MUKA TANGATA
People, Food and Fibre
Workforce Development Council

Workforce Planning: A guide for Ahuwhenua Trusts and Māori Agribusinesses

What is a workforce development plan?

A workforce development plan is a document that aligns future business and social goals with steps to achieve them through developing kaimahi.

Goal setting or strategic planning can generate statements like "We will have 20+ employees working across the value chain", but lack the planning required to **identify**, **recruit**, and **develop** each of those individuals.

A workforce development plan can support this growth and help businesses establish pathways towards their goal state.

Why do you need a plan?

There is a significant shortage of skilled labour in food and fibre industries, with many operations struggling to find appropriately trained workers to fill their vacancies and enable growth.

This is especially true for trusts or businesses whose goal is to preferentially employ whānau members or owners/beneficiaries of the trust.

It is not easy to find and recruit individuals who have the skillsets, knowledge, and attributes that a business needs, especially with short notice or under urgency. In these cases, there is risk of loss of productivity when key team members leave the business.

A workforce development plan helps to reduce this risk by identifying future needs and investing in training and development early. This ensures a pathway towards a strong workforce and allows the business to exert control of their future, rather than be subject to the labour market demands.

How do you do it?

There is no set way to develop a workforce development plan, but the following steps form an approach that may be useful to you.

1. Get all of your information together

As best you can, find and lay out all the information you hold about your trust. This could include:

- The tikanga and values of the business
- Current asset size and value
- Financial status
- Shareholders and beneficiaries
- Current number of workers, broken down by full/part time, casual/permanent contracts, owner/beneficiary status
- Sources of labour - How do you currently find workers? How effective is this?
- How does your in-house training happen? Do you have a formal development process inside the business?
- Current training partners and sources of additional funding or support (e.g. Provincial Growth Fund, Jobs for Nature)
- Trends and projections;
  - of your own performance and the wider industry or industries you are engaged in
  - workforce and training patterns, number of workers and levels of qualification (our Regional Economic Workforce Explorer can help with this: Regional Economic Workforce Explorer) .
- A picture of the wider geographic context:
  - What is economic state or mood in the community?
  - Who are the local schools and training providers?
  - What resources or infrastructure are available? e.g. housing and public transport.

This information forms a picture of your starting point or baseline. It will help you understand what the business already has and where its vulnerabilities may lie.

2. Identify your strengths and weaknesses

Assess your asset and the industries you are currently invested in. Are there opportunities or advantages that can be leveraged?

Consider the areas where you have good, skilled people as well as where are you vulnerable, needing additional skills or personnel.

Consider the succession needs of the business and ask which leadership and governance positions will need coverage in future. How will candidates for these be identified and developed?

3. Formulate your goals

What do you want your business or asset to look like in 15 years?

- What industries or income streams will you be invested in?
- How will the asset grow in size or value?
- How many employees will you have?
- What will the structure(s) look like?
- How will this support social investment kaupapa?
- How do these goals align with the trust's wider strategy?
- How do these goals uphold the trust's tikanga and values?
- What cultural aspirations are included in these goals?

4. Map backwards from the end point

Plot short, medium, and long-term milestones that lead towards your end goal. These can be for any time period you want, but could be two years, five years, and ten years as an example.

Consider reasonable growth to be achieved in these intervals, and what needs to be put in place to meet each milestone.

> *For example, if 10 people are to be employed in the next five years, what skills, knowledge and experience do they need to have by then, how long will it take to develop these? When should this development begin?* ***How will you identify****,* ***recruit, develop,*** *and* ***retain*** *them?*

Immediate action may be required to identify and recruit individuals **now,** for them to be adequately prepared for the future milestones.

5. Identify sources of support

Look for groups or agencies that can provide support to achieving your plan. This could include:

- Contacting local training providers to provide both training and a pathway for their students to enter your business(es) as kaimahi.
- Approaching your local secondary schools to offer work experience placements and/or your business as a location for field trips.
- Investigating funding programmes or support from groups such as Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs.
- Looking for other trusts or businesses in your region who could join in a partnership or collective for mutual support and use of resources.

6. Identify and plan for risks

Use available information and historical trends to consider risks to your business and its plans. These could include climate or environmental changes, legislative or regulatory shifts, market disruptions or emerging technologies.

Review these risk plans regularly to ensure their currency and adjust as required.

7. Set action points and assign responsibility

Clearly define what each step of your plan entails, who is responsible for these actions, and when each step needs to be completed.

Require updates from responsible people to check progress and allocate support if required.

8. Monitor and adjust

As you action your workforce development plan, you should continue to track progress and review your information. You may need to adjustment it due to unexpected changes in regional, national, or global contexts.

Don’t be afraid to change the plan to account for these changes if necessary.

Who can help us write our plan?

We’ve developed several data-driven tools that will support your planning.

- Our Ahuwhenua workforce planning tool provides tailored guidance and offers targeted insights into industry trends, workforce needs, and economic contributions at a regional level.
- Our Skills Forecasting tool can help to predict future workforce needs. You can view the tool here: Skills Forecasting » Muka Tangata Workforce Development Council
- Our Regional Economic Workforce Explorer tool provides a view of key economic and workforce trends in Aotearoa, tailored to both specific food and fibre industries and regions. You can view the tool here: Regional Economic Workforce Explorer » Muka Tangata Workforce Development Council