



The Textiles, Clothing & Footwear Industry Advisor

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SIP Policy Review Now Being Undertaken

When the TCF Strategic Investment Program (SIP) was first legislated back in 1999, one of the key undertakings of the Government was to implement an annual review of the Scheme, to ensure that its roll-out over the five years to 2005 remained consistent with original Government policy. The idea was for grants to be made under the Scheme 'to encourage the TCFL sector to become more sustainable and competitive during the transition to a free trade environment post-2005'.

Well, it has taken a couple of years, but the TCF Policy Unit of the re-badged Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources is now undertaking the promised review. As usual with reviews of this nature, time is short and firms need to have submissions lodged with the Department by 2 April. Also, there is to be a round of industry consultations over the first few weeks of March, so if you would like to be included in that list, please give me a call on (02) 9310 2900 as quickly as you can.

TCF Services is also preparing a substantive submission in regard to the calling of the SIP Scheme review, so if you have any suggestions or points you consider to be relevant, email them to me at gerry@tcfservices.com.au.

Gerry Frittmann
Managing Director
TCF Services Pty Ltd

Reviewing TCF-SIP Scheme Policy

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (DITR) has set up a small Canberra-based team to undertake an internal review of progress to date of the SIP Scheme. DITR says the internal review is designed to meet the needs of good program management, however, Departmental officers are also aware of a number of complaints across industry about how the legislation is structured, and the way in which it has been subsequently implemented.

Questions relating to the efficiency with which the SIP Scheme has been delivered to date - as well as other administrative matters - however, have been ruled outside the scope of the current review, and therefore, will not be investigated at this stage. This is a pity, as efficient administration of any Government assistance scheme usually has a lot to do with its overall success, and therefore, helps to answer the question of how adequately it is meeting industry development needs.

Outside of appeals to AusIndustry, or letters to the responsible Minister or your local member, any form of review of an industry assistance scheme is useful from the point of view of providing an opportunity for industry or individual firm input on issues of concern. For the purposes of the SIP Scheme internal review, DITR has said the review will focus on:

- the effectiveness of the SIP Scheme in achieving the program's objectives; and
- the appropriateness of the policy in meeting the development needs of the TCFL sector.

DITR says it is keen to gain the views of industry associations, companies, consultants and other interested stakeholders on policy aspects of the TCF (SIP) Scheme, although it acknowledges the time-frame for such consultations is short. Face to face meetings will necessarily have to run over the first few weeks of March so that the team has time to thoroughly investigate the major themes that emerge during these discussions. Comments are being sought from companies of differing size, activity and experience with the SIP Scheme, in order to provide the team with opportunity to hear a diversity of views.

Progressing the SIP Review

DITR is expecting the review to produce sufficient information to show how industry has used the SIP Scheme to date, what changes are happening within firms and the sector, and the extent to which industry has responded to the initiative. To achieve this, it is instigating a series of industry consultations over the first few weeks of March, as well as calling for written submissions to be lodged by 2 April 2002.

Following this, the Department will move into a series of internal discussions, designed to produce a substantive report assessing the degree to which the policy purposes of the Scheme have been met, and whether any policy refinements might be warranted. The report will then go to a Departmental steering committee for additional consultation by the end of June 2002.

Recommendations for any changes to the SIP Scheme will then be run past DITR Minister Macfarlane, so that any amendments to the Scheme (most likely to apply from 2002/03), can be put into Parliament once sittings resume on 19 August. Theoretically, and given the timetable set down by DITR, a public announcement would be made sometime in July on prospective changes to the Scheme - and hopefully - well before the actual legislative amendments were introduced into the House of Representatives for consideration.

Contacting DITR's SIP Review Team

TCF Services clients wishing to obtain further details on the TCF (SIP) Scheme Review, directly, should contact any of following DITR review team members:

Bob Fairley	02 6213 7481
Lisa McPherson	02 6213 6532
Joy Mettam	02 6213 7544

Written submissions due by 2 April

Submissions should be sent by post or e-mail by 2 April 2002 to:

TCF (SIP) Scheme Review Team
TCF Policy Unit
MEC Division
Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources
GPO Box 9839
CANBERRA ACT 2601
joy.mettam@industry.gov.au

TCF Services response to the SIP Review

As noted, TCF Services are also participating substantively in the review, both through direct consultations with the internal review team, as well as via the preparation of a written submission, and subsequent contact with both the Department and the Minister. If you would like to provide material to TCF Services to help with the preparation of this submission, please advise your client manager of your interest. Teams from TCF Services will also be scheduling visits to clients in both Sydney and Melbourne over the next few weeks.

The Textiles, Clothing & Footwear Industry Advisor (C) 2002 [Co-Operative Ventures (Australia) Pty Ltd] brings you the latest facts, analysis and contacts regarding Australia's TCF industries and related Government support programs.

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