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Transforming higher education through innovative partnerships

Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform (SPHEIR), is a new DFID fund to catalyse innovative partnerships to transform the quality, scale and affordability of higher education in low income countries.

The global challenge

With fast changing demand for skills and jobs, we need to look beyond primary and secondary education to invest further in human capital through higher education. The new UN Global Goals recognise that inclusive economic growth, good governance and productive employment are vital for sustainable development. Effective higher education systems are essential for a country to build the critical skills needed to accelerate development.

Higher education is expanding, but improvements tend to be concentrated in more advanced economies. Many African countries face a particular challenge of having a fraction of the number of skilled professionals of Vietnam or Brazil at similar stages of their development. This requires a new approach to boost the performance of higher education in low income countries in Africa and Asia and generate the job-ready graduates, including the future teachers, engineers, entrepreneurs and leaders who are key to building stronger economies and states.

The SPHEIR approach

Promoting better quality higher education that is more affordable, more accessible and equitable and more market relevant requires new players and new approaches.

SPHEIR will catalyse diverse and innovative partnerships, opening up opportunities for new organisations to enter the higher education space, including the private sector. SPHEIR partnerships will harness the expertise of the UK, the Global South and wider international organisations, the public and non-state sector. By scaling up what works from enhancing the relevance of academic courses to labour markets, to new modes of delivery and technologies, to governance reforms, SPHEIR will deliver strategic and transformative change in higher education systems globally.

How will the fund work?

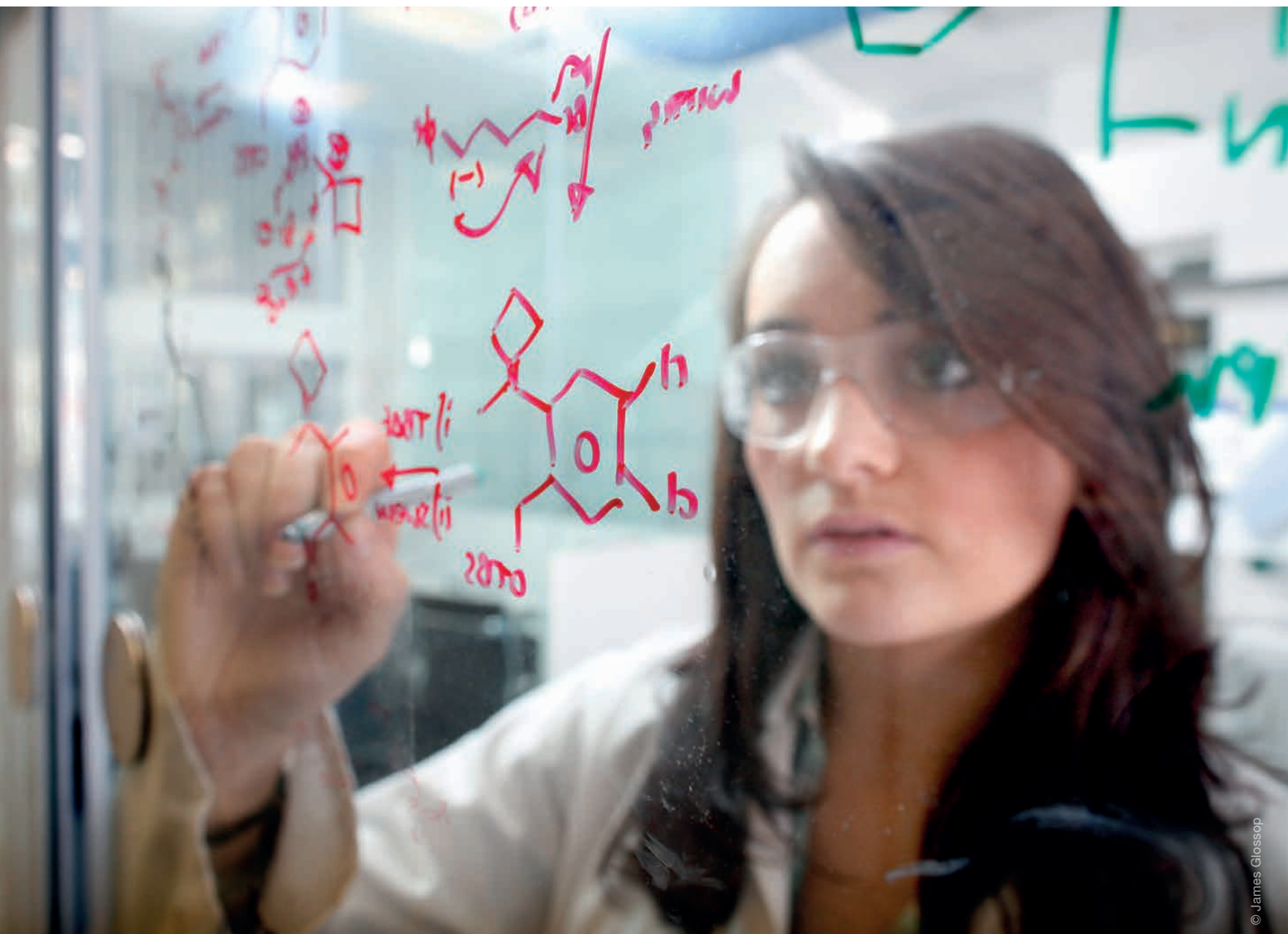
The programme will be managed by a fund manager consortium led by the British Council, in association with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), and the UK HE International Unit.

The fund will open in June 2016, with Sub-Saharan Africa as a major focus and potential expansion to select DFID focus countries in Asia. Partnerships will be demand-driven and bids will be assessed competitively to drive value for money through knowledge transfer and services from diverse suppliers.

Further details of the programme's themes, target countries, criteria, and timetable will be released in the coming months.

How can I find out more?

For further information or to register your interest, please visit www.spheir.org.uk



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