

# A toolkit for assessing the barriers and mitigations in establishing TNE partnerships

A British Council funded project



Cardiff  
Metropolitan  
University

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Metropolitan  
Caerdydd



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# About the project

This toolkit is the third output as part of a British council joint funded project around reducing the barriers to TNE partnerships between UK and Nigerian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

The project was coordinated by Cardiff Metropolitan University and the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). The first two outputs of the project were centred around establishing what those barriers may be, and then identifying potential mitigations as well as a roadmap towards establishing them.

This final output, in the form of a toolkit, has been designed around the processes that were undertaken in developing the first two outputs, in order for those resources to be used to carry out similar activities in the future.

All three project outputs can be found in the resources section on the right of this page.

## RESOURCES

 [Phase 1 Output - Scoping Report](#)

 [Phase 2 Output - Mitigations](#)

 [Phase 3 Output - TNE Roadmap](#)

The project took place from January 2025 to January 2026 and involved the following partners:



### Cardiff Metropolitan University

Based in Cardiff, Wales, Cardiff Metropolitan University is the sixth largest provider of Transnational Education in the UK.



### The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)

The QAA is the UK's independent expert body for ensuring high-quality tertiary education, working across the UK and internationally to support standards, review quality, and provide sector guidance, particularly in higher education (HE) and Transnational Education (TNE).



### The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)

Based in Nigeria, NOUN is an Open and Distance Learning Higher Education Provider, with the largest number of student enrolments in Nigeria.





# Using this toolkit

The purpose of this toolkit is to take lessons learned from the project to provide a roadmap for similar activities in future i.e. UK and International HEI's looking to explore barriers to TNE partnerships.

The following sections provide a step by step break down of the project, with individual resources, as well as examples and guidance on how each step was completed.

The resources are broken down by each phase of the project e.g. Scoping and mitigation, and provide resources, guidance on how they were approached as well as lessons learned.





# Phase 1: Scoping

The purpose of the phase 1 scoping activity is to try and establish what the barriers toward a specific TNE partnership may be.

The level of detail required as part of this phase will vary depending on a number of factors such as:

- Whether there is an existing TNE activity in place within the region
- The preparedness of each partner in terms of establishing partnerships and or TNE activity
- The level of recognition of existing HEI frameworks and qualification in the region being explored

To this end some elements may be of more use than others, but the purpose of phase 1 activity is to identify sources of relevant information as well as the most efficient methods of gathering information from them.





# Scoping 1

TNE partner identification and initial scoping

The first area is to establish a partner who can assist with scoping. In the case of the project these were funded partners, but it is assumed that the toolkit will be used between potential TNE partners.

Once established, the first step is to conduct a desk based review of the potential barriers.

The purpose of this is to rapidly gather the insights of those who have contextual information around the regions in which they operate.

In the context of the research this was focussed on:

- The UK institution looking in and out and
- The Partner institution looking in and out

The review was based around a PESTLE analysis, to ensure suitable coverage of a range of factors.

A blank version of a template that can be used to carry out your own PESTLE, as well as the complete PESTLE related to this project can be found in the resources section on the right of this page.

## RESOURCES

 [Blank desk-based PESTLE](#)

 [Complete desk based PESTLE](#)

The second scoping phase involves creating a survey to explore the views and access the knowledge of a wide range of stakeholders.

The first phase was to outline who the stakeholders were, with a description, as well as why their views were important.

Once this was complete, we were then able to create questions that fit each stakeholder. These questions were developed between the UK and Nigerian partners to ensure adequate coverage from contextual knowledge.

A blank version of the stakeholder document can be found [here](#).

A complete version related specifically to this project can be found [here](#).

A sample of the questions used can be found [here](#).

## RESOURCES

 [Blank stakeholders Mapping](#)

 [Complete Stakeholders Template](#)

 [Sample Stakeholder Questions](#)



# Scoping 3

TNE partner scoping Visits and Reports

The third element of the scoping activity was a visit to the potential partner.

The purposes of this was to explore some of the contextual institutional barriers to partnership, explore issues that may arise as part of this visit and interview specific staff at the partner HEI. These included:

- Senior staff
- Academic support
- QA Staff
- Administrative staff

These activities allowed for the initial scoping report to be completed.

Such reports have the potential to identify initial issues relating to the establishing TNE partnership and provide the foundation for mitigating the identified barriers. An example of the completed PHASE 1 scoping report can be found [here](#).

## RESOURCES

 [Phase 1 Output - Scoping Report](#)



# Phase 2: Potential Mitigations

Once the initial scoping report was analysed, the core issues were split into sections. These sections were where barriers related to areas specifically around:

- Regulatory and Legal
- Financial and Economic
- Operational and organisational
- Pedagogic/Academic
- Technological
- Security and Risk
- Perception and Recognition
- Environmental and Sustainability

Each section was divided using a table which outlines the barrier and a brief description of the barrier.

Once this was complete, a third column was added that allowed potential mitigations to be included.

The two documents here include the blank mitigations template, as well as the complete document relating to this project as guidance.

## RESOURCES

 [Blank mitigations](#)

 [Phase 2 Output - Mitigations](#)



# Phase 3: The Roadmap

Once complete, it was then possible to develop a working roadmap for exploring a TNE partnership between the regions. The roadmap was split by phase, i.e. Partnership Exploration, Partnership Set-Up, Early Delivery, Ongoing Delivery & Quality Assurance, and Review, Renewal & Expansion.

Within each phase, potential activities to ensuring a successful partnership were outlined relating to specific stakeholders which were the UK university partnership team, the international team (in this case the National Open University of Nigeria), Link tutors, as well as regulators and external stakeholders.

This document however should be used in conjunction with the phase 2 output for maximum coherence.

It is highly likely that such roadmaps will be highly specific to any partnership, but the complete roadmap can be found [here](#).

## RESOURCES

 [Phase 3 Output - TNE Roadmap](#)



# Project Leads



## Cardiff Metropolitan University



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Karl Jones is a Senior Lecturer in technologies at Cardiff Metropolitan University. He has worked as both a lecturer in education and computer science and is now a link tutor for the Cardiff School of Technologies who have over 6000 TNE students across six countries.



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