

Project ID No.	CP 3 / 2 / 1 / 9
GOAL	4 SUB-PROGRAM

Effective Networking Communities of Practice

Action plans must be submitted online to www.reframingthefuture.net by COB Tuesday 20 June 2006.

Please refer to 'How to submit an action plan online' in the Reframing the Future handout or on the website.

All sections must be completed.

Please note: sections 1 – 9 of this document will be uploaded onto the Reframing the Future website. Details of participants in item 11 will be only be used in accordance with our privacy policy and will not be published on the website.

Name of organisation funded by Reframing the Future

NSW Dept of Education and Training; Community Grants Programs, Links to Learning
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3. Project overview (100 words maximum)

What outcomes do you hope to achieve in your project?

The project's main achievement is to create real entry level VET opportunities for disadvantaged, high need young people at risk through quality, fun and creative learning, partnerships and youth enterprise initiatives – *eg land care skills pathways for Aboriginal young men in Far West NSW, hospitality skills for 15-19 in SW Sydney, clothing design and manufacturing for 15-17 yo young women in NSW North Coast, traditional artefacts production in Brewarrina etc.*

Our RTF project will develop **six Regional LINKS Communities** of practice throughout NSW from the Links to Learning Community Grants Program network, consolidating preliminary RTF 2004 efforts which engaged the larger network in focussing on quality practices and the AQTF.

Regional **LINKS Communities** of practice will be established to develop members' capabilities to successfully engage and partner with VTE stakeholders to achieve national training system -related outcomes for educationally disadvantaged young at risk in high need areas of the State including Aboriginal young people in isolated rural areas.

LINKS Communities will plan and capture innovative models and creative strategies for collaborative learning pathways for young participants in Links to Learning community based projects, ie 15-24 yo early school leavers.

Each of our **LINKS Communities** will work with a regional leader (established in 2004) to implement creative strategies to address specific regional needs, interests and issues through collaborative opportunities.

Each regional **LINKS Community** will develop partnerships with “youth friendly” RTOs and other strategic local relationships to implement, evaluate and document learning pathway models that involve:

- the delivery of training package competencies
- the delivery of entry level VTE qualifications
- preparatory AQF qualifications
- the development of resources and learning strategies to support transition for young people at risk to VTE pathways.

We aim to enhance practitioner capability to achieve collaborative and sustainable outcomes when implementing the NTF for their equity target group within their local community!

4. Domain of knowledge

What aspects of the national training system will be addressed by your project?

(e.g. establishing relationships with industry clients; improving workplace assessment or delivery; implementing new Training Packages) (Please add rows as required)

The aspects of the national training system which will be addressed in our project include

- Establishing relationships with ‘youth friendly’ RTOs to enable pathways to be developed
- Delivery of training package competencies
- Delivery of entry level VTE qualifications – particularly preparatory AQF
- The development of resources and learning strategies to support transition for young people at risk through to VTE pathways
- Building partnerships with other government, industry, schools and community agencies to support training pathways for young people at risk

At the local level, the Regional Communities of Practice will strengthen evolving partnerships and build new ones with groups such as youth support agencies, local government, public and private RTOs, regional DET industry training centres, group training providers, key community leaders (eg. Aboriginal elders, community role models, youth and VTE pathway “leaders” etc), and employers.

Partnerships will be a key part of building the community and establishing the domain of knowledge associated with pathway planning and implementation in VTE (eg Arabic speaking young men exiting from school early into training and employment opportunities with Arabic butchers in Punchbowl). Specific arrangements which can serve as the basis for developing models of good practice for seamless pathways into VTE may include:

- those Links to Learning organisations currently based within an RTO can develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to deliver entry level qualifications/ relevant national units as either an integrated part of their *Links to Learning* activities or via foundation skills, knowledge and “VTE orientation activities” that lead directly to VTE pathways at the completion of their LTL program. Development of employability skills is a focus. The concept of a “continuum of learning” approach to transition pathway planning, from a focus in LTL activities underpinning skills and knowledge through to full qualifications, will be explored together with the support requirements needed for successful implementation of the national training system at the local level.
- those Links to Learning organisations who are not-for-profit community organisations can develop partnerships with an appropriate and supportive RTO. This will also require identifying the necessary preparation for entry to a learning pathway opportunity and, again, will seek to use the concept of a continuum of learning as a basis for pathway planning and establishment of partnership arrangements for implementation.

5. Facilitating your community of practice

Please describe how you propose to facilitate your group progressing through the stages of growth of a Community of Practice (see Table 4.1 in the report: *The Potential for Communities of Practice to underpin the National Training Framework*):

As this project builds on the work funded in 2004, through the original establishment of regional groups, the groups are already formed. Since 2004, DET has also provided ongoing professional development to the Regional Group leaders so that their role in driving their local group is supported.

The regional groups have already moved past the 'potential' stage and have begun operating at the 'coalescing' stage. The project will therefore build on this level of engagement as a community of practice and aim to continue to build into the 'active' stage. As issues impacting on Links to Learning projects are of a continuous nature it is intended that the regional groups continue beyond the life of this RTF funded project. The specific activities carried out under this project may lead to outcomes which reflect achievement of the proposed activities – but this will be a precursor to other activities – thus 'dispersed' and 'memorable' will remain part of the cycle of continuous building of the regional groups. In our experience of a community of practice which has an ongoing life, the stages can be cyclical and as membership changes, can also be non-linear.

It is the intention of this project to facilitate the regional groups through a particular layer of professional development which will again focus on the stages of the community of practice – although recognising that the groups themselves are at the 'active' stage with a range of activities with which they collaborate. Eg they are already working on building elearning activities and pathways for young people at risk (outside of this project) and so have a common sense of purpose and enthusiasm to explore and learn together and from each other.

For the RTF project we will need to raise the profile of other issues to gain momentum. Thus the potential stage will be around engendering enthusiasm and interest in building skills to facilitate local networks to engage and promote the VTE system for young people. This will involve discussions with each regional group leader, informal contact, and use of regular contact mechanisms such as the existing LTL web and email networks

For the coalescing stage, the facilitators will work with existing meeting structures (each Regional Group has established mechanisms to meet regularly to work on common professional development themes) to promote the ideas around leadership development- especially the skills associated with establishing and driving a local network of community, government, industry, schools stakeholders with a common interest in young people at risk. This aspect of the work of a Links to Learning coordinator, so vital in implementing the VTE system, is one which requires new skills and support.

It is proposed to conduct workshop/s with the regional group leaders to build on their existing practice and skills in working with youth at risk and to strengthen the component associated with building and managing partnerships.

The methodology (see below) will focus on building leadership skills amongst regional groups so that they can better drive and support local networks of relevant organisations to foster pathways for young people at risk.

6. Structuring your community

Please describe how you propose to support the development of the three components of your community: its domain of knowledge, community and practice (see *Effectively Structuring Communities of Practice in VET*):

Domain of Knowledge: the domain of knowledge relates to the application of VTE concepts such as pathways, AQF, entry level programs, employability skills through the building of appropriate local networks to foster the employment and training outcomes for young people at risk. Each participant will be exploring innovative ways to engage young people, how to link such activities to the fundamentals of the VTE system (eg use of Training Packages, negotiating pathways with RTOs, employability skills) – and will extend this domain of knowledge to include the ways that different organisations can participate and partner to contribute to outcomes for young people. Thus, the power of local networks is also a domain for this project

Community is about the ways that the groups themselves work together to build expertise, to share learnings and to build expertise and confidence. It is planned to conduct face to face workshops to both focus on the domain topic and also to enable the group to operate collaboratively and to share learnings. The use of web forums and ongoing contact and support by the facilitators will also enable the group to form as a community of practice. The community members include Links to Learning coordinators across NSW, engaged in their regional groups (5 regional groups in total), the leaders of each regional group and supported by agencies which are committed to the networks which build outcomes for young people.

Practice relates to the set of frameworks, tools and ideas used by the community. In this case the tools will be those associated with negotiating partnerships and pathways with RTOs, with establishing and managing local networks, with using a range of elearning strategies for the members themselves (eg online forums).

7. Anticipated outcomes (see Chapters 6-7 of *The Potential*)

Please describe the outcomes anticipated as a result of your project:

for participating individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development and consolidation of skills and understanding in areas such as developing pathways, building and managing partnerships, using Training Packages and meeting AQTF requirements • enhanced feeling of belonging to a collegial group – decreased feeling of working in isolation • increased confidence in using national training framework components in activities for disadvantaged young people • development of skills and confidence to utilise the community as a vehicle for improved practice • skills and confidence in being able to establish and drive a network of stakeholders to support their Links to Learning agency and young people
for participating organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased knowledge of all aspects of national training system • profiling successful outcomes, partnership arrangements and pathway models, including sharing resources and approaches to pathways for young people • consolidation and strengthening of peer and regional networks to support AQTF arrangements for young people • a key role in local networks aimed at improving pathways for at risk young people, eg by hosting local planning initiatives with other community organisations, schools, government and community groups

8. Evaluation

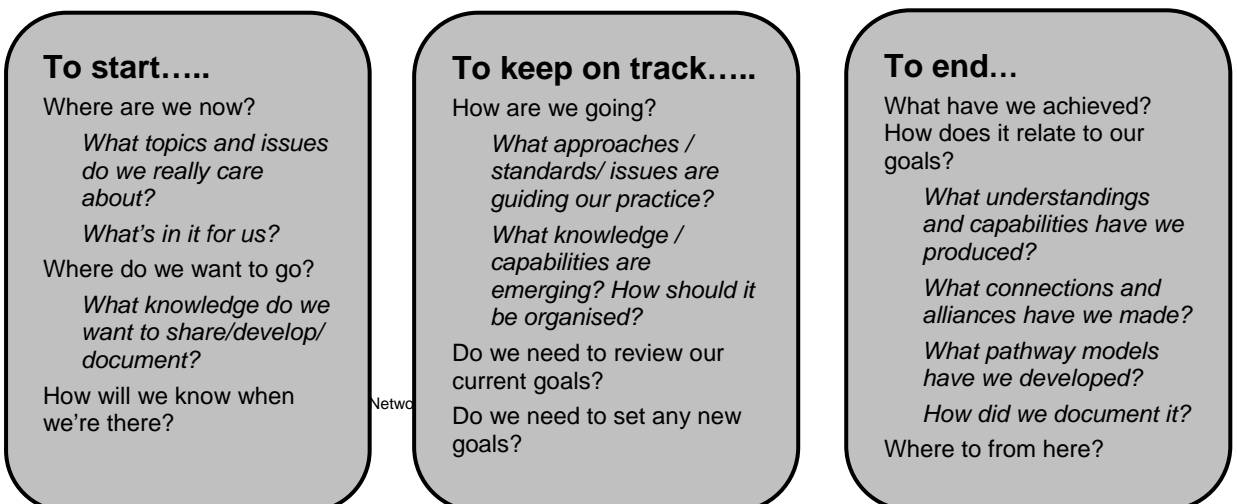
Please provide an outline of the methods you will use to evaluate the participants' learning and your project's efficiency and effectiveness.

Evaluation of the project, in particular the learning processes, will occur throughout the project as part of the knowledge building process. Opportunities will be provided at each meeting to provide feedback about the effectiveness and development of the Community of Practice.

The **regional Communities of Practice** will identify, evaluate and document aspects of good practice and "success factors" in their operation and "capture" those theoretical and practical components that are contributing to their success. Members will be encouraged to keep a journal of their experience. The evaluation at the regional levels will focus on the effectiveness of the particular roles with the Community of Practice in shaping and achieving the learning and other objectives of the community. Evaluation will also be integrated into any work-based learning activities arising.

Processes for monitoring and evaluating the project outcomes and the associated learning process be documented in the **RTF Action Plan**, and **reported on as part of the Reframing the Future reporting requirements**.

Evaluation can occur on a number of levels using the following evaluation questions and stages as a guide:



9. Project timeframe

Please list project milestones and key dates

(Please add rows as required)

Milestone	Key date
Reframing the Future meeting May 24 th – forum for projects	May 24 th
Meeting with key stakeholders who fund the Links to Learning program to establish specific requirements of Links to Learning coordinators in managing own local networks (ie senior program coordinator)	August 11 th
Meeting with Regional Group Leaders to begin process of establishing parameters of skills development – meeting or phone hook up	August 14 th
Design of workshops to enhance leadership capacity of regional group leaders and members to be able to host and conduct local network and partnership meetings	September
Conduct of 2 day workshop for participants (Sally Davis)	October 3 and 4
Ongoing support and coaching established by peers or facilitators depending on needs	October (ongoing)
Meeting 3 – evaluation of progress by participants in establishing and managing local community networks to support the work of their organisation	November 21
Final report completed -	Tuesday 5 December