
TRANSFORM: addressing education reform in Sri Lanka

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

1. Background

British Council Sri Lanka is implementing a major education reform programme, known as TRANSFORM, in collaboration with the Government of Sri Lanka. The aim of TRANSFORM is that all young people have access to and benefit from learning opportunities provided by a fit-for-purpose and relevant education system, enabling young women and young men to fulfil their potential, achieve their aspirations and contribute to Sri Lanka's economic and social development and growth.

TRANSFORM adopts a holistic approach to sustainable systemic reform with key areas of focus across secondary, further and vocational and higher education:

- **Professionalisation.** This builds the professional skills and competence of the education body through individual and institutional capacity building, targeting, for example, teacher educators, in-service advisers, school principals and lecturers. Our extensive work in English features highly in this domain, with our flagship project Improving Teacher Education in Sri Lanka (iTESL) focussing on teacher education, mentoring and institutional strengthening. A current additional area is building the capacity of teachers to teach and test listening and speaking skills. We have also supported the development of school leadership as well as piloting approaches to learner-centred classrooms for Higher Education.
- **Quality assurance.** We are collectively keen to ensure that young Sri Lankans have access to an education system of internationally benchmarked quality. We support the review and ongoing development of national education policy, professional standards, quality assurance and language assessment. Our project work is delivered in collaboration with University Grants Commission (UGC) and covers enhancing quality assurance systems for Higher Education (HE), including student engagement as well as the role of research in maintaining quality.
- **Transition from education to employment.** The focus is on ensuring that education provision links through to employment. This includes areas such as careers guidance, employer and student engagement in higher education, and the adoption of national occupational standards as the basis for developing curricula and assessment. Our most critical engagement to date has been to work with National Education Commission (NEC) on the policy for careers guidance for schools and we are building our work in the skills, strengthening the system and enhancing industry engagement.

Our work is underpinned by key cross-cutting areas:

- **English.** We promote the use of English as a key employability skill, and work to ensure that the delivery of English teaching and learning reflects this view of it as a transferable skill relevant to the world of work.
- **Research, evaluation and learning** where we make sure that everything we do is evidence-based and that we learn from our work to foster sustainability. Recent research projects have

included: English language assessment; teachers' language proficiency; careers guidance; improving HE research quality; and whole school culture.

- **Communications** to inform, raise awareness and shape knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of education professionals and the wider public.
- **Social inclusion.** We also foster social inclusion through capacity building on inclusive pedagogies and research on whole school culture.

We are committed to collaborative working and as such, TRANSFORM operates with a range of stakeholders. Working with the Government of Sri Lanka is critical for our engagement in education reform. We work with and across multiple government ministries and departments, including the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, University Grants Commission, National Education Commission, Technical and Vocational Education Commission and Ministry of Labour Department of Manpower. We also collaborate with development partners whenever we can to share insights and maximise our respective inputs and areas of engagement. As we recognise and acknowledge the link between education and employment, we also engage with employers, both as individual companies and through their representational and industry bodies. Finally, as our programme aim focuses on youth benefitting from a relevant education system, we seek their views whenever and however possible to better understand their expectations and aspirations and to ensure relevance of what we do.

Information about education provision in Sri Lanka can be found on the relevant Ministry website:

Ministry of Education: <http://www.moe.gov.lk/english/>

School Census: http://www.statistics.gov.lk/education/School%20Census%20Report_2017.pdf

Ministry of Higher Education: <https://www.mohe.gov.lk/index.php?start=8&lang=en>

University Grants Commission: <https://www.ugc.ac.lk/>

2. Call for expressions of interest

On the strength of our engagement with the different bodies of the Government of Sri Lanka, the British Council has been invited to draft a proposal for inputs aligned to the current education reform programme and which are reflected in the activity areas of TRANSFORM, underpinned by direct provision of capacity building and a research programme. This request was re-confirmed after the Research Symposium held in December 2019.

We are now seeking potential organisations with whom to develop a proposal at both secondary and higher education levels, addressing the themes of professionalisation, quality assurance, transitions to employment and English. While the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education received their own budget allocations (and are beneficiaries of World Bank funding), the intention is to address these issues in a holistic way across ALL education sectors. We therefore welcome submissions from organisations who are willing to contribute and work collaboratively across sectors as appropriate to ensure a cohesive and consistent approach. However, we will be submitting two

physical proposals, one to each Ministry, to reflect government budget allocation and operational systems.

The work packages which we expect to be included in the final proposal are outlined below.

TRANSFORM WORK PACKAGES		
Results Area	Work package	Sample Activities
Work Package Set 1: SECONDARY EDUCATION		
English	1.1 English Language Assessment Reform	Review of current work; situational analysis; development of test outcomes etc; development of new exams; capacity building in test development
	1.2 English curriculum and materials development	Redefined learning outcomes; capacity building; linking curriculum to world of work
	1.3 English teacher language proficiency and ongoing professional development	Presett and Insett. International benchmarking
Professionalisation	1.4 Professional standards for teachers, teacher educators, and school leaders	Occupational standards; international benchmarking; qualified teacher status
Quality Assurance	1.5 Quality Assurance and Qualifications frameworks	Review of and relevant action on inspection and qualifications frameworks; international benchmarking; capacity building. <i>N.B. Policies and oversight are held by UGC</i>
	1.6 Whole school culture	Leadership; policy; standards and compliance; community engagement; teaching and learning processes.
Transitions to Employment	1.6 Schools Careers Guidance	Development of careers guidance policy and framework; standards; professional qualifications; curriculum; leadership; capacity building
	1.7 Entrepreneurship and employability	Situational analysis; curriculum review and development; capacity building; embedding in the curriculum
Work Package Set 2: HIGHER EDUCATION		
English	2.1 English Support Unit curriculum	Review and revision of core curriculum

Professionalisation	2.2 Learner-centred classrooms	Core principles; international benchmarking; standards; capacity building of faculty and leadership
	2.3 Policy Development	Core principles; international benchmarking; standards; capacity building. <i>N.B. This is relevant to all education sectors</i>
Quality Assurance	2.4 Inspection frameworks	Review of and relevant action on inspection framework; international benchmarking; capacity building. <i>N.B. This also includes secondary</i>
	2.5 Qualifications frameworks	Review of and relevant action on qualifications framework; international benchmarking; capacity building. <i>N.B. This also includes secondary</i>
	2.6 Student engagement in quality assurance	Learner outcomes; student survey
Transitions to employment	2.7 HE careers guidance	Employer engagement; policy and framework; standards; leadership; capacity building; entrepreneurship and employability

Please note that the Government of Sri Lanka is experiencing a period of change. While the work described in the call reflects the education reform programme, there may be some variation in the scope of work proposed.

3. British Council policies

The British Council is committed to equality and to positive action to promote this. It believes that an Equal Opportunities Policy helps to ensure that there is no unjustified discrimination in the recruitment, retention, training and development of staff on the basis of gender including transgender, marital status, sexual identify, region and belief, political opinion, race, work pattern, age, disability or HIV/AIDS status, socio-economic background, spent convictions, trade union activity or membership, on the basis of having or not having dependents, or any other relevant grounds. The applicants must agree to operate in accordance with these principles while undertaking work of the British Council grant.

The British Council is committed to open government and to meeting its legal responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the "Act"). Accordingly, all information submitted to a public authority may need to be disclosed by the public authority in response to a request under the Act. The British Council may also decide to include certain information in the publication scheme, which the British Council maintains under the Act.

Organisations submitting an EOI should also note that the receipt of any material marked 'confidential' or equivalent by the British Council should not be taken to mean that the British Council accepts any duty of confidence by virtue of that marking.

The organisations will comply with all applicable legislation and codes of practice, including, where applicable, all legislation and statutory guidance relevant to the safeguarding and protection of children and vulnerable adults and with the British Council's Child Protection Policy; in addition the organisation will ensure that where it engages any other party to supply any of the services under this agreement that party will also comply with the same requirements as if they were a party to this agreement.

All relevant policies that organisations are expected to adhere to can be found on the British Council website – <http://www.britishcouncil.org/about/policies>. The list of policies includes (but it is not limited to):

- Anti-Fraud and Corruption
- Child Protection Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Health and Safety Policy.

4. Preparation and submission of the expression of interest

Eligibility: This call is open to UK-based organisations. An organisation can submit individually or associate with other organisations to form a cluster. If the submission adopts the cluster approach, all associates must be identified. The intention is to identify a small number of organisations that can lead on results areas and/or thematic work packages, but who are able to bring in any necessary additional resources.

Cost: Organisations must take responsibility for the cost of preparing the expression of interest. Successful organisations at the EOI stage must also take responsibility for the cost of their engagement in the proposal development process. We do not require a budget indication of the work proposed at this stage as this will be elaborated by successful organisations during the proposal development process.

Work packages: Organisations may express interest in either a) packages in Set 1 **or** Set 2; or b) packages across the two Sets. Please note, however, that if your submission includes both Set 1 and Set 2, this is likely to involve a higher level of effort as a separate proposal will be developed for each Ministry.

EOI form: The EOI form consists of the following seven parts: Part 1 - Contact details; Part 2 - Your understanding of the assignment; Part 3 - Your organisation; Part 4 - Track record; Part 5- Further information; Part 6 – Signatures; Part 7 - Checklist of enclosures. All Parts of the form (with the exception of optional Part 5) must be completed. Incomplete submissions will be automatically rejected. Organisations submitting as a cluster must also provide a signed letter of association with each associate confirming the intent to collaborate.

Submission instructions: An electronic copy of the EOI form must be submitted **by 23.59 UK time on Sunday 16 February 2020** to Transform@britishcouncil.org. Please write 'TRANSFORM Expression of Interest' in the subject line.

5. Evaluation

Submissions that meet the criteria for qualification will be evaluated against three key criteria, reflecting Parts 2, 3 and 4 from the EOI form, with each part being equally weighted.

Evaluation criteria	Comments
Understanding of the assignment	<i>Indicating the work packages included in the EOI and the approach for each work package</i>
The organisation	<i>Including Parts 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.5 of the EOI form</i>
Track record	<i>Including Part 3.4 and Part 4 of the EOI form. Track in South Asia including Sri Lanka is a priority</i>

The following scale will be used for evaluating the response:

Score	Description
10 points (Excellent)	A comprehensive and strong answer indicating the provider is fully capable and experienced to deliver the required outcomes. A detailed response that directly responds to all requirements with no ambiguity and relevant examples provided.
7 points (Good)	A good answer that indicates that the provider understands the assignment and can meet most of the requirements and has some relevant experience. May come across as competent but with a more boilerplate approach to meeting the requirements.
5 points (Adequate)	There are concerns that the organisation will not be able to achieve the outcomes required and response significantly lacks details of relevant experience. A less detailed response that broadly responds to the requirement with some ambiguity and no/irrelevant examples provided.
3 points (Poor Response/Limited Evidence)	There are serious indications that the organisation will not be able to achieve the outcomes required and has not provided appropriate evidence of experience to successfully deliver the outcomes required. A response that is not entirely relevant to the requirement, with ambiguity and lacking specific detail.
0 points (Unacceptable)	The answer is non-compliant and/or no relevant information has been received to demonstrate the organisation can achieve the required outcomes. No response or a response that is entirely irrelevant.

Briefing meeting: A virtual meeting will be held by Skype or similar on Friday 31 January 2020 from 0930 to 1100 UK time. Organisations wishing to join can send a request to Transform@britishcouncil.org by close of play Tuesday 28 January 2020 and will be sent dial-in information.

This guidance, EOI form and letter of association are issued on 21 January 2020.

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