



Request for Proposal (RFP)

For: English Connects East Asia Feasibility Study

Date: 20th August 2021

1 Overview of the British Council

1.1 The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. We do this by making a positive contribution to the UK and the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust.

1.2 We work with over 100 countries across the world in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Each year we reach over 20 million people face-to-face and more than 500 million people online, via broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body

1.3 The British Council employs over 10,500 staff worldwide. It has its headquarters in the UK, with offices in London, Manchester, Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh. Further information can be viewed at www.britishcouncil.org.

2 Introduction and Background to the Project/Programme

2.1 The British Council's work in English for Education Systems (EES) aims for transformational change in English language policy and practice. We believe that better teaching and learning of English increases academic and career opportunities and enables people to participate actively in a global society. Our research and innovation with UK and overseas partners provide evidence of 'what works' in English language teaching and learning and contributes to the development of English language teaching and learning worldwide. We support language teaching and learning in a multilingual world, helping to ensure inclusive and equitable quality language education in line with UN Sustainable Development Goal 4.

As of 2021, our EES programmatic framework is thematically organised into three key global impact areas: ELT in Education, English and Empowerment and English Connects, the latter of which encompasses the British Council EES team's digital offer for English teacher CPD globally. Underpinning these priorities is our approach harnessing UK expertise in teacher education, education technologies and inclusive pedagogies, research, insight, and innovation. Through our work we seek to document and share learning gained from practical experience, while our role in global English means that advancing thought leadership and positioning the UK as leaders in English language education are at the heart of our mission.

2.2 The purpose and scope of this RFP and supporting documents is two-fold: 1.) to explore the East Asian (China, Japan, South Korea) digital landscape, through a landscape review and needs analysis focusing primarily on English teacher Continuous Professional Development (CPD) offers and needs. The review seeks to audit the range of digital CPD products and services that the British Council and other

providers currently offer, and explore teachers' experience, needs and motivations to engage with these; and 2.) build on this initial regional landscape review to provide more localised insight into China's digital English teacher CPD needs and relevant aspects of its EdTech environment to help identify and justify potential partnerships and pathways for future development, supplementation and cooperation through global and local English Connects offers. Outputs will include specific recommendations, a tiered impact assessment and projected costings. Further details can be found in Section 7.

3 Tender Conditions and Contractual Requirements

This section of the RFP sets out the British Council's contracting requirements, general policy requirements and the general tender conditions relating to this procurement process ("**Procurement Process**").

3.1 Contracting requirements

3.1.1 The contracting authority is the British Council which includes any subsidiary companies and other organisations that control or are controlled by the British Council from time to time (see: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/structure/status>).

3.1.2 The appointed supplier will be expected to deliver the goods and/or provide services in liaison with the British Council China.

3.1.3 The British Council's contracting and commercial approach in respect of the required goods and/or services is set out at Annex [1] (Terms and Conditions of contract) ("**Contract**"). By submitting a tender response, you are agreeing to be bound by the terms of this RFP and the Contract without further negotiation or amendment.

3.1.4 The Contract awarded will be for the duration of project need.

3.1.5 In the event that you have any concerns or queries in relation to the Contract, you should submit a clarification request in accordance with the provisions of this RFP by the Clarification Deadline (as defined below in the Timescales section of this RFP). Following such clarification requests, the British Council may issue a clarification change to the Contract that will apply to all potential suppliers submitting a tender response.

3.1.6 The British Council is under no obligations to consider any clarifications / amendments to the Contract proposed following the Clarification Deadline, but before the Response Deadline (as defined below in the Timescales section of this RFP). Any proposed amendments received from a potential supplier as part of its tender response shall entitle the British Council to reject that tender response and to disqualify that potential supplier from this Procurement Process.

3.2 General Policy Requirements

3.2.1 By submitting a tender response in connection with this Procurement Process, potential suppliers confirm that they will, and that they shall ensure that any consortium members and/or subcontractors will, comply with all applicable laws, codes of practice, statutory guidance and applicable British Council policies relevant to the goods and/or services being supplied. All relevant British Council policies that suppliers are expected to comply with can be found on the British Council website

(<https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/transparency/policies>). The list of relevant policies includes (but it is not limited to): Anti-Fraud and Corruption, Child Protection Policy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Fair Trading, Health and Safety Policy, Environmental Policy, Records Management, and Privacy.

3.3 General tender conditions (“Tender Conditions”)

3.3.1 Application of these Tender Conditions – In participating in this Procurement Process and/or by submitting a tender response it will be implied that you accept and will be bound by all the provisions of this RFP and its Annexes. Accordingly, tender responses should be on the basis of and strictly in accordance with the requirements of this RFP.

3.3.2 Third party verifications – Your tender response is submitted on the basis that you consent to the British Council carrying out all necessary actions to verify the information that you have provided; and the analysis of your tender response being undertaken by one or more third parties commissioned by the British Council for such purposes.

3.3.3 Information provided to potential suppliers – Information that is supplied to potential suppliers as part of this Procurement Process is supplied in good faith. The information contained in the RFP and the supporting documents and in any related written or oral communication is believed to be correct at the time of issue, but the British Council will not accept any liability for its accuracy, adequacy or completeness and no warranty is given as such. This exclusion does not extend to any fraudulent misrepresentation made by or on behalf of the British Council.

3.3.4 Potential suppliers to make their own enquires – You are responsible for analysing and reviewing all information provided to you as part of this Procurement Process and for forming your own opinions and seeking advice as you consider appropriate. You should notify the British Council promptly of any perceived ambiguity, inconsistency or omission in this RFP and/or any in of its associated documents and/or in any information provided to you as part of this Procurement Process.

3.3.5 Amendments to the RFP – At any time prior to the Response Deadline, the British Council may amend the RFP. Any such amendment shall be issued to all potential suppliers, and if appropriate to ensure potential suppliers have reasonable time in which to take such amendment into account, the Response Deadline shall, at the discretion of the British Council, be extended.

3.3.6 Compliance of tender response submission – Any goods and/or services offered should be on the basis of and strictly in accordance with the RFP (including, without limitation, any specification of the British Council’s requirements, these Tender Conditions and the Contract) and all other documents and any clarifications or updates issued by the British Council as part of this Procurement Process.

3.3.7 Format of tender response submission – Tender responses must comprise the relevant documents specified by the British Council completed in all areas and in the format as detailed by the British Council in Annex [2] (Supplier Response). Any documents requested by the British Council must be completed in full. It is, therefore, important that you read the RFP carefully before completing and submitting your tender response.

3.3.8 Modifications to tender response documents once submitted – You may modify your tender response prior to the Response Deadline by giving written notice to the British Council. Any modification should be clear and submitted as a complete new tender response in accordance with Annex [2] (Supplier Response) and these Tender Conditions.

3.3.9 Rejection of tender responses or other documents – A tender response or any other document requested by the British Council may be rejected which:

- contains gaps, omissions, misrepresentations, errors, uncompleted sections, or changes to the format of the tender documentation provided;
- contains hand-written amendments which have not been initialled by the authorised signatory;
- does not reflect and confirm full and unconditional compliance with all of the documents issued by the British Council forming part of the RFP;
- contains any caveats or any other statements or assumptions qualifying the tender response that are not capable of evaluation in accordance with the evaluation model or requiring changes to any documents issued by the British Council in any way;
- is not submitted in a manner consistent with the provisions set out in this RFP;
- is received after the Response Deadline.

3.3.10 Disqualification – If you breach these Tender Conditions, if there are any errors, omissions or material adverse changes relating to any information supplied by you at any stage in this Procurement Process, if any other circumstances set out in this RFP, and/or in any supporting documents, entitling the British Council to reject a tender response apply and/or if you or your appointed advisers attempt:

- to inappropriately influence this Procurement Process;
- to fix or set the price for goods or services;
- to enter into an arrangement with any other party that such party shall refrain from submitting a tender response;
- to enter into any arrangement with any other party (other than another party that forms part of your consortium bid or is your proposed sub-contractor) as to the prices submitted; or
- to collude in any other way
- to engage in direct or indirect bribery or canvassing by you or your appointed advisers in relation to this Procurement Process; or
- to obtain information from any of the employees, agents or advisors of the British Council concerning this Procurement Process (other than as set out in these Tender Conditions) or from another potential supplier or another tender response,

the British Council shall be entitled to reject your tender response in full and to disqualify you from this Procurement Process. Subject to the “Liability” Tender Condition below, by participating in this Procurement Process you accept that the British Council shall have no liability to a disqualified potential supplier in these circumstances.

3.3.11 Tender costs – You are responsible for obtaining all information necessary for preparation of your tender response and for all costs and expenses incurred in preparation of the tender response. Subject to the “Liability” Tender Condition below, you accept by your participation in this procurement, including without limitation the submission of a tender response, that you will not be entitled to claim from the British Council any costs, expenses or liabilities that you may incur in tendering for this procurement irrespective of whether or not your tender response is successful.

3.3.12 Rights to cancel or vary this Procurement Process - By issuing this RFP, entering into clarification communications with potential suppliers or by having any other form of communication with potential suppliers, the British Council is not bound in any way to enter into any contractual or other arrangement with you or any other potential supplier. It is intended that the remainder of this Procurement Process will

take place in accordance with the provisions of this RFP, but the British Council reserves the right to terminate, amend or vary (to include, without limitation, in relation to any timescales or deadlines) this Procurement Process by notice to all potential supplier in writing. Subject to the “Liability” Tender Condition below, the British will have no liability for any losses, costs or expenses caused to you as a result of such termination, amendment or variation.

3.3.13 Consortium Members and sub-contractors – It is your responsibility to ensure that any staff, consortium members, sub-contractors and advisers abide by these Tender Conditions and the requirement of this RFP.

3.3.14 Liability – Nothing in these Tender Conditions is intended to exclude or limit the liability of the British Council in relation to fraud or in other circumstances where the British Council’s liability may not be limited under any applicable law.

4 Confidentiality and Information Governance

4.1 All information supplied to you by the British Council, including this RFP and all other documents relating to this Procurement Process, either in writing or orally, must be treated in confidence and not disclosed to any third party (save to your professional advisers, consortium members and/or sub-contractors strictly for the purposes only of helping you to participate in this Procurement Process and/or prepare your tender response) unless the information is already in the public domain or is required to be disclosed under any applicable laws.

4.2 You shall not disclose, copy or reproduce any of the information supplied to you as part of this Procurement Process other than for the purposes of preparing and submitting a tender response. There must be no publicity by you regarding the Procurement Process or the future award of any contract unless the British Council has given express written consent to the relevant communication.

4.3 This RFP and its accompanying documents shall remain the property of the British Council and must be returned on demand.

4.4 The British Council reserves the right to disclose all documents relating to this Procurement Process, including without limitation your tender response, to any employee, third party agent, adviser or other third party involved in the procurement in support of, and/or in collaboration with, the British Council. The British Council further reserves the right to publish the Contract once awarded and/or disclose information in connection with supplier performance under the Contract in accordance with any public sector transparency policies (as referred to below). By participating in this Procurement Process, you agree to such disclosure and/or publication by the British Council in accordance with such rights reserved by it under this paragraph.

4.5 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“FOIA”), the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (“EIR”), and public sector transparency policies apply to the British Council (together the “**Disclosure Obligations**”).

4.6 You should be aware of the British Council’s obligations and responsibilities under the Disclosure Obligations to disclose information held by the British Council. Information provided by you in connection with this Procurement Process, or with any contract that may be awarded as a result of this exercise, may

therefore have to be disclosed by the British Council under the Disclosure Obligations, unless the British Council decides that one of the statutory exemptions under the FOIA or the EIR applies.

4.7 If you wish to designate information supplied as part of your tender response or otherwise in connection with this tender exercise as confidential, using any template and/or further guidance provided at Part [2] (Submission Checklist) of Annex [2] (Supplier Response), you must provide clear and specific detail as to:

- the precise elements which are considered confidential and/or commercially sensitive;
- why you consider an exemption under the FOIA or EIR would apply; and
- the estimated length of time during which the exemption will apply.

4.8 The use of blanket protective markings of whole documents such as “commercial in confidence” will not be sufficient. By participating in this Procurement Process, you agree that the British Council should not and will not be bound by any such markings.

4.9 In addition, marking any material as “confidential” or “commercially sensitive” or equivalent should not be taken to mean that the British Council accepts any duty of confidentiality by virtue of such marking. You accept that the decision as to which information will be disclosed is reserved to the British Council, notwithstanding any consultation with you or any designation of information as confidential or commercially sensitive or equivalent you may have made. You agree, by participating further in this Procurement Process and/or submitting your tender response, that all information is provided to the British Council on the basis that it may be disclosed under the Disclosure Obligations if the British Council considers that it is required to do so and/or may be used by the British Council in accordance with the provisions provision of this RFP.

4.10 Tender responses are also submitted on the condition that the appointed supplier will only process personal data (as may be defined under any relevant data protection laws) that it gains access to in performance of this Contract in accordance with the British Council 's instructions and will not use such personal data for any other purpose. The contracted supplier will undertake to process any personal data on the British Council's behalf in accordance with the relevant provisions of any relevant data protection laws and to ensure all consents required under such laws are obtained.

5 Tender Validity

5.1 Your tender response must remain open for acceptance by the British Council for a period of sixty days from the Response Deadline. A tender response not valid for this period may be rejected by the British Council.

6 Payment and Invoicing

6.1 The British Council will pay correctly addressed and undisputed invoices within 30 days in accordance with the requirements of the Contract. Suppliers to the British Council must ensure comparable payment provisions apply to the payment of their sub-contractors and the sub-contractors of their sub-contractors. General requirements for an invoice for the British Council include:

- A description of the good/services supplied is included.
- The British Council Purchase Order number is included.

7 Specification

This section spells out the scope for this assignment including the range of activities that the supplier is expected to deliver, the qualifications and expertise required of the supplier and the expected timeline for the task.

7.1 Assignment background

The English Connects impact area is a key aspect of the current British Council global EES strategic refresh and offers an amalgam of the British Council EES's global digital English teacher CPD resources¹, communities and online professional development opportunities. The majority of English Connects resources and events are open and free for English teachers to engage with and it presently supports the world's largest online English teacher community.

The British Council East Asia EES team is currently implementing an ambitious 3-4-year programme that supports English teacher CPD within East Asia and ASEAN under the British Council's ELT in Education and English Connects impact areas. The scope of this programme is primarily focused on public education systems but in some countries where significant reach and impact is possible this may also include private organisations and associations. Within its scope, the 3–4-year programme will supplement the global English Connects offer to better support English teachers' online CPD, within identified priority countries through tailored offers and contextualised platforms that enhance what is currently available. To ensure digital programme activities are well-informed and under-pinned by relevant, localised insight we are issuing this RFP to meet the need for further research and evidence in East Asia that identifies what is needed and what the potential benefits of British Council digital and online offers may be. A separate RFP will be issued for the ASEAN region.

In order to ensure resources are effectively allocated and localised to match the actual needs and opportunities on the ground within identified countries it is important to create a baseline of information on the local digital contexts and teacher needs that can act as the foundation for future strategic decision-making. To this end, we are seeking a research partner(s) who has the necessary experience and resources to conduct 1.) a comprehensive needs analysis and landscape review of online English teacher CPD within 3 key *identified countries*: China, Japan, and South Korea, and 2.) a further follow-up deep dive

¹ Digital resources for CPD may include, but not exclusive to lesson plans, language learning content, research dissemination, communities, events, including peer to peer events and expert to non-expert events; platforms for learning; courses

into the unique mainland China digital context supplementing information collected in the initial landscape review. One research team for both phases of the research is preferred.

7.2 Assignment scope

7.2.1 Main objective / rationale

Regional (Phase 1): Through a needs analysis and landscape review that utilises both primary and secondary research, to have a better understanding of English teacher CPD needs and the current range of digital offers, products and services that meet those needs within the identified countries. This research data will establish a baseline of digital/online platforms and services across China, Japan, and South Korea (regional and in-country) that offer free and open² digital resources and online English teacher development opportunities and explore English teacher digital trends and needs within this context. Reference to prominent commercial offers relevant to the local context which are open to the larger ELT community may also be included where relevant. This review will be used to identify areas of future need and opportunity and inform higher level decision making in East Asia and at country level. (**Audience:** For external and internal audiences).

China (Phase 2): To build on the regional landscape review and needs analysis, to effectively and more deeply analyse ways to support and engage with local English teacher CPD digital needs and online trends, explore future partnership or localisation models, and make recommendations on the possible impact and costings of existing and potential models of digital engagement and/or partnerships in China. The findings will be used to inform specific China-related decision-making strategy. (**Audience:** For British Council internal review)

7.2.2 Specific phase objectives

It is envisaged that research methods will be a combination of desk research and reviews that initially builds a comprehensive literature review, supplemented by online surveys and individual interviews with key stakeholders (incl. teachers) and experts in the online education and IT fields. It is likely that many external respondents in country will prefer their first language to provide data and feedback, therefore corroborated translation may be required for dissemination purposes.

Some technical field work and experimentation may be required e.g., regarding internet speeds, performance, and accessibility of platforms. Interviews will likely cover areas such as English teacher needs and attitudes towards online CPD, the current digital landscape and predictions for future development and partnerships, legal ramifications, and insight into sector trends. Interviews may also include discussions with internal British Council staff in relation to identifying stakeholders, potential

² **An important distinction** = resources should ultimately be open to all teachers/users. Where communities/resources/events are closed or limited to teachers within a certain, pre-ordained group this would fall under ELT in Education (digital) NOT English Connects.

compliance issues and other relevant regional or country-level considerations.³ Previously acquired internal reports and data within the scope of the research can also be shared for reference and inclusion.

It is expected that all agreed objectives will be met in a way that contributes to the strengthening of relationships between the UK, the British Council and key local stakeholders and decision makers.

A breakdown of main objectives for each of the two main phases of the proposal can be found below; these are divided into REGIONAL (i.e., China, Japan & South Korea) and CHINA for clear separation of research areas. Final wordings and scope of each objective can be confirmed in a negotiation stage after final selection of the supplier, but the objectives presented below outline the key expectations of any submitted proposals for initial reference. **Note:** Through negotiation, and in line with ODA funding requirements, some consideration of gender should be included within the research body or questions to ensure the proposal is 'gender sensitive.'

Phase 1: REGIONAL (China, Japan, South Korea)

- To conduct a landscape review to audit the range of products and services that British Council and others (e.g., partners, competitors) are currently offering in terms of digital resources for English teachers and English teacher CPD. Consideration of whether these digital products are provided by global or local providers, and whether they are temporary or permanent solutions/offers, should also be included.
- To conduct a targeted needs analysis with local English teachers and education officials in each country to better understand current online CPD preferences, needs and what opportunities they would find useful from a global online English Teaching platform/offer.
- Through the landscape review, to establish a baseline of open and freely accessible⁴ digital/online platforms across China, Japan, and South Korea (regional and in-country) that offer digital resources and online English teacher development opportunities which meet local English teachers' needs.
- To identify opportunities and outline options and recommendations for online or, in some markets where relevant, offline⁵ resources, digital English teacher communities, and online professional teacher development opportunities for English teachers that can be made available across China, Japan, and South Korea.
- To propose a holistic and systematic strategy to cover the lifespan of the EES East Asia programme (i.e., 3 years) that helps develop and implement online CPD opportunities and events that meet and/or exceed British Council and FCDO KPIs and lead towards medium-long-term outcomes of the EES programme in the region. Findings should include an evidenced and prioritised tiering of potential activities against potential reach and audience.
- To create a replicable research approach for future English Connects landscape reviews and provide all associated templates for conducting these future reviews and needs analysis in other countries or regions.

Finalised research question content and number will be negotiated with the selected supplier prior to research commencement. Possible research questions may include:

³ Relevant British Council staff who can contribute to the research will be identified and communicated to the selected researcher when research is ready to proceed. The amount of support available will be confirmed at the post-selection negotiation of scope stage.

⁴ Not to include closed platforms of local authorities or where resources are hosted in a closed platform

⁵ Offline = digital content made available through offline sources – storage/data cards for example - that English teachers might access where internet connections are poor, or data costs are a consideration.

- What are British Council currently doing in the region/countries in terms of digital/EdTech/online provision, particularly in the area of English teacher support and English teacher CPD?
- What are ministries, partners, stakeholders, competitors offering?
- Are current digital solutions regarded as temporary or permanent in the current climate?
- What online CPD do English teachers currently engage in? What are their experiences?
- What are the social media habits of English teachers? What are the feelings of English teachers towards social media as part of their CPD?
- How do English teachers and stakeholders in the region currently engage with the TeachingEnglish website (www.teachingenglish.org.uk) offer?
- What are English teachers' motivations for engaging in online CPD? What are their feelings towards online CPD? What are the barriers and enablers for accessing relevant CPD resources?
- What are English teachers' digital support needs? Are they being met?
- What are the range of partnership options for the British Council (either through English Connects or ELT in Education) to reach English teachers in China, Japan and South Korea and offer English teacher CPD opportunities?
- What LMS (Learning Management System) or CMS (Content Management System) specifications do both existing and potential platform partners have?
- What are the options and relative additional benefits for different levels of localisation in China, Japan, and South Korea? e.g., No localisation, Low localisation, High localisation.

Phase 2: CHINA

- To conduct a detailed investigation of the current China social media and online communications landscape that specifically highlights which digital options provide the necessary functionality for moderated English teacher communities in China. This will include an exploration of how localised English Connects events, either adaptations of global offer or locally created offers, can best engage and connect with both local and global audiences and potential partners, and highlight potential challenges through social media.
- To conduct an expanded needs analysis with local English teachers and education officials in both under-developed and developed areas of China to better understand current online social media habits, platforms, events and content preferences for CPD or learning and further, more deeply⁶ explore what opportunities⁷ and features they would find useful from a global online English Teaching platform/offer.
- To assess EES's current local digital engagement models with particular focus on scaling up reach and impact, e.g., local authority portal models and use of KOLs (Key Opinion Leaders) to support video dissemination.
- To consider the feasibility of potential cooperation with national partners to promote and use British Council digital resources, events, and communities to support English teachers in under-developed or disadvantages areas.
- To assess the pros and cons of developing a TeachingEnglish website (TE) country skin in China i.e., pages created in local language or with dedicated local content that are still linked to and hosted by the global platform. The assessment shall include what creating and maintaining a localised skin will involve and consider potential costs, legal issues and risks.
- To ensure exploration of localisation options includes an impact assessment and a projected costing for individual models or pathways, where possible. Impact should be tiered and

⁶ The focus of the needs analysis in China should go beyond the scope of any needs analysis at a regional level

⁷ Content for CPD may include teaching resources, topic areas, communities, events – live and recorded, courses – MOOCs, SPOCs and all other relevant digital options that may be of interest to English teachers. This may overlap with the term digital resources.

prioritised in a cumulative grouping⁸ to reflect potential activities the British Council can undertake against potential reach and audience.

- To create a replicable research approach for future English Connects landscape reviews and provide associated templates for conducting these future reviews and needs analysis in other countries or regions (as highlighted in Phase 1)

Finalised research question content and number will be negotiated with the selected supplier prior to research commencement. Possible research questions may include:

- Which organisations have widest online reach in education in China? How was this achieved? Is it feasible, both legally and financially, that the British Council can replicate that as a foreign cultural relations organisation?
- What are the favoured options⁹ of English teachers for online participation in CPD activities? What are the key factors in this?
- What online CPD do English teachers currently engage in? What are their experiences?
- What are the social media habits of English teachers? What are the feelings of English teachers towards social media as part of their CPD?
- Should the British Council localise the TeachingEnglish website for China? Is there a need for this? What form of localisation is most amenable to local conditions?
- How can current localised project models be scaled up effectively? Is this a feasible option under the Grant in Action funding restrictions¹⁰ and potential reach of such activities?
- What existing online models could be viable in China to help target and build English teacher communities and/or provide CPD opportunities under the English Connects programme?

7.2.3 Key Audiences and Research Users

The key audiences and users of this research could include:

- Ministries of Education
- British Council departments
- National research institutions and think tanks
- Regional and national digital/online platforms/providers
- National/local HE/research institutions
- Academics, practitioners, researchers in EME
- National ELT / Teacher Associations
- Provincial/Local education authorities
- English Teachers and English Teacher Educators
- UK DIT
- UK ELT and EdTech sector
- UK bodies e.g., Universities UK, English UK, Chartered College of Teaching, IATEFL
- Potential UK HE / ELT sector partners
- UNESCO

⁸ i.e., start with key recommendations and their projected reach and audience, and then add further recommended activities to build expected reach and audience cumulatively

⁹ Including platforms, apps or other forms of engagement

¹⁰ e.g., cannot contribute to commercial operations of partners

7.3 Required services and deliverables

7.3.1 Required services and deliverables

The final scope and approach will be determined through negotiation between the British Council and the selected supplier prior to commencement of the research. This will involve input from British Council teams in the 3 identified countries.

The selected supplier will be responsible for producing the following deliverables:

1. *A detailed methodology, approach, workplan and timeframe to achieve the deliverables.* This detailed outline should be prepared within 4 weeks of the contract and agreed with the British Council, with a general outline of proposed methods provided in the initial proposal.

We expect the research to primarily comprise desk-based review, interviews and data analysis covering the outlined geographical region, and that such research methods and approach will be adequate for the scope and depth required to achieve all the objectives. Some online experimentation and testing may be required in each country. The supplier must indicate their proposed methodology in their proposal, although a detailed methodology may be developed after selection and in discussion with the British Council.

2. *Deliver the following outputs, deliverables, reports, and documents*

a. Collection of key statistical data on English teacher CPD offers, opportunities and needs based on research in both phases. The proposed methodology should indicate approaches to the gathering and organisation of this data. Copies of finalised surveys and standardised research tools should be compiled into a toolkit that can be re-used and allow for data to be cross-referenced against future landscape reviews in other regions.

b. Record of key interviews with policy makers, representatives from educational bodies, teachers, British Council staff and any other significant actors at a country and regional level should be kept. British Council offices in Japan, South Korea and China can offer some guidance on local needs and stakeholders who can contribute at the negotiation of scope stage and may provide some limited further support where resources allow. The proposed methodology should indicate further approaches to the identification of these actors and interview approaches.

c. A digital landscape review report for China, Japan, and South Korea. (For internal and external audiences). The exact content of the paper will be defined by the agreed research questions in scope at the negotiation stage.

The report should be presented in a format suitable for publication and dissemination to high-level stakeholders¹¹ within the region. The report will include the following sections:

- ✓ Rationale and purpose of research
- ✓ Externally shareable Executive Summary of key findings and recommendations for external dissemination (not to exceed 6 pages)

¹¹ Stakeholders may include, but is not exclusive to, local ministries of education, regional research organisations and influential think tanks.

- ✓ Literature review incorporating a contextual overview of digital products, services, and content on offer
- ✓ Research scope and questions (If primary research is conducted)
- ✓ Research methodology
- ✓ Data analysis and research findings (incl. needs analysis findings)
- ✓ Specific recommendations on opportunities available as outlined in Section 7 at both country and regional level
- ✓ Bibliography
- ✓ Appendices should include a *summary breakdown of key findings for each of the 3 countries* in the landscape review. This should be suitable for external and internal review and will be presented to each of the country teams as an overview for decision making purposes.

d. An English Connects localisation report for China only, including recommendations on potential strategy and detailed costings (for internal audience only). More specifically this will include:

- ✓ Key conclusions on the feasibility and impact of localised China project models, both current and potential, and their ability to scale up and increase
- ✓ Key, specific recommendations on how to best engage Chinese English teachers in online communities, CPD resources or events
- ✓ Key, specific recommendations on how/whether the British Council might move forward with localisation of global offers that contribute to the English Connects programme, including impact assessment and estimated costings as highlighted above
- ✓ Research toolkit as outlined above, applicable to Phase 2.

e. Research summary presentations. The presentation should 1. provide a summary of the report (s) appropriate for delivery at a policy round table or online conference format, accompanying notes, and other support to be agreed with the British Council, and 2. provide key findings and recommendations that may be of relevance to the teaching community directly. The presentations should be in sufficient detail to be shared both internally and externally and contribute to the British Council's key decision-making and thought leadership position in the region.

f. Landscape review replicable toolkit – Including survey templates, interview materials and methodological guidance on conducting the landscape review in other contexts e.g., replicable tool kit as highlighted in the objectives above.

7.3.2 Review and finalization of reports. The draft reports and research summary presentation will be subject to a review by the British Council. This will likely result in the suggestion of revisions which will require a response by the supplier before the final report can be accepted.

7.3.3 *The value of the contract shall not exceed **GBP 49,999**.*

7.4 Research Management and Stakeholder Engagement

The work of this assignment will be guided by British Council East Asia EES team with support from the global EES team. The British Council East Asia EES team is responsible for managing the research, which includes but is not limited to:

- direct contact point for research manager of the provider

- approving final work plan and deliverables.
- support in identifying interviewees and localisation options where possible
- assessing the completion of services and deliverables against the approved work plan, supported by targets and indicators, prior to paying invoices submitted by the research provider
- providing technical quality assurance on performance and all deliverables
- disseminating deliverables to relevant stakeholders

8 Mandatory Requirements / Constraints

8.1 As part of your tender response, you must confirm that you meet the mandatory requirements / constraints, if any, as set out in the British Council's specification forming part of this RFP. A failure to comply with one or more mandatory requirements or constraints shall entitle the British Council to reject a tender response in full.

9 Qualification Requirements

9.1 As part of your tender response, you must provide all information required in supplier proposal. A failure to submit all information shall entitle the British Council to reject a tender response in full.

9.2 This Request for Proposal must include a dedicated local Chinese partner or research team to support Phase 2 of the proposal. Suppliers having access to available research teams in Japan and Korea would also be preferred. The supplier should propose a team of experts, headed by a lead researcher, which can undertake the tasks mentioned above. It is envisaged that the assignment will be undertaken by a team of experts suitably qualified and experienced in educational research and analysis with additional experience in teacher CPD and EdTech being strongly preferred.

9.2.1 As a parallel ASEAN review will take place there may be some opportunity to coordinate with research teams selected for that study

9.3 Lead researcher

Category and duration of equivalent experience

10+ years of experience undertaking research in areas of English language teaching, training and assessment, with relevant experience or knowledge of digital English teacher CPD.

Experience

- Experience working with international organisations undertaking qualitative and quantitative research in English language in basic education.
- Prior experience of East Asia and an in-depth understanding of the region.
- Experience conducting research on basic education systems in one or more East Asian countries, and a demonstrable understanding of the role regional intergovernmental bodies play in national education systems.

- Excellent analytical skills and confidence with a variety of research methods, as evidenced through past experience in documenting field research, compiling quantitative data or presenting research findings.
- Excellent writing skills.
- Proven ability to work constructively as part of a team in a cross-cultural context and, at times, work under limited guidance to deliver high-quality results.

9.4 Research team

The team undertaking this work will need to demonstrate:

- an academic understanding of issues relating to the high-quality provision of English Language Teaching, Learning and Assessment in basic education, particularly in areas of digital English teacher CPD.
- an understanding of online education in different contexts and related terminologies, including, for example, use of social media, Learner and Content Management Systems and common digital platforms.
- a knowledge and understanding of basic education and education systems policy development in developing contexts, preferably with a specific focus on East Asia and China.
- a track record of conducting similar research projects and reports.
- a track record of working with a range of partner organisations and stakeholders.
- excellent communication skills with people of varying linguistic, educational, socio-economic, and cultural backgrounds.

The British Council particularly encourages partnerships between the UK and East Asia in the development of research teams. The selected supplier may also be required to engage with specific national or regional bodies during the course of the research.

9.5 Prospective suppliers are required to submit **RFP Responses** which contain the following 3 documents to Li Rui (Li.Rui@britishcouncil.org.cn), CCing: Fraser Bewick (fraser.bewick@britishcouncil.org.cn) and Kathleen Zhong (kathleen.zhong@britishcouncil.org.cn) with subject line 'English Connects Feasibility Study – East Asia RFP'

- Technical proposal, specifying the approach to the research brief, methodology and time framework for the research, using Annex [2] template
- Commercial proposal, detailing daily fee rates and other associated costs, using annex [3] template
- Full CV(s) in English, including accounts of previous relevant experience.

10 Key background documents and further information

10.1 Further relevant background documents / information may be provided to potential suppliers as set out below, as an Annex to this RFP and/or by way of the issue of additional documents / links to additional information / documents. Where no such information / documents are provided, this Section of the RFP will not apply.

11 Timescales

11.1 Subject to any changes notified to potential suppliers by the British Council in accordance with the Tender Conditions, the following timescales shall apply to this Procurement Process:

Aug 20, 2021	Request for Proposal (RFP) of research project issued to Chinese and British research institutions / individuals
Sep 14, 2021	Deadline for clarification questions (23:59, UK time)
Sep 17, 2021	Response deadline: submission of RFP responses by potential suppliers using tools provided (23:59, UK time)
Sep 24, 2021	Evaluation and selection of applications
Sep 30, 2021	Feedback and revision provided to selected suppliers
Oct 7-29, 2021	Contracting with selected supplier
Nov 1, 2021	Implementation of research project
Feb 26, 2022	Interim report provided by research project team
March 31, 2022	Initial full reports submitted
June 30, 2022	Final full reports

12 Instructions for Responding

12.1 The documents that must be submitted to form your tender response are listed in Part [2] (Submission Checklist) of Annex [2] (Supplier Response) to this RFP. All documents required as part of your tender response should be submitted to the British Council staff identified in section 9.5 as set out in the Timescales section of this RFP.

12.2 The following requirements should be complied with when submitting your response to this RFP:

- Please ensure that you send your submission in good time to prevent issues with technology – late tender responses may be rejected by the British Council.
- Do not submit any additional supporting documentation with your RFP response except where specifically requested to do so as part of this RFP. PDF, JPG, PPT, Word and Excel formats can be used for any additional supporting documentation (other formats should not be used without the prior written approval of the British Council).
- All attachments/supporting documentation should be provided separately to your main tender response and clearly labelled to make it clear as to which part of your tender response it relates.
- If you submit a generic policy/document, you must indicate the page and paragraph reference that is relevant to a particular part of your tender response.
- Unless otherwise stated as part of this RFP or its Annexes, all tender responses should be in the format of the relevant British Council requirement with your response to that requirement inserted underneath.
- Where supporting evidence is requested as ‘or equivalent’ you must demonstrate such equivalence as part of your tender response.
- Any deliberate alteration of a British Council requirement as part of your tender response will invalidate your tender response to that requirement and for evaluation purposes you shall be deemed not to have responded to that particular requirement.
- Responses should be concise, unambiguous, and should directly address the requirement stated.

- Your tender responses to the tender requirements and pricing will be incorporated into the Contract, as appropriate.

13 Clarification Requests

13.1 All clarification requests should be addressed by email to kathleen.zhong@britishcouncil.org.cn by the Clarification Deadline, as set out in the Timescales section of this RFP. The British Council is under no obligation to respond to clarification requests received after the Clarification Deadline.

13.2 Any clarification requests should clearly reference the appropriate paragraph in the RFP documentation and, to the extent possible, should be aggregated rather than sent individually.

13.3 The British Council reserves the right to issue any clarification request made by you, and the response, to all potential suppliers unless you expressly require it to be kept confidential at the time the request is made. If the British Council considers the contents of the request not to be confidential, it will inform you and you will have the opportunity to withdraw the clarification query prior to the British Council responding to all potential suppliers.

13.4 The British Council may at any time request further information from potential suppliers to verify or clarify any aspects of their tender response or other information they may have provided. Should you not provide supplementary information or clarifications to the British Council by any deadline notified to you, your tender response may be rejected in full, and you may be disqualified from this procurement process.

14 Evaluation Criteria

14.1 You will have your tender response evaluated as set out below:

Stage 1: Tender responses will be checked to ensure that they have been completed correctly and all necessary information has been provided. Tender responses correctly completed with all relevant information being provided will proceed to Stage 2. Any tender responses not correctly completed in accordance with the requirements of this RFP and/or containing omissions may be rejected at this point. Where a tender response is rejected at this point it will automatically be disqualified and will not be further evaluated.

Stage 2: The completed Qualification Questionnaire (*if used*) will then be reviewed to confirm that the potential supplier meets all of the qualification criteria set out in the questionnaire. Potential suppliers that meet the qualification criteria will proceed to Stage 3. Potential suppliers that do not meet the qualification criteria set out in the Qualification Questionnaire (*if used*) may be excluded from the Procurement Process at this point. Where a potential supplier is excluded at this point, its tender response will be rejected in full and not evaluated further and the supplier will automatically be disqualified from this Procurement Process.

Stage 3: If a bidder succeeds in passing Stages 1 and 2 of the evaluation, then it will have its detailed tender response to the British Council's requirements evaluated in accordance with the evaluation methodology set out below. Information provided as part of Qualification Questionnaire (*if used*) responses may also be verified as part of this stage.

14.2 Award Criteria – Responses from potential suppliers will be assessed to determine the selected tender through the following criteria and weightings and will be assessed entirely on your response submitted:

Criteria	Weighting
Academic qualifications and experience of team members	25%
Track record in relevant research and publications	15%
Methodology	25%
Understanding and readiness to explore issues in Online English teacher CPD, EdTech and related social media in developing contexts, East Asia and China	15%
Value for Money	20%

14.3 Scoring Model – Tender responses will be subject to an initial review at the start of Stage 3 of the evaluation process. Any tender responses not meeting mandatory requirements or constraints (if any) will be rejected in full at this point and will not be assessed or scored further. Tender responses not so rejected will be scored by an evaluation panel appointed by the British Council for all criteria other than Commercial using the following scoring model:

Points	Interpretation
10	Excellent – Overall the response demonstrates that the bidder meets all areas of the requirement and provides all of the areas evidence requested in the level of detail requested. This, therefore, is a detailed excellent response that meets all aspects of the requirement leaving no ambiguity as to whether the bidder can meet the requirement.
7	Good – Overall the response demonstrates that the bidder meets all areas of the requirement and provides all of the areas of evidence requested but contains some trivial omissions in relation to the level of detail requested in terms of either the response or the evidence. This, therefore, is a good response that meets all aspects of the requirement with only a trivial level ambiguity due the bidder’s failure to provide all information at the level of detail requested.
5	Adequate – Overall the response demonstrates that the bidder meets all areas of the requirement, but not all of the areas of evidence requested have been provided. This, therefore, is an adequate response, but with some limited ambiguity as to whether the bidder can meet the requirement due to the bidder’s failure to provide all of the evidence requested.
3	Poor – The response does not demonstrate that the bidder meets the requirement in one or more areas. This, therefore, is a poor response with significant ambiguity as to whether the bidder can meet the requirement due to the failure by the bidder to show that it meets one or more areas of the requirement.
0	Unacceptable – The response is non-compliant with the requirements of the RFP and/or no response has been provided.

14.4 Commercial Evaluation – Your “Overall Price” (as calculated in accordance with requirements of Annex [3] (Pricing Approach) for the goods and/or services will be evaluated by the evaluation panel for the purposes of the commercial evaluation. Prices must not be subject to any pricing assumptions, qualifications or indexation not provided for explicitly by the British Council as part of the pricing approach.

In the event that any prices are expressed as being subject to any pricing assumptions, qualifications or indexation not provided for by the British Council as part of the pricing approach, the British Council may reject the full tender response at this point. The British Council may also reject any tender response where the Overall Price for the goods and/or services is considered by the British Council to be abnormally low following the relevant processes set out under the EU procurement rules. A maximum offer score of 10 will be awarded to the tender response offering the lowest "Overall Price". Other tender responses will be awarded a mark by application of the following formula: (Lowest Overall Price/Overall Price being evaluated) x 10 (rounded to two decimal places) = commercial score.

14.5 Moderation and application of weightings – The evaluation panel appointed for this procurement will meet to agree and moderate scores for each award criteria. Final scores in terms of a percentage of the overall tender score will be obtained by applying the relevant weighting factors set out as part of the award criteria table above. The percentage scores for each award criteria will be amalgamated to give a percentage score out of 100.

14.6 The winning tender response – The winning tender response shall be the tender response scoring the highest percentage score out of 100 when applying the above evaluation methodology, which is also supported by any required verification evidence (to include, without limitation, any updated information or references relating to any Qualification Question responses) obtained by the Authority relating to any self-certification or other requirements referred to in the Qualification Questionnaire (*if used*). If any verification evidence requested from a supplier, or a relevant third party as may be referred to by the supplier in the Qualification Questionnaire (*if used*) as a party prepared to provide such information, is not provided in accordance with any timescales specified by the British Council and/or any evidence reviewed by the British Council (whose decision shall be final) does not demonstrate compliance with any such requirement, the British Council may reject that tender response in full and disqualify the potential winning supplier from the Procurement Process at that point.

