Central Asia Symposium on ICT in Education (CASIE):
Innovative ICT Practices on Lifelong Learning

28-30 January 2013
Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan

Guideline for Preparing Country Reports

1. Background

At the International Symposium on ICT in Education held last year (13-14 September 2011, Mongolia), Central Asian countries reported on their policies, promising practices and lessons learnt in the use of ICT in education.¹ It was evidenced in this symposium that Central Asian countries shared common issues and would need to be provided a regional platform where government officials and experts can share and discuss practices in using ICT in education, related policy options and potential solutions to the common challenges faced by their respective education systems. To this end, UNESCO Bangkok (Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education) will be holding the Central Asia Symposium on ICT in Education (CASIE) in Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan on 28-30 January in 2013, with financial support from Government of Japan and in collaboration with Tokyo Institute of Technology (Tokyo Tech). The world in the 21st century is characterized by its rapid and constant changes brought by globalization and development in ICT. In order to prepare the people for such unpredictable world, a traditional thinking of “education” that revolves around formal schools is no longer valid. Instead, learning at all ages that subsumes formal, non-formal and informal channels is increasingly required. This is why UNESCO places a great importance to the concept of lifelong learning.

Central Asian countries are not exempted from this trend. Considering the similar contexts and challenges faced by the Central Asian countries, i.e. scattered population in vast territories with nomadic tradition, ICT can play an important role in reaching the unreached and promoting universal access to quality lifelong learning. In the highly connected and rapidly changing world, integrating ICT in the education system takes more than providing equal access to school education. It takes a more system-wide educational reform where learning beyond formal education is encouraged and multiple channels to diverse learning opportunities are recognized. Indeed, open access to learning throughout life has emerged as a vital component in training human resources for a knowledge-based society. With the help of technologies, such access to lifelong and life-wide learning has become possible beyond the boundary of time and space.

In this regard, it is timely and relevant to the situations in the Central Asian region to take stock of the promising policies and practices on ICT-supported open and distance learning. The Symposium will

address two specific themes, but from a broader framework of ICT-in-Education policy: 1) ICT-enhanced policy formulation and management to support lifelong learning; and 2) innovative practices on open and distance learning, including mobile and smart learning technologies and community-based ICT learning centers.

The Symposium will provide a venue for information-sharing on policies, practices and challenges in planning and implementing an ICT-supported lifelong learning environment, focusing on said specific themes. It will also serve as an opportunity for the Central Asian countries to lay the groundwork for building national capacity in the use of ICT in Education at all levels.

2. Objectives

CASIE aims:
- To provide a platform for national education policy makers, practitioners and development partners to share issues and challenges that Central Asian countries are facing in integrating ICT into the education systems, with particular emphasis on the use of ICT for policy formulation and ICT-supported open and distance learning towards enabling lifelong learning;
- To promote collaboration and partnership among the Central Asian countries in the identification of solutions to similar issues and challenges in relation to the effective and efficient use of ICT in Education.

3. Themes

1) Policies and initiatives to promote lifelong learning through ICT:
   - National policies, initiatives and programmes to support lifelong learning including ensuring coherence in ICT-related policies across sub-sectors and learning pathways/channels (e.g., general and vocational, formal, non-formal and informal)
   - Issues, challenges and future plans and policy responses to promote and further articulate the use of ICT for lifelong learning.

2) Use of ICT for planning and managing lifelong learning policies
   - National programme and capacity to use ICT for evidence-based policy development on lifelong learning (e.g. integrating learning management system (LMS) with national EMIS)
   - Use of ICT-based data and information to support lifelong learning (i.e. beyond formal education and EMIS)
   - Issues, challenges and future plans to further integrate use of ICT to improve education planning and management towards lifelong learning.

3) Open and distance learning through various ICT-supported modalities
   - Current status of ICT-supported open and distance learning, including but not limited to mobile/smart learning technologies for education for all, community-based learning through tele-centres/ multimedia/ eLearning centre, available content/ OER, ICT-enabled teacher education in rural areas, etc.
   - Issues and future plans to enhance lifelong learning through ICT-supported open and distance learning.

4. Methodology of the Country Reports

Preparation of the country documents will be carried out primarily through reviewing and analyzing the existing literature (e.g., national development plans, education sector plans, policies, and reports).
and will not require a collection of the primary data. However, it will be encouraged to consult key stakeholders through interviews during the process so that the most recent information can be reflected in the reports to the extent possible.

5. Languages

Simultaneous translation (Russian from/to English) will be provided during the Symposium and the country presentations can be made in those languages. The country reports, however, should be prepared in English and it is encouraged to prepare a PowerPoint Presentation in English as well.


- **Length and structure**: it is recommended that the report does not exceed 15 pages. Each report will include a title, the name of the author (or authors), the institution, and a table of contents. All pages should be numbered.
- **Format**: It is recommended to use the font Times New Roman, size 12 (and size 10 for footnotes). Tables, diagrams and other figures should be numbered and recorded in an index.
- **Bibliographic references**: Please ensure that information sources are properly cited. The bibliographic references should be in parentheses (Name, year). The complete bibliographic references should appear at the end of the report, by alphabetic order of the names of the authors.

7. Outline of the Country Report (total number of pages = 15)

Each paper will start with an introduction briefly describing the education system of the country, including the management structure, educational organization, major policies and priorities as well as the key statistics especially those related to ICT in education (3 pages).

7.1 National Plans and Priorities in ICT in Education and Progress Made (5 pages)

This section provides a summary and analysis of the national plans, priorities and progress made in the areas related to the themes of the symposium, as per below.

- Policies and initiatives to promote lifelong learning through ICT
- Use of ICT for planning and managing lifelong learning policies
- Examples of open and distance learning through various ICT-supported modalities

7.2 Challenges Remain, and Lessons Learnt (5 pages)

This section provides an analysis of challenges still remaining and lessons for future improvement of the use of ICT in education.

7.3 Conclusion (2 pages)

8. Deadline

All country participants should send their draft country reports in English to the Secretariat (s.yano@unesco.org, j.park@unesco.org) by 15 January 2013.