

## **Entrepreneurship & Innovation in Higher Education** *Becoming an Innovative & Entrepreneurial Institution*

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### **Introduction**

Nigeria is in a unique position. With a fast-growing youthful population, sizeable infrastructure deficit, large scale unemployment, a de-industrialized economy that is dependent on the export of primary commodities, there has never been a greater need to prioritize the role of knowledge for catalyzing development opportunities than what exists today.

Higher Education Institutions, as centres for knowledge creation, are faced with the challenge of organizing the translation of knowledge into usable products and services which will address challenges and benefit society. And the challenges abound; from poverty and rampant unemployment, infections and diseases, effects of climate change, food insecurity, malnutrition, conflicts and others. While institutions are increasingly directing attention at conducting research to address some of these problems, such efforts are not yet resulting in tangible solutions, owing to the disconnect between universities and business organizations who are responsible for facilitating the 'last mile' of diffusing the resulting products and services into the market for the benefit of society. HEIs are also largely disconnected from regional and national economies, and as such, are not having much impact on economic activities, as they should, through enterprise and entrepreneurship development initiatives. The Entrepreneurship & Innovation in Higher Education Programme is designed to address these challenges.

### **The EIHE Programme**

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The EIHE is a capstone initiative designed to help institutions increase their impact on regional and national economies, by developing and deploying strategies which produce entrepreneurial skills, increases the number of new business ventures, supports the growth of existing businesses, fosters effective university-industry partnerships and enables commercialization of research outcomes. Whereas many institutions seek to achieve more impact, the know-how to deliver has been a major constraint. EIHE seeks to plug the identified gaps in know-how through strategic capacity building and provision of extensive support. The importance of human capital in fostering linkages, building partnerships and ensuring research is focused on achieving tangible problem-solving outcomes, has continued to be emphasized over the years.

It is vital that institution leaders take a holistic perspective, hence our proposal for a **Whole-of-Institution-Approach**. This requires that a decent number of university leaders participate in the EIHE Programme.

### **Capacity Development Programme**

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12 selected universities will nominate a multi-disciplinary team of 10 participants each, comprising members of university management (e.g., VC, DVC, tenured professors, Deans/HODs of research-intensive faculties/departments, Directors of Entrepreneurship, R&D, Linkages, Centres of Excellence) to undertake a capacity

development programme comprising of four modules. Participants from each institution will take part in a group exercise after each module, to produce a draft action plan. Upon completion of the four modules, the drafts will be synthesized and an overarching institution strategy and global action plan for innovation and entrepreneurship development prepared and submitted to TETFUND.

The course will be delivered in modular learning format. Each module builds on the previous one, extends learning and both contributes to developing a holistic understanding at the leadership levels of participating institutions.

We recognize the difficulty of having 10 senior officers leave the institution at the same time for a training programme and the possibility of scheduling challenges owing to competing demands for the time of busy leaders. Therefore, we will run two consecutive streams of each module, which enables each institution to distribute attendance of officers over the two streams.

## **Project Outcomes**

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- Enhanced capacity of university administrators to lead innovation
- Development of Entrepreneurship & Innovation implementation strategy, with clear impact indicators
- Development of a monitoring and evaluation framework for entrepreneurship & innovation

## ***EIHE Modules***

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### **Module 1 (March 20-24, 2023)**

**Innovation & Enterprise Development** - An understanding of innovation and enterprise development is critical for university leaders who wish to transform their universities and leverage knowledge capabilities. However, innovation is a much-misunderstood concept, and its close linkage to entrepreneurship development is not fully appreciated. This course aims to address the lack of understanding and position innovation and enterprise development as the foundation to transition the institution into its role as a catalyst for regional and national economic development. This module will introduce a framework for implementing an entrepreneurship and innovation strategy at institutional levels. The other courses in the programme will build on the foundation laid by the innovation and enterprise development course.

*Topics:*

- Framework for innovation & enterprise development in HEIs
- Managing the entrepreneurship education and enterprise development function
- Leveraging technology to teach entrepreneurship and 21<sup>st</sup> Century work skills
- Understanding the digital economy, and establishing innovation or technology hubs
- Incubating and Accelerating Startups
- Academic Entrepreneurship
- Understanding how startup funding works and working with startup funders (angel investors, venture capital and private equity)

## **Module 2 (tbc)**

**Developing and managing university-industry collaboration** - University Industry Collaboration is the engine which leads to knowledge societies and economies. It can enhance productivity, unlock new economic opportunities and address social problems and challenges, such as high levels of youth unemployment. UBC helps to create a more connected and functioning relationship between government, business and HEIs. HEI leaders often misunderstand the concept of university-industry engagement as '*patent registration and licensing of research*'. This view significantly reduces the context for the engagement. University-Industry engagement should not be seen as a transactional activity, it is one based on holistic and comprehensive relationships.

### *Topics:*

- Understanding the university-industry cooperation framework
- Human and institutional capital requirements for executing university-industry linkages
- Mechanisms for facilitating and executing university-industry linkages
- Identifying hindrances and drivers of interaction
- Developing the institution's industry engagement strategy

## **Module 3 (tbc)**

**Technology Transfer & Commercialization** - There is a gradual shift towards knowledge-based economies, research has become a key driver in economic performance. This requires that attention is paid to the management of technology commercialization processes, to ensure universities can extract value in the form of technologies and innovations. Latecomer economies such as Nigeria will have to take concrete measures to foster the development and transfer of new technologies, or the adaptation of existing technologies, in order to deploy solutions to challenges in the society, such as health provision, sanitation, agricultural productivity and food security amongst others. Researchers have been working on finding solutions to these problems in the society, but commercialization of scientific research continue to be a problem. Many believe the problem is a lack of willingness on the part of potential partners (businesses and entrepreneurs, venture capitalists) to engage. However, the real problem lies in the transfer and partnering process. The second problem is the possibility of differing priorities of universities and the partners in the commercialization process. Coupled with the differences in organizational cultures between universities and business enterprises, the result has been an inability to engage productively in partnerships, thereby limiting the potential for commercialization of research output.

### *Topics:*

- Understanding the technology transfer & commercialization process
- Human and institutional requirements for undertaking technology transfer & commercialization
- Establishing and managing the Technology Transfer Office (TTO)
- Technology licensing or spinoffs/spinouts

- Establishing Science & Technology, Knowledge, Agro-processing and Industrial Parks

#### **Module 4 (tbc)**

**Local Economic Development** – Every state in Nigeria has some geographical or physical endowments that can be tapped to create employment and generate or increase the level of economic activities. Often such endowments are not properly utilized. Most states in Nigeria are referred to as ‘civil-service states’, largely because of the paucity of employment opportunities and economic activities outside the scope of those offered by the presence of government, which is inadequate. This has led to rampant poverty in most localities and states, and a resultant exodus of people of working age to urban areas in search of economic opportunities. However, the presence of tertiary institutions in such localities should be an enabler to stimulating economic activities and catalyzing local and regional economic development. But most institutions appear to be insulated and isolated from their immediate environments. The concept of Local Economic Development offers a powerful tool for institutions to engage with the community around them, and thereby catalyze the needed economic development which will lead to wealth creation and employment generation in the local economy, weaning them off dependence on dwindling public resources. The focus of this course is to equip leaders of higher education institutions with the tools and frameworks of Local Economic Development, to enable them create and manage multi-stakeholder engagements to stimulate economic activities, tap into available natural resources and endowments, attract investments and catalyse growth in the local economy around the institution. This aligns with the third mandate of higher education institutions; that of community engagement (after teaching & learning, research & development)

#### *Topics:*

- The concept of Local Economic Development (LED)
- Locality development & growing local economies
- Cluster Development & Value Chains
- Role of small businesses in the local economy
- Creating synergies between policies and stakeholders
- Working with stakeholders: government, donor agencies, multilateral organizations, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations and cooperatives

#### **Post-training outcomes**

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At the end of the four modules, the participating institutions are expected to prepare and submit institutional multi-year strategic plans for entrepreneurship and innovation (demonstrating a clear understanding of the nexus between entrepreneurship and innovation within the context of 21<sup>st</sup> century higher education, which will spell out how the institutions will develop and implement initiatives such as innovation hubs, industrial parks, and other programmes to enhance each institution's capability to

foster economic development in their localities. They should also identify and deploy qualified staff to coordinate the following functions:

- (a) university-industry collaboration
- (b) technology transfer and commercialization
- (c) local economic development

Such staff will form the first cohort of cadre of university staff to become professional practitioners in the fields of university-industry collaboration, technology transfer and local economic development, and will be supported to build networks for continuous professional development (CPD), as is the norm in other countries. This will facilitate sustainability and continuous expansion of the provision of such services which will be diffused throughout the university system within several years.

### **Programme Management**

Cognity Advisory, an Africa focused development consulting practice, has been engaged to manage the Entrepreneurship & Innovation in Higher Education programme. Cognity Advisory will be working with delivery partners, including the underlisted:

- University of Turku, Finland (one of the leading entrepreneurial universities in Europe)
- Technology Transfer Innovation Limited (A U.K based company led by Tom Hockaday, pioneer Managing Director of the University of Oxford Technology Transfer Office and author of a book about Technology Transfer)