

# Transforming the Stunted UNESCO-Korea Development Partnership? The Case of UNESCO Bangkok's Strategic Framework for the Korea Funds-in-Trust

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**Abstract** This study sets out to analyze a delicate and uncomfortable relationship between UNESCO Bangkok Office and the Korean partner agencies in carrying out the Korea Funds-in-Trust (KFIT) for one decade (2007 – 2016). The development partnership between UNESCO and Korean partners has been problematized due to lack of not only coordination mechanisms from the initial stage to the final reporting of KFIT projects but also lack of intention of both parties to understand partner's internal processes of policy transfers. The upshot of such a low degree of trust between donor and implementer of trust funds is expected to spawn the accountability deficits. In responding to this challenging situation, the study proposes a new strategic framework for the KFIT, which is equipped with its key findings and the restoration of coordination mechanisms based upon them.

**Keywords** Development Partnership · UNESCO · Korea Funds-in-Trust · Strategic Framework · Coordination Mechanism

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## Introduction: Uncomfortable Partnership between Korea and UNESCO

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Asia and Pacific Bureau for Education (hereafter, UNESCO Bangkok) and the Republic of Korea (hereafter, Korea) have been strengthening and developing the breadth and depth of cooperation through the Korea Funds-in-Trust (KFIT) since 2007.<sup>1</sup> From 2007 to 2015, KFIT supports to UNESCO Bangkok consisted of 15 different projects in the field of education for the Asia and Pacific region. Particularly, in 2015, the Korean government decided to commit USD 3 million over four years for the three new key initiatives of UNESCO Bangkok: (1) Promoting Intercultural Dialogue and a Culture of Peace in South-East Asia through Shared Histories, (2) Developing Regional Quality Tools to Facilitate the Cross-Border Mobility of Students in Asia and the Pacific and (3) Preparing Teachers for Global Citizenship Education. Past experiences, however, of both parties – UNESCO Bangkok and the Korean government – rather demonstrate the fluctuation of cooperative relationships, despite the good shape of positive collaboration in general. Enhancing more constructive partnership between both parties and more effective management of KFIT projects require a necessary progression for developing a streamlined and mutually-accountable KFIT strategic framework in the Asia and Pacific, which must be embedded in policy priorities of UNESCO Bangkok and the Korean counterparts alike.

The main purpose of this study primarily results from a critical call to review the past and ongoing relationships of UNESCO Bangkok and the Korean government authorities, thereby prompting both parties to view them as an important stepping-stone for not only enhancing the partnership between both parties but also improving the effectiveness, relevance, and accountability of KFIT projects (Brinkerhoff, 2002; Eichenauer and Reinsberg, 2017; Kim, 2017). In this regard, it is also undertaken for the purpose of the deep exploration of the coordination mechanism and communication channels for the past and ongoing KFIT projects and other cooperative activities that both UNESCO Bangkok and the Korean governmental institutions have been implementing. Reviewing the coordination mechanism with regards to KFIT projects is further expanded to the internal relationship between UNESCO Headquarters – particularly, Bureau for Strategic Planning (BSP) and Division for Cooperation with Extrabudgetary Funding Sources (CFS) – and UNESCO Bangkok, along with in-house relationships between the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Korea to UNESCO (hereafter, Korean Delegation to UNESCO) and other KFIT-related Korean institutions. With the particular focus on the coordination process of the two parties involved in KFITs, the study is aimed to provide a set of constructive proposals, which are taken into account as necessary conditions to develop a streamlined partnership for conducting KFIT projects and strengthen the coordination mechanism within them in a more effective way. Therefore, the strategic framework needs to cover the financial contributions provided by the Korean Government to UNESCO Bangkok and define common procedures for consultation and decision-making and

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<sup>1</sup> KFIT is one of trust funds which the Korean government plans to assign to UNESCO in the form of multi-bi financing. Given that multi-bi financing, channeled to multilateral agencies through trust funds, can be provided by sovereign donors, multilateral donors and global funds, and private actors (Reinsberg et al., 2015), the study concentrates on sovereign donor (Korea)'s contributions to non-core financing of UNESCO.

management of the contributions.

In so doing, the focal points, which are required to take a deep look at for UNESCO Bangkok's strategic framework for a better coordination in implementing the KFIT, proceed in three folds: (1) detecting the root causes of coordination deficits throughout focus group interviews and close reviews on past and ongoing KFIT project documentations; (2) comparing key research findings as critical references for innovating or adjusting the KFIT projects for both parties; and (3) proposing and drafting a *KFIT-UNESCO Strategic Framework in the Asia and Pacific Region* for a much enhanced relevance, effectiveness and accountability for the KFIT projects, which is attached to the Appendix I.<sup>2</sup> In a nutshell, this study carries out a practical analysis and *ex post* meta-evaluation for a strategic way of enhancing the coordination power of the Korean trust funds towards UNESCO Bangkok by drawing upon the two main questions:

- How efficient and effective is UNESCO Bangkok's KFIT coordination mechanism in identifying and implementing projects that are relevant to both parties?
- How can the current KFIT coordination mechanism and processes be improved in order to facilitate the efficient and effective implementation and management of the KFIT projects by UNESCO Bangkok?

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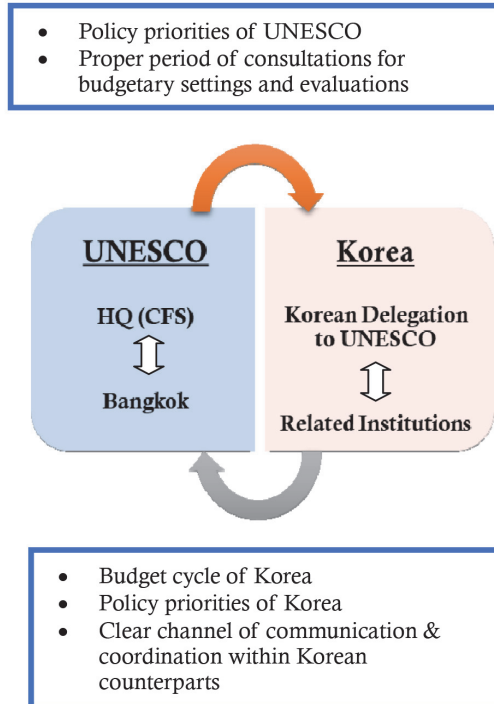
<sup>2</sup> For this analytical framework, the study employs both qualitative research interview and documentation review as a main research method. The two ways of research method for analysis and evaluation are by and large undertaken in the two manners:

- **Documentation review:** Key documents of both parties, mainly PCM-related guidelines and the KFIT project records on UNESCO part, and government-issued papers related to the KFIT projects on the Korean side.
- **Qualitative research interview:** Employing the focus group interviews with key persons in both UNESCO Bangkok office and UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, and the Korean institutions such as the Korean Delegation to UNESCO, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO and so forth. The focus group interview is built upon the snowball sampling (or chain-referral sampling), which is meant as a non-probability respondent-driven sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. For this approach, the following five logical steps need to be taken: (1) draft a participation program; (2) approach stakeholders and ask for contacts; (3) gain contacts and ask them to participate; (4) community issues groups may emerge that can be included in the participation program; and (5) continue the snowballing with contacts to gain more stakeholders if necessary.

The focus group interviews contributed to mapping out the current address of KFIT partnerships between UNESCO Bangkok and its Korean counterparts. They were divided into four parts: (i) program specialists of previous and ongoing KFIT projects, the director and the chief in UNESCO Bangkok; (ii) program specialists in charge of the KFIT in UNESCO BSP/CFS; (iii) key persons in Korean Ministries (MOE, MOFA, Korean Delegation to UNESCO); and (iv) key persons in Korean National Commission for UNESCO and other non-governmental agencies in Korea.

## Analytical Framework: Multilateral Implementer vs. Bilateral Donor

Considering the key purposes of consultation processes, the focal points of analysis need to be divided into three parts, as shown in the following figure: (1) Korean government and its related agencies (the Korean Delegation to UNESCO, related Ministries, and implementation agencies), (2) UNESCO (BSP/CFS in UNESCO Headquarters and UNESCO Bangkok), and (3) consultation and coordination mechanisms for developing partnerships across both parties – UNESCO Bangkok and the Korean counterparts (see figure 1).



Source: By authors

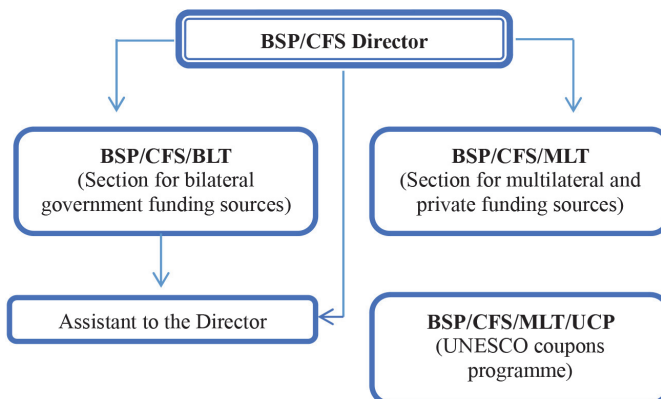
**Fig. 1** Analytical Framework

The first steps are undertaken on the part of Korea in order to review and understand the internal procedures for policy coordination among varieties of Korean stakeholders, particularly the formality of communication channels among the Korean institutions involved in the KFIT projects. Currently, the plural numbers of stakeholders take part in setting priorities, managing the coordination mechanism, and implementing projects in collaboration with UNESCO. Given that KFIT projects are classified as one of grant-based aid projects, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), which is in charge of all grant-based aid policies and project-designing under the structural architecture of Korea's ODA policy-making, is always a crucial actor in deciding the KFIT projects. The Ministry of Strategy and Finance (MOSF) is a powerful governmental agency in the sense of its controlling power of budgetary authorities allocating all ODA budgets

to Ministries. The Ministry of Education (MOE) is an important partner agency to UNESCO Bangkok, as MOE is the proper counterpart who consults with UNESCO Bangkok about common procedures on education-centered projects via consultation and management of mutually-agreed KFIT projects. In addition, there are various counterparts of governmental agencies (i.e. Korean Delegation to UNESCO, Cultural Heritage Administration) and non-governmental agencies (i.e. Korean National Commission for UNESCO), all of which are treated as essential components for designing, implementing and managing the KFIT projects.

Along with the presence of multi-stakeholder complexity on the Korean part, however, the governance structure on the Korean part has the lack of clear coordination among multiple stakeholders, and structural loopholes of channeling the dialogue with their counterparts of UNESCO Bangkok and BSP/CFS in Paris. It is therefore critical to detect and clarify what are the problems all about and which part is a missing link in connecting the coordination mechanism with UNESCO. Particularly, this report identifies the budgetary cycle of the Korean government and the National Assembly, as well as *ex-post* settlement processes (evaluations) after the KFIT projects are finalized.

The second focal point is placed on the part of UNESCO. It is worthwhile to include and review the internal coordination mechanism between UNESCO Headquarters and UNESCO Bangkok in terms of project cycle management (PCM) guidelines. Given that the governance of UNESCO contains a centralized system within which UNESCO Headquarters provide a clear set of activity guidelines for regional offices, this is an important step that needs to be taken for figuring out how UNESCO's counterpart such as Korea can understand internal procedures in implementing its trust fund projects for the purpose of more effective implementation and partnerships. In particular, extrabudgetary activities with bilateral government funding sources, such as KFIT, are systematically operated under the supervision of BSP/CFS in UNESCO Headquarters (see figure 2). Thus, BSP/CFS has full authorities in the processes of signing agreement and closing the KFIT projects, which are designed to support for UNESCO Bangkok and are supposed to be managed by project officers from UNESCO Bangkok. For this matter, *A Practical Guide to UNESCO's Extrabudgetary Activities* is a good reference for the review (UNESCO, 2013a).



Source: UNESCO (2013a)

**Fig. 2** Structure of BSP/CFS Sections

Another crucial point on the side of UNESCO is the global (or regional) list of UNESCO's policy priorities in dealing with extrabudgetary bilateral government funding sources. The proper preparation of the program menu based on policy priorities and the proactive advertisement of it to bilateral donors are a critically important element not only to ease the information accessibility for them but also to reduce time and energy for sharing common interests and facilitating the way of forming trust funding projects. For understanding UNESCO's priorities and strategic planning, UNESCO's *Medium-Term Strategy, 2014-2021* (UNESCO, 2014) and *the Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau's Education Support Strategy, 2014-2021* (UNESCO, 2013b) are referred to as main sources.

Finally, the most critical element for revitalizing the partnership between UNESCO Bangkok and the Korean partner institutions comes from how to redesign and develop the bolts and nuts of how both parties are to be properly linked for better commitments and foster better relations between key counterparts. Precisely, they depend upon to what degree both parties are ready to share relevant information with each other and clearly identify which agencies will be the main channel for project coordination from the beginning to the end, especially on the issues of the budget cycle of Korea, the key project priorities and PCM of both sides, and clear-cut lists of collaborating agencies, contact methods, and key personnel. Most of all, this focal point needs to address further how the Korean governance structure embedded in various stakeholders without a centralized coordination institute can be realigned (see figure 1).

## **Rebuilding Coordination Mechanisms: Key Findings & Effective Management**

The history of UNESCO-Korea KFIT projects is about 10 years (from 2007 to 2016) and demonstrates 15 different projects supporting UNESCO Bangkok (see table 1). The time span of 10 years is not too short to set up a stabilized path of KFIT projects, and it is thereby necessary to seek a way of upgrading the quality of partnership and institutionalizing the sustainable and stable relations among all partners involved. Analytical results can be reshuffled as key recommendations which both UNESCO Bangkok and the Korean partner agencies should take into deep consideration in order to revamp the interdependent structure of development partnerships drawing on KFITs as a multi-bi aid modality (Eichenauer and Reinsberg, 2017; Reinsberg, 2016; Reinsberg et al., 2015). All findings are able to serve as practical platforms to shape the strategic framework for both parties to conduct the KFIT projects in more effective ways.

### **Major Issues to UNESCO Bangkok**

#### *Detailed Information on the Budget Projection Cycle of the Korean Government*

With regards to one-year budget projection for international development cooperation, ODA, as well as KFIT, is formed in accordance with what figure 3 depicts. MOFA, as the supervising ministry of grant-based projects, is scheduled to send "Guidelines for ODA Project Budgeting" to ministries by the end of February Year F-1. The Korean institutions – if they have plans to

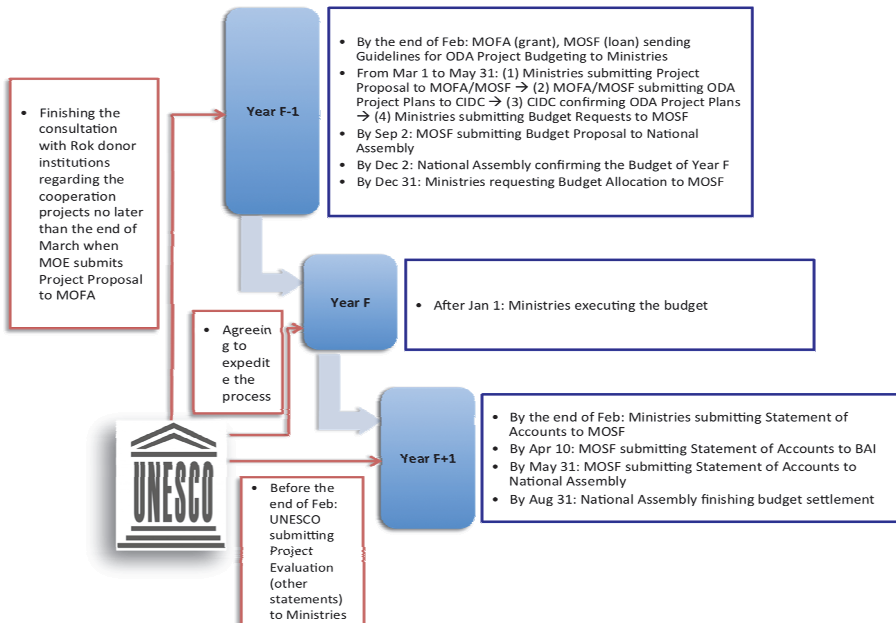
**Table 1** List of KFIT Projects Implemented by UNESCO Bangkok, 2007-2016

No	Title	Valid from	Valid to	Total Budget (US\$)	Sector
1	Documentation of Children's Traditional Games in the Asia Pacific Region	2/1/2007	5/21/2012	113,000	Culture
2	Facilitating Effective ICT-pedagogy Integration	10/1/2009	1/1/2014	1,000,000	Education
3	Enhancing Regional Capabilities for Safeguarding the Health of Marine Ecosystems in the Western Pacific within the Framework of EXPO 2012 Yeosu Korea	3/9/2010	12/22/2011	42,940	IOC
4	Analysis and Dissemination of Information on the State of Education and Human Resource Development in the Asia-Pacific Region	1/1/2011	1/1/2015	258,000	Education
5	Promotion of the Research and Development of Marine Renewable Energy Technologies in the Western Pacific	5/15/2011	1/1/2015		IOC
6	Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage through the Strengthening of National Capacities in Lao PDR and other Beneficiary Countries in Asia and the Pacific	11/4/2011	1/1/2015	200,000	Culture
7	UNESCO Network of Arts Education Observatories in the Asia Pacific Region: Reinforcing Communication, Advocacy and Research in Arts Education	12/13/2011	1/1/2015	73,000	Culture
8	Joint Research Initiative between UNESCO & Korean Women's Development Institute	9/1/2012	6/11/2015	105,000	Education
9	Supporting Competency-based Teacher Training Reforms to Facilitate ICT-pedagogy Integration	8/16/2013	8/15/2017	1,145,608	Education
10	Enhance the Capacity for Species Identification and Genetic Analysis on Marine Organisms in the Coral Reef Ecosystems in the Western Pacific	3/14/2013	3/31/2015	140,000	IOC
11	Developing Regional Quality Tools to Facilitate the Cross-Border Mobility of Students in Asia and the Pacific	5/6/2015	5/5/2019	1,000,000	Education
12	Preparing Teachers for Global Citizenship Education	4/1/2015	3/31/2019	1,000,000	Education
13	Promoting Intercultural Dialogue and a Culture of Peace in South-East Asia through Shared Histories	5/6/2015	5/6/2019	1,000,000	Culture
14	Innovative Financing for Early Childhood Care and Education			50,000	Education
15	The Eastern Silk Roads Story			67,790	Culture

Source: By authors

implement ODA or trust funds like KFIT projects – have to submit the proposal and budget request to MOFA by March. From April to May Year F-1, MOFA puts forward “ODA Project Plans for all Ministries” on the basis of collected ministerial proposals to the Committee of International Development Cooperation (CIDC) under the Prime Minister Office, and the CIDC is required to confirm the ODA Project Plans. Accordingly, ministries submit Budget Requests to MOSF by the end of May Year F-1. MOSF submits the whole Budget Proposal to the National Assembly by 2 September Year F-1, and the National Assembly deliberates and confirms the Budget of Year F by 2 December Year F-1. Considering the budget process and cycle of Korea, it is better for UNESCO to finish the conversation with the Korean partner institutions (mainly, MOE) about the cooperation project with UNESCO by February at the latest. Particularly, given the fact that MOE is required to submit Project Proposal to MOFA by March, UNESCO Bangkok is advised to share information on policy priorities with MOE and finalize the consultation about the KFIT projects in advance by the end of February Year F-1.

Regarding the execution of KFIT in Year F, Korean institutions can spend and transfer the fund (budget) from the 1<sup>st</sup> day of New Year (Year F), as the National Finance Act specifies. In this regard, if UNESCO and the Korean partner agencies agree to expedite the process in advance before 1 January Year F, UNESCO can receive the fund without any unnecessary delays. After the completion of ODA projects, ministries are also requested to submit the Statement of Accounts to MOSF by the end of February Year F+1. By 10 April Year F+1, MOSF submits the Statement of Accounts to the Board of Audit and Inspection (BAI) which conducts the investigation of activities and corruption issues of ODA implementing agencies. By 31 May Year F+1, MOSF submits the Statement of Accounts to the National Assembly, the

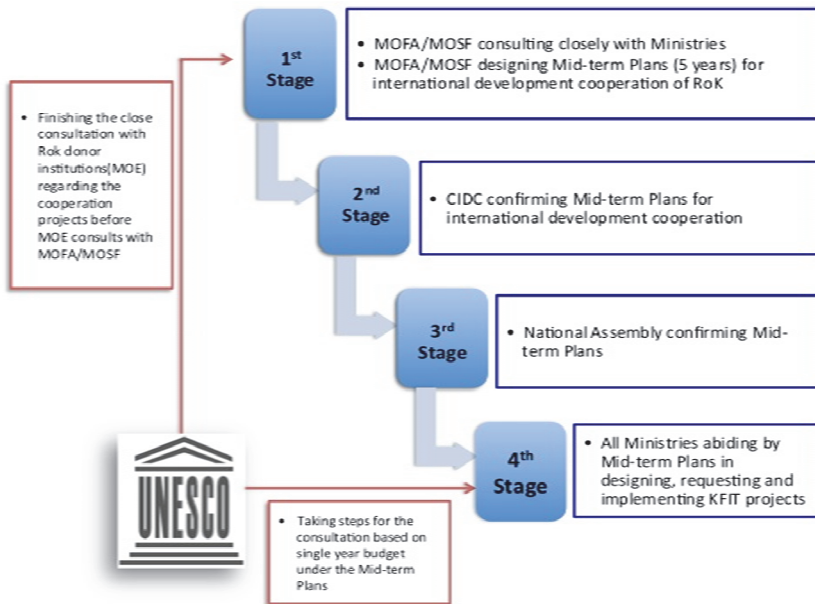


Source: By authors

Fig. 3 One-year Budget Projection for International Development Cooperation

National Assembly finishes budget settlement procedures by the end of August Year F+1. Given that Korean partner institutions – normally from April to June – request a kind of financial reports and information to UNESCO Headquarters and Bangkok Office in order to prepare the deliberation of the National Assembly, it is much safer that UNESCO Bangkok finalize its preparation of financial report and briefing sessions to the Korean counterparts before March Year F+1.

Meanwhile, multi-year (5 years) budget projection for ODA is based on close consultations at the inter-ministerial level which lead MOFA in charge of grants and MOSF in charge of loans to make the mid-term (next five years) plans for development cooperation of Korea (see figure 4). After the mid-term plan by the logical outgrowth of consultations between MOFA and MOSF, it is expected to be tossed to the CIDC for the confirmation of the mid-term plans which then are officially authorized as the formal yardsticks that ODA implementers are required to comply with. By principle, all ministries must abide by the mid-term plans when they design, request and implement the ODA projects.



Source: By authors

**Fig. 4** One-year Budget Projection for International Development Cooperation

Considering the practicality of those two modes of budget projections, as a result, the ‘single year budget’ is more significant than the ‘mid-term projection and plans.’ It is simply because Korea’s procedural practices that Korean ministries and MOSF are used to secure a newly designed ODA project when they decide next year budget and can reflect the implication of this project for the mid-term projection after launching and implementing the project. UNESCO needs to understand the mid-term projection system of Korea and focus on the single year budget projection system to develop more stable cooperation relationship with Korean

counterparts via the KFIT projects.

### *Strategies for Effective Management of the KFIT Projects*

For more effective management of the KFIT projects, UNESCO Bangkok is required to share information on policy priorities with MOE and other counterpart agencies of Korea, match project priorities with them in informal ways by the end of February Year F-1, and finalize the close consultation in formal ways by the end of May Year F-1 when the CIDC confirms the ODA Project Plans of each ministry.

Practically, to facilitate and assist close consultation and coordination with the Korean governmental agencies, UNESCO is able to work closely with the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, which can take the new function as a gatekeeper of information sharing and collection across multi-stakeholders involved in KFIT projects. Until now, the Korean government has no clear single channel orchestrating various contact points with UNESCO, collecting information of each stakeholder including UNESCO, and disseminating lists of projects strategies and priorities within Korean counterparts. This leads to unnecessary confusions which cause UNESCO Headquarters and the Bangkok Office to easily lose information about who is the right agency as contact points of Korean counterparts, duplicate the same information for different partners who are sometimes overlapped or totally separate from each other, and thereby suffer from decreasing returns of efficient works. A possible solution on this matter contains the following policy suggestion that the Korean government integrates the current set of diverse agencies into one single gatekeeper administering a reliable channel for information sharing between UNESCO and Korean partner institutions. Its institutional function is similar to that of the secretariat for the KFIT projects and can be given to the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, given that the Korean National Commission for UNESCO is a mixed bag of public agencies and private NGOs in terms of its institutional identity, thereby not only enjoying a neutral stance between public authorities and civil society but also connecting these two groups as like an institutional lubricant.

It is therefore prime time for UNESCO Bangkok to directly contact the Korean National Commission for UNESCO in order to deliver the annual menu of project priorities, receive the policy priority of Korean counterparts, and set up the annual meeting for consultation and coordination. Thanks to the secretariat work of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, UNESCO Bangkok is able to reduce transaction costs in setting up informal consultations with the Korean counterpart, mainly MOE or its agencies. After informal consultations between UNESCO Bangkok and key counterparts of Korea, the formal signing of agreements and the closing of projects are both controlled by UNESCO Headquarters (BSP/CFS) rather than UNESCO Bangkok.

### *Appointing Korean Staffs for the KFIT Projects*

To enhance the synergistic effectiveness of the KFIT projects, it is advisable that UNESCO Bangkok employs Korean nationality holders as key staffs in charge of the KFIT projects. During the transitional period towards the stabilized operation of KFIT projects, the staffs of UNESCO Bangkok, in charge of KFIT projects, are critical in communicating and coordinating

with the Korean counterparts about varieties of agendas. Since 2007 when the KFIT projects were first embarked via UNESCO, the person in charge of KFIT has been always non-Korean nationals, mainly Japanese and KFIT has been placed under the Japanese-Funds-in-Trust (JFIT) as a secondary concern by UNESCO Bangkok. If they lack knowledge on the Korean culture of ministerial activities and internal processes of policy-making, they would be vulnerable to unnecessary confusion, misunderstanding and miscommunication. Employing Korean staffs for the KFIT Projects, in this regard, is a safe way for institutionalizing and stabilizing the proper operation of KFIT projects, particularly during this transition period.

The Korean staff has high utility for KFIT projects in terms of smooth communication and coordination with Korean stakeholders, due to his/her accessibility and understanding of culture, language, and so forth. After successful institutionalization of consultation mechanisms between both parties, there is no reason to appoint Korean nationalities as UNESCO Bangkok staff who will be in charge of KFIT projects. It is also advisable to employ Secondments from the Korean government as UNESCO Bangkok staff in charge of KFIT projects for the sake of its financial convenience. Moreover, it would be a good way to appoint the Korean Secondment at the BSP/CFS as UNESCO's informal channel to coordinate KFIT projects with its Korean partners at the level of UNESCO Headquarters. Together with the appointment of Korean Secondments, it would be necessary to strengthen the manpower and expertise in managing KFIT projects at the Korean Delegation to UNESCO in Paris.

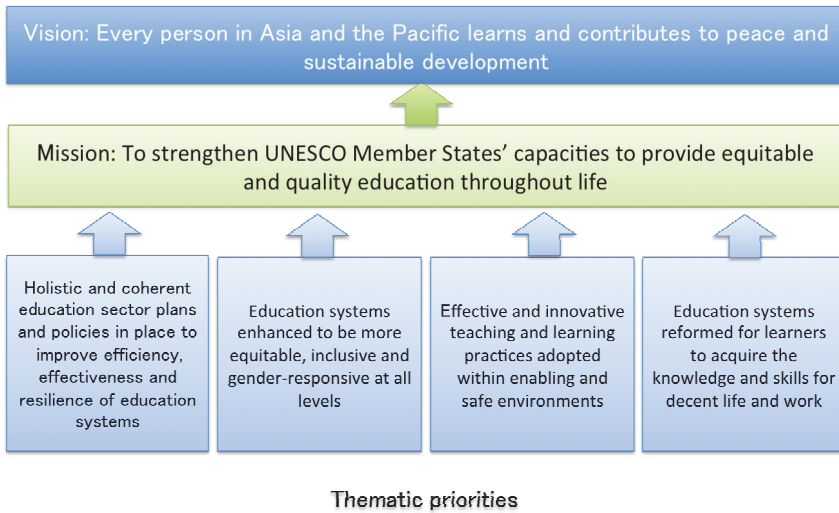
## **Major Issues to the Korean Partner Institutions**

### *Reviewing 37 C/4: UNESCO's Medium Term Strategy, 2014-2021 (HQ) and UNESCO Bangkok's Education Support Strategy, 2014-2021*

Among the Korean institutions involved in KFIT projects, there is the lack of understanding major strategies of UNESCO when they coordinate with UNESCO Bangkok about specific themes for KFIT projects. The Korean stakeholders are required to first review *37 C/4: Medium Term Strategy, 2014-2021* at the level of UNESCO Headquarters, and *Education Support Strategy, 2014-2021*, at the level of UNESCO Bangkok (UNESCO, 2013a, 2013b, 2014). Drawing on main priorities of UNESCO at both global and regional levels, the Korean government would find common backdrops into which KFIT projects can be grafted as supportive components to achieve the aims of UNESCO. UNESCO's 37 C/4 has global priorities (Africa and gender equality), overarching objectives (peace and equitable/sustainable development), nine strategic objectives and overall mission statement of UNESCO.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, 37 C/4 is playing a crucial role in providing institutional platforms and standards for setting up regional plans at each regional offices of UNESCO, including UNESCO Bangkok.

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<sup>3</sup> The mission statement of UNESCO's 37 C/4 document stipulates that "As a specialized agency of UN, UNESCO – pursuant to its Constitution – contributes to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, and sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information" (UNESCO, 2014).



Source: UNESCO (2013b)

**Fig. 5** UNESCO Bangkok's Strategic Framework

The Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau's *Education Support Strategy 2014-2021* (UNESCO, 2013b) consists of vision, mission and the four thematic priorities – (i) policies and planning for lifelong learning, (ii) equality and equity in education, (iii) teaching and learning processes, and (iv) quality and relevance of education (see figure 5). According to *Education Support Strategy 2014-2021*, UNESCO Bangkok pursues its final vision through the four thematic priorities and missions: "Every Person in Asia and the Pacific learns and contributes to peace and sustainable development." It is notable to confirm that *Education Support Strategy* aligns its final vision with the overarching objectives of *37 C/4: Medium Term Strategy*.

More relevance, effectiveness, and accountability of KFIT projects can be secured by reflecting key priorities defined by these two UNESCO strategic frameworks. For sharing UNESCO strategic frameworks among the Korean stakeholders, the Korean government can directly distribute them to each partner agency or ask the Korean National Commission for UNESCO to circulate them on behalf of the Korean government. Also, it is strongly recommended for the Korean government to set up internal dialogues for sharing and discussing UNESCO's key strategic priorities and their relevance and compatibility to KFIT projects.

### *Understanding UNESCO's Internal Processes of PCM*

Together with the understanding of UNESCO's mission and main strategies, UNESCO's internal procedures of PCM are absolutely a prerequisite for the Korean government to undertake in order to harmonize KFIT with UNESCO's activities. UNESCO Headquarters (particularly, BSP/CFS) are the central focal point of UNESCO for all strategic, programmatic and budgeting issues in terms of the cooperation with extrabudgetary funding sources. BSP/CFS's principal tasks are to provide information on the general policies and specific requirements

of the various funding sources, such as donors' thematic and geographical priorities and specific requirements on project design and project agreements. BSP/CFS also offers advice and assistance with the preparation of agreements to formalize cooperation with donors. Comprised of a team of individuals who serve as focal points for specific donors, BSP/CFS is also responsible for handling the overall relations with UNESCO's main partners and donors.

It is critical to review in-house procedures of PCM between BSP/CFS and UNESCO Bangkok (see table 2). While at the level of work planning and project implementation, project officers of UNESCO Bangkok are main person responsible for these missions, BSP/CFS plays a central role at the level of agreement signing and project closing. It is once again confirmed that BSP/CFS tightly controls the decision and activities of regional offices by dominating the initial process through agreement signing as well as the final process by evaluating and closing the project of regional offices. The Korean institutions should take into consideration these procedural elements when communicating, consulting, and coordinating KFIT projects with UNESCO counterparts, particularly BSP/CFS and the Bangkok Office.

**Table 2** Main Steps of UNESCO's Project Cycle

Main steps in project cycle ◊	Person responsible ◊	Other approvals ◊
<b>Work planning</b> ◊	PO (with AO) ◊	EO ◊ BFM/BMR ◊
<b>Agreement signing</b> ◊	BSP/CFS ◊	LA and/or ◊ BFM when agreements are not standard ◊
<b>Project implementation</b> ◊	PO (with AO) ◊	BFM/BMR ◊ BFM/FPC ◊ HRM ◊
<b>Narrative reporting</b> ◊	PO ◊	DIR/Div. ◊ Head/FO ◊ EO ◊
<b>Financial Reporting</b> ◊	BFM/BMR ◊	◊
<b>Evaluation</b> ◊	PO (in consultation with IOS) ◊	IOS ◊ Sector ADG ◊ BSP/CFS ◊
<b>Closing of projects</b> ◊	PO ◊ AO ◊ BSP/CFS ◊ BFM/PRG ◊	BFM ◊

\* PO: Project Officer; AO: Administrative Officer; FOD: Field Office Director/Head; EO: Executive Officer; BSP: Bureau for Strategic Planning; BSP/CFS: Division for Cooperation with Extrabudgetary Funding Sources; BFM: Bureau of Financial Management; IOS: Internal Oversight Service; LA: Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs; BFC: Bureau of Field Coordination; HRM: Bureau for Human Resource Management

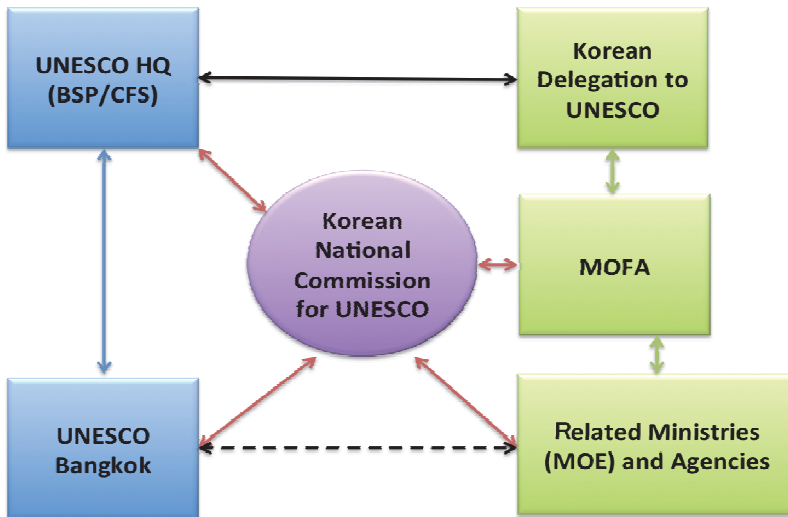
Source: UNESCO (2013a)

### *Institutionalizing Uniform channels for Effective Coordination Mechanisms*

The major obstacle ahead of KFIT projects on the Korean side includes lack of good evidences demonstrating effective communications for the KFIT projects between UNESCO Bangkok and the Korean partner agencies. It is mainly because there are too many stakeholders holding the communication channels separately with UNESCO partners – thereby, no centralized coordination mechanism to integrate all channels of dialogues regarding KFIT projects.

The coordination for KFIT projects at the macroscopic level (between BSP/CFS and the Korean Delegation to UNESCO) has no serious problems, but the micro-level coordination is problematic since both BSP/CFS and UNESCO Bangkok do not have sufficient and clear-cut information on which agency is the proper actor to be coordinated on the side of Korean institutions. Such a micro-level management problem hampers UNESCO from not only circulating its program strategy and project priorities in a right way to the Korean counterparts but also finding the right partners for coordinating the direction, implementation, and evaluation of KFIT projects.

In this regard, it is strongly recommended that the Korean government should establish a single communication channel integrating information sharing and coordination mechanisms in a more systematic fashion. In practice, the complicated characteristics of UNESCO activities – wide ranges of education, sciences, culture, and communication – cover cross-over agendas across different ministries, particularly MOFA and MOE. This complexity and its relatedness to inter-ministerial politics hinder appointing one single ministry as the secretariat administering KFIT projects, but enable the third actor to be designated as a key institute coordinating them.



Source: By authors

**Fig. 6** Integrating a Single Contact Point for KFIT Projects

On this issue, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO would be the best candidate for this coordination mission between UNESCO and the complicated structure of Korean stakeholders (see figure 6). The main reason for this idea stems from its mandates specializing all UNESCO agendas and its longstanding experiences and reputations. Indeed, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO is able to play a gatekeeper role in collecting and distributing information and project priorities between the Korean government and UNESCO. However, it should be clarified that the main function of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO is confined to the *secretariat* connecting the Korean stakeholders and UNESCO, rather than a decision-making agency or implementation agency of KFIT projects.

If this plan is supported by MOFA and MOE, UNESCO Bangkok could deliver its thematic priorities and annual plans *en bloc* to the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, and then the latter tosses them to the right counterpart for consultation, and collects all responses from different counterparts and returns them to UNESCO Bangkok. The Korean National Commission for UNESCO, if appointed as the secretariat, needs to call for annual coordination dialogues between UNESCO Bangkok and Korean counterparts, at least three times per year. The first dialogue is necessarily set up to discuss the common priority in designing KFIT projects no later than February Year F-1. The second one is scheduled around December Year F-1 to discuss how to expedite the budgetary spending for the KFIT implementation in Year F. The third dialogue needs to be held by the end of March in order to discuss the financial reports and evaluation that will be submitted to the BAI and National Assembly in Year F+1.

Lastly, by appointing the Korean National Commission for UNESCO as the single coordinator, the Korean government is required to avoid the frontline of micro-management of KFIT projects. The complex engagement for micro-management, which the Korean counterparts seem to have been doing, is not a good way of partnering with UNESCO Bangkok. It is advisable that micro-management needs to be given to UNESCO and the Korean government puts more weights on macro-management of KFIT projects.

### *Dispatching the Secondment of Korea's Ministries to UNESCO Bangkok*

As aforementioned, the Korean government needs to take into deep consideration the dispatch of the Secondment from MOE, MOSF, MOFA or related governmental institutes to UNESCO Bangkok in order to assign him/her important tasks for taking full charge of KFIT projects. If the Korean Secondment takes this mission, he/she can take the mandate of communication channels between UNESCO Bangkok and Korean institutions, and play a connector role in close dialogue with the Korean National Commission for UNESCO.

The effectiveness and efficiency would be doubled by appointing the Korean Secondment as UNESCO Bangkok's staff responsible for KFIT projects, simply because he/she has better knowledge on bureaucratic culture, structure, language, and processes of decision-making than non-Korean staffs. However, a careful decision is necessarily required when the Korean government dispatches the Korean Secondment to BSP/CFS, due to the nature of its mandate that covers not only KFIT projects but also internal tasks of CFS. Instead of the Secondment dispatch to UNESCO Headquarters, it is more realistic to reinforce the professional expertise and communication power of the Korean Delegation to UNESCO by dispatching the Secondment specializing the coordination with BSP/CFS as well as domestic stakeholders.

## Prerequisites for the Strategic Framework for KFIT

Considering all findings through the analysis of both sides (UNESCO and the Korean partner agencies), the following five observations and their entailing seven issues consist of the *Strategic Framework for the KFIT*, which can be utilized as a sort of safeguards protecting and harnessing the coordinated and harmonized development cooperation between UNESCO Bangkok and its partners in Korea.

- (1) To identify the key problems in linking both parties for effective, relevant, and accountable implementations of the KFIT projects
- (2) To propose the new alternative of promoting the UNESCO-Korea partnership by reshaping the linkage of key counterparts in an integrated fashion
- (3) To propose the possible scenario for redesigning the internal coordination mechanism on the part of the Korean institutions
- (4) To propose the future road map that sets shared objectives, priorities and management mechanism between the two parties, which guarantees an accountable coordination and good governance furthermore
- (5) Korea's national budget cycle should be informed properly and systematically linked with UNESCO Bangkok's PCM and CFS's institutional chain of command.

First of all, the overall objective of the Strategic Framework is to support the realization of the present internationally agreed development goals through UNESCO Bangkok's mandate and activities. The Strategic Framework covers the financial contributions provided by the Korean government to UNESCO Bangkok and defines common procedures for consultation and decision-making and management of the contributions. Areas to be financed by the Korean government shall be set out under the Strategic Framework, established by the parties. Subject to this Framework, the Korean government is prepared to grant funds to UNESCO Bangkok.

Second, the Korean government's financial contribution primarily depends on the quality of UNESCO's performance as evidenced by the results achieved. The Korean government, subject to the approval of its own National Assembly, makes available to UNESCO a financial contribution to be used exclusively to finance selected projects and/or program approved for financing by the Korean government. Also, UNESCO is required to acknowledge the receipt of funds in writing, and the financial contribution made available by the Korean government should be used in accordance with UNESCO's regulations and rules.

The third issue involves the agenda of funds-in-trust. The Korean government and UNESCO Bangkok consult each other to mutually agree on the priorities to be funded under funds-in-trust. UNESCO Bangkok is asked to submit proposals to the Korean government for programs or projects to be funded under funds-in-trust. The proposals should follow UNESCO's standard format and include a draft work plan and budget plan as well. UNESCO Bangkok and the Korean government needs to enter into a specific project funds-in-trust consultation for each project to be funded. For projects in an individual country, UNESCO Bangkok is then required to establish with the beneficiary government a plan of operation or other agreement for the implementation of the project. Either the plan of operation or other agreement provides that the obligations of UNESCO Bangkok are conditioned upon the funds being made available by the

Korean government in accordance with the approved budget and the agreed payment schedule for the funds-in-trust contribution. Also, UNESCO Bangkok administers and accounts for the funds-in-trust in accordance with its own financial regulations and other applicable rules. UNESCO Bangkok is responsible for project supervision and control, and free to appoint sub-contractors in accordance with UNESCO's regulations and rules, for the execution of the whole or part of a project.

Along with benefits of KFIT, UNESCO Bangkok needs to provide the Korean government with an annual report on the progress of the project. In the interval between two progress reports, relevant information on the progress of the project under this Framework needs to be forwarded by UNESCO Bangkok to the Korean government, as often as may reasonably be requested by the Korean government. Upon completion of the project, UNESCO Bangkok also needs to prepare a final report which gives a summary of outputs and activities undertaken, achievements compared to the goals and objectives and an assessment of the project. In addition, UNESCO Bangkok is required to provide the Korean government with annual certified financial reports for each project and the submission of intermediary financial reports can also be agreed by the parties. As soon as feasible, and no later than 12 months after the operational termination of a project, UNESCO Bangkok shall submit a final certified financial report to the Korean government. Financial reports will be presented in the format of the approved budget.

Fourth, the issue of audit states that the funds made available by the Korean government are exclusively subject to the internal and external audit procedures as laid down in UNESCO's regulations, rules and directives. When available, UNESCO Bangkok is requested to submit to the Korean government the Audited Financial Statements of the Organization, together with the opinion of the UNESCO external auditor, as submitted to the Governing Bodies.

Fifth, the Strategic Framework is a rational product aimed at enhancing and promoting annual consultations and review meetings or making communication channels in a more integrated and periodic pattern. It is the intention of UNESCO Bangkok and the Korean government that there should be close cooperation between them for the purpose set forth in this Strategic Framework. To that end, they can regularly consult with each other and make available to each other all such information and assistance as may reasonably be requested. A review meeting also can be established to take place every year dealing with policy issues and review activities undertaken under the Strategic Framework. The date and place of the meeting can be decided jointly by UNESCO Bangkok and the Korean government.

The agenda of the annual consultations includes (1) exchange of views on major strategic issues including the development cooperation and future cooperation, (2) exchange of top priorities for mutually agreed projects for the next year, and (3) review activities implemented and results achieved during the previous year, including the financial situation. UNESCO Bangkok can, one month prior to the meeting, submit to the Korean government the following information and reports: (1) annual progress narrative reports; (2) annual financial reports for funds-in-trust projects; (3) a draft agenda including the thematic priorities; and (4) a draft list of participants. UNESCO Bangkok also prepares draft agreed minutes of the meeting and submit them to the Korean government for approval. The annual consultation may be arranged by the Government's budget cycle for enhancing its effectiveness on the decision-making process of funds-in-trust. UNESCO Bangkok and the Government may appoint the Korean National

Commission for UNESCO as the communication channel to coordinate the dissemination of information for both parties.

Sixth, regarding anti-corruption policy, in the event that UNESCO Bangkok becomes aware of non-frivolous allegations that indicate the need for further scrutiny of the implementation of the activities, including corrupt, fraudulent, collusive or coercive practices may have been undertaken in relation to the activities, it should promptly notify the Government. These allegations are dealt with in accordance with UNESCO's accountability and oversight framework and are brought promptly to the attention of UNESCO's head of internal oversight and, if required, to its chief financial officer.

Seventh, regarding the accountability mechanisms based upon monitoring, review and evaluation, UNESCO Bangkok is responsible for results and financial monitoring, assessment, review and evaluation in accordance with UNESCO's regulations and rules (Asian Development Bank, 2015). UNESCO Bangkok should inform the Korean government of all proposed reviews and evaluations regarding the projects for possible participation by the Korean partner agencies. UNESCO Bangkok should provide the Korean partners with all information on the use of resources provided by the Korean government.

## Conclusion

This study originally began with the consultancy request from UNESCO and its funding to review the lack of consultation, coordination and communication between UNESCO Bangkok and the Korean government with regards to the KFIT projects. The dearth of active coordination processes may generate the accountability deficits in operating and managing the implementation of KFIT projects and unclear division of mandates between donor funding to multilateral organizations and final reporting of project outcomes to donors (Addison et al., 2004; Kim, 2017; Barakat, 2009; Barakat et al., 2012; Tortora and Steensen, 2014). The case of UNESCO-Korea KFIT represents such a dilemma of multi-bi aid and trust funds, which results from discrepancies between donor's demands for more accountability and UNESCO's demands for clearer communication and coordination.

For the rational solution to tackle this coordination dilemma, both parties pay more attention to what is the main cause of problems and give more efforts to configure how to transform the current lack of coordination mechanism by developing the Strategic Framework as a common pledge for the renovation of the current system and the integration of fragmented channels of communication and coordination processes. On top of an integrated coordination mechanism, UNESCO Bangkok make more efforts to understand the domestic procedures of national budget projections in Korea across the National Assembly and ministries involved in KFIT, whereas the Korean partner agencies put more weights on the efforts to figure out what is the main theme and policy orientation of UNESCO, as well as the internal structure of project managements between UNESCO Headquarters and Bangkok Office.

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