International Skills Partnerships Foundation Project Proposal Guidance

These guidelines should be used when completing proposal forms for Foundation Partnership Projects. They provide detailed guidance on completing each section of the proposal form.

Before using these guidelines please read the International Skills Partnerships General Guidelines. These include important information that will help you understand how British Council International Skills Partnerships work and what makes a good partnership. This information will help ensure that your proposal is as strong as possible.

Compulsory Activities
In order to ensure the successful completion of International Skills Partnerships ALL partnership projects are required to complete the following:

- Attendance at Bringing the Learning Home
- Interim and final report
- Virtual project platform
- Dissemination event
- Partnership activity included on both partners websites.

Completing this form

What are International Skills Partnerships about?
British Council International Skills Partnerships have mutual benefit at their heart and this should be reflected from the outset of the partnership journey. It is of paramount importance therefore in designing your partnership project proposal that all organisations in the proposed partnership project contribute to the proposal and approve its contents prior to submission. In particular, the lead partner organisation from each country should work together closely on completing the proposal form.

In designing your proposal, please note that British Council International Skills Partnerships are essentially about impact – on individuals, on organisations (those directly involved in delivering the partnership project and organisations more broadly) and ultimately on a national level (through sharing the learning from the project with policy makers and helping to inform their approach to national skills strategies). Project proposals that include an external focus (i.e. beyond simply the consortium itself) and convincingly demonstrate the potential to deliver significant impact both in the UK and overseas will be much more likely to be approved than those where impact is limited, affecting only the organisations involved.

At the same time, in quantifying targets a proposal that has credible but more modest targets will be considered more favourably than one which promises to have major impact without convincingly setting out how this will be achieved; it is better to convincingly demonstrate how you will involve 10 specific employers than claim the project will engage 20 employers without providing a credible plan to support this.
the end of your project we may ask you to evidence any direct engagement with stakeholders.

International Skills Partnerships are also about innovation and developing new approaches to skills and your proposal should contain something new. This could be the development of a new curriculum but if your proposal includes a focus on an effective approach to skills development that is new in some relevant way, then the proposal will be significantly enhanced as a result.

Your proposed project should cover a period of 12 months.

Partnerships will be expected to co-operate in an annual monitoring survey beyond the lifespan of funding in order to monitor the long-term impact and sustainability of British Council funded projects.

1. Organisation details

This section asks for details about the partners in the project, the ones with the primary responsibility for delivering the project and its activities and deliverables.

British Council places a strong emphasis on consortium approaches in its International Skills Partnership work. This helps ensure the development of joined-up partnerships that can deliver maximum impact.

What type of organisations can be part of the project?
While partnerships are often led by training providers, they should also include additional organisations. In particular, partnership project proposals that include the relevant UK sector skills organisation and relevant employers will be significantly strengthened. Awarding bodies, skills agencies, NGOs, universities and government ministries are examples of other organisations that might be included in the consortium to add value to the partnership’s work.

All partners listed in this section must have given their explicit written approval to be included in the proposal and approved the project proposal and their role in it.

Who is the lead partner?
The UK lead partner will normally be the same organisation that applied successfully for a travel grant related to this opportunity. The lead overseas partner will be one of those identified as a candidate overseas partner as per previous communication from British Council.

2. Travel weeks

Forging connections between different British Council International Skills Partnerships, particularly those working in the same countries, themes and sectors, is important to building the capacity of partnerships and their ability to maximise the impact of their project work. Wherever possible, British Council facilitates networking opportunities for partnerships to enable them to share learning, knowledge and experience and
identify mutually beneficial opportunities, including opportunities to directly collaborate.

Please indicate whether travel dates have been discussed and confirmed by both UK and overseas partners.

3. Preparatory activity

This section provides the opportunity to present brief details of the activities that have supported the establishment of the partnership.

Information such as the outcomes from the visit of UK representatives to the overseas country (if applicable), meetings held, relevant research completed, contacts made and relationships built. How much did you change your initial ideas in the light of your discussions, and how are you ensuring mutual benefit? What changes as a result of the project would benefit each partner? What would the impact of the project be in the short and long term? How far did you advance in joint discussions about roles and responsibilities, deliverables and activities, and how easy has it been since the visit to finalise the proposal jointly?

4. Project rationale

The project rationale represents your reasons for designing the project as you have. Why is there a need for change? Who will benefit and in what way in both the immediate and longer term?

This section can include reference to the strengths that partners bring to the project but should also focus on the context, including the context in the UK and the overseas partner country, that make this project timely and necessary.

It is recommended that you are as specific as possible in presenting the problem(s) the project will address, and give facts and statistics, rather than using too many adjectives or vague terminology such as “encouraging entrepreneurship.”

This section should also include any relevant past institutional or personnel experience that will lead to the successful completion of the project. Experience in the UK or overseas project or partnership management, delivering change at a local, national or international level, collaboration with stakeholders such as employers, government, skills agencies should be highlighted in this section.

5. Project summary

This section builds on preceding sections. It should include the primary aims and objectives and details of the different stages, main activities, deliverables and impact of the proposed project. Please be as specific as possible. Please clearly set out the sectors (e.g. fashion) and themes (e.g. employer engagement) that the proposed
project focuses on. Please make sure that project summary is consistent with the work plan (below) and includes reference to activities, deliverables and the impact of the project.

In assessing this summary, consideration will be given to the extent to which the proposed project is likely to deliver against the central goal of all British Council’s skills work: to promote higher quality skills development that meets industry needs and helps young people to prosper.

6. How will the project impact on UK and overseas stakeholders?

Delivering impact is the key driver of British Council’s international skills partnership work and should be a focus from the outset of the partnership.

This section should include information as to what change will by created by the proposed project and what impact will that lead to? What difference will the project make in the UK and overseas? Who will benefit in the short and long term?

This section provides an opportunity for organisations to demonstrate how they plan to maximise the impact of the partnership project. This is likely to include how you plan to engage policy makers, employers, government agencies from the outset of the project to help deliver wider impact - long-term and more immediate – beyond those organisations involved in the consortium. And also to list the organisations that will be involved.

Projects are measured against our impact and outcomes framework. Our proposed outcomes are mentioned below. If your proposal includes one of the 7 points below, please reference by number in your proposal.

1. An active network of local and global employers, employer representative organisations and other skills stakeholders is established

2. Knowledge and understanding of effective approaches to skills development is improved

3. Young people are better prepared for the world of work and enterprise

4. Understanding and recognition of the benefits of working internationally and how to do this effectively is increased

5. New approaches to skills development are implemented at institution/organisation level

6. Policy changes and/or new approaches to skills development are implemented at national and/or system level

7. Higher quality skills that meet industry needs are developed.
7a. Sustainability

All British Council International Skills Partnerships are expected to actively work to become long-term partnerships, sustainable beyond the grant funding phase. To achieve this it is vital that sustainability is a focus from the start of the partnership. Although British Council international skills partnership projects are pre-commercial in their nature, the long-term sustainability of the partnership is in part dependent on ensuring future funding.

This section is your opportunity to demonstrate how you will work over the course of the grant funding phase to ensure the long-term sustainability of the partnership. This can include potential future business ideas that the partnership might develop, potential or actual sources of future funding identified, and targeted networking and relationship building to help secure sustainability.

All activities related to sustainability should be reflected in the work plan.

7b. Project management

If the proposal is successful, the responsibilities of the UK lead partner will include receiving the grant from British Council and budget management. Both partners should be involved in project management, the establishment and monitoring of a virtual project platform, completion of a self-assessment interim report after 6 months, and the submission of the final report including a finance report to the British Council.

Effective communication is vital to the success of International Skills Partnerships. All partnerships should have a communication strategy setting out how the organisations involved will communicate with one another, how the partnerships will communicate with the British Council and with other organisations external to the partnership as required.

The strategy should detail which methods of communication are to be used including email, telephone conferences, video conferences, Skype, virtual learning environments and should attach a frequency to all apart from emails. Any potential technological challenges (e.g. lack of internet connectivity) should be set out in this section along with appropriate contingencies for addressing them. In order to have an agreed record of actions it is recommended that partnerships make use of email and that conversations by telephone, video-conference or Skype are followed up with an email summary of what has been agreed.

Any potential language barriers to communication should be set out in this section, along with contingencies for dealing with them. Those English speakers at the overseas organisation responsible for communication should be identified here, as should, if appropriate, their UK counterparts responsible for communication who can speak the language of the partner country.

All significant activities related to communication should be reflected in the work plan.
8. Roles and responsibilities

In this section, please list those staff who will deliver the project. The list should include a minimum of one member of staff for each participating organisation. For the lead organisation in each country several members of staff should ideally be included.

Strong partnership project proposals take a whole-organisation approach to partnerships. Where lead partners are colleges, for example, it is envisaged that the principal, the business development unit, the international unit, the marketing and communications department and teaching staff could all have a role in ensuring that the partnership delivers maximum reach, profile and impact.

9. Publicity and direct engagement

9a. Publicity

A key success indicator for each international skills partnership is the profile that it has in the UK, in the partner country and internationally. Strongly publicised partnerships help to build the credibility and recognition of achievement of International Skills Partnerships, with long-term benefits for the skills sector generally.

Publicity strategies typically involve a range of approaches and media including websites, print media, radio, television, social networking sites and conferences. Please note that all projects are required to include promotion of the partnership and its work on the websites of all participating organisations and to utilise networks as appropriate to ensure promotion on third-party websites within the 1st quarter of the partnership reporting. This action is compulsory and is part of the grant agreement.

This section requires target numbers for publicity through different methods of promotion. Please use the Additional Information section to provide specific details including when the different publicity actions will take place with relevant links where possible.

9b. Direct engagement- Audience Reach

Please provide anticipated numbers of people in each category that will be directly engaged or impacted on by the work of the project in both countries during the lifetime of the project. Please use the Additional Information field to list specific organisations involved both in the UK and in the overseas country.

While these numbers will inevitably be estimates they should be as accurate as possible.

All activities related to publicity and reach should be reflected in the work plan.

10. Compulsory Project Requirements
This section identifies compulsory project actions and deliverables that are part of the work plan and Grant agreement. The compulsory actions are as follows: the establishment of a virtual project platform, the promotion of the partnership on partner websites, a dissemination event, attendance at Bringing the Learning Home and an interim self-assessment report and a final report.

The Lead partner should ‘tick’ in the box provided to indicate that they have read the Guidelines related to the compulsory activities of the project (see below). The completion of the compulsory activities will be included in the Grant agreement.

**Virtual project platform**
The lead partners are required to establish and maintain a shared virtual project platform for all project partners to report, store, communicate and present information linked to the project.

The creation of a virtual project platform will provide a centralised project management area where files, resources, documents, contacts and updates can be stored in a central location that can be accessed anywhere at any time. In addition, meetings and communications can be supported through a virtual project platform and can include notices, chat, email, blogs and wikis. Partners may choose to use their own institutional Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to support this action, in the case of UK colleges and universities, Moodle and Blackboard.

Members of the British Council’s international skills partnership team, as well as relevant staff from the partnership, should be given access to the VLE.

**Publication of the project on all partner websites**
Each project partner is required to include information related to their partnership on their website. The page should be updated regularly and should include the British Council logo.

**Interim Self Assessment**
The Lead partners will be responsible for the completion of an online self assessment report. The Lead partners will be expected to be reflective, and honest when completing the questionnaire. The Lead partners will be responsible for the communication of the results via the virtual project platform to the partnership members. In addition, the Lead partners will hold responsibility for addressing any weaknesses or issues in the project identified by the assessment.

**Final Report**
The final report should be completed by all partners. All partners are responsible for contributing to the Final report. The virtual project platform should be used to collate information required for the final report and from all partners.

**Dissemination event**
Distinct from publicity, which focuses on raising the profile of the partnership and its work and happens from the outset of the partnership project, dissemination is about showcasing the learning, research, results, outputs and outcomes of the project. Key to maximising impact and important in building sustainability, dissemination generally happens towards the end of the project. All partnerships should have a dissemination
strategy setting out how the project’s work will be disseminated to key audiences, this should include at least one face to face event with a wider audience.

**Bringing the Learning Home**

Bringing the Learning Home (BTLH) is British Council’s annual International Skills Partnership event, which brings together our International Skills Partnerships from around the work to network, share experiences and learn from each other. BTLH includes inspiring plenary presentations, interactive capacity-building workshops and outstanding international networking opportunities. It also sees the announcement of a global call for new partnerships, and the unveiling of our International Skills Partnership of the Year. Attendance from at least one UK and one overseas partner is a compulsory requirement of the programme and should be built in to the expenditure and workplan.

Please make provision of £3,000 in your budget for one member of staff from each of the formal partners to attend the Annual British Council workshop. We will be sending further details of the next workshop event to your partnerships, in the meantime, more information can be found here: [https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/skills-employability/what-we-do/international-skills-partnerships/bringing-learning-home](https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/skills-employability/what-we-do/international-skills-partnerships/bringing-learning-home)

## 11. Work plan

The work plan sets out the activities and deliverables that the partnership will produce in order to achieve the project aims, objectives and impact. This work plan forms the basis of your Agreement with British Council and will be used as the basis for reporting and evaluation. Compulsory activities and deliverables have been included in the Work Plan and should be adhered to and not amended.

Activities are what the project will do - for example, share and assimilate relevant documentation, conduct an employer engagement forum, hold a training or curriculum development workshop, conduct a visit to the partner country, deliver a presentation on the partnership at a conference, write a blog post, conduct meetings with key external stakeholders or other partnerships.

Deliverables are the core tangible and measurable outputs of the project that will help the partnership achieve impact - for example, a new curriculum, training manuals, a fit-for-purpose employer engagement methodology, a research or evaluation report, a new apprenticeship scheme.

Please ensure that as far as possible there is a balanced spread of activities across the four quarters and that the work plan covers all activities and is as comprehensive as possible. For example, in the case of inward and outward visits, please state how many staff will travel, for how many days, and what their roles are. Please note that the maximum number of staff that can be funded from the grant on any one visit is three. More than this can travel but the organisation concerned would be required to meet the cost of any additional staff travelling.
Please be aware that some activities will be repeated at different stages of/throughout the work plan.

12. Expenditure

Before completing this section please familiarise yourself with the costs covered by and not covered by the grant:

**Eligible costs**

- Economy class flight travel for UK and overseas partner organisation’s staff to/from the country where each organisation is based. As noted above, the maximum number of staff travelling on any visit covered by the grant is three.
- Local travel in the UK and overseas (public transport to and from the airport and for meetings/visits is encouraged where possible)
- Reasonable accommodation and subsistence costs for staff for visits to their partner organisation in the UK or overseas
- Reasonable hospitality costs
- Reasonable production costs (e.g. for materials development, not including staff time)
- Translation/interpretation costs (where procured externally)
- Visa costs for the UK and overseas organisation’s staff to/from the country where each organisation is based
- Costs relating to resources of a specific nature to the project. This is by negotiation with the British Council and is not likely to include purchase of equipment. Software may be eligible but only when approved in advance by British Council and will depend on the rationale and clear written justification.

All of the above activities must be directly related to the development and delivery of the agreed project. Partners will be asked to complete expenditure information and provide evidence with receipts to British Council for monitoring and auditing purposes.

**The following items of expenditure will not be covered by the grant award:**

- Participating organisations’ staff costs. The funds are not intended to contribute towards the direct costs of staff time associated with the project.
- Participation in trade fairs, exhibitions or conferences
- Promotional activities which are solely concerned with the recruitment of overseas students
- Participating organisations’ administration or overhead costs
- Costs relating to activities which have already taken place at the outset of the project
- Costs relating to capital spend (e.g. hardware, software – see note above regarding possible software expenditure)
- Exchange rate costs/loss and other banking related costs
- Consultancy fees
- No profit or fees to be charged during the period of this grant funding
Matching funding

Participating organisations are required to contribute matching funding towards the project, including all staff time, which needs to be quantified. Matching funding should be equivalent to (or exceed) the grant payment.

In this section please set out the expenditure associated with each relevant item (e.g. staff time, staff travel, staff accommodation, production of materials, dissemination costs etc.), including the unit (e.g. number of people travelling), unit cost (e.g. the cost of one person travelling) and the total cost, indicating whether this cost will come from the grant and/or matching funding.

Please remember to include the staff time of both/all participating organisations as appropriate. For example, in the case of a visit to the partner country, staff time should include not only those travelling but also the time spent by local staff to host and participate in the work of the visit.

When calculating the cost of the staff days you will need to take into account the appropriate hourly rate for the specific members of staff.

13. Signatures

This section requires the signature of the Principal/CEO of the applicant institution. By signing the document the Principal/CEO is agreeing to follow the Guidelines set out in this document and acknowledges that the institution has the capacity to deliver the project that has been proposed.

If the project proposal is successful the Principal/CEO will be required to directly receive a copy of the Grant Agreement and will be required to agree the Terms and Conditions specified.