

Teaching Innovation Lab (TIL) — EOI Information Session FAQ

Summary of applicant questions and Elimu-Soko responses from the virtual information session (22 Jan 2026).

Note: This FAQ is a summary for convenience. Applicants should follow the requirements and dates in the official EOI invitation and application materials.

ELIGIBILITY & PARTNERSHIPS

Q: Who can submit an EOI? Do we need to be an Africa-based organization?

A: Individual organizations and consortia are welcome. Applicants do not need to be Africa-based but should demonstrate strong local context and a feasible pathway to delivery in a priority country.

Q: Can private sector / EdTech companies apply?

A: Yes—private sector applicants are welcome if the solution is practical in low-connectivity settings and can be sustained and scaled through government systems.

Q: Are universities and other government-affiliated organizations eligible?

A: Yes—universities and affiliated organizations can apply, but should clearly state how they will work with the relevant Ministry of Education or education agency to implement and scale.

Q: What do you mean by a ‘large implementer’—is there a minimum size requirement?

A: ‘Large’ is not a criterion; it is a common characteristic of organizations that already hold strong government relationships (often with several years of in-country work and prior collaborations).

Q: Can we submit more than one EOI (e.g., different innovations, themes, or countries)?

A: Yes—if you have distinct innovations or distinct country contexts, you may submit multiple EOIs as separate submissions.

Q: How should consortia be structured?

A: Identify one lead applicant and clearly describe complementary partners and roles (e.g., solution/innovation, implementation, government engagement).

Q: If multiple implementers want to partner with the same innovator, can the innovator submit with more than one partner?

A: Yes—this is possible, but it should be submitted as separate EOIs where the country and/or context differs.

Q: Do we need to partner with a specific named organization (e.g., an approach originator) to use a known model?

A: Partnership is not required unless it fills a technical or relationship gap—however, applicants should be mindful of any intellectual property and ensure they have permission if required.

Q: Is there a platform/matching mechanism where organizations looking for partners could go?

A: Elimu-Soko can help with that. Email: info@elimu-soko.org

Q: Can one organization submit more than one EOI?

A: Yes.

Q: Must submission be done via an organization or can an individual also submit?

A: Individuals are welcome to apply, but they should meet all the criteria.

Q: I have an existing idea but no organizational support. Can I be supported?

A: We suggest partnering with an organization already implementing programs in the country and submitting a joint application.

Q: Do partnerships with regional African inter-governmental organizations qualify?

A: Yes, they qualify but the innovation must take place in specific countries and letters of support from those countries will be required during the proposal stage.

Q: If we don't have a strong government partnership but have a strong partnership with an organization that does, can we leverage that?

A: Absolutely

THEME FIT & WHAT QUALIFIES

Q: How should we choose the right theme (innovation window) for our EOI?

A: Choose the theme that best matches your primary mechanism of change (teacher tool, peer learning routine, data-to-action workflow, or positive deviance identification and diffusion).

Q: Can one EOI cover multiple themes?

A: Yes—cross-cutting proposals are acceptable, but the EOI should clearly state the primary hypothesis and how the innovation works in practice.

Q: What counts as an 'innovation' under TIL—does it have to be digital?

A: No—innovations can be tools, routines, workflows, or delivery models; low-tech solutions are welcome if they are structured, practical, and scalable.

Q: Will concept-stage ideas be considered, or do we need an MVP / prior deployment?

A: Concept-stage innovations are likely to be deprioritized; stronger EOIs usually describe solutions that have been developed and/or deployed elsewhere, or are well-supported by evidence and plausibility.

Q: Can we build on an existing government program or should it be a stand-alone pilot?

A: Pilots can be embedded within an existing government program; if layering onto an existing pilot, applicants should ensure evaluation can attribute the contribution of the TIL-supported innovation.

Q: If a pilot has already started but we want to scale it up, does that qualify?

A: Yes, it qualifies.

Q: We're starting pilots including one in a listed country, adding one country per year. Should we submit for current activities or future countries?

A: We are indifferent between scale-up within a country or expansion to a new country. In the EOI stage, provide basic details on both options; we'll give more guidance before the proposal stage.

Q: If our organization agreed to work with a teacher training school to develop a literacy module that hasn't been developed yet, would that not qualify?

A: Correct. We are looking for concepts that already have some level of past results/proof points.

Q: Can an organization submit an EOI for an innovation that hasn't been tried before but wants to pilot?

A: We do want to see some evidence of the innovation's effectiveness. Rather than applying to this funding window, contact us separately at info@elimu-soko.org.

Q: What is the age/grade range for initiatives?

A: The main focus of the Lab is early primary grades (grades 1-4).

Q: Is there scope for pre-primary?

A: Pre-primary is out-of-scope, but programs that include both pre-primary and primary would be fine.

Q: Are teachers the only targets? What about librarians and other school communities?

A: Unfortunately, the funding available is for teachers only. We welcome a separate conversation about other parts of the education sector outside this call.

GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

Q: Do we need an existing government relationship to apply?

A: Applicants should either have an existing relationship or a clear, feasible plan to establish one—being explicit about your current status is important.

Q: What qualifies as evidence of a government relationship at EOI stage?

A: A brief description is sufficient at EOI stage (e.g., named focal point, prior collaboration, ongoing engagement, or existing MoU—attachments are not required).

Q: Does a partnership with local government (e.g., district/local authority) count even if they are not funding the work?

A: Yes—an implementation partnership with a government entity can qualify; applicants should also explain the intended pathway to transition the innovation into government systems.

Q: Can we implement in a country where we are not currently based?

A: Yes—this is not a negative; the key is demonstrating specific understanding of the problem and feasible government engagement in the chosen priority country.

Q: Would a letter of intent from government help?

A: A letter can help at the full proposal stage, but it is not required for the EOI—EOIs should simply articulate where you are with government engagement.

COSTS, AFFORDABILITY & VALUE FOR MONEY

Q: What is the typical pilot duration and maximum award size?

A: Pilots are expected to run for approximately 6–12 months, with an award cap of up to US\$150,000 for the pilot.

Q: Do we need a detailed budget in the EOI?

A: No—EOIs should provide a qualitative affordability narrative (and, where helpful, a high-level breakdown); detailed costing is expected at full proposal stage.

Q: What does TIL mean by ‘affordable at scale’?

A: Applicants should explain how the solution could transition from externally supported delivery during the pilot to ongoing delivery within government resource constraints.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Q: Do we need rigorous evaluation evidence (e.g., an RCT) of our specific solution to apply?

A: No—EOIs can cite prior results from your solution or credible evidence from literature for the broader approach; the key is a plausible pathway to improving teacher practice and learning outcomes.

Q: Can evidence come from other geographies (e.g., India) if we want to pilot in Africa?

A: Yes—evidence from other geographies is acceptable, so long as the context is comparable; applicants should briefly note any important contextual differences and why the approach should transfer.

Q: Can published research evidence substitute for having tested the exact tool ourselves?

A: Yes—EOIs may cite relevant research or documented results from similar approaches; you should connect that evidence to your proposed hypothesis and design.

Q: What outcomes will TIL look to measure if selected?

A: Pilots are expected to track changes in teacher practice, student learning outcomes, and implementation fidelity (baseline and endline, with appropriate monitoring in between).

OTHER

Q: Will there be feedback on EOIs before full proposals are requested?

A: Yes—EOIs will receive written feedback, and shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal.

Q: Is it required to specify a sub-national region (state/province) at EOI stage?

A: No—sub-national specificity is encouraged and can strengthen contextual fit, but it is not required at EOI stage.

Q: How and where do we submit the EOI?

A: Submit your EOI as instructed in the official invitation (single PDF submission to the published email address by the stated deadline).

Q: How do you anticipate integrating A/B testing in proposals? Should this be included?

A: Not required for EOI stage. At the proposal stage, this should be included.

Q: Can you explain more about the A/B testing requirement?

A: Further guidance will be provided at full proposal stage

Q: Can you give an overview of the number of pilot cohorts and approximate deployment dates?

A: We anticipate selecting a first cohort of pilots by the end of Q1 2026. If funding remains, we might explore a second cohort in Q2 2026.

Q: Should I do a detailed cost breakdown in the EOI?

A: No, only a brief description of sustainability considerations should be included in the EOI – we will provide guidance for cost narratives at the full proposal stage

Q: Will Elimu-Soko cover any overhead or staff costs?

A: Yes. You should aim to provide implementation cost breakdowns in the full proposal stage – justifiable line items will be included within the stated budget cap.

Q: Are the slides available?

A: Session slides may be uploaded to the Elimu-Soko website for further reference ahead of EOI deadline

Q: Where do we submit the EOIs?

A: Please refer to the official EOI invitation on the Elimu-Soko website for submission instructions