



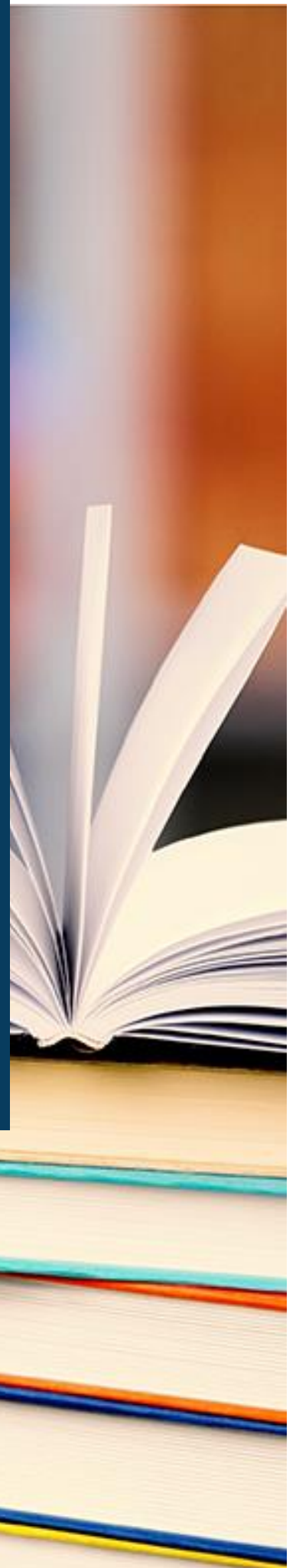
**Higher
Education**
STRATEGY ASSOCIATES

British Council Going Global Partnerships & Legacy Review — East Asia

Final Report

Prepared for The British Council

September 2023





Higher Education Strategy Associates (HESA) is a Toronto-based firm providing strategic insight and guidance to governments, postsecondary institutions, and agencies through excellence and expertise in policy analysis, monitoring and evaluation, and strategic consulting services. Through these activities, HESA strives to improve the quality, efficacy, and fairness of higher education systems in Canada and worldwide.

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Introduction

The British Council contracted Higher Education Strategy Associates (HESA) to evaluate the outcome and legacies of its higher education partnerships in East Asia. Some of these have completed delivery, and some of these are still ongoing. They include the Going Global Partnerships of 2021-22 and 2022-23, as well as grants dispersed in 2020-2021 prior to the creation of the Going Global Partnerships programme. East Asian partner country programmes included in this study are China, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, South Korea, Japan, and Philippines. Hong Kong programmes were excluded from this review owing to their distinctly different thematic focus, programme delivery, and outputs.

Going Global Partnerships are intended to cultivate inclusive, socially and economically dynamic, and internationally connected higher education and TVET systems. Supported initiatives catalyse collaboration and innovation to address local and global needs across a range of priority themes. All of these themes fall under the wider strategic aims of the Going Global Partnerships Theory of Change (ToC):

- Enabling research, knowledge, and innovation collaboration
- Internationalising HE and TVET institutions through enabling quality assurance and inter-institutional accreditation recognition
- Strengthening institutions and systems through quality assurance and capacity building, including governance and leadership
- Enhancing learner outcomes for the global graduate, as evidenced by community engagement, employability, and entrepreneurship

This report has four main areas of focus: a discussion of the characteristics of Going Global partnerships and networks in East Asia between 2020-23; an assessment of the outcomes and impacts of the GGP – East Asia portfolio by partner country; a summary of the challenges to programme implementation that emerged from HESA’s document analysis, interviews, and survey of programme participants; and a discussion of the sustainability of GGP East Asia partnerships. It concludes with a brief set of recommendations as to the current evaluability and future design of East Asia programmes. It will be accompanied by fifteen illustrative case studies of highly impactful partnerships selected from across the range of East Asia programmes.

Methodology

Desk Research and Document Review

HESA received documentation from the British Council on a rolling basis from April – June 2023. Our team categorised the findings of the document review in a programme grid developed in collaboration with the British Council.

This grid included the following evaluative criteria:

- Grant call name
- Document type (application, contract, interim report, final report)
- Granting period (2020-21 or “pre-GGP,” 2021-2021, 2022-2023)
- Project status (ongoing, concluded)
- Partnership type (bilateral, multilateral, consortium)
- Project Title
- Institutions in the partnership
- Countries involved
- Lead partner versus supporting partner
- Departments in the partnership, where available
- UK Economic Region of UK partner
- Grant amount (GBP)
- Matched funding (GBP), where available
- Team demographics (including gender, nationality, and position within university), where available
- Partnership duration (months)
- Subject areas of focus (high level priority themes determined by HESA team)
- Prior connection with the partners
- Categorised outcomes (Student/staff Mobility, Workshops, Public Conferences, TNE & Joint Teaching, Training Programs/Capacity Building, Research Publications, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI), Community or Industry Partnerships)
- Next steps identified in the reports (i.e., partnership sustainability, barriers to continuation, etc.), where available
- Basic satisfaction scores, where available
- Challenges, where available

The key findings report of the document review, submitted in July 2023 and revised over August – September 2023, identified the following:

- The number and distribution of partnerships across UK nations, economic regions, and institution type
- The number and distribution of partnerships by East Asia partner
- The distribution of leading versus supporting role in partnerships by HEI in the UK and in China, whose partnerships are by far the greatest in number and complexity of all East Asia partner countries
- The subject-area focus of programmes by time period (pre-GGP, 2021-2022, 2022-2023) and by East Asia partner country
- An overview of reported programme outcomes by East Asia partner country
- A summary of programme performance in priority areas (enabling research, internationalising higher education, strengthening systems and institutions,

and enhancing learners' outcomes) with attention to country-specific priority sub-themes

Survey Analysis

In late July – August 2023, HESA delivered a survey of GGP – East Asia programme participants. HESA conducted both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the results of this survey, which had a moderately low response rate at 92 total responses (country mean: 13; mode: 12; median 12) from respondents involved in programmes in China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand, and Philippines. The survey assessed:

- The impact of British Council funding on participants' ability to secure additional funding
- The completion rate of planned outputs
- Challenges to programme implementation
- The likelihood of partnerships continuing beyond the life cycle of the GGP grant
- Satisfaction with level and form of British Council support
- The likelihood of partnership formation without British Council support

Open field responses to survey questions were anonymized to ensure the confidentiality of participant responses. The survey questions are included in Appendix A.

Limitations

For this evaluation, HESA has relied on project documentation, some of which is incomplete. HESA has enough detailed project data on 91% of British Council funded partnerships in East Asia to confidently detail major trends in planned project outcomes. Data gaps exist for projects in Philippines, South Korea, and to a lesser extent, Thailand. A majority of projects are still live and have yet to submit final reports (e.g. for Thailand, HESA was able to review to final reports for 25% of programmes reviewed, and for Vietnam, 34%). As a result, HESA's evaluation describes the activities and outcomes of programmes completed and the projected activities and outcomes of those that are ongoing.

These projected outcomes are likely a significant understatement of the ultimate activities and outcomes of ongoing projects, owing to the changeable nature of project implementation environments, and the catalytic nature of most GGP grants, meant as they are to facilitate future impact, much of which takes time to materialise—all the more so due to travel restrictions, prolonged illnesses, and increased costs attributable to the Covid-19 pandemic. All of these factors are amply documented in this evaluation.

HESA was able to find enough data to provide a meaningful assessment of the activities outcomes of Going Global Partnerships for live programmes being

implemented across eight East Asia partner countries, to date, and based on the documentation submitted for evaluation by the British Council as of June 2023. This data has also provided sufficient basis for HESA to make some high-level recommendations for future improvement to GGP programme design and evaluation.

Partnership Network

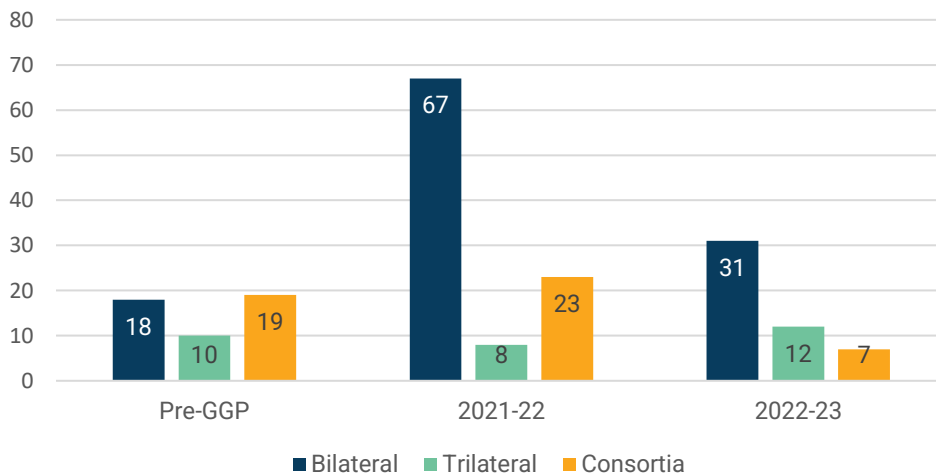
The British Council awarded approximately £6.6 million in grants to support initiatives that fall under the Going Global Partnerships – East Asia portfolio and to the grant disbursements immediately preceding it, for the year 2020-2021. East Asia partner countries whose programmes are reviewed here include: China, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, and Philippines (and does not include Hong Kong programmes). The grant spent was significantly weighted toward programmes in China, Vietnam, and Malaysia: with £1,105,742, or just under 30% of the East Asia grant spend, going to Chinese programmes; 21% going to Vietnam; and 18% going to Malaysia.

The advent of Going Global Partnerships programming in East Asia in 2021-2022 entailed an average increase in grant disbursement of 110% over 2020-2021. In 2022-2023, total GGP – East Asia programming contracted by 52%, although a significant number of country programmes were extended with a second year of support, and still many other new initiatives received grant support.

Types of Partnership Networks in Review

Going Global partnerships are either bilateral, trilateral, or consortia. Bilateral partnerships entail a single UK partner collaborating with an East Asian partner. Trilateral partnerships can entail either two UK partners and one East Asian partner or vice versa. In some cases, trilateral partnerships can involve partners across three separate countries. Consortia are defined here as collaborations between four or more institutions. As a result, this category encompasses significant variation. There are collaborations that can include as many as eighty institutions. These larger consortia are exclusively found in collaborations with Chinese partners.

Figure 1: GGP – East Asia Partnerships by Type



A slim majority of British Council supported projects are bilateral partnerships. Consortia make up just over a quarter of all projects, with trilateral partnerships making up approximately one-fifth of the total.

Bilateral and trilateral collaborations typically forward specific shared research foci or new joint curricula ranging from dual PhD programmes to online modules and MOOCs. Individual country programmes each have their own strategic call foci and priority strands, all of which tend back to the overarching Going Global Partnerships mandate of promoting the internationalisation, excellence, and inclusivity of higher education and TVET systems.

The pre-GGP China consortia ran digitisation projects in smart design, green energy, and higher education delivery out of departments ranging from engineering sub-fields to the humanities. In the GGP era, these foci have expanded to include robotics, health science, heritage, and the arts. All East Asian country programmes reflect GGP priority themes of cultivating excellence in teaching, research, innovation, and knowledge transfer through quality assurance and TNE; capacity building in programme delivery and leadership governance; equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) outcomes such as gender equality in leadership and subject representation; digital innovation and transformation; sustainability; and fostering the qualities of the global graduate (employability, soft skills, community outcomes, and entrepreneurship). Outcomes are discussed on the basis of partnership type and country in the Outcomes section on page 23, and challenges specific to programme type are discussed beginning on page 35.

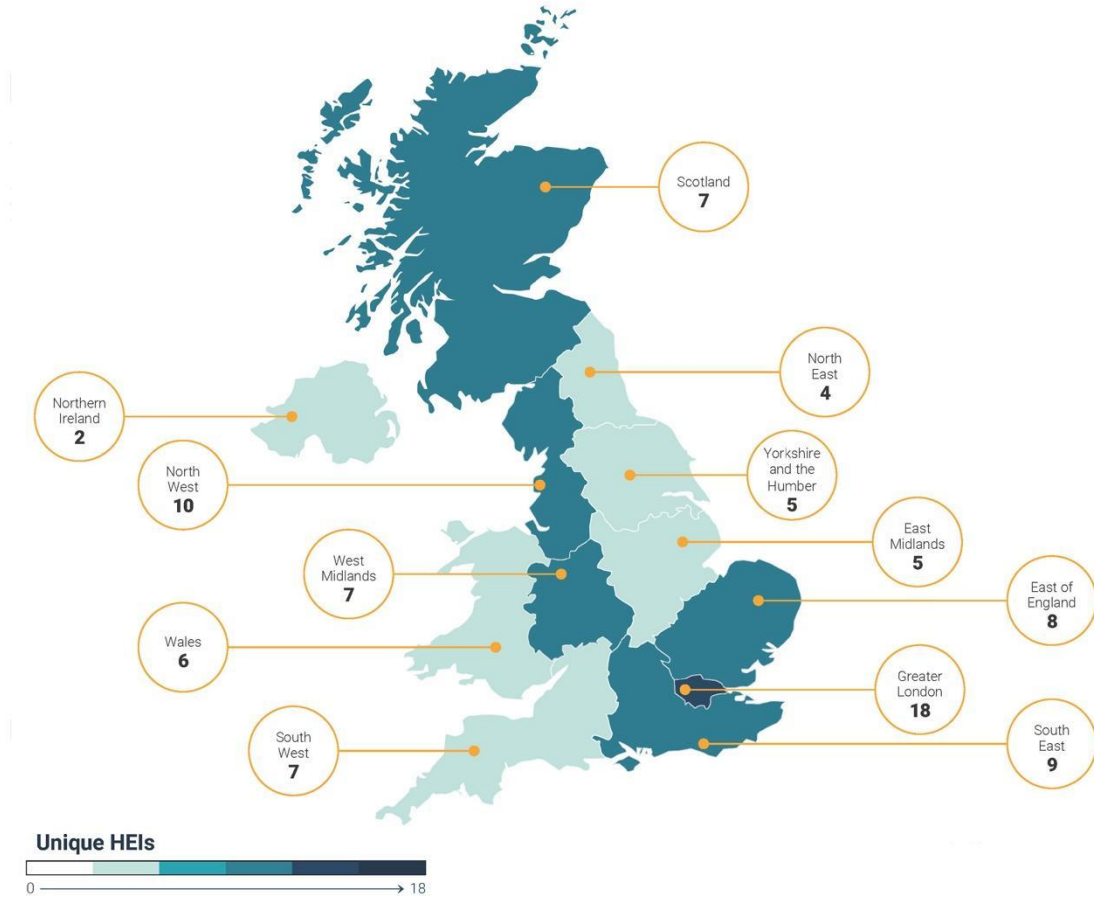
The United Kingdom

East Asian Going Global Partnerships rely on lead and supporting institutions drawn from all UK nations and economic regions. The GGP – East Asia programme has fostered a network of 127 unique partnerships between institutions in the UK and those in partner countries, with 88 unique partner institutions spread across the UK's four nations.

HESA has tracked the distribution of East Asia partnerships by economic region and by institution type and identified zones of concentrated partnership momentum in Greater London, the North-West, and the South-East in particular. “Unique UK partner institutions” here refers to the total number of institutions that have been direct beneficiaries of British Council support under the GGP – East Asia umbrella. These include lead partners and supporting partners, but will not encompass every single associate partner (who tend to be late additions to partner networks without administrative duties, and who do not receive grant funds). Many of the institutions represented in the below graphic—here counted once—may feature in numerous British Council-supported partnerships, and may be involved as lead partners and/or supporting partners of consortium, trilateral, or bilateral partnerships.

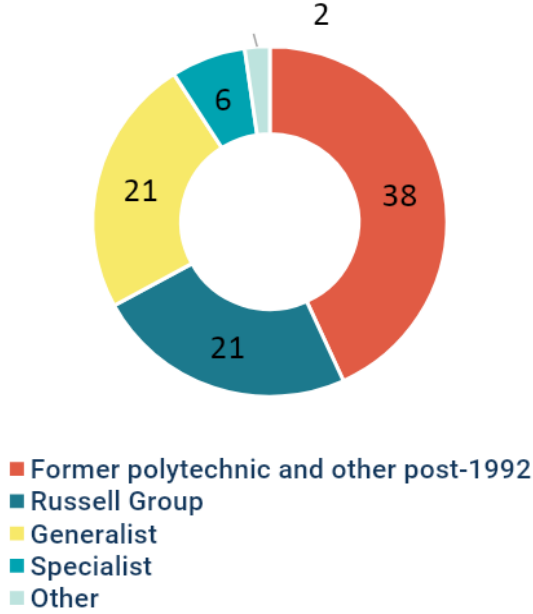
The unique UK partner institutions involved in GGP – East Asia programmes are given by economic region in the graphic below.

Figure 2: GGP – East Asia UK Partner Institutions by UK Economic Region



The breadth of the Going Global Partnerships – East Asia programme network is also evident in the variation in institution types of partner HEIs. While many of the larger partnerships (e.g. consortia) are led by Russell Group institutions, which represent the second most numerous category of institution, 43% of the 88 UK institutions that benefit directly from British Council GGP – East Asia grant support are former polytechnics and other post-1992 schools. The distribution of grants by institution type is summarised in Figure 3.

Figure 3: GGP – East Asia UK Partner Institutions by Institution Type

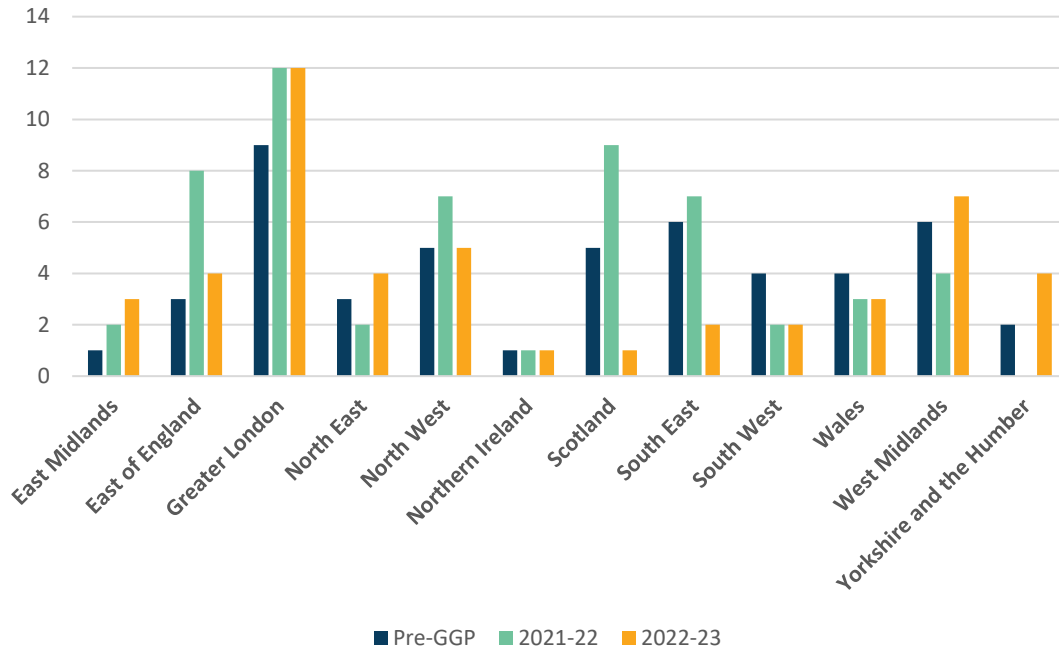


The diversity of institutions represented here is indicative of the capacity of British Council support to elevate the profile of researchers and institutions conducting socially valuable work but who are less customary recipients of the most prestigious grants. These figures refer to unique institutions (many of which are direct beneficiaries of more than one pre-GGP or GGP grant), and they **represent the impact of cumulative relationship-building over the pre-GGP and GGP periods**, speaking to the actual reach of the British Council’s HEI network in the UK, as represented across East Asia programmes.

A more granular breakdown of grant distribution by economic region of the lead institution and era is included below in Figure 4. A significant number of grants are held by institutions in Greater London, Scotland, and the East of England, followed close by institutions in the South East, North West, and West Midlands. The area of greatest potential for partnership expansion beyond the GGP period is Northern Ireland.

The below figure breaks down East Asia project distribution as it has varied over the three time periods covered in this evaluation: pre-GGP (2021-21), 2021-22, and 2022-23.

Figure 4: GGP – East Asia UK Partner Institutions by Era & Region



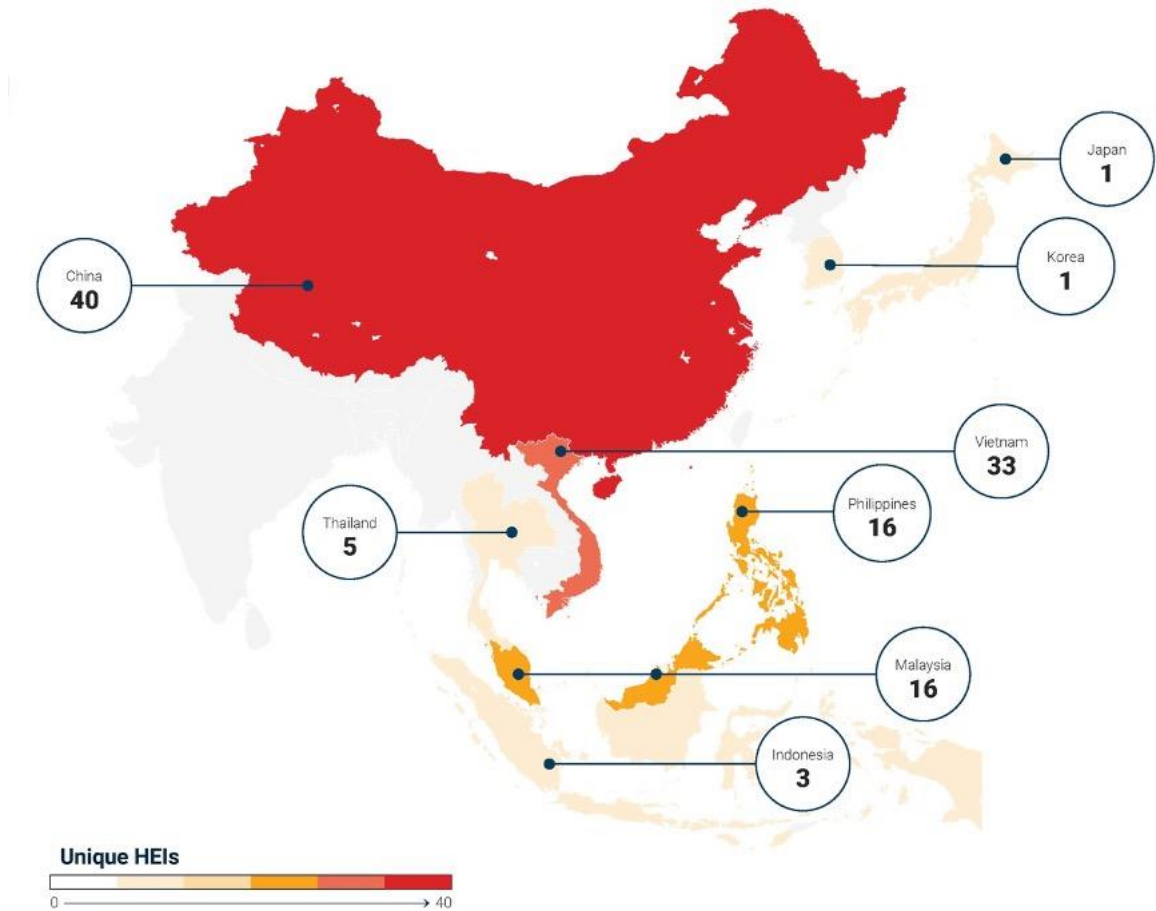
East Asia

HESA reviewed documentation for GGP programmes in China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, Japan, and South Korea. (Hong Kong programmes have been excluded from this evaluation due to their significant departure in programme structure and outputs.) The GGP – East Asia partnership network encompasses the 127 partnerships spread across 116 unique East Asian partner HEIs in 8 countries and 79 cities. These are represented in the figure on page 11.

By far the largest GGP - East Asia partner country in terms of the number of institutions engaged and programmes in operation, China partnerships involve 40 unique Chinese HEIs, which includes institutions serving as the lead partner as well as supporting partners. Nearly 40% of the partnerships where a Chinese institution serves as lead involve partners from outside China—primarily from other Asian countries. Therefore, the disproportionate size of the China portfolio may slightly exaggerate the benefit to China of these partnerships, as well as understate the extent to which they also draw upon expertise beyond Chinese institutions and political borders. Chinese consortia appear to serve as hubs for East Asian regional collaboration, with the British Council and UK institutions playing a key role in catalysing and internationalising those efforts.

Against, the graphic below represents the **impact cumulative relationship-building over the pre-GGP and GGP periods, speaking to the actual reach of the British Council’s HEI network in East Asia**, as represented across reviewed East Asia projects.

Figure 5: GGP – East Asia Partner Institutions by Partner Country



Partnerships in Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia also form a significant part of the GGP - East Asia programme activity reviewed here. The Vietnamese GGP programme network in particular is extensive. By contrast, Thai programmes are concentrated in fewer institutions, with one institution acting as the lead institution for 60% of Thai GGP programs. Philippine programmes are focused on internationalisation and capacity building, and while they involve a relatively significant number of HEIs, their programmes are relatively small scale, e.g. 2021-22 EME grants for £2,000) and have been delayed by challenges in grant disbursement and project implementation.

Lead consortia institutions are given in red in the graphic below, as well as listed in the left-hand column of the table that follows. Associate partner institutions are given in blue and listed in detail in the right-hand column of the table.

The centre of gravity of GGP – East Asia consortia is along China’s east coast, triangulated by Nanjing, Chengdu, Shanghai, and Ningbo. Consortia are also clustered in Beijing and Tianjin in the north, and in Hong Kong, Shenzhen, and Ghangzhou to the south.

Figure 6: Chinese Consortia Networks by Lead Chinese Partner Institution

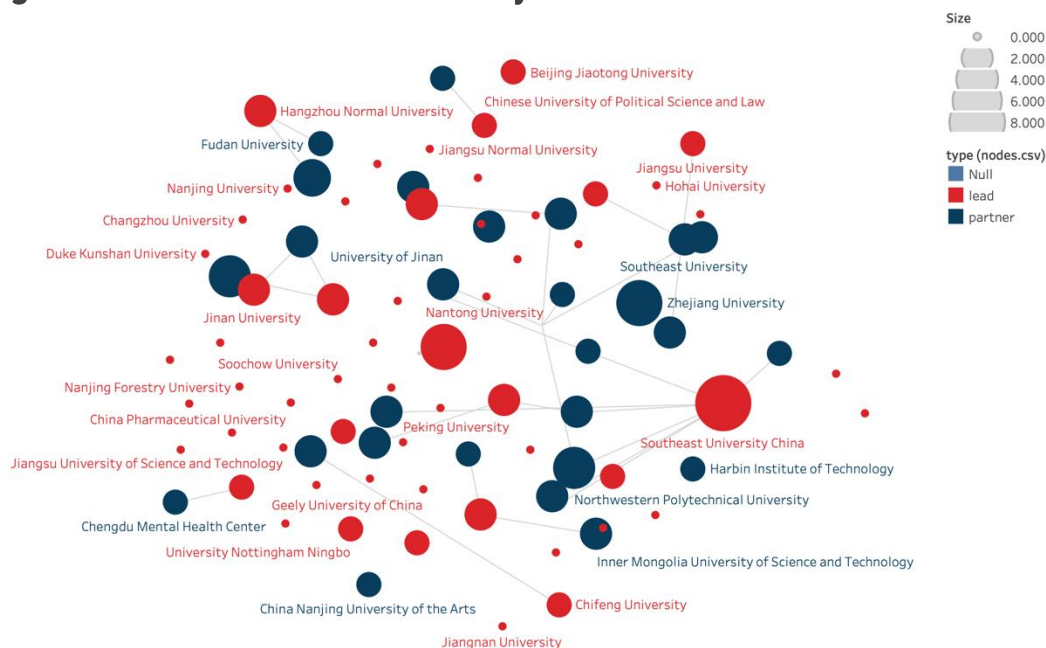


Table 1: UK-China Higher Education Consortium

Consortium	Chinese Lead institutions	Chinese partner institution
UK-China University Consortium on Engineering Education and Research	Southeast University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beijing Institute of Technology Chongqing University Dalian University of Technology Harbin Institute of Technology Northwest Polytechnic University South China University of Technology Tianjin University Tongji University
UK-China Humanities Alliance	Tsinghua University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peking University Fudan University Wuhan University Chinese University of Hong Kong Beijing Foreign Studies University Shanghai Foreign Studies University
UK-Jiangsu World-Class Universities Consortium	Jiangsu University Southeast University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changzhou University China University of Mining and Technology China Pharmaceutical University Hohai University Jiangnan University Jiangsu Normal University Jiangsu University of Science and Technology Nanjing University Nanjing University of the Arts

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nanjing Agricultural University • Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics • Nanjing Forestry University • Nanjing University of Information Science & Technology • Nanjing Medical University • Nanjing Normal University • Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications • Nanjing University of Science and Technology • Nanjing Technology University • Nantong University • Soochow University • Yangzhou University • Nanjing University of Finance & Economics • Nanjing Audit University • Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University • Duke Kunshan University • Changshu Institute of Technology • Huaiyin Institute of Technology • Yancheng Institute of Technology • Xuzhou Medical University • Nanjing Vocational University of Industry Technology
UK-China TNE Joint Institute Alliance	Dongbei University of Finance and Economics	

Table 2: UK-China Going Global Partnership Funds

Year	Funded project	Chinese Lead partner institutions	Other Chinese partner institution
2018/19	Universities Network on Global Leadership, Peace and Development: Creating Educational and Societal Transformation	Peking University	
	Dental Healthcare Training Programme	Chifeng University	Heze Medical College
	Education Partnership in Intelligent Manufacturing (BRIIM)	Wuhan University of Science and Technology	Chongqing University Macao University of Science and Technology
	Joint Offshore Energy Engineering and Innovation Partnership (JOIN)	Dalian University of Technology	
	Partnership and capacity for teaching and training in food safety and nutrition	Jiangsu University	
2019/20	Adapting to Industry 4.0 oriented international education and research collaboration	Guangxi University of Science and Technology	Dongguan University of Technology
	Digital twin-driven lifecycle smart product design and manufacturing for railway industry	Southwest Jiaotong University	University of Electronic Science and Technology of China
	Advanced manufacturing of biochar in UK/China/Malaysia/Nigeria	North China University of Water Resources and Electric Power	
	Upskilling and Pedagogical Improvements in Advanced Construction Manufacturing Skills Leveraging BIM	Tianjin University	
	Education Partnership for Promoting High Value Manufacturing Supply Chain Systems (EPPHVMSCS)	Jinan University, Guangdong	Hefei University of Technology Zhejiang University – Ningbo Institute of Science and Technology
2020/21	A Mobile and Open learning and networking platform for Science and Engineering (MOSE platform)	Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China	
	Integrated Built Environment Teaching & Learning in the	Chang'an University China	

	Joint Curriculum Development amid Digital-Driven Industry 4.0 among China, Vietnam, and UK		
	Decarbonisation, Decentralised and Digitalisation (3D Energy)	Guangxi University	
	Digital Doctorate Training Hub	Northeast Normal University, China	
	Foster Multidisciplinary Collaboration amongst Architecture, Engineering&Construction(AEC) Graduates Using Digital Construction Skills and Immersive learning	Beijing Jiaotong University	
2021/22	UK-Jiangsu Digital Innovation Platform (UJ-DIP) with Joint Education Programmes in Advanced Manufacturing, Environmental Engineering and Healthcare	UK-Jiangsu Consortium member universities	
	UK-China Animation: Co-Creating Research and Knowledge Exchange	University Nottingham, Ningbo	China Nanjing University of the Arts Shanghai Theatre Academy
	UK-China Centre in Net-Zero Engineering Innovation	Southeast University China	Tongji University; Dalian University of Technology; Harbin Institute of Technology; Tianjin University; South China University of Technology; Chongqing University; Beijing Institute of Technology; Northwestern Polytechnical University
	UK-China Alliance: Development of the virtual centre of academic excellence for mycotoxin reduction, enhanced nutrition and food safety	Jiangsu University	Zhejiang A&F University
	Enabling collaborative academic development, research & entrepreneurship (eCADRE) across UK-China TNE	Zhejiang University;	University of Jinan; Beijing Jiaotong University;

			China Medical University; Nanjing University of Information Science and Technology; Northwestern Polytechnical University;
	Multifunctional nanocomposites in waste-water treatment	Tsinghua University, Beijing	
	Enabling electrolytic hydrogen production from molten salts	Northeastern University	
	(Re-)connecting Research in China	Hangzhou Normal University;	Fudan University; Shanghai Theatre Academy;
	UCL-NMU-SEU international collaboration on Artificial Intelligence in Medicine: tackling challenges of low generalisability and health inequality	Nanjing Medical University	Southeast University
	Integration and Re-engineering of Architectural Heritage in Guangxi, Inner Mongolia Minority Regions in China with UK Modern Bio-based Construction Technology	Guangxi University of Science and Technology (GXUST)	Inner Mongolia University of Science and Technology
	PIEZOELECTRIC SELF-DRIVING MINIROBOTICS FOR MICRO-CONTROL, PRECISE POSITIONING AND MEASUREMENT IN INDUSTRIAL APPLICATIONS	Harbin Institute of Technology	
	Digital economy and resilient society: governance, sustainability, and harmonisation	Chinese University of Political Science and Law	Capital Normal University
2022/23	Implementing Safewards in psychiatric hospitals in Sichuan, China	Chengdu University of Traditional Chinese Medicine	Chengdu Mental Health Center
	Embedding Digital Manufacturing and Circularity into Construction & Demolition Waste Management: advancing China and UK's Research & Education	Jiangsu University of Science and Technology	
	COVENTRY – GEELY CLUB: A Partnership between Coventry	Geely University of China	

	University, Geely University of China and Geely Automotive		
	Microneedle Array Patch for the continuous monitoring of multiple Chronic Kidney Disease biomarkers in transdermal biofluid	Peking University	
	Future Leader's adoption of ESG Driven MOre Sustainable MOre Profitable (MOSMOP) Business Model Innovation	Shanghai JiaoTong University	
	Digital Twin-Based Smart Transportation and Service System for Sustainable Development	Southwest Jiaotong University	Institute of Software, Chinese Academy of Sciences
	Rethinking Heritage Futures: Building competencies, synergies, and knowledge exchange between UK and China on heritage management, digitisation and creative economy	Communications University China	
	Robotic Construction in the UK and China - Towards Affordable Net Zero-Carbon Housing	Tongji University	

This table does not reflect in entirety the reach of Chinese-led consortia. While the weight of their membership remains on the mainland, consortia networks extend into ASEAN countries, particularly Vietnam and Indonesia, as well as to Africa and Europe. An example of this is China's Belt and Road Initiative, a global infrastructure development project that includes partners in over 150 countries. British Council relationships by way of Chinese GGP programmes have thus been formed not only with the Chinese institutions illustrated above, but with HEIs in Cameroon, Croatia, Hungary, Indonesia, Kenya, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nigeria, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, and Vietnam.

China programme priority areas or themes are discussed on page 18 and their outcomes on page 28.

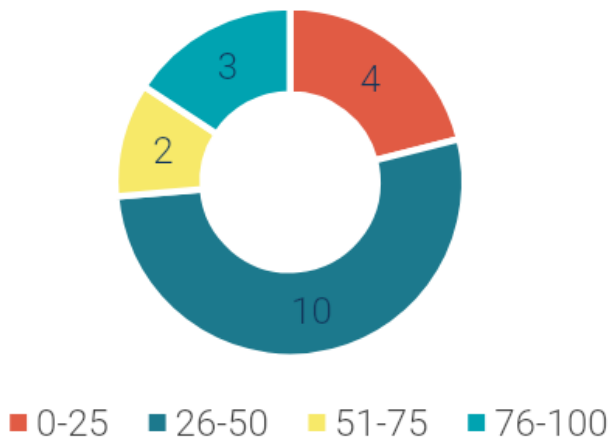
Additional Funding

British Council support appears to positively affect a partnership’s ability to secure additional support, including matched funding, from other sources.

While project documentation around matched, in-kind, and other additional funding is inconsistent, a minimum of 40% of reviewed programmes report either matched or in-kind funding secured from partner HEI, government partner, or commercial partner sources. This figure increases to 54% when only Going Global era programmes are considered (not 2020-2021 or pre-GGP grants), suggesting that the Going Global umbrella has been effective in enhancing partners’ ability to leverage British Council endorsement to secure additional support.

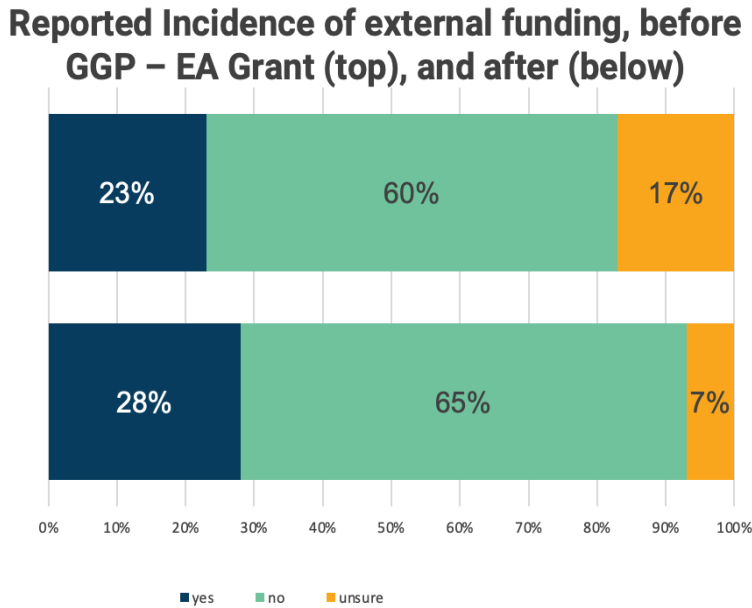
Survey data (which is not disaggregated by pre-GGP and GGP eras) from summer 2023 supports this impression. Respondents were asked what approximate percentage of their total programme funding came from sources other than the British Council. The average response across country programmes was 45%, and the mode response was 50%. Survey responses are consistent with the averages that emerged from HESA’s analysis of programme documentation, and they are summarised below.

Figure 7: Percentage of Programme Funding from Additional Sources



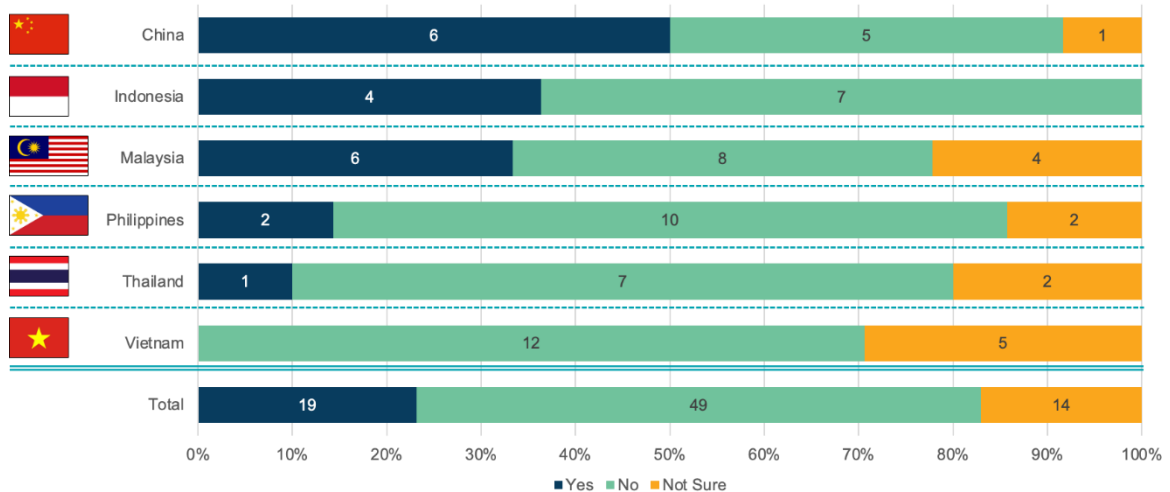
Thirty-three percent of survey respondents indicated that British Council support helped them to secure funding from other sources. Prior funding is positively correlated with success in British Council grant application. However, British Council support appears to have an independent positive effect on partners’ ability to subsequently secure additional funding and in-kind support from other sources. Survey responses to this effect are provided in the table below:

Figure 8: Incidence of Additional Funding Before and After GGP support



Country-specific survey response data as to additional funding rates are also provided here. Chinese partners report the highest likelihood of attracting external funding following British Council support, at a rate of roughly 50%, with Indonesia and Malaysia partner respondents indicating a subsequent external funding success rate of over 30%.

Figure 9: Incidence of Additional Funding After GGP support, by Partner Country



Targeted interviews with lead partners indicate a stronger impact of British Council support on additional funding success than available figures (e.g. survey responses) suggest. In the words of one consortium programme partner, “BC funding isn’t just about the money; it’s about the endorsement. The impact is different.” In their reckoning, the British Council provides a kind of due diligence for other UK institutions

to further their internationalisation goals, providing vital intelligence and opening doors to foreign high-level officials and opportunities.

*BC funding isn't just about the money; it's about the endorsement.
The impact is different.*

HESA's review of available documentation alongside interview and survey data suggests that the success of leveraging British Council endorsement is unevenly experienced across programmes. Some programmes, particularly those focused on robotics and artificial intelligence (AI), healthcare, and advanced manufacturing tended to have higher degrees of additional funding and industry partnership.

Country differences also exist. Chinese partnerships were notably successful in attracting additional funding, with an average over the evaluation period of 58% of programmes reporting additional funding in available documentation. Vietnam was less successful, according to available records, at 23% of programmes reporting additional funding (although the figure goes up to 35% if the pre-GGP period is not considered), whereas 48% of Malaysian programmes reported additional funding support and Indonesian programmes 49% (73% if the pre-GGP period is not considered).

These are relatively strong figures, which are nonetheless likely to be underestimated, as they are based on available project documentation while programmes are underway. They cannot in the majority of cases account for the legacy impact on funding of British Council support after the conclusion of a grant.

Partnership Characteristics

The East Asia group is the largest and most internally heterogeneous of the Going Global Partnership portfolios. Relevant grant calls are summarised in the figure below, while country-level aims of grant calls are discussed in the section that follows, by country and where available for review.

Table 3: Pre-GGP and GGP East Asia Grant Calls by Country, Completed & Ongoing

Year	CH	VN	TH	MY	SK	JN	ID	PH
Pre-GGP	UK-China BRI Countries partnership Fund	UK Vietnam Higher Education Partnership (UK - VN HEP)	Thai - UK HEP Programme	UK-Mal Higher Education Partnership Project		COP26 Trilateral Research Initiative	Role of English in TNE: EMI in HEIs	JDNP Philippines Grant to Develop TNE with UK
	Engineering							
	Humanities							
	GGP ASEAN 2020							
	UK-Jiangsu							
	TNE Alliance							
2021-22	Enabling Grants	UK-Viet Nam Partnerships for Quality and Internationalisation	TH-UK World-class University Consortium (Yr1)	UK-Malaysia ASEAN+3 Catalyst Grant	Going Global Partnerships Exploratory Grant for UK-Korea Virtual Academic Collaboration	RENKEI: Climate Adaptation Grant & RENKEI 10 th Anniversary Grant	UK-Indonesia GGP TNE Grant 2021	ACT-IHE Year 1
		Gender Equality Partnerships				COP26 Trilateral Research Initiative		English Medium Education (EME) training and Internationalisation training

2022-23	Enabling Grants	UK-Viet Nam Season 2023 Collaboration Grants	TH-UK World-class University Consortium (Yr2)	UK Malaysia Institutional Partnership Grant		COP26 Trilateral Research Initiative	UK-Indonesia GGP Teacher Training Grant 2022	UK-PH HE Partnership Catalyst Grant
		Digital Transformation in Higher Education	Research Environment Link, Researcher Connect Grant					ACT-IHE Year 2

Thematic Focus

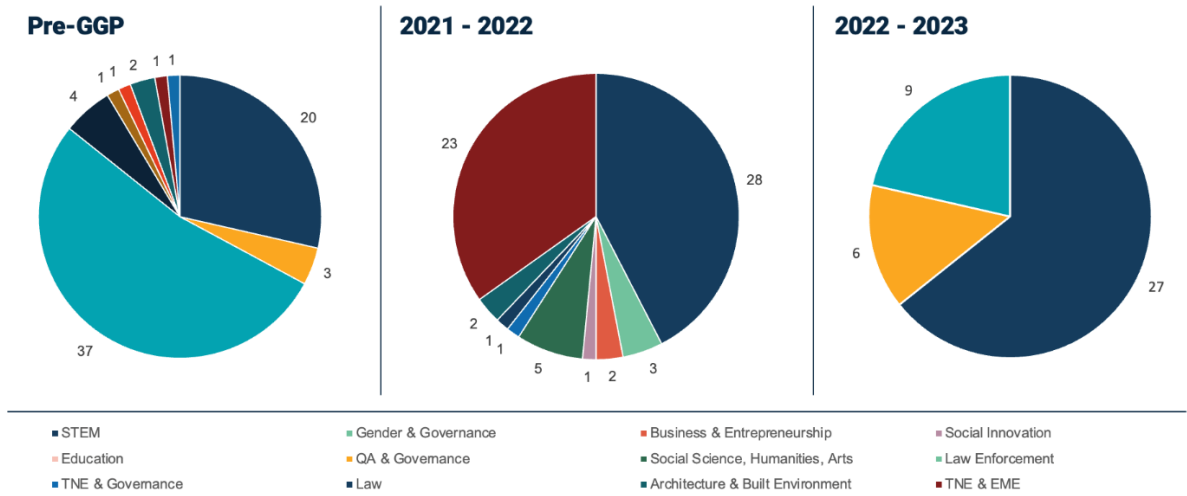
HESA has catalogued and assessed GGP – East Asia programmes on the basis of their subject area/thematic focus and their outcomes using common evaluative criteria derived from the document review.

There was a rich diversity of research interests and expertise represented across GGP – East Asia supported programmes. For purposes of analysis, HESA has summarized these in overarching categories, which correspond with their subject areas or, where HESA lacked subject area information or deemed it most indicative of programme aims, their strategic pillar. These are described by each era of British Council funding (pre-GGP or 2020-21, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023).

Subject area and strategic pillar categories include:

- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), which aggregates three areas of research and teaching:
 - Computer science & information technology
 - Engineering & environmental science
 - Health science (biomedicine, nursing)
- Education
- Transnational Education (TNE) & Governance
- Gender & Governance
- Quality Assurance (QA) & Governance
- Law
- Business & Entrepreneurship
- Social Science, Humanities, Arts
- Architecture & Built Environment
- Social Innovation
- Law Enforcement
- Transnational Education (TNE) & English as a Medium of Education (EME)

Figure 10: GGP – East Asia Programmes by Thematic Focus

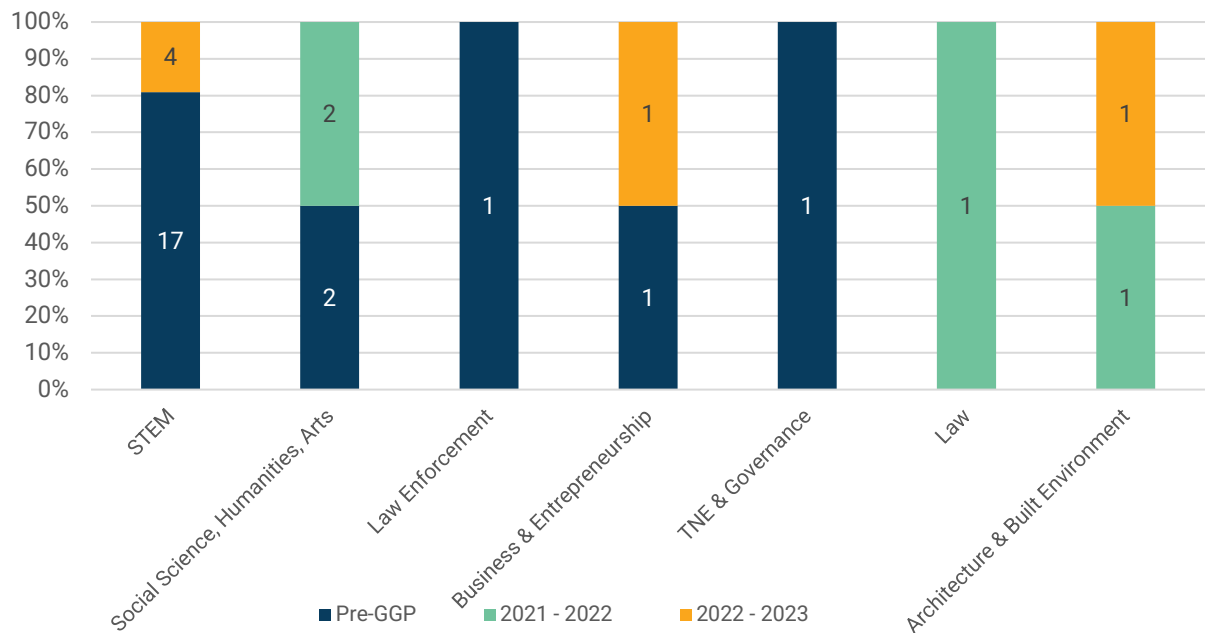


The relative distribution of programmes into the above categories is visualized above. Pre-GGP programmes tended toward exploratory and scoping programmes focused on internationalisation in education as well as science and innovation (e.g. Vietnam); enhancing the sustainability of technology transfer and research management in HEI (e.g. Malaysia); and initiating new HE partnerships, generating dialogue about best practices and TNE opportunities that promote UK qualifications, and enhancing quality assurance (QA) (e.g. Thailand).

The GGP programme furthers those internationalisation and capacity gains with four specific strategic aims: 1) Enabling research, knowledge, and innovation collaboration; 2) Internationalising higher education and TVET institutions through enabling quality assurance and inter-institutional accreditation recognition; 3) Strengthening institutions and systems through quality assurance and capacity building, including governance and leadership; and 4) Enhancing learner outcomes for the global graduate, as evidenced by community engagement, employability, and entrepreneurship.

In the forthcoming sections, HESA outlines how the thematic foci of each country portfolio reflect those aims in year 1 (2021-22) and year 2 (2022-23) of programming.

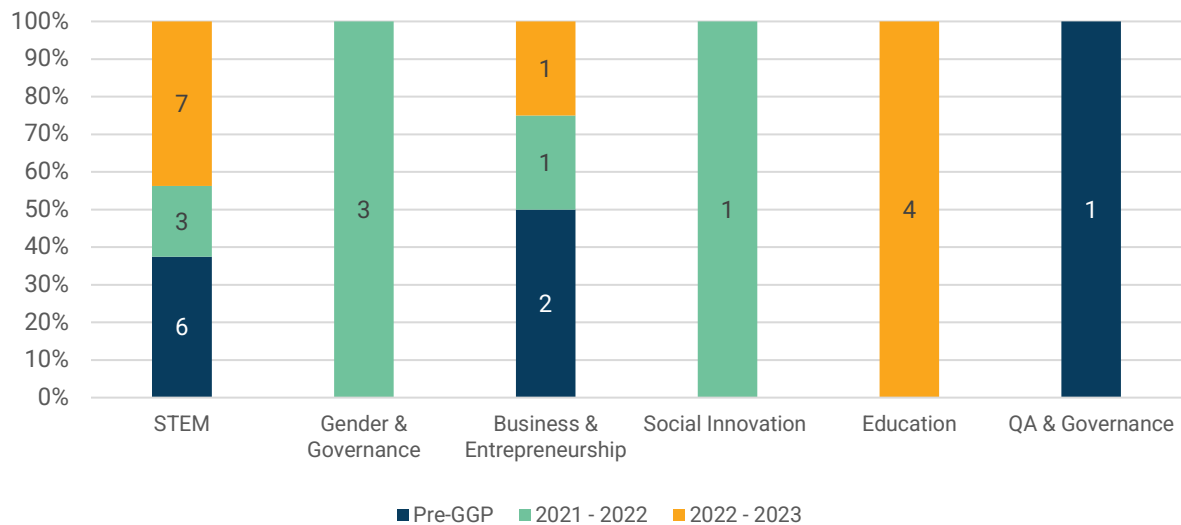
Figure 11: GGP – East Asia Programmes Thematic Focus – China



China programmes represent the largest number and most diverse spread of thematic areas in the East Asia group. At £1,105,742, China’s GGP programmes represent just under 30% of the entire East Asia grant spend. Pre-GGP programmes include programmes supported under the GGP ASEAN 2020 trilateral and consortia initiatives, bringing institutions in ASEAN countries into partnership with those in China and the UK. It also includes 14 consortia, namely the UK-China University Consortium on Engineering Education and Research (UKCEER), which began in 2016, linking Queen’s University Belfast with six other UK Russell Group universities, and with China’s Excellence League (E9) universities. With a focus on engineering, it aims to promote joint programmes, joint research, and student and academic mobility, initially in the areas of energy and intelligent manufacturing.

The UK-China Humanities Alliance is led by the University of Exeter and Tsinghua University (joint secretariat) and links 9 other UK institutions with 6 other Chinese universities to support the internationalising and strengthening of higher education in subfields summarised above, including Digital Transformation, which HESA has included in the category of STEM. Other consortia include the UK-Jiangsu Consortium (led by University of Liverpool and Changzhou University), which advanced strategic alignment across consortia members, focusing in particular on enhancing learner outcomes through graduate programme mobilities (categorised here as STEM), and the TNE Alliance, which the University of Edinburgh headed alongside South China Normal University, in order to share best practices and develop shared goals in TNE. All of these were beneficiaries of support in the form of subsequent GGP Enabling Grants in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 seasons, which fostered research, innovation, and teaching in areas from animation (Social Science, Humanities, Arts) to digital transformation in manufacturing (STEM).

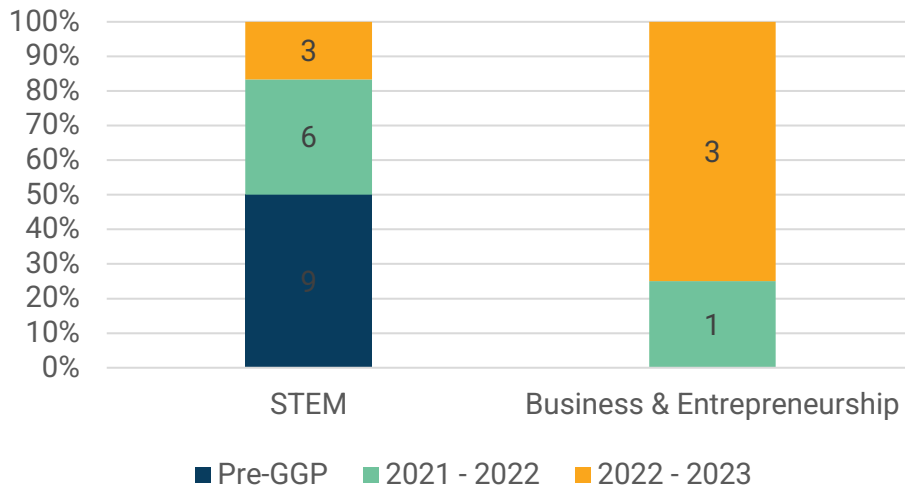
Figure 12: GGP – East Asia Programmes Thematic Focus – Vietnam



Vietnam projects date from 2018-19 and are focused on supporting internationalisation in education and science & innovation, and to promote UK engagement in the local HE sector. Working closely with the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in Vietnam, higher education partnership (or HEP) programmes have shared good practices in internationalisation, built capacity in management and governance, and promoted research, mobility, and local university-industry (U-I) collaboration. These are represented in blue above, in programme emphasis on QA & Governance, Business & Entrepreneurship, and STEM.

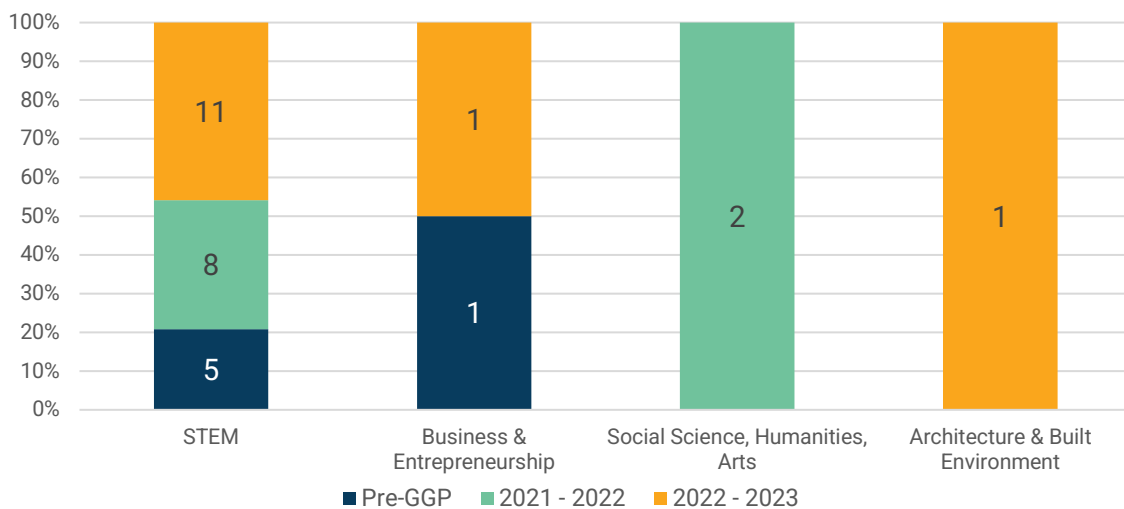
GGP era programmes furthered these pre-GGP goals with a horizon of 2024: enhancing sustainable, diverse, and inclusive HE partnerships between UK, VN, and other EA countries in teaching, research, innovation, and knowledge transfer; and launching pilot Gender Equality Partnership programmes aimed specifically at: gender violence prevention, increasing women’s representation in higher and further education leadership, and reducing subject segregation, particularly in STEM disciplines and careers. These are reflected above in the distribution of 2021-22 programmes predominantly in Education and Gender & Governance, supplemented by programming in STEM, Social Innovation, and Business & Entrepreneurship. Vietnam programme outcomes are discussed on page 29.

Figure 13: GGP – East Asia Programmes Thematic Focus - Malaysia



Malaysia GGP programmes have evolved out of a 2018-2020 British Council partnership with the Ministry of Education Malaysia to enhance the Sustainability of Technology Transfer and Research Management in Higher Education Institutions. The nine pre-GGP collaborative partnerships (bilateral, pictured above in blue) were established between HEIs in UK and Malaysia to share good practices and expertise in technology transfer in STEM fields. UK-Malaysia consortia were established in 2021-22 to promote strategic engagement and bilateral cooperation in HE, laying the groundwork for long-term collaboration and complementary research excellence and expertise between UK and Malaysian institutions. These are situated in interdisciplinary STEM fields (i.e. smart diagnostics and commercial application of biomedicine and biotechnology). Malaysia programme outcomes are discussed on page 34.

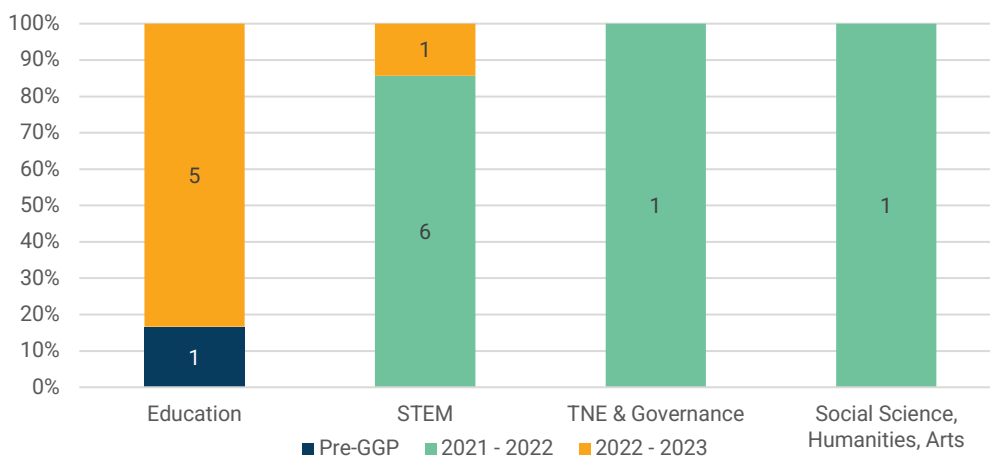
Figure 14: GGP – East Asia Programmes Thematic Focus by Country - Thailand



Thailand programming resembles Vietnam in its structure, beginning with 2018 Higher Education Partnership (HEP) initiatives focused on sharing best practices, fostering

joint research, and scoping for potential TNE programmes in applied fields. HESA has categorized here as STEM and Business & Entrepreneurship. Thailand GGP programmes diverged somewhat from those in Vietnam and Malaysia in the emphasis of the Thai-World-class University Consortia, developed in 2021-22 and 2022-23, upon increasing strategic and sustainable partnerships, advancing quality teaching and learning, strengthening research and university systems, and promoting knowledge exchange in seven priority areas. These are: Architecture & Built Environment, Chemical Engineering, Life Sciences, Agriculture and Forestry, Medicine (abridged above as STEM), Geography and Developmental Studies. This evaluation has folded these last two areas into the broader category of Social Science, Humanities, Arts, represented above in red. Thailand programme outcomes are discussed on page 32.

Figure 15: GGP – East Asia Programmes Thematic Focus by Country - Indonesia



The figure above summarises Indonesia programmes in pre-GGP through 2022-23. Pre-GGP grants focused on designing and delivering projects on improving pre-service training for future Early Childhood Educators (ECE), including the role of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI). This focus that was renewed in a 2022-23 grant call. These can be seen represented in the first column, Education. One 2021-22 partnership focused on initiating and developing TNE at a policy level. Others focused on exploring ideas, shared research, and best practices, or on strengthening capacity in teaching, learning, and innovation in specific disciplinary areas, visualised here respectively as STEM and Social Science, Humanities, and Arts. These efforts are also associated with enhancing student outcomes and employability, as well as strengthening HE institutions and structures themselves. Indonesia programme outcomes are described on page 38.

The thematic foci of programmes in South Korea, Japan, and Philippines are not presented graphically in this section, as they feature much less internal diversity. South Korean programmes began in the pre-GGP period as exploratory grants for virtual collaboration between two private universities. South Korea programmes are grouped as Architecture in the first graphic overview above of GGP themes.

Japan GGP programmes are focused on increasing UK influence in the global research and innovation ecosystem (first ToC pillar), and on the internationalisation of HE institutions (second ToC pillar). Japanese initiatives include only two: the RENKEI 10th Anniversary programme, and the related activities of the COP26 Trilateral Research

Initiative (2021-22), which the British Council developed in the lead up to COP26 or the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties in Glasgow in November 2021. RENKEI is based on a network of 12 Japanese universities, and its focus is building a cohort of early career researchers (ECR) in climate change adaptation and resilience through mobility and mentorship programmes. The COP26 research programme similarly focused on supporting those interdisciplinary research collaborations and networks among ECRs across Japan, the UK, and one or more ASEAN country in the field of climate research. For the purposes of this review, HESA has grouped these activities under the umbrella of STEM. Japan programme outcomes are discussed on page 36.

Philippine GGP programmes similarly pursue HE internationalisation (second ToC pillar). Their basis is in the 2016 Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED) agreement with the British Council to implement the *Joint Development of Niche Programmes through Philippine-UK Linkages* (JDNP) project, as well as the 2019 CHED and British Council *Access and Competitiveness through Internationalisation of Higher Education* (ACT-IHE) project. GGP era programmes were jointly funded by the CHED and focus entirely on Transnational Education (TNE) and English as a Medium of Education (EME). Involving 24 different Philippine HEIs, they developed joint Master's level programmes with UK partner institutions, offered TNE scholarship programmes for ongoing local professional development, and expanded Philippine educators' access to internationally-recognised programmes and qualifications. Philippine programme outcomes are discussed on page 40.

Project Outcomes

HESA evaluated documentation for 187 projects across eight GGP – East Asia partner countries for the pre-GGP era, 2021-22, and 2022-23. We developed a common evaluative framework informed by the findings of the document scan and with reference to the British Council’s GGP Theory of Change (ToC). We have coded some indicators of project progress and success that occurred most commonly in the documentation, and which are generative of or consistent with the desired outcomes of GGPs per the ToC:

1. Increased influence over global research and innovation ecosystem by internationalised institutions
2. Greater internationalisation of HE institutions
3. Improved quality and efficiency of tertiary education institutions, systems, and structures
4. Better outcomes and employability for students

Evaluative Framework

To help facilitate comparison and assessment of GGP - East Asia project progress to date, HESA has devised the following high-level categories:

- **Mobility (pillar 1, 4). Activity.** The movement of students, post-graduate researchers, and staff travelling from the UK to a partner East Asia country, or vice versa, for purposes of pursuing a GGP-supported programme of study or to forward collaborative research or research dissemination.
- **Workshops (pillar 1, 2). Activity.** These include exploratory and scoping as well as research meetings, both in person and digital, for purposes such as: the identification of shared research priorities or best practices for QA programmes; training sessions run for capacity building projects; or the delivery of research findings.
- **Conferences (pillar 2). Activity.** This includes larger-scale collaborative events and occasions where project participants and/or the wider public meet to exchange ideas, present research findings, or develop approaches to identified problems.
- **Transnational Education (TNE) & Joint Teaching Programmes (pillar 2).** Increased scale and/or effectiveness of UK TNE and Joint Teaching Programmes.
- **Quality Assurance (pillar 3).** Contributions to wider reform processes including quality assurance, compliance, relevant tools, evaluative frameworks and access.
- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) (pillar 4).** Increased inclusion and recognised value of under-represented groups, (focus on gender); or Increased access, retention, awareness or agency of under-represented groups (with a focus on gender); or Initiatives for equitable access and inclusion for under-represented groups, (with a focus on gender).

- **Training & Capacity Strengthening (pillar 3, 4).** *Activity.* Enhancing the quality of existing programme offerings, mainly through professional development, “train the trainer initiatives, or other pedagogical supports.
- **Research Publications (pillar 1, 2).** New collaborative research outputs created and knowledge exchanged.
- **Community or Industry Engagement (pillar 4).** Improved skills (including for employability or entrepreneurship, community outcomes, or soft skill) for learners; or Enhanced role between HE / TVET (as an anchor institution), civic society and economy.

The East Asia group of programmes have already been reasonably effective in forwarding the key aims of the GGP Theory of Change, despite the fact that many programmes are still ongoing. A high-level overview of key programme outcomes, based on documentation available as of June 2023, is given here:

- Enabling Research
 - 17% of programmes report increased Research publications
- Internationalising Higher Education
 - 58% of programmes report increased mobilities
 - 43% of programmes report increased TNE
- Strengthening Systems and Institutions
 - 58% of programmes report QA and capacity building
 - 65% of programmes report new workshops and conferences
- Enhancing Learners’ Outcomes
 - 86% of programmes report increased training and capacity building
 - 20% of programmes report active community, local government, or industry partnerships

The alignment of GGP – East Asia programme activities with intended ToC outcomes is evident in the above figures. Nearly half of all projects report increased TNE and joint teaching programmes, and a huge majority (86%) cited enhancements in training and capacity building, and quality assurance activities, and that strategic focus has been followed through. Mobilities, recognised as a vital mechanism for strengthening HE partnerships and systems and enhancing student outcomes, as well as for forwarding UK leadership in the international research ecosystem, were reported by 58% of all programmes. HESA suspects this figure is a significant undercount of actual mobility to date, much less of final mobility counts at effective programme end dates.

The most listed activity was workshops (reported at an average rate of 65% over the GGP era, or 2021-22 and 2022-23). This reflects the centrality of interpersonal connections made virtually if not in-person (as above, in mobility). This outcome is likewise consistent with the mandate of internationalising HE institutions in year 1 of GGP projects: simply gathering students, post-graduate researchers, academic staff, and policy makers together such that all have greater awareness of the environmental and technical barriers—and pathways—to international employment opportunities, transferrable credentials, student markets, and joint programme partnership opportunities.

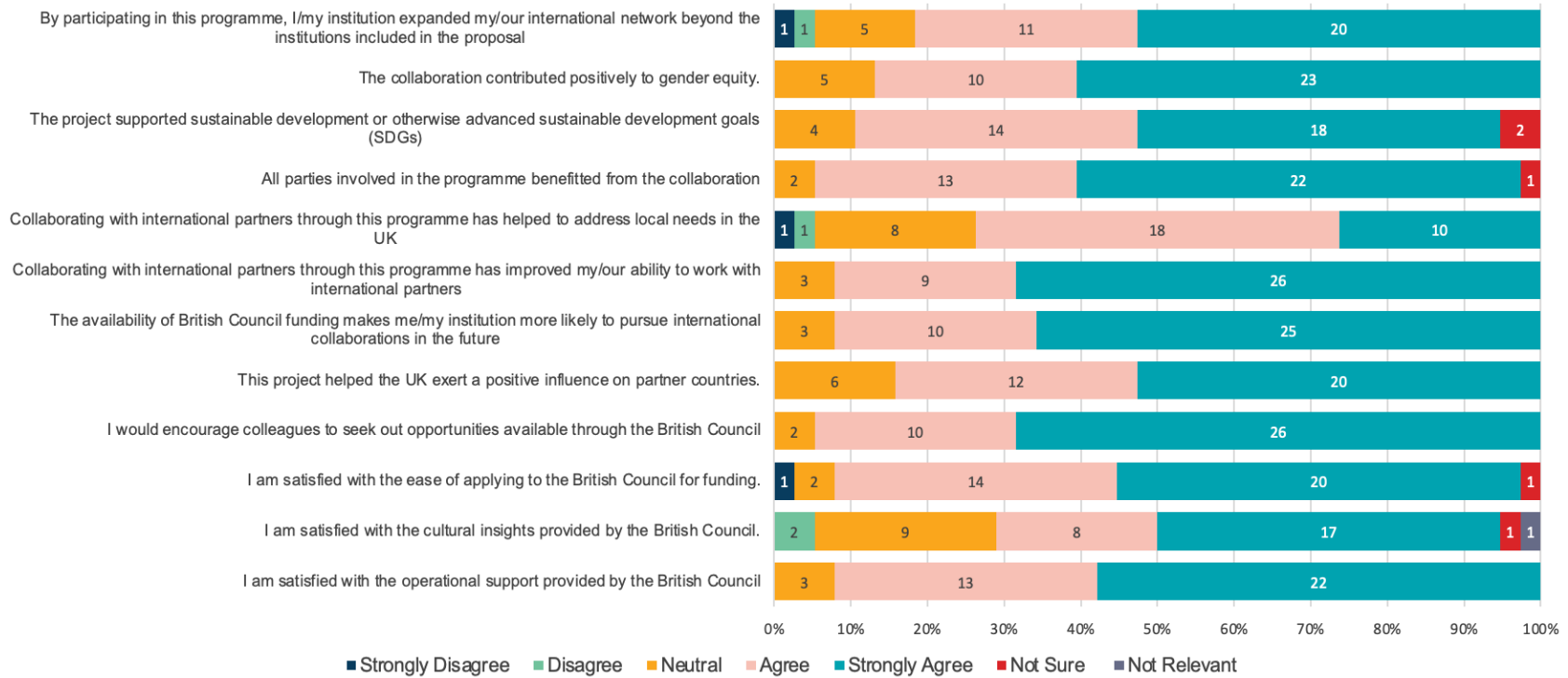
Strengthening HE systems and enhancing learner outcomes are also clearly reflected in programme activities. Quality assurance and capacity building activities together were reported in 58% of all projects, and a huge majority (86%) of projects list outcomes of staff training, fostering teaching excellence, or institutional and individual capacity building.

Survey Indicators

Survey data are indicative of the ongoing nature of a majority of GGP projects. Of the respondents to HESA's survey in summer 2023, 20% indicated that their projects were concluded. Of these concluded projects, 87% reported that they had completed all or nearly all (>80%) of their planned outputs.

Respondents reported overwhelmingly that GGP-EA programmes had contributed positively toward international research collaboration, strengthened TNE networks, gender equity, forwarded a range of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and addressed local needs. Respondents' feedback when prompted about project outcomes is summarized below.

Figure 16: Survey Responses to Priority Impacts & Satisfaction



To illustrate the outcomes of Going Global Partnerships over our periods of interest in each East Asian country, as well as other notable trends within each country, HESA constructed country-specific tables illustrating the frequency and relative frequency of each type of activity and outcome of interest (see introduction for more details on how HESA categorises our periods of interest, and see discussion on page 24 for the definition of activities and outcomes quantified by country in the section below).

This accounting of project outcomes is based upon project leads self-reporting project milestones in available documentation. As a result, these figures are almost certainly an undercount of activities to date and will likely increase significantly by the time of project completion. As discussed above, HESA estimates that this is particularly the case around mobility. While collaborative workshops or conferences would imply mobility prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the widespread adoption of virtual meeting software means this is no longer the case. As a result, HESA did not automatically count workshops or conferences as entailing mobility – any mobility needed to be identified explicitly in project documentation. Due to inconsistency in levels of documentation, HESA has aggregated the mobility figure here to include any mobility of students, post-graduate researchers, or staff as part of project activities.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is noted as a project outcome, reflecting the overlays of the Going Global Partnerships Theory of Change, which identifies gender equality and anti-racism as priority cross-cutting themes for the GGP programme as well as the broader British Council HE portfolio.

Outcomes by Country

China

One of the world's most robust higher education sectors, China had 40 grant projects (21 for pre-GGP, 12 in 2021-22, and 7 in 2022-23) considered under this evaluation. Chinese partnerships had a particularly high rate of mobilities (67%) and research publication (62%), as well as a strong emphasis on equity, diversity, and inclusion in programme design (e.g. gender representation in leadership, student selection). Chinese partnerships were also particularly effective in securing additional funding from either HEI, government, or industry sources. While not a leading output in any of the periods of interest, workshops remained a consistent feature of many partnerships throughout our periods of interest, whereas conferences declined over the three periods, as did additional funding. Given this, it is curious that only 5 projects, or just over 2% of projects, reported Community or Industry Engagement. It is likely that this category is underreported and suggests an ongoing need for clear report templates that reflect British Council interest in this outcome.

Table 4: GGP – East Asia Outcomes Dashboard – China

Outcome Reported	Pre-GGP		2021 - 2022		2022 – 2023	
	No. Projects	% of Total	No. Projects	% of Total	No. Projects	% of Total
Mobility	16	76%	8	67%	4	57%
Research Publications	14	67%	9	75%	3	43%
TNE & Joint Teaching Programmes	9	43%	5	42%	3	43%
Quality assurance	3	14%	5	42%	0	0%
Training & Capacity Strengthening	13	62%	3	25%	3	43%
EDI	17	81%	12	100%	6	86%
Workshops	13	62%	9	75%	3	43%
Public Conferences	14	67%	8	67%	2	29%
Community or Industry Engagement	0	0%	5	42%	0	0%
Additional Funding	12	57%	7	58%	3	43%
	Total Pre-GGP:	21	Total 2021-22:	12	Total 2022-23:	7

Vietnam

Though less than a tenth the size of China by population, the number of grant projects developed with Vietnamese partners was 29, making it the second largest country programme in the GGP – East Asia group. There are also some notable differences to China in terms of outcomes: strong dissemination of EDI principles and practices did not feature as frequently in projects conducted with Vietnamese partners compared to Chinese ones. Mobility was also far less frequently listed as an outcome.

However, projects reported strong outcomes, averaged over the three periods, in TNE and joint teaching programmes (66%), training and capacity building (50%), and workshops (79%). This likely reflects the strong downward effect of Covid-19 on physical mobility numbers over 2020-2022, but also the scoping nature of many Vietnamese grant calls, as well as the 2025 outlook of 2022-23 grant calls. Vietnam grant calls consistently prioritized bilateral HE partnership-building, promoting UK engagement with the HE sector, and laying the groundwork for TNE and the promotion of UK qualifications internationally.

Finally, the high reported levels of community or industry engagement—as high as 67% of projects in 2022-23—reflects another priority strand of grant calls in both the pre-GGP era and 2022-23: university-industry collaboration.

Table 5: GGP – East Asia Outcomes Dashboard - Vietnam

Outcome Reported	Pre-GGP		2021 - 2022		2022 – 2023	
	No. Projects	% of Total	No. Projects	% of Total	No. Projects	% of Total
Mobility	3	33%	2	25%	1	8%
Research Publications	1	11%	4	50%	4	33%
TNE & Joint Teaching Programmes	7	78%	5	63%	7	58%
Quality assurance	4	44%	7	88%	5	42%
Training & Capacity Strengthening	4	44%	3	38%	8	67%
EDI	0	0%	4	50%	2	17%
Workshops	7	78%	6	75%	10	83%
Public Conferences	4	44%	2	25%	5	42%
Community or Industry Engagement	3	33%	1	13%	8	67%
Additional Funding	3	33%	8	100%	5	42%
	Total Pre-GGP:	9	Total 2021-22:	8	Total 2022-23:	12

Thailand

The number of Thai grant projects reviewed sits at 20, or half the number of Chinese programmes. While mobility featured prominently as an outcome in projects with Chinese and Vietnamese partners also, it featured particularly frequently in projects that included Thai partners. EDI was also heavily prioritized, particularly in pre-GGP and in 2021-2022 with 15 of 19 of projects reporting EDI as an outcome.

There are very early signs that research publications may be increasing as an outcome in Thai projects: in 2022-2023, there were 6 projects that resulted in research publications, which is double the total of the combined 2021-2022 and pre-GGP era.

An average of 66% of projects reporting TNE and joint teaching initiatives reflects the impact of the pre-GGP Thai Higher Education Partnership (HEP) initiatives focused on sharing best practices, fostering joint research, and scoping for potential TNE programmes in applied fields. Thai-World-class University Consortia, developed in 2021-22 and 2022-23 similarly advanced quality teaching and learning, strengthening HEI systems and structures, and enhancing student outcomes through staff and faculty training.

Table 6: GGP – East Asia Outcomes Dashboard - Thailand

Outcome Reported	Pre-GGP		2021 - 2022		2022 – 2023	
	No. Projects	% of Total	No. Projects	% of Total	No. Projects	% of Total
Mobility	4	67%	8	80%	5	50%
Research Publications	0	0%	3	30%	6	60%
TNE & Joint Teaching Programmes	0	0%	0	0%	4	40%
Quality assurance	2	33%	7	70%	1	10%
Training & Capacity Strengthening	2	33%	1	10%	4	40%
EDI	5	83%	10	100%	4	40%
Workshops	4	67%	8	80%	4	40%
Public Conferences	1	17%	3	30%	5	50%
Community or Industry Engagement	0	0%	0	0%	2	20%
Additional Funding	0	0%	2	20%	5	50%
	Total Pre-GGP:	6	Total 2021-22:	10	Total 2022-23:	14

Malaysia

Though a small country with only 33.5 million citizens, Malaysia's GGP projects reviewed here total 24—nearly as many as Vietnam. Projects listing EDI outcomes (17 of them) and workshops (13 of them) make up over a third of total outcomes (20% and 15% of listed outcomes, respectively). There is a relative absence of projects that reported research publications or quality assurance, with these two categories combined figuring in fewer than 10% of projects featuring Malaysian partners.

Malaysian grant call focus on technology transfer and research management in STEM fields is evident in some of the below reported outcomes, with (relative to those of other ASEAN GGP partner countries) moderately high reported levels of community and industry partnership or engagement at an average of 42% of projects. These figures likely reflect the influence of key consortia initiatives focused explicitly on cultivating gender equity in programme enrolment and leadership and community and industry partnerships.

Table 7: GGP – East Asia Outcomes Dashboard - Malaysia

Outcome Reported	Pre-GGP		2021 – 2022		2022 – 2023	
	No. Projects	% of Total	No. Projects	% of Total	No. Projects	% of Total
Mobility	1	11%	4	44%	2	33%
Research Publications	0	0%	3	33%	1	17%
TNE & Joint Teaching Programmes	1	11%	3	33%	4	67%
Quality assurance	0	0%	2	22%	1	17%
Training & Capacity Strengthening	1	11%	4	44%	3	50%
EDI	7	78%	7	78%	3	50%
Workshops	7	78%	2	22%	4	67%
Public Conferences		0%	3	33%	2	33%
Community or Industry Engagement	4	44%	3	33%	3	50%
Additional Funding	1	11%	3	33%	6	100%
	Total Pre-GGP:	9	Total 2021-22:	9	Total 2022-23:	6

Japan

HESA reviewed Japanese RENKEI and COP26 programming only in the GGP era, or 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. There was a total of 6 projects run over these two years. Five projects reported EDI outcomes achieved. Four focused on quality assurance activities and reported additional funding, whereas 3 cited Community or Industry Engagement.

Mobility and Public Conferences were reported for 3 projects in total, with Research Publications and Training & Capacity Strengthening featured as outcomes of 2 projects each. The 2022-23 project reported workshops and conferences, as well as TNE & Joint Teaching Programmes.

Table 8: GGP – East Asia Outcomes Dashboard - Japan

Outcome Reported	Pre-GGP	Pre-GGP	2021 – 2022	2021 – 2022	2022 – 2023	2022 – 2023
	No. Projects	% of Total	No. Projects	% of Total	No. Projects	% of Total
Mobility	0	0%	2	40%	1	100%
Research Publications	0	0%	2	40%	1	100%
TNE & Joint Teaching Programmes	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
Quality assurance	0	0%	3	60%	1	100%
Training & Capacity Strengthening	0	0%	2	40%	1	100%
EDI	0	0%	5	100%	0	0%
Workshops	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
Public Conferences	0	0%	2	40%	1	100%
Community or Industry Engagement	0	0%	3	60%	0	0%
Additional Funding	0	0%	2	40%	1	100%
	Total Pre-GGP:	0	Total 2021-22:	5	Total 2022-23:	1

Indonesia

The 15 projects developed with Indonesian partner HEIs featured a strong emphasis on equity, diversity, and inclusion in programme design, as well as on training & capacity strengthening (53%) and workshops (53%). These three outcomes were the most frequently observed and, when combined, make up nearly 60% of Indonesia projects. This reflects the priority focus of Indonesia grant calls on the role of English in TNE or English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), as well as internationalising HEIs and capacity building in staff and faculty.

There was a notable near absence of public conferences in the Indonesian projects reviewed. In fact, only one such projects yielded a conference as its output. Mobility and Community or Industry Engagement fared only marginally better with 2 and 3 projects listing these as outputs respectively.

Table 9: GGP – East Asia Outcomes Dashboard - Indonesia

Outcome Reported	Pre-GGP		2021 – 2022		2022 – 2023	
	No. Projects	% of Total	No. Projects	% of Total	No. Projects	% of Total
Mobility	0	0%	2	25%	0	0%
Research Publications	0	0%	0	0%	4	67%
TNE & Joint Teaching Programmes	1	100%	3	38%	0	0%
Quality assurance	0	0%	1	13%	3	50%
Training & Capacity Strengthening	0	0%	6	75%	5	83%
EDI	1	100%	8	100%	6	100%
Workshops	0	0%	6	75%	5	83%
Public Conferences	0	0%	1	13%	0	0%
Community or Industry Engagement	0	0%	1	13%	2	33%
Additional Funding	0	0%	5	63%	5	83%
	Total Pre-GGP:	1	Total 2021-22:	8	Total 2022-23:	6

Philippines

HESA reviewed 29 Philippine projects developed over the GGP era. The 2021-2022 season was a particularly active for Philippine partnerships, with 23 projects implemented. Projects featured 4 types of outcomes: Training & Capacity Strengthening (26), EDI (22), as well as workshops and TNE & Joint Programmes (20). A handful of projects reported mobility (10) and public conferences (6). No projects under review reported research publications, quality assurance, community and industry engagement, or additional funding as outputs.

Table 10: GGP – East Asia Outcomes Dashboard - Philippines

Outcome Reported	Pre-GGP	Pre-GGP	2021 – 2022	2021 – 2022	2022 – 2023	2022 – 2023
	No. Projects	% of Total	No. Projects	% of Total	No. Projects	% of Total
Mobility	0	0%	6	26%	4	67%
Research Publications	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
TNE & Joint Teaching Programmes	0	0%	16	70%	4	67%
Quality assurance	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Training & Capacity Strengthening	0	0%	22	96%	4	67%
EDI	0	0%	22	96%	0	0%
Workshops	0	0%	16	70%	4	67%
Public Conferences	0	0%	6	26%	0	0%
Community or Industry Engagement	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Additional Funding	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Total Pre-GGP:	0	Total 2021-22:	23	Total 2022-23:	6

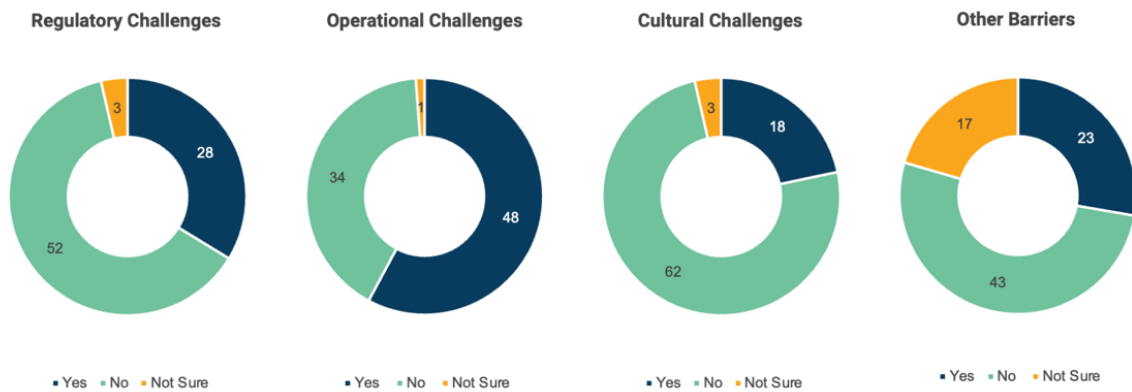
Challenges

General

GGP - East Asia programmes encountered a range of expected and unexpected operational, regulatory, and cultural challenges, in that order. HESA’s survey of programme participants in summer 2023 revealed a general trend of regulatory and operational challenges predominating in responses. It should be noted that written comments reveal that there are a number of overlapping issues that respondents identified as regulatory or operational, particularly around financial issues.

Survey responses about programme challenges are summarised in the table below.

Figure 17: GGP – East Asia Programme Challenges Overview



A number of written comments from survey respondents provide an elaboration of these challenges. Some highlighted regulatory challenges including issues with financial transfers or budget approvals (5), visa applications and approvals (4), or challenges with aligning different institutional policies (3). Only one written comment directly noted issues with “British Council bureaucracy;” otherwise, critical feedback largely oriented around some factors that are beyond British Council control (such as the speed of visa applications).

Operational challenges to benchmarking exercises, for example, include difficulty securing institutional approval to access relevant documentation, or country-specific differences in programme structure that prevent benchmarking exercises and delay project completion.

There is some overlap between identified operational and regulatory challenges. In particular, many respondents (10) highlighted financial challenges in their responses, including challenges with transferring money across different national banking systems or in the amount of money available for travel. The second most commonly identified category was personnel (7). Respondents highlighted a key person leaving a project, challenges with training, or simple personnel clashes as challenges here. Four respondents identified ongoing issues with COVID and travel restrictions. Three highlighted issues with attracting adequate survey responses for their research

project. One respondent simply noted the issues in translating things from Chinese to English.

Cultural challenges can be grouped in a few broad categories. Four respondents made comments that reflected differences in working culture. This included things like differing expectations around timelines and frequency of communication. For instance, one respondent noted that one side of a partnership worked primarily via Teams, while the other side preferred not to use that platform. Another noted that the two sides had differing expectations concerning how long in advance things needed to be planned.

Differing perceptions of rank and hierarchy also came into play. One partnership struggled to agree on the amount of responsibility a PhD student should be permitted to have within the operations. Two respondents noted that language barriers were the main issue, and there simply needed to be more time allocated to translating materials and exchanges.

Respondents were able to identify other challenges they didn't feel fit into the other categories, though the themes identified above are often repeated. These include issues with COVID (3), issues with the commitment of a specific member of the partnership (3), or financial rules (2). Other identified issues include delays because of a typhoon or challenges recruiting program participants.

The written comments suggest that more might be done to prepare programme participants to navigate visa requirements or the financial rules and regulations that they might engage with. More written agreement over distribution of labour and workload may also help to manage expectations around how much work people can contribute to a partnership, although there are always limits to how much regulations or work plans can mitigate for shifts in personal priorities.

Other operational challenges include country differences in institutional benchmarking and quality assurance (QA) structures. One key difference indicated by an interviewee was the relative ease of developing dual PhD programmes as opposed to Masters level programmes, from the standpoint of TNE:

"The dual PhD was the preferred route, all the way up to the [partner country] Ministry... because it's easier to align the two QA structures of the two countries at the PhD level [whereas] structure-matching is much harder to align with the Course-work based Masters programmes."

Challenges to bilateral and trilateral partnerships appear to vary based on project goals, with operational and regulatory challenges featuring prominently for TNE and joint teaching initiatives, in particular. However, the most frequent challenge to programme implementation—cited with near universality—were the delays and mobility restrictions associated with Covid-19. Most partnerships mitigated this challenge by adopting digital meeting platforms and processes, and many applied for programme extensions from the British Council, rescheduling mobilities in 2022-2023 that were originally slated for 2021-2022, for instance.

Consortium Challenges

Many of the most impactful East Asia partnerships are consortia. The size and complexity of these partnerships, ranging from 4 to as many as 150 partners, present distinct challenges. HESA's best access to these challenges has been through case study interviews with consortia lead researchers, although we have also drawn upon challenges described in project progress reports and final reports, where available.

Consortia challenges can be grouped into four main categories:

- Partner engagement
- Leadership structure
- Outreach and promotion
- Financial sustainability

Many interviews and progress/final reports cite differing levels of partner engagement as an abiding challenge to programme implementation. In some instances, this is described as a lack of "(pro)active participation" or an "unevenness" of competencies across partner institutions, sometimes addressed with the adoption of a SMART Goals approach (Specific, Measurable, Assignable, and Timebound). One interviewee reported:

"There are a few universities on the UK side that aren't actively involved. They have joined seminars but haven't been involved in other activities. The secretariat plans to engage these institutions more, but we're still developing a mechanism for how to do that, to encourage engagement in a way that's effective. Chasing responses [from less engaged partners] is very time-consuming." - UK lead partner

Leadership, on the other hand, is cited by another partner as the trickiest aspect of consortia management, given that there is no specific protocol for assigning direction of consortium activities. A rotating secretariat, hosted at one institution in turn, has been the strategy employed so far, but the length of tenure of a given secretariat remains unclear. This interviewee reflected that other joint decision-making structures and processes might be worth considering as alternatives to the secretariat model.

Outreach and promotion have been described as ongoing challenges for consortia partners. Strategies for generating exposure, expanding reach, and attracting potential new stakeholders through social media was discussed with both enthusiasm and frustration. One interviewee described LinkedIn as the most effective platform, in their experience, for generating high engagement around programme events and for announcing new funding or industry partnerships.

Many project leads described the ongoing concern of funding beyond the life cycle of the GGP grant. Sustainable projects is their goal, but ensuring this is never guaranteed, despite high levels of investment in in-kind funding and staff time by consortium partner universities. The Turing Fund was cited as a likely avenue, inspiring some confidence that projects would continue without British Council support.

Partnership Sustainability

British Council GGP - East Asia programmes have increased East Asia partners' understanding of the UK HE sector and their ability to collaborate internationally.

Of surveyed partners, 88% of respondents said they were highly likely or likely to still be collaborating with programme partners in 2-5 years. This is a strong result that suggests that there is fertile ground for the development of renewed and long-term relationships and collaborations. While the previous discussion of Additional Funding on page 13 refers explicitly to the degree of financial sustainability achieved by a partnership to date, this section refers to the sustainability of the relationships between partners.

A few participants offered some written comments on how they plan to sustain their partnerships. This includes working on developing new collaborative research projects, cultivating new communities of practice that lead to symposia or shared research or creative process documentation, creating shared social media pages where participants can continue to engage with each other, or simple continuation of email exchanges and threads.

Interviews with lead partners consistently indicate that face-to-face interaction with programme counterparts abroad is pivotal for building sustained partnerships. Research momentum and mutual inspiration and support are cited as the chief benefits of the mobility that British Council support helps to make possible. Such benefits are described as incentivizing ongoing partner engagement and commitment to pursue the other important determinant of programme sustainability: additional funding.

One interviewee was frank in stating that:

"sustainability of a collaboration depends on whether people get along... [and whether they] secure meaningful grant funding to then enable further joint research. With meaningful I mean a large grant that gives [a] high profile to both UK and [partner country] researchers and funds research staff time... All the British Council funding I hold is used for pilot work to enable [us] to secure larger grants or fellowships for early-career researchers." - UK lead partner

HESA's review of the GGP - East Asia programme reveals a strong partner focus on leveraging the British Council's extensive institutional knowledge and networking activities to secure the larger institutional and grant support that will enable them to continue their collaborations beyond the life of a British Council grant.

Role of the British Council

This evaluation found the role of the British Council in the UK funding ecosystem to be characterised as that of a friendly broker of international opportunity with unrivalled brand recognition. Its funding was consistently described as modest; however, its support and reach was described as great.

The influence of the British Council's endorsement on programme success in securing institutional and industry partnerships, as well as additional funding, was noted by many interviewees. One saw enormous advantage to the expansion of individual professional networks among their Scottish and English students due to GGP - East Asia mobility initiatives. They also reported how influential the British Council support was in making the UK system more transparent and comprehensible to foreign students and HEI staff:

"The UK system is quite rigid compared to other places, in terms of grading systems, board of examiners, professors' autonomy.... and the BC grant helps to bridge the institutional cultural differences... [to help] smart students from other countries to want to come here instead of just going elsewhere [like Australia, the United States, or Europe]." - UK programme lead

Another interviewee characterised the value of the British Council granting model as being the support and feedback its staff provide during the application process, which they described as "outstanding." Another described the British Council's great value to their project being its willingness to take risks on unconventional projects—perhaps projects that did not otherwise fall into pre-existing funder categories. Other feedback described the value of the British Council being the quality of its international community-building—the specificity and intentionality that goes into the matching of research collaborators by Council staff. In their words, "The British Council brings people together."

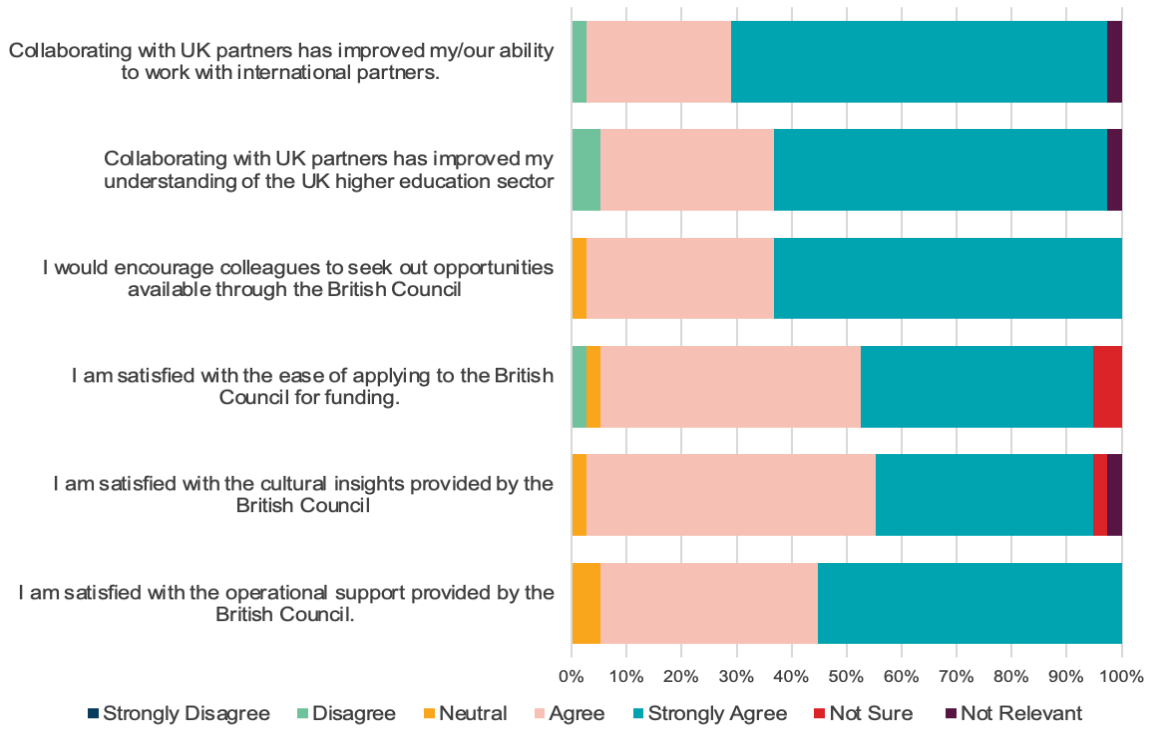
Fifty-eight percent of survey respondents felt that their international partnerships were unlikely or highly unlikely to have developed without the involvement of the British Council. This suggests that in many cases, the British Council funding can act as a form of quality assurance, flagging to external groups that a project is worthy of additional funding or input.

The British Council brings people together.

There are national distinctions worth noting. Three survey respondents in each of the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam believed they were likely or highly likely to be able to form such partnerships without British Council support. In contrast, none of the Chinese or Indonesian respondents thought it would have been likely for their international partnerships to have developed without British Council support.

The figure below demonstrates that for the most part, and across most categories, respondents were broadly satisfied with the role the British Council played. Typically, only one or two respondents disagreed with a range of questions examining relative satisfaction. Respondents were particularly satisfied with the British Council's role in improving their ability to work with international partners and, critically, to pursue collaborations with UK institutions in the future. Reflecting some of the written comments, there is somewhat softer agreement to the statements "I am satisfied with the ease of applying to the British Council for funding" and "I am satisfied with the cultural insights provided by the British Council," but sentiment to these questions is still net positive.

Figure 18: Perceptions of the British Council & the UK as a Country of Choice
Respondents said



Recommendations

HESA's recommendations for the British Council after evaluating the Going Global Partnerships – East Asia group of programmes include those for programme administration and review, as well as recommendations for future programme design.

First, the exercise of evaluating a regional portfolio was challenging due to the significant diversity of projects aims, outputs, timelines, and research and teaching disciplines. Developing a common evaluative framework for project outcomes at the regional level thus required a considerable degree of simplification that likely prevented the richness and nuance in evaluation desirable for gauging programme reach and impact with regard to: 1) digital and in-person audiences and beneficiaries in the short-term, and 2) the medium-to-long-term value to HEI-based research and innovation of community and industry partnerships initiated under the GGP umbrella.

Second, evaluating GGP – East Asia programme impact was frustrated by significant inconsistencies and gaps in programme documentation. Standardised and streamlined reporting structures would be highly beneficial. For example, eliminating the redundancy between progress reports and quarterly newsletters, which partners are often asked to prepare for country-level communications, might ease partner reporting fatigue and encourage timely submission of reports. Required reports should have a consistent format and Key Performance Indicator (KPI) frameworks in order to facilitate cross-programme or cross-country evaluation. Inconsistent knowledge management practices were also a challenge to HESA's document analysis; numerous folders and sub-folders were sent to the evaluator mislabeled or simply empty of relevant documentation, which made assessment of project outputs much more difficult.

Third, the rich and nuanced assessment of grant programme legacies of interest to the British Council may be better realised through country-level medium or longer-term evaluation, as opposed to global or regional programme evaluation. HESA would recommend this 'deep dive' style of country-level evaluation be conducted at the conclusion of programmes, when all final reporting is available for assessment, rather than conducted mid-stream, while projects have only just completed or are still underway.

Future improvements to British Council grant structure or design might include a programme for follow-up or top-up grants, intended to prevent the dissolution of the GGP alumni body. One interviewee observed that many Australian funding bodies follow this model, as does Fulbright, leading them to believe that it could be possible for the British Council to better leverage the value of the researcher-community it has built. Another interviewee reflected that they would like to tap into the institutional knowledge of previous grantees—or contribute themselves to such a body of experience—through some form or other of continuity grant or mentorship programme, in which previous grantees advise prospective or new British Council grantees. Crucially, that form of mentorship needed to have a formal structure with grant support in order to 'buy' faculty time and thus make this investment in the British Council alumni-network a sustainable exercise.



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