

NATIONAL POLICY & GUIDELINES FOR THE DIASPORA-BRIDGE

Federal Ministry of Education • Federal Republic of Nigeria



Approved By:	The Federal Minister of Education, July 2026
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1. Purpose of the Policy

This policy outlines the key principles and guidelines governing the implementation of the Diaspora-BRIDGE program. It describes the comprehensive responsibilities of the Federal Ministry of Education, the BRIDGE Secretariat, the global diaspora experts, Nigerian experts and Nigerian tertiary institutions. Furthermore, it provides clear, optimized mechanisms for scaling the program and simplifies communication channels to guarantee optimal operational experience and high-quality output for all parties involved.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the following target demographics and entities:

- National and Global Diaspora Experts specialized in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Medicine, and Allied Health Sciences (STEMM).
- Vetted diasporans who successfully qualify as Nigeria Diaspora Bridge Fellows (**NDBF**).
- Participating Tertiary Education Institutions in Nigeria, including public Universities, Colleges of Education, and Polytechnics and all Nigerian STEMM learners.
- The dedicated BRIDGE Secretariat staff within the Federal Ministry of Education.

3. Vision, Partners, and Definitions

The Diaspora-BRIDGE Program (BRIDGE) is a structured national human capital intervention designed to bridge the gap between global and national expertise and local institutional needs. BRIDGE is as an acronym for Bridging Research, Innovation, Development, and Global Engagement. It serves as a strategic pipeline to attract, vet, and deploy multi-disciplinary professionals from both the global diaspora and Nigerian experts to serve in Nigeria's tertiary institutions, research centers, and public sectors for short-term, high-impact knowledge transfer.

The program is a prestigious service opportunity for Nigeria's diasporans actively engaged in STEM. Conceived as a multifaceted framework leveraging modern technology, the program aims to rapidly transform STEM education across the nation, engineering a robust knowledge economy through intensive skills transfer and global insights.

3.1 Executive Approval and National Mandate

The program was formally approved in 2025 by the Federal Government of Nigeria under the leadership of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration. The statutory approval and institutional execution mandate were granted directly by the Honorable Minister of Education Dr. Maruf Tunji Alausa CON, establishing BRIDGE as a flagship human capital strategy of the Federal Ministry of Education.

3.2 Funding and Sustainability

The operational architecture is seamlessly integrated with the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), utilizing its advanced digital infrastructure and institutional funding pathways to ensure absolute transparency, milestone tracking, and long-term sustainability.

TETFund is a strategic funding partner of the Federal Ministry of Education's Diaspora-BRIDGE program (<https://tetfund.gov.ng/>). Established under the Tertiary Education Trust Fund Act of 2011, this intervention agency is mandated to provide focused, transformative interventions for Nigerian tertiary institutions. Consequently, the funding sustainability for the Diaspora-BRIDGE framework is robustly assured.

Other Strategic Partners: Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM)

4. Participation Guidelines and General Program Policy

4.1 Voluntary Participation

All participation by Diaspora and Domestic Professionals/Experts is voluntary. It is highly valued and officially acknowledged as a selfless, pro-bono contribution to the nation's educational, scientific, medical, and research capacity. Participation does not constitute or establish an employer-employee relationship with the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN).

4.2 Funding Architecture and Program Financials

4.2.1 Institutional Funding: The Federal Ministry of Education (FME), in collaboration with TETFund, shall incur and cover all approved costs associated with the BRIDGE intervention activities. Funding mechanisms are systematically integrated to ensure transparent tracking of project milestones, resource deployment, and comprehensive financial accountability.

4.2.2 Nigerian Host Institution Financial Immunity: Nigerian host institutions (including public universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, and research centers) participating in the BRIDGE program shall have complete financial immunity. Host institutions shall incur zero regulatory or operational costs related to recruitment, international travel, expense reimbursements, or standard accommodations for assigned visiting Diaspora-BRIDGE Fellows.

4.2.3 Diaspora Experts and Financials: Becoming a Nigeria Diaspora Bridge Fellow (NDBF) is a prestigious, rewarding accomplishment reserved for world-class experts who have undergone rigorous vetting. No salaries or commercial remunerations are paid for virtual or in-person participation. However, the Federal Government of Nigeria via the Federal Ministry of Education will cover the following: an economy return air ticket, local logistics (transportation, etc.), and standard duty allowance for accommodation for all vetted and approved participants. The expected coverage duration is a maximum of 21 days of active on-ground operations. The BRIDGE Secretariat will formally issue an engagement letter and approvals before the initiation of any activity for it to qualify for funding. The Federal Government of Nigeria will provide a return international economy flight ticket. The local duty allowance will be based on the National Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission circular dated 23rd April 2026 with reference number SWC/S/04/S.6/T/79 for grade level 16-17 and their equivalent. Only one 21-day in-person visit per expert will be funded per fiscal year. It is strongly recommended that scholars integrate continuous virtual interaction alongside physical deployment for maximum impact.

5. Recruitment, Vetting, and Engagement of Diaspora Experts

The BRIDGE team utilizes a centralized portal (www.diaspora-bridge.ng) to announce open calls, accept applications, and process professional credentials of prospective diaspora experts. The verification architecture employs machine-driven scoring Toolkits and computational screening questionnaires to ensure the evaluation process remains fair, objective, transparent, and globally scalable. Upon initial registration, applicants receive a link to the vetting platform designed to guide optimal institutional placement. Contact the secretariat at info@diaspora-bridge.ng for assistance if you encounter any difficulties or do not receive an automated acknowledgement.

5.1 Application and Onboarding Process

- To initiate an application, visit the portal www.diaspora-bridge.ng and follow the structured prompts.
- Applicants will receive a diaspora number (DIAS/xxxx) via an automated confirmation email. For support, contact the secretariat at info@diaspora-bridge.ng.
- The acknowledgement email includes a direct link to the vetting questionnaire. This must be completed within 7 days of the initial application. (Application should be made at least one month prior to the intended engagement start date for in-person activities).
- Experts meeting the required score threshold will receive a formal confirmation email and will proceed to develop their proposed teaching/mentoring/research topics and modules in alignment with the Nigerian STEMM curriculum ([click here to access curriculum](#)).
- A Diaspora Expert may modify their mode or scope of intervention (e.g., transition from virtual to physical, and or teaching to research) at any stage by notifying the Secretariat.
- The standard timeline between application completion and formal engagement deployment spans 2 to 4 weeks.

5.2 Flexible Modes of Diaspora Engagement

To maximize the acquisition of global talent, the program accommodates three core participation models:

5.2.1 Virtual Mode

This model offers a flexible asynchronous and synchronous time commitment, typically involving a minimum of two hours per week to deliver 3 to 6 targeted lectures. Vetted experts selecting this mode will design contemporary course topics / modules within the framework of institutional curriculum. For your

reference, the BRIDGE team provides [comprehensive STEMM curricula](#) spanning undergraduate and postgraduate levels across Nigerian Universities, Polytechnics (OND/HND), and Colleges of Education. Upon receipt and approval of the lecture topics the Diaspora will receive a letter from the Bridge team specifying official platforms for course delivery. Registration will open and remain accessible to Nigerian learners nationwide at least one week prior to commencement.

5.2.3 In-Person Mode

This model demands a fixed-term physical deployment within a public Nigerian tertiary institution for a consecutive period of at least 21 calendar days. Following vetting, the fellow will identify and contact a counterpart at an eligible public host institution to co-generate workshop/course module content and schedule). These could include mentoring and research targeted at multiple levels of scholars. Upon submission of this work plan (signed by diaspora and identified host institution), the BRIDGE team issue a formal engagement letter. If a diaspora expert does not have an existing local contact or potential host, the Secretariat will mediate introductions based on regional and disciplinary preferences.

- **Intervention Duration:** While extended relationships are encouraged, government-funded on-ground logistics are strictly capped at 21 calendar days per cycle. Additional stays operate at the sole expense of the parties involved.
- **Travel Provisions:** Reimbursable economy tickets (up to the Naira equivalent of \$2,500) are only authorized after receiving the official engagement letter.
- **Subsistence & Incidentals:** Pre-approved daily incidentals and per diems are disbursed to manage living costs during active deployment.
- **Cross-Institutional Mobility:** Fellows are permitted to serve multiple host institutions within their 21-day window, coordinated via Institutional Desk Officers and the central Secretariat.

5.2.3 Hybrid Mode

A blended configuration combining remote virtual preparation with intensive on-site execution. Experts can blend multiple intervention types (Teaching, Research and Mentoring) across modes, provided the comprehensive schedule is declared to allow advertisement and online platform planning.

6. Recognition

Upon successful completion of an approved intervention cycle, all participants (Virtual, In-Person, and Hybrid) who document a minimum cumulative contribution of 15 active intervention hours will receive a special thank you note for volunteering their expertise and time when duty called.

7. Intellectual Property (IP) Framework

Any intellectual property, patent rights, or commercial innovations emerging from collaborative projects initiated under the BRIDGE program shall be governed by international best practices. Exact ownership fractions, licensing structures, and commercialization parameters must be explicitly co-developed, documented, and signed off by the collaborating entities during the formal onboarding stage.

8. Guidelines for Host Institutions & Domestic Counterparts

8.1 Guidelines for Domestic Professionals

- **Functional Role:** Act as the local co-investigator, co-mentor, and direct knowledge reception. Domestic counterparts are responsible for driving joint research pipelines, and sustaining project momentum after the diaspora fellow departs.
- **Engagement Format:** Active, mandatory attendance and participation in all virtual and physical workshops, laboratories, and milestone sessions connected to the matched project.
- **Administrative Protection:** Local institutional leadership must fully endorse the professional's involvement, ensuring program duties are accommodated without prejudice to their local standing or career advancement.
- **Resource Allocations:** The Ministry of Education will cover specific, pre-vetted logistical costs, including inter-state travel to centralized workshops or basic data stipends for running data-intensive collaboration pipelines.

8.2 Guidelines for Host Institutions

- **Financial Scope:** Maintain zero financial liability for the travel, lodging, or stipend costs associated with the incoming expert.
- **Physical Infrastructure Obligations:** Host institutions must supply functional workspace, standard teaching facilities, and accessible laboratories. They are required to arrange safe local transport for program activities and coordinate basic lodging frameworks in tandem with the Secretariat, utilizing funds provided by the Ministry.
- **Institutional Anchor:** Institutional management must officially assign a senior-level Institutional Coordinator (Desk Officer) within the specific matching discipline to actively oversee the daily execution of the intervention and formally integrate it into the school's long-term academic strategy.

9.1 Security and Personal Indemnity Disclaimer

The Ministry of Education and the Federal Government of Nigeria remain firmly committed to the safety of all participants. However, the Federal Government, TETFund, NiDCOM, and individual Host Institutions assume zero legal liability for personal harm, property loss, logistical disruptions, or physical injury sustained during an in-person engagement cycle. Experts are required to exercise personal caution, rigorously follow official security advisories, and completely avoid unauthorized regional travel and activities.

9.2 Recommended Insurance Requirement

It is the sole responsibility of every In-Person Diaspora Expert to independently secure comprehensive personal health insurance, including full emergency medical evacuation coverage, prior to boarding any flight or activating their engagement cycle. Proceeding without verified coverage is done entirely at the participant's own risk.

10. Monitoring, Evaluation (M&E), and Analytics

The operational framework utilizes continuous data tracking, reporting metrics, and automated milestone tracking powered entirely by the TETFund TERAS system. The criteria for evaluating the efficacy of the program vary appropriately between disciplines and selected modes of intervention.

Item	M&E Focus Area	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) & Metrics
10.1	Impact & Capacity Assessment	Total unique participants; cumulative contact hours; volume of co-authored, globally indexed publications; number of new or structurally modernized curriculum units; workshop attendance rates.
10.2	Institutional Enhancements	Measurable spikes in international grant applications or joint funding awards generated; setup of new laboratory sub-units or clinical simulation modules; documented technology adoption scores.
10.3	Stakeholder Feedback Loops	Compulsory end-of-service reports from Diaspora experts; formal Institutional Coordinator impact assessments; post-intervention evaluation surveys completed by beneficiary students and local professionals.
10.4	Milestone Accountability	Digital tracking of project timelines and deliverables against goals configured on the BRIDGE platform; transparent resource utilization mapping.