Call for Proposals: Advanced ICT Skills Course Development and Delivery in the Commonwealth Countries

In the current six-year strategic plan (2021-2027) the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) will foster an enabling environment for digital transformation in Commonwealth countries. Within this framework, COL seeks to collaborate and support advanced ICT skills development for improving employment and entrepreneurship for youths.

With 60 percent of the Commonwealth’s population under 30 years of age, the skilling of youth is a top priority for governments. Since 2015, COL has developed several courses. Recognising the need for skilling the youths, especially the marginalised, women and girls, and persons with disabilities, and the employment opportunities in the field of digital media and ICTs to improve their livelihoods, COL’s focus in 2021-2027 shall be to collaborate and develop new open courses that can be offered at scale and use the existing courses to provide training and livelihoods opportunities at local levels in Commonwealth countries. This strategy is based on the increasing availability of courses with an open license for reuse, and the need for offering targeted training for those who need the most.

COL works with recognised educational institutions and civil society organisations to offer advanced ICT skills courses to reach learners across the Commonwealth. All courses developed by partner institutions under this project are available as OER under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike (international) (CC BY-SA) licence.

Educational institutions with expertise in various areas of advanced ICT skills collaborate with COL to develop courses that are immediately needed to decrease the skills gap and improve employment opportunities for youths. Before venturing into a partnership to develop a course, COL confirms that relevant OER are not already available; if they are, COL suggests that partner institutions check the materials’ suitability for local needs. Partner institutions take responsibility for the following:

- Receiving course approval from statutory bodies at the institutional and/or national level (if required)
- Partnering with skill-development agencies and/or industry at the national level for accreditation
- Developing the courses and conducting quality assurance
- Teaching the courses, registering learners and providing learner support
- Providing certification as well as placement support
- Providing COL with data related to enrolment and placement

Civil Society Organisations can also develop new courses in collaboration with other educational institutions or offer training courses using already existing OER courses.

The main objective of the Advanced ICT skills development project is to improve the livelihoods of learners, especially those who are marginalized, women and girls, and persons with disabilities. In collaboration with partner institutions, COL intends to:

- increase access to quality learning opportunities for livelihoods;
• Support learners with advanced ICT skills to access job opportunities;
• Connect skilled individual to financial institutions to start their own enterprise.

The Call for Proposal

Eligibility: This call is for recognised educational institutions (colleges and universities) and civil society organisations willing to offer advanced ICT skills courses offering courses and programmes in the Commonwealth countries.

Number of institutions: Five. COL intends to support five new organisation during 2021-2022 financial year. COL’s financial year starts on July 1.

Last Date to submit a Proposal: August 20, 2021.

Nature of the Partnership: This is not a call for funding support. It is a call for collaboration to develop advanced ICT skills courses, offer training and support employment and entrepreneurship. If selected, COL and the selected organization will enter into a Contribution Agreement (with limited funding support for activities). As such, most of the COL support comes in terms of technical advice, providing online courses, and external expertise needed to implement the course development and delivery.

Duration: One year. While it is expected that the COL supported activities are continued by the partner institution after the successful implementation in the year one, COL may continue to support running of the project beyond to provide support to additional cohorts.

Selection Process: All submissions will be reviewed by COL using the following criteria:

1) Alignment of the institutions policies and commitment to COL’s strategic plan (2021-2027) and policies.
2) Committed resources for implementation of TEL. A budget in CAD indicating the cost of the activities in unit terms and contribution of the partner institution. Please note that COL does not support purchase of equipment to support activities in a contribution agreement. All infrastructure related costs shall be the responsibility of the partner institution.
3) Availability of the expertise and network to support student placement and connection with financial institutions.
4) A realistic timeline and plan for implementation of TEL.
5) Expected and potential impact for learners. Indicate the number of learners to be support in year one and for the next five years.

COL may increase/decrease the number of institutions to support during the year 2021-2022. COL reserves the right not to collaborate with any organisation without assigning any reason. If your proposal is not accepted, you will be intimated about it. However, no further queries related to non-acceptance of the proposal will be entertained.
Proposal: Your proposal must include the following:

1) A letter of commitment to collaborate on Advanced ICT skills course development and delivery from the head of the institution, indicating the name and designation of the project lead and other people proposed to the involved.

2) A brief about the organisation indicating status of recognition in the country and sources of funding.

3) Proposal including the courses (up to 4 courses) to be developed; course delivery model (face to face, blended, online), proposed activities aligned with COL’s strategic plan, a timeline for achieving results, including expected outputs and outcomes, and the proposed budget (including expected contribution form the institutions, COL and other sources). Indicate expected cost per learners.

Process: Interested organisation to collaborate may nominate a contact person to take the following steps:

1) Register for the “Advanced ICT skills course: Information Session” to be held on **August 11, 2021** at 9 am (Vancouver time). Check for your time Zone [here](#).

2) Submit the proposal, preferably in one PDF file, on or before **August 20, 2021** by email to COL at **tel@col.org** with “AICTC development and Delivery” on the subject line.

Timelines

- Announcement: July 25, 2021
- Advanced ICT skills course: Information Session: August 11, 2021
- Proposal Due: August 20, 2021