Without a doubt, ICTs have become an integral part of our lives in this digitally connected and rapidly changing 21st century society. Teachers’ role and capacity to adequately equip our young learners with relevant knowledge and skills have indeed become more critical than ever before. Faced with an enormous pressure and demands to be key agents in “changing the culture of learning”, they are expected to effectively integrate ICT into their teaching practices in a manner that goes beyond merely using technology to reinforce conventional teaching and learning approaches. However, it has been observed that there is a lack of alignment between national ICT in Education policy and actual teacher development on how to effectively use ICT to enhance pedagogy and student learning, exacerbated by inappropriate and insufficient tracking and monitoring of teachers’ progress and actual integration of ICT in the field. This ultimately leads to low capacities among teachers to support ICT in Education policies at the practice level.

In response to this, UNESCO Bangkok is currently 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 teachers’ developments throughout pre-service and in-service training are 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 teachers’ professional development.
Progress to Date

Within its first year of implementation, the project has been able to gather useful information regarding the experiences of different countries in developing and operationalizing ICT competency standards for teachers. A desk research was conducted to determine the availability of such standards and related resources in the Asia Pacific region. In addition, international experts had provided relevant information on country-level experiences, findings, and reference materials. Of these, five exemplary country case studies had been collected that discuss, in detail, the different frameworks, models, and processes undertaken.

The findings from the country cases have been synthesized towards developing the initial draft of the “Regional Guidebook for Supporting Competency-Based Teacher Training Reforms to Facilitate ICT-Pedagogy Integration”. The guidebook will consist of a package of generic tools, 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 will serve as valuable references for other governments and institutions in replicating and adapting the process in their own context, particularly in: (1) assessing the current status of teacher ICT competencies in light of existing ICT in Education policies, (2) formulating national ICT competency standards for teachers, and (3) operationalizing the competency standards by designing and implementing an appropriate assessment system and curriculum.

In preparation for the project’s pilot implementation in three selected countries (Nepal, Philippines, Uzbekistan), the project team has coordinated with the key education stakeholders in these countries for the development of their respective Country Background Report (CBR) that provides an overview of the national education system and a self-evaluation of the issues and challenges that the country has been facing in integrating ICT in education. Eventually, the CBR will serve as a critical source of references for the project team to plan and implement the strategies that best support the country. A country-level task force will be working closely with the UNESCO Bangkok team in the local project implementation.

The project has organized/ supported various ICT in Education activities in the region to promote the development of teacher competencies in effective ICT-Pedagogy integration. Furthermore, the project team has likewise restructured the network of UNESCO Resource Distribution and Training Centres (RDTCs) in rolling out country-level ICT-Pedagogy Integration activities. The network will also be tapped in clarifying the nuances related to the review/ development of teacher training curriculum and assessment of competencies that are core elements in operationalizing competency standards.

Regional Meeting 2014

On 21-22 August 2014, UNESCO Bangkok will bring together key project stakeholders to share and review the project’s progress and discuss future plans. This is consistent with the recommendation from the previous KFIT project (“Facilitating Effective ICT-Pedagogy Integration”) that encouraged UNESCO projects to undergo a formative project evaluation to assist the project team in reviewing and enhancing the project design.

In addition, the draft Regional Guidebook will be presented to orient the task force members from the 3 pilot countries on the different modalities and resources used by the 5 exemplary country cases, for possible replication or adaption. Comments and suggestions will likewise be gathered
towards improving the Guidebook, to ensure readability, relevance, and usefulness for the Asia Pacific region.

The Meeting will provide the opportunity for the participants to:

1. gather feedback from the Experts’ Committee on project achievements and planned next steps,
2. collect comments and suggestions on the initial set of project outputs,
3. take stock of the experiences of the 3 pilot countries in relation to teachers’ professional development and their implementation plans for the KFIT-II Project, and
4. determine how the Regional Guidebook can be adapted to the respective contexts of the 3 pilot countries.

**Expected Output**

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

- enhanced project design and work plan
- improved country cases and Regional Guidebook
- concrete workplans for the pilot country implementations

The outputs of the Regional Meeting will be used as inputs for the project’s next steps including the finalization of the Regional Guidebook ver1 and country-level activities related to competency standards development and adoption.

**Dates and Venue**

The meeting will be organized at Double Tree by Hilton, Sukhumvit Soi 26, Bangkok, Thailand on 21-22 August 2014.

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