

Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises (iDICE) Programme

Enterprise Support Organization (ESO) Programme Implementation Guide

South-West and South-South Nigeria

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Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
AfDB	African Development Bank
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
BOI	Bank of Industry
CoE	Centre of Excellence
ESO	Enterprise Support Organization
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
iDICE	Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
PCU	Programme Coordination Unit

ToR	Terms of Reference
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1. Introduction

The Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises (iDICE) Programme is a flagship initiative of the Federal Government of Nigeria designed to stimulate inclusive economic growth through investments in digital innovation, entrepreneurship, and the creative economy. The programme seeks to strengthen Nigeria's innovation ecosystem by improving access to digital skills development, enterprise support services, innovation infrastructure, and market opportunities for entrepreneurs and emerging businesses.

A key component of the programme is the establishment of Digital and Creative Centres of Excellence (CoEs) within selected tertiary institutions across Nigeria. These Centres of Excellence are intended to serve as innovation hubs that provide high-quality skills development, incubation, business acceleration, mentorship, and enterprise development services to students, graduates, startups, and members of the wider entrepreneurial ecosystem.

AfriLabs has been appointed as the Lead Aggregator for Enterprise Support Organizations (ESOs) responsible for coordinating implementation across the South-West and South-South geopolitical zones. Under this mandate, AfriLabs will identify, engage, support, monitor, and coordinate qualified ESOs that will operate individual Centres of Excellence in partnership with host institutions and the iDICE Programme Coordination Unit.

The success of the programme depends on ensuring that every Centre of Excellence delivers a consistent, high-quality implementation model while allowing sufficient flexibility for local adaptation based on institutional strengths, regional priorities, and ecosystem opportunities.

This Programme Implementation Guide has therefore been developed to provide prospective ESOs with detailed operational guidance beyond the information contained in the Terms of Reference (ToR). It establishes common planning assumptions, implementation expectations, beneficiary targets, programme methodologies, and performance standards to enable all applicants to prepare technically sound, realistic, and comparable Concept Notes.

2. Purpose of this Guide

This guide complements the Enterprise Support Organization Terms of Reference and the Concept Note Template by providing additional programme-specific information that prospective implementation partners require when developing proposals.

The guide is intended to ensure that all applicants base their implementation strategies, workplans, staffing structures, and indicative budgets on a common set of assumptions and expectations. It also provides detailed information on the operational framework for the Centres of Excellence, including beneficiary allocations, programme delivery schedules, learning pathways, and institution-specific implementation considerations.

Specifically, this guide aims to:

- Provide additional implementation information not contained within the Terms of Reference.
- Establish standardized planning assumptions for all applicants.
- Clarify the expected programme delivery model across all Centres of Excellence.
- Present institution-specific information relevant to implementation planning.

- Define expected programme activities, outputs, and performance indicators.
- Promote consistency in Concept Note preparation and facilitate objective evaluation of applications.
- Reduce ambiguity during the application process by addressing common implementation questions in advance.

This guide should be read together with the following documents:

- Enterprise Support Organization Terms of Reference.
- ESO Call for Applications.
- Concept Note Template.
- Any subsequent clarifications issued by AfriLabs during the application period.

Where there is any inconsistency between this Guide and the Terms of Reference, the Terms of Reference shall take precedence unless otherwise communicated by AfriLabs.

3. About the iDICE Programme

The Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises (iDICE) Programme is a strategic initiative established to strengthen Nigeria's digital and creative economy through investments that enhance entrepreneurship, innovation, skills development, enterprise growth, and job creation.

The programme is jointly funded by the Bank of Industry (BOI), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and Agence Française de Développement (AFD), with implementation coordinated through the iDICE Programme Coordination Unit (PCU).

Within the South-West and South-South geopolitical zones, the programme will establish fifteen (15) Digital and Creative Centres of Excellence located within selected universities and polytechnics. These Centres will provide entrepreneurs and aspiring innovators with access to modern infrastructure, technical skills training, business incubation, mentorship, enterprise advisory services, networking opportunities, and industry partnerships.

The Centres of Excellence are designed to become sustainable innovation ecosystems that connect academia, industry, government, investors, and entrepreneurship support organizations to accelerate the development of globally competitive digital and creative enterprises.

Rather than functioning solely as training facilities, each Centre of Excellence is expected to operate as a regional innovation platform that supports the complete entrepreneurial journey from skills acquisition and idea validation to business formalization, incubation, investment readiness, and long-term enterprise growth.

4. Programme Objectives

The iDICE Digital and Creative Centres of Excellence have been established to strengthen Nigeria's digital and creative economy through the delivery of market-relevant skills development, entrepreneurship support, innovation programming, and enterprise growth services within selected tertiary institutions.

The Centres of Excellence are expected to serve as sustainable innovation ecosystems that bridge the gap between academia, industry, government, investors, and entrepreneurs while creating pathways for employment, enterprise creation, and commercialization of innovation.

Specifically, the programme seeks to:

4.1 Develop Industry-Relevant Digital and Creative Skills

Provide high-quality technical and entrepreneurial training aligned with current industry needs and emerging technologies within the digital and creative economy.

The training programmes should equip beneficiaries with practical competencies that improve employability, entrepreneurial capability, and innovation capacity.

4.2 Strengthen Enterprise Development

Support aspiring entrepreneurs, innovators, startups, and MSMEs through structured enterprise development programmes including:

- Business incubation
- Startup acceleration
- Business advisory
- Investment readiness
- Business formalization
- Product validation
- Commercialization support

4.3 Promote Innovation

Create innovation ecosystems within participating institutions by encouraging collaborative problem-solving, digital innovation, creative enterprise development, and technology commercialization.

Innovation should be promoted through practical activities such as:

- Innovation Challenges
- Hackathons
- Demonstration Events
- Product Showcases
- Industry Collaboration

4.4 Improve Employment Outcomes

Increase employment opportunities by equipping beneficiaries with technical competencies and entrepreneurial capabilities required within Nigeria's digital and creative economy.

The programme seeks to produce graduates who are capable of:

- Securing employment
- Creating businesses
- Becoming freelancers
- Building technology-enabled enterprises
- Creating additional jobs

4.5 Build Sustainable Innovation Ecosystems

Strengthen institutional capacity by embedding sustainable innovation support structures within participating institutions that continue beyond the life of the project.

This includes strengthening relationships between:

- Institutions
- Enterprise Support Organizations
- Industry
- Investors
- Government
- Development Partners

5. Guiding Principles for Implementation

To ensure consistency across all fifteen (15) Centres of Excellence, every selected ESO shall implement activities in accordance with the following guiding principles.

5.1 Beneficiary-Centred Delivery

Programme delivery shall be designed around the needs of beneficiaries.

Learning experiences should be practical, industry-driven, inclusive, and responsive to evolving labour market demands.

Every activity should contribute towards improving beneficiary knowledge, skills, employability, or enterprise growth.

5.2 Experiential Learning

Training should emphasize practical application rather than theoretical instruction.

Programme delivery should incorporate:

- Hands-on projects
- Industry case studies
- Group assignments
- Live demonstrations
- Practical simulations
- Prototype development
- Real business challenges

Learning by doing should underpin all training interventions.

5.3 Industry Relevance

Programme content should reflect current industry standards and emerging technologies.

ESOs are expected to continuously engage industry experts to ensure that curriculum delivery remains relevant to employers, investors, and the broader innovation ecosystem.

5.4 Entrepreneurship-Driven Approach

The Centres of Excellence are not intended to function solely as training centres.

Rather, they are expected to cultivate entrepreneurial mindsets by supporting beneficiaries throughout the enterprise lifecycle, from ideation and skills acquisition to incubation, business formalization, market access, and investment readiness.

5.5 Inclusion and Accessibility

All implementation activities should promote equitable participation.

ESOs are expected to intentionally promote access for:

- Women
- Youth
- Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)
- Underserved communities

Programme delivery should incorporate inclusive recruitment strategies and reasonable accommodations where required.

5.6 Collaboration

Successful implementation requires strong collaboration among all stakeholders.

Each ESO is expected to work closely with:

- AfriLabs
- Host Institution
- iDICE PCU
- Industry partners
- Investors
- Government agencies
- Innovation ecosystem actors

5.7 Sustainability

Programme activities should contribute towards strengthening institutional capacity beyond the project lifecycle.

Every implementation strategy should demonstrate how knowledge, partnerships, and systems will remain functional after project completion.

6. Programme Overview

The iDICE South-West and South-South Aggregator Project will establish fifteen (15) Digital and Creative Centres of Excellence across selected universities and polytechnics.

Each Centre of Excellence will operate as a regional innovation hub providing structured skills development, entrepreneurship support, incubation services, and ecosystem engagement activities over a thirty-six (36) month implementation period.

A single Enterprise Support Organization (ESO) will be engaged to manage each Centre of Excellence.

The ESO will serve as the primary implementation partner responsible for programme delivery while working closely with AfriLabs, the host institution, and the iDICE Programme Coordination Unit.

Programme Summary

Item	Description
Project Duration	36 Months
Number of Centres	15
South-West Centres	4
South-South Centres	11
Implementation Partner	One ESO per Centre
Delivery Model	Hybrid (Physical & Virtual where appropriate)
Primary Beneficiaries	Students, Graduates, Startups, Entrepreneurs, MSMEs
Learning Pathway	Foundational → Intermediate → Specialized/Advanced

7. Geographic Coverage

The programme covers two geopolitical zones comprising fifteen (15) participating tertiary institutions.

South-West

State	Institution	Proposed Hub Type
Lagos	Yaba College of Technology	Creative Hub
Ogun	Federal Polytechnic Ilaro	VR Learning Center
Osun	Osun State Polytechnic, Iree	Gaming Hub
Ondo	Federal Polytechnic Ile-Oluji	Digital Tech Hub

South-South

State	Institution	Proposed Hub Type
Akwa Ibom	University of Uyo	Gaming Hub
Akwa Ibom	Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic	Digital Tech Hub
Akwa Ibom	Heritage Polytechnic	Digital Tech Hub
Bayelsa	Bayelsa State Polytechnic	Digital Tech Hub
Rivers	Rivers State University	Gaming Hub
Rivers	Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic	Creative Hub
Edo	University of Benin	Creative Hub

Edo	Auchi Polytechnic	VR Learning Centre
Delta	Michael and Cecilia Ibru University	Gaming Hub
Cross River	Cross River State University of Technology	VR Learning Centre
Cross River	Federal Polytechnic Ugep	Digital Tech Hub

8. Centre of Excellence Framework

Each Centre of Excellence is expected to function as a complete entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem rather than a standalone training facility.

The implementation framework consists of six interconnected pillars:

Pillar 1: Skills Development

Delivery of market-relevant technical and entrepreneurial training across three progressive learning streams.

Pillar 2: Enterprise Development

Support for business ideation, business modelling, customer validation, business formalization, and enterprise growth.

Pillar 3: Incubation and Acceleration

Structured support for startups through mentorship, coaching, advisory services, product development, and market access.

Pillar 4: Ecosystem Development

Strengthening relationships among academia, industry, investors, government agencies, and entrepreneurship support organizations.

Pillar 5: Innovation Programming

Practical innovation activities including:

- Hackathons
- Innovation Challenges
- Networking Events
- Demo Days
- Product Showcases
- Job Fairs

Pillar 6: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Continuous monitoring of programme implementation, beneficiary progress, enterprise growth, and overall project performance.

Infrastructure and Facility Responsibilities

To remove ambiguity in proposal budgeting, the following division of responsibility applies to the physical set-up and day-to-day running of each Centre of Excellence.

Provided to establish the Centre (AfriLabs, the iDICE PCU and the Host Institution)

Each Centre of Excellence will be equipped, ahead of ESO-led programme delivery, with the physical infrastructure required to operate, including:

- Studio and specialised equipment appropriate to the Centre's designated hub type
- A reliable electricity source, including backup power provision
- Furniture and fittings required for classroom, studio, and co-working use
- Physical space (classrooms, studios, and common areas) within the host institution

The ESO's Responsibility

With the Centre established, the ESO is responsible for running it, including:

- Training delivery across all three learning streams
- Staffing of the Centre, including the Centre Manager, Training Coordinator, MEL Officer, and other required roles
- Facilitators, trainers, and mentors
- Day-to-day operation of the Centre, including scheduling, consumables, and beneficiary management
- Software licences, teaching materials, and other consumables required for ongoing training delivery, beyond the fixed equipment provided

Note: Applicants should not budget for capital infrastructure costs (equipment procurement, electrical installation, furniture) as part of their proposals. Indicative budgets should instead focus on staffing, facilitation, training delivery consumables, and ongoing operational costs.

9. Beneficiary Allocation Methodology

To ensure equitable distribution of programme opportunities across participating institutions, beneficiary targets have been allocated at regional and institutional levels.

Overall Beneficiary Targets

Region	Centres	Total Beneficiaries
South-West	4	10,000
South-South	11	25,000
Total	15	35,000

Note: Based on the figures above, the average allocation for South west is approximately **2,500** while South-South is approximately **2,273 beneficiaries per Centre of Excellence** over the 36-month implementation period. Estimated minimum physical traffic flow of beneficiaries for the 3 streams of training per day is **150**.

Beneficiary Distribution Across Programme Lifecycle

Beneficiaries shall be recruited progressively over the implementation period through eight programme sessions.

The total beneficiary allocation for each Centre shall be distributed across:

- Eight implementation sessions
- Three learning streams
- Thirty-six months of programme delivery

ESOs are expected to propose an appropriate distribution model that ensures efficient utilization of infrastructure, instructional resources, and mentorship capacity while achieving the approved beneficiary targets.

Implementation Sessions

Year	Number of Sessions
Year One	2
Year Two	4
Year Three	2
Total	8 Sessions

Each session should include activities across the three learning streams (Foundational 60%, Intermediate 30% and Specialized 10%), with progression pathways designed to support beneficiary advancement from foundational skills to specialized competencies.

Planning Assumptions for Beneficiary Management

For proposal development purposes, applicants should assume that:

- Beneficiary recruitment will occur at the beginning of each programme session.
- Learning pathways may accommodate new entrants as well as progression of existing participants.
- Participant progression should be based on defined learning outcomes and programme completion requirements.
- ESOs should design cohort management strategies that optimize learning quality, mentor availability, and infrastructure utilization.
- Beneficiary records must be maintained throughout the programme lifecycle to support monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and alumni engagement.

10. Programme Delivery Framework

10.1 Delivery Philosophy

The iDICE Digital and Creative Centres of Excellence are designed to provide an integrated enterprise development experience rather than isolated training interventions. The implementation model combines technical skills development, entrepreneurship education, business incubation, mentorship, ecosystem engagement, and employment pathways into a structured learning journey that supports beneficiaries from entry-level skills acquisition to enterprise creation and growth.

The delivery framework has been developed to ensure consistency across all fifteen (15) Centres of Excellence while allowing ESOs sufficient flexibility to contextualize implementation based on institutional strengths, local industry opportunities, and the specific focus area of each Centre.

Every Centre of Excellence is expected to operate as an innovation ecosystem that supports beneficiaries throughout the programme lifecycle and contributes to the long-term sustainability of entrepreneurship and innovation within the host institution.

10.2 Programme Delivery Cycle

Each implementation cycle should follow a structured approach consisting of seven phases.

Phase	Description
Phase 1	Outreach and beneficiary recruitment
Phase 2	Selection and onboarding
Phase 3	Technical and entrepreneurship training
Phase 4	Mentorship, coaching and business advisory
Phase 5	Innovation activities (Hackathons, Networking, Job Fairs, etc.)
Phase 6	Incubation, acceleration and investment readiness
Phase 7	Monitoring, evaluation and alumni engagement

Each phase is expected to build upon the previous phase to ensure continuity and measurable progress.

10.3 Thirty-Six-Month Delivery Framework

The implementation period spans three years, with eight structured programme sessions delivered across the project lifecycle.

Implementation Year	Programme Sessions	Primary Focus
Year One	Session 1–2	Programme establishment, beneficiary onboarding, foundational skills development, ecosystem activation
Year Two	Session 4–6	Scale-up of programme delivery, advanced technical training, incubation, innovation programming and enterprise support
Year Three	Session 2–4	Enterprise growth, sustainability, commercialization, institutional transition and alumni engagement

This phased approach enables progressive capacity development while allowing sufficient time for enterprise incubation and ecosystem strengthening.

10.4 Eight-Session Programme Schedule

The implementation framework comprises eight programme sessions distributed across the 36-month implementation period.

Session	Year	Primary Objectives
Session 1	Year 1	Recruitment, onboarding and training, Networking Event, Hackathon

Session 2	Year 1	Recruitment, onboarding Continued technical training, mentorship and networking
Session 3	Year 2	Recruitment, onboarding and training incubation and innovation, networking, Hackathon
Session 4	Year 2	Recruitment, onboarding and training Advanced enterprise development and ecosystem engagement
Session 5	Year 2	Recruitment, onboarding and training and business acceleration
Session 6	Year 2	Recruitment, onboarding and training incubation and innovation, networking, Hackathon
Session 7	Year 3	Recruitment, onboarding and training incubation and innovation, networking, Hackathon
Session 8	Year 3	Recruitment, onboarding and training incubation and innovation, networking, Hackathon

Applicants may refine implementation sequencing provided that all programme requirements are achieved within the project period.

11. Learning Streams

The learning framework has been designed to progressively build beneficiary competencies from foundational digital and entrepreneurial skills through to advanced technical specialization and enterprise development.

All programme participants should be enrolled within one or more of the three learning streams based on their experience, competency level and programme objectives.

11.1 Foundational Stream

Duration: 4 Weeks

Purpose

The Foundational Stream distribution is 60%, introduces beneficiaries to the core concepts, knowledge and competencies required for participation within Nigeria's digital and creative economy.

This stream is intended for individuals with limited or no previous technical experience and establishes the baseline knowledge required for progression into intermediate and specialized learning pathways.

Expected Learning Outcomes

At the completion of the Foundational Stream, beneficiaries should be able to:

- Demonstrate fundamental digital literacy competencies.
- Understand entrepreneurship principles.
- Apply basic problem-solving techniques.
- Work collaboratively in teams.
- Develop introductory business concepts.
- Understand innovation and design thinking processes.
- Demonstrate awareness of emerging opportunities within the digital and creative sectors.

Delivery Approach

The Foundational Stream should emphasize experiential learning through:

- Instructor-led sessions
- Practical workshops
- Demonstrations
- Team exercises
- Case studies
- Digital assignments
- Project-based learning

11.2 Intermediate Stream

Duration: 8 - 12 Weeks

Purpose

The Intermediate Stream distribution is 30%, it builds upon the competencies developed during the Foundational Stream by introducing more advanced technical content, applied entrepreneurship and enterprise development activities.

Beneficiaries should begin applying acquired knowledge to real-world business and innovation challenges.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Participants should be able to:

- Develop practical technical competencies relevant to their Centre of Excellence.
- Apply business planning methodologies.
- Build minimum viable products (MVPs) where applicable.
- Validate business ideas.
- Demonstrate customer discovery techniques.
- Participate effectively in collaborative innovation projects.
- Prepare enterprises for incubation.

Delivery Methodology

Programme delivery should incorporate:

- Practical laboratory sessions
- Guided projects
- Industry masterclasses
- Mentorship engagements
- Group assignments
- Prototype development
- Business clinics

11.3 Specialized / Advanced Stream

Duration: 12-16 Weeks**Purpose**

The Specialized Stream distribution is 10%; it is designed to prepare beneficiaries for employment, enterprise creation, commercialization and long-term business sustainability.

Participants should receive intensive technical training aligned with the specialization of their assigned Centre of Excellence.

Expected Learning Outcomes

By the end of this stream, beneficiaries should be able to:

- Demonstrate advanced technical competencies.
- Develop commercially viable products or services.
- Formalize business operations.
- Develop investment-ready enterprises.
- Prepare professional portfolios.
- Present business pitches to investors and ecosystem stakeholders.
- Transition into employment or entrepreneurship.

Programme Activities

Activities may include:

- Advanced technical projects
- Capstone projects
- Startup incubation
- Business advisory
- Investor readiness coaching
- Product demonstrations
- Demo Day preparation
- Market linkage activities

12. Standardized Implementation Methodology

To ensure consistency across all Centres of Excellence, every Enterprise Support Organization shall implement a standardized methodology consisting of eight interconnected workstreams.

Workstream 1 – Beneficiary Recruitment and Selection

Each ESO shall develop and implement a transparent recruitment strategy aligned with programme objectives.

Recruitment activities should include:

- Community outreach
- Institutional engagement
- Digital campaigns
- Information sessions
- Application management
- Beneficiary screening
- Selection interviews (where required)
- Onboarding

Recruitment processes should promote diversity, inclusion and equitable participation.

Workstream 2 – Training Delivery

Training should be competency-based, practical and industry-driven.

Training methodologies should include:

- Physical instruction
- Hybrid learning where appropriate
- Practical demonstrations
- Industry projects
- Collaborative learning
- Continuous assessments
- Practical assignments
- Portfolio development

Workstream 3 – Mentorship and Coaching

Each Centre of Excellence shall establish a structured mentorship programme that connects beneficiaries with experienced entrepreneurs, industry professionals and technical experts.

Mentorship activities should include:

- One-on-one mentoring
- Group mentoring
- Technical coaching
- Career guidance
- Enterprise coaching
- Leadership development
- Business growth advisory

Mentorship should continue beyond classroom instruction to support beneficiary progression.

Workstream 4 – Business Advisory and Incubation

ESOs are expected to provide structured business development services that support enterprise creation and growth.

Business support services should include:

- Business model development
- Business registration guidance
- Financial management
- Product validation
- Customer acquisition strategies
- Branding support
- Market access facilitation
- Investment readiness

Where appropriate, startups should be admitted into incubation or acceleration programmes.

Workstream 5 – Ecosystem Engagement

Every Centre should actively cultivate relationships with key ecosystem actors.

Expected stakeholders include:

- Industry partners
- Technology companies
- Investors
- Financial institutions
- Government agencies
- Innovation hubs
- Alumni
- Development partners

The objective is to create sustainable partnerships that enhance beneficiary outcomes.

Workstream 6 – Innovation Programming

Innovation programming is a mandatory component of every Centre of Excellence.

Each ESO shall deliver the following minimum activities:

Activity	Minimum Requirement
Hackathons	Two (2) annually
Networking Events	Ongoing throughout programme implementation
Job Fairs	One (1) during each programme session
Industry Engagement Sessions	Continuous
Innovation Challenges	As appropriate to the Centre's specialization
Demo Days	At the completion of major programme milestones

Applicants are encouraged to propose additional innovation activities that strengthen beneficiary learning and enterprise outcomes.

Workstream 7 – Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

ESOs shall establish robust systems for tracking beneficiary participation, learning outcomes, enterprise development and programme performance.

Monitoring systems should support:

- Attendance tracking
- Progress monitoring
- KPI reporting
- Beneficiary feedback
- Lessons learned
- Continuous programme improvement

Workstream 8 – Sustainability and Alumni Engagement

Programme sustainability should be integrated throughout implementation rather than considered only at project close-out.

Each ESO should establish mechanisms to:

- Maintain alumni networks.
- Facilitate ongoing mentorship.
- Promote peer learning.
- Connect graduates to employment opportunities.
- Support enterprise growth beyond programme completion.
- Strengthen institutional ownership of the Centre of Excellence.

13. Centre of Excellence Profiles

13.1 Purpose

The Digital and Creative Centres of Excellence (CoEs) will be strategically established across the selected tertiary institutions in the South-West and South-South geopolitical zones to serve as regional innovation hubs. Each Centre has been assigned a proposed specialization based on the infrastructure readiness assessment, available facilities, institutional strengths, and regional opportunities within the digital and creative economy.

The purpose of this section is to provide prospective Enterprise Support Organizations (ESOs) with institution-specific information to guide the development of tailored implementation strategies. While a standardized implementation methodology is expected across all Centres of Excellence, ESOs should contextualize programme delivery to reflect the unique characteristics of the assigned institution, local ecosystem, and Centre specialization.

Important Note: The hub types and Centre of Excellence focus areas presented below are intended to guide proposal development. AfriLabs reserves the right to refine these during implementation based on final infrastructure readiness, equipment deployment, and programme priorities.

A. SOUTH-WEST CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

Centre of Excellence Profile 1

Institution Overview

Item	Description
Institution	Yaba College of Technology (YABATECH)
State	Lagos
Geopolitical Zone	South-West
Proposed Hub Type	Creative Hub

Institutional Context

Yaba College of Technology is one of Nigeria's foremost institutions for technical and vocational education and is strategically located within Lagos, the country's commercial and technology hub. The institution is well positioned to leverage its proximity to Nigeria's thriving creative and digital economy, making it an ideal location for a Creative Hub focused on digital media, creative technologies, and innovation.

Infrastructure Context

The infrastructure assessment indicates that the institution is suitable for the establishment of a Creative Hub. The Centre is expected to be equipped with modern digital infrastructure to support practical skills development, innovation, and enterprise creation in the creative sector.

Local Implementation Considerations

The implementing ESO should:

- Leverage Lagos' vibrant innovation ecosystem.
- Establish partnerships with creative industry stakeholders.
- Facilitate exposure to creative technology companies.
- Promote entrepreneurship within the creative economy.
- Strengthen linkages with investors and employers in the creative sector.

Centre of Excellence Profile 2

Item	Description
Institution	Federal Polytechnic Ilaro
State	Ogun
Geopolitical Zone	South-West
Proposed Hub Type	VR Learning Centre

Institutional Context

Federal Polytechnic Ilaro has been identified as the proposed location for a Virtual Reality Learning Centre. The institution presents opportunities to develop competencies in immersive technologies, digital simulation, spatial content creation, and extended reality applications.

Infrastructure Context

The infrastructure assessment recommends the institution for specialized VR equipment and immersive learning facilities.

Local Implementation Considerations

The ESO should prioritize:

- Hands-on VR training.
- Industry partnerships with technology companies.
- Development of immersive learning content.
- Project-based learning.
- Practical portfolio development.

Centre of Excellence Profile 3

Item	Description
Institution	Osun State Polytechnic, Iree
State	Osun
Geopolitical Zone	South-West
Proposed Hub Type	Gaming Hub

Institutional Context

The Centre is intended to develop competencies in gaming technologies, interactive content creation, digital storytelling, animation, and game entrepreneurship.

Infrastructure Context

Specialized computing infrastructure will support practical game design and development activities.

Local Implementation Considerations

Applicants should include strategies for:

- Game development bootcamps.
- Game jams and hackathons.
- Industry mentorship.
- Digital storytelling.
- Commercialization of gaming products.

Centre of Excellence Profile 4

Item	Description
Institution	Federal Polytechnic Ile-Oluji
State	Ondo
Geopolitical Zone	South-West
Proposed Hub Type	Digital Tech Hub

Institutional Context

The Centre is expected to deliver broad-based digital skills training while supporting entrepreneurship development across multiple digital disciplines.

Infrastructure Context

The institution has been identified for a standard Digital Innovation Hub supporting multidisciplinary programme delivery.

Local Implementation Considerations

The implementing ESO should establish strong regional partnerships with technology companies, MSMEs, and innovation ecosystem stakeholders to enhance beneficiary outcomes.

B. SOUTH-SOUTH CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

Centre of Excellence Profile 5

Item	Description
Institution	University of Uyo
State	Akwa Ibom
Geopolitical Zone	South-South
Proposed Hub Type	Gaming Hub

Institutional Context

The University of Uyo offers a strong academic environment capable of supporting advanced digital innovation programming. The proposed Centre should combine immersive technologies with game development and interactive digital solutions.

Local Implementation Considerations

The ESO should establish collaborations with technology firms and promote multidisciplinary innovation projects that integrate immersive technologies with entrepreneurship.

Centre of Excellence Profile 6

Item	Description
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Institution	Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osurau.
State	Akwa Ibom
Proposed Hub Type	Digital Tech Hub

Institutional Context

The Centre is expected to deliver broad-based digital skills training while supporting entrepreneurship development across multiple digital disciplines.

Infrastructure Context

The institution has been identified for a standard Digital Innovation Hub supporting multidisciplinary programme delivery.

Local Implementation Considerations

The Centre should emphasize practical content creation, digital design, immersive learning applications, and entrepreneurship within the creative economy.

[Centre of Excellence Profile 7](#)

Item	Description
Institution	Heritage Polytechnic Eket
State	Akwa Ibom
Proposed Hub Type	Digital Tech Hub

Institutional Context

The Centre is expected to deliver broad-based digital skills training while supporting entrepreneurship development across multiple digital disciplines.

Infrastructure Context

The institution has been identified for a standard Digital Innovation Hub supporting multidisciplinary programme delivery.

Local Implementation Considerations

Applicants should demonstrate strategies for strengthening entrepreneurship, business incubation, and regional ecosystem engagement.

[Centre of Excellence Profile 8](#)

Item	Description
Institution	Bayelsa State Polytechnic
State	Bayelsa
Proposed Hub Type	Digital Tech Hub

Institutional Context

The Centre is expected to deliver broad-based digital skills training while supporting entrepreneurship development across multiple digital disciplines.

Infrastructure Context

The institution has been identified for a standard Digital Innovation Hub supporting multidisciplinary programme delivery.

Local Implementation Considerations

The implementing ESO should leverage the creative economy to support enterprise development and youth employment.

Centre of Excellence Profile 9

Item	Description
Institution	Rivers State University
State	Rivers
Proposed Hub Type	Gaming Hub

Institutional Context

The Centre is intended to develop competencies in gaming technologies, interactive content creation, digital storytelling, animation, and game entrepreneurship.

Infrastructure Context

Specialized computing infrastructure will support practical game design and development activities.

Local Implementation Considerations

Implementation should prioritize advanced game development, industry engagement, commercialization, and startup incubation.

Centre of Excellence Profile 10

Item	Description
Institution	Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic
State	Rivers
Proposed Hub Type	Creative Hub

Institutional Context

The institution is well positioned to leverage its proximity, making it an ideal location for a Creative Hub focused on digital media, creative technologies, and innovation.

Infrastructure Context

The infrastructure assessment indicates that the institution is suitable for the establishment of a Creative Hub. The Centre is expected to be equipped with modern digital infrastructure to support practical skills development, innovation, and enterprise creation in the creative sector.

Local Implementation Considerations

The Centre should strengthen digital entrepreneurship while supporting practical skills development across creative industries.

Centre of Excellence Profile 11

Item	Description
Institution	University of Benin
State	Edo
Proposed Hub Type	Creative Hub

Institutional Context

The institution is well positioned to leverage its proximity, making it an ideal location for a Creative Hub focused on digital media, creative technologies, and innovation.

Infrastructure Context

The infrastructure assessment indicates that the institution is suitable for the establishment of a Creative Hub. The Centre is expected to be equipped with modern digital infrastructure to support practical skills development, innovation, and enterprise creation in the creative sector.

Local Implementation Considerations

Applicants should leverage the University's research capacity to promote innovation commercialization and startup development.

Centre of Excellence Profile 12

Item	Description
Institution	Auchi Polytechnic
State	Edo
Proposed Hub Type	VR Learning Centre

Institutional Context

Auchi Polytechnic has been identified as the proposed location for a Virtual Reality Learning Centre. The institution presents opportunities to develop competencies in immersive technologies, digital simulation, spatial content creation, and extended reality applications.

Infrastructure Context

The infrastructure assessment recommends the institution for specialized VR equipment and immersive learning facilities.

Local Implementation Considerations

Implementation should emphasize practical technical competencies and entrepreneurship.

Centre of Excellence Profile 13

Item	Description
Institution	Michael and Cecilia Ibru University
State	Delta
Proposed Hub Type	Gaming Hub

Institutional Context

The Centre is intended to develop competencies in gaming technologies, interactive content creation, digital storytelling, animation, and game entrepreneurship.

Infrastructure Context

Specialized computing infrastructure will support practical game design and development activities.

Local Implementation Considerations

Applicants should propose multidisciplinary programmes that integrate gaming, immersive technologies, entrepreneurship, and innovation.

Centre of Excellence Profile 14

Item	Description
Institution	Cross River State University of Technology
State	Cross River
Proposed Hub Type	VR Learning Centre

Institutional Context

Cross River State University of Technology has been identified as the proposed location for a Virtual Reality Learning Centre. The institution presents opportunities to develop competencies in immersive technologies, digital simulation, spatial content creation, and extended reality applications.

Infrastructure Context

The infrastructure assessment recommends the institution for specialized VR equipment and immersive learning facilities.

Local Implementation Considerations

The Centre should strengthen regional innovation capacity while supporting entrepreneurship development.

Centre of Excellence Profile 15

Item	Description
Institution	Federal Polytechnic Ugep

State	Cross River
Proposed Hub Type	Digital Tech Hub

Institutional Context

The Centre is expected to deliver broad-based digital skills training while supporting entrepreneurship development across multiple digital disciplines.

Infrastructure Context

The institution has been identified for a standard Digital Innovation Hub supporting multidisciplinary programme delivery.

Local Implementation Considerations

The ESO should prioritize inclusive beneficiary recruitment, ecosystem engagement, and enterprise development.

13.2 Common Expectations Across All Centres of Excellence

While each Centre has a unique thematic focus, all selected ESOs will be expected to deliver a consistent minimum programme offering across the fifteen (15) Centres of Excellence. Each Centre should function as an integrated innovation ecosystem that supports beneficiaries beyond classroom instruction.

At a minimum, every Centre shall provide:

Programme Component	Minimum Requirement
Technical Skills Training	Mandatory
Entrepreneurship Training	Mandatory
Business Incubation	Mandatory
Business Advisory	Mandatory
Structured Mentorship	Mandatory
Networking Events	Continuous throughout implementation
Hackathons	Two (2) annually
Job Fairs	One (1) per programme session
Industry Engagement	Ongoing
Investment Readiness Support	Mandatory
Startup Showcases / Demo Days	At key programme milestones
Monitoring & Evaluation	Continuous
Alumni Engagement	Mandatory

Note: ESOs are encouraged to propose additional value-added activities that align with the Centre's specialization and local ecosystem needs, provided they are consistent with the programme objectives and implementation framework.

14. Programme Components

Sections 14.1 to 14.7 set out the operational detail an ESO needs to plan curricula, staffing, incubation, mentorship, innovation events, partnerships, and sustainability deliverables consistently across all fifteen (15) Centres of Excellence.

14.1 Curriculum Framework by Hub Type

Every Centre delivers three progressive tiers, regardless of hub focus:

Tier	Share of Intake	Duration	Courses
Foundation	60%	4 weeks	4 courses
Intermediate	30%	8 weeks	3 courses
Advanced	10%	12 weeks	3 courses

Minimum split per session per school (250 beneficiaries): Foundation 150, Intermediate 75, Advanced 25, with at least 40% female participation across all streams.

Note: For all specialized Centres (VR Learning Centre, Gaming Hub, Creative Hub), the Foundation and Intermediate tiers are built on the same core digital and employability skill set as the Regular/Digital Tech Hub curriculum. Specialization is concentrated in the Advanced tier. This ensures every beneficiary builds a common digital-literacy base before progressing into hub-specific advanced training, and allows beneficiaries who do not proceed to the Advanced tier to still leave with transferable digital skills.

ESOs are welcome to propose additional or alternative courses that fit the programme objectives, provided the tier structure, share of intake, and digital-skills grounding described above are maintained. Given the programme runs for 36 months across multiple cohorts, curricula may be refreshed between sessions to keep pace with industry and technology changes, subject to AfriLabs/PCU sign-off.

VR Learning Centre

Foundation:

- Content Creation / Social Media
- Data Entry & Records
- AI Tools for Productivity
- Design, Computational Thinking & Coding

Intermediate:

- 3D Modelling & Spatial Content
- VR Development Fundamentals
- Immersive Learning & 360° Media

Advanced:

- Advanced VR & Digital-Twin
- XR Interaction & Multi-User
- VR Learning Systems & Accessibility

Gaming Hub

Foundation:

- Customer Service / Call Centre
- Data Entry & Records
- Entrepreneurship & Business
- Intro to Gaming
- Intro to Streaming

Intermediate:

- Game Design & Prototyping
- Unity & Unreal Development
- Game Art, Animation & Audio

Advanced:

- Advanced Programming, AI & Multiplayer
- Serious Games & Gamification
- Publishing, Esports & Monetization
- 3D Asset Creation & VFX

Creative Hub

Foundation:

- Data Entry & Records
- Social Media / Content Creation
- Intro to Graphic Design
- Photography / Videography

Intermediate:

- Intro to Data Analysis
- Animation & Motion Graphics
- Intro to Music Production

Advanced:

- Digital Marketing
- Film Making
- Advanced Music Production
- New Media Journalism

Regular / Digital Tech Hub

Foundation:

- Customer Service / Virtual Assistants
- Data Entry & Records
- Content Creation / Storytelling
- Entrepreneurship Fundamentals

Intermediate:

- Intro to Data Analysis
- Graphic Design
- AI Tools for Business
- Frontend Web Development

Advanced:

- Digital Marketing
- Cybersecurity & Data Protection
- Backend Web Development

Expected outputs, software, and portfolio requirements (e.g. a completed VR scene for VR Learning Centre Advanced, a playable prototype for Gaming Hub Advanced, a portfolio reel for Creative Hub Advanced, a deployed web application for Digital Tech Hub Advanced) should be defined by each ESO in its work plan and agreed with AfriLabs/PCU prior to session launch.

14.2 Staffing Assumptions

For planning and budgeting purposes, each Centre is expected to maintain, at minimum, the following core team:

Role	Minimum Number
Centre Manager	1
Training Coordinator	1
MEL Officer	1
Community / Ecosystem Officer	1
Administrative Assistant	1
Facilitators / Trainers	As required by curriculum load (see ratios below)

Proposed minimum ratios:

- Facilitator-to-beneficiary ratio: not more than 1:25 per active class
- Mentor-to-beneficiary ratio: not more than 1:10 for incubation-stage participants
- MEL Officer coverage: 1 per Centre, supporting all three learning streams

14.3 Incubation Model

- Duration: minimum 3 months per incubation cohort, aligned to programme sessions
- Eligibility: beneficiaries who have completed the Intermediate stream and have a validated business idea or existing MSME
- Curriculum: business model validation, financial management, legal/formalization, product development, investment readiness
- Support package: co-working/studio access, mentorship, advisory clinics, and pathways to Demo Day and investor introductions
- Mentor structure: each incubatee assigned a primary business mentor, supplemented by rotating technical/industry mentors
- Exit criteria: completion of a business plan or MVP, and a graduation pitch at a Demo Day or Centre showcase

14.4 Mentorship Framework

- Mentor-to-beneficiary ratio: not more than 1:10 (incubation stage); group mentorship models may be used for Foundation/Intermediate participants
- Frequency: at least one structured mentorship session per beneficiary per month, more frequently during incubation
- Duration: mentorship relationships should run for the length of the beneficiary's active session, with continued light-touch support into alumni engagement
- Mentor qualifications: relevant industry or entrepreneurship experience, vetted by the ESO and reported to AfriLabs
- Mentor reporting: ESOs should maintain a simple mentorship log (sessions held, topics covered, follow-up actions) as part of MEL evidence

14.5 Innovation Programming Guidance

Activity	Minimum Frequency	Key Parameters
Hackathons	Two (2) per year	Open to Centre beneficiaries and wider ecosystem; typically, 24–48 hours; judged by a mixed panel of ESO, industry, and academic representatives; prizes/recognition at ESO discretion; outputs documented (prototypes, teams formed)
Demo Days	At key programme milestones (minimum once per session)	Combines investor pitch, exhibition, and graduation elements; showcases incubation and Advanced-tier outputs
Networking Events	Continuous / at least quarterly	Connects beneficiaries with industry, alumni, and investors; can be combined with masterclasses or showcase events
Job Fairs	One (1) per programme session	Brings employer and internship partners on-site or virtually; tracked for placement outcomes

14.6 Partnership Expectations

To ensure comparable proposals, each ESO should target, at minimum (final targets to be confirmed with AfriLabs during proposal review):

- At least 10 active mentors drawn from industry and entrepreneurship networks
- At least 5 industry/employer partners for job fairs, internships, and curriculum input
- At least 2 investor or funding-access partnerships to support incubatees
- Formal engagement with the host institution's existing entrepreneurship/innovation structures, where these exist

14.7 Sustainability Deliverables

By project close, every Centre should have in place:

- A documented governance structure for the Centre post-project
- A sustainability/revenue strategy (e.g. paid short courses, facility rental, corporate training, consultancy)
- A signed institutional MoU or equivalent agreement covering continued use of the Centre
- A transition plan naming the institutional owner and staffing arrangement after ESO exit

15. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

This section sets out the minimum reporting cadence, tools, and evidence ESOs are expected to maintain. It complements the programme-level M&E framework being finalized with AfriLabs' M&E lead.

15.1 Reporting Requirements

Report	Frequency	Submitted To
Activity/Progress Report	Monthly	AfriLabs Programmes Team
Financial Report	Quarterly	AfriLabs Programmes/Finance
MEL Data Upload (beneficiary, session, KPI data)	Monthly	AfriLabs MEL system/dashboard
Session/Cohort Completion Report	At the end of each programme session	AfriLabs Programmes Team
Annual Report	Annually	AfriLabs / iDICE PCU

15.2 MEL Tools and Evidence

- Standard templates to be issued by AfriLabs for beneficiary registration, attendance, mentorship logs, and outcome tracking
- A shared MEL dashboard/database for real-time tracking of beneficiary numbers, gender split, and stream progression
- Evidence requirements: session attendance sheets, mentor logs, before/after skills assessments, and outcome surveys (employment, enterprise creation) at defined checkpoints
- Data collection tools should protect beneficiary privacy while still allowing AfriLabs to cross-reference records (e.g. needs assessment responses) against registration data where required

16. Key Performance Indicators

The table below sets out the KPI categories every Centre will be measured against. Numeric targets marked “TBC” are being finalized as part of the programme-level M&E framework and will be confirmed by AfriLabs/PCU.

KPI	Target
Beneficiaries trained per Centre (36 months)	South-West: ~2,500 · South-South: ~2,273
Female participation	≥ 40% across all streams
Foundation / Intermediate / Advanced split	60% / 30% / 10%
Businesses created	TBC
Businesses formalized	TBC
Jobs created (direct and indirect)	TBC
Internships secured	TBC
Startups incubated	TBC
Investment raised by incubatees	TBC
Hackathons delivered	2 per year
Job Fairs delivered	1 per programme session
Alumni actively engaged post-programme	TBC

17. Budget Planning Assumptions

This section describes the cost categories ESOs should plan for.

Budget Line	Included	Excluded (see Section 8: Infrastructure and Facility Responsibilities)
Staffing	Centre Manager, Training Coordinator, MEL Officer, Community Officer, Administrative Assistant salaries/stipends	—
Facilitation	Facilitator/trainer fees at per contact hour	—
Mentorship	Mentor honoraria/stipends where applicable	—
Training Consumables	Software licences, learning materials, printing, minor consumables	Capital equipment, studio build-out, furniture
Events	Hackathons, Demo Days, Networking Events, Job Fairs (venue support, refreshments, judging, prizes)	—
Travel	Local travel for facilitators/mentors/staff	—

18. Proposal Development Guidance

Applicants should ensure their Concept Note addresses each of the following, consistent with the assumptions set out in this Guide:

- A workplan mapped to the 36-month, eight-session delivery framework (Section 10)
- A staffing plan consistent with the minimum team and ratios in Section 14.2
- A curriculum plan by tier and hub focus consistent with Section 14.1, noting any proposed additional courses
- An indicative budget consistent with the cost categories in Section 17, excluding capital infrastructure costs
- A mentorship and incubation plan consistent with Sections 14.3 and 14.4
- A partnership plan addressing the minimum expectations in Section 14.6
- A sustainability approach addressing the deliverables in Section 14.7
- An outline risk register (see Appendix, Section 19.1)

Concept Notes should be internally consistent: figures used in the workplan, staffing plan, and budget should match. Where an applicant proposes to exceed the minimum standards in this Guide (e.g. additional partnerships, additional courses), this should be clearly flagged as a value-added proposal rather than a baseline requirement.

19. Appendices

19.1 Risk Register Template

ESOs should maintain a risk register covering, at minimum, the following categories. Likelihood, impact, and mitigation columns should be completed and updated by each ESO for its own context.

Risk Category	Example Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation (ESO to complete)
Institutional	Student strikes / academic calendar disruption			
Infrastructure	Internet or power failure at the Centre			
Recruitment	Low beneficiary recruitment or high dropout			

Political/Security	Political disruption or security incident affecting access			
Operational	Equipment failure or delayed procurement			
Staffing	Key staff or facilitator turnover			

19.2 Governance and Escalation Overview

Programme governance operates across five levels, each with a defined escalation pathway:

- AfriLabs (Lead Aggregator) — overall coordination, ESO support, and reporting to the iDICE PCU
- Host Institution — provision of infrastructure and institutional support, per Section 8
- ESO — day-to-day Centre management, delivery, staffing, and first-line issue resolution
- Centre Manager / State Project Officer — on-the-ground coordination and first point of escalation for operational issues

Issues should be escalated up this chain when they cannot be resolved at the level at which they arise; AfriLabs recommends escalating as a programme risk after two unsuccessful attempts at resolution, rather than allowing issues to persist unaddressed.

19.3 Year-by-Year Deliverables Checklist

Year	Expected Deliverables
Year One	Recruitment completed for Sessions 1–2; Centre operational; core staffing in place; 2 programme sessions completed; ecosystem activation begun; MEL baseline established
Year Two	Sessions 3–6 delivered; incubation cohorts running; hackathons and job fairs delivered per Section 14.5; partnership targets met (Section 14.6); quarterly reports submitted on schedule
Year Three	Sessions 7–8 delivered; final Demo Day(s) held; sustainability deliverables in place (Section 14.7); transition plan agreed with host institution; final reporting and evaluation completed