

Implementing the Whole-School Approach under the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development

A component of the project
“Today for Tomorrow: Coordinating and Implementing the
Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development”

INFORMATION NOTE FOR NATIONAL COORDINATORS OF UNESCO’S ASSOCIATED SCHOOLS PROJECT NETWORK (23.03.2017)

I. CONTEXT

1) Implementing the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development

In November 2014, the Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was launched at the UNESCO World Conference on ESD in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, to build on the achievements of the United Nations Decade of ESD and create new momentum for action. GAP’s goal is to generate and scale up action in all levels and areas of education and learning to accelerate the progress towards sustainable development. GAP has **five Priority Action Areas** to allow for strategic focus and partnerships: 1) advancing policy; 2) enhancing learning and training environments; 3) building capacities of educators and trainers; 4) empowering and mobilising youth; and 5) accelerating sustainable solutions at local level. As the lead agency for ESD UNESCO coordinates the global implementation of GAP.

In this context UNESCO has designed the new initiative **“Today for Tomorrow: Coordinating and Implementing the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development”**. Funded by the Government of Japan, the project focuses on the implementation of the five GAP Priority Action Areas and its effective global coordination.

2) Piloting the implementation of the whole-school approach to ESD through UNESCO’s Associated Schools Project Network

Implementing the whole-school approach to ESD is a focus area of the project to transform learning and training environments, in line with GAP’s second Priority Action Area. UNESCO seeks to encourage schools and educational institutions worldwide to implement the whole-school approach to ESD. In the context of the project, implementation will be piloted through UNESCO’s **Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet)**. As “pace-setters” ASPnet Schools strive to introduce new issues and concerns in the classroom to better prepare children and young people to address current and future challenges. Education for Sustainable Development is a top priority for ASPnet to help reorient education worldwide. In the context of the project, there will be a **special thematic focus on climate change** as a concrete entry point to ESD.

What is the whole-school approach to ESD?

The whole-school approach to ESD means that an educational institution includes sustainability principles in every aspect of school life. This includes **teaching content and methodology, school governance and cooperation with partners and the broader communities as well as campus and facility management.**

The active involvement of all internal and external school stakeholders, namely students, teachers, school staff at all levels and the wider school community such as families and community members in reflecting and acting on sustainability is key to a successful implementation of the whole-school approach (the Sustainable School Label, 2016).

II. WHAT IS THE PROJECT ABOUT?

1) Objective

Under the project component relating to the whole-school approach for ESD, an initial group of 12 countries¹ had been invited in June 2016 to identify ten **UNESCO Associated Schools each to implement the whole-school approach to ESD, taking a special focus on climate change.** The selection of this initial group of countries was based on their participation in the UNESCO international seminar on the whole-school approach to ESD and climate change education (Paris, 7-8 December 2015).

A second batch of **130 schools from 13 additional countries²** is invited to join the project from January 2017 on. Countries from the first group can serve as mentors to the second group and share their experiences on the development and implementation of a climate change school action plan.

In order to encourage action on climate change in schools worldwide, UNESCO will launch a new Global ASPnet Flagship initiative in September 2016 that will seek to involve all ASPnet members and through which the entire network can benefit from the experiences of the schools engaged in the current pilot project.

2) Project components

Participating schools are expected to **develop and implement their own school action plan on the whole-school approach to climate change,** and to participate in the **exchange with other participating schools,** notably through the ASPnet online tool (OTA).

a) Development and implementation of an action plan on the whole-school approach to climate change

¹ Invited countries group 1: Brazil, Denmark, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Japan, Lebanon, Namibia, Oman, Senegal

² Invited countries group 2: Cabo Verde, Canada, Costa Rica, Haiti, Kuwait, Lao PDR, Mali, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Tanzania and Uganda

Participating schools are expected to develop and implement their own school action plan that is adapted to the specific context of the school. The ultimate objective is to transform the school into a climate-friendly entity while enabling students and young people to fully participate and to act outside the school as well. This process will be facilitated by school facilitators appointed by the respective ASPnet National Coordinator. The guidebook *“Getting climate ready: A guide for schools on climate action”* developed by UNESCO with the contribution of ASPnet members and other material on climate action in schools will be disseminated by and through the National Coordinator and will provide guidance to schools. An essential component of the project will be the sharing of experiences, good practices and collaborative learning through the ASPnet online tool but also through encounters, where feasible.

b) Thematic collaborative space on the ASPnet online tool

UNESCO will establish a thematic collaborative space on the whole-institution approach to climate change as part of the ASPnet online tool in which knowledge, experiences and material can be shared among participating schools. This will allow for the exchange of good practices and lessons learnt, thereby further stimulating the work in schools and promoting the whole-school approach to climate change to other schools in the same country/region.

The table in annex 1 provides an overview of the major project activities and related responsibilities and timelines.

3) What schools are expected to do

Schools that wish to participate in the project should conduct the following activities:

- ✓ **Set up a cross-school climate action team** representing all internal and external school stakeholders (e.g. school leaders, teachers, other school staff, students, families, community members, local experts, private companies, etc.). The action team will develop, implement and revise the school’s action plan.
- ✓ **Conduct an assessment** of the school’s current commitment and action on addressing climate change, including through the collection of baseline data.
- ✓ **Develop an action plan** outlining the school’s climate change objectives, priorities and specific activities to be undertaken considering the entire action scope of the school such as the curriculum, school governance, facility and operations management, and community partnerships. This step also includes defining clear timeframes and roles and responsibilities for all activities and taking into account available resources and needs for training and learning on climate change issues in the local school context.
- ✓ **Implement the action plan** involving internal and external stakeholders.
- ✓ **Establish processes and responsibilities for evaluation and monitoring of progress** in implementing the school action plan.
- ✓ **Engage with other ASPnet Schools** participating in the project to share knowledge, experiences and material. This will happen through the ASPnet online tool, virtual meetings and, where feasible physical encounters and site visits.

III. ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

1) Role of National Coordinators

The **ASPnet National Coordinators** are expected to play active key role in the implementation of the project. They will be in charge of coordinating project activities at national level with the support of UNESCO and other project partners. This includes:

- ✓ Selecting participating ASPnet schools in the country (see below guidance);
- ✓ Distribute to schools the material from UNESCO and other resources (see attached list) as well as other material available at national level;
- ✓ Appointing school facilitators (two per school);
- ✓ Organise a national training workshop for school facilitators on the whole-school approach to climate change based on the initial training of trainers organised by UNESCO at the beginning of the project;
- ✓ Encourage and organise exchanges among schools through virtual meetings and, where feasible, through site visits and encounters;
- ✓ Mobilise additional local/national partners to support schools in their efforts for climate action.

2) Guidance for the selection of schools

Participating schools need to be selected carefully by the National Coordinators keeping in mind that they are expected to conduct the above-mentioned activities (see par. II.3) in a relatively short period of time to successfully develop and implement their local school action plan.

Approximately **ten schools per country** should be selected for participation in the project depending on the circumstances in each country. The following criteria provide some guidance for the selection of schools:

- ✓ Schools with a **strong commitment to ESD and climate change**;
- ✓ Schools with a **previous engagement and experience in ESD or climate change work**;
- ✓ Schools with **human and basic material resources** allowing them to effectively develop and implement their school action plan;
- ✓ To the extent possible, participating schools should reflect the country's **geographic diversity** (rural and urban schools from different regions of the country) and represent different **school levels** (pre-schools, primary and secondary schools, technical and vocational schools, and teacher training institutions).

3) Role of UNESCO

UNESCO will coordinate the implementation of the project at international level to ensure a smooth delivery of activities and the creation of synergies across all the participating countries. In addition, UNESCO will offer a range of services to support National Coordinators and ASPnet schools in their endeavours:

- ✓ Guidance and backstopping to National Coordinators;
- ✓ Technical support for the preparation and roll-out of activities at national level;

- ✓ Provision of materials for schools on the whole-school approach to climate change, including the overall guidebook ***“Getting climate ready: A guide for schools on climate action”*** developed by UNESCO with the input of ASPnet members;
- ✓ Organisation of an initial interregional Training of trainers’ workshop for school facilitators (2 per country) and ASPnet National Coordinators on the whole-school approach to climate change;
- ✓ Provision and animation of a virtual platform on the whole-school approach to climate change as part of the ASPnet online tool;
- ✓ International promotion of the project outcomes, including through a video.

With the support of:



Annex 1: Overview of key project activities

Planned Activities	Responsible	Partners	Timeline
Selection of schools in 12 countries (first batch)	National Coordinators		July 2016
Appointment of two school facilitators per school (first batch)	National Coordinators		July - mid Sept. 2016
Distribution of material on climate action to schools	National Coordinators	GAP PN 2 members	Sept. 2016
Preparatory activities in schools (first batch): diagnosis/collection of baseline data	Schools led by school facilitators	National Coordinators	July - mid-Oct. 2016
Selection of school facilitators (two per country) for participation in interregional training of the trainers' workshop	National Coordinators		Oct. 2016
First interregional training of the trainers workshop for school facilitators and ASPnet National Coordinators on the whole-school approach to climate change (first batch)	UNESCO	National Coordinators GAP PN 2 members	Nov. 2016
Selection of schools in 13 countries (second batch)	National Coordinators	UNESCO	Dec. 2017
Appointment of two school facilitators per school (second batch)	National Coordinators		Jan - Mar. 2017
Preparation and submission of School Action Plans (first batch of schools)	Schools led by school facilitators	National Coordinators	Apr. 2017
Implementation of School Action Plans in 120 schools (first batch) and exchanges among schools	Schools led by school facilitators	National Coordinators, local partners, GAP PN 2 members	Apr. - Dec. 2017
Preparatory activities in 130 schools (second batch): e.g.: Diagnosis/collection of baseline data	Schools led by school facilitators	National Coordinators	Feb. - May. 2017
Second interregional training of the trainers workshop for school facilitators and ASPnet National Coordinators on the whole-school approach to climate change (second batch)	UNESCO	National Coordinators GAP PN 2 members	May. 2017
Preparation and submission of School Action Plans (second batch)	Schools led by school facilitators	National Coordinators	Sept. 2017
Implementation of School Action Plans in 130 schools (second batch) and exchanges among schools	Schools led by school facilitators	National Coordinators, GAP PN 2 members	Sept. 2017 - Feb. 2018
Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of activities, including preparation and submission of final report (first and second batch of schools)	Schools led by school facilitators	National Coordinators, UNESCO, GAP PN 2 members	June 2017 - Mar 2018
Contribution to the thematic participatory hub of OTA: sharing of materials (written and audio-visual), participation in online discussions and webinars and outreach to/twinning with other schools	School facilitators, National Coordinators	UNESCO	Sep. 2016 - March 2018