

Partnerships and Coordination in CET

As already highlighted in the section on developing institutions, one way of addressing the multiple challenges that will confront the CET sector in the immediate and intermediate or even long term during their establishment is through partnerships. The types of partnerships that can be pursued are also mapped out in the aforementioned section. A useful way of considering the partnerships that can be entered into by colleges and other entities is to think about the college process flow from recruitment to articulation. This should then be followed by an evaluation of whether partnership would be beneficial in improving the performance of the college in each of its functional areas, particularly where there are resource or capacity constraints. The key process areas where partnerships may be required are mapped below.

Partnership Focus	Possibilities
Marketing and advertising	As a new institution, colleges would need to be advertised to raise awareness and promote enrolment. This may entail: • Local radio stations can be vital in spreading the word about colleges • Community development workers can be a good source for a college recruitment drive and are potentially very good partners • Some departments running national development projects focused at employment creation and redress can be partnered with to help raise awareness of colleges on their own programmes, so that the education and skills component of those projects is linked to community colleges. So when people apply for EPWP projects for example, they would also get information on colleges in their area where they can access education and training.
Infrastructure	• Donation of land or buildings by a municipality • Offer to have the college rent lecture space at favourable rates • The college renting out its own space to other education and training entities • Rehabilitation of college infrastructure e.g. painting and repairs • Addressing a key need e.g. an institution focusing on disability issues assisting with finance for ramps or equipment to improve learning for students with disabilities
Programme delivery	Partnerships with NGOs, SDPs and other organisations to deliver skills programmes and community programmes
Lecturer development	• Universities can play a role in lecturer development so accredited formal programmes would be their domain • Other organisations could provide non-formal professional development programmes • Partnerships could be for financing the professional development of lecturers
Articulation	• Partnerships with TVET colleges to allow progression into that sector • Partnerships with employment preparation and placement agents to allow articulation into the world of work

Partnership Focus	Possibilities
Research and evaluation	• Research organisations to conduct research on the CET sector • Funders who can fund large or small scale research and evaluation on the sector
Student Support Services	• NGOs who offer sport as an outlet and developmental tool • Organisations that offer Study skills • Organisations that focus on spiritual and psychological wellness

Roles and responsibilities in the operationalisation of partnerships

The three spheres of influence for the operationalisation of partnerships are the DHET at National level, community colleges in their respective regions, and potential partners including NGOs, NPOs and SDPs in the community.

DHET's roles and responsibilities

The DHET is responsible for developing the partnership strategy that sets the parameters and rules of engagement on partnerships, as well as driving interdepartmental and intradepartmental partnership. The CET Branch's coordination is needed at this level to avoid an uncontrolled influx of negotiations between colleges and national departments. If colleges were to negotiate partnerships with national departments themselves, this could also lead to competition for resources. In this regard, it would be better if the CET Branch negotiated and distributed resources from these negotiations to the colleges accordingly, based on which college is best positioned (in terms of capabilities and infrastructure) to successfully execute the agreements of the partnerships. It is important that the Branch does not lose sight of the mandate when negotiating these partnerships. If there is money to support agricultural activity for example, the colleges' role would be skills, and not anything else to do with the broader project and the funds for other aspects of that project.

Roles and responsibilities of colleges and other providers and entities

Colleges can negotiate partnerships at local level, including with the municipalities and other providers in the community. While colleges would approach other providers or entities based on their need, they should also be open to reviewing proposals from these providers/entities if approached for partnership.

Assessing the need for partnerships

An assessment of whether a partnership is needed or not is a critical aspect of partnerships. Partnerships are intended to achieve what a college cannot achieve on its own. It may not always be the case that all colleges need partnerships so they should not be regarded as a requirement for all colleges. All partnerships entered into should clearly specify their purpose. In assessing whether a partnership is needed or not, colleges must also assess

whether they have the capabilities to support the kind of partnership that they are seeking. For example, if the college wants to get into a partnership for training 10 000 EPWP beneficiaries in one year, there has to be an assessment of whether the college has the appropriate skills among its staff to deliver the required programmes; if it has the space for such big numbers and if not, if alternative adequate space can be sourced, and whether the college can continue delivering its core programmes effectively and not compromise quality because of this partnership which may have attractive financial incentives for the college. Any partnership entered into should not threaten the sustainability of core business for the colleges.

Criteria for approval of partnerships

Colleges must be aware of the potential for abuse through partnerships and although this may not always be water tight, problems can be reduced by ensuring that criteria are put in place to curb corruption and nepotism. The following criteria may be considered in the selection and approval of partners:

- a. Do the services/goods offered by the potential partner support the vision and mission and core mandate of the college?
- b. Is the partner of a reputable standing in the proposed area of partnership? Are they one of the best in the field in their area of proposed partnership?
- c. Is the potential partner free to enter into a legally binding contract with the college?
- d. Is the partner financially sound? Is the partner willing to go through a due diligence process should this be required?
- e. For programme delivery, does the partner have experience in delivering the programme at the scale they are being required to provide?
- f. If the college has space constraints, for programme delivery, does the partner have appropriate access to resources (physical and staffing) to deliver the programme?
- g. Does the partner have an acceptable record of partnership with other institutions?
- h. Does the partner have robust quality management procedures?
- i. Has the partner been subject to any allegations or convictions for fraud, bribery or corruption?
- j. Is there a reputational risk associated with the partnership (for example, the partner's business and ethical interests, the risk of being unable to deliver the project)?

Discussion

What should colleges and the CET Branch do to systematise partnerships into the system?
Proposals for TT to debate

1. Colleges should do a SWOT analysis as part of their strategic plans to determine the areas where they can partner with other entities and provide programmes; and areas where they can seek services and goods from other

2. The CET Branch should do some mapping of national programmes where CET can play a role in skills provision to improve programme outcome
3. Each college must develop criteria for vetting partner credentials in the area in which the partnership is being sourced. Review the criteria proposed below.
4. The CET branch must develop a generic MoU that can be adapted by colleges depending on their partnership needs.
5. What work should be done for the plan on partnerships? By who?