
Soft Skills Project Design and Delivery Toolkit

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Introduction

Soft skills are an important factor when considering peoples' employability and job prospects. However, numerous research has highlighted the gap in employers' expectations and the soft skills of many job entrants. This gap has been widened by the changes connected with the globalisation, accelerated transformation and digitalisation of the market, and more recently with new demands in the post-COVID-19 era, as a result of which the importance of soft skills in education and employment has been further increased.

However, there isn't a universally accepted definition of soft skills. They are often referred to under different titles, mean different things to different people, and are continuously evolving in responseto the changing work environment and requirements of the workforce. Neither is there a universally accepted way to deliver and assess soft skills.

The British Council believes in the central role soft skills play in improving an individual's employability and in maximising employment opportunities and over the past years the British Council has managed a number of soft skills projects in different TVET contexts; some have had soft skills as a primary delivery objective, some have incorporated soft skills in wide TVET reform projects.

In the process of developing the toolkit an action research was conducted in to British Council-supported soft skills development programmes. The purpose of the research was threefold:

- to help identify the main problems these different projects and initiatives were trying to solve;
- to help identify the framework components required, and;
- to review the characteristics and delivery models of the different projects British Council has been delivering across the globe in order to:
 - identify success factors;
 - lessons learned from the projects, and;
 - inform future design and delivery.

Methodology used to identify the toolkit components

A literature review was carried out by studying project specifications, ongoing evaluations and final reports from various projects that either delivered soft skills as a primary deliverable, or where soft skills were incorporated in to a wider TVET project.

Materials reviewed included projects delivered by British Council in Morocco, Egypt, Ghana, South Africa, Yemen, Iraq, Pakistan, India, Thailand, Malaysia and Vietnam.

Following the review, interviews were carried out with the key British Council officers from www.britishcouncil.org

Morocco, Malaysia, South Africa and the UK who were involved in the design and delivery of these projects.

These technical interviews focused on:

- i) what were critical success factors,
- ii) what were the key positive outcomes,
- iii) what lessons were learned, and;
- iv) what would be done differently if the project were to be managed again.

This information has subsequently been reviewed, analysed and key themes, or pathways, developed for this toolkit.

The literature review and subsequent interviews revealed a number of interesting observations.

Regardless of the type of projects that have been running, some key themes emerged:

- engagement with employers and relevant government departments in the design of projects was key to success;
- involving employers in the identification of soft skills to be delivered within a programme was essential;
- the involvement of UK delivery partners (from colleges and TVET providers) was seen as a key credibility factor overseas;
- knowledge of soft skills delivery was often limited amongst teaching staff in TVET providers, and therefore;
- teacher training was key, not just in terms of pedagogy, but also in terms of identification of soft skills development opportunities;
- delivery models were best focused on collaborative, facilitated workshops and on-the-job training (this posed particular challenges for employers), and;
- certification from UK awarding organisations was a good motivational feature for both providers and learners.

Across all projects there were two types of objective:

- where soft skills development was the main intended outcome, with a focus on content development and assessment, and;
- where the need of soft skills was identified post project-inception, and where the original project's scope was predominantly about employer engagement in curriculum development, and/or improving young people's employability through development of their soft skills.

Regardless of the delivery model, soft skills delivery was never a stand-alone activity, it was always embedded as part of a wider skills development programme, and worked best when integrated with sector-specific vocational training programmes.

Projects benefitted from UK-provider involvement. UK approaches to soft skills development were demonstrated through facilitated workshops and contextualised for each country, taking into account the local skills landscape (national strategies, government policies, funding initiatives).

Other key findings were:

- the importance of considering systemic-level influencing factors;
- the necessity for organisational commitment;
- the opportunity provided for more creative thinking around delivery of soft skills;
- developing a common understanding across all partners involved in the project;
- the value of piloting projects in certain key sectors, and;
- the development of specific tools used in the delivery of soft skills development programmes.

Using the toolkit

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide a tool to identify the starting-point, scope, breadth and depth, and structure of any soft skills development project and to guide development agencies in their approach to designing and delivering projects focusing on soft skills development.

The toolkit consists of four elements:

- Element 1 - Soft skills project design and delivery launch pad, that will help users identify the issue/ problem that needs to be solved and will direct them to the correct entry point into the soft skills design and delivery framework;
- Element 2 - Soft skills project design and delivery framework, which will guide the development and delivery of the most appropriate solution for the issues faced;
- Element 3 - Lessons learned from previous delivery and general success factors to be considered and
- Element 4 - Recommendations for future design and delivery of projects focusing on soft skills development in a TVET context.

Elements 1 and 2 are interlinked and have been developed as interactive tools. By answering the questions in the launch pad users will be directed to the appropriate entry-point(s) into the design and development framework. Once the issues/problem(s) have been identified, the framework is designed to assist with the design and delivery of the most appropriate interventions to address the issues by providing advice and guidance in nine specific areas / themes:

- programme design;
- government engagement;
- employer engagement;
- content development;
- delivery partnerships;
- teacher training/continuous professional development (CPD);
- delivery models;
- assessment models, and;
- certification routes.

Each theme includes a number of individual components that should be given consideration when designing and developing interventions and these are linked to specific advice and guidance on activities needed to address that component. Each theme is addressed:

- i) at a systemic/policy level;
- ii) at operational/organizational level, and;

iii) at practitioner level.

In order to deliver soft skills in the most effective way, all three areas need to be addressed within and across the toolkit, at every stage of the project; from inception through to delivery, and evaluation.

The toolkit is designed to support system development and capacity building projects and programmes aimed at increasing individuals' soft skills capability and employability. However, education frameworks, government policies, TVET infrastructure, capacity, and capability differ from country to country. This is also true of employment legislation/regulations, business and societal culture, and factors relating to economic landscapes. This is why when using this toolkit, **consideration should be given as to how each component can be applied in the specific in-country context**, and this should be included in the decision-making process of the programme structure, design and execution.

The British Council Soft Skills Project Design and Delivery Toolkit

Toolkit element 1: Soft skills project design and delivery launchpad

In order to develop the most appropriate soft skills interventions, it is important to first of all identify the **specific issue/problem(s)** within a system and the underlying causes.

The launch pad asks a series of questions to help identify the problem(s) which need to be addressed. By answering the questions, the launch pad will direct developers to the appropriate entry-point(s) into the design and development framework and will support setting the aims and objectives and design for soft skills development and delivery.

The launch pad

The starting point: A thorough analysis should be undertaken to identify the reasons for the lack of soft skills. It will most likely be one or more, or all of the issues identified in the table below.

Action required:

- analyse each of the issues identified in the launch pad to see which and how many need to be addressed;
- design a comprehensive soft skills intervention at systemic, institutional and practitioner levels to address the issues identified, and;
- wherever possible incorporate soft skills development into a wider vocational skills development programme – ideally as part of a wider vocational curriculum within and across sectors. If this is not possible, look closely at how the intervention could encourage and enable the development of such, and how the intervention could be incorporated into such as one emerges.

Framework links: *All framework themes should be considered and reviewed for relevance to the identified issues*

| Soft skills issue identified | Proposed solution | Framework links | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | Framework theme entry point | Linked framework themes |
| <p>Lack of relevant training - the content of soft skills training is not what employers need. This may be because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the wrong soft skills are being developed; the right soft skills are being developed, but the content is wrong; there is no content, and/or; the content is being delivered in the wrong way. | <p>Review of existing soft skills programmes and evaluation against known International best-practice – to identify exactly the gap between what is available, if anything, and what employers need, with solid recommendations for improvement.</p> | <p>4. Content development</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Programme design 2. Government engagement 3. Employer engagement 5. Delivery partnerships 6. Teacher training/CPD |
| <p>Quality of delivery - the content is not being delivered and/or assessed in an effective manner, the quality of teaching or methodology is not good enough</p> | <p>Soft skill teacher training programmes to improve pedagogy and assessment practice against known International best-practice, with solid recommendations for improvement.</p> | <p>6. Teacher training/CPD</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Programme design 2. Government engagement 3. Employer engagement |

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| | | | <p>5. <i>Delivery partnerships</i></p> <p>6. <i>Teacher training/CPD</i></p> |
| The delivery method is ineffective - soft skills are not being developed in the most effective way | Review existing delivery models and evaluate against known International best-practice, with solid recommendations for improvement. | <u>4. Delivery models</u> | <p>1. <i>Programme design</i></p> <p>2. <i>Government engagement</i></p> <p>3. <i>Employer engagement</i></p> <p>5. <i>Delivery partnerships</i></p> <p>6. <i>Teacher training/CPD</i></p> |
| The delivery infrastructure is not there - there is no organising framework to enable delivery (possibly no effective TVET system operating) | Design and development of a programme of soft skills development with a view to testing the most appropriate type of programme, including every aspect of delivery. | <u>1. Programme design</u> | <i>All framework themes should be considered and reviewed for relevance to the identified issues</i> |
| A combination of some or all of the above | Design and development of a full programme of soft skills development, testing the individual issues identified. | <u>1. Programme design</u> | <i>All framework themes should be considered and reviewed for relevance to the identified issues</i> |

Toolkit element 2: Soft skills design and delivery framework

Introduction

Once the issues/problem(s) have been identified, the framework is designed to assist with the design and delivery of the most appropriate interventions to address the issues by providing advice and guidance in a number of specific areas. The framework focuses on nine key themes:

- programme design;
- government engagement;
- employer engagement;
- content development;
- delivery partnerships;
- teacher training/continuous professional development (CPD);
- delivery models;
- assessment models, and;
- certification routes.

Each theme includes a number of individual components that should be given consideration when designing and developing interventions and these are linked to specific advice and guidance on activities needed to address that component. Each theme is addressed at macro-, meso-, and micro-level (or systemic, institutional and practitioner levels).

Where an individual component and activity needs to consider another element of the framework a reference is made in the final column, '*Linked framework themes*'.

The framework

| Framework theme | Framework features | | |
|---------------------|---|--|-------------------------|
| | Systemic | | |
| | Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| 1. Programme design | Ensure the programme supports as many Government education strategies/policies as possible | <i>Carry out research to identify what strategies/policies exist within Ministries at central/state/regional Government that are relevant to soft skills development and/or TVET in general and how they impact on training programmes in the given locality.</i> | |
| | Map programme aims, objectives, content, and outcomes to as many Government strategies/policies as possible | <i>Once the relevant strategies/policies have been identified, map these to the agreed aims and objectives of the programme. Highlight those that the programme will explicitly support and those where there may be an indirect impact. Government is more likely to support the programme if they believe it will further their strategic and policy objectives.</i> | |
| | Wherever possible, design programmes that complement wider vocational training programmes and promote a holistic and comprehensive approach to improving learners' employability and employment prospects | <i>Soft skills development is most effective when the soft skills are developed in conjunction with a wider vocational programme.</i> Vocational training provides greater opportunities to develop soft skills that employers need in their employees, and this will enhance learners' employability prospects and make them more attractive to employers. <i>Including soft skills development in a wider vocational programme enables learners to understand soft skills in a context in which they will have to use them. They will be more likely to see the relevance to themselves of the softskills they are developing.</i> | |

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| | <p>Devise and agree a communications/PR campaign for Government to support the promotion of the programme</p> | <p><i>As what the programme will be delivering is probably going to be new and different, publicising and promoting this new approach will be important. Stakeholders need to know how it is different, why it is different and what impact it will make to individuals and employers. Having Government support/participation will be key to success.</i></p> <p><i>A plan should be devised that will have maximum input at the right time, and will need to identify the target audience, key messages, and any promotional Material needed, with timelines attached.</i></p> <p><i>If working with International partners, they may well have experience in this area and have materials already developed.</i></p> <p><i>The plan should be in place well before the programme begins, to build expectation and buy-in from key Government /Government agencies.</i></p> | <p><u>2. Government engagement</u></p> <p><u>5. Delivery partnerships</u></p> |
| | <p>Design a robust process to evaluate the outcomes of the programme</p> | <p><i>If systemic change is to be brought about by the programme, it is vital a robust evaluation process be designed that enables the outcomes of soft skills development to be identified, measured, and weighed.</i></p> <p><i>Post-delivery evaluation should be an integral part of the programme's design, and this may include evaluations taking place during the programme delivery.</i></p> <p><i>The evaluation process should enable sufficient and appropriate data gathering at specific points/milestones within the programme, using effective analytical tools.</i></p> | <p><u>2. Government engagement</u></p> <p><u>3. Employer engagement</u></p> <p><u>5. Delivery partnerships</u></p> |

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| | <p><i>Decide what needs to be analysed, when to analyse it, and who needs to be involved, as this will inform decisions about the type and quantity of data required. Data collection should provide the basis for appropriate and effective production of both quantitative and qualitative analysis.</i></p> <p><i>The evaluation process should include, as a minimum, the following key features:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>data collection and collation requirements and arrangements;</i>• <i>analysis and contextualisation of data;</i>• <i>effective use of communication channels to publish and publicise the outcomes of the analysis, and;</i>• <i>strategy/action to implement/action the outcomes of the evaluations.</i> <p><i>Agreements signed by participating organisations, such as employers and delivery partnerships, should have a component for participation and co-operation in evaluation activities included in them.</i></p> <p><i>Evaluations should be presented and produced in a format that can be easily shared and understood by all key stakeholders and a wider audience, if appropriate.</i></p> | <p><u>7. Delivery models</u></p> |
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| Organisational | | |
|---|--|--|
| Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| Ensure programme design takes into account employer needs for soft skills | <p><i>Canvass employers to identify how they see soft skills being developed in ways that will supply them with employees with the skills they need. Most employers will probably not have a view, but there will be some, who are very engaged in vocational training, who definitely will have a view as to how the programme should be structured.</i></p> <p><i>By engaging with employers, and involving them in the design of the programme, their support is more likely to be won – which will be vital to the success in developing soft skills in learners.</i></p> | 3. Employer engagement |
| Ensure there are opportunities for learners to develop, practice their soft skills and have them assessed in a relevant and appropriate way | <p><i>Design the programme in such a way that learners have realistic and relevant opportunities to develop the required soft skills.</i></p> <p><i>This will include given them exposure to a range of learning environments where they learn about, practice, and master soft skills – for example, arranging work placements; facilitating work-based learning; utilising community and voluntary work; sitting on student councils; running student unions, etc.</i></p> <p><i>The programme should also be designed to maximise the range and volume of opportunities for them to demonstrate their soft skills for assessment, and those assessments should be measurable, recordable, and credible.</i></p> | 8. Assessment models |

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| | <p>Ensure senior management teams are fully supportive of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the programme as a whole • the concept of on-the-job development of soft skills development • enabling teaching staff to work directly with employers to develop learners' soft skills and develop their own teaching and assessment practice | <p><i>Meet with as many senior management teams as possible, as early as possible in the programme design to ensure they understand the aims and objectives of the programme, and what will be involved in its delivery.</i></p> <p><i>They will need to understand the human, physical, and financial resources they will need to make available.</i></p> <p><i>Important too, is that they realise the time commitment needed from their teaching and support staff. This will enable them to ensure their staff are available and have the time when and where they need it, to ensure successful delivery.</i></p> <p><i>They may need to adjust or amend their scheduling and timetabling for those staff involved in the programme, and they need sufficient time to plan this effectively.</i></p> | <p>3. Employer engagement</p> <p>5. Delivery partnerships</p> |
| | <p>Devise and agree a communications/PR campaign for employers/employer organisations to support the promotion of the programme</p> | <p><i>As what the programme will be delivering is probably going to be new and different, publicising and promoting this new approach will be important. Stakeholders need to know how it is different, why it is different and what impact it will make to individuals and employers. Having support and participation from organisations involved in the delivery, whether that be local and/or International delivery partners, employers/employers, and employer organisations, trades unions, certification bodies, etc. will be important.</i></p> <p><i>Devise a plan that will have maximum input at the right time. It will need to identify target audiences, key messages, and any promotional material needed, with timelines attached.</i></p> | <p>3. Employer engagement</p> <p>5. Delivery partnerships</p> |

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| | | <p><i>If working with International partners, they may well have experience in this area and have materials already developed.</i></p> <p><i>The plan should be in place well before the programme begins, to build expectation and buy-in from key delivery organisations.</i></p> | |
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| Practitioner | | |
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| Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| Ensure there are opportunities for teaching staff to undergo relevant CPD activities with employers in a way that develops their soft skills teaching and assessment practice | <p><i>Design-in opportunities for teacher training/CPD – days, times, locations, etc. – when CPD opportunities will occur.</i></p> <p><i>Have a clear idea about the level and volume of training that will be needed. Sufficient time should be given in the design of the programme to be able to develop CPD opportunities and content development, delivery, and assessment of teacher training/CPD</i></p> | <p>4. Content development</p> <p>5. Delivery partnerships</p> <p>6. Teacher training/CPD</p> <p>7. Delivery models</p> <p>8. Assessment models</p> <p>9. Certification models</p> |

| Framework theme | Framework features | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| | Systemic | | |
| | Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| 2. Government engagement | Identify key Government departments and individuals | <p><i>It is important to the success and long-term sustainability of soft skills development, that key Government and Government agencies are successfully engaged with the programme.</i></p> <p><i>Firstly, identify which Ministries and/or agencies have responsibility for soft skills development. This will often, but not always, come under the Ministry responsibility for TVET. But do not make that assumption. In some countries it may be the responsibility of a Ministry responsible for general education, higher education, and even split across many Ministries; each having an interest in soft skills development or TVET.</i></p> <p><i>Then identify the best way to engage with the individuals, Ministries, and/or agencies to sell the benefits of the programme to their individual Ministerial agendas. Think creatively about how this can be achieved – it could include a range of options, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>a trade body/association engaging on behalf of the programme;</i> • <i>delivery partners operating as a facilitator/broker in bringing Government and stakeholders together;</i> • <i>high-profile individuals, or people with the right contacts, engaging directly with Government on behalf of the programme, and/or;</i> • <i>a combination of some or all of the above.</i> | 1. Programme design |

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| | <p>Identify relevant Government strategies and/or policies that the programme can help deliver</p> | <p><i>To maximise the chances of Government support, identify all the key strategies and policies relating to TVET and soft skills development. Map the programme's aims and objectives to as many as possible, clearly identifying where and how the programme, not only supports the strategy/policy, but how it helps deliver the desired Governmental outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>Governments are more likely to support the programme if the programme is supporting their key education initiatives.</i></p> | |
| | <p>Identify potential strategy/policy blockers or barriers and devise solutions to mitigate</p> | <p><i>It is equally as important to identify strategies and policies that may hinder or challenge programme's deliverables. This might take the form of long-established Government approaches to education. The programme will likely be doing new things, in new ways, and this may well challenge the status quo.</i></p> <p><i>If key blockers and barriers have been identified, it can enable a robust and rational response, with the potential to remove these barriers – it may be that the programme will help the Government overcome long-standing barriers they are keen to be rid of.</i></p> <p><i>It is important to be able to show how removing these barriers will benefit stakeholders in TVET and soft skills development and how it will positively impact learners, employers, and the economy as a whole – how will it make businesses more sustainable and/or profitable.</i></p> | |

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| | <p>Devise engagement strategy and execute Government engagement activities</p> | <p><i>Have a plan. Think about how and when engagement with Government stakeholders is needed. Think about the best times and places to engage.</i></p> <p><i>Systematically engage with as many people in Government with an interest in TVET and soft skills as possible. There will likely be sensitivities, overlapping or competing agendas, and these need to be managed skillfully so as not to offend or compromise the outcomes of the programme.</i></p> <p><i>If there is methodically planned engagement, with built-in flexibility for the 'unexpected', the timing of engagements will position the programme for maximum impact.</i></p> | |
| | <p>Establish schedule of engagement activities and communications strategy</p> | <p><i>Plan it. If there is a workable plan, the approach to Government engagement can happen in a strategic way. Be aware of anything that may hinder, or help, engagement. Think about:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>policy timelines;</i> • <i>current and/or emerging legislation/regulations;</i> • <i>planned elections;</i> • <i>national/public/religious holidays/festivals;</i> • <i>parliamentary sessions, etc.</i> | |

| Organisational | | |
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| Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| Identify organisations that can assist with Government engagement | <p><i>Think about working in collaboration with other organisations. There may be organisations that are better positioned to engage with Government. They may have established relationships, close ties, formal agreements, MoU's, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Be open to creative ideas, it may be that International partners have those relationships from previous projects they have undertaken in the country. It may be they have 'prestige' or credibility, as an International organisation that can be leveraged on behalf of the programme.</i></p> <p><i>Approach any identified organisations with a view to working with them. If possible, have formal agreements/arrangements with these organisations to engage with Government on behalf of the programme.</i></p> | <p>1. Programme design</p> <p>3. Employer engagement</p> <p>5. Delivery partnerships</p> |
| | <p><i>It may be that someone internally already has established relationships. Work with these individuals and identify the best and most appropriate way to engage. Often it is someone not related to the programme that is best placed.</i></p> | |

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| | <p>Identify key strategy blockers/barriers that could challenge programme objectives</p> | <p><i>Know the organisation. Research whichever organisation is identified as a potential engagement partner. Make sure their company ethos, principles, strategies and policies align with those of the programme. Preferably identify organisations that have stated TVET/soft skills agendas/initiatives, and policies (Apprenticeships are a good one to look for).</i></p> <p><i>Make sure they are not being asked to do something they cannot do, or something that would undermine their business in any way.</i></p> <p><i>Be careful to only approach organisations that are in good standing with the Government of the day. Research the organisation to ensure there will be no controversy with establishing a relationship with them, and that they can, indeed, provide a positive impact on engagement with Government.</i></p> | |
| | <p>Work with these organisations to develop key messages to Government to highlight strategy/policy compliance, support, and/or implementation</p> | <p><i>Provide them with the key messages that need to be communicated with Government.</i></p> <p><i>Make sure they fully understand the concept, aims and objectives, and detail of the programme before they engage. Work with them to develop a deep understanding of the programme so that they can maximise their influence wherever possible.</i></p> <p><i>If appropriate, accompany them to meetings; make sure any communications are shared – in both ways of two-way, open communications always works better; provide materials and/or promotional collateral for use with Government officials.</i></p> | <p><u>3. Employer engagement</u></p> <p><u>5. Delivery partnerships</u></p> |

| Practitioner | | |
|--|---|---|
| Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| Identify available in-country Government support for teacher CPD | <p><i>This may be existing training programmes, funding opportunities, etc.</i></p> <p><i>It may be that the Government has practitioner development training initiatives. Examine these carefully to see if there are any that could contribute to teacher training/CPD. Carefully scrutinise the programmes, make sure that they do not present obstacles to the delivery of the programme.</i></p> <p><i>If delivery is the issue the programme needs to address, there may be a need to develop an entirely new training/development programme for teachers delivering soft skills. If this cuts across existing Government programmes, be extremely careful how this is communicated. Provide evidence as to how existing programmes are not providing teachers with the necessary skills for soft skills development but, obviously, do this with sensitivity and diplomacy.</i></p> <p><i>If no programmes exist, make sure new programmes and programme content that will deliver teachers with the required skills needed for effective soft skills development is identified clearly. This may be an existing programme from International partners, if this is the case, work closely with delivery partners to understand and present how the programme will benefit teachers and learners alike. It may be an entirely new programme specifically focused on local context. If this is the case, work with delivery partners to identify who is best placed to deliver the training.</i></p> | <p>1. Programme design</p> <p>4. Content development</p> <p>5. Delivery partnerships</p> <p>6. Teacher training/CPD</p> |

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| <p>Identify CPD opportunities that support Government teacher training/upskilling initiatives</p> | <p><i>Look at creative ways to deliver CPD opportunities that support Government initiatives wherever possible. It may be that teachers are not familiar with the opportunities that exist, or there may be a need to work with delivery partners to create new opportunities that support existing programmes. It may need the creation of new content that fits with existing initiatives, tailored to the local context</i></p> | <p>4. Content development</p> <p>5. Delivery partnerships</p> <p>6. Teacher training/CPD</p> |
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| Framework theme | Framework features | | |
|------------------------|--|--|--|
| | Systemic | | |
| | Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| 3. Employer engagement | Identify and engage with Government agencies responsible for employer engagement in skills development | <p><i>It is important to use as many assets as is possible when engaging with employers. Governments often have agencies that work directly with employers and/or employer organisations. When scoping out Government engagement possibilities, always look to see what direct links Government has with public- and private-sector organisations. These may be stand-alone Government agencies, or may be Government Ministries tasked with working with employers on skills issues. It may also be that Education Ministries have links through the work they do on curriculum development. Be thorough in the analysis, rule nothing out</i></p> <p><i>Once identified, approach these Government Ministries/agencies through the most appropriate routes, subject to local context, and seek assistance in instigating contact The protocols for this will differ from country to country, so identify how this should be done locally and work through the process with the relevant Government body.</i></p> | <p>1. Programme design</p> <p>2. Government engagement</p> |

| Organisational | | |
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| Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| <p>Identify potential contributors/partners from sectoral:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employers; • trade bodies; • professional associations; • trade association; • trades unions, etc. | <p><i>Engaging employers in skills development initiatives is notoriously difficult, wherever in the world programmes are run. Every avenue should be explored and, again, nothing should be ruled out. It may require some level of creativity in how engagement is carried out, so think broadly in terms of identifying those who could be worked with.</i></p> <p><i>Remember, too, that it's not just the private-sector where engagement can take place. Public-sector organisations are employers too – and, obviously, they have employees with skills needs just the same as the private-sector.</i></p> <p><i>Consider the local context where the programme will operate – some governments mandate that certain organisations must be included when consulting on skills needs – such as trades unions, for example. Make sure these are identified along with any local regulations or requirements.</i></p> | <p>1. Programme design</p> |
| <p>Negotiate and agree employer engagement activities for the programme with employers</p> | <p><i>Once all employers and/or organisations needed to engage with have been identified, enter into discussions with them. Be sure to be very clear about:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the aims and objectives of the programme;</i> • <i>what the expected outcomes are – at every level (macro, meso, and micro), but especially what it will achieve for employers and employees;</i> • <i>what is expected from them – in terms of time commitment, frequency, long-term ambitions, level of personnel required, expected inputs, etc., and;</i> | |

- *the arrangements for location, expenses, and travel expectations/requirements.*

Because most employers are very busy, it is important to make it as easy as possible for employers to engage. This means that the type of engagement used is critical to success. Be flexible about how and where engage takes place with employers. Ask:

- *can the engagement be carried out electronically, or virtually?*
- *can engagement events be hosted in different locations?*
- *can venues be rotated to ease travel requirements?*
- *can several of the same engagement events be held at at different locations to reach as broad a range of employers as possible?*
- *If appropriate, consider monetary and non-monetary incentives for engagement*
- *when working with employer organisations – which is a great way to reach a high-volume of employers – is the organisation truly able to represent the needs of their employers/members when it comes to soft skills development?*

Knowing the difficulty in securing employer engagement, make sure the potential outcomes and aims of the engagement are realistic and pragmatic in terms of employer-expectations. Clearly their voice needs to be heard, and it is important to tell them that. However, if, subsequently, their expectations are not met or what they will perceive as the 'promise' is not delivered, they will most likely walk away and never return – so be sure about what is offered in terms of outcomes – no matter how carefully or how heavily these are 'caveated'.

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| | <p><i>In some countries, employers expect to be reimbursed for the time they commit to engagement with these types of initiatives. Be sure that local expectations and regulations are identified and understood, and be very clear with employers what the arrangements for reimbursement are. If appropriate, and it will help, consider the approach of other development agencies in terms of employers engagement and try to align.</i></p> <p><i>If at all possible, enter into formal agreements/arrangements with them. The terms and conditions of which should be clear and unambiguous for all parties.</i></p> | |
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| Practitioner | | | |
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| Component | Activity | | Linked framework themes |
| Engage with employers to identify and agree CPD opportunities for teaching staff delivering soft skills | <p><i>One of the difficulties teachers of vocational and soft skills face is how to keep their knowledge and skills current in an ever-changing working environment. The skills that employers need, including soft skills, evolve over time as working practices, technology, regulations, etc. change, and as this happens teachers get further away from what learners will be expected to do when they enter the workforce.</i></p> <p><i>Employers could provide valuable ‘real-work’ settings for teachers to keep their knowledge and skill up-to-date. It is worth exploring with employers if there are any opportunities for teaching staff to work with employers in order to keep their CPD ongoing. For example, could teachers spend time in a business, perhaps a few days a year, working and updating their knowledge and skills? Or could they spend time in the business learning directly from employers how their business is run and the challenge they face in keeping the workforce competent and their business profitable, and how soft skills development could directly benefit them?</i></p> | | <p>4. Content development</p> <p>5. Delivery partnerships</p> <p>6. Teacher training/CPD</p> |

| Framework theme | Framework features | | |
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| | Systemic | | |
| | Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| 4. Content development | Identify any Government requirements for soft skills content and compare with employer needs | <p><i>The reason for developing soft skills content will most likely be for one of two reasons:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>there is no current existing soft skills content, or;</i> • <i>the existing content is not providing employers with the right soft skills required by their business.</i> <p><i>If there is existing content, this may have been developed independently from Government, or may have been developed by Government for use within their education system.</i></p> <p><i>Through engagement with employers and employer organisations, the most relevant and current soft skills required by the workforce the programme will target will have been identified. Any new content developed must be compared with any existing Government-developed/owned soft skills content to identify any differences.</i></p> | <p>1. Programme design</p> <p>2. Government engagement</p> |

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| | | <p><i>If there are no differences between what Government has provided and what employers demand, carefully examine the rationale for the programme, as it is likely then to be related to issues relating to delivery and/or assessment. If this is the case, the Government-developed/owned content should be used and the programme should focus on the issues hindering relevant soft skills development. Using Government developed/owned content will help ease tensions or challenges, if they exist, that the programme might be facing from Government institutions.</i></p> | |
| | <p>Where different, ensure relevant Government Ministries and/or Government agencies understand the differences and how and where they support Government strategies/policies</p> | <p><i>Where differences in any Government developed/owned soft skills content is identified, work with Government to explain why the content of the programme differs from their existing content. They may have identified issues with their content already, in which case they may welcome the development of new content. If they haven't, be sensitive to any perceived 'criticism' of their content.</i></p> <p><i>In either case, present the findings, the new content, in a constructive way –using clear and unambiguous evidence from employer consultations. It may well be useful to have selected, high-profile and/or respected employers involved in presenting the new content – employers can be very persuasive when interacting with a Government that wants to have a demand-led education system. However, exercise caution, if knowledge of the local context indicates this may be counter-productive.</i></p> | <p><u>2. Government engagement</u></p> |

Seek agreement from Government on employer-defined soft skills requirements

If new content has been developed, at all times and in every case, seek to gain support from Government. Their support will often ease any resistance that may be experienced from delivery partners and teaching staff who may be resistant to change, especially if they are being asked to change their teaching pedagogy or delivery method – the rationale being that new content needs to be delivered in new ways, and the programme has the support of Government in doing this.

If Government has not been involved in the programme development – and there may be very logical and valid reasons why they have not been involved – it may require lengthy and detailed negotiations with Government to gain Government support.

However, it may be felt, based on local knowledge and experience of the local context, that gaining Government support may hinder buy-in from employers and/or delivery partners. In this case, evaluate the pros and cons and make a decision whether to go forward with this particular component.

2. Government engagement

| Organisational | | |
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| Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| Identify employers/employer organisations willing to support soft skills content identification | <p><i>Engaging employers in skills development initiatives is notoriously difficult, wherever in the world programmes are run. Every avenue should be explored and, again, nothing should be ruled out. It may require some level of creativity in how engagement is carried out, so think broadly in terms of identifying those who could be worked with.</i></p> <p><i>Remember, too, that it's not just the private-sector where engagement can take place. Public-sector organisations are employers too – and, obviously, they have employees with skills needs just the same as the private-sector.</i></p> <p><i>Consider the local context where the programme will operate – some governments mandate that certain organisations must be included when consulting on skills needs – such as trades unions, for example. Make sure these are identified along with any local regulations or requirements.</i></p> <p><i>Having said that, it is important that engagement with employers who can add value to the development of soft skills occurs. Not every organisation will have the capacity or the capability to make a valid contribution to content development. Before identifying employers, create a profile of the sort of organisation that need to be involved. It is important to ensure every type of employer should be looked at and a wide range of employer types should be aimed for:</i></p> | <p>1. Programme design</p> <p>3. Employer engagement</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>small, medium, and large employers;</i> • <i>single-, multi-, and cross-sectoral organisations, and;</i> • <i>public-, private-, and third-sector organisations.</i> | |
| | <p><i>It cannot be underestimated how difficult engaging employers can be. For example, it may be an external funder's requirement to work with a particular sector in very rural areas, where the vast majority of businesses are micro-businesses, subsistence-farming businesses and/or family-run businesses, etc. Creative thinking about how engagement with businesses of this type may be needed. It will most likely be impossible for them to engage in the more traditional employer-engagement activities. It may require, for example, personal one-to-one visits/interviews with individual businesses in a region, which require lengthy journeys involving great distances and difficult terrain. Consider logistical, security and safety issues involved.</i></p> <p><i>Work with local partners and stakeholders to identify the most effective way to reach these businesses. Take advice from a range of employer-related organisations, such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>chambers of commerce;</i> • <i>trade bodies;</i> • <i>professional associations;</i> • <i>trade association, and/or;</i> • <i>trades unions, etc.</i> | |

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| | | <p><i>It may be appropriate/valid to ask one, or a combination of these, to actually carry out the consultation/engagement on the programme's behalf – they may have local representatives in the area. This would require close working relationships with them and there would be a need for very close monitoring and evaluations to ensure the quality and robustness of the engagement, to ensure the necessary outcomes are achieved, and it may even require some tutorage/training beforehand.</i></p> | |
| | <p>Work with employers/employer organisations to identify and agree soft skills and soft skills content</p> | <p><i>Once employers/employer organisations have been identified and their participation secured, work with them to develop the content needed for relevant and appropriate soft skills.</i></p> <p><i>There are numerous methods of engagement available, pick the most appropriate for the local context. These could include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>face-to-face, one-to-one, consultations;</i> • <i>telephone consultations;</i> • <i>group workshops;</i> • <i>residential workshops;</i> • <i>paper and/or online surveys/questionnaires;</i> • <i>third-part hosted events;</i> • <i>breakfast meetings, and/or;</i> • <i>other types of appropriate consultation events relevant to the local context.</i> <p><i>It is important to capture the information supplied at these events, so ensure that the events are adequately staffed by those who have been given the responsibility for developing the content.</i></p> | <p><u>3. Employer engagement</u></p> |

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| | | <p><i>It will also be important to make sure feedback is provided to those who engage in these consultations, so that they continue to feel involved and valued. They will expect to see their input in the resulting output, so make sure that there is an explicit and identifiable link articulated between the two.</i></p> | |
| | <p>Work with local delivery partners to obtain and/or create the curriculum content, for both soft skills development and teacher CPD</p> | <p><i>Once the required content for soft skills development programmes has been identified and articulated, this will need to be turned in to curriculum content. International best practice dictates that this should be reflected in measurable learning outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>This should be the responsibility of the delivery partners involved in the programme – this may be local or International partners. It might be advantageous to arrange for one partner to take responsibility for developing all the content required, or it might be better to involve a number of partners, spreading the workload across multiple partners. If this is done, ensure the format, language and style is consistent across all developers. To this end, it will be useful to agree a common unit/module template, and a bank of acceptable ‘terms’ or ‘phrases’ that are expect to be used.</i></p> <p><i>Along with the curriculum content, arrange for associated schemes of work, associated learning materials, and resources to be developed, and the process followed should reflect the process undertaken to develop curriculum content.</i></p> <p><i>A complete suite of products that delivery partners can pick up and use to deliver a complete programme of soft skills development should be developed.</i></p> | <p><u>5. Delivery partnerships</u></p> |

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| | | <p><i>Put in place appropriate acceptance/sign-off criteria and procedures for content developed by partners. This should involve appropriate representation from employers involved in the process.</i></p> | <p><u>2.</u></p> |
| | <p>If appropriate, agree 'sponsors' and soft skills 'champions' who will promote the benefits of the programme to a wider audience</p> | <p><i>To build engagement and participation in skills development programmes it is important to have sponsors or 'champions' who will publicly promote the programme and encourage participation from stakeholders across the spectrum. This may be included as part of the communications/PR strategy.</i></p> <p><i>These 'champions' can come from high-profile or 'celebrity' individuals, Government Ministers/officials, employers, delivery partners, or a combination of all. Use local knowledge and experience to help identify who is best placed to take this role.</i></p> <p><i>If it is possible to sign-up 'champions' ensure that they are fully and accurately briefed/prepared, and that they are provided with any and all necessary materials for them to fulfil their role.</i></p> <p><i>Make sure that they fully understand what it is expected for them to do and what the expectations are of their involvement – but be realistic and reasonable; the best 'champions' can easily become the worst 'nightmare' if they don't feel supported or valued</i></p> | <p><u>3. Government engagement</u></p> <p><u>4. Employer engagement</u></p> <p><u>5. Delivery partnerships</u></p> |

| Practitioner | | | |
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| Component | Activity | | Linked framework themes |
| Work with International partners to identify best practice in soft skills development and embed this as the content of CPD training for teachers | <p><i>International partners often have vast experience in the delivery of soft skills development programmes. If they are involved in the programme, be guided by their knowledge and skills. Often, they have not only had experience of their local delivery, but the best International partners will have experience of working in other countries and regions, and will have learned lessons from across a broad range of education systems, cultures, and business environments.</i></p> <p><i>This includes the development of teaching practice for teachers involved in soft skills delivery. Often, they have excellent ‘train the trainer’ programmes that can be deployed for the benefit of local teachers and their support staff.</i></p> <p><i>They may have off-the-shelf or adaptable programmes that can be delivered and contextualised to local needs, taking account of the local education system, culture, and business environment.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, it may be advantageous to look at best practices and lessons learned of other programmes led by other development agency in other countries, in the context of the abovementioned areas.</i></p> | | <p>1. Programme design</p> <p>5. Delivery partnerships</p> <p>6. Teacher training/CPD</p> |

| Framework theme | Framework features | | |
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| | Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| 5. Delivery partnerships | Liaise with Government Ministries and/or agencies in the selection of local delivery partners, where appropriate | <p><i>If the local Government is an active participant in the project, they may have a view as to which local delivery partners they want to be involved. If this is the case, co-operate as much as possible– unless there are very good reasons for not working with a specific local partner, and this will need to be negotiated very carefully and sensitively with the Government.</i></p> <p><i>It may be that the government grades or rates local providers, if the Government hold such a list, it would be useful to at least consult this list when considering local partners. Always identify and review the local regulations or legislation around delivery partners to ensure the programme is compliant with any necessary requirements.</i></p> | <p>1. Programme design</p> <p>2. Government engagement</p> |

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| Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| Identify appropriate local delivery partners that can participate in meeting the programme aims and objectives | <p><i>The success of the programme will largely depend on the delivery partners selected. In designing the programme, selection criteria for providers should be created and adopted, based on the aims and objectives. Delivery partners should be selected that will enable the programme to have the maximum impact.</i></p> <p><i>If the programme is focused on learner outcomes, then select partners that give confidence that expected outcomes can be delivered. Or it may be that the programme is focused on delivery partner capacity and capability building, which would mean delivery partners who need support in raising the quality of their delivery are selected. If there is an International co-operation and learning focus to the programme, select partners who demonstrate ability and willingness to work collaboratively with overseas delivery partners.</i></p> <p><i>Local delivery partners should be selected based on criteria or profiles that include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>capability;</i> • <i>capacity;</i> • <i>experience;</i> • <i>governance;</i> • <i>legal status;</i> • <i>funding requirements;</i> | <p><u>1. Programme design</u></p> <p><u>3. Employer engagement</u></p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>credibility, and;</i> • <i>reputation.</i> <p><i>Whatever the focus of the programme, when selecting local delivery partners make sure detailed and thorough discussions with potential partners take place to ensure they understand what is expected of them and that they give confidence that they can deliver for the programme.</i></p> <p><i>Look at using a mix of public- and private-sector providers, if possible. It may be that the programme is focused on supporting a particular type of provider to raise the overall quality of that particular sector (Government-funded/managed providers or privately-owned).</i></p> <p><i>Whatever the focus of the programme, delivery partner selection should be consistent, justifiable if queried, and in line with the overall objectives of the programme.</i></p> | |
| | <p>Identify International partners who can participate in meeting the programmes aims and objectives</p> | <p><i>As with local delivery partner selection, International partners should be carefully considered. Selection criteria, or provider profiles, should be set at the design-stage of the programme.</i></p> <p><i>International delivery partners should be selected based on criteria or profiles that include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>capability;</i> • <i>capacity;</i> • <i>experience;</i> • <i>governance;</i> | <p><u>1. Programme design</u></p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>legal status;</i> • <i>funding requirements;</i> • <i>credibility, and;</i> • <i>reputation.</i> <p><i>International delivery partners should be selected based on the focus and aims and objectives of the programme. International partners will have different areas of expertise and experience.</i></p> <p><i>A thorough review and evaluation of potential partners' eligibility and suitability should be made before selection occurs. Detailed discussions with each partner and thorough research in to each potential partner should be undertaken before any agreements are formed.</i></p> | <p><u>2.</u></p> |
| | <p>Identify appropriate and sufficient employers and/or employer organisations willing to participate in the delivery of the programme</p> | <p><i>Employers should be key partners in any soft skills development programme. Select employers and/or employer organisations that will help deliver on the programme's aims and objectives.</i></p> <p><i>Aim for as wide a range of employers as possible.</i></p> <p><i>Use as many resources as possible in identifying employers. It may be that the Government has details of employers who contribute to skills development programmes, or who have expressed a willingness to participate in the past. If they are willing and able to share these details, this would be a good starting point. Employer organisations and trades unions would be good organisations to consult with when looking for employers to engage with.</i></p> | <p><u>3. Government engagement</u></p> <p><u>4. Employer engagement</u></p> |

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| | | <p><i>When selecting local and International delivery partners, consult with them to see whether they have experience of working with local employers on skills development programmes.</i></p> <p><i>Thoroughly research potential employers and have detailed discussions with them to ensure confidence in their ability to deliver what the programme needs them to. Selection criteria, or profiles, should be set for selection of employers, and this should include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• capability;</i> <i>• capacity;</i> <i>• experience;</i> <i>• legal status;</i> <i>• credibility, and;</i> <i>• reputation.</i> <p><i>The British Council in the UK will be able to provide advice about selecting and working with employers, so be sure to consult with them as well.</i></p> | <p><u>2.</u></p> |
| | <p>Ensure agreements are in place with all partners that meet the organisation's requirements and local laws and regulations</p> | <p><i>Make sure there are clear agreements with participating employers in place before the programme begins. These agreements should be clear and unambiguous and include detailed terms and conditions. They should set out:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• the aims and objectives of the programme;</i> <i>• what is expected of employers, and how they have agreed to contribute to the programme – including the activities they will participate in;</i> <i>• what support they can expect from all stakeholders in the programme – this may include local Government, local and International delivery partners, etc.;</i> | <p><u>3. Government engagement</u></p> <p><u>4. Employer engagement</u></p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any funding/payments/allowances payable to them, and; • any regulatory/legal obligations that may be relevant in the local context. <p><i>These agreements could be in the form of a legal contract, a service level agreement, or a MoU. The type of agreement will be determined by a combination of the organisation's requirements and local Government regulations/legislation.</i></p> | |
| <p>Agree with delivery partners, local and International, the delivery model(s) to be used in the development of learners' soft skills – to include classroom, workshop, on-the-job, and wider context settings</p> | <p><i>The delivery model should be formed out of the aims and objectives of the programme, and will be determined by the desired outcomes emerging from the programme.</i></p> <p><i>Delivery partners will contribute to the formulation of the delivery model, and selected delivery partners should be able to meet the demands and expectations of the chosen delivery model.</i></p> <p><i>Make sure there are clear agreements with participating delivery partners in place before the programme begins. These agreements should be clear and unambiguous and include detailed terms and conditions. They should set out:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the aims and objectives of the programme; • what is expected of delivery partners, and how they have agreed to contribute to the programme – including the activities they will participate in; • what support they can expect from all stakeholders in the programme – this may include local Government, employers, etc.; • any funding/payments/allowances payable to them, and; • any regulatory/legal obligations that may be relevant in the local context. | <p>7. Delivery models</p> |

These agreements could be in the form of a legal contract, a service level agreement, or a MoU. The type of agreement will be determined by a combination of the organisation's requirements and local Government regulations/legislation.

| Practitioner | | | |
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| Component | Activity | | Linked framework themes |
| Identify International partners who can participate in providing CPD content and delivery to local teaching staff | <p><i>Development agencies, national and international organisations supporting skills development will be able to provide advice about selecting and working with International delivery partners experienced in teacher training/CPD, so be sure to consult with them.</i></p> <p><i>The local Government may also have worked with International partners in the delivery of teacher training/CPD in the past. Consult with them to identify potential partners.</i></p> <p><i>International delivery partners should be able to demonstrate previous experience and ability to deliver high-quality teacher training/CPD</i></p> <p><i>Thoroughly research potential International delivery partners and have detailed discussions with them to ensure that they will be able to deliver what the programme needs them to. Selection criteria, or profiles, should be set for selection of employers, and this should include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>capability;</i> • <i>capacity;</i> • <i>experience;</i> • <i>legal status;</i> | | <p>1. Programme design</p> <p>2. Government engagement</p> <p>6. Teacher training/CPD</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>credibility, and;</i> • <i>reputation.</i> | |
| Identify appropriate and sufficient employers and/or employer organisations willing to provide CPD opportunities for teaching staff | <p><i>Employers can make a valuable contribution to teacher training/CPD for the delivery of soft skills development. If the programme involves teachers gaining ‘hands-on’ experience of soft skills in the workplace, identify employers who can help provide these opportunities. This will be complex and difficult to organise and agree. There will likely be legal implications for both employers and teachers’ employers. Work with both parties and the local Government to identify any challenges and issues that will need to be addressed before this can take place.</i></p> <p><i>Selection criteria, or profiles, should be set for employer selection. These should include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>capability;</i> • <i>capacity;</i> • <i>legal status, and;</i> • <i>credible ability to offer ‘hand-on’ experiential opportunities.</i> <p><i>Development agencies and international delivery partners will have experience in working with employers in this field, so make sure these are consulted with when setting selection criteria and when considering potential employers.</i></p> | <p>3. Employer engagement</p> <p>6. Teacher training/CPD</p> |
| Ensure agreements are in place with all partners that meet the organisation’s requirements and | <p><i>Make sure there are clear agreements with participating organisations in place before the programme begins. These agreements should be clear and unambiguous and include detailed terms and conditions. They should set out:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the aims and objectives of the programme;</i> • <i>what is expected of partners, and how they have agreed to contribute to the programme – including the activities they will participate in;</i> | |

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| | <p>local laws and regulations</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>what support they can expect from all stakeholders in the programme – this may include local Government, local and International delivery partners, etc.;</i> • <i>any funding/payments/allowances payable to them, and;</i> • <i>any regulatory/legal obligations that may be relevant in the local context.</i> <p><i>These agreements could be in the form of a legal contract, a service level agreement, or a MoU. The type of agreement will be determined by a combination of the organisation’s requirements and local Government regulations/legislation.</i></p> | |
| | <p>Agree with delivery partners, local and International, the delivery model(s) to be used in the development soft skills teaching skills</p> | <p><i>The delivery model should be formed out of the aims and objectives of the programme, and will be determined by the desired outcomes emerging from the programme.</i></p> <p><i>Delivery partners will contribute to the formulation of the delivery model, and that selected delivery partners will be able to meet the demands and expectations of the chosen delivery model.</i></p> <p><i>Whatever the model, look to take a blended approach, to include a mix of classroom, workshop, on-the-job, and wider context settings.</i></p> <p><i>Make sure there are clear agreements with participating delivery partners in place before the programme begins. These agreements should be clear and unambiguous and include detailed terms and conditions. They should set out:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the aims and objectives of the programme;</i> | <p>6. Teacher training/CPD</p> <p>7. Delivery models</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>what is expected of delivery partners, and how they have agreed to contribute to the programme – including the activities they will participate in;</i>• <i>what support they can expect from all stakeholders in the programme – this may include local Government, employers, etc.;</i>• <i>any funding/payments/allowances payable to them, and;</i>• <i>any regulatory/legal obligations that may be relevant in the local context.</i> <p><i>These agreements could be in the form of a legal contract, a service level agreement, or a MoU. The type of agreement will be determined by a combination of the organisation's requirements and local Government regulations/legislation.</i></p> | <u>8.</u> |
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| | Systemic | | |
| | Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| 6. Teacher training/CPD | <p>Work with local Government and/or Government agencies to identify, and where appropriate utilise, any existing initiatives/programmes for teacher training</p> | <p><i>Governments will often have teacher training programmes in place for the training and upskilling of teachers. If these exist a careful consideration should be made as to whether these can be used to upskill teachers in the delivery of soft skills development programmes.</i></p> <p><i>If teacher training/CPD is a component of the programme, wherever possible use existing programmes rather than create new ones. However, in most cases teacher training programmes are focused on academic teaching pedagogy and delivery. Carefully examine these programmes to see whether they are appropriate for soft skills delivery.</i></p> <p><i>If the local country has a TVET system, there may be teacher training available for vocational teachers. If so, scrutinise the programme to see if it's appropriate for soft skills delivery. It may be that it fits well, or it might need some 'tailoring' to ensure it is appropriate and can deliver on the aims and objectives of the training and the programme overall.</i></p> | <p>1. Programme design</p> <p>3. Government engagement</p> |

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| | | <p><i>If it is possible to use existing Government training, it may be necessary to negotiate and agree terms for use. Doing so may also help the programme support Government strategies and policies for teacher development and thus enhance the links between the programme and the Government.</i></p> | |
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| Organisational | | |
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| Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| Agree with delivery partners' senior management teams the schedule for teacher training/CPD | <p><i>If teacher training/CPD and appropriate programmes to develop teachers' capability have been identified, time and resources will need to be made available by local delivery partners. This may include releasing teachers from existing planned teaching. In order to facilitate this, keep the senior management teams within delivery partners involved in the planning and delivery. Give them as much forward-planning time as possible as existing schedules, timetables, locations and resources will likely be impacted. However, in some countries teaching staff do not get paid for CPD or if they attend no substitute teacher is provided and students miss lessons. If this is the case, this aspect needs to be managed sensitively through consultation and exploration.</i></p> <p><i>Develop a schedule with delivery partners, as part of a collaborative and co-operative working relationship. This will help build ties within the senior management teams and will help secure commitment from them.</i></p> <p><i>Once agreed, makes sure that there is formal sign-off from delivery partners. This could be a formal letter (on letter-headed paper), or a confirming e-mail, from someone with the authority to sign-off on the schedule. Confirmation via social-media or messaging apps should be supported by a letter or e-mail.</i></p> <p><i>Verbal agreement should not be accepted, there needs to be able tangible sign-off confirmation, should there be challenges or queries at a later date.</i></p> | <p>5. Delivery partnerships</p> <p>7. Delivery models</p> <p>8. Assessment models</p> <p>9. Certification models</p> |

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| | <p>Where appropriate, agree with employers/employer organisations opportunities for ‘on-the-job’ teacher training/CPD opportunities for teachers to enhance the skills and understanding of workplace environments and soft skills development opportunities</p> | <p><i>Employers should be an integral part of any soft skills delivery teacher training. Select employers and/or employer organisations that will help deliver on the programme’s aims and objectives. Aim for as wide a range of employers as possible.</i></p> <p><i>In International best-practice, this would be considered ‘the Gold Standard, but if this is not achievable, a lack of direct employer engagement does not mean that high-quality teacher training/CPD cannot happen. Explore alternatives to direct employer engagement. This might include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>opportunities for employer representative organisations to participate in the training – perhaps delivering presentations on employer needs, working environments and practices, business cultures, etc.;</i> • <i>video presentations relating to the sector/industry and its needs, working environment and practices, business culture, etc.;</i> • <i>simulated training opportunities that replicate the working environment, practices, culture, etc.;</i> • <i>presentations from individual employers/staff including employer needs, working environments and practices, business cultures, etc.;</i> • <i>a combination of the above.</i> <p><i>Use as many resources as possible in identifying employers. It may be that the Government has details of employers who contribute to skills development programmes, or who have expressed a willingness to participate in the past. If they are willing and able to share these details, this would be a good starting point. Employer organisations and trades unions would be good organisations to consult with when looking for employers to engage with.</i></p> | <p>3. Employer engagement</p> <p>4. Content development</p> <p>5. Delivery partnerships</p> |
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| | | <p><i>When talking to employers and/or employer organisations about learning opportunities for teachers, look for opportunities for teachers to access the working environment within a participating employer's business. This could be in the form of a 'placement' within a business, perhaps taking on an appropriate job function within the business, or job shadowing, meetings/interviews with key personnel within the business, or observation of people/functions. Be willing to be innovative and creative when considering options; work with the employer to see what the possibilities are.</i></p> <p><i>Be aware that there may be challenges/issues around insurances, legal regulations/legislation around access, etc.</i></p> | <p><u>6.</u></p> |
| | <p>Agree with delivery partners organisational roles and responsibilities in the delivery of teacher training/CPD</p> | <p><i>Teacher training will most likely be delivered by an International delivery partner, and there needs to be clarity with delivery partners about the expectations of them.</i></p> <p><i>There should be a formal agreement that sets out:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the aims and objectives of the training programme;</i> • <i>what is expected of delivery partners, and what they have agreed to deliver;</i> • <i>what support they can expect from all stakeholders in the programme – this may include local Government, employers, etc.;</i> • <i>any funding/payments/allowances payable to them, and;</i> • <i>any regulatory/legal obligations that may be relevant in the local context.</i> | <p><u>5. Delivery partnerships</u></p> |

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| | <p><i>These agreements could be in the form of a legal contract, a service level agreement, or a MoU. It could also form part of a wider contract/agreement for their involvement in a comprehensive soft skills development programme. The type of agreement will be determined by a combination of British Council requirements and local Government regulations/legislation.</i></p> | |
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| Practitioner | | | |
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| Component | Activity | Linked framework themes | |
| Identify which teachers require what level of training/CPD and agree an individual training plan with individual teachers | <p><i>Because of the likely disruption to existing planned programmes of work for teachers within their existing employment contracts, ensure that this is minimised. Create Individual Training Plans (ITP's) for each teacher undergoing training/CPD. Who develops this ITP can be flexible, but ordinarily it should be developed by the partner delivering the teacher training/CPD programme, and agreed with each participant in the programme.</i></p> <p><i>Make sure that the employing organisation is aware and agrees to the time/resource requirements for the programme.</i></p> <p><i>Assess all teaching staff involved in soft skills development delivery, to ascertain what, if any, training they require. This will help inform not only the content of their ITP, but also inform the development of the content of the programme. This will ensure the programme delivers only what is required in terms of skills development – a 'train to the gap' model.</i></p> | <p>1. Programme design</p> <p>4. Content development</p> <p>5. Delivery partnerships</p> <p>7. Delivery models</p> | |
| Organise and deliver teacher training/CPD | <p><i>Develop a delivery schedule, in conjunction with teachers, delivery partners, employers, and any other stakeholders involved in the programme.</i></p> | <p>5. Delivery partnerships</p> <p>7. Delivery models</p> | |



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| | | <i>Regularly review the programme to ensure delivery is on track and is meeting the identified needs and expected outcomes, and put in place any appropriate remedial actions, agreed with all stakeholders, should they be required.</i> | |
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| Framework theme | Framework features | | |
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| | Systemic | | |
| | Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| 7. Delivery models | <p>Communicate findings of investigations in to delivery models and proposed model(s) to gain support from Government and/or Government agencies</p> | <p><i>Once the delivery model that best fits with the programme’s aims and objectives has been agreed with delivery partners, it is useful communicating this to Government. It is best to keep them up-to-date so they can review the outcomes of the programme. If successful, the model should be looked at with regard to potential roll-out to as wide an audience as possible, and Government will be key to this</i></p> <p><i>Communicate with as many Government Ministries/agencies and officials as possible. The more people in Government are aware of the programme, and talking about it the higher profile the programme will gain. The programme will benefit from as many people talking about the programme as possible, as the more awareness there is of it the more the successes it is likely to be. This will be critical for the long-term sustainability of the delivery model(s) the programme is promoting.</i></p> | <p>2. Government engagement</p> |
| | <p>Work with Government to agree a communications strategy to promote the agreed delivery model and its benefit in the local context to all stakeholders</p> | <p><i>If Government are supportive of the programme, attempt to agree with them a joint communications strategy to promote the delivery model(s) selected. This will enable the programme to reach a wider audience within the Government context. This is important for the long-term sustainability of the programme’s aims and objectives; decision-makers within Government will be much more likely to support the programme post-delivery if they are familiar with the model(s) and have been kept informed along the way.</i></p> | |

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| | <p>Work with Government to agree best-practice delivery models</p> | <p><i>Delivery models should be designed and developed with the active participation and collaboration of employers and delivery partners. Once the model has been agreed, work with Government to agree how best to use the delivery model to bring about systemic change in soft skills development. International best-practice suggests that the best delivery models are those that embed soft skills development in vocational curriculum. This provides a holistic and, for learners, a relatable model based on real working practices in the industries they are, or will be, working in.</i></p> <p><i>Design the programme in a way that enables collection of evidence on how delivery model(s) perform and the outcomes and changes they effect. This evidence should then be presented to Government in a compelling way, that enables the programme to maximise positive outcomes.</i></p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Programme design</u> 2. <u>Government engagement</u> 3. <u>Employer engagement</u> |
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Organisational

| Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
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| <p>Work with providers to discover current delivery models, including the extent to which employers are involved in delivery, and appraise their effectiveness</p> | <p><i>If soft skills are being delivered, then the very fact that this programme is going ahead means there are probably issues with what is currently available. Look closely at how these skills are being delivered. Ask:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>is the delivery model suitable for the context and target audience?;</i> • <i>is it the method of delivery the issue, or could it be:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>the quality of delivery;</i> ○ <i>the content of the programme, or;</i> ○ <i>the assessment methodology?</i> • <i>does the delivery model inhibit good teaching and good delivery?, and;</i> • <i>is the delivery model a stand-alone model, separate and distinct from any other programme, and does this impact on the achievement of soft skills by learners?</i> <p><i>If possible, work with current providers to provide an objective view of current delivery. There may be examples of good delivery that could be used and adapted for a wider audience. The review of current delivery models will inform the design of the programme, and may even change the focus of the programme; it could move the focus to teacher training or greater employer engagement in providing opportunities for soft skills development, rather than delivery models, content development, or assessment models.</i></p> | <p>1. Programme design</p> <p>5. Delivery partnerships</p> |

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| <p>Work with providers and employers to construct the best delivery model for the local context</p> | <p><i>Work closely with both delivery partners and employers to construct the best delivery model(s) to meet the programme's aims and objectives. Ideally, this would be as part of a wider TVET skills development programme, rather than a stand-alone project. However, if no TVET programme exists, then a stand-alone delivery model should bring delivery partners and employers together to provide a vocational context for the development and embedding of soft skills in the vocational curriculum.</i></p> <p><i>It may be that the programme is designed to test more than one delivery model, and this is appropriate, as long as one group of learners are not disadvantaged over another. Each delivery model should enable all learners to develop the soft skills required by employers.</i></p> <p><i>Delivery models should expose learners to the world of work, and should enable delivery partners and employers to identify opportunities to develop soft skills in the workplace. Models should be inclusive and involve learners in the decision-making process when it comes to opportunities to develop soft skills.</i></p> <p><i>If International delivery partners are participating in the programme, work with them in the construction of delivery model(s), as they will have a much wider perspective of what works and what does not. Make sure, though, that whatever models are proposed by International partners are adapted or tailored to the local context.</i></p> <p><i>Ensure that employers, especially, sign-off on the delivery model(s), as they will be key to successful delivery.</i></p> | <p>1. Programme design</p> <p>3. Employer engagement</p> <p>5. Delivery partnerships</p> |
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| Practitioner | | |
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| Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| Work with teaching staff to ensure they have capability to deliver on agreed delivery model | <p><i>Evaluate the current capability and capacity of delivery partners' teaching staff to ensure they can deliver the proposed model(s). This could be achieved through:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>discussions with senior management in delivery partners;</i> • <i>reviews of teachers' CV's;</i> • <i>online or face-to-face assessment centres, and/or;</i> • <i>interviews/discussions with teachers.</i> | <p>1. Programme design</p> <p>5. Delivery partnerships</p> <p>6. Teacher training/CPD</p> |
| Organise and deliver relevant teacher training/CPD | <p><i>Be prepared for challenges on proposals that involve change to teaching methods. Change is never easy, and teachers may be resistant to, even fearful of, changing the way they have been teaching – perhaps for many years. Be sensitive to this and try and bring them on the change-journey the programme is embarking on.</i></p> <p><i>Make sure that any required training/CPD is detailed in an Individual Training Plan (ITP) for each teacher who require it.</i></p> <p><i>It is likely that an International delivery partner with experience of providing training to teachers will deliver the training, so be sure that everyone involved is clear about the aims and objectives of the teacher training/CPD, and how they link to the overall programme aims and objectives.</i></p> | <p>5. Delivery partnerships</p> <p>6. Teacher training/CPD</p> <p>7. Delivery models</p> <p>8. Assessment models</p> |

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| | <p><i>Make sure that the senior management teams within the delivery partners whose teachers will be trained are an integral part of the training programme, as there will be existing schedules, timetables, allocated resources that may be impacted by the addition of teacher training/CPD. Make sure the programme takes account of the activities detailed in framework component 6. Teacher training/CPD.</i></p> | <p><u>8. Certification models</u></p> |
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| Framework theme | Framework features | | |
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| | Systemic | | |
| | Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| 8. Assessment models | <p>Communicate findings of investigations in to assessment models and proposed model(s) to gain support from Government and/or Government agencies</p> | <p><i>Once delivery partners have agreed the assessment model that best fits with the programme's aims and objectives, it is useful communicating this to Government. It is best to keep them up-to-date so they can review the outcomes of the programme. If successful, the model should be rolled out to as wide an audience as possible, and Government will be key to this.</i></p> <p><i>Communicate with as many Government Ministries/agencies and officials as possible. The more people in Government are aware of the programme, and talking about it, the higher profile the programme will gain. The more people talk about the programme, the more awareness there is of it the more the successes will be talked about. This will be critical for the long-term sustainability of the assessment model the programme will be promoting.</i></p> | <p>1. Programme design</p> <p>2. Government engagement</p> |
| | <p>Work with Government to agree a communications strategy to promote the agreed delivery</p> | <p><i>If Government are supportive of the programme, attempts should attempt to agree with them a joint communications strategy to promote the assessment model selected. This will enable the programme to reach a wider audience within the Government context. This is important for the long-term sustainability of the programmes aims and objectives; decision-makers within.</i></p> | <p>1. Programme design</p> |



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| | model and its benefit in the local context to all stakeholders | <i>Government will be much more likely to support the programme post-delivery if they are familiar with the model and have been kept informed along the way</i> | |
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| Organisational | | |
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| Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| Work with providers to discover current assessment models, including the extent to which employers are involved in assessment, and appraise their effectiveness | <p><i>If soft skills are being delivered, then the very fact that this programme is going ahead means there are probably issues with what is currently being done. Look closely at these programmes to discover if the way they are being assessed is contributing to the issues. Ask:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>is the assessment model valid, reliable, and suitable for the context and target audience?;</i> • <i>is the method of assessment the issue, or could it be:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>the quality of delivery;</i> ○ <i>the content of the programme, or;</i> ○ <i>the delivery methodology?, and;</i> • <i>does the assessment model inhibit good teaching and good delivery?</i> <p><i>If possible, work with current providers to provide an objective view of current assessment practice. There may be examples of good practice that could be used and adapted for a wider audience. The review of current models will inform the design of the programme, and may even change the focus of the programme; it could move the focus to teacher training or greater employer engagement in providing opportunities for soft skills development, rather than assessment models.</i></p> | <p>1. Programme design</p> <p>7. Delivery models</p> <p>9. Certification models</p> |

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| | <p>Work with providers and employers to construct the best assessment model for the local context</p> | <p><i>Work closely with both delivery partners and employers to construct the best assessment model to meet the programme’s aims and objectives. Ideally, this would be a model that utilises workplace opportunities as much as possible, ensuring that delivery partners and employers work collaboratively and in partnership to assess learners’ soft skills development.</i></p> <p><i>It may be that the programme is designed to use a variety of assessment methods, and this should be encouraged.</i></p> <p><i>Assessment models should expose learners to the world of work, and should enable delivery partners and employers to identify opportunities to assess soft skills in the workplace wherever possible. Models should be inclusive and involve learners in the decision-making process when it comes to assessment opportunities.</i></p> <p><i>If International delivery partners are participating in the programme, work with them in the construction of assessment models, as they will have a much wider perspective of what works and what does not. Make sure, though, that whatever models are proposed by International partners are adapted or tailored to the local context.</i></p> <p><i>Ensure that employers, especially, sign-off on the assessment models, as they will be key to successful delivery.</i></p> | <p>1. Programm edesign</p> <p>3. Employer engagement</p> <p>5. Delivery partnerships</p> <p>9. Certification models</p> |
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| Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| Work with teaching staff to ensure they have capability to deliver on agreed assessment model(s) | <p><i>Evaluate the current capability and capacity of delivery partners' teaching staff to ensure they can assess using the proposed models. This could be achieved through:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>discussions with senior management in delivery partners;</i> • <i>reviews of teachers' CV's;</i> • <i>online or face-to-face assessment centres, and/or;</i> • <i>interviews/discussions with teachers.</i> <p><i>Think creatively about how assessments are carried out, and by whom. Employers, customers and student peers can all provide input in to the assessment process – indeed they may have more 'real world' experience that could enhance and provide invaluable insights in to a teacher's capability. Work closely with them to ensure the validity and quality of their contribution, but more often than not they are more closely aligned to the business's soft skills needs and the best way to demonstrate capability.</i></p> | <p>1. Programme design</p> <p>5. Delivery partnerships</p> |
| Organise and deliver relevant teacher training/CPD | <p><i>Be prepared for challenges on proposals that involve change to teaching methods, including assessment methodologies. Change is never easy, and teachers may be resistant to, even fearful of, changing the way they have been teaching and assessing – perhaps for many years. Be sensitive to this and try and bring them on the change-journey the programme is embarking on.</i></p> | <p>6. Teacher training/CPD</p> <p>9. Certification models</p> |

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| | | <p><i>Make sure that any required training/CPD is detailed in an Individual Training Plan (ITP) for each teacher who require it.</i></p> <p><i>Likely this training will be delivered through an International delivery partner with experience of providing training to teachers, so be sure that everyone involved is clear about the aims and objective of the teacher training/CPD and how they link to the overall programme aims and objectives.</i></p> <p><i>Make sure that the senior management teams within the delivery partners whose teachers will be trained are an integral part of the training programme, as there will be existing schedules, timetables, allocated resources that may be impacted by the addition of teacher training/CPD.</i></p> | |
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| Framework theme | Framework features | | |
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| | Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| 9. Certification models | Work with local Government and/or Government agencies to ensure certification routes identified are legitimate and achievable in the local context | <p><i>Certification of soft skills development will be an important and very motivational aspect of delivery for programme learners. It will also be important to delivery partners, especially if this comes in the form of International recognition.</i></p> <p><i>If certification routes have been identified, ensure that there are no legal, strategy or policy barriers to including this as part of the programme. There may be local certification routes that can be included, so check if these are appropriate. Using Government certification routes can be both positive and negative – it may be seen as a valuable recognition of achievement. Or it may be seen as negative, if employers do not hold these certifications in high regard, or if they are somehow tainted by reputation.</i></p> | <p>1. Programme design</p> <p>2. Government engagement</p> <p>8. Assessment models</p> |

| Organisational | | |
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| Component | Activity | Linked framework themes |
| Work with all delivery partners to identify if local/International certification of soft skills is relevant and/or a desirable outcome for learners | <p><i>Employers may see certification as a positive thing, in that they will be recognised as a 'learning organisation' that invests in the upskilling of its workforce. Or they may see challenges with it, in that once qualified, employees may be more attractive to competitors and therefore lose the investment they have made. So it is important to decide early on whether certification is a route to follow.</i></p> <p><i>Certification will be important to learners; they will want recognition for their hard work and effort. So the options will likely be:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• provide a programme certification from delivery partners, awarded to learners based on what they achieve;</i> <i>• provide certification through local national certifying/awarding organisations;</i> <i>• provide certification through an International certifying/awarding organisation, or;</i> <i>• a combination of the above.</i> | <p>1. Programme design</p> <p>2. Government engagement</p> <p>5. Delivery Partnerships</p> <p>8. Assessment models</p> |
| Work with all delivery partners and certifying/awarding organisations to identify potential certification routes and | <p><i>If certification is to be included as an outcome of the programme, it is important to work closely with delivery partners and employers to maximise the benefits and minimise the risks of certification of learners to employers. This will be important if employers are putting existing employees through the programme. It will be less important if they are looking at potential new employees as an outcome of the programme.</i></p> | <p>1. Programme design</p> <p>2. Government engagement</p> |

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| | <p>agree certification models and requirements</p> | <p><i>Identify, with delivery partners, where content maps to potential local or International certification routes. Where these are identified, work closely with local and International delivery partners and the identified certifying/awarding organisations, as there will be certain criteria, processes and procedures that delivery partners will need to meet in order to be able to offer certifications. These can be very detailed, time-consuming, and require a financial commitment from delivery partners.</i></p> <p><i>Delivery partners will need to ensure they have the infrastructure, capacity, and capability to meet the standards required by certifying/awarding organisations to manage and process certification.</i></p> | <p>5. Delivery Partnerships</p> <p>8. Assessment models</p> |
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| Practitioner | | | |
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| Component | Activity | | Linked framework themes |
| Work with delivery partners to ensure staff responsible for certification processes are fully trained and capable to process certification of soft skills | <p><i>With delivery partners, identify the specific requirements for certification processing from certifying/awarding organisations. This will likely include the need to train both teaching and administrative staff within delivery partner organisations.</i></p> <p><i>Work closely with local and International delivery partners and the identified certifying/awarding organisations, to identify what criteria, processes and procedures will need to be met and established in order to be able to offer certifications. These can be very detailed, time-consuming, and require a financial commitment from delivery partners.</i></p> <p><i>Delivery partners will need to ensure they have the infrastructure, capacity, and capability to meet the standards required by certifying/awarding organisations to manage and process certification, so identify what training is required by what staff.</i></p> | | 5. Delivery Partnerships |
| Organise and deliver relevant training/CPD for delivery partner staff | <p><i>Be prepared for challenges on proposals that involve change to working practices, including administrative, teaching, and assessment processes and practices. Change is never easy, and it may be that delivery partner staff are resistant to, even fearful of, changing the way they have been working – perhaps for many years. Be sensitive to this and try and bring them on the change-journey the programme is embarking on.</i></p> | | 1. Programme design 6. Teacher training/CPD |

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| | | <p><i>Make sure that any required training/CPD is detailed in an Individual Training Plan (ITP) for each member of staff who require it.</i></p> <p><i>It is likely that this training will be delivered through an International delivery partner with experience of providing training to teachers, so be sure that everyone involved is clear about the aims and objective of the teacher training/CPD and how they link to the overall programme aims and objectives.</i></p> <p><i>Make sure that the senior management teams within the delivery partner whose staff will be trained are an integral part of the training programme, as there will be existing schedules, timetables, allocated resources that may be impacted by the addition of training/CPD.</i></p> | |
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Toolkit element 3: Success factors

There are always many different factors that impact on project success, but our research identified some common success factors when it came to soft skills delivery.

These are detailed in the following:

1. The importance of considering systemic-level influencing factors

Projects will have limited or no impact if systemic factors are not considered and addressed. These factors influence delivery outcomes at every level and every stage of development and delivery.

At Ministerial/government level, it is important to address national strategy and policy initiatives, as governmental support will enable wider, post-project support and sustainability, and will maximise either outcomes for participants and future participants. It will also signal to the wider stakeholder audience, the potential for long-lasting and effective impact on workforce capability.

2. Organisational commitment

Equally important, at organisational level, is that the senior management team of participating organisations are bought-in to the project and provide the necessary time, resources, and learning and assessment opportunities required for the delivery model selected.

3. The opportunity for more creative thinking around delivery of soft skills

Providing appropriate and relevant CPD for teachers can be transformative in the quality and penetration of soft skills development. A number of projects reported both capability and attitudinal transformations amongst teaching staff involved in the delivery of soft skills. Often teachers are used to one teaching pedagogy, which is usually inappropriate and ineffective when trying to develop learners' soft skills.

When CPD opens up alternative ways of identifying opportunities for developing and assessing soft skills, teachers embrace this and report feeling 'liberated' and this pro-actively encourages creative thinking around soft skills delivery.

4. Developing a common understanding

Scope and terminology can and do differ from country to country, so it is important to be very clear about the what the project is designed to do, and this should be reflected in the scope

used. Where possible, work at a systemic level to effect change in terminology so that all partners, at all levels, have a clear understanding of the scope and intended outcomes of each project.

5. Piloting projects

Soft skills projects have a greater impact and are more readily adopted across a broader range of sectors if a pilot is successfully managed, and the outcomes and lessons-learned, across a limited number of sectors. This will allow other sectors to see the benefit of soft skills development and then enable modifications to cater for sectoral differences, whether this is a structural, economic, or modality difference.

6. The development of specific tools

Where specific tools and toolkits were developed these had a major influence on the success of the project. These continued to be useful once the funded project had been completed.

This is a major contributing factor to the sustainability project delivery and outcomes in the long-term, and aids positive outcomes for a much larger population than the original project scope.

Toolkit element 4: Recommendations

Having carried out appropriate research and evaluated the outcomes, the British Council Soft Skills Design and Delivery Toolkit has been created. This framework has taken the outcomes of the research, the lessons learned from previous soft skills development projects, and proven best-practice, and distilled this in to nine key themes and associated guidance on key activities at three distinct levels – systemic, organisational, and practitioner.

We are confident that the toolkit will provide valuable assistance in the design and delivery of soft skills development programmes. To this end, we make the following recommendations:

1. Be guided by the toolkit... always

Use the toolkit as a reference guide throughout the project – it has been designed to provide support at every stage of the programme’s design, development, and delivery. It utilises experience from previous British Council managed soft skills programmes, and years of International experience by those who have contributed to its development.

2. Rationale

Always investigate thoroughly what the problem is and where the roots lie in order to effectively tackle it. Never assume to know what the problem is. The launch pad is designed to help identify the problem and pinpoint the entry point(s) for interventions. Canvass answers to the questions from colleagues and key stakeholders to confirm or contradict the initial thinking. Never assume to know what the problem is – be open to the possibility that there are more issues than initially thought.

3. Scope and definition of ‘soft skills’

Be clear/agree with all stakeholders the scope/definition of the ‘soft skills’ for the specific project. There is no universally accepted definition of what skills are, so ensure all stakeholders have a clear and common understanding of what ‘soft skills’ mean in the local context and on the context of the programme.

4. Stakeholder consultation processes

Have an effective mechanism for consultation with all stakeholders in both the public- and private-sector. Be pragmatic and flexible in the approach, while maintaining a robust and auditable process, when consulting with the relevant sectors/industries on the current (and future) demands and projections, in terms of soft skills requirements.

5. Operational levels

Work at macro, or systemic, level as much as possible. This will help focus on achieving the maximum possible impact and long-term sustainability – the framework is designed to address each aspect of the design and delivery at three levels macro-, meso-, and micro-level, or in the context of the Framework – systemic, organisational, and practitioner levels.

6. Piloting

Start with a pilot to test the approach and roll it out regionally/nationally if and when the approach has proved successful. Being able to evidence success of a small pilot secures more easily funding and support for a national roll out. Remember that failure tells as much, if not more, than success does – so don't be worried if initial approaches don't appear to work.

Review, evaluate and amend if necessary.

7. Analysis of current educational landscape

Scope the education and skills system to see how best to respond to the soft skills challenge. It's very unlikely that there will be a need to design a stand-alone soft skills course. International best-practice shows that soft skills are better taught, and more effectively applied by learners, when embedded in a vocational curriculum.

8. Training and development

Having a good curriculum isn't enough if it's not taught correctly. It could be the best curriculum in the world, but if it's delivered ineffectively or inappropriately, it will not have the desired impact. Ensure appropriate training is built in to build the capacity and capability of trainers/teachers to apply the new materials and training concepts effectively.

9. Assessment methodologies

Skills need to be demonstrated and evidenced in order to bring value to individuals and employers, so ensure assessment methodologies are built in. This is vital for the credibility of the programme in the eyes of employers, especially. For learners/participants, recognition for their new skills, and the effort and hard work they have put in to develop them, is an excellent motivator. Appropriate certifications should be considered and included as part of the programme wherever possible.

10. International best-practice

Make use of international best-practice and similar toolkits developed by other organisations. At the time of the development of this toolkit, the ILO has been in a process of collating and developing a large scale comprehensive soft skills toolkit. Use every available, and appropriate tool possible.

Annex 1: The UK experience

In the UK alone, across the four nations, there are different requirements from Governments for soft skills delivery in a TVET context.

For example, in *England*, Government policy steers soft skills development to be delivered through

Apprenticeship Occupational Standards and, from 2020, *T-Level qualifications*.

In Apprenticeship standards, soft skills are expressed through the *Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours* (KSB) required to successfully achieve the standard and assessed as part of an *End-point Assessment* (EPA) process. There is no specific section dedicated to soft skills. They can be expressed as part of the Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours identified by employers for a given occupation.

For example, in the Engineering sector, the Apprenticeship for a Level 2 Material Cutter identifies soft skills in the Knowledge and Behaviours sections¹:

Knowledge

K8: Workload planning for example scheduling and prioritisation.

K15: Mathematical techniques for cutting, measuring and calculating meterage.

K26: Verbal and written communication techniques.

K28: Team working techniques and benefits.

Behaviours

B1: Prioritises health, safety and the environment, for example follows safe ergonomic practices, ensures safety and welfare of self and others and adopts environmental working practices.

¹ <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/material-cutter-v1-0>

B2: Uses own initiative, for example when dealing with material faults and flaws.

B3: Adaptable and flexible, for example in response to changes in priorities and work deadlines.

B4: Team player, for example keeps others informed, interacts proactively, considers impact of actions on others, and takes account of equality and diversity.

B5: Takes ownership and responsibility, for example seeks to meet quality targets, completes allocated work on time, escalates issues.

B6: Professional, for example polite and courteous, a good timekeeper, has a positive can-do attitude.

In the Business and Administration sector, the Level 3 Business Administrator Apprenticeship identifies soft skills in the Skills and Behaviours sections²:

| Skills | What is required (advancing key skills to support progression to management) |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Decision making | Exercises proactivity and good judgement. Makes effective decisions based on sound reasoning and is able to deal with challenges in a mature way. Seeks advice of more experienced team members when appropriate. |
| Interpersonal skills | Builds and maintains positive relationships within their own team and across the organisation. Demonstrates ability to influence and |
| | challenge appropriately. Becomes a role model to peers and team members, developing coaching skills as they gain area knowledge. |
| Communications | Demonstrates good communication skills, whether face-to-face, on the telephone, in writing or on digital platforms. Uses the most appropriate channels to communicate effectively. Demonstrates agility and confidence in communications, carrying authority appropriately. Understands and applies social media solutions appropriately. Answers questions from inside and outside of the organisation, representing the organisation or department. |

² <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/business-administrator-v1-0>

| Behaviours | What is required (Role-model behaviours and positive contribution to culture). |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Professionalism | Behaves in a professional way. This includes: personal presentation, respect, respecting and encouraging diversity to cater for wider audiences, punctuality and attitude to colleagues, customers and key stakeholders. Adheres to the organisation's code of conduct for professional use of social media. Acts as a role model, contributing to team cohesion and productivity – representing the positive aspects of team culture and respectfully challenging inappropriate prevailing cultures. |
| Personal qualities | Shows exemplary qualities that are valued including integrity, reliability, self-motivation, being pro-active and a positive attitude. Motivates others where responsibility is shared. |
| Managing performance | Takes responsibility for their own work, accepts feedback in a positive way, uses initiative and shows resilience. Also takes responsibility for their own development, knows when to ask questions to complete a task and informs their line manager when a task is complete. Performs thorough self-assessments of their work and complies with the organisation's procedures. |
| Adaptability | Is able to accept and deal with changing priorities related to both their own work and to the organisation. |
| Responsibility | Demonstrates taking responsibility for team performance and quality of projects delivered. Takes a clear interest in seeing that projects are successfully completed and customer requests handled appropriately. Takes initiative to develop own and others' skills and behaviours. |

How the soft skills are developed and assessed is left to the organisations developing the End Point Assessments. The Government regulator for Apprenticeships standards does not specify how the soft skills are to be developed or assessed.

However, only 20% of the Apprenticeship standard delivery can take place off-the-job (and this is usually reserved to develop the required Knowledge). The clear indication here is that soft skills should be integrated into the wider training programme – and developed alongside the Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours set for the standard.

T-level qualifications are developed by awarding organisations, using a Government-approved T-level Standard. There will be 15 technical routes, with 3 levels within each route. Developed through direct consultation with employers, each T-level comprises three elements; a technical qualification (TQ), an industry placement, and English, maths and digital provision.

There are two elements within the TQ: the *Core Component* and the *Occupational Specialism*. Within the Core Component there is a mandatory *Employer-set Project*. Employer-set Projects focus on developing students' overall employability. These 'core skills' are assessed through an employer-set project, so that they are developed and applied in context rather than in isolation.

As employers are directly involved in the development, through T-level panels, any soft skills are written in to the TQ specification.

In *Scotland*, the Scottish Government use a *Core Skills Framework* of five core skills for the delivery of soft skills. These standards can be delivered as:

- dedicated Core Skills units;
- embedded Core Skills within units and/or courses, and;
- signposting opportunities to develop Core Skills through delivery of a units/courses.

Core skills are delivered at five levels within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) – SCQF levels 2-6 – and comprise of:

- communication;
- numeracy;
- information and communication technology;
- working with others, and;
- problems solving.

Core Skills are normally delivered and assessed in a classroom setting, but can be assessed using Workplace Assessed Core Skills Units, where most of the candidates' evidence is gathered from a workplace setting. Simulation of workplace evidence is allowed, but must be by exception. This is particularly relevant when included in a Scottish Modern Apprenticeship – where employers determine which of the Core Skills are needed for the relevant occupational role.

In *Wales*, policy initiatives around core skills focus on Essential Skills Wales – a suite of stand-alone qualifications for Communications, Numeracy, ICT, and Employability skills at four levels of the Credit and Qualifications Framework Wales (CQFW) – Entry Levels (1-3) – Level 3.

Apprenticeships must have an Essential Skills Wales component.

The Essential Employability Skills qualifications focus on:

- planning and organisation;
- creativity and innovation;
- critical thinking and problem solving, and;
- personal effectiveness.

Essential Employability Skills qualifications are designed for use in Further Education, Work-based Learning, Adult Community Learning and alternative settings, and are assessed using controlled tasks and structured discussions at all levels.

In *Northern Ireland*, Essential Skills qualifications from Entry 1 to Level 2 can be taught as stand-alone qualifications or as a component of other qualifications, including in Apprenticeships, and are available for:

- reading, writing, speaking and listening;
- working with numbers, and;
- use of computers and technology.

Regardless of the delivery and assessment mechanism, the standards, and differing frameworks across the UK, they all highlight one thing – **soft skills should not be delivered as a standalone programme**, but should be integrated in to a wider TVET training and where possible embedded in to TVET curricula.