



TICZA

TEACHER INTERNSHIP
COLLABORATION SOUTH AFRICA

TICZA CoPs 2024: Integrated Report

December 2024

The TICZA Community of Practice (CoP) Series

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CCF	Common Competency Framework
COP	community of practice
DBE	Department of Basic education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
ESTIs	extended teacher internships
HEI	higer education institution
IP	implemeting partner
ITE	initial teacher education
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NGO	non-governmental organisation
SACE	South African Council for Educators

1. Background

The TICZA Community of Practice (CoP) is a programme element in the TICZA workstream ‘Sector-Wide Collaboration’. The purpose of this stream is to (i) deepen collaboration and knowledge sharing amongst stakeholders and implementing partners (IPs), leading to shared lessons and improved network relationships and partnerships among TICZA members; and (ii) develop shared resources that can be adapted and integrated into programme delivery to enhance system alignment.

TICZA CoPs are a collaborative mechanism through which stakeholders share knowledge and practice, discuss key initial teacher education (ITE) issues and expand the evidence base on student-teacher internship models. CoP reports capture a range of inputs and shared insights which feed into the TICZA project; TICZA partners are expected to leverage and integrate these views into TICZA plans and workstreams.

The following are viewed as stakeholders in the TICZA ecosystem: government in the form of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), as well as provincial education departments; the South African Council for Educators (SACE); teacher unions; higher education institutions (HEIs); non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in initial teacher education as well as continuing professional education; and funders. TICZA CoP events are open to all these groups.

2. 2024 Attendance and Topics

Relevant individuals from all stakeholder groups listed above were invited to the three TICZA CoPs held in 2024. The attendance breakdown is noted below. Variability in attendance is linked to topic, inputs and scheduling.

Notes:

TICZA Convening Group members are not included as stakeholder organisations but are reflected in participant numbers.

Total participant numbers include more than one individual from one stakeholder organisation.

Table 1: Attendance at CoPs 2024

Stakeholder Organisations	CoP 13 Sustainability and scale in the context of ESTIs: Perspectives of Funders and Implementers	CoP 14 Mentorship in the context of ESTIs	CoP 15 Enhancing teacher training through innovative distance and blended learning models: Insights, collaborations and research
NGOs	10	11 (excluding student teacher interns who attended this CoP)	8
HEIs	3	3	7

Stakeholder Organisations	CoP 13 Sustainability and scale in the context of ESTIs: Perspectives of Funders and Implementers	CoP 14 Mentorship in the context of ESTIs	CoP 15 Enhancing teacher training through innovative distance and blended learning models: Insights, collaborations and research
DBE	-	-	2
DHET	-	-	1
Unions	-	1	1
SACE	1	-	-
Funders	2	-	3
Total number of individual participants (online and in person)	26	34	30

Note: ESTIS = Extended teacher internships

3. CoP 2024 Highlights

3.1. CoP 13: Sustainability and scale in the context of ESTIs: Perspectives of funders and implementers. 20 February 2024.

1. Insights shared by Rebecca Muir (funder, Maitri Trust)

- Sustainability and scale can only be achieved through institutionalisation.
- Visible progress needs to be documented, with evidence drawn from activities.
- Programmes can be adapted, if evidence shows the need, in order to be sustainable and scalable.
- Case studies from Peepul and Sol's Arc illustrate strategies for government engagement, impact demonstration and strategic partnerships.

2. Participant reflections

- Interventions can only be sustainable if they are linked to meeting long-term needs.
- The need for evidence to show proof-of-concept and the effectiveness of models is clear.
- Scale relates to growth and impact. The achievement of both sustainability and scale depend to a large extent on government buy-in and the policy environment.
- Risks relate to reduced funding, government turnover, bureaucratic hurdles and pressure to maintain quality during transition periods.
- Opportunities include innovation, advocacy, collaborative partnerships and shared learning.

Read the [CoP 13 report](#).

3.2. CoP 14: Mentorship in the context of ESTIs. 5 June 2024

1. **Mentorship Panel**

- A panel of mentors and student intern mentees held a facilitated conversation, reflecting on different mentorship models and their own experiences with mentor/mentee relationships.
- Participants discussed the benefits and challenges of different approaches and models for both mentors and mentees and ways of addressing challenges.

2. **Feedback on the ESTI Mentorship Toolkit**

- Participants gave detailed feedback on different agreements within Tool 1, Mentorship Agreements, in the TICZA Mentorship Toolkit.
- Key questions raised included:
 - While some gaps have been identified, it is difficult to know how detailed these agreements should be. How do we get a balance between useful generic agreements and comprehensive agreements that may not apply to a particular school or context?
 - There are diverse mentorship models for ESTI implementers which may include distinct levels of mentors and different terminology for varied roles (e.g., external mentors, mentor coordinators, school-based mentor teacher, classroom mentor, SMT mentor etc.). A common terminology is needed, which should be linked to that used in the Common Competency Framework (CCF). Suggestions made include:
 - School Mentor
 - Programme Mentor
 - Site Liaison (for SMT person who is the point-person for NGO interaction with the school).

Read the [CoP 14 report](#).

3.3. CoP 15: Enhancing teacher training through innovative distance and blended learning models: Insights, collaborations and research. 3 October 2024

1. **Inputs from Higher Education Institutions**

- North-West University and the University of Johannesburg shared models for B.Ed. programmes in ITE, with a specific focus on work-integrated aspects of their curricula and how their students are observed and assessed when in schools.
- Responses raised the following themes: distance education challenges; school functionality; quality of ITE teaching; role of mentorship; potential partnerships between HEIs and NGOs focused on integrating wrap-around support provided by NGOs into work-integrated learning (WIL).

2. **Input from the Coalition of Teacher Internship Providers (CTIP)**

- TICZA has commissioned research on what constitutes wrap-around support in ESTIs as they are currently implemented. The focus of the research is to define the core elements of wrap-around support to be provided by ESTI implementers.

- The viability of the proposed ESTI framework is linked to a cost effectiveness analysis and to the development of a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework, drawing on evidence and research, in order to showcase the value of the ESTI model. This relates to goals such as sustainability and scale (see CoP 13).

3. Key Takeaways from the CoP overall:

- Regulatory Framework: Innovations must align with policies from the DHET, DBE and SACE as well as with HEI regulations on partnerships and agreements. It is also particularly important that those involved in ESTI activities (as students and as teachers/school leaders) comply with SACE regulations regarding conduct in schools.
- Role of Partnerships: NGO IPs can provide services like lesson observation, feedback, mentorship and professional development for school-based student teachers.
- Cost and Funding Models: Wrap-around support incurs costs, requiring sustainable funding models (e.g., government, private funding or student fees).
- Evidence Requirements: Evidence supported by data and longitudinal studies is needed on the impact of wrap-around support on graduate throughput, quality and teacher retention.
- High-Level Conversations: Collaboration among the DBE, DHET and Education Deans is essential to establish partnerships and integrate NGO IP services into the ITE ecosystem.

Read the [CoP 15 report](#).

4. CoPs in the Overall TICZA Context

4.1. TICZA workstreams



Common themes in CoP discussions intersect with elements of the TICZA workstreams shown above. Illustrative examples of key activities across workstreams in 2024, and how these relate to CoPs held in 2024, are given below.

4.1.1 **Advocacy and Governance**

The TICZA CoP supports advocacy in the sense that knowledge-sharing from different stakeholder perspectives increases understanding of ESTI components and the scope, types and impact of wrap-around support in this context.

4.1.2 **Sector-Wide Collaboration**

A common theme in 2024 CoPs was the need for strengthening and formalising relationships between HEIs and NGO IPs.

- The IPs held conversations with the DBE in the context of efforts towards a proof-of-concept planned for 2025. (Reported in August SteerCom meeting.)
- A memorandum of understanding on behalf of a collective of IPs is being explored with UNISA as part of the TICZA process, opening the possibility of impacting a larger number of students and increased data. (Reported in August SteerCom meeting.)
- The CCF developed by the Bertha Centre is aimed at supporting HEI-NGO alignment and alignment to the SACE professional teaching standards to make these more actionable in practice. The tool is intended to complement the relationship between mentors and mentees in schools. (Reported in November SteerCom meeting.) The CCF was referenced in discussions in CoPs 14 and 15.

4.1.3 Research & Shared Measurement

At the SteerCom meeting of 23 August 2024, it was noted that ‘...ESTIs are potentially facing an existential problem if there is failure to prove their value, and stakeholders would need to support the process to make or strengthen the case of ESTIs, especially in relation to funding.’ (Meeting minutes page 3, overtype page 40) . Given this dynamic, the need for an evidence-base showing the value of ESTIs ran through all 2024 CoPs. CoP members participated in crucial and related activities in this workstream, bringing these learnings into 2024 CoPs.

- A number of different stakeholders took part in the TICZA Institutionalisation and Research Workshop held on 7 June 2024, moving towards common understandings of ESTI models as discussed in CoP 15.
- The Theory of Change review workshop held in July 2024 discussed IP collaboration on developing one standard ESTI model as the way forward for institutionalisation, scale and sustainability. (Reported in November SteerCom and Southern Hemisphere workshop report, 8 August 2024.)
- Activities outlined in the TICZA Research Plan are directly relevant to the CoP topics discussed. These include:
 - ESTI cost-effectiveness assessment;
 - The appointment of a consultant to work with IPs on reviewing the nature, features and scope of various wrap-around support models in order to reach common understandings of best practice features;
 - The potential applications of the CCF once finalised. These could include teacher interns’ self-reporting and development processes; mentorship and peer-to-peer learning support; IPs’ efforts to align contextual tools to national standards; and information for funder organisations to clarify levers for competency-driven interventions/programmes. The implications of the CCF for elements of wrap-around support, recording and reporting, and M&E will all be topics for debate in CoPs going forward.

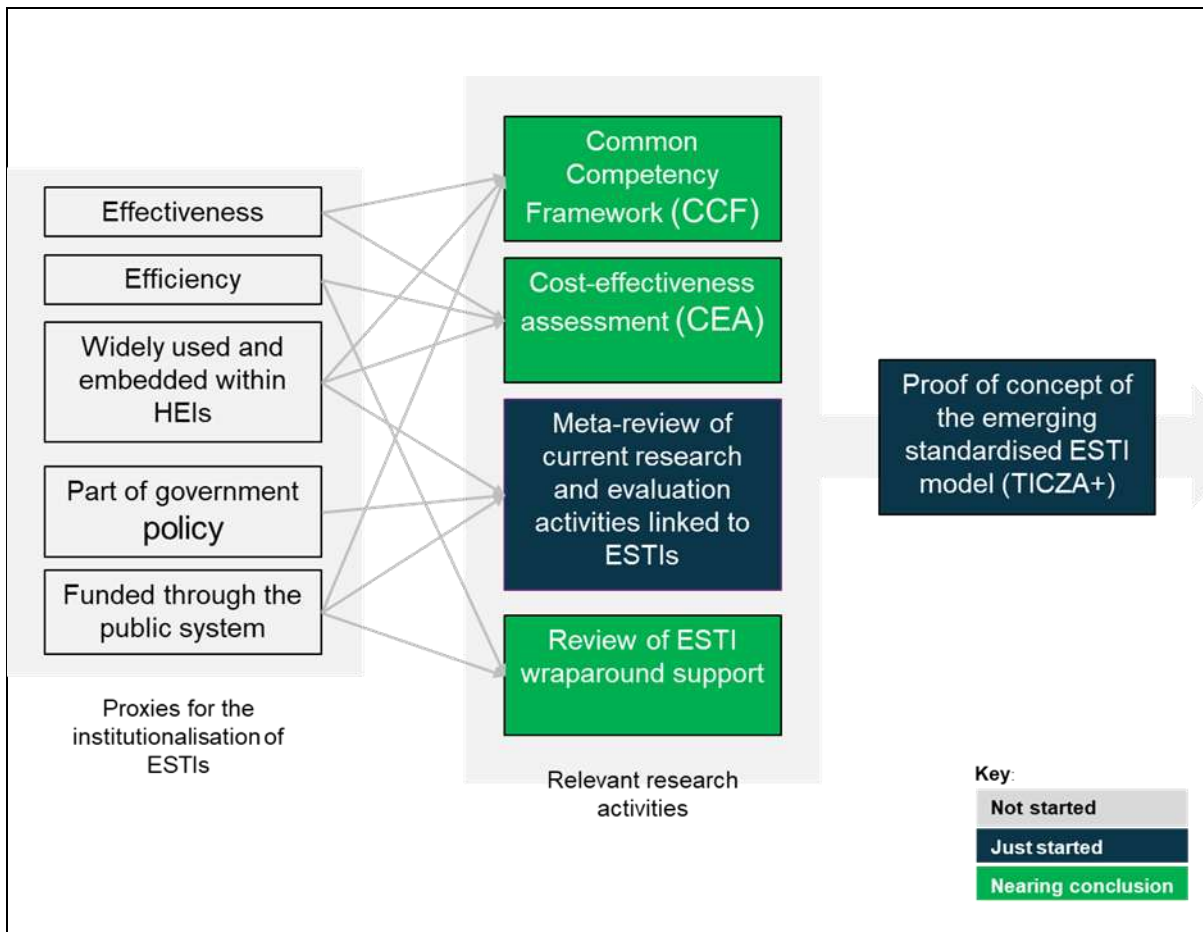


Figure 1: TICZA research activities, (TICZA Research Plan 2024-2025, dated November 2024)

4.1.4 Knowledge Products

1. The Draft ESTI Mentorship Toolkit was presented and discussed in CoP 14.
2. CoP reports use terminology drawn from the [TICZA Glossary of Terms](#).
3. CoP information feeds into articles presented in the [TICZA Digest](#).
4. CoP reports are themselves knowledge products, components of TICZA’s overall communications and advocacy strategy.

See: [TICZA Knowledge Products](#)

5. Conclusion

In 2025, CoP topics and inputs will continue to be informed by, and run parallel with, all other TICZA activities, with a particular focus on those related to the integration of research for the strengthening of a standardised ESTI model.