

## **Action Group Concept Note**

### **Building a stakeholder consultation process for “National Policy on ICT in School Education” Champion- Jayalakshmi Chitoor**

This proposal seeks to work over the next year or so with the United Nations Solution Exchange ICT for Development Community of Practice. The proponents of the Action Group include – Centre for Science, Development and Media Studies (CSDMS) ([www.csdms.in](http://www.csdms.in)) , Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative (GeSCI) ([www.gesci.org](http://www.gesci.org)) and Ministry of human resources development (MHRD). The proposal seeks to define a national consultation process combining online thematic conference/e-discussion clubbed with several regional consultations on issues that have to be collated towards providing a consultative and participatory policy development process.

The ICTD CoP collaboration aims to bring together the expertise of over 1400 members of the community which brings together multi-stakeholders within the ICT for education sub-domain and beyond. This would add value to the process of consultation.

The current maturity of the facilitation and expertise gathering role that SE-ICTD group has played makes this a timely opportunity for the process, already initiated since the past 18 months or so to a logical crystallisation stage for the policy formulation process.

#### **INTRODUCTION – NEED FOR A POLICY ON ICT IN SCHOOL EDUCATION**

There is really no need to restate the growing role of ICTs in enhancing the process and outcome of School Education. It is a well accepted fact that the effective usage of ICTs in the classroom is correlated to positive academic outcomes, including higher test scores, better attitudes towards schools, and better understanding of abstract concepts. A longitudinal study of a statewide experiment with classroom computers found that those most in need of help – low-income, low-achieving students, and students with disabilities – made the most gains.

In addition to better performance in traditional measures of academic achievement, a secondary benefit of ICTs in education is a new generations' familiarisation with the technologies that have become integral components of the modern world. However, despite the positive impacts emerging from the integration of ICTs – improvements in teaching, learning and administration, there is a growing awareness among Ministries of Education (MoE), Schools and practitioners of the inherent risk factors involved: costly deployments; poor planning; lack of coordination, and lack of correspondence to educational objectives. To increase the potential impact of ICTs in the education system these risk factors must be reduced.

#### **1. BUILDING THE CASE FOR A NATIONAL ICT IN EDUCATION POLICY**

India's situation is unique in several ways: while on the one hand, India has a robust IT sector with sufficient human resource capacity to meet the demands of economic growth, it must also face the realities of inequity represented by approximately 35 million out-of-school children – the largest population of its kind in the world.

The Government of India has several National as well as State specific schemes that run concurrent to a large number of privately led ICT initiatives across India. India can now boast the world's largest number of pilot ICT initiatives on the ground: the consequence of this proliferation

of schemes and initiatives has left Indian schools in the position of being testing grounds for ICT initiatives.

There is a prevailing assumption today that technologies, in and of themselves, represent the greatest challenge in the effective integration of ICTs into education. However, technologies, regardless of issues of infrastructure and expense, present the least costly and least complicated element to be considered in a series of elements that can result in these technologies becoming sustainable and beneficial.

The reality is that effective integration of ICTs into education systems is far more complicated, as it involves:

- A rigorous analysis of educational objectives and a changing educational environment.
- A realistic understanding of the potential of technologies.
- A purposeful consideration of the pre- and co-requisites of the effectiveness of ICTs for education.
- The prospects of this process within the dynamics of educational change and reform.

The process of integrating ICTs into educational systems and activities can be arbitrary, ad hoc and disjointed -- leading to ineffective, unsustainable and wasteful investments. On the other hand, a comprehensive set of analytical, diagnostic and planning tools can force a certain discipline on the process <sup>1</sup>.

### **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

In recognition of the need to develop an appropriate and deliberate policy to enhance the role of ICT in education and poverty eradication, the Department of Education, MHRD, GoI, has decided to initiate a consultative and participatory process to formulate the national ICT in Education Policy for India. The Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative, (GeSCI) founded by the United Nations ICT Task Force will provide strategic assistance to the Department of Education in the process of Policy Formulation. The partnership will work on the following:

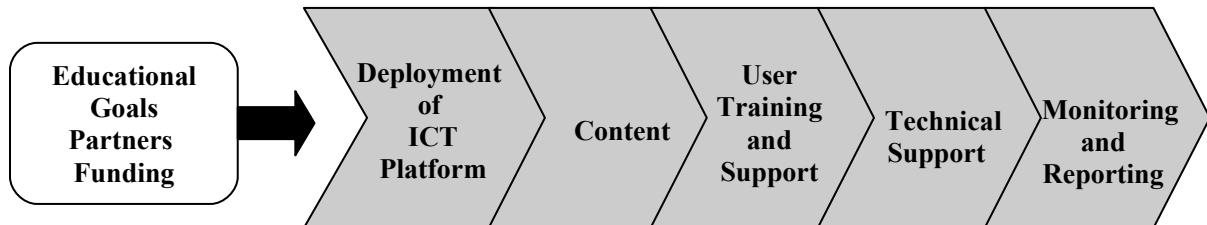
1. Developing an appropriate framework to support the effective deployment and integration of ICTs in the Education system.
2. Providing a platform for dialogue amongst all relevant stakeholders to ensure alignment of plans, programmes and projects.
3. Evolving a strategy for leveraging economies of scale in procurement of standard content, equipment and services, and leveraging resources from other partners.
4. Evolving a mechanism to ensure that knowledge, expertise and skills are shared across all states and territories.
5. Building in-house capacities within the MoE to conduct regular updates for ensuring a dynamic and live policy.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ictinedtoolkit.org/user/conceptblueprint.php>

## Approach

- An efficient demand-driven ‘end-to-end’ system, based on strong partnership and close co-ordination, is the key to achieving real impact:



## PROCESS OF POLICY FORMULATION

- The MHRD will create operating mechanisms for effective policy formulation, adoption and implementation processes, through committees and task forces drawing on the existing expertise across thematic areas.
- A national consultative process to understand the needs, challenges and issues of the states and union territories and other stakeholders at large will be initiated through several partnerships. This consultative process could take the form of online consultations and regional workshops in key areas and meetings with key stakeholders, commissioned studies and surveys.
- The collated learning will provide recommendations to MHRD to enable a participatory policy formulation. Since both technology and processes will be dynamic, the consultations will continue as a dynamic expertise sharing mechanism.

### Expectation from the Solution Exchange ICTD community

This proposal seeks to obtain the buy-in of the ICTD community, and active participation and identification of regional/state level champions to further the consultations to the length and breadth of this country.