Project Meeting on
“Enhancing National Capacity to Foster Digital Citizenship Education in Asia-Pacific”
Double Tree by Hilton Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand; 16-17 October 2017

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The exponential growth of ICT has fundamentally changed the way in which society operates. Considering that ICT has become a dominant channel to participate in and contribute to the highly connected knowledge society, the Education 2030 Agenda emphasized the acquisition of relevant ICT and digital literacy skills as part of the relevant key competencies needed for employment, decent job attainment, and entrepreneurship. The digital skills in this regard should include competencies beyond basic ICT literacy that enable learners to effectively manage and be resilient to an array of social and ethical challenges surrounding safety, health, violence, and misinformation, while being aware of one’s rights in the digital world.

In view of this, it is of paramount importance for the education sector to provide an enabling and conducive environment in policy and practice that fosters digital citizenship among children. In response to this, through the continued support from the Korean Funds-in-Trust (KFIT), UNESCO Bangkok launches the “Enhancing National Capacity to Foster Digital Citizenship Education in Asia-Pacific” Project that will run from 2017 to 2021.

The project, expanding on the previous phases in 2013-2017, aims to support Member States in building national capacity in making informed policy decisions in fostering digital citizenship in the education setting, with special emphasis on incorporating these into teacher training and development. In line with this, the project consists of three components:

1) Establishment of a regional comparative framework to help gather baseline information on children’s perception, competency levels, behaviours and use of ICT in education settings
2) Expansion of national capacity building efforts in developing, implementing, and monitoring competency-based ICT teacher training and development programmes, focusing on competency assessment and recognition mechanisms as well as training of master teacher trainers on enhanced curriculums
3) Continued provision of regional platforms for high-level policy dialogues to disseminate project outcomes, to advocate the importance of comprehensive digital citizenship competencies, and to strengthen regional partnerships in the area of ICT in Education
The first component intends to create a baseline understanding of children’s actual use of ICT in education settings. Dubbed as Digital Kids Asia Pacific (DKAP), this component of the project is a response to an urgent regional need to foster children’s safe, effective, and responsible use of ICT without restricting numerous opportunities that ICT can offer. Due to its nascent stage in responding to such needs, most educational programmes and interventions in the region lack a sound knowledge base on children’s experiences, issues, competencies, and actual behaviour in the digital space. The research framework and baseline knowledge established through the project will eventually contribute to data-informed context-appropriate policy responses to guide educational campaigns, curriculum, training programmes and resources to further develop learners’ ICT and digital skills.

Another aspect of the digital citizenship education is the growing awareness of the critical role that teachers play in fostering such traits. Students learn and model from their teachers relevant competencies that digital citizens are required to possess. True enough, the previously concluded KFIT-funded “Supporting Competency-Based Teacher Training Reforms to Facilitate ICT-Pedagogy Integration” (2013-2017) Project proved that the three Ministries of Education (Nepal, Philippines, Uzbekistan) highlighted this aspect in their respective ICT competency standards for teachers. This will eventually impact teacher training and development by integrating ICT in teaching and learning in a safe, effective, and responsible manner. This also corresponds to current trends in international teacher competency standards. For example, ISTE’s National Education Technology Standards for Educators that include “inspire students to positively contribute to and responsibly participate in the digital world” as one of its seven core standards. Furthermore, in the “Asia-Pacific Regional Strategy on Using ICT to Facilitate the Achievement of SDG4” (Regional Strategy) that was recently endorsed by Member States in the region, “ICT for improving the quality of teaching and teaching practices” came out as one of the four key priority areas in the region, with a special emphasis on the teacher’s central role in achieving this particular target. Towards this end, the Regional Strategy sets out the corresponding action point: “On the Quality of Teaching and Teaching Practices, Member States to develop competency standards for teachers towards ICT-integrated transformative pedagogies, and establish learning spaces and communities of practices to support teachers and share innovations.”

Given such emerging needs to address digital citizenship in teacher training and development programmes, it is a priority to design teacher training programmes based on a clear baseline understanding of how ICTs are perceived and actually being used by children in schools and beyond.

Finally, the project will continue providing regional and sub-regional platforms for high-level policy dialogues where Ministry of Education officials, experts, practitioners, and researchers take part in a multi-directional exchange of ideas, experiences, innovations, good practices, and challenges in integrating ICT into the education systems. These forums likewise promote smart partnerships and collaboration among the Member States and other stakeholders towards the efficient and effective use of ICT in education. It is worthy to note that ‘capacity building for teachers in the effective use of ICT in their teaching practices’ continue to be one of the pressing concerns cited by country delegates for which they request technical assistance, thus emphasizing the relevance and timeliness of the KFIT projects.

**Project Meeting**

To celebrate the successful implementation of the previous KFIT-ICT project and kick off the new phase of the Project, UNESCO Bangkok will convene the Project Meeting with key stakeholders on

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1. ISTE Standards for Educators: [https://www.iste.org/standards/standards/for-educators](https://www.iste.org/standards/standards/for-educators)
16-17 October 2017 in Bangkok, Thailand. It will bring together the advisory committee, country project teams, international experts, and project evaluators to collectively evaluate the progress and achievements of the recently concluded KFIT Project. The discussions will logically progress to an examination of the initial design and workplan of the current KFIT project.

In view of these, the objectives of the Meeting are two-fold:

1. Evaluate the impact of the previous KFIT Project on the target pilot countries (Day1)
   a. Take stock of overall project implementation, achievements, and challenges using objectively verifiable indicators
   b. Gather, validate, and analyze feedback and recommendations on the various project components to serve as inputs to the new KFIT Project

2. Enhance the initial design and workplan of the new KFIT Project (Day2)
   a. Orient the participants on the project components
   b. Exchange ideas and guidelines on crucial elements, processes, and issues for the country-level implementations
   c. Discuss and agree on the guiding framework for the country-level implementations

**Component 1: Digital Kids Asia-Pacific (DKAP)**
The breakout session on Day 2 will orient the participants on the background, purpose, and development process of the Digital Citizenship Competency Framework (DCCF). The lead research team for the DKAP project will introduce their role in DKAP and the proposed research methodology. Country teams will discuss the DCCF domains and core competencies, share their feedback on the DCCF in relation to the specific country’s contexts.

The country teams will then draft a work plan, in alignment with the DKAP work plan, for national implementation of DKAP with the assistance of the DKAP Advisory Committee, the lead research team, and invited experts. Based on these outputs, participants will agree on the next steps relating to pilot country implementation of DKAP.

**Component 2: Capacity Building related to ICT Competency Standards for Teachers**
The breakout session on Day 2 invites the three pilot countries from the previous KFIT implementation to share their progress and achievements in relation to developing competency standards and enhancing their teacher training curriculum, along with the challenges and key success factors. The new beneficiary countries will have opportunities to consult the pilot countries as well as international experts and deliberate on the feasibility and action plans for their respective country implementations.

The country teams will likewise be requested to review and provide suggestions to the usability and effectiveness of the “Guideline for Competency-based Teacher Training Reform to Facilitate ICT-Pedagogy Integration”. They will also have a chance to consult the Advisory Committee, invited experts, and project evaluators on next steps, including training of trainers, accreditation of training providers, assessment & recognition of teachers’ ICT competencies, and evaluation of the competency standards.
Expected Outputs

By the end of the Meeting, the UNESCO Bangkok Project Team will have the following outputs:

- evaluation feedback on the implementation of the previous KFIT Project
- enhanced project design and workplan for the new phase (2017-2021)
- guiding framework for the country-level implementations

Dates and Venue

The Meeting will be organized in Double Tree by Hilton Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand on 16-17 October 2017.

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Annex: Project Overview

Achievements of the previous KFIT project (2013-2017)

From September 2013 to August 2017, UNESCO Bangkok implemented the “Supporting Competency-Based Teacher Training Reforms to Facilitate ICT-Pedagogy Integration” Project, through the support of Korean Funds-in-Trust (KFIT). The project aimed to support governments in reforming ICT teacher training and professional development programmes into competency-based ones, where teacher development throughout pre-service and in-service training is systematically guided, assessed, monitored and tracked at policy and institutional levels.

During the first year of implementation, the Project identified and gathered four promising case studies that developed and successfully operationalized their respective national ICT competency standards for teachers. The publication, “Diverse Approaches to Developing and Implementing Competency-based ICT Training for Teachers: A Case Study”, is available for distribution and download (http://bit.ly/KFIT2Cases). The four cases provided the project with accounts of country-level experiences, findings, and reference materials on the different frameworks, models, and processes in developing and operationalizing ICT competency standards for teachers. The discussion included (a) how ICT competencies for teachers were developed; (b) how the developed competencies systematically guided the development of teacher training curriculum for in-service and pre-service teachers; and (c) how these competency standards were assessed/evaluated and recognized.

The synthesis from the case studies served as the basis for the development of capacity building training modules and generic tools that were used in the pilot country implementations (Nepal, Philippines, and Uzbekistan) within a two-year period (2015-2016):

- The first year of country implementation (2015) focused on supporting these countries in developing their national ICT competency standards for teachers, for either pre-service teacher education or in-service professional development, tailored to the needs and contexts of the respective countries.
- The second year (2016) was designed to support the countries in operationalizing the standards by reflecting the formulated competency standards in the actual teacher training curriculum or professional development programmes.

With the country workplans serving as a guide, UNESCO Bangkok, together with experts, provided technical assistance to the pilot countries through in-country national workshops and online consultations with the country task forces and key stakeholders. To date, all three pilot countries have successfully developed their national ICT competency standards for teachers and enhanced their respective teacher training curriculum.

It should be noted that upon the recommendation of the Project’s advisory committee, the procedures involving competency assessment and recognition were moved to the next project phase (2017-2021). This is in view of foreseen requirements for project timeline extensions to accommodate individual countries’ administrative processes.

The project also provided technical and staff support towards the implementation of UNESCO Bangkok’s “Fostering Digital Citizenship through Safe, Effective, and Responsible Use of ICT” (SERU-ICT) that served as groundwork for the upcoming KFIT Project.

Knowledge exchange activities were likewise conducted to disseminate the outcomes of the project:
• the Asia Pacific Ministerial Forum on ICT in Education (AMFIE) in 2013 and 2017 to update high-level education officials on the regional status and international/regional trends in ICT use for transformative education; the “Asia-Pacific Regional Strategy on Using ICT to Facilitate the Achievement of Education 2030” was endorsed by Member States during AMFIE 2017
• the Central Asia Symposium on ICT in Education (CASIE) conducted in 2014, 2015, 2016 to keep education stakeholders abreast on challenges, good practices, and potential areas of collaboration on continuous professional development and support for teachers in the area of ICT in Education
• the annual Project Regional Meeting held in 2014, 2015, and 2016 to provide pilot countries to report on progress and exchange experiences as well as consult experts on project-related concerns and developments
• the annual Regional Seminar for the UNESCO Resource Distribution and Training Centres (RDTC) organized in the years 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 where 22 RDTC members from 12 countries shared research findings, capacity-building initiatives, and resources to improve ICT-pedagogy integration in the region

Brief overview on the new KFIT Project activities (2017-2021)

The new Project is composed of three major components that will contribute towards improving the capacity of Member States in systematically developing, implementing, and monitoring teacher education and development policies and programmes that foster digital citizenship. These are:

1) Component 1: Digital Kids Asia-Pacific (DKAP)
   The DKAP study seeks to bring together global, regional, and local experts and research groups to provide expert guidance and reference research models towards the establishment of reliable and valid baseline research data on children’s ICT practices, attitudes, behaviours in the region. This will inform the validation of the Digital Citizenship Competency Framework (DCCF) for the Asia-Pacific region. Regional and country-level workshops will be conducted to agree on research parameters and consequently develop the instruments. Partner research organizations from pilot countries (Bangladesh, Thailand, Vietnam), in close coordination with their respective Ministries of Education, will then administer the research survey and synthesize cross-country findings. By the end of the project, the DKAP baseline research data and the DCCF will be available to interested Member States to strengthen their capacity to understand children’s online behaviors as well as to make informed policy decisions.

On 24-26 July 2017, international and regional experts were gathered to further develop the DCCF that was first drafted during the Conference on Digital Citizenship Education on 2-3 March 2017. The meeting led to the finalization of five domains covering Digital Literacy, Digital Safety & Resilience, Digital Participation & Agency, Digital Emotional Intelligence, and Creativity & Innovation. The experts also developed a provisional set of twenty competencies across the five domains together with sample performance indicators. Moving forward, the lead research team from Ewha Womans University, with UNESCO, will further refine the DCCF in online consultations with the experts.

2) Component 2: Capacity Building related to ICT Competency Standards for Teachers
   One of the previous project’s major outputs is the “Guideline for Competency-based Teacher Training Reform to Facilitate ICT-Pedagogy Integration” (Guideline) that is comprised of various tools that other Member States can freely access and use. Using these resources, the project will

expand the support to a new set of target countries (Myanmar, Mongolia, Sri Lanka) and assist them through a series of national workshops in developing their national ICT competency standards for teachers, along with corresponding competency-based curriculum for teacher education/training. Furthermore, the project seeks to sustain the initial efforts in the original set of pilot countries (Nepal, Philippines, Uzbekistan) by training master trainers, accreditation of training service providers, and establishing competency assessment and recognition mechanisms.

3) Component 3: Knowledge Sharing

Strong partnerships with expert groups, relevant government agencies, research and teacher education institutions, and other key organizations will play a big role in the successful implementation of the project. Activities that promote knowledge sharing and technology transfer will be done through the UNESCO RDTCs, sub-regional and regional forums, seminars, and training workshops. Outcome documents and reports will inform relevant stakeholders in the region about ICT in Education updates and potential areas of collaboration.