

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

## Selecting EdTech Entrepreneurs for the Regional Centre for Innovative Teaching and Learning in ICT



## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3 - 4</b>
1.1 Invitation	3
1.2 About the Mastercard Foundation	3
1.3 About the Regional Centre for Innovative Teaching and Learning in ICT	3 - 4
<b>Overview</b>	<b>4 - 5</b>
1.4 The Challenge	4
1.5 Call to Action	4 - 5
<b>Application and Submission Process</b>	<b>5 - 6</b>
1.6 Eligibility Criteria	5
1.7 RFP Submission Requirements	5
1.8 Overview of the RFP Process	5
1.9 Application Timeline	6
<b>Evaluation Considerations</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Annex A: Terms and Conditions</b>	<b>7 - 8</b>

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Invitation

---

The Mastercard Foundation's Regional Centre for Innovative Teaching and Learning in ICT (the Centre) was established to spark innovation and promote promising practices in the use of ICT in teaching and learning, and thereby catalyze significant improvement in access, quality and relevance of education. One of the main outcomes of the Centre is demand-driven EdTech innovations that close the gap in access, quality, and relevance of education and learning outcomes for the most disadvantaged students. This will ensure that all students receive the education and training required to secure meaningful and significant work upon graduation, in line with the Mastercard Foundation's Young Africa Works strategy.

In August 2019, the Centre convened a Ministerial Forum which brought together Ministers of Education, EdTech entrepreneurs, private sector, donors, and other education stakeholders. The objective of the meeting was to converge on key challenges that face education systems in Africa that ICT can effectively address.

We are pleased to announce this Request for Proposal (RFP), which calls on African EdTech entrepreneurs to propose innovative solutions for two of the challenges that we identified at the Ministerial Forum:

- A. Enhance and increase accessibility and affordability of professional development for in-service school teachers, which also minimises their out-of-classroom time
- B. Create and deliver enriched learning content that improves quality, relevance and accessibility to both in-school and out-of-school secondary school learners

All submissions should be made through the [Online Application Form](#) by 21 November 2019. See details in Section 3 - Application and Submission Process.

### 1.2 About the Mastercard Foundation

---

The Mastercard Foundation's work is guided by our mission to advance learning and promote financial inclusion to create an inclusive and equitable world.

In March 2018, the Foundation launched its new strategy, Young Africa Works, which focuses on youth employment and the changing nature of work in Africa. Our goal is to enable 30 million young people in Africa, especially young women, to secure dignified and fulfilling work by 2030. We will do so by improving the quality of education and training to equip young people with the skills employers need, finding new ways to link job seekers with employers, and increasing access to capital and other supports for entrepreneurs and small businesses to expand sectors of the economy.

For more information, please visit [www.mastercardfdn.org](http://www.mastercardfdn.org).

### 1.3 About the Regional Centre for Innovative Teaching and Learning in ICT

---

The Centre seeks to catalyze significant improvements in secondary education and beyond across Africa.

*Specifically, the Centre will achieve three key outcomes:*

- Demand-driven EdTech innovations that close the gap in access, quality and relevant learning for the most disadvantaged learners
- Better evidence of what works in ICT for school and system leaders in Africa
- An active network of ICT leaders in secondary education and beyond, advancing the integration of technology in education policies and practices across Africa

Working at the intersection of EdTech entrepreneurs and governments, the Centre will support entrepreneurs with EdTech innovations that have the capacity to improve teaching and learning in secondary education at scale.

*The Centre will:*

- Identify key challenges in secondary education and beyond, to be addressed by EdTech solutions.
- Issue competitive calls for proposals for EdTech innovations with potential to scale to address those identified key challenges.
- Define and scale the EdTech market in Africa to catalyze investment and address key barriers in the EdTech ecosystem by advancing research and sharing best practices with stakeholders.
- Support EdTech entrepreneurs to enhance, test and validate their innovations and business models.
- Pilot and validate approaches with government, school administrators, teachers and learners. The Centre will establish a network of test schools across its “anchor countries” – Rwanda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Ghana – to test and refine selected EdTech innovations. The Centre will also engage with these government leaders to validate innovations and provide feedback on the potential to scale.
- Work with policymakers, entrepreneurs, investors and other key stakeholders to support the scaling up of validated EdTech solutions.

## OVERVIEW

### 1.4 The Challenge

---

Education systems in Africa face a myriad of challenges that negatively impact education outcomes. For example, secondary education enrollment and completion rates are a major barrier for development - at least 50% of adolescents aged 15–17 in Sub-Saharan Africa are not in school.<sup>1</sup> Also, many school-age adolescents live in remote areas, limiting their access to education.<sup>2</sup> Beyond access, the quality and relevance of curricula is also problematic in many education systems across the continent – disproportionately affecting disadvantaged learners.<sup>3</sup> All of the above highlights the need for the development of high-quality, relevant learning content and innovative delivery methods in efforts to reach learners from rural or otherwise disadvantaged and vulnerable communities.

In addition to limited accessibility, secondary education systems in Sub-Saharan Africa suffer from a deficit of qualified teachers, attributed in part to the prevalence of conflicts, poor working conditions, inadequate remuneration, and lack of support.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, most of these teachers receive no continuous professional development or support.<sup>5</sup> While professional development will not solve the teacher issue in its entirety, it will go a long way in improving the quality of teaching among existing teachers, and it may revitalize the profession by providing teachers an opportunity to grow.

### 1.5 Call to Action

---

The Centre has taken a demand-driven and consultative approach to define and prioritize the most pressing challenges facing education systems in Africa. We encourage applicants to propose bold and innovative ideas to address these challenges identified by key stakeholders.

*These challenges are to:*

- A. Enhance and increase accessibility and affordability of professional development for in-service school teachers, which also minimises their out-of-classroom time  
*Statistics illustrating the need to address this challenge include the following:*
  - 65% of teachers in South Africa do not have a formal qualification for teacher training.<sup>6</sup>
  - In Kenya, 70% of the professional development providers in primary schools have not been trained to offer them.<sup>7</sup>
  - Shortfalls in teachers' content knowledge account for 30 percent of the shortfall in learning relative to the curriculum, according to data collected from nationally representative surveys of schools in seven Sub-Saharan African countries.<sup>8</sup>
- B. Create and deliver enriched learning content that improves quality, relevance and accessibility to both in-school and out-of-school secondary school learners
  - Most African counties have an internet penetration of less than 50%.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, a significant number of African schools in rural or semi-rural areas lack electricity. These infrastructural factors must be considered when designing EdTech solutions that actually work.

---

1 Children still battling to go to schools, UNSESCO 2013; Millions of children miss school due to war and drought in East Africa, Norwegian Refugee Council 2017

2 Infrastructure Report, Educate a Child; Causes of School Dropouts among students in Nigeria, 2018

3 Resources and facilities for teaching mathematics and science school, UNESCO; Van der Berg et al., Low Quality Education as a Poverty Trap (2011)

4 Educational International, 2018; Resources article, Educate a child; Developing the Education Workforce in Africa, The Education Commission, 2016

5 Bashir et al. (2018); Africa can tackle its “Severe Learning Crisis”, The World Bank, 2018; Learning to realize education’s promise, The World Development Report 2018; GEM Report 2019, UNESCO

6 Dreyer, L.M Engelbrecht, P. & Swart, E. 2012. Making learning support contextually responsive. Africa Education Review 9(2): 270-288

7 Mwaura, P.A.M, Gathenya, T.W. & Abdi, A.M. 2012. Professional Development Centre (PDC) Initiative for Primary Teacher Training College in Kenya.

8 Bold, T., Filmer, D., Molina, E. and Svensson, J. (2019). The Lost Human Capital: Teacher Knowledge and Student Achievement in Africa.

9 <https://www.internetworldstats.com/africa.html>

- Most Cameroonian and South African schools have not adapted their curriculum post-colonialism.<sup>10,11</sup> This speaks to a lack of accuracy and relevance that is pervasive across the continent’s education systems.
- Delays and bottlenecks in the allocation of resources like salaries, allowances, financing and materials have been identified as serious problems affecting quality of services and morale of teachers in most countries in Africa.<sup>12</sup>

The Centre wishes to encourage the design, testing and validation of innovations and facilitate piloting of those showing promise to improve educational outcomes in selected schools throughout our Anchor Countries (Rwanda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Ghana). The Centre will also act as a channel between government, investors and entrepreneurs, and will explore the potential to scale validated solutions across Africa.

## APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION PROCESS

### 1.6 Eligibility Criteria

- Applicants must lead a registered company that is now post-product with the potential to scale (typically in operations for two years or longer);
- The applicant’s company is majority African led and/or owned;
- A for-profit or non-for-profit operating model is in place;
- The applicant’s company is already operating in, or interested in moving into, the education market in Africa;
- The applicant’s product specifically addresses (A) the professional development of teachers and/or (B) the need for enriched and accessible learning content for learners. See Call to Action (2.3).

### 1.7 RFP Submission Requirements

Interested and eligible entrepreneurs are invited to submit the following documents for the Centre’s review and consideration:

1. Completed [Online Application Form](#). The responses provided will be used to assess the applicant’s ability to address the challenge in the RFP,  
**Note:** Applicants will be required to submit a full proposal if selected to move on to Phase B of the process.
2. Previous [Two Years Financial Statements and Balance Sheets](#) (submitted in the [Online Application Form](#)). This document should provide a high-level understanding of the company’s financial situation for the last two years.  
**Note:** A company that has been in existence for less than two years is expected to submit financials from inception.

The above must be completed and submitted through [this link](#) by **21 November 2019**. Applicants may email questions to the Mastercard Foundation at [edtech-rfp@mastercardfdn.org](mailto:edtech-rfp@mastercardfdn.org).

### 1.8 Overview of the RFP Process

PHASE A: RFP Response Development	Foundation Review	PHASE B: Proposal Development
<b>For Submission by the Applicant:</b> 1. <a href="#">Online Application Form</a> 2. Financial statements and balance sheets for the last 2 years of operations	<i>Promising applicants are selected and notified to move on to Phase B and submit a full proposal.</i>	<b>For Submission by the Applicant:</b> 1. Full Proposal
<b>Timing:</b> 21 October – 21 November 2019	<b>Timing:</b> Rolling review from receipt of first RFP responses until 29 November 2019.	<b>Timing:</b> 22 November – 2 December 2019

<sup>10</sup> Ndille, Roland. (2018). Our schools our identity: efforts and challenges in the transformation of the history curriculum in the Anglophone subsystem of education in Cameroon since 1961. Yesterday and Today, (20), 91-123.

<sup>11</sup> Lebeloane, L., 2017. Decolonizing the school curriculum for equity and social justice in South Africa. KOERS — Bulletin for Christian Scholarship, 82(3).

<sup>12</sup> T, Pholotho, J, Mtsweni. Barriers to Electronic Access and Delivery of Educational Information in Resource Constrained Public Schools: A Case of Greater Tubatse Municipality IST-Africa 2016 Conference Proceedings, 2016.

## 1.9 Application Timeline

MILESTONE	DATE
RFP announced and <a href="#">Online Application Form</a> opens*	21 October 2019
Deadline to submit Online Application Form	22 November 2019
Selected applicants are notified to move on to Phase B.	29 November 2019
Full proposal and supplementary documentation submitted	2 December 2019
Final selection of applicants announced	16 December 2019

\* It is the responsibility of applicants to obtain clarification of any terms, conditions, or requirements contained in the RFP or [Online Application Form](#) by emailing [edtech-rfp@mastercardfdn.org](mailto:edtech-rfp@mastercardfdn.org). Please note that while the Foundation cannot guarantee responses to all questions received, an FAQ article will be updated on a regular basis and made available to applicants [here](#).

## EVALUATION CONSIDERATIONS

To be considered seriously, submissions in response to this RFP must:

- 1) Demonstrate alignment to the Centre’s mission.** Specifically, innovations should target the most disadvantaged populations, and be designed to address the realities on the ground, in terms of infrastructure, limited financial resources and capacity of teachers and learners.
- 2) Provide evidence of a product in market.** Entrepreneurs must demonstrate their innovation has reached the necessary level of product development, including market research, customer testing, and early adoption.
- 3) Highlight the strengths, expertise, and assets of the company.** In their application, entrepreneurs should highlight specific areas of expertise, strengths, and assets of the company, its team composition, existing customers and partnerships.
- 4) Demonstrate your ability to validate and potentially scale the product.** Entrepreneurs have a plan to validate their product, with a roadmap outlining key milestones as well as clearly defined barriers to implementation.

Applications will then be evaluated based on the following criteria:

EVALUATION CRITERIA	WEIGHT
<b>Product Design</b> <i>The solution responds to the call to action and has successfully proven its potential to make positive impact on the focus challenge(s)</i>	40%
<b>Project Team and Experience</b> <i>The applicant and company have demonstrated capacity to scale the product, if given the necessary resources.</i>	30%
<b>Company Governance</b> <i>The company has demonstrated sound management of resources.</i>	15%
<b>Project Plan</b> <i>A project plan (included in the <a href="#">Online Application Form</a>) that clearly articulates how the entrepreneur intends to get the product to a validation stage.</i>	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## ANNEX A: TERMS & CONDITIONS

---

These Terms and Conditions apply to applicants' participation in this RFP process in any form whatsoever, including, without limitation: (i) submitting a response to this RFP; and/or (ii) using the information contained in this RFP and/or any supporting documents relating to this RFP which may be made available by the Mastercard Foundation from time to time.

This RFP process is an opportunity only, and the Mastercard Foundation does not guarantee that any applicant's submission of a response and/or participation in this RFP process in any form whatsoever will lead to any result or commit the Mastercard Foundation to any course of action.

### Amendments

---

The Mastercard Foundation reserves the right to amend, add to or withdraw all or any part of this RFP at any time. Applicants will remain responsible for all costs and expenses incurred by them, their staff, and their advisors or by any third-party acting under their instructions in connection with this RFP process.

### Conflict of Interest

---

Applicants must disclose in the Online Application Form any circumstances, including personal, financial, and business, that will or might give rise to a real or perceived conflict of interest by taking part in this RFP process. This also applies to any implementing partners proposed by the applicant. Where applicants identify potential conflicts, they shall state in the Online Application Form how they will avoid such conflicts. The Mastercard Foundation reserves the right to reject any applicant which, in the sole opinion of the Mastercard Foundation, gives rise or potentially gives rise to a conflict of interest.

### Confidentiality, Intellectual Property and Use of Documents

---

The contents of this RFP and any supporting documents that may be made available by the Mastercard Foundation from time to time throughout this RFP process, are confidential and proprietary to the Mastercard Foundation, and protected by intellectual property rights. This RFP and such other documents are being made available to applicants on the condition that each applicant shall always keep the contents of this RFP and such other documents confidential and shall not reproduce, distribute or disclose the contents for any purpose, except: (i) to the applicant's own employees that have a need-to-know in order to facilitate the applicant's participation in this RFP process; and (ii) where required by applicable laws or regulations.

Nothing in these Terms and Conditions shall convey to the applicant any right, title, interest or license in, or to, any trademark, trade name, or any other intellectual property rights of the Foundation. The applicant shall not issue any news release, public announcement, advertisement, or any other form of publicity, in any form or content, in connection with this RFP and/or referring to the Foundation without first obtaining the written approval of the Foundation.

If applicants have any doubts about the disclosure of confidential or proprietary information, the Foundation recommends that they consult with their legal counsel and take steps necessary to protect their confidential information and intellectual property.

### Privacy

---

Throughout this RFP process, applicants shall refrain from providing the Foundation with any information that identifies or can be used to identify any individual, other than business contact information that is necessary for the Mastercard Foundation to contact representatives of applicants about matters relating to this RFP process.

### Compliance with Foundation Policies and Procedures

---

Successful applicants shall observe the rules and policies as contained in the Foundation's policies, including (but not limited to): Partners Code of Conduct, Child and Youth Protection Guidelines, Travel and Expense Policy as well as with all applicable procedures and policies of Foundation currently in existence or as may be adopted or amended from time to time. Foundation may change its policies and procedures in its sole discretion and will provide successful applicants with at least ten (10) Business Days' prior written

notice of same. Successful applicants agree to comply with any such changes. Successful applicants shall not remove any property of Foundation, including any proprietary or confidential information, from Foundation's premises without the prior written consent of Foundation.

## Limitation of Liability and Indemnity

---

While the information provided in this RFP and in supporting documents that may be made available by the Mastercard Foundation from time to time throughout this RFP process have been prepared in good faith, the information does not purport to be exact or comprehensive. Neither the Mastercard Foundation nor its affiliates, officers, directors, employees or other representatives, make any representation or warranty as to the accuracy or completeness of the information, nor shall they be liable for any loss or damage arising from or in connection with any reliance on such information.

This RFP process is an opportunity only, and neither the Mastercard Foundation nor its affiliates, officers, directors, employees or other representatives, make any representation or warranty that participation in this RFP process in any form whatsoever will lead to any result or commit the Mastercard Foundation to any course of action, nor shall they be liable for any loss or damage arising from or in connection with any participation in this RFP process in any form whatsoever.

By using the information contained in this RFP and/or any supporting documents relating to this RFP which may be made available by the Mastercard Foundation from time to time, or by otherwise participating in this RFP process in any form whatsoever, applicants hereby agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Mastercard Foundation and its affiliates, officers, directors, employees and other representatives, from and against any and all claims, liabilities, costs and expenses arising from or in connection with the applicant's: (i) breach of these Terms and Conditions; (ii) negligent act, omission or wilful misconduct relating to this RFP process; or (iii) failure to comply with applicable laws and regulations relating to this RFP process.

## Governing Law

---

These Terms and Conditions are governed by the laws of the Province of Ontario and the federal laws of Canada applicable therein, without regard to conflict of laws principles that would require the application of the laws of another jurisdiction. The Mastercard Foundation and applicants irrevocably submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of the Province of Ontario.