In 2015, the global community committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG4 on inclusive and quality education by 2030. In its Framework for Action, Information Communication Technology (ICT) was identified as an essential tool to facilitate the education sector to achieve the ambitious goals of the Education 2030 Agenda. As part of an initial effort, the Asia-Pacific Regional Strategy on Using ICT\(^1\) for the next five years was adopted during the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Forum on ICT in Education (AMFIE) 2017 in the presence of all five Asia-Pacific sub-regions. The Regional Strategy highlighted strengthening the Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) as a priority area since an effective EMIS facilitates collection, organization, and analysis of data for monitoring SDG4 indicators.

Since 2011,\(^2\) UNESCO has organized the Central Asia Symposium on ICT in Education (CASIE) as a sub-regional platform for the Member States to collectively deliberate on possible solutions to the issues at hand, with a particular focus on integrating technologies into the national education systems. During CASIE 2016 held in Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan, participants expressed their enthusiasm for a further exchange of promising practices, shared issues and challenges, and continued collaboration and partnerships on promoting effective use of ICT in Education, which has been reflected and given considerable attention in the new Education 2030 Agenda.\(^3\)

Over the recent years, the Central Asian countries showed commendable progress within ICT in Education, Education Management Information System (EMIS) development, and data collection. As such,


Kazakhstan has developed a functioning EMIS system and has been collecting data from different sub-sectors, Ministry of Education and Science’s departments/institutions, and household surveys, to monitor and evaluate (M&E) the education system. Kyrgyz Republic is introducing the system of monitoring and evaluation of school performance through EMIS. Uzbekistan piloted the Open Education Management Information System (Open EMIS) at Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) level to allow for strengthening of the monitoring and evaluation system. The project would need to be scaled up beyond one level in order to encompass the entire education system. In Tajikistan, due to the political will and buy-in from the government, policies were established that had institutionalized EMIS and the timely compilation of education statistics. However, some challenges in Central Asian countries remain, including a lack of individual student data and accessibility of data and inadequate horizontal and vertical coordination with regard to M&E among Ministry of Education and Science, local governance bodies, and educational organizations.

Due to the indispensable value and importance of data collection, especially in light of the ambitious targets of Education 2030 Agenda, it is important to evaluate the current capacity of the countries in providing data needed to monitor the SDG 4 indicators. Based on a UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) rapid appraisal survey conducted in 2014 to assess country readiness to measure the 43 thematic indicators, including the 11 global ones, the results showed that out of the four countries in Central Asia that participated, the availability of SDG 4 indicators ranged from 34 to 94 per cent. This points to an extensive gap in indicators vis-à-vis the targets and would greatly affect the assessment of Central Asia’s progress towards achieving SDG 4. Moreover, this would imply that insufficient or incomplete evidence would be available to shape sound policy interventions to address the drawbacks of the education systems prior to and beyond Education 2030 Agenda. In order to have a more holistic monitoring, the SDG 4 indicators could be integrated in national indicator frameworks, if countries align their SDG 4 targets in their education sector plans.

To support Central Asia in continuously improving its data collection and EMIS, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan, UNESCO, and Korea Education and Research Information Service (KERIS), will organize this year’s CASIE in Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan on 24-26 October 2018.

Building on the discussions from the 2017 Asia-Pacific Ministerial Forum on ICT in Education and previous Symposia, CASIE 2018 will continue to examine policies, strategies, and initiatives to address the growing need for strengthening EMIS and data collection, organization and analysis of data for monitoring SDG4 indicators, and in particular, global indicators related to ICT in Education (4.4.1 and 4.a.1).

CASIE 2018 calls for a collective effort of various stakeholders from policy, statistics, research, and practice to reflect on current conditions, and share their perspectives on EMIS status, environment and utilization. Specifically, the Symposium seeks to address the following aspects, including:

- Roles of EMIS and education data in enhancing policy, monitoring and evaluation to achieve the SDG4
- Use of digital platforms for data collection

Through various formats, such as plenary and break-out workshop sessions, the Symposium will serve as an opportunity for the Central Asian countries to further explore the issues surrounding support to EMIS and use of ICT for data collection for EMIS. During subsequent CASIEs, each member state will
report their progress against the agreed action plan, as a way to showcase concrete results, promote cooperation, as well as share and cross-fertilize success factors, challenges and lessons learned.

Objectives

- To provide a platform for representatives of the Ministries for education and its subordinate organizations that are responsible for data collection and statistics, practitioners and development partners in ICT education to share issues and challenges that Central Asian countries are facing in developing EMIS, learn promising cases on national EMISs from other countries, and discuss how to enhance the EMIS to collect data for monitoring SDG4 implementation;
- To promote collaboration and partnerships among the Central Asian countries in the identification of solutions in response to similar issues and challenges toward the effective and efficient use of EMIS;
- To provide an opportunity for all participating Member States to formulate a long-term strategic planning document, outlining the measures and required actions necessary for the mainstreaming of ICT-enhanced EMIS.

Date and Venue
24-26 October 2018 in Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan

Language of the Symposium
Russian and English with simultaneous translation in two languages

Participants
- Participating countries: Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. More participants from the host country and other countries can be accepted upon review and approval by the Organizers, their attendance being at their own expense.
- Three participants from each of the five countries, including a high-level Ministry representative (e.g. Department Director or higher level), Head of ICT-in-Education Division, and a statistician from the ‘EMIS’ department, under the Ministry of Education.
- Officials from the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea
- Experts from other countries, UNESCO, UNICEF, EU, ITU, World Bank and other international organizations
- Partner representatives from the private sector and civil society

Expected outputs
A CASIE 2018 Outcome Document will be produced and disseminated, to include:
- Session Synthesis Reports
- A compilation of Country Case Studies on EMIS
- Policy Recommendations from the workshop
- Follow-up activities for cooperation

UNESCO contacts

Lina Benete, Education Program Specialist, UNESCO Almaty, l.benete@unesco.org