



## National Education Collaboration Trust

### Terms of Reference

### Output to Purpose Review

March 2016

#### 1.0 Project Aim

The National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) seeks to appoint an appropriate service provider to conduct an output to purpose review of its strategic direction and programmatic activities since its inception.

#### 2.0 Background to the NECT

The National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) is a public benefit organisation involving government, business, labour and civil society. The principal aim of the NECT is to contribute to the implementation of the National Development Plan (NDP). The NDP proposes a national initiative involving a coalition of stakeholders to drive efforts for improving learning outcomes in schools, starting with the worst performing. In response, the ECF was initiated as a partnership between government and social partners to increase cooperation among the stakeholders involved in education improvement, for the enhancement of learning outcomes. In accordance with the founding principles of the ECF, the Trust was instituted as a partnership initiative involving government, labour, business and civil society, to support the implementation of the NDP and the realisation of the objectives of the Education Sector Plan (Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025).

The NECT is guided by the ECF<sup>1</sup>, which is a blueprint for partnership between government and other social partners and aims to:

- influence and support the implementation of government's education reform agenda;

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://nect.org.za/publications/education-collaboration-framework-document/view>

- increase the effectiveness, value for money and sustainability of private sector social investment in education;
- improve educational outcomes.

The ECF presents a model for collaboration between Government and social partners which aims to appreciate the unique authorities, roles, responsibilities and capabilities of each, as well as the space for collaboration. The Figure below illustrates this. The M&E framework includes means and measures for testing this partnership model.

Figure 1: ECF Collaboration Model, [Source: NECT, 2013]



The model poses the following assumptions:

- Both the governmental and non-governmental groupings have a common goal of improving the quality of education but do not as yet share a common understanding of the roles that they expect of each other. Thus the framework seeks to help to delineate and define these complementary roles.
- Government as a large organisation, is designed to establish and maintain the education system and to continuously define the reform addenda, thus government is best positioned to maintain stability and sustain gains, rather bring about rapid change.

- The non-governmental sphere, in its multiplicity and networked forms is able to innovate and accelerate delivery of aspects of the education system. The system is thus best suited to supporting and complementing the maintenance and reform sphere which anchors the education improvement agenda.

Eight districts have been identified in the first instance as priority districts, and the ECF makes provision to support interventions in 40 districts (out of 86 nationally) over the next 10 years. To achieve sustainable systemic improvement, the ECF focuses its support on **6 thematic areas** linked to the aims of the NDP and the Education Action Plan. These are:

**Theme 1: Professionalisation of the teaching service** The NECT will support Government to: • Set up frameworks and materials required to implement the 2011 planning framework for teacher education and development. • Train teachers and support them in their classrooms. • Build management capacity at district and school level to support and monitor teachers. • Improve the effectiveness of teachers and education officials.

**Theme 2: A call for courageous leadership** The NECT will explore with relevant structures the following actions: • Promoting more active roles by civil society organisations to keep a check on actions that undermine schooling. • Delivering training on good governance at school, district and provincial levels. • Acting to empower managers to make decisions and be accountable for their decisions. • Assisting leaders to set examples for officials and learners to follow. • Reviewing the governance framework involving school principals, school management teams and school governing bodies.

**Theme 3: Improving government capacity to deliver** The NECT will support Government to: • Develop a national framework and materials for implementation of the school management and district monitoring processes. • Offer training and support programmes to assist schools and districts to implement monitoring and support systems. • Investigate the current teacher provisioning model and develop and implement a more effective one. • Provide mentors and coaches to strengthen school monitoring and support capacity, particularly in under-staffed districts.

**Theme 4: Improving resourcing:** teachers, books and infrastructure NECT will encourage joint actions among stakeholders to: • Improve maintenance, retrieval and utilisation of workbooks, textbooks and readers in schools. • Develop a wide range of African language readers. • Complement the provision of learning and teaching support materials, especially readers and maths and science kits. • Develop and maintain an infrastructure demand and maintenance system that will inform investments by Government and its partners. • Increase infrastructure and ICT resources, prioritising libraries and science laboratories. • Increase the provision and utilisation of IT resources for teachers and learners.

**Theme 5: Community and parent involvement** The NECT will promote the following actions: • Utilise talent beyond the public

school system to support schooling, particularly literacy, maths and science education. • Rebuild public accountability by equipping parents with checklists of what to expect from schools, teachers and learners and promoting advocacy to reinforce accountability. • Integrate active citizenship and ethics in programmes for teachers, school managers and governing bodies.

**Theme 6: Learner support and wellbeing** The NECT will promote joint activities that: • Increase provision of psychosocial services in schools. • Complement nutrition in schools. • Contribute to resourcing sports and cultural activities in schools.”

While the NECT promotes broader collaborative activities aimed at implementing the six themes, it has identified five educational programmes that will be designed and implemented under its auspices. These are:

- Districts and Schools (70%)
- Systematic Interventions (10%)
- Innovation (5%)
- Local Projects (5%)
- Education DialoguesSA (10%)

The themes of the NECT guide the design and interventions of the five programmatic areas. All the themes of the NECT find expression in each of the five programmes outlined below:

### **1. Districts and Schools (70%)**

**The District Improvement Programme** is the flagship programme of the NECT accounting for approximately 90% of expenditure.

The programmes pitched at four levels:

- Improving planning and delivery of the curriculum
- School support and monitoring –improving the effectiveness of the support and monitoring services provided by districts to schools
- Fresh Start Schools – select schools with unique circumstance and requiring high dosage interventions
- District Steering Committees – Multi-stakeholder governance structure which oversee the NECT programme at local level and drives community mobilisation programmes

The District Improvement Programme has five focus areas, aimed at providing a comprehensive and cohesive set of activities based on a common change theory. These are:

### *Focus Area 1: Teacher professionalisation*

The primary objective of the programme is to enable teachers to develop the practical competence to effectively manage the curriculum. This practical competence entails:

- Subject matter content knowledge to understand the topics and units in CAPS for coverage of the curriculum
- The capacity to plan the delivery of the curriculum within allocated timeframes so that the curriculum will be covered
- The pedagogical skills and understanding to teach particular topics on the curriculum
- The capacity to plan lessons and organize instructions so that learners receive maximum benefit
- The capacity to plan and manage assessment, and the capacity to use assessment results to improve instruction

A secondary, but important objective of the programme is the capacity of teachers to understand, detect and assist learners who experience a wide range of barriers to learning. Teachers are also expected to abide by the ethos and standards of the profession, and to take responsibility for and manage their professional growth and development.

### *Focus Area 2: Courageous leadership and management*

The approach to courageous and effective leadership is practice-based. School managers are mobilised and motivated to take ownership of their responsibilities, and are trained in specific areas of school management. Formal training interventions are supported by carefully designed organisational application of what is learned, so that schools can actually implement and refine their managerial systems and processes. Change agents are assigned as management and leadership coaches to visit schools and support school managers in the adoption or refinement of their organisational systems. Principals that are in close geographic proximity hold cluster meetings where they share lessons and support each other.

### *Focus Area 3: District Development.*

The approach to district development and capacity building is practice-based, and focuses on building the capacity of subject advisors and circuit managers to undertake their responsibilities. District officials are trained in each aspect of their responsibilities, are provided with the necessary tools to ensure their effectiveness, and are coached on a one to one basis so that they can shadow, engage with, and learn from their counterpart mentors. The intent is to build the capacity of these officials to serve and support schools by emulating the mentorship the officials receive during the NECT programme. The capacity of the district office is reinforced by the platform of support and advocacy that is available from the community representatives who serve on the District Steering Committee.

*Focus Area 4: Community and parent involvement.*

The general approach to parent and community involvement is that of empowering parents to assist and support their children in school. Resources will be prepared for parents on 12 topics, and parent volunteers will assist in the dissemination of this information and in conducting group information sessions with other parents. Both the DSC and the school governing bodies (SGBs) will be used to mobilise parents to participate in the programme. Overall, the programme is intended to build strong links between the school and the community, and to build better working relationships between parents and schools.

*Focus Area 5: Learner support and wellbeing*

The approach to learner welfare and development is to maximize each learner's potential for success. There are two components to the approach – understanding and attending to any psycho-social barriers which may impede learners' progress; and empowering learners to manage their learning, and to become disciplined and productive members of a vibrant school culture. While teachers and NECT specialists will serve as advisors, the programme will be facilitated by learner leaders who will serve as peer tutors and coaches, each engaging with and grooming a group of about 7-10 learners. A total of 12 topics will be addressed over the course of one year, and one topic will be covered each month.

2. **Systemic change intervention** This programme seeks to focus on two key sub-systems of the education system that may be re-engineered in order to increase efficiencies. The teacher provisioning model, which relates to teacher supply, demand and utilisation
3. **Innovation projects** involves testing and piloting new ideas and innovations which can be replicated at wider scale;
4. **Local intervention projects** This programme seeks to contribute to making local social investment more effective. Its initial plan is to provide guidelines that will increase return on social investments in education.
5. **National education dialogues** Brings together key constituencies to engage in a public dialogue at the highest level. It involves representatives from government, business, labour and civil society and is aimed at creating an open and honest engagement as well as exploring joint actions.

The Board of the NECT resolved, in March 2015, that the NECT's District Intervention Programme would embark upon a national programme that is both replicable and transferable beyond the current districts in which the programme is now being implemented. One of the critical aspects of the Board's decision is that all Lead Agents must implement a common programme of intervention, and all must apply a common approach in effecting the transformation of schools and districts. The Board's decision was largely in

response to the diverse approaches and materials currently being used by Lead Agents, and in response to a growing discomfort that the scope of interventions was too broad, that interventions were sometimes not directly focused on learning outcomes and that the intensity of interventions sometimes seem insufficient for achieving the desired effect.

All Lead Agents have embarked on a commonly agreed upon programme that is similar in its essential features, directly focused on learning outcomes, properly scaled to lead the desired effects, and sufficiently clear and adaptable for replicability and transfer to other districts. For this reason resources have predominately been directed towards Programme 1 – District Improvement.

### **Delivery model**

At its inception, the ECF envisaged a small secretariat overseeing a number of implementing agents. In line with the changes in programme structure and contractual changes with Lead Agents, the delivery model was updated in 2015. Management of the implementing teams for districts in Limpopo and Eastern Cape was placed directly under the NECT secretariat. As a result the secretariat has taken on a number of functions not previously anticipated.

### **Programme timeline and budget**

The NECT commenced operations in January 2014 and is planned to conclude on 31 December 2019. The total budget allocated for the programme is an estimated R400 million.

## **3.0 Purpose of the review**

This review of the NECT will explore key questions at both strategic and operational levels. The programme is based on a complex model and theory of change which prioritizes collaboration between key stakeholders, innovation and testing system level changes that are significantly different to a host of preceding ‘school improvement’ and ‘education and development’ programmes.

## **4.0 Scope of the review**

This review has two components, which together focus on a range of the NECT’s outputs at all levels of the education system including systemic, district, school and the learner level.

### *4.1 Output to purpose*

- a. Determine, in a systematic and objective manner, whether the NECT’s programme and its sub-programmes are being implemented in accordance with its strategy, objectives, standards, needs and/or requirements.

- b. Document the achievements and outcomes of the programme after 2 years of operation, and note the extent to which these outcomes are consistent with the objectives and targets of the programme.
- c. Establish the extent to which the programmes are moving towards achieving the outcomes.
- d. Identify any deviations and/or challenges encountered during the implementation of the existing programme and sub-programmes; explain the reasons for the deviations and/or challenges experienced, and provide recommendations for the improvement of programme implementation.
- e. Assess the extent to which programme delivery structures facilitate the effective and efficient operation of the programme.
- f. Provide recommendations on the strategy, structure and the lessons emerging.

*4.2 Survey of school and learner level outcomes*

Improved education outcomes are at the heart of the NECT’s programming structure and the bulk of its resources and resources are devoted to improving the processes, systems and behaviours which support teaching and learning at district, school and classroom level. In this respect, it is focused on long-term system level changes which will deliver improvements in learner achievement, professional practice of teachers and the leadership and management of schools. The NECTs monitoring and evaluation framework specifies intermediate outcomes and indicators which are used to measure and track these changes. At the same time, NECT proposes to use this review to track learner performance of age-defined cohorts since 2014 using ANA and NSC data.

**5.0 Key Questions (Examples)**

	<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>Efficacy of Implementation</b>	<b>Progress towards outcomes</b>	<b>Recommendations on improving performance</b>	<b>Lessons emerging</b>
Strategic level					
	Does the model of collaboration to	Has the NECT been effective in creating	What results have been achieved in relation to	What are strengths and weaknesses of the	What lessons have emerged since the

	achieve system level changes in education remain relevant?	greater collaboration between key stakeholders in the education system?	the each level of the education system (processes, systems, products, services, outcomes etc.), and what has not?	programme?	programme's inception?
	To what extent has the programme benefitted from increased collaboration?	How effectively was the programme implemented in the following programme areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Districts and schools</li> <li>• Systemic intervention</li> <li>• Innovation</li> <li>• Local Projects</li> <li>• Dialogue SA</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> </ul>	Is the current delivery model fit for purpose?	What challenges and constraints face the programme, and how can these be overcome?	Do these lessons suggest the need for change in strategy or implementation?
	What emerging lessons from the collaboration model can be used elsewhere in the system?	How has the programme impacted on the education system at national, provincial and district levels in term policy change, operations and		What factors have enabled the programme to have strengths, and what have contributed to the weaknesses in the programme?	Are there successful programmes that are using better practices? If so, what are these and what lessons can be learnt from these?

		innovative new practices?			
	What are the helping and hindering forces in the collaboration process?			What actions are recommended based on the outcomes of the review?	How can knowledge management be strengthened using these lessons?
	What evidence exists for the claims made?				
Transversal issues					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is resource envelope adequate to the programme's objectives?</li> <li>• To what extent will a reduced resource envelope impact on the programme's objectives?</li> </ul>					

## 6.0 Provisional Timeline

The process for this review will include the following steps:

Activity	Timeline
1. Advertisement	18 March 2016
2. Submission of expressions of interest and capability statement	1 April
3. Compulsory briefing session	8 April
4. Briefing with successful bidder and contracting	1 <sup>st</sup> week May
5. Proposal design	3 <sup>rd</sup> week May
6. Approval of design by NECT	1 <sup>st</sup> week June
7. Review of strategy, programming and implementation	2 <sup>nd</sup> week June – 2 <sup>nd</sup> week August

8. Analysis of school and learner effects and tracking	
9. Draft findings presentation	mid September
10. Inputs and revisions	End September
11. Final presentation	Early October
12. Final report submission	mid October

## 7.0 Methodology

The project team is expected to seek inputs from key informants including key stakeholders (external and internal) NECT, its partners/subcontractors and key staff responsible for programme design, management and delivery; the representatives from the DBE and provincial departments including the District Steering Committees. The review team will consider all relevant activity and programme reports of the NECT to date.

It will survey NECT beneficiaries at the school and learner levels. The results of these surveys/interviews will be analysed to gauge the extent to which the NECT has met its programme objectives. The project design will include an approach and definitions of progress towards outcomes.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Approximate time allocated (person days)</b>
Briefing with NECT key staff at national level	3 days
Instrument design	4 days
Review and analysis of key documents (see below for details)	16 days
Interviews with NECT programme management staff	3 days
Interviews with key stakeholders (incl DBE, provincial departments of education, funders, other partners)	10 days

Interviews with contractors/implementing teams	8 days
Interviews with community level stakeholders (District Support Committees)	4 days
Survey design and instrument development for school and learner level outcomes	10 days
Training	10 days
Fieldwork planning and management	2 days
Survey administration and data collection (2 days per district)	16 days
Data capture	4 days
Data analysis	4 days
Survey reporting	3 days
Draft report (consolidated)	6 days
Draft report presented	4 days
Revisions	4 days
Final report	2 days

It is anticipated that the service provider will examine all documentation pertaining to the programme, progress reports submitted, including financial reports, contracts, project plans, examples of data collection instruments, technical process reports, research reports, products of meetings/workshops/seminars/, records of capacity development activities, publications etc.

## **8.0 Deliverables**

The service provider/s will be expected to carry out the following key tasks:

- a. A final project proposal and plan which will serve as the basis of the contract between the NECT and the service provider.
- b. Final data collection tools and schedules.
- c. Draft report for review.
- d. Presentation of draft findings and recommendations at a workshop to the project steering committee.
- e. Three (3) printed hard copies of the final report, and soft copy (electronic).
- f. All data collection instruments (e.g. interview schedules) and analysis tools for approval of questionnaires.
- g. Submission of the final report.

## **9.0 Expressions of Interest**

Service providers are required to submit an expression of interest including the following information:

- a. Name, address, legal status and tax clearance of the organization/company;
- b. Evidence of BEE status;
- c. Approach to the task
- d. Abridged Curriculum Vitae of the review team, indicating qualifications and experience in undertaking similar reviews;
- e. Evidence of experience in having undertaken strategic and organizational reviews and assessments of major programmes in the education sector involving NGOs and government.
- f. Indicative budget and rationale including personnel costs and disburseables

## **10.0 Competencies**

An appropriate mix of expertise is required in a team that comprises:

- High level capability in strategy, education programme design and evaluation (including international experience) and leadership of previous strategic reviews
- Experience in education policy and system change

- Appropriate operations management expertise
- Appropriate technical expertise in education surveys and evaluation
- Data analysis capacity

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Profile</b>
Team Leader	Minimum 8-10 years experience at national and/or international experience in leadership of education programme design, strategy reviews and evaluation. PhD/Masters level qualification in relevant discipline required.
Senior consultant (policy and system change)	Minimum 8-10 years experience at national and/or international level in education policy and system change
Consultant (operations)	Minimum 5-8 years experience in operations management including NGO and public sector operations in finance, programme management, procurement, governance etc.
Consultant (surveys and testing)	Minimum 5-8 years experience in education survey methodology design, implementation, data collection management, analysis and reporting
Data analyst	Minimum 5 years experience in data handling and analysis

### 11.0 Evaluation criteria

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
Profile and experience of the team	40%
Approach to the task	20%
Organizational/technical capacity	10%

Compliance	5%
Price	25%

## 12.0 Project Management and Governance

NECT will be the contractual body for this review. The NECT contact person for contractual issues and access to documents is reachable at [zethum@nect.org.za](mailto:zethum@nect.org.za). All inquiries must be submitted in writing.

The project team will report to a Steering Committee that will guide the review, assess progress, and deal with constraints and challenges facing the project.

NECT reserves the right to be fully involved in the design process of the review.

## 13.0 Deadlines and conditions

- a. The interested organisations should submit expressions of interest (EOI) including their capability statements to [zethum@nect.org.za](mailto:zethum@nect.org.za) no later than **Friday, 1 April 2016**.
- b. A compulsory briefing session for interested service providers will be held on **Friday, 8 April 2016**. The venue and time of the briefing will be communicated to organisations that would have submitted EOIs.
- c. NECT reserves the right not to appoint a service provider/s. For more information on the NECT, see: [www.nect.org.za](http://www.nect.org.za)