Annex 1 ‘I-WORK Partnerships’

Background

I-WORK (Improving Work Opportunities – Relaying Knowledge) is a project that addresses the ‘fairer future’ theme of the Commonwealth Summit with emphasis on promoting the interests of the 60% of the Commonwealth’s population who are under 25. The objective of the project is to improve the employment prospects of young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, by piloting and introducing new approaches to employer led skills development.

By promoting good practice, partnerships and mutual learning between Commonwealth member states at a policy and delivery level British Council is driving forward improved opportunities for youth whilst raising the knowledge and understanding of the Commonwealth and strengthening relationships with the UK. The project will work in five countries, Ghana, India, Malaysia, South Africa and UK, but will disseminate the lessons and practice innovation across the Commonwealth.

The objective is to contribute to positive systemic and institutional change and develop partnerships between employers and training providers which are sustained over the long-run without further support. The planned interventions, with a focus on disadvantaged young people, supporting employment outcomes and economic development, will align with the National Security Council Strategy and supports the UK’s global influence and engagement, building stability, and economic security and opportunity.

The I-Work Project will run during 2019 and will directly support ‘A Fairer Future’ vision and strategy for the Commonwealth Summit over, 2018–2020 period, during which the UK is Chair of the Commonwealth. The project is also fully aligned to the Sustainable Development Goal 16, which all Commonwealth Member States have committed to.

Opportunities for UK based FE Colleges / Training Organisations etc

British Council is now inviting applications from UK based FE Colleges and Training Organisations* (with experience of Education Employer engagement and work-based learning) to act as ‘Lead Partner’ in collaborative clusters working with peer TVET providers from Ghana, India, Malaysia and South Africa. Further details are set out below.

Grants of £50,000 will be available for each of six clusters (£40,000 operational costs and £10,000 for overheads for the UK Lead).

Who should apply?

FE Colleges and Training Organisations based in the UK are eligible to apply for the role of ‘Lead Partner.’ The opportunities are suited to those in the UK Skills sector interested in building their capacity to engage in international opportunities that involve delivering contracts focussing on system level change; capacity building etc. Applicants will have direct experience in their institutions of engaging with employers and employer bodies to create better employability outcomes for cohorts of their learners / students.

*For the purposes of the I-Work Project British Council defines ‘Further Education Colleges’ and ‘Training Organisations / Providers’ as bodies registered and based in the United Kingdom, whom deliver technical and vocational education (including apprenticeships); are in receipt of public funding; and are subject to regulation and inspection by the appropriate government recognised authority depending on location in UK.
If you are planning on applying please make sure to directly answer the questions in the I-Work application form.

**What support will British Council provide?**

During the application process two information webinars (second repeat of first) will be provided to assist you.

After the selection process, each of the six international Clusters will be lead by a UK FE College / Training Organisation. The British Council Skills team will be on hand, and we will appoint an external mentor based in the UK to support you. British Council’s team will also carry out an onsite visit at the half way point to discuss progress and review finances.

**What will the I-Work Project involve?**

I-Work is a collaborative project that will create enhanced opportunities for young people in the Commonwealth, by building capacity in TVET leaders and practitioners. Knowledge and innovation will be shared between TVET leaders and practitioners in five countries, bringing them together face to face in six clusters. Each cluster will have representatives of Ghana, Malaysia, India, South Africa and UK. Grouping in clusters will enable leaders and practitioners to focus on two of the overall themes of the FCO Inclusion Fund:

- Creating guidance and piloting activity to develop ‘Skills training centres’ in each country that will act as focal point hubs in existing provision e.g. TVET College / Polytechnic etc that champions responsive and inclusive skills provision in local contexts

- Influencing policy and practice at national and regional levels through developing frameworks and piloting projects that innovate in employer-led education

**Who will take part in cluster activity?**

Each of the six clusters will have two collaborative working groups.

- A Leadership Group – this will consist of a TVET leader e.g. College Principal (or Senior Management Team member) from each country

- A Practitioner Group – this will consist of two TVET institution staff from each country (in the UK this could for example be one person with upper to middle management responsibility for employer partnerships / work-based learning and one for internationalisation)
All cluster group members will participate in a summative policy dialogue event where learning is shared amongst fellow clusters in their home countries.

What themes will cluster’s focus on?

3 of the clusters will focus on ensuring employer-led education impacts young people’s learning and leads to outcomes that enhance employability.

3 of the clusters will focus on ensuring that at a local and regional level the right mechanisms are in place to enable employer led education to happen.

The themes are set out below:

- **5x TVET leaders meet**
  - Develop responsive framework
  - Provide strategic leadership back in-country

- **10 x TVET practitioners meet**
  - Interpret framework to devise solution focussed pilots
  - Deliver pilots back in-country

- **Each country host national workshops involving the 6 clusters**
  - Dissemination of how strategic working has informed change at system level
  - Dissemination of best practice and learning at institution and individual level
An individual cluster will undertake the following journey. The UK Lead will drive forward and co-ordinate this process

December 2018 – February 2019

**STEP 1:** British Council recruits and contracts TVET Colleges from 5 countries to form 6 clusters

February 2019

**STEP 2:** The UK Lead will invite participating TVET Colleges to travel to attend two global meetings. In advance of travelling the UK Lead will survey their cluster to identify where employer-led education sits as a priority in each of the respective countries. The UK Lead will liaise with Cluster countries to determine the locations of each of the two meetings

March – June 2019

**STEP 3:** The UK Lead will set up and organise for the five TVET leaders to meet face to face in one selected country for a 2-3 day workshop. Together they will develop a strategic framework that responds to their selected theme and will contribute to the delivery of I-WORK’s two main objectives set out above. They will also consider how impact will be monitored and evaluated. They will take their thinking back to their home country and impart it to the two practitioners offering guidance and strategic advice
April – July 2019

**STEP 4:** Four to six weeks later the UK Lead will set up and organise for the ten TVET practitioners (2 per country) to meet for a 2-3 day workshop in a different selected country. They will consider the strategic framework and how they can develop innovative projects, and how they will gather data that will inform monitoring and evaluation through reflective practice. They will take this back to the TVET leader for sign off.

March- December 2019

**STEP 5:** The UK Lead will ensure TVET leaders and practitioners will have access to an online platform (e.g. Google Docs; Dropbox etc) that allows them to share information and exchange ideas and learning, specific to their cluster, and allow cross-fertilisation with other clusters.

June-October 2019

**STEP 6:** During the 12 months the two practitioners, in each of the five countries, will work to deliver pilot projects, with the support of their TVET leader. Gathering key lessons learnt will be crucial to ensuring that successes and challenges are addressed in the thematic areas.

November – December 2019

**STEP 7:** Upon completion of the projects, each country will bring the representatives of 6 clusters (leaders and practitioners) to disseminate and share learning through a policy dialogue. Employers, employer bodies, governments and other stakeholders will be invited.