

BUSINESS PLAN

2024 - 2026

Canada needs skills innovation

Transformation and change in the global economy is not slowing down. With changing patterns of migration, trade, climate, and technology, strategic leadership is required to ensure Canada's workers, employers, and economy will not fall behind.

Demand for the Future Skills Centre's investments and partnerships over the last six years clearly demonstrates the need for leadership and investment in innovation for Canada's skills development systems.

The Future Skills Centre is an essential partner to ensure Canada has the skills we need in the labour force to bolster our competitive edge and to deliver prosperity for all people in Canada.

Who we are

The **Future Skills Centre** accelerates innovation in skills development in the face of a rapidly changing economy.

We support Canada's workers, employers and economy by generating insights, solutions and systems change that will allow our labour market to adapt and thrive into the future.

The Future Skills Centre leads and coordinates the expert efforts of a consortium of partners, including:



**The Conference
Board of Canada**

Blueprint

The Future Skills Centre is funded by the Government of Canada's Future Skills Program

Canada 

What we do

We provide policymakers, employers and practitioners with insights on what works, and what doesn't, when it comes to future-proofing the Canadian labour market to inform policy, practice, and career pathways.

- ✓ We're testing the next big ideas
- ✓ We're partnering for maximum impact
- ✓ We're scaling up the best solutions
- ✓ We're driven by evidence
- ✓ We're sharing what works



How we work



As Canada's skills innovation hub, we help **transform Canada's skills development ecosystem through solutions, insights and systems change.**

Solutions

We work with a diverse portfolio of partners to test and evaluate the impact of innovative practices, training models, tools, and approaches — in real-time and across regions and sectors — to address emerging labour force challenges.

Insights

We convene, curate and consolidate the best thinking from across the country and globally to understand the future of work and its implications for innovation in skills development.

Systems Change

We work across boundaries with experts and policy leaders from every jurisdiction to share, implement and scale innovations, actively collaborate with education and skills providers, and partner with employers and labour to navigate change in the most critical sectors for renewal and growth in Canada's economy.

What we've accomplished

Solutions

400
innovation
projects

3,102
partners

32%
of portfolio is
employer-led

Insights

870
research
products

46
new tools & digital
platforms

370+
events &
presentations

Systems Change

78%
of pilots seeing
ecosystem
impact

20%
of portfolio is
scaling / expanding

9
regional
partnerships
underway

\$309M invested in
skills innovation
pilots & projects

\$122M in-kind
funds committed
by projects

1.14 million
participants in
FSC programs

105,000+
people in Canada provided
with training &
employment opportunities

71%

of projects focused on
underrepresented groups

5+ million

audience reach of our
projects & insights

Our Strategy

Our strategic objectives

We know what we're doing and why. Since day one, we have been focused on creating...

RESPONSIVE CAREER PATHWAYS

Many Canadians only receive career support when they are in school or graduate from post-secondary education, or when they lose their job.

We enable the testing, prototyping, and evaluation of new ways to provide high-quality career advice and education and skills training throughout the lifecycle.

SO THAT...Canadians have access to high quality career advice and skills development throughout their working lives that is responsive to their needs, enables them to navigate change, and sets them on a meaningful career path.

AGILE LABOUR MARKET RESPONSES

Industries and the economy are changing constantly.

We collaborate with employers and sectors to test, prototype, and evaluate new ways to proactively anticipate labour market change and equip workers with necessary skills.

SO THAT...Employers and sectors embrace skills development as central to their business strategy and have access to workers with the skills they need.

EASY TO ACCESS, PRACTICAL LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

To develop effective solutions to pressing skills challenges, governments and practitioners need to know what's happening in the market.

We work with labour market information experts to identify the right data, tools, and resources to inform evidence-based policy and programmatic responses.

SO THAT...Policy makers, employers, and practitioners use dynamic labour market and skills information to guide decision making and service delivery.

"WHAT WORKS" REPLICATION

Building strong and resilient skills development systems in Canada must be a team effort.

We build networks around our "what works" solutions, building capacity, policies, and impact through shared and scaled best practices.

SO THAT...Viable new ideas to improve Canada's skills development systems are expanded to benefit more people, more sectors, and more geographies.

Our focus areas

We focus our strategic objectives on five key areas we've identified as holding the greatest potential for impact on innovation in skills development in Canada and where the Future Skills Centre can bring added value because of the momentum we have already built.

1.

PATHWAYS TO JOBS

Supporting individuals entering, transitioning, and advancing in the labour market.

2.

TECH AND AUTOMATION

Preparing workers and employers for a more digital and connected world of work.

3.

SME ADAPTABILITY

Engaging Canadian employers, especially SMEs, in meaningful skills development.

4.

INCLUSIVE ECONOMY

Driving labour market inclusion for underrepresented groups with an emphasis on Black Youth, Newcomers, and Indigenous & Northern Communities.

5.

SUSTAINABLE JOBS

Advancing skills development and transition planning for a decarbonized economy.

We will also monitor other emerging issues and engage where we can clearly add value.

Our supporting infrastructure

As a hub for innovation, we aim to drive a forward-looking culture in Canada's skills development systems and maximize the impact of our efforts through investments in lasting infrastructure.

1. INSIGHTS HUB

Generating policy- and practice-relevant insights from our research and investments and promoting them among partners in skills development and employment systems.

2. REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Supporting skills development innovation and collaboration to address local and regional labour market challenges and opportunities.

3. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Supporting projects and partners to deliver results, as well as learning and insights relevant to skills development practitioners, employers, and policy makers.

Our strategy at a glance

Strategic Objectives

**RESPONSIVE
CAREER
PATHWAYS**

**AGILE LABOUR
MARKET
RESPONSES**

**EASY TO ACCESS,
PRACTICAL
LABOUR MARKET
INFORMATION**

**“WHAT WORKS”
REPLICATION**

Focus Areas

Pathways to Jobs

Supporting individuals entering, transitioning, and advancing in the labour market.

Tech and Automation

Preparing workers and employers for a more digital and connected world of work.

SME Adaptability

Engaging Canadian employers, especially SMEs, in meaningful skills development.

Inclusive Economy

Driving labour market inclusion for underrepresented groups with an emphasis on Black Youth, Newcomers, and Indigenous & Northern Communities.

Sustainable Jobs

Advancing skills development and transition planning for a decarbonized economy.

Supporting Infrastructure

Insights Hub

Generating policy- and practice-relevant insights from our research and investments and promoting them among partners in skills development and employment systems.

Regional Partnerships

Supporting skills development innovation and collaboration to address local and regional labour market challenges and opportunities.

Technical Assistance

Supporting projects and partners to deliver results, as well as learning and insights relevant to skills development practitioners, employers, and policy makers.

Our theory of change

Strategic Objectives	Short-term Outcomes	Medium-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
	Solutions are funded...	Learnings & insights are applied...	SO THAT...
RESPONSIVE CAREER PATHWAYS	More investment is made, across all sectors, into approaches to developing responsive career pathways based on what works, for whom and in what context (conditions/ factors, process/ models).	More skills development and education practitioners have improved capacity to provide evidence-based career path-focused career/ training advice and education/ skills training.	People in Canada have access to high quality career advice and skills development throughout their working lives that is responsive to their needs, enables them to navigate change, and sets them on a meaningful career path.
AGILE LABOUR MARKET RESPONSES	New and better ways for employers to anticipate future skills needs, priorities, and barriers are developed.	Evidence-based approaches to skills development meet the long-term needs of employers, and employers plan for and invest/ engage in training and skills development.	Employers and sectors embrace skills development as central to their business strategy and have access to workers with the skills they need.
EASY TO ACCESS, PRACTICAL LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION	Private and public data sources are clearly identified and integrated in system-wide applications, with validation from multiple levels of government.	New sources of timely and predictive labour market and skills information are widely accessible and used by policymakers, employers, and practitioners.	Policy makers, employers, and practitioners use dynamic labour market and skills information to guide decision making and service delivery.
“WHAT WORKS” REPLICATION	Policymakers, practitioners and other actors systematically collaborate and share learning about what does and doesn’t work, supported by a culture of innovation in skills development.	Widespread agreement on, and consistent application of, effective approaches to agile and responsive skills development is achieved.	Viable new ideas to improve Canada’s skills development systems are expanded to benefit more people, more sectors, and more geographies.

The impact we want to see

Our investments and partnerships lead to impacts for people, employers, and skills development systems.

People receive effective career and skills development advice, tools, and other supports throughout their working lives to help them navigate and succeed in a constantly changing world of work, with a focus on people who are vulnerable or underrepresented in the labour market.

Employers, especially SMEs, embed skills development into workplaces, break down silos between training bodies and employers, and make sure employers find workers with the skills they need into the future.

Skills development systems are improved by dynamic labour market and skills information, by scaling programs, models, and approaches that work better for more people in more sectors and places, and by identifying ways (e.g., policies) to incentivize change among workers, employers, practitioners, and policymakers.

What we've learned

Since our inception in 2019, we have learned a lot about the conditions for success, enabling us to refine our approach and increase our impact.

1.

Start with the right questions.

Before jumping into solution-finding, we've learned to dedicate time and resources to identifying the true pressure points that will shape the success of Canada's labour market.

2.

Focus our efforts.

Having built a large portfolio of pilots, we've had to find a balance between a broad approach on every issue versus zeroing in on key trends where the Future Skills Centre can uniquely add value.

3.

Invest in what works.

Not everything works, or is appropriate to scale. While we will continue to invest in experimentation as part of our mandate, being clearer about identifying approaches that are showing the greatest promise and making choices about what we will invest in is necessary to address critical priorities where we can make the most impact for Canadian workers, employers, and the economy.

Looking forward

Over the course of 2024-2026, we will apply our learning to sharpen our focus, increase our impact, and generate relevant insights to inform policy and practice.

Focus. We will continue to hone our ability to target investments to where they are most needed by aligning our work with five Focus Areas critical for Canada's future prosperity.

Impact. We are ready to implement with momentum, re-investing in partners who are ready and able to take the next big step in scaling up their successful initiatives towards greater impact and self-sustainability, and providing insights on our Focus Areas for policy makers and practitioners. At the same time, we will develop new partnerships that ensure our ability to have impact in the future.

Relevant Insight. We will continue to intensify our approach to knowledge mobilization to ensure that our current work and our partnerships are proactively informed by the future-focused needs of policy makers, employers, practitioners, and ultimately all Canadians.



**Future
Skills
Centre**

**Centre des
Compétences
futures**

Delivering Impact Through Focus Areas

How the focus areas shape our work

We centre our work on five Focus Areas representing important and pressing skills and labour market development challenges in Canada, which we believe are key to Canada's future prosperity.

We conducted an extensive evidence review of available research and our own portfolio of projects to identify key challenges and questions under each Focus Area to shape our investments, knowledge mobilization and insights work, and the partnerships we support.

Explore the focus areas



Pathways to Jobs

Supporting individuals entering, transitioning, and advancing in the labour market.

Technology and net-zero transitions means increased labour market volatility and more job displacement. Now, more than ever, workers need the right supports to navigate career pathways and transition between jobs and sectors as smoothly as possible.

Our Investments & Portfolio

\$141M invested

105 projects

**165 reports /
publications**

1,212 partners

Partner Spotlight



Working across regions to grow the pipeline of workers into trades and apprenticeship

Tech and Automation

Preparing workers and employers for a more digital and connected world of work.

Technological change, including AI, are creating uncertainty in jobs, their skills composition & the impact on sectors and regions. Workers with the right skills are needed to facilitate the integration of technology and building those skills among workers quickly and flexibly is critical to keeping pace with change.

Our Investments & Portfolio

\$45M invested

66 projects

**93 reports /
publications**

839 partners

Partner Spotlight



Accelerating the adoption of AI in healthcare, shifting mindsets, skill sets, and toolsets.

SME Adaptability

Engaging Canadian employers, especially SMEs, in meaningful skills development.

SMEs make up a large part of the Canadian economy but tend to have lower productivity levels, be slower adopters of technology and to underinvest in training. Solutions that meet SMEs' short-term skills needs and that lower time and cost barriers are needed to have the best chance of driving greater investment in reskilling, upskilling and employee development.

Our Investments & Portfolio

\$14M invested

16 projects

**21 reports /
publications**

188 partners

Partner Spotlight



Scaling pay-for-performance to incentivize SME investment in training

Inclusive Economy

Driving labour market inclusion for underrepresented groups with an emphasis on Black Youth, Newcomers, and Indigenous & Northern Communities.

Diversifying workforces continues to be a nearly universal strategy across sectors and industries to address labour and skill shortages. More effective skills-based approaches to labour market inclusion are needed for groups who are under-represented in key sectors.

Our Investments & Portfolio

\$58M invested

94 projects

**119 reports /
publications**

830 partners

Partner Spotlight

IMMIGRANT
EMPLOYMENT
COUNCIL OF BC **IEC_{BC}**



Increasing employment readiness of newcomers in skilled trades; accounting and finance, biotech and life sciences; IT and data services; culinary arts; and senior's care.

Sustainable Jobs

Advancing skills development and transition planning for a decarbonized economy.

Impacts of the net-zero transition will vary region to region, driving economic growth and job opportunities in some and unemployment, loss of income, and out-migration in others. Place- and sector-based approaches are needed that coordinate workforce development strategies across a range of actors.

Our Investments & Portfolio

\$18M invested

23 projects

**35 reports /
publications**

268 partners

Partner Spotlight



Testing a layoff- aversion model in the automotive sector to support employers and workers before layoffs occur.



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