



## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### Using technology to accelerate teacher professional development towards achieving SDG 4: Landscape review and research agenda

Released by: Digital Learning for Development (DL4D) and TPD@Scale Coalition for the Global South  
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## 1. DL4D, TPD@Scale Coalition for the Global South, IDRC, UKAid, and USAID

**Digital Learning for Development (DL4D)** is a global research network that aims to improve educational systems in developing countries through expanding understanding about digital learning, fostering collaboration on research, testing digital learning innovations, and scaling proven ones. It is part of the Information Networks in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (INASSA) program funded jointly by Canada's **International Development Research Centre (IDRC)** and the United Kingdom's **Department for International Development (UKAid)**, and administered by the **Foundation for Information Technology Education and Development (FIT-ED)** of the Philippines.

**TPD@Scale Coalition for the Global South** is a collaborative effort of ministries of education and other government agencies; international organizations; development agencies; non-governmental organizations; universities, education colleges, and training institutions; research and policy centers; private corporations; and other education and technology stakeholders. The Coalition aims to contribute to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 4 — ensure inclusive and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all — by promoting quality, equitable, and sustainable large-scale, ICT-mediated teacher professional development through collaboration, research, and implementation support.

The research project under this Call will be jointly funded by IDRC, UKAid, and the **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**. These three institutions are members of the **Mobiles for Education Alliance** and this publication will join the other series of landscape reviews jointly designed by Alliance members.

## 2. Introduction

A critical bottleneck in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 is a massive teacher shortage in terms of quantity and quality. UNESCO estimates that 68.8 million teachers need to be recruited and trained in developing countries if the goal of universal enrollment in primary and secondary education is to be achieved by 2030 (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2016). At the same time, existing teachers are often poorly prepared. In sub-Saharan Africa and in the Caribbean, around a quarter of secondary school teachers have had no formal training (UNESCO, 2016). The attrition rate among public primary school teachers in sub-Saharan Africa is as much as 15% (UNESCO, 2016) while an estimated 20% of instructional time is lost in Latin America and the Caribbean due to absenteeism and inadequate preparation (Bruns & Luque, 2015).

The provision of high quality teacher professional development (TPD) to all teachers, from pre-service to induction to in-service, poses a challenge for many countries, especially those in the Global South where there are limited resources and significant rural-urban, regional, and other gaps. Addressing these gaps requires innovative approaches to TPD.

Information and communication technologies (ICT) have the potential to contribute to inclusive, high-quality, and cost-effective TPD. The term “teacher professional development at scale” (TPD@Scale) as used here derives from “learning at scale” or L@S, referring to large-scale, ICT-mediated learning environments that engage large numbers of learners, remotely and/or face-to-face, with limited expert

intervention.<sup>1</sup> The MOOC (massive open online course) is the most well-known variant of L@S, but other forms exist and are emerging: open courseware, intelligent tutoring systems, learning games, and a variety of peer learning networks and collaborative communities. TPD@Scale focuses on teachers as learners and as part of a professional learning community that engages in continuous TPD. Informed by the principles of effective TPD and depending on the particular contexts of the teachers, teacher education institutions, and schools, approaches to TPD@Scale may be “blended,” combining online and offline methods, modalities, resources, and activities when and where appropriate.

### 3. Research questions and methodology

Eligible individuals and institutions (*see Section 5*) are invited to submit a proposal to conduct a landscape review of TPD@Scale models across the Global South and develop a research agenda to inform governments and implementers in the Global South on the use of ICT to advance equity, quality, and efficiency in TPD.

#### 3a. Landscape review

This review should provide a **comprehensive overview** of the state of ICT-mediated TPD on a large scale for **primary and secondary education teachers** across the Global South. While much is known about the principles of effective TPD,<sup>2</sup> there is significantly less research on models in developing countries that use ICT in some way to apply these principles at scale. The review should also seek to understand the **key principles and components of design, development, and deployment** of large-scale, ICT-mediated TPD programs in developing country contexts by examining both successful and less successful cases.

Specific research questions to be covered:

1. What models of TPD@Scale have been designed/adapted for and deployed in developing country contexts? What are the key features of these TPD@Scale models? How are these models implemented? What are the impacts of these models with respect to equity, quality, and efficiency?
2. How do educational, infrastructural, technological, socio-cultural, and economic factors affect the impact and sustainability of TPD@Scale across the range of developing country contexts (e.g., from low-resourced to high-resourced environments)?
3. What are the key lessons in learning design, development, and deployment generated from the experience of these TPD@Scale models?
4. What are the key inclusion-related challenges (e.g., gender, disability) involved in TPD@Scale in developing country contexts? What are some successes and failures to address such inclusion issues in TPD@Scale implementations?

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the proceedings from the ACM Conference on Learning at Scale for a sense of the breadth and depth of the work being done in this emerging research field: <https://learningatscale.acm.org/las2014/>, <https://learningatscale.acm.org/las2015/>, <https://learningatscale.acm.org/las2016/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/effective-teacher-professional-development-brief>

Answering these questions will involve several tasks.

1. Comprehensive review of white and grey literature.
2. Email survey of funders and implementers looking at uncovering innovative models, as well as the challenges and lessons in design, development, and deployment.
3. Structured interviews and/or focused group discussions with government agencies and other relevant stakeholders to gain insight on their current TPD@Scale practices and challenges, and their knowledge of TPD@Scale models. These interviews shall include research agenda-related questions and probe information needs and preferred means of receiving that information (see 3b below).
4. Conduct at least two stakeholder consultations to validate preliminary findings and gather further inputs and insights for the landscape review and research agenda. These consultations will be organized by DL4D and the TPD@Scale for the Global South Coalition.

Depending upon the results of the consultations with government agencies and implementers (see 3b below), other research questions might be added to the review.

### 3b. Government/implementer-focused research agenda

The research agenda should be clearly defined and should prioritize research questions relevant and actionable for governments and implementers interested in employing proven TPD@Scale models and techniques. The development of this agenda will draw from the activities of and insights from the landscape review.

The research agenda and landscape review will be packaged as appropriate for different identified audiences.

### **4. Project duration and funding scope**

Project start date is anticipated for 16 June 2018. The research must be completed within 8.5 months, including all research activities and final reporting.

Proposed costs must not exceed **USD \$20,000**. They should exclude travel for stakeholder consultations organized by DL4D/the Coalition.

### **5. Eligibilities and qualifications**

- All individuals and institutions, including for-profit firms, non-profit organizations, and academic institutions, with the capability to undertake research are eligible for this award.
- The research team must have knowledge of:
  - the theory and practice of TPD;
  - learning at scale (MOOCs, open courseware, learning games, intelligent tutoring systems, peer learning networks, collaborative communities, and other emerging forms), online and blended learning, learning analytics, and other related uses of technology for learning
  - issues and challenges related to TPD in developing country contexts at both system and individual levels
  - the lived experience and politics of oppression of marginalized populations, including those marginalized due to disability and gender

## 6. Selection criteria

Proposals will be assessed against criteria described below.

Criterion	Weight (%)
<b>Research objectives and relevance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● well-developed and realistic objectives based on research questions</li><li>● clear articulation of the intended users and uses of the research outputs</li><li>● relevance of study to TPD, ICT for education, and SDG 4</li></ul>	10
<b>Theoretical foundation and literature review</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● robustness and appropriateness of the theoretical approach</li><li>● critical review of up-to-date knowledge on the topic</li></ul>	10
<b>Research methods</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● adequacy and appropriateness of study design to achieve the research objectives</li><li>● clear description of methods and rigor and appropriateness of methods for data gathering and analysis</li></ul>	50
<b>Project Leader and Principal Investigators</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● suitability of the Project Leader's and Principal Investigators' expertise and experience</li><li>● credible track record of the Project Leader and the Principal Investigators in the relevant fields</li><li>● experience of the Project Leader and the Principal Investigators in managing complex projects including strong administrative, communication and collaboration skills</li></ul>	20
<b>Work plan and budget</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● clarity and soundness of the work plan, with activities matched to objectives</li><li>● clear deliverables and a realistic time frame</li><li>● reasonableness, realism, and completeness of proposed costs</li></ul>	10

## 7. Selection process

Proposals submitted under this Call will be reviewed and assessed by a panel of specialists. Final funding decisions based on the review and recommendations of the review panel will be made jointly by IDRC, UKAid, USAID, and FIT-ED. Proposals will be either accepted or rejected. The accepted proposal may receive specific comments from the review panel which the proposing institution or individual is required to satisfactorily address before the contract is awarded and an agreement signed. The selection criteria and point system as noted above will be used in this process.

The issuance of this Call, the preparation and submission of proposals by applicants, and the subsequent receipt and evaluation of proposals by the review panel shall not commit IDRC, UKAid, USAID, or FIT-ED to award a contract to anyone. Furthermore, in no event shall choosing a proposing institution or individual for presentation, negotiations or otherwise be construed to create any legal obligations on the part of IDRC, UKAid, USAID, or FIT-ED.

## 8. Proposal requirements and format

Applicants are required to submit 1) a completed General Information Form (*see Appendix A*), 2) a Technical Proposal, and 3) a Cost Proposal (*see Appendix B*).

### Technical Proposal

Technical proposals must include the following sections:

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Abstract (*start page 1 here*)
- Research objectives and questions
- Review of related literature and theoretical framework
- Methods
  - design
  - data collection: subjects, instruments, procedures
  - data analysis
  - gender considerations and analysis
  - ethical considerations
- Work plan: Objectives, activities, outputs and timeline (Month 1, Month 2, ..., Month 6)
- Risks and mitigating actions
- Ethics clearance plan
- Open access dissemination plan
- References
- Annexes

### *Required annexes*

- A description of the roles, responsibilities and time commitments of the Project Leader and the Principal Investigators
- Detailed CVs of the Project Leader and the Principal Investigators. CVs must include a listing of related research and publications.
- At least two samples of related work (e.g., published articles, research reports, academic/technical papers, policy papers, etc.) of each Principal Investigator.

### Additional requirements for institutions:

- A one-page profile of all institutions involved in the project (the proposing institution and partner institutions, if any).
- A past performance profile of the proposing institution listing up to five programs or projects within the past five years that are related to the research being proposed.

Technical proposals must directly address each of the selection criteria listed in Section 6.

Technical proposals must be written in English. They must not exceed 12 pages (excluding the title page, table of contents, references, and annexes), formatted as follows:

paper size: 8-1/2" x 11"  
margins: 1" all around  
font: Calibri, 11 points

spacing: single  
 pagination: continuous, starting at page 1 on the abstract page

Pages that exceed the limit will not be evaluated.

### Cost Proposal

Cost proposals must be presented using the Cost Proposal Form (*see Appendix B*). The cost proposal must include a detailed budget and a payment plan. The payment plan should link payments to the successful delivery of research outputs, and should clearly demonstrate the applicant’s acceptance of risk of non-delivery.

Below is an indicative payment plan with suggested deliverables. The applicant may suggest modifications as suits the proposed research design, work plan, and timeline.

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Payment</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Signed contract</li> <li>● Final research design and plan</li> </ul>	before 15 June 2018	15% of total budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expanded outline of the landscape review</li> <li>● Final survey, interview, FGD and other instruments</li> <li>● List of survey respondents and key informants, and schedule of data collection</li> <li>● Brief description of 6 to 8 cases</li> </ul>	on or before 15 July 2018	15% of total budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● First draft of landscape review</li> </ul>	on or before 15 October 2018	20% of total budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stakeholder consultation 1</li> </ul>	on or before 15 November 2018	n/a
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Second draft of landscape review</li> <li>● First draft of research agenda</li> </ul>	on or before 15 December 2018	25% of total budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stakeholder consultation 2</li> </ul>	on or before 30 January 2019	n/a
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Final draft of landscape review</li> <li>● Final draft of research agenda</li> </ul>	on or before 1 March 2019	25% of total budget

### **9. Other requirements**

- a. *Country clearance.* Applicants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with their respective country clearance requirements and take these into account in their research planning.
- b. *Ethics clearance.* Applicants shall be responsible for securing all necessary ethics clearances before undertaking research activities involving human subjects. An ethics clearance plan should be included in the proposal.
- c. *Gender analysis.* The final research report must include a discussion and analysis of gender issues, as appropriate. Proposals should include a section on gender considerations and analysis.
- d. *Accessibility.* The final research report must be Section 508 compliant.
- e. *Open access.* DL4D believes that publicly funded research should be freely and openly available. Applicants must comply with USAID’s open data policy and IDRC’s open access policy. Proposals should include an open access dissemination plan.

## 10. Submission process

Full proposals with all the required annexes must be submitted by email to **dl4d@fit-ed.org** on or before **18 May 2018, 5:00 PM EST**. Incomplete proposals or proposals received after this deadline will not be considered.

Questions regarding this Call may be sent by email to **jgmodesto@fit-ed.org** until 27 April 2018. Responses to questions will be posted at **www.dl4d.org** by 1 May 2018.

## 11. Solicitation timeline

Release of Call for Proposals	20 April 2018
Deadline for submission of questions about the Call	27 April 2018
Posting of answers to questions about the Call	1 May 2018
Deadline for submission of proposals	18 May 2018, 5:00 PM EST
Panel review of proposals	19 to 31 May 2018
Notice of review results	1 June 2018
Contract negotiations	2 to 15 June 2018
Project start	16 June 2018

## 12. Additional information

- a. All responses and supporting documentation shall become the property of FIT-ED, the fund manager for this award, and will not be returned.
- b. FIT-ED reserves the right throughout this process to select any contracting option that best meets its requirements regardless of this process.
- c. Neither FIT-ED nor its partners will be responsible for any costs incurred by applicants in the preparation of any materials or presentation relating to this process.

## 13. Permission for use and disclosure of information

By submitting a proposal under this Call, the applicant consents to the disclosure of all submitted documents to the review panel, FIT-ED, IDRC, UKAid, USAID, and other third parties who are involved in this solicitation process. If selected for funding, the applicant further consents to the disclosure of the name of the proposing institution/individual, the name of the Project Leader and the title of the proposed project in any award announcement.

## References

Bruns, B., & Luque, J. (2015). *Great teachers: How to raise student learning in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Washington, DC: World Bank. Retrieved from <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/20488>

UNESCO. (2016). *Education for people and planet: Creating sustainable futures for all*. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002457/245752e.pdf>

UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2016, October). *The world needs almost 69 million new teachers to reach the 2030 education goals*. UIS Fact Sheet, 39. Retrieved from <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs39-the-world-needs-almost-69-million-new-teachers-to-reach-the-2030-education-goals-2016-en.pdf>