EdTech Hub

Clear evidence, better decisions, more learning.

Session 3: How can I develop an aligned and actionable EdTech strategy?

November 2022

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About this document

Background

The Strategic Choices for Education Reform workshop held in Zimbabwe in November 2022 aimed to provide a forum for senior government officials to reflect and consider the strategic reform options for their countries. The objective was to convene officials in key positions in the ministries of education, higher education, finance, and planning to learn about important issues and approaches in education; exchange experiences and lessons; develop an understanding of what is necessary to reconstruct better and more resilient education systems; and to transform the large potential of young people, through human capital investments, into development and prosperity.

EdTech Hub was invited to facilitate the day of the workshop focused on harnessing ICT for better teaching and learning. This presentation is one of several used in the workshop to promote learning, discussion, and problem solving among the participants. We have published four presentations. Details are on the next slide.

Published presentations from the workshop

We have published four presentations from the workshop, you can access these in our Evidence Library using the following links

- **Session 3: How can I develop an aligned and actionable EdTech strategy**

- **Session 4: How can I rapidly upskill my large teacher workforce?**

- **Session 5: How can I use EdTech to ensure that students are provided with quality educational content, at the right level?**

- **Session 6: How do I ensure my EdTech investments are cost effective**

Why might a country want to create an EdTech strategy?

1. **Facing forward.** How can EdTech be used to help create the envisioned future?

2. **Capturing what we are doing today.** How can we develop a strategy that consolidates everything related to EdTech or digital learning that we are working on?

3. **Reacting to circumstances.** How can we use EdTech to respond to recent events and disruptions to education, such as the Covid-19 pandemic?

What else might EdTech strategies be called?

EdTech	Strategy	Other names for 'EdTech strategy'
- Education(al) Technology - ICT in Education (or IT / ICTE) - Digital Learning* - Digital Education* - Technology-supported learning / education	- Policy - Plan - Master plan - Roadmap** - Action plan**	- ICT in Education Master plan - Digital Learning Plan - Digital Learning Roadmap - EdTech / Digital Learning Action Plan

* Depending on how it is defined, 'digital learning' or 'digital education' may exclude non-digital forms of technology such as radio and television.

** 'Roadmaps' or 'action plans' may use a shorter time horizon than a strategy, policy or masterplan

It is important to understand the variety of these different terms / titles when looking for examples from other contexts.

Why are EdTech strategies important?

1

Much was learnt in a short time

Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, our cumulative knowledge about EdTech has rapidly increased.

Strategies are an important mechanism to embed effective and sustainable practices, and also to dispose of ineffective approaches.

2

The prudence of strategising

Education strategies are important for coordinating stakeholders and mobilising resources. Strategies communicate the credibility, sustainability, and trustworthiness of policies to funders and partners.

(⬆GPE & IIEP-UNESCO, 2015)

3

The specificities of EdTech

Aspects of EdTech necessitate strategizing beyond general education planning, including:

- Constant shifts
- Diverse use across the education sector
- Not a goal but a tool
- Long term maintenance
- Unique inequalities

4

The need for policy leadership

Education policymakers need to determine how to effectively mainstream EdTech into broader education systems and services.

Examples of our work on national EdTech strategies

Turkey

Pakistan

Laos

Thailand

Guinea

Cambodia

Sierra Leone

Ghana

Bangladesh

Sao Tome &
Principe

Kenya

Tanzania

ICT in Education strategies and education sector plans

- National EdTech and broader education strategies should be:

  ☑ Vision driven   ☑ Achievable

  ☑ Strategic   ☑ Sensitive to country context

  ☑ Holistic   ☑ Attentive to disparities

  ☑ Evidence-based

- Given these similarities, it is crucial that EdTech strategies are aligned with the wider national education sector plans and strategies. Therefore, focused on education goals, rather than technology goals.

Before developing a strategy, be aware:

1

There is no one 'right' way to create a strategy, but many ways it can go awry

2

The process, emphasis, and role of a strategy will look different depending on the nature of a nation's education system
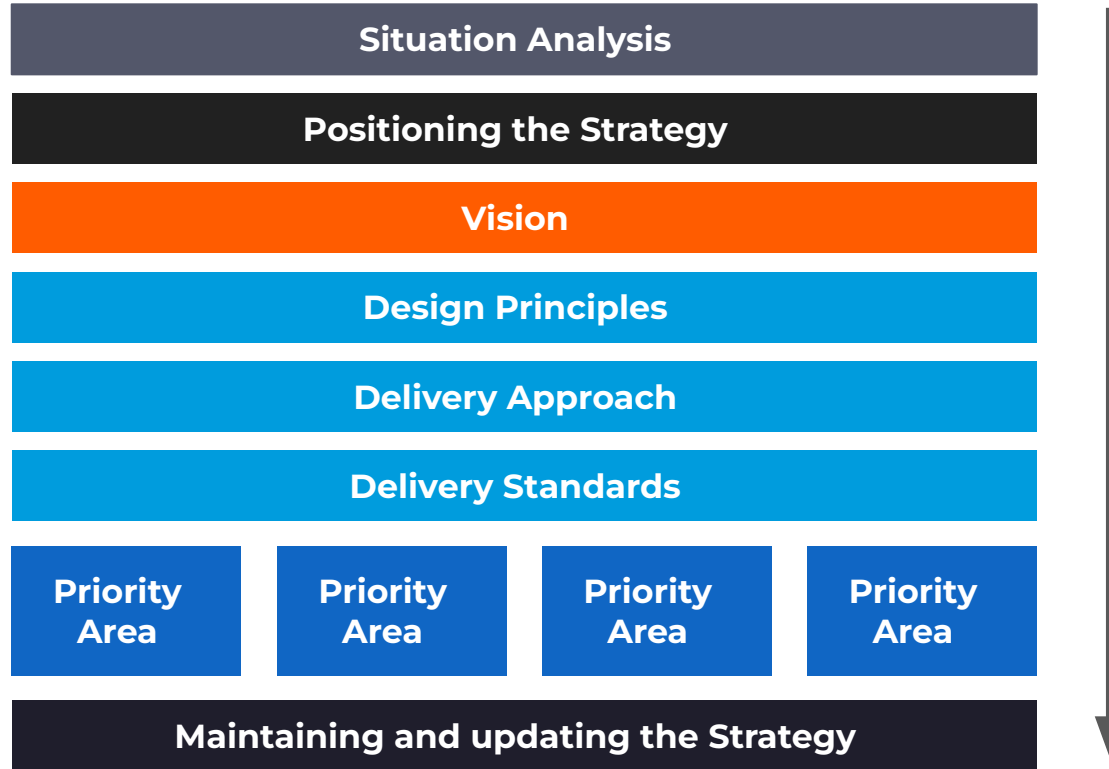
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The particularities of EdTech merit special approaches to planning and strategising

4

Balance comprehensiveness and feasibility in a plan

Process: developing a national EdTech strategy

Situation Analysis

Positioning the Strategy

Vision

Design Principles

Delivery Approach

Delivery Standards

Priority Area	Priority Area	Priority Area	Priority Area

Maintaining and updating the Strategy

Developed on the basis of UNESCO's ICT masterplan guidance (↑UNESCO, 2022)

Comprehensive EdTech strategies and policies often cover the following components:

ICT in Education strategies often cover the following components:

1. Vision and planning	2. ICT infrastructure	3. Educators' & teacher professional development	4. Skills and competencies	5. Learning resources
6. Assessment & examination	7. Data for decision-making & EMIS	8. EdTech ecosystem & private sector	9. Equity & inclusion	10. Safety & privacy

These components are based on the SABER-ICT framework paper for policy analysis (⇡Trucano, 2016)

Factors to consider when drawing on example strategies

In looking for examples of EdTech strategies there are a number of factors to consider including:

1 Level of economic development and maturity of an EdTech ecosystem

2 Geography

3 Education system structure (centralised vs. decentralised)

4 Plan history and ownership

5 Top-down vs. bottom-up approach to strategy development
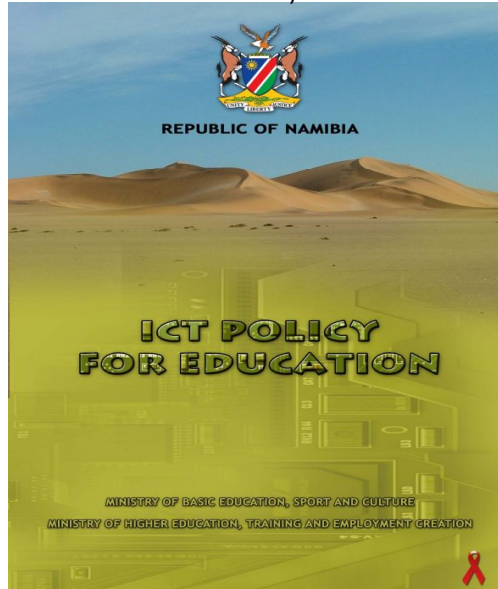
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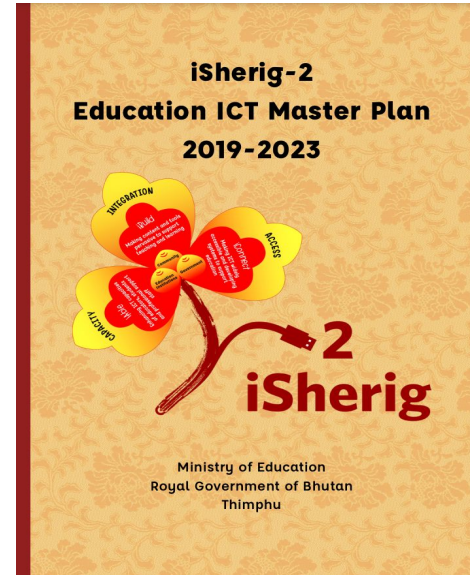
Exemplar EdTech strategies

Namibia's ICT Policy for Education
(⬆Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture & Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation, 2007)

Bhutan Ministry of Education's iSherig-2 Education ICT Master Plan
(⬆Ministry of Education (Bhutan), 2019)

Namibia's ICT Policy for Education

Vision and planning	Defines central vision and provides detailed description of the systems, processes, and structures that will support its implementation
EdTech ecosystem & private sector	Outlines opportunities for collaboration and cooperation between governing bodies and private sector actors for the benefit of EdTech uptake and use
Equity & inclusion	Offers contextually relevant goals and expectations related to EdTech-specific equity and inclusion

Bhutan's iSherig-2 Education ICT Master Plan

Skills and competencies	Aims to ensure availability and accessibility of digital resources
Learning resources	Defines clear competency standards for educators and learners and clearly allocates responsibilities
Data for decision-making & EMIS	Outlines a plan to upgrade the Ministry of Education's EMIS to improve user experience

What we have learnt about *ineffective* strategies

In our review of ICT in Education strategies, we have also come across less effective plans.
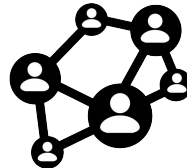
Unclear vision

Lack of ICT infrastructure

Limited EMIS and data processes

Insufficient support for educators

Poorly defined leadership

Lack of financial sustainability

Key takeaways

What is an effective EdTech strategy?

Plans / strategies outline an approach for using EdTech in support of education goals.

Effective strategies are evidence-based, feasible, clear and practical, and have a high likelihood of successful implementation and improving learning outcomes.

How are effective EdTech strategies made?

The development process of these tools is complex and should be flexible, iterative, and should prioritise:

- Robust situational analyses
- Coordination within policy ecosystems
- Collaboration with stakeholders
- Setting clear central vision and goals
- Prioritising learning for iteration and course correction
- Prioritisation of sustainable financing

References

These references are available digitally in our evidence library at
https://docs.edtechhub.org/lib/VVT2BI9M

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