

NOTIFICATION – FUNDING OPPORTUNITY FOR COLLABORATION WITH CHINESE EXCELLENCE LEAGUE (E9) GROUP OF UNIVERSITIES

CONTEXT

The Excellence League was established in 2010 in order to improve the quality of engineering research and teaching within China through collaboration within the group and relevant international partners. It is composed of the following subset of Project 985 universities:

- Beijing Institute of Technology (<http://english.bit.edu.cn/>);
- Chongqing University (<http://study.cqu.edu.cn/IndexOfEnglish/Index>)
- Dalian University of Technology (<http://en.dlut.edu.cn/>)
- Harbin Institute of Technology (<http://en.hit.edu.cn/>)
- Hunan University (<http://www-en.hnu.edu.cn/>)
- Northwestern Polytechnical University (<http://en.nwpu.edu.cn/>)
- South China University of Technology (<http://en.scut.edu.cn/>)
- Southeast University (<http://www.seu.edu.cn/english/>)
- Tianjin University (<http://www.tju.edu.cn/english/>)
- Tongji University (<http://www.tongji.edu.cn/english/>)

PROPOSAL

During the September 2016 delegation to Shanghai by Jo Johnson MP, Minister for Universities and Science, the British Council China, E9 and Universities UK International signed a Statement of Intent. The objective of this is:

- To develop a platform that promotes strategic engagement and collaboration in higher education between a UK-China university consortium.
- To strengthen bilateral cooperation in an increasingly competitive global environment and support both countries' industrial ambitions.
- To further develop collaborative partnership on the principle of equality and mutual benefit.

To take this work forward a self-composed consortium of UK universities is being sought to act as the UK partner to the E9. It is expected that the final China-UK partnership could include collaboration in postgraduate student and staff mobility, joint research, transnational education including masters and PhD, doctoral training and developing industry links.

FUNDING

The funding for the UK consortium is subject to final confirmation but expected to be approximately £200,000 of project funding from the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy for 2016/2017. This funding is not subject to ODA requirements. The funding is intended to support the project start up costs associated with the setting up of the partnership and liaison with E9 in China. This includes a secretariat function to be based within a member of the UK university consortium.

In the first instance there is a commitment for the UK consortium to run the project for at least period of three years up till 2020.

From 2017-2020, consortium members shall be expected to fund the running of the consortium and secretariat office as well as contribute institutional resource for any agreed joint activities with E9.

UK CONSORTIUM DESIGN

The expectation is that the lead institution shall host the funded secretariat function though this is not required. The design of the consortium is to be defined by its members but would



ideally be composed of a similar number of institutions to the E9 and include universities with established complementary expertise in engineering.

The ambition is for the collaboration to be self-sustaining, yielding tangible results in postgraduate exchange and research outcomes. In the long term, a suitable goal may be for the creation of dedicated physical infrastructure to support collaborative activities.

APPLICATION

Formal applications are invited from UK consortium. Applications should include details upon the lead and member institutions, evidence of strength in engineering and demonstration of previous successful work within China.

Given the short timeframe, applications are welcomed from individual or small groups of universities that would seek to join others in a consortium.

The exact scope of the partnership shall be defined latterly through discussion between the UK consortium and the E9 facilitated by British Council China. However, applications should give some indication of the types of activities that they would like to pursue within the scope of the partnership over the initial three-year time frame.

TIMELINE

Applications should be sent to meng.wenjing@britishcouncil.org.cn by close of the day on Friday 23 December 2016.

Applications shall be judged by a panel including representatives of British Council China, the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and independent representatives from the UK sector. Successful applicants will be informed in the week commencing Monday 16 January 2017.

Senior representatives (Vice-Chancellor or Pro-Vice Chancellor) from at least the lead, and ideally, other participating institutions should be available to travel to Shanghai no later than end February 2017 to meet with senior representatives of the E9 universities to discuss the collaboration.

IMPLEMENTATION

Successful applicants must agree to the terms and conditions which will be stipulated in the agreement. The agreement will be signed with the British Council China.

Funded projects will be expected to provide progress updates and annual achievement reports based on the milestones agreed at the time of approval. A project manager from the British Council China will monitor all projects. The British Council may also commission independent evaluations.

A detailed record of activities, including important communications, documents and spending, must always be kept in case an external audit is carried out.

