CONCEPT NOTE

Project Brief

Undoubtedly, in this highly connected and rapidly changing world, teachers’ role and professional capacity are more critical than ever in equipping young learners with relevant knowledge and skills. Teachers are expected to supersede conventional textbooks and materials, stay connected with fellow teachers and students in and outside of the classroom, and remain competent in diversifying pedagogical approaches with the aim of developing the ‘21st century skills’ of the students. In reality, however, teachers in most countries are not provided with adequate support to accomplish the transformative ICT-pedagogy integration. Research shows that facilitating ICT-pedagogy integration in school education takes more than sporadic professional development, requiring more systematic policy-level changes to create an enabling environment (European Commission, 2014; Shear, Gallagher & Patel, 2011).

Since 2013, UNESCO Bangkok has been implementing “Supporting Competency-Based Teacher Training Reforms to Facilitate ICT-Pedagogy Integration” Project, through the support of Korean Funds-in-Trust (KFIT). The project (“KFIT-II Project”) aims 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.

The specific objectives of the project are:

1. To develop a set of generic tools and training modules in the form of a Regional Guidebook that will serve as reference for the Member States in building local capacity in defining national ICT competency standards and developing an assessment/monitoring system that can be later adapted and localized into the context of a country (to be piloted in three selected countries);
2. To build the capacity of national TEIs in developing appropriate curriculum to support the developed national ICT competency standards; and
3. To share and disseminate evidence-based information with other member states in the Asia-Pacific region and support localizing the developed tools/training modules into different languages and contexts

The Project’s outputs and processes employed in the pilot countries would serve as models for other countries as they develop their own localized roadmaps for teacher professional development.
Progress to date

During the first year of implementation, the Project identified and gathered four promising case studies of five countries (e.g. Australia, China, South Korea, Tanzania and Kenya) that developed and successfully operationalized their respective national ICT competency standards for teachers. Based on the analysis of the cases, three distinctive approaches to developing competency standards emerged: 1) Adapting from existing frameworks, such as UNESCO ICT CFT or ISTE; 2) Profiling stand-alone ICT standards from high performing teachers; and 3) Embedding ICT standards into the overall national teacher standards. The consolidated version of the case studies is currently at the final editing stage and is expected to be published in October 2015.

Drawing on the country cases, the pilot version of the “Regional Guidebook for Supporting Competency-Based Teacher Training Reforms to Facilitate ICT-Pedagogy Integration” was developed in December 2014. The guidebook consists of a package of generic tools/instruments, step-by-step guidance in developing and operationalizing the national ICT competency standards for teachers, training modules on development processes and mechanisms, and model country cases that serve as valuable references for other governments and institutions in replicating and adapting the process in their own contexts.

Upon completion of the pilot version of the Guidebook, the Project commenced the two-year country implementation phase (2015-2016) in three selected pilot countries, namely, Nepal from South Asia, the Philippines from Southeast Asia, and Uzbekistan from Central Asia. The first year of country implementation has been 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. All three countries have completed the first draft of their national ICT competency standards for teachers, with relevant support provided from local coordinating bodies, such as UNESCO field offices (Nepal and Uzbekistan) and SEAMEO INNOTECH (the Philippines). It is expected that these standards get official endorsement from their governments by the end of 2015.

The second year of country implementation, which will start in January 2016, is 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.

Regional Meeting 2015

The Regional Meeting 2015 will bring together key project stakeholders, international experts, and project evaluators to share and review the project’s progress and discuss next steps.

The primary purpose of this Meeting is to provide an opportunity for the three pilot countries to exchange findings from their teacher readiness assessment exercise, country implementation progress and achievements, and share challenges and lessons learned throughout the first year of implementation. In addition, the UNESCO project team will orient the pilot countries on project activities lined up for the second year of country implementation in order to collectively identify required support and develop action plans to achieve project objectives.

The project team and pilot countries will also have opportunities to consult international experts and the project evaluators on possible adjustments to the project design. This is consistent with the recommendation from the previous KFIT project (“Facilitating Effective ICT-Pedagogy Integration”) that encouraged UNESCO projects to undergo formative project evaluation to assist the project team in reviewing and enhancing the project design.
In summary, the Meeting will provide the participants with an opportunity to:

- take stock of the experiences and achievements of the three pilot countries in regard to developing national ICT competency standards for teachers,
- gather feedback from the Experts’ Committee on project achievements and planned next steps,
- discuss and concretize action plans for the second year of country implementation (i.e. operationalizing competency standards).

**Expected Outputs**

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

- documentation of the first year of pilot country implementations
- enhanced project design and work plan
- concrete work plans for the second year of pilot country implementations

The outputs from the Regional Meeting will be used as inputs for the project’s next steps, including the enhancement of the online Regional Guidebook and country-level activities related to competency standards adoption and operationalization.

**Dates and Venue**

The meeting will be organized at Radisson Blu Plaza, Bangkok, Thailand on **27-28 October 2015**.

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**References**
