

Annex 5: Terms of Reference

Overall Objective: *to assess the effectiveness of using mobile messenger apps, for delivery of Continuous Professional Development to English teachers, identifying both best practices and areas for improvement, and providing recommendations to increase efficacy.*

The British Council requires a Consultant to conduct research on the use of mobile messenger apps to deliver Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers of English. This research will include carrying out desk research on the topic, producing a literature review looking at the effectiveness of online vs face-to-face CPD, and examining as a case study the work of the British Council in providing CPD in this way to teachers of English in rural schools in Chiapas, México. The case study will draw from existing monitoring and evaluation evidence, and from upcoming evidence from class observations that we plan to conduct in Chiapas, and from surveys to be administered by the Consultant. The research will pull together credible evidence from these sources to assess the effectiveness of this way of delivering CPD, identify best practices and areas for improvement, and making recommendations based on evidence.

This research will be focused on CPD delivered through mobile phone messenger apps (e.g., WhatsApp and Telegram), in comparison with other forms of online and face-to-face CPD. Through the chosen case study, it will be looking at the effectiveness of this type of CPD efficiency, how teachers feel about it, the advantages and disadvantages, and practices that contribute to or detriment its efficacy.

1. Background

English Connects is a British Council global programme that has as its main focus offering support to English teachers and access to opportunities for CPD. In the case of the British Council in Mexico (as in other countries in Latin America), the organisation provides these opportunities to teachers in rural areas, who are frequently excluded due to their location and the difficulty to reach them through traditional methods. The tools that are being used to provide teachers in rural areas with CPD are WhatsApp and Telegram.

The training programme conducted by the British Council in Chiapas, Mexico, was provided for a total of 365 participants, from which 325 completed the course. The course included 20 study hours, distributed in different phases:

- 10 asynchronous activities with the model of flipped classroom.
- 10 synchronous sessions with an online tutor.
- 10 activities to compensate absences to the workshops, in the case that teachers had not been able to attend.
- 2 face-to-face sessions for the proper implementation of the programme, delivery of materials, analysis of objectives, knowledge consolidation and data collection for analysis and evaluation of the final product.

During the implementation of the programme, different aspects were evaluated, and data was collected:

- The participants were given a self-assessment test to evaluate their pedagogical needs before starting the programme and after having completed it.
- A quality survey was conducted to the participants after the end of the course to assess their perspectives on the programme.
- Data was collected during the implementation of the programme on attendance, participation, completion of tasks and drop-outs.
- Photographic evidence and video testimonials from the teachers were collected.

In addition to the mentioned above, during 2023 the British Council Mexico expects to carry out classroom observation before and after implementing a new CPD module, which will provide further data. If timings allow, this data should be considered in the research that is being commissioned in the present Terms of Reference.

2. Purpose of the research

Phase one will entail the Consultant conducting thorough desk research on the use of mobile messenger apps (Telegram and WhatsApp in particular) for CPD, to produce an academic literature review of evidence available for and against this form of CPD. After this, and in the light of the desk research, the Consultant will then, in phase two, conduct a case study on the work that the British Council is carrying out in Chiapas, México, in terms of the effectiveness of using of mobile messenger apps for CPD.

The focus will be on the use of tools such as WhatsApp and (principally) Telegram (as well as any other low-tech solutions) as platforms for CPD, their effectiveness in achieving the desired impact on teacher development, listing any advantages and disadvantages, and recommending best practices to increase said efficacy (e.g. do's and don'ts).

The questions that the Consultant should aim to answer through this research are the following:

- How effective are mobile messenger apps as a means to deliver CPD be in comparison with alternative forms of online and face-to-face CPD?
 - What are the limitations?
 - What potential exists to improve on how this is done now?
 - What support is needed when delivering CPD through messenger apps beyond what is already being done?
- How effective is the British Council's existing methodology for implementing mobile messenger app. CPD, based on the project in Chiapas?
 - What are the limitations?
 - What potential for improvement exist?
 - Should the current blended approach (i.e. percentage face-to face vs online) be changed in any way?

3. The Task

The Consultant will **identify and collate credible evidence from primary and secondary sources, presented in a clear narrative** structure, to achieve the following:

- Examine the effectiveness of the use of messenger apps to deliver CPD to English teachers.
- Identify practices that contribute to efficacy.
- Identify and suggest areas for improvement.
- Produce recommendations for changing the implementation of this programme.
- Identify in the literature good practices for messenger app CPD in general, especially as it pertains to the Latin America context.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the consultant will conduct:

- A thorough desk research to review the existing relevant literature and evidence available, and any consensus on the topic of CPD online vs face-to-face.
- A case study on the work that the British Council is carrying out in Chiapas, México, with regards to mobile messenger apps to deliver CPD. This will include analysis of existing evidence and conducting new surveys to participants.

The Consultant will fulfil the task objectives taking the following into account:

- The **methodological design** of the research, with expected dates for the deliverables (phase one and phase two reports) that should not exceed the end of December 2023.
- It is expected the phase one **Desk Research** should be carried out between June and August, to identify relevant literature and evidence on the topic.
- Simultaneous to the desk research, **review and analysis of the findings along with programme documentation and data** from different sources to identify credible evidence that could help start finding answers to the evaluation questions should be undertaken.
- A report should be submitted at the end of phase one with proposed follow-up actions to better understand (ie. surveys, focus groups, etc.)
- The **design and conduction of surveys / focus groups** with programme participants. Access will be facilitated by the British Council, and it is expected these will be completed online.
- The second output will be the **production of an internal report** in English, with an assessment of the effectiveness of this way of conducting CPD, with a special focus on the British Council CPD programme in Chiapas and evidence-based recommendations to improve it. The report should set out, in a clear narrative form, the programme's effectiveness in terms of its objectives and drawing on the evidence from the desk research and from the data from the programme's implementation. The report should include a one-page executive summary and visuals (i.e., graphs) to make it easier to read. A first version will be sent to the British Council for its review, and the British Council team will provide feedback to be included in the final version (timeline to be agreed upon)
- The **production of a public-facing brief document** (third output) that outlines best practices for messenger-based CPD that can be put into practice by other actors and organisations.
- The presentation of main findings in an **online event** in February 2024 (most likely to coincide with the BBELT conference)
- Optional: The presentation of main findings alongside a British Council representative at **IATEFL conference in April 2024**.

4. Location

The research can be conducted remotely. We are not expecting the Consultant to do study visits but rather to analyse data and conduct surveys with participants online; and attend virtual meetings with the British Council team when needed and as agreed between the parties. Please note that the Consultant will be contacted and meetings will be scheduled within working hours in the time zones of Argentina and Mexico. The British Council will facilitate access to the participants of the case study in Mexico and other stakeholders the Consultant identifies for surveys/focus groups.

5. Governance

The Consultant will report to Victoria Maineri (British Council Argentina English Project Manager) and British Council team for all contractual and logistical issues as well as for all implementation and finance activities. A timeline of meetings and deliverables will be agreed in the initial Briefing Meeting before the evaluation commences.

Clear lines of communication with regular monitoring and progress reporting will be established to ensure the study is completed within the agreed timelines, with expected quality, and to ensure any risks or issues are raised promptly as the work progresses.

Key outputs may also be independently quality assured through the British Council's quality assurance framework agreement.

6. Consultant qualifications

The British Council seeks an experienced independent consultant to design and undertake this study, to gather credible and contextualised evidence in response to the evaluation questions.

The Consultant will be selected through a limited competitive tender process.

- 5+ years of experience in designing, leading and managing field and desk-based studies and data analysis.
- Strong experience in a range of analytical methods, including innovative qualitative approaches and undertaking case studies.
- Experience (and understanding of challenges) in undertaking research and evaluations in ELT in Continuous Professional Development programmes.
- Experience in data collation, analysis and synthesis, and gathering learning.
- Experience of conducting studies in development contexts working with local teams, specifically in international development programmes governed by bilateral or multilateral partnerships.
- Demonstrated experience in the production of high quality and timely reports.
- Interpersonal and communication skills.
- Languages: bilingual in English and Spanish.

7. The proposal and additional documents

Suppliers should use the Supplier Response Templates and respond in English and preferably on a PDF format. They are free to include additional documents to support their qualifications provided that they follow specifications in the instructions for responding on the Request for Proposal.

8. Pricing

Applicants must include in their submission the total cost of the research, including taxes (if applicable) and any other considerations to ensure deliverables. Please bear in mind that reports will be delivered without design. A communications agency will be separately contracted for the designing of the report and the infographics.

8. Deliverables and schedule (to be agreed with the Consultant)

Initial briefing meeting	August 3, 2023
Desk research output (complete list of materials reviewed)	September 4, 2023
First version of the internal report with recommendations	October 16, 2023
Final version of the internal report, having addressed feedback	November 27, 2023
Participation in online event	TBC
Participation in IATEFL conference	April 2024