Call for Proposals: Technology-Enabled Learning Implementation 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 the systematic implementation of technology-enabled learning (TEL) in educational institutions.

COL’s TEL implementation model recognises the transformative power of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to improve access and increase quality of learning. Accordingly, COL takes an ecosystem approach to TEL implementation that focuses on Policy-Technology-Capacity for integrating ICTs in teaching and learning. Use of appropriate technologies in context, including creating and curating open educational resources (OER) is important for success of the TEL model. Use of blended learning, mobile devices, and massive open online courses (MOOCs) have emerged as important approaches taken by many institutions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, institutions with robust policy, appropriate technology, and skilled teachers with capacities to use technology for teaching and learning were able to adopt and make the transition to online learning easily. COL has supported over 15 institutions to implement TEL in a systematic manner. Some of the successful implementations are documented in the publication entitled “Technology-Enabled Learning: Policy, Pedagogy and Practice”.

The main objective of the TEL implementation project is to improve the effectiveness of educational institutions to leverage the power of TEL. Participating institutions engage in a range of activities leading to:

- increased use of ICTs by students and teachers for teaching and learning;
- availability of more courses using online and blended strategies for teaching and learning;
- a gender-responsive approach to integration of ICTs in teaching and learning;
- student learning through use of ICTs; and
- sustainable use of ICTs for dissemination of teaching and learning materials.

The TEL Implementation Model

TEL implementation in each of the partner institutions starts with an expression of interest from senior management in adopting a systematic approach for the successful implementation of TEL in their respective institutions. This call for proposal is part of that expression of interest. To exercise evidence-based decision-making, COL adopts a scholarly approach by following a three-phase model of TEL implementation.

Phase 1 includes a baseline study of the institution via a survey of ICT use by teachers and students; a Policy Review and Infrastructure Audit (PRIA) of the institution; the development of a draft report and a draft policy for TEL; consultation with institutional stakeholders through a visioning workshop; approval of the policy by the appropriate statutory bodies of the
institution; capacity-building for the implementation of TEL; and the development of an implementation plan for two to three years. In Phase 2, COL provides advice on how to strengthen the infrastructure (the learning management system and open access repositories, in particular) and offers expertise to build local capacities to use ICTs for teaching and learning. The major focus of Phase 2 is institutionalising the TEL policy by developing blended courses and offering them to students. COL supports a blended course development workshop and provides services of a mentor to ensure quality of the courses. In Phase 3, COL encourages evaluative research in student learning and teacher pedagogical changes, involvement in the TEL Community of Practice and voluntary engagement in benchmarking of TEL.

**Key Outputs and Outcomes**
Partner institutions that implement TEL using the model can demonstrate the following:
- Availability of baseline reports on student and teacher access to technologies
- Collaborative policy development for TEL
- Evidence of improving student learning
- Improved capacity to offer blended courses
- Faculty engagement in an international Community of Practice
- Benchmarking TEL implementation practice
- Faculty participation in massive open online courses (MOOCs) offered by COL.

**The Call for Proposal**

*Eligibility:* This call is only for recognised educational institutions (colleges and universities) offering courses and programmes in the Commonwealth countries. Institutions already implementing TEL with COL support or in advances stages of TEL implementation need not respond to this call for proposal.

*Number of institutions:* Five. COL intends to support five new institutions during the 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 implement TEL. If selected, COL and the educational institution will enter into a Contribution Agreement (with limited funding support for activities). As such, most of the COL support is in terms of technical advice, providing online courses, and providing external expertise needed to implement TEL systematically.

**Duration:** 2-3 years. While the project will be implemented in three phases, the overall implementation period will depend on the speed of activities.

**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 estimated year-wise implementation cost. 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. A realistic timeline and plan for implementation of TEL.
4. Expected and potential impact for learners.

COL may increase/decrease the number of institutions to support during the year 2021-2022.

COL reserves the right not to collaborate with any institution without assigning any reason. If your proposal is not accepted, you will be informed 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 TEL implementation from the head of the institution, indicating the name and designation of the project lead and other departments/positions proposed to be involved in the project.
2. A brief about the educational institution indicating the status of recognition in the country and sources of funding.
3. Proposal including how the TEL implementation process is aligned to the institution’s mission and vision, proposed activities aligned with COL’s TEL implantation, a timeline for 2-3 years indicating the specific expected outputs and outcomes, and the proposed budget for three years (including expected contribution form the institutions, COL and other sources).

**Process:** Interested educational institutions to implement TEL, may nominate a contact person to take the following steps:
1) **Register** for the “TEL implementation: Information Session” to be held on **August 10, 2021** at 9 am (Vancouver time). Check for your time Zone [here](#).

2) Submit the proposal, in one PDF file, on or before **August 20, 2021** by email to COL at [tel@col.org](mailto:tel@col.org) with “TELI Proposal” as the subject line.

**Timelines**

- Announcement: July 25, 2021
- TEL Implementation info session: August 10, 2021
- Proposal Due: August 20, 2021
- Selection of institutions: September 30, 2021.