

Commonwealth Startup Fellowship (CSF)



Overview

The Commonwealth Startup Fellowship (CSF) is a six-month programme designed to ignite and elevate high potential startups from low and middle income Commonwealth countries. The programme is made up of a combination of in-person and online learning, to provide participants with essential skills, tailored support, and a global network.

Rationale

The World Bank estimates that 600 million jobs will be needed by 2030 to absorb the growing global workforce. ([World Bank, 2019](#)). The CSF helps to address this problem by supporting early-stage entrepreneurs to grow their businesses and become the next generation of business leaders and job creators.

The Programme

The programme is delivered in partnership with the [Imperial College London Enterprise Lab](#), global leaders in this field. 40 businesses will be supported in total, across two cohorts of 20 businesses.

Cohort 2 will start in November 2025. **Applications are open from 2nd– 30th June 2025**. An information session for applicants is being held on Tuesday 3rd June. You can register here: bit.ly/3EYWDXC

The Fellowship is made up of 3 stages

Stage 1: Fully funded in person ‘bootcamp’ in Accra Ghana

- Here, the programme will be launched with intensive, hands-on training. Participants will refine their business plans, develop targeted growth strategies, and build a strong network of fellow entrepreneurs and experts.

Stage 2: Five months of bespoke online learning and business coaching

- Learning modules will continue remotely for the next five months, giving fellows the opportunity to apply what they are learning in real time. They will each be supported by a personal mentor and have monthly ‘venture review panels’ with industry and country experts who will provide feedback and guidance on the progress and choices they are making.

Stage 3: Fully funded Capstone Week in London

- At the end of the programme, businesses will have the opportunity to travel to London to take part in an international investor event and other networking opportunities.

Who we’re looking for

To be eligible for these Fellowships, prospective Fellows must:

- Be of at least graduate level.;
- Be a citizen of or have been granted refugee status by an eligible low- or middle-income Commonwealth country;
- Be permanently resident in an eligible Commonwealth country;
- Be fluent in written and spoken English.
- Not have undertaken a Commonwealth Professional Fellowship within the last five years (at the time of taking up the award);
- Be available to undertake their fellowship from the prescribed start date.

In addition, they must demonstrate:

Evidence of innovation, in terms of product, service, or market

Active development for at least six-months and demonstrable commitment from team members

A working minimum viable ‘product’, service and/or prototype

Significant evidence of customer engagement or traction in the form of early sales or pre-sales . proof of interest or demand, signed contracts or other relevant evidence.

Links

imperialenterpriselab.com/programmes/commonwealth-startup-fellowship/

cscuk.fcdo.gov.uk/entrepreneurship-innovation-and-job-creation/