

# Activity brief (December 2014)

## Infrastructure Skills for Development (IS4D) Program January – November 2015

**Background:** At up to \$50 billion per year, Africa's annual infrastructure financing gap is cutting gross domestic product growth by about 2.2 per cent. The *Africa Mining Vision* articulates the importance of harnessing the continent's natural resource endowment as a means of accelerating economic growth, and it emphasises the critical role of infrastructure.

Recognising the infrastructure deficit, African Heads of State approved an ambitious continent-wide Programme for Infrastructure Development for Africa (PIDA) in 2012, together with a Priority Action Plan to develop the key trade, transport, information and communications technology, power and water corridors with potential to integrate the continent. The NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency has oversight over PIDA.

Australia's aid program in Africa includes a focus on the extractives sector, to encourage the development of mineral wealth in a manner that favours good governance and inclusive economic opportunity.

**Objective:** The IS4D Program aims to support public sector project managers and other individuals who are collectively responsible for the delivery of priority infrastructure projects in Africa, to further develop their capacity in complex project management.

**Activity description:** Lack of finance is only one cause of public infrastructure deficits in Africa. A more serious problem is the lack of public sector experience with complex regional projects requiring cross-border collaboration and institutional solutions.

In response to this challenge, the Australian Government has launched the IS4D Program to build public-sector capacity to plan and oversee the delivery of priority PIDA infrastructure projects. The Australian

Government is partnering with NEPAD to deliver the IS4D Program over nine months.

The program will be implemented through a combination of academic course material, delivered via distance learning, together with practical learning provided by private sector partners. For the academic portion, participants will stay in their own jobs and apply the learning to problem solving in their own work-based project.

**Sector:** Extractives

**Where will the program operate and who will participate?** The IS4D Program has selected three corridors where there are good prospects to accelerate momentum of key PIDA infrastructure projects, and to make a substantial impact on participating agencies and their personnel. These include the North-South power transmission corridor connecting East and Southern Africa, the Northern Multi-Modal transport corridor connecting East and Central Africa and the Beira-Nacala Rail Corridor.

Eighteen agencies in seven countries nominated participants from which 38 public sector professionals were selected for the incoming class. Implementation began with an offsite workshop in February 2015, and much of the program will be delivered while participants remain on the job in their home agencies.

**Expected outcomes:** The program will be delivered through a comprehensive package, including:

- delivery of an accredited Australian curriculum through distance learning designed to teach on-the-job project management skills to participants;
- access to highly experienced mentors;
- establishment of a peer network – and the facilitation of regular peer-to-peer discussions; and
- customised specialist training to enrich participant learning, where appropriate – for example, via exposure to negotiation skills, structuring of public-private partnerships, community consultation and impact assessment.

**Date approved:** 28/03/2014

**Implementation partner:** NEPAD

**Total cost:** AUD 2 500 000



For more information, please visit the Australia-Africa Partnerships Facility (AAPF) website: [www.aa-partnerships.org](http://www.aa-partnerships.org)  
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