry; more confident relationship development between industry and stakeholders; and improved engagement with the general public.
- A ‘first-level’ leadership program that can be implemented at local and regional levels has been developed and piloted. (FRDC project 2009/322 ‘People Development Program: Building seafood industry representational capacity’)

Key activities addressing theme 12: Workforce development

- Research has been undertaken to assess the quality of the current data sets on employment and education and training in the Australian fishing industry. The project, undertaken by ABARES provides a set of recommendations of the key workforce data sets that need to be further developed, collected and compiled to satisfy stakeholder needs.
- FRDC is investing in schools’ programs to build awareness about the seafood industry and the range of employment opportunities available. The Primary Industries Centre for Science education, Primary Industries Education Foundation, and the Seafood Industry Partnerships in Schools are key programs.
- Together with DAFF, the FRDC established a training scheme to improve knowledge and skills in aquatic animal health management. A large number of business operators, veterinarians, pathologists, diagnosticians, researchers, educators, and other persons engaged in aspects of aquatic health management have benefited from this training.

Key activities addressing theme 13: Innovation skills

- An important component of the Program has been an annual round of Development Awards. Several of these Awards assist individuals to build networks, and acquire new skills and knowledge through international exchanges and support for visiting experts.
- The Program is encouraging innovation and renewal within industry bodies. How to invigorate industry representative bodies to build leaders, and provide them with capacity to apply those skills, is critical to the future of the seafood industry. These capabilities are being developed through project 2011/410 ‘People development program: A program to enhance membership participation, association health, innovation and leadership succession in the Australian fishing industry (Short title - Healthy Industry Associations and Succession)’
- The FRDC provides scholarships to the Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarship program. The Nuffield program provides Australian primary producers with the opportunity to study technologies and production practices throughout the world and to become part of a global network of innovative producers.

All key documents are saved to 2007/319 as final report appendices.

Keywords: People development, capacity, leadership, workforce development