

# UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE)

## Medium-Term Strategy 2026–2029

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# **UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE)**

## **Medium-Term Strategy 2026-2029**

### **Introduction**

This strategic document outlines the direction, priorities, and planned actions of the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE) for 2026–2029. Building on the achievements of the 2022–2025 Strategy, it responds to the rapidly evolving landscape of digital transformation in education, with particular attention to the unprecedented growth and application of artificial intelligence (AI) in learning, teaching, and systemic change of education.

As the only UNESCO Category 1 Institute fully dedicated to ICT in education, IITE will continue supporting Member States in translating UNESCO’s normative frameworks, particularly the Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence and AI competency frameworks for students and teachers, into practice. Its work will be aligned with UNESCO’s Major Programme I, adopted at the UNESCO 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of General Conference in November 2025, including the Outputs assigned to IITE.

Looking ahead, IITE must seize the momentum of digital transformation in education. With only five years remaining before 2030 - the target year for achieving SDG4 and the Education 2030 Agenda - the Institute has a unique opportunity to accelerate human-centered, ethical, inclusive and responsible integration of AI and emerging technologies in learning and teaching. While education faces disruptions and dilemmas, and the world navigates new directions, IITE will remain committed to ensuring that technology serves humanity as a transformative force for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all - a foundation for peace and a vital catalyst for sustainable development.

### **I. The Changing Landscape of Education and UNESCO’s Strategic Priorities**

#### **1. The Changing Landscape of Education in the Age of AI**

Since the adoption of the previous Medium-Term Strategy 2022–2025, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has evolved at an unprecedented pace, reshaping education across the world. AI offers extraordinary opportunities: it can personalize learning, enhance teaching practices, support data-driven decision-making, and expand access to quality education for learners in remote or underserved communities. AI-powered tools are already enabling adaptive learning, real-time feedback, and more engaging, inclusive learning environments. Moreover, AI has the great potential to support Greening Education, promote multilingualism in education and intercultural understanding, and advance education for peace and sustainable development.

However, this rapid transformation also brings unprecedented challenges. How to keep up with the evolution of AI, its potential uses and applications, and its transformative impacts in education? Meanwhile, a widening AI divide persists, with more than 2.6 billion people still lacking internet access, according to the ITU. UNESCO studies indicate that many AI systems

reflect biases embedded in their training data, which can marginalize learners from diverse linguistic, cultural, or social backgrounds. These realities highlight the urgent need for ethical, inclusive, and responsible approaches to the use of AI in education to preserve its inherently relational nature.

Moreover, studies have revealed that while AI tools provide immediate performance gains, they can diminish intrinsic motivation, critical thinking, and engagement, leaving users more prone to boredom. Emerging research also shows that AI can hinder the development of independent thinking and inhibit children's cognitive, social, and problem-solving skills. Thus, AI also reshapes the environment of learning and personal relations. These findings remind us that although generative AI is a powerful technology, further research and new approaches are needed to understand how to harness its benefits while preserving the essential qualities of learning and ensuring an environment that supports personality development and the well-being of the young generation.

These research and findings, among many others, demonstrate that we are entering a new phase of transformation unlike any before, unprecedented and full of opportunities, but also deep uncertainties. Ethical AI integration is less a technological challenge and more a human-systems design challenge. It requires continuous dialogue, adaptable policies, and an unwavering commitment to educational values over mere technological convenience. The central question remains: how can we ensure that technology serves humanity, rather than the other way around? The answer to this question will shape not only the future of education, but the future of our societies as a whole.

## **2. UNESCO's Leading Role and Strategic Priorities**

Around the world, educators, learners, policymakers, and communities are increasingly co-designing AI systems grounded in local needs, cultural contexts, and ethical principles. Lessons from past technological revolutions, such as the global adoption of mobile technologies, demonstrate that equitable impact is achieved when stakeholders actively shape, adapt, and integrate technology meaningfully within their own realities.

As education systems face profound disruptions and dilemmas, and as Member States and the global education community collectively explore new directions, UNESCO has taken a leading role. Since the unanimous adoption of the historic Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, UNESCO's first-ever global standard on the ethics of AI, in 2021, the Organization has been guiding the implementation of its core principles worldwide. These efforts translate ethical commitments into concrete actions in education policy, system planning, and classroom practice. To realize the new vision of UNESCO for the people, close to realities, and looking towards the future set up by Professor Khaled El-Enany, the Director-General of UNESCO, AI and emerging technologies have a major role to play, provided UNESCO navigates the right directions and delivers efficient and timely technical support to Member States.

Within the Education Sector, UNESCO has developed a comprehensive suite of initiatives to support Member States. These include the Guidance for Generative AI in Education and Research, the AI Competency Framework for Teachers and Students, and the flagship project Artificial Intelligence and the Futures of Learning, including the publication *AI and the Future of Education: Disruptions, Dilemmas and Directions*. Together, these initiatives provide a forward-looking vision, research insights, and technical guidance for policymakers, educators, and learners to meaningfully integrate AI into teaching, learning, and governance processes.

As summarized by Ms. Stefania Giannini, UNESCO Assistant Director-General (ADG) for Education, five strategic priority issues have been identified by Member States and the global education community:

- **Confronting the AI divide:** The digital divide is rapidly becoming an AI divide. Without electricity, meaningful connectivity, and affordable devices, millions risk being left behind.
- **Ensuring safety and ethics:** Human rights and human dignity must come first. AI tools in education must be transparent, accountable, and free from bias.
- **Supporting teachers as irreplaceable actors:** AI should empower, not replace educators. This requires sustained investment in teachers' professional development and digital competencies.
- **Promoting localization and cultural relevance:** AI must work for all, reflecting the diversity of societies, languages, and communities around the world.
- **Fostering global solidarity and shared standards:** No country can navigate this transition alone. International cooperation is vital to set norms, develop curricula, and exchange knowledge on emerging pedagogies.

To address these challenging issues, we must adhere to the core values established in the UNESCO historical document, *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence*—namely, human rights and dignity, inclusiveness and fairness, sustainability, and peaceful and just societies, along with the ten principles of action outlined in the document: proportionality and do no harm, safety and security, fairness and non-discrimination, sustainability, right to privacy and data protection, human oversight and determination, transparency and explainability, responsibility and accountability, awareness and literacy, and multi-stakeholder and adaptive governance.

### **3. Priority Needs of Member States and Expectations for IITE**

To better understand the needs and expectations of Member States, IITE conducted a survey among National Commissions for UNESCO during the preparation of this Strategy. The responses provide valuable insight into national priorities, challenges, and preferred forms of support from IITE in advancing ICT and AI in education, highlighting teacher capacity building, policy and planning, inclusion, and integration of local contexts as priorities at national level.

They serve as a guide for identifying IITE's strategic directions, programme priorities and main actions over the next four years.

### **Key challenges and national priorities in promoting ICT and AI in education**

Member States identified the following as their top priorities:

- Supporting and empowering teachers with new pedagogical skills, teaching and assessment approaches, and digital competencies.
- Developing national ICT and AI in education strategies and related policies.
- Promoting the use of ICT and AI that reflects local contexts, languages, and cultures.

### **Areas of IITE's mandate and activities most relevant at the national level**

Respondents highlighted the following most valuable forms of engagement with IITE:

- Capacity-building activities such as webinars, workshops, and online courses.
- Global and regional conferences (e.g., the Global Smart Education Conference, the Global MOOC and Online Education Conference, and the Creativity in Education Summit, International Conference on Digital Lifelong Learning).
- Digital platforms and online resources (e.g., the E-Library for Teachers, the IIOE Platform for higher education capacity building, online resources on capacity building for teachers, policymakers and for Health and Well-being Education).

### **Most effective ways IITE could support Member States**

Member States expressed strong interest in IITE's continued and expanded role in:

- Expanding teacher training and professional development opportunities.
- Promoting inclusion, gender equality, and the empowerment of vulnerable groups.
- Strengthening technical expertise, policy guidance, and research-based support for digital transformation in education.

## **II. IITE's Role and Strength in UNESCO strategies**

### **1. IITE's Role and Responsibilities in UNESCO Strategies**

The **UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy for 2022–2029** provides the overarching framework for the development of the new IITE Strategy 2026–2029 and defines the Institute's role and responsibilities.

UNESCO has five Major Programmes for 2022-2029, of which **Major Programme I** is devoted to Education. In accordance with the resolution adopted by the 43rd Session of the UNESCO General Conference, IITE is requested to contribute to Intersectoral **Output 7.4** and **Output 1.10** under Major Programme I.

- **Intersectoral Output 7.4:** Knowledge and capacities of Member States and stakeholders enhanced for inclusive digital transformation, advancing sustainable AI and data governance, equitable access to quality education and diversity of contents.
- **Output 1.10:** A common international vision driven by cooperation, monitoring, research, and foresight promoted to advance progress toward SDG4 and shape the post-2030 education agenda

According to the resolution, IITE as a global center of excellence for technologies in education, has a unique mandate and plays a fundamental role in the implementation of Major Programme I. The Institute should provide services to Member States in a proactive, flexible, effective, efficient, timely, and sustainable way. It contributes to the achievement of UNESCO's strategic objectives, outcomes, and outputs of Major Programme I, particularly with regard to capacity development, policy advice, research, and knowledge-sharing in the field of technologies in education, through:

- Evidence-based policy research, analytical studies and the collection and dissemination of best practices on the use of technologies in education for teachers and learners.
- Provision of technical assistance, knowledge and information sharing with Member States on the application of technologies in education, with particular emphasis on teachers and learners and the digital content of curricula.
- Harnessing digital technologies to raise awareness and promote health and well-being education for youth with a focus on technology-enhanced learning for healthy living.

## 2. IITE's Opportunities, Strengths and Challenges

The rapid advancement of emerging digital technologies, particularly the recent breakthroughs in generative AI, is profoundly reshaping the global education landscape. In this transformative context, the demand from UNESCO Member States and the global education community for guidance and technical support has never been more urgent or more intense. The open questions and concerns we face have never been so profound or so complex. How can we ensure that technology truly serves humanity, fostering a human-centered, inclusive, and responsible digital transformation that benefits all? This is a shared challenge before us all, not only for the achievement of SDG 4 and the Education 2030 Agenda but also for the vision of education beyond 2030. As the only UNESCO Category I Institute with a global mandate for ICT in education, IITE stands at a unique moment of opportunity and momentum to contribute meaningfully to this endeavor.

Over the past 28 years since its establishment in 1997, and particularly during the last Medium-Term Strategy period 2022–2025, IITE has accumulated extensive experience and strengthened its professional capacity in serving Member States and the global education community. The Institute has demonstrated the following key strengths:

- **Professional team:** IITE possesses a highly experienced and skilled team capable of leading transformative changes in the field of ICT in education, coordinating multisectoral projects, mobilizing resources, and demonstrating dedication and resilience in challenging situations. The team is also able to incorporate complementary competencies as needed.
- **Established online platforms and resources:** Over the past Medium-Term Strategy period, IITE has developed and collected a rich set of online platforms and resources. These provide a solid foundation for designing and implementing new projects, supporting capacity-building for teachers, youth, and policymakers, and fostering new collaborative partnerships.
- **Partnerships and networks:** IITE has developed a wide network of collaborative partnerships across regions and thematic areas, connecting education experts, public and private stakeholders, and technology partners. These networks enhance IITE's collaboration both internally within UNESCO and externally with multisectoral partners.
- **Strategic guidance and support:** The guidance of IITE's Governing Board and UNESCO Headquarters, and the support of the Host Country ensure IITE's strategic directions and continued development in the new Medium-term period.

The current challenges and risks that IITE faces include:

- **Strengthening professional capacity for AI-enabled education transformation:** While IITE has a highly capable team, further development is needed in leading research and providing technical support to Member States in the emerging AI-driven transformation of teaching, learning and education system. This requires both upskilling staff in cutting-edge research, AI applications in education and adapting methodologies to diverse national contexts.
- **Limited funding and resource constraints:** The Institute relies on funding and stable resources provided by UNESCO Headquarters and the Host Country. Ensuring the stability of the core team and the sustainability of its programs necessitates proactive fundraising, resource mobilization, and the development of diversified funding streams.
- **Operating in a challenging geopolitical environment:** Geopolitical tensions and uncertainties create a challenging environment that requires resilience, flexibility, and careful management of staff, operations, and program implementation. Maintaining continuity, effective collaboration, and engagement with Member States under such conditions demands adaptive approaches and special support from UNESCO Headquarters and the Host Country.

### III. IITE's Mission and Priorities

IITE's mission and priorities 2026-2029 are guided by UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy 2022–2029, the mandates assigned to the Institute by the 43rd Session of the UNESCO General

Conference. They reflect the pressing needs and concerns of Member States (as revealed in the survey conducted in the preparation of this Strategy) and the global education community in a rapidly evolving educational landscape shaped by Generative AI and other emerging technologies.

## 1. Mission Statement

UNESCO IITE is committed to advancing a human-centered, ethical, and inclusive digital transformation of education. As a global center of excellence with a distinct mandate on the use of technologies in education, the Institute aims to foster the innovative, meaningful and responsible integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital technologies into teaching and learning processes and awareness raising. Building on its technical expertise and extensive international partnerships, IITE serves as a thought leader and capacity builder, supporting Member States and the global education community in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) and in shaping the education agenda beyond 2030.

Strategically, IITE is determined to act as:

- **Thought Leader:** As a central pillar of UNESCO's leadership in guiding global research and debate on the ethics of AI in education, IITE addresses critical issues such as the AI divide and inclusion, the new role of teachers and human communication in education, content localization and multilingualism, bias, and data security.
- **Advocacy Facilitator:** Co-leading, alongside strategic partners, global and regional consultations and forums on AI and emerging technologies in future learning, contributing substantively to guidance for integrating AI in teaching and learning, innovative ideas, and analysis and sharing of best practices.
- **Innovative Application Cluster:** Showcasing best practices and guiding the applications of AI and ICT-powered tools and technical solutions that transform teaching and learning, while promoting the ethical, inclusive, and responsible use of AI and emerging technologies in education, and supporting socio-emotional learning and well-being education, and the prevention of school violence and cyberbullying.
- **Capacity Building Pioneer:** Demonstrating effective strategies and offering concrete programs for developing AI and digital competencies for policymakers, teachers and students, establishing networks, and creating scalable implementation models of Open Education and Open Educational Resources (OER), Media and Information Literacy (MIL), Inclusion of Education, and other communities of practice.

## 2. IITE's Contribution to UNESCO Strategic Priorities

UNESCO has two Global Priorities: Priority Africa and Gender Equality, while Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Youth are UNESCO's priority target groups. In addition, Inclusion remains a core pillar of UNESCO's mission across all programmes. Building on IITE's

comparative strengths and extensive experience, the following priorities are highlighted across its programmes:

- **Priority Africa and SIDS:** Expanding projects and partnerships to support capacity building for policymakers, teachers, and youth in African Member States and SIDS.
- **Gender Equality:** Leading research, advocacy and promotion of best practices that support gender equality in education by integrating AI and digital technologies, ensuring that all projects and activities contribute substantively to this priority.
- **Inclusion:** Mainstreaming inclusion across all programmes, with a focus on supporting and engaging vulnerable groups and special themes such as disability inclusion (in line with the UNESCO Disability Inclusion Strategy 2026-2029), older adults, and multilingualism in teaching and learning.
- **Youth:** Empowering young people through targeted training on AI competencies, health and well-being education literacy, and actively engaging them in global and regional events, initiatives, and competitions.

### 3. IITE's Regional Focus and Key Target Groups

As a global UNESCO category 1 Institute, IITE's mandate and activities extend across all regions of the world. While the Institute continues to maintain its contribution and visibility at the global level, it also prioritizes certain regions through established partnership networks and in view of limited resources. This focus does not, however, constrain IITE's openness to initiating new activities and partnerships in regions where its presence is currently limited.

Building on the Institute's successful experience during the Medium-Term Strategy period 2022–2025, IITE's priority regions will be:

- Africa,
- Eastern Europe and Central Asia,
- the Arab States.

Meanwhile activities and partnerships will be further expanded in:

- Southeast Asia,
- Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

### 4. IITE's Target Groups

- **Teachers and educators.** IITE's platforms, resources, and programmes are primarily designed for teachers and educators, including school counsellors and instructors from teacher training institutions, who form the first target group. These programmes aim to develop AI competencies and digital skills, innovative teaching models, and new learning

environment across all levels, from pre-schools to higher education. Teachers and educators supporting disability inclusion and other vulnerable groups are a special focus.

- **Policymakers and educational administrators.** A strategically important group for planning and management, policymakers and educational administrators benefit from research guidance, capacity-building initiatives, and opportunities to share experiences and showcase best practices.
- **Students and youth.** This target group comprises students of all levels of education, and youth, who are offered age-appropriate opportunities for consultation, training, competitions, and the exchange of innovative practices and cross-cultural experiences.
- **Researchers, technology partners, and lifelong learners.** Finally, IITE's resources and programmes also support researchers, technology partners, parents of students, and lifelong learners, extending the impact of its work across the broader education ecosystem.

#### IV. IITE's Strategic Objectives

IITE's mandate and contribution to UNESCO Major Programme are outlined in the UNESCO C/5 document adopted at the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of UNESCO General Conference. Within the framework of the key responsibilities assigned to the Institute, IITE identifies the following Strategic Objectives for 2026–2029:

1. **Evidence-based policy research, analytical studies and the collection and dissemination of best practices on the use of technologies in education for teachers and learners**
  - **Policy research and analytical reports** will be produced to address key issues related to ethics, inclusion, privacy and safety in AI and emerging technologies transforming education, including the new AI divide, gender bias, and the evolving role of teachers and human communication in teaching and learning, the new trends of Open Education and OER. These studies will support Member States, particularly policymakers and educators, in advancing a human-centered and inclusive transformation of education in the AI era.
  - **Foresight reports** on the pedagogical implications of AI for teaching and learning will be published to provide practical guidance for teachers on applying new pedagogies and technologies. Best practices in the use of AI and emerging technologies will be systematically collected and analyzed, highlighting innovative approaches across regions and sectors, with particular emphasis on educational institutions, schools, and teachers.
  - **Research findings and best practices** will be disseminated to Member States, policymakers, and teachers through conferences and forums organized by IITE and its partners at global, regional, and national levels, as well as through IITE's partnership networks, website, and social media channels.

- **Collaboration and partnerships** with organizations from the education and technology sectors will be strengthened and expanded to jointly develop research reports and to enhance the collection and dissemination of best practices, while maintaining Africa and SIDS, Gender equality, Inclusion, and Youth as priorities.
- 2. Provision of technical assistance, knowledge and information sharing with Member States on the application of technologies in education, with particular emphasis on teachers and learners and the digital content of curricula.**
- **Guidance and recommendations** will be published to provide technical support to policymakers and teachers in integrating digital skills and AI/ICT competencies into curricula, leveraging AI and emerging technologies to transform teaching and learning, and ensuring ethical, inclusive, meaningful, and responsible applications, while safeguarding data protection, school cybersecurity, and the safe use of digital technologies in schools.
  - **Platforms and online resources**, including micro-credential will be expanded and new platforms will be developed in collaboration with partners. These resources will be multilingual and cover regions such as Africa, Central and Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe, and the Arab States, serving as hubs and online communities for teachers to share experiences, strengthen AI competencies, and access professional development support.
  - **Regular webinars and training programs**, both online and onsite, will be organized based on IITE's guidance and online courses. These sessions will focus on digital skills and AI competencies for teachers, Media and Information Literacy (MIL), emphasizing ethical, inclusive, and responsible use of emerging technologies, and addressing key concerns such as the evolving role of teachers, disability inclusion, multilingualism, bias, and data security.
  - **Competitions and awards** for teachers and students in digital skills, leadership, creativity, and future-focused design will be organized to encourage sharing of innovative practices, exploration of cutting-edge technologies, and collaboration in intercultural working environments.
- 3. Harnessing digital technologies to raise awareness and promote health and well-being education for youth with a focus on technology-enhanced learning for healthy living.**
- Opportunities for a meaningful, inclusive, safe and ethical use of AI and ICT-powered tools in well-being and healthy living promotion will be explored and partners will be supported to maximize the reach and impact of such tools.
  - The regional well-being education learning platform will be continuously updated to keep pace with evolving needs and thematic priorities. It will provide specialists across Eastern

Europe and Central Asia with relevant training opportunities on the development of social and emotional skills, health literacy, and the prevention and effective response to violence and bullying — including cyberbullying. The platform will also help foster safe, inclusive learning environments that support personal growth and development.

- Partnerships will be established and strengthened with national educational platforms to update existing and develop new resources, ensuring their localization and relevance.
- Online tools, applications, and platforms that promote youth well-being and provide psycho-social support, will be reviewed to assess their advantages, limitations, and the evolving needs of their users. Based on these findings, recommendations and technical support will be provided to interested stakeholders.

## **V. Main Programme Pillars**

To fulfil the Strategic Objectives for 2026-2029, IITE will take concrete actions in five areas as Main Programme Pillars at global, regional and national levels.

### **Programme Pillar 1. Conventions at Global and Regional Levels**

As an Advocacy Facilitator, IITE will strengthen its role as a global convener and catalyst for dialogue on the transformation of education in the digital age. Through global and regional conferences and forums, IITE will provide inclusive platforms for policymakers, educators, technology partners, and youth to exchange experiences, address emerging challenges, and co-create innovative pathways for the future of education.

Between 2026 and 2029, IITE will consolidate and expand its portfolio of flagship events to enhance global policy dialogue, knowledge exchange, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Key initiatives will include:

- Global Smart Education Conference, co-organized with Beijing Normal University (BNU), serving as a high-level forum for sharing evidence, policies, and innovations on smart education ecosystems;
- Global MOOC and Online Education Conference, co-organized with the Global MOOC and Online Education Alliance (GMA), advancing international cooperation in digital learning and open education;
- International Conference on Digital Lifelong Learning, co-organized with Shanghai Open University (SOU) and UNESCO Institute UIL, strengthening lifelong learning through ethical and innovative use of AI and collaboration network; and
- Creativity in Education Summit, held with the Global Institute of Creative Thinking (GIoCT) and OECD, promoting creativity, innovation, and human-centered learning in the AI era.

At the regional level, IITE will foster localized innovation and capacity building through collaborative platforms, including:

- Co-organization together with Huawei of the Regional ICT Competition and Summit, engaging youth and teachers across the Middle East and Central Asia;
- Regional conventions on AI and emerging technologies in education, focusing on the Arab States and Southeast Asia;
- Initiative on education for health and well-being in a learning environment that fosters personality development in Eastern Europe and Central Asia;
- Initiative on AI competencies for policymakers, teachers and youth in Africa.

Through these actions, IITE will not only advocate for the human-centered and ethical use of technologies in education but also generate collective knowledge, foster innovation ecosystems, and build regional capacities for digital transformation. The focused themes also include multidisciplinary ethics review mechanisms, audit frameworks for algorithmic bias detection, reflective practice protocols for the ongoing ethical evaluation of AI tools, and the integration of assessments of the environmental impact of digital infrastructure.

IITE will further contribute its expertise and partnerships to major UNESCO global initiatives, including the Digital Learning Week, Global Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Week, the International Mother Language Day, International Day against Violence, Bullying and Cyberbullying, reinforcing UNESCO's leadership in steering the global education agenda in the AI era.

## **Programme Pillar 2. Research Reports and Practices Analysis**

As a Thought Leader, IITE will continue its contribution to UNESCO's leadership on AI and emerging technologies in the futures of education through:

- **Research reports and policy briefs** providing evidence-based recommendations to policymakers on global smart education, Open Education and OER, well-being and supportive learning environments, reflecting emerging trends and critical issues of ethics, inclusion and gender equality, bias, data security and school cybersecurity in the digital transformation of education in the AI era.
- **Technical guidance and frameworks** on empowering teachers and students with AI competencies, promoting Media and Information Literacy (MIL) for teachers, and supporting educators in integrating AI and emerging technologies into teaching and learning, ensuring inclusion, ethics, and safety in their use.
- **Collection and analysis of best practices** from teachers and students on integrating AI and emerging technologies in teaching, learning, and innovation, showcasing practical solutions addressing creativity, inclusion, bias, and safety, demonstrating the impact of AI in learning outcomes.

- **Contribution to global policy discussions** through participation in the UNESCO Futures of Education Initiative, the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, and other flagship UNESCO initiatives as authors, reviewers, or expert contributors.

### **Programme Pillar 3. Online Platforms and Learning Resources**

As an Innovation Application Cluster, IITE will further strengthen its capacity to provide online platforms, learning resources, and partnerships to Member States, educational institutions, policymakers, teachers, and students, with teachers as the core target group.

- **E-Library for Teachers** – Operated jointly by IITE and NetDragon, this UNESCO learning platform is available in English, Arabic, Russian, and Chinese. It offers online learning courses and communication tools for school teachers. IITE will continue its collaboration with NetDragon to enhance support for ASPNet school teachers, as well as teachers from Africa, Arab States, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and China. New micro-credential courses and video series will be developed on AI competencies for teachers and the innovative and inclusive integration of AI and emerging technologies in teaching. The platform also provides a virtual space for teachers and educators to share experiences, exchange resources, and explore collaborative initiatives.
- **IIOE Learning Platform (Russian version)** – Operated jointly by the UNESCO Category 2 Center for Higher Education Innovation (ICHEI) and IITE, this platform continues to offer online micro-credential courses for university teachers from Central Asia and Russian-speaking countries on Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and the integration of AI tools in teaching practice. IITE will also collaborate with ICHEI in developing online resources and training programs for women teachers in African universities, contributing to UNESCO’s Priority Africa and Priority of Gender Equality.
- **Learning Platform on Health and Well-being** – This platform focuses on health and well-being education, including socio-emotional learning, healthy living and relationships, and the prevention of school violence, bullying and cyberbullying. The collaboration will continue with the development of AI-enabled chatbots, new online courses, round tables, micro-learning programs for education specialists and youth workers. IITE will further explore customization of chatbots and online resources into local languages to better meet national contexts and local needs. The platform will continue to develop and support the community of practice and the accelerator for new solutions.
- **New platforms and Resources** – In addition to the three established learning platforms, IITE will contribute to a new online learning platform on Creativity in Education, developed in partnership with the Global Institute of Creative Thinking (GIoCT). Online micro-credential courses will guide schools and teachers in fostering creativity in teaching, learning, and student personality development. These resources will be shared

through the Creativity in Education Network, reaching schools and teachers worldwide. Meanwhile, IITE will establish an AI in Education Observatory, leveraging the introduction of new AI tools and technological solutions, as well as best practices gathered from online platforms. IITE will also promote co-design methodologies involving educators and learners and mandate accessibility-first design in all digital resource development.

#### **Programme Pillar 4. Training and Webinars**

As a Capacity Building Pioneer, IITE will organize regular trainings and webinars under the theme “**Harnessing AI and Emerging Technologies to Transform Education**”, targeting teachers, policymakers, and students. These sessions will focus on sharing best practices and research findings, developing AI competencies, supporting professional development for teachers, and enhancing capacity for integrating AI and emerging technologies in teaching and learning.

- **Focused thematic content:** IITE’s webinars will cover how AI and emerging technologies such as Blockchain and Metaverse are reshaping teaching and learning, potential technical solutions, and strategies for strengthening capacity among policymakers, teachers, and students. Special attention will be given to the ethical and inclusive use of AI, including data protection and school cybersecurity, gender equality, disability inclusion, multilingualism, AI literacy programmes with a focus on assessment and evaluation, Media and Information Literacy (MIL), AI-enabled learning environments, the ethics of AI and digital citizenship, and AI applications in health and well-being education.
- **Regional and multilingual delivery:** Webinars will be tailored to different regions and target groups, prioritizing Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and Arab States. Sessions will be delivered in multiple languages: Russian for Central Asia and Russian-speaking countries, French for Francophone African countries (e.g., coding training for teachers and students), and English for global audiences.
- **Partnerships and joint activities:** IITE will co-organize webinars and trainings with UNESCO and external partners. Beyond serving as the primary organizer, IITE will participate in Webinar series and forums led by UNESCO Headquarters or partner institutions, demonstrating its contribution and enhancing the visibility of the Institute at global and regional levels.
- **In-person engagement:** limited funding restricts IITE’s ability to organize regular in-person training, however, the Institute will continue to mobilize resources and partnerships to organize a number in-person events such as regional forums and workshops on learning environment and personality development, health and well-being education. In addition, IITE will actively participate in workshops and fora hosted by partners, contributing maximally to the capacity building of policymakers, teachers, and students (e.g., the Africa-Asia Youth AI Tour to China).

#### **Programme Pillar 5. Competitions, Awards and Youth Consultations**

As an Innovation Application Cluster and Best Practice Showcase, IITE will collaborate with its partners to co-organize international competitions and awards for teachers and students, highlighting innovative practices and exemplary integration of AI and emerging technologies in education and future-oriented learning. These initiatives aim to inspire creativity, promote innovation, and share global best practices in the digital transformation of education.

Key initiatives include:

- **Huawei ICT Competition Regional Final** for the Middle East and Central Asia – organized jointly by Huawei Regional Office and IITE, focusing on AI and digital technologies in education and entrepreneurship.
- **Global Competition on Design for the Futures** – co-organized by Beijing Normal University (BNU) and IITE, focusing on innovative design on AI for Education, AI for Science, and AI for Society.
- **International Creativity in Schools Award** – organized by the Global Institute of Creative Thinking (GIoCT) and IITE to celebrate excellence in fostering creativity in education.
- **Global Smart Education Innovation Prize** – presented at the annual Global Smart Education Conference, co-organized by BNU and IITE, recognizing leading practices in smart and AI-enabled education.
- **Best Research Paper and Best Practice Award** – offered jointly by Shanghai Open University and IITE at the International Conference on Digital Lifelong Learning, honoring academic and practical contributions to digital education.

Alongside these competitions and awards, IITE will organize youth forums and consultations on the use of technology in educational practice, gathering valuable feedback, encouraging innovation, strengthening partnerships, and enhancing global visibility.

## **VI. Means of Implementation**

To achieve the three Strategic Objectives 2026-2029 and reach the goals of the five Main Programme Pillars, IITE will strengthen Means of Implementation in four areas:

### **1. Partnership and Networking**

Further strengthening IITE's global partnerships and networks will be a key strategic approach to achieving its goals and fulfilling its mission for 2026–2029. Building on its current partnerships, IITE will enhance its global collaboration network through cooperation with:

- **UNESCO Member States**, particularly National Commissions for UNESCO and Ministries of Education of Member States. All IITE's programme activities are designed to serve UNESCO Member States and to provide technical support to teachers, students, and policymakers through close collaboration with National Commissions for UNESCO and Ministries of Education. IITE will further strengthen strategic partnerships with

Member States identified as key target countries for its programmes. The goal is to establish comprehensive partnerships with at least one Member State from each of the six regions (UNESCO regional groups), ensuring balanced geographical representation and deeper engagement in implementing IITE's initiatives.

- **The Broad UNESCO family.** Strengthening collaboration with: 1) UNESCO Headquarters, including Education Sector in the areas of AI in education, Education for health and well-being, inclusion and gender equality, and ASPNet; UNESCO PAX on capacity building for teachers, policymakers, and youth; UNESCO CI Sector on Open Educational Resources (OER) and Media and Information Literacy (MIL). 2) UNESCO Field Offices particularly in Africa and Central Asia, sister UNESCO Category 1 Institutes on joint activities and projects. 3) UNESCO Chairs (focused on AI and technologies in education, open education and OER, MIL, and health and well-being education), UNESCO Category 2 Centers (in the area of ICT in education), and ASPNet schools.
- **Global Networks** where IITE serves as a coordinator or strategic partner, including the Global Smart Education Network (GSENET), Global MOOC and Online Education Alliance (GMA), Creativity in Education Summit Network (CESNET), and Global Network for Digital Lifelong Learning (GDLLNET). These four global networks serve as fundamental platforms for IITE to strengthen its global visibility, maintaining long-term partnerships and exploring new collaborations with potential partners. Meanwhile, IITE will further extend collaboration with other education networks at the regional and global level, in particular through current partnerships and support of GB members.
- **Strategic Partners** with whom IITE will maintain long-term collaboration based on formal agreements or regular joint activities, either with funding support or in-kind contributions. Current strategic partners include Beijing Normal University, Tsinghua University, Shanghai Open University, UNESCO-ICHEI, NetDragon, Huawei, Charitable Institute GIoCT, and Charitable Foundation Investment in the Future. During 2026–2029, IITE will expand its strategic partnerships both by region and by sector through developing long-term collaboration with new partners from the technology, private, and philanthropic sectors, while maintaining cooperation with existing partners. Special attention will be given to establishing new partnerships in Arab States (e.g. through ALECSO), Southeast Asia (e.g. through SEAMEO), and Latin America and the Caribbean, while strengthening collaboration with Rehabilitation International (RI) on disability inclusion in education.
- **Partnerships with Public and Private Sectors**, particularly with universities and education institutions, leading technology companies and innovators, philanthropic organizations, through joint projects and co-organized activities. IITE will diversify its partnerships across regions and sectors by engaging technology enterprises and private actors through formal agreements, while remaining open and flexible to all possible forms of collaboration.

## 2. Fundraising and Resource Mobilization

Since IITE is a UNESCO Institute with limited resources from the regular UNESCO budget and the host country contribution, the successful implementation of its Strategy also depends on **extrabudgetary funding, fundraising, and resource mobilization**, both in terms of financial support and in-kind contributions.

IITE's integrated budget comprises four components:

- **UNESCO regular budget**, approved by the UNESCO General Conference on a biennial basis;
- **Home country regular contribution** from the Russian Federation;
- **UNESCO decentralized funds**, primarily for programmes on health and well-being education; and
- **Extrabudgetary funds** from donor partners secured through IITE's fundraising efforts.

**Stable funding from the UNESCO regular budget and the Russian contribution** ensures the **operations and fundamental staffing** for both programme and management functions. Any increase in these funds would strengthen the operational and programme capacity of the Institute.

**The UNESCO decentralized funds** dedicated to health and well-being education support the core professional staff of the Unit of ICT in Health Education and the programme, contributing to Strategic Objective 3. IITE will continue to demonstrate its expertise and the leading role in integrating AI and emerging technologies into health and well-being education.

**Extrabudgetary funds** from IITE's fundraising activities will support the core professional staff of two IITE Units and advance the major programmes related to Strategic Objectives 1 and 2, as well as the two Outputs assigned to IITE. The global partnership networks of the Institute and ongoing joint projects provide a strong foundation for successful fundraising. To achieve this, first, IITE will maintain and strengthen long-term collaboration with existing donor partners, enhancing the visibility and impact of current joint projects, secondly, IITE will explore new extrabudgetary opportunities with potential donors through its partnership networks and further diversify funding sources across regions and sectors.

**In-kind contributions** from partners remain a key component of IITE's programme implementation, supporting expenses such as conferences, webinars, staff travel, research report development, and publications. IITE will continue to enhance in-kind contribution through engaging universities, technology partners, private organizations, and foundations for joint actions. These in-kind contributions are a significant outcome of the global partnership networks that IITE has developed and play a crucial role in enhancing the Institute's capacity and outreach.

### 3. Human Resources and Capacity Building

In 2026–2029, IITE will maintain its current organizational structure, comprising three programme Units -- the Unit of Digital Pedagogy and Learning Materials, the Unit of Teacher Professional Development and Networking, and the Unit of ICT in Health Education, as well as the Director's Office and Administrative Office. The staff composition will also remain largely unchanged, consisting of personnel with UNESCO contracts (including fixed-term, project appointments, and other UNESCO contract holders) and staff with local contracts through secondment arrangements.

The new mission and tasks of IITE, particularly the rapid development of AI and emerging technologies and their impact on reshaping teaching and learning will require new competencies for all staff. At the same time, the challenging environment IITE faces adds complexity to human resources management. To maintain a highly qualified professional team and further enhance staff performance in programme implementation and management, IITE will strengthen capacity building through:

- **Ensuring the implementation of UNESCO regulations** in recruitment, performance monitoring and evaluation, and professional development.
- **Creating opportunities** for new and junior staff to engage in project design and management, deliver presentations, organize global and regional events, and coordinate partnerships.
- **Further promoting a culture of trust, openness, and transparency** within the team, leveraging the diverse cultural and professional backgrounds of staff to enhance collaboration and innovation.

### 4. Communication and Visibility

Effective communication and visibility are essential for IITE to maintain strong partnerships, maximize programme impact, and benefit Member States, policymakers, teachers, and youth.

To achieve this, IITE will highlight its role in communication with Member States, partners and global education community as

#### **Understanding and Mastering AI in Education with UNESCO IITE!**

We will:

- **Ensure regular communication and information sharing** with all partners, UNESCO Headquarters, the Host Country, Member States, and the UN Country Team in Russia.

- **Further develop IITE’s website and social media channels** as key platforms for programme information, publications, and resources produced by IITE and shared by partners, while also serving as a community for discussion and exchange of experiences.
- **Enhance IITE’s visibility** by collaborating with partners, leveraging partner platforms, particularly those of strategic partners, and showcasing activities during major events at global and regional levels.

## **VII. Monitoring, Evaluation and Risk Management**

In accordance with its Statutes, IITE reports through two parallel lines, to the Governing Board and to the UNESCO Assistant Director-General (ADG) for Education. Together with relevant UNESCO regulations, this dual reporting structure ensures the effective implementation of the Strategy through annual planning, monitoring and evaluation, and risk management.

### **1. Annual workplan and Objectives Setting**

IITE’s annual programme plan will be drafted in alignment with the Strategic Objectives and Main Programme Actions and subsequently reviewed and approved by the Governing Board.

Simultaneously, IITE will establish annual Objectives with concrete goals, both in quality and quantity, through the personal Objectives of the Director and all Unit Chiefs. These personal Objectives will be discussed, reviewed, and approved by the relevant Supervisors (with the ADG for Education approving the Director’s Objectives).

This parallel mechanism ensures clear direction and prioritization of programme activities, contributing to the successful implementation of the Strategy.

### **2. Monitoring and Evaluation**

UNESCO applies a mandatory half-year and annual monitoring and evaluation system for all core staff, including the Director, Unit Chiefs, and the Head of the Administrative Office. Progress is reviewed semi-annually and annually, with objectives adjusted as necessary. Each evaluation identifies key achievements, challenges, and recommendations for improvement.

In parallel, IITE reports its achievements, challenges, and lessons learned to the Governing Board for review and evaluation, as part of its statutory obligations.

This dual mechanism, combining UNESCO’s performance evaluation system with the oversight of the Governing Board, provides strong institutional support for continuous improvement and effective implementation of the Strategy.

Key indicators for monitoring and evaluation will focus on the two Outputs assigned to IITE, the three Strategic Objectives, and the five Programme Actions in the Medium-Term Strategy.

- **Number of Member States** (with special focus on Africa, Central Asia, and the Arab States, while engaging all other regions) supported in developing and implementing national strategies and policies on integrating AI and emerging technologies in teaching and learning, Open Education and OER, Greening Education and SDG 4, and promoting the ethical, inclusive, meaningful, and responsible use of technologies in education and sustainable development.
- **Number of conventions** organized jointly with partners at the global, regional, and national levels, and the number of policymakers, researchers, teachers, and students engaged in debates and experience-sharing on critical issues related to AI in transforming teaching and learning, and on the role of technologies in health and well-being education, greening education, and sustainable development.
- **Number of research reports, policy briefs, and collections and analyses of best practices** published and launched to support the ethical, inclusive, and responsible integration of AI and emerging technologies in education planning, teaching and learning in particular in inclusive education, promotion of Open Education and OER, health and well-being education, and education for peace and sustainable development and other relevant topics.
- **Number of online platforms and learning resources** (particularly micro-credential courses on AI competencies, AI tools and solutions, and integrating AI and emerging technologies in teaching and learning, inclusion of education, health and well-being education, and greening education) created and disseminated, as well as the number of teachers and students completing online training courses with micro-credentials or certificates.
- **Number of webinars and workshops** organized on the ethics of AI, AI competencies, and the use of AI tools and solutions in teaching and learning, and other topics both online and in person, and the **number of teachers, students, and policymakers** engaged, with special focus on inclusive education, women teachers and students.
- **Number of competitions and awards** organized on research and best practices related to AI and emerging technologies in teaching and learning, AI competencies and digital skills, creativity and well-being in personality development of the young generation, as well as the **number of teachers and students** participating.
- **Number of partners** collaborating in the implementation of the Strategy, including partners from UNESCO Headquarters and the UNESCO family (including UNESCO Chairs and ASPnet schools, UNESCO Category 2 Centers), education institutions, public and private sector partners, and technology partners.

### 3. Risk Management

IITE identifies three key risks, as reflected in the UNESCO Risk Register, that may affect its management and programme implementation of the Strategy.

- **Programme Risk – The role of IITE within UNESCO’s strategy needs further strengthening.**  
IITE plays a key role in promoting digital technologies, particularly AI, in education transformation. However, its direct involvement in the design and implementation of

UNESCO's global strategies and initiatives remains limited. This situation may pose a risk to the successful implementation of the IITE Strategy and could weaken the Institute's contribution to UNESCO's Major Programme I (Education) and to the achievement of SDG 4.

- **Sustainability Risk – Funding to secure the core team and programmes remains unstable.**

The current level of guaranteed funding from the regular budget and extrabudgetary projects does not fully cover programme activities and core staff costs. This shortfall may lead to unsustainable programme delivery and instability among staff. In particular, the reduction of UNESCO regular budget for IITE has direct impact on IITE's operation. IITE has close partnership with several donors from different regions and sectors, however, achieving long-term collaboration remains a challenge. Continued efforts are needed to sustain donor partnerships, further diversify funding sources across regions and sectors, and balance donor priorities with IITE's programme focus and UNESCO's core values.

- **Management Risk – The regular financial contribution from the Russian Federation is managed through a bank account not under UNESCO's direct control.**

Since its establishment, IITE's regular financial contribution from the Russian Federation has been managed through a local bank account outside UNESCO's direct financial control. This arrangement is expected to continue in the foreseeable future. To mitigate potential risks, IITE strictly complies with UNESCO's financial regulations, recommendations from the UNESCO Internal Audit, and applicable local laws in managing this account.