

Q3 (1.2.1): When drawing together teams for deployment to projects, British Council uses multiple routes to access, recruit and mobilise personnel. Our major assets in deploying teams efficiently and effectively for CSSF are (i) our global reach with a permanent, long-term on-the-ground presence in over 100 countries worldwide (including a great many CSSF delivery countries – detailed in Q8) and, (ii) access to our network of trusted and experienced local and international experts – both in-house and external and in relevant CSSF thematic areas – who are presently delivering British Council’s commercial project portfolio for a range of donors and clients globally (comprising over 80 projects with a turnover of over £180m p.a). These assets are vital elements in our ability to quickly design technically and geographically appropriate approaches to often quite short (2-3 week) CSSF timescales. They also ensure rapid, efficient deployment of teams should such bids be successful.

Accessing and mobilising international and local experts/staff:

British Council will call down on **in-house national and UK-based experts** in technical areas relevant to this framework. Specifically for the thematic areas under CSSF2, this includes technical personnel who cover **CSSF thematic areas 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8**. In most cases, these personnel are already designing, managing and delivering HMG or other donor funded projects around the world in development or fragile contexts, and so are fully familiar with working in FCAS as well as CSSF, DFID and wider HMG priorities, requirements and approaches. These thematic experts will be complemented by experts in cross-cutting areas such as **Evaluation and Gender** where British Council has in-house technical expertise as well as networks of trusted suppliers. On evaluation expertise, British Council has invested in this area and appointed regional evaluation advisers with strong technical expertise who now perform advisory roles on contracts and will be available for CSSF projects. For Gender, we have a team of in-house and trusted-associate gender experts who are already working in advisory positions on programmes and will be available for deployment to CSSF. This team builds the capacity of project teams on gender issues and has developed a toolkit on integrating gender sensitivity into project design and delivery. This toolkit is incorporated into formal training being rolled out to our global project teams. The training and toolkit are also used as an entry point for a process of continuous learning and professional development for our global project teams on gender sensitivity (including both in-house and external experts). Learning and development is further embedded through our formal **Gender Community of Practice**.

For CSSF, these in-house technical experts will: (i) provide up-to-date technical content and approaches - contributing to political / contextual analysis in their specialist areas and geared specifically towards FCAS; (ii) lead on and construct high quality technical proposals at the mini-competition stage; (iii) deliver both short-term and long-term technical inputs/consultancy/training for projects won under CSSF; (iv) take on Programme and Project Director roles; (v) ensure, and be accountable for, the technical quality of project delivery and sign-off on the quality of third party technical inputs (vi) ensure that all projects have robust impact measures in place in the form of evaluation frameworks and strategies, and (v) that all project actions have gender sensitivity built in as a core element of design and outcome delivery.

We will also call on our **trusted global network of external consultants and experts (local and international)**. These are not just names on a database, but are experts we presently engage in the delivery of our global portfolio. To manage this network we have a purpose-built, secure, web portal, the Consultant Management Information System (CMIS), where prioritised and specially selected experts pass a vetting process and update their experience and availability on-system. Experts are first vetted through a formal process by our in-house technical teams and are required to provide evidence of their relevant experience. Once accepted, we engage experts through a variety of methods, both face-to-face and digital. CMIS allows us to track expert availability and deployment to any of our global projects or commercial bids, which enables us to respond rapidly within short timescales by only identifying and approaching **qualified** experts who are **available** and have **already demonstrated relevant experience**. CMIS contains experts from across **CSSF thematic areas 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9** as well as cross-cutting experts on areas such as political economy, gender and evaluation.

This pool of trusted experts is constantly and actively refreshed and replenished by running recruitment exercises through the specific development section of our britishcouncil.org website and running advertisements in DEVEX, Assortis and other relevant membership bodies. British Council also has access to procurement frameworks of suppliers which enable the **rapid** identification and selection of suppliers to specific call downs on projects. As a very recent example, in 2018 we have undertaken a major procurement exercise for Evaluation Service providers and have appointed qualified suppliers to an Evaluation Framework agreement. Experts from these frameworks will also be deployable to CSSF opportunities.

Accessing and mobilising local experts/staff:

When it comes to identifying and deploying **local experts** specifically, we are able to call on a wide spectrum of practitioners due to our on-the-ground presence and long-term engagement in over 100 countries worldwide. As with our exhaustive network of international consultants, our national expert network is not an opportunistic or transactional relationship based on winning a single contract in a particular geography - it is built on trust and long-term multiple engagements. This approach has helped us to build a sustainable network across multiple thematic areas, programmes and sectors in **Governance, Civil Society, Justice and Security, Arts, Education and English** with individual experts and those within partner organisations such as CSOs, think tanks, university departments, SMEs, large multinational organisations, trade associations and the creative industries. These pre-established networks of local partners and experts who see British Council as a trusted employer and partner will be deployed to CSSF activities in FCAS quickly and efficiently. As well as deploying national experts to CSSF from our existing network, we are committed to **training and developing the next generation of national experts in fragile environments**. For example, our British Council funded DEVOPS consultant development programme in Myanmar specifically aimed to strengthen local consultant capacity and covered areas such as Political Economy Analysis and Mentoring and Coaching skills. This fosters and grows the next generation of practitioners and contributes to sustainable development beyond and outside individual donor-funded contracts.

Accessing and mobilising partner experts/staff:

The above routes are further enhanced and complemented by our CSSF partner institutions through their own in-house and external networks (*the CSSF thematic areas covered by each partner are shown in brackets*): **Governance and Justice Group** (3,4,5,6,7,8,9), **International Civil Society Action Network** (1,3,5,6,7,8,9), **Interpeace** (1,3,4,6,7,8), **INTRAC** (1,2,3,4,6,7,8), **Itad** (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9), **Thomson Reuters Foundation** (1,3,7,9) and **Westminster Foundation for Democracy** (1,2,4,6,7,8,9). Each of these partners has formally agreed to join us for this framework and are long-standing partners of British Council having been our **partners for the first CSSF Framework**. They each bring access to their own extensive **networks of in-house and external experts** to deploy under this framework in their specialist areas. To manage this selection process, during the first CSSF framework, we invested in the set-up a specific, **secure, password protected portal for our partners**. This portal, which we will also use for this framework if successful, is specifically used for CSSF opportunities as a quick, efficient mechanism to share information on CSSF calls for proposals with partners and remotely discuss the call-down. This enables us to mobilise partners to quickly identify potential experts for any call-down and has clear benefits in terms of the quality of team we can propose, our response time and having as large a pool of potential experts as possible to choose from - which also helps secure the best possible price for assignments through negotiation i.e. by negotiating with more than one qualified expert.

Case Study: In most cases, the teams of experts we will deploy for CSSF projects procured through CSSF will call on a mixture of the above sources. For example, for the **Justice For All (J4A) programme in Nigeria (DFID, £51m, 2012-2017)**, the large full-time in-country team comprised 50 experts, plus 3 British Council full-time staff - including the lead thematic technical expert. This full time team was complemented by a further 150+ short-medium term experts sourced from British Council, local and international partner networks. At the outset international experts delivered the majority of the technical inputs. However, to ensure sustainability beyond the project lifespan, we ensured that this proportion shifted to much more emphasis on local expertise. By project closure, the Justice and Cross-sector co-ordination components comprised almost 100% of local experts. Exceptions were the Policing and Anti-Corruption components where more international expertise was required. This reflects our nuanced approach to expert selection and deployment that balances VfM, delivery needs, sustainability, environmental, risk and political requirements.

Management of the selection, recruitment and deployment process:

At call-down, each CSSF opportunity will be assigned to a specific team of thematic and in-country specialists who will design and, if successful, deliver the project. At the same time, one of a small team of experienced senior consultants from our **Governance and Civil Society practice** – who are already working on CSSF responses for the first CSSF framework and previously for DFID frameworks – will be immediately assigned to lead the design teams through the rapid CSSF process. They are also responsible for tracking CSSF opportunities, contributing to designs, engaging internal decision makers on opportunities to ensure rapid decision making, maintaining our CSSF portal and ensuring our partners are aware of updated CSSF pipelines. In turn, they report to the Head of Governance and Civil Society (also experienced in the successful design and delivery of CSSF-funded programmes) who will be ultimately accountable for CSSF responses. This CSSF-experienced core group – working with specifically identified thematic and in-country specialists for each call-down – will ensure **high quality, quick, efficient and fully CSSF-compliant responses**.

In addition, in order to effectively manage consultant deployment, we will call on our full-time, permanent, experienced in-house HQ and in-country functional teams in areas such as **finance, legal and contracts, tax and status, global estates and security, digital, facilities management, HR and personnel management, learning and development, centre of excellence, project and programme management, marketing and communications, press and public relations, design, brand and publishing, audit and other relevant areas**. As an organisation operating and delivering programmes and activities through an existing on the ground presence in over 100 countries worldwide, many of them fragile, conflict affected or post-conflict, such support services are essential. This wider team will ensure that deployed experts are supported through the deployment process. As such, whatever the route used to recruit, select and deploy, all experts, trainers and third party contractors deployed under CSSF by the British Council will:

- Be appointed on the basis of **best fit for the job** (there are no pre-agreed partnership input shares between partners).
- Be recruited via our formal open, transparent and documented selection process that adheres to our corporate **Procurement Policy** (reviewed by NAO given our status as an NDPB) and verified and assessed against our fully operationalised **Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity strategy**.
- Go through a thorough due diligence process involving external credit reference agencies as well as a formal ethical screening process. Including, if the role involves or is likely at any point to involve, contact with children - s/he going through our **Child Protection** process that includes the need for the enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check. Where appropriate and necessary, experts may also be required to undertake **SC or CTC screening** - which British Council does for both in-house staff and experts through the Home Office.
- Be formally vetted according to **Baseline Personnel Security Standards (BPSS)** which consists of verification checks of the following, (i) Identity, (ii) Nationality and Immigration Status (including an entitlement to undertake the work in question) (iii) Employment history (past 3 years) and (iv) Criminal record (unspent convictions only)
- Be supported through **pre- and post-deployment** by experienced personnel both in the UK and in the country to which they will be deployed. This ensures that all logistics, transfers, personal belongings, insurances, accommodation, family arrangements and other administrative issues are dealt with smoothly and with minimum disruption, ensuring deployed experts are not distracted or concerned by domestic considerations.
- Due to our **on the ground** presence, be immediately plugged into **pre-existing management systems** such as legal, contractual, payroll, financial, risk, human resources, training and development, child protection, duty of care and others. This provides value for money benefits and avoids experts undertaking the costly and time-consuming set-up of unique project specific processes and practice – ensuring expert time at the all-important inception period is focussed on setting up the delivery of project outcomes.
- Once again due to our on the ground presence, quickly gain **access to British Council government, education, civil society and other networks** - ensuring that when international experts land in-country they immediately have **professional networks** to plug into.
- Be managed through a **formal performance management system** that: (i) incorporates the best international practice in consultancy management through strong tried and tested contracting practice by using contracts and ToR that have been legally tested in both the UK and our countries of operation (ii) uses clear performance indicators that link remuneration to results or output delivery (whichever is most appropriate), (iii) uses a formal line management and performance appraisal system where expert performance is monitored and appraised, under-performance quickly spotted and rectified – and reward and recognition used to encourage commitment, expert retention and continuous high quality delivery.
- Be integrated within in a **large global network/community of experts and practitioners** who are delivering a large portfolio of CSSF-relevant work globally for British Council. This ensures that continuous cross-project learning takes place and best practice can be quickly adopted for each new project, rather than reinvented - a considerable VfM and speed-of-deployment benefit. This **global learning and communities of practice** approach being managed by our specialist in-house **Centre of Excellence**.
- Represent **value for money** – we have preferential rates with experts as part of the identification processes detailed above and via this extensive network, can ensure we are able to negotiate with more than one expert for posts, enabling robust negotiation on fee rates.
- Understand, fully adhere to and be monitored against, British Council's 18 core policies including, but not limited to, Code of Conduct, Equal Opportunity and Diversity, Anti-Fraud and Corruption, Security, Anti-Terrorism and Money Laundering and Child Protection.
- Be aware of and fully adhere with **duty of care and security** arrangements. For ALL experts/personnel deployed to FCAS (including sub-contractors) this can include: (i) security briefings pre-departure and on arrival (ii)undertaking training such as "SAFE"/hostile environment training (or other) as necessary (iii)confirming that they know and understand the risks identified, any mitigating measures put in place and that adherence to such is a condition of employment and deployment (included in all third party contracts) (iv)pre-departure arrangements for any formal in-country arrangements to be put in place (for example, use of close protection, armoured vehicles, hostile environment training, use of specific hotels, and secure accommodation etc.); (v) inclusion on country cascade lists and emergency contact/evacuation procedures.
- Have access to formal **training and development** opportunities through a suite of mandatory and optional training. Mandatory training areas including: Security, Child Protection, Diversity, Information Management, Fraud Awareness and optional training including areas such as APM Practitioner Project Management (externally accredited), Contracts Masterclass, Influencing & Negotiating, Gender toolkit training, Commissioning and designing Evaluations and Evaluation Masterclass.