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UNESCO PRIZES

REVIEWS AND RENEWALS

PART I

UNESCO KING HAMAD BIN ISA AL-KHALIFA PRIZE FOR THE USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN EDUCATION

SUMMARY

In conformity with Article 8.1 of the Statutes of the UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of ICT in Education (195 EX/Decision 11.III), the Revised Overall Strategy for UNESCO Prizes and its Constituent Criteria (191 EX/Decision 12), an external review of the UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize has been undertaken. By way of this report, the Director-General informs the Executive Board about the main results of this review and recommends the renewal of the Prize.

Decision required: paragraph 16.

Job: 202002881

I. BACKGROUND

1. The UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) in Education was established in 2005 by the Executive Board (172 EX/Decision 56) through the generous support of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The purpose of the Prize is “to reward projects and activities of individuals, institutions, other entities or non-governmental organizations for excellent models, best practice and creative use of ICTs to enhance learning, teaching and overall educational performance”. In 2014, the Prize was renewed for another six-year cycle by the Executive Board through 195 EX/Decision 11.III.

2. In conformity with Article 8.1 of the Statutes of the Prize, an external review of all aspects of the Prize has been completed six months prior to the agreed end of the term of the Prize. In compliance with the relevant provision of the Revised Overall Strategy for UNESCO Prizes and its Constituent Criteria (191 EX/Decision 12), the Director-General hereby submits the findings of the review with a recommendation for the continuation of the Prize for a period of six years (2021-2026), starting with the 2021 edition.

I. FINDINGS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

3. The external review was undertaken through a combination of document analysis, online research as well as 17 interviews that were conducted remotely with UNESCO staff, Prize winners, Jury members and donor representatives. It covered the period from 2015 to early 2020, during which a total of 10 Prize winners were selected (the formal Award Ceremony for the 2019 winners has been postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic). In line with the constituent criteria of the Revised Overall Strategy for UNESCO Prizes (191 EX/Decision 12) and the assessment framework for renewal studies (196 EX/12 Part I, annex), the review covered the following five key elements of the Prize: its relevance, prestige and visibility, integrity, management aspects, as well as financial considerations.

Relevance of the Prize to UNESCO’s programme priorities

4. The Prize fully aligns with UNESCO’s mandate and is well aligned with its programmatic priorities. Within the current Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2021 (37 C/4), UNESCO is working towards “strengthening national capacities for the development of education systems to foster high-quality and inclusive lifelong learning” (37 C/4 Strategic Objective 1) and “promoting access to information and knowledge” (37 C/4 Strategic Objective 9), notably by expanding innovative learning opportunities through ICT in education. The Prize particularly contributes to these objectives. UNESCO’s central role in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, notably Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education, including through the use of ICTs ensures the alignment of the Prize to the SDGs.

5. The review notes that there are several prizes of international relevance to ICTs and education. However, this Prize is the only one that is global in scope, covers all levels of education and has an open application policy. The main attraction of the Prize is the prestige, authority and independence that comes from its association with UNESCO.

6. Furthermore, the Prize generates significant benefits and has a positive impact on the winners’ capacity to sustain and expand their projects. It opens new opportunities and enables them to engage with senior government officials and Ministers, as well as with potential donors and partners impressed by UNESCO’s endorsement. Most Prize winners expect the benefits to multiply in the future, and also greatly appreciate the Award Ceremony and the occasion to network. The review also notes that some would welcome further opportunities to engage and interact more deeply with their peers, UNESCO experts and others active in the field. Ensuring the visibility and recognition of the award winners in their home country is an added incentive.

Prestige and Visibility

7. The prestige of being associated with UNESCO, its global scope and reputation for independence, greatly overshadows the Prize's monetary value (US $25,000 per winner). Meanwhile, the monetary value is also appreciated, especially by smaller organizations.

8. The review points out that the call for nominations is widely circulated and clearly articulated, with some National Commissions making strong efforts annually to support applicants through what can be a cumbersome process. The online application system greatly enhances transparency and efficiency. Furthermore, a high number of nominations are secured, a good proportion of which are of high quality, and the Secretariat is well-positioned to nominate highly qualified Jury members, renowned in their field, and to secure their commitment.

9. The annual Award Ceremony attracts an impressive attendance of 400 to 500 people, raising their awareness of the Prize and the theme highlighted. Many Permanent Delegations report to their capitals as relevant, while media coverage, including social media, is ensured in line with the resources available.

Integrity

10. The integrity of the Prize is well-ensured as reflected through its sound management. The review confirms that all reputational risks for UNESCO and the donor in organizing the Prize have been avoided. In addition, the Jury deliberation process, supported by the Secretariat, engages with all Prize nominations comprehensively and fairly. The review concludes that winners are worthy Prize recipients and that there is no evidence that the independence of the Jury has been compromised.

Management

11. The collaboration between the donor and UNESCO is positive, and the division of labour between them is appropriate and effective. Furthermore, the Prize has strong leadership and the Secretariat is efficient and effective in managing the Prize. Their efforts are appreciated and they have a high level of trust from the Jury. The review also indicates that, due to time pressure and the fact that the Prize receives a high number of applications, sustainable human resources are required, including a full-time associate project officer and a part-time assistant, so that the Secretariat could reflect on the process and outcomes of the Prize, and improve it in the future.

Financial Considerations

12. The second cycle of the Prize (2015 – 2020) was funded in the amount of $758,600, as was stipulated in the Statutes, and an additional amount of $550,000 was generously provided by the donor in 2019. This budget was well managed, fully utilized and the Secretariat was fully occupied in achieving results throughout the annual cycles. The budget helped deliver a wide range of activities, such as a well-planned and supported Prize nomination and Jury selection process and a well-attended and high-profile awards ceremony. The Prize yields significant visibility and awareness raising on the annually-selected theme as well as significant benefits for the Prize winners.

Overall recommendations of the review

13. The review recognizes that the Prize is achieving its goals, is well-managed and offers good value for money given the resources invested in it. It recommends that a new cycle, with a relative increase in funding, could build upon its achievements to gain a higher profile within the overall prize ecosystem by reframing the Prize as an annual problem-solving process that engages interactively with practitioners, including applicants and relevant staff across UNESCO entities globally.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

14. Having examined the findings of the review report on the UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize, the Director-General, in consultation with the donor, proposes to the Executive Board to renew the Prize for the duration of six years (2021-2026) with proposed amendments to the current Statutes, as contained in Annex I of this document. The proposed Statutes follow the standard template and there are no deviations.

15. Should the Executive Board approve the renewal of the Prize, the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain will provide a one-time financial contribution to the Prize in the amount of US $758,600, which includes a total of US $300,000 for the awardees throughout the six years.

Proposed draft decision

16. In light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to take the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 172 EX/Decision 56,
2. Taking into consideration 191 EX/Decision 12 and 201 EX/Decision 24,
3. Having examined document 210 EX/16.I,
4. Expresses its appreciation for the commitment of the Government of Bahrain to the promotion of the use of information and communication technologies in education;
5. Decides to renew the UNESCO-King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Education for a period of six years (2021-2026);
6. Approves the amended Statutes of the UNESCO-King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Education, and takes note of the Financial Regulations of the Special Account for the Prize as set out in Annexes I and II, respectively, of document 210 EX/16.I.

ANNEX I

STATUTES OF THE UNESCO KING HAMAD BIN ISA AL-KHALIFA PRIZE FOR THE USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN EDUCATION

Article 1 – Purpose

The purpose of the UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Education (ICT) is to reward projects and activities of individuals, institutions, other entities or non-governmental organizations for excellent models, best practice, and creative use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to enhance learning, teaching and overall educational performance. The objective of the Prize is in conformity with UNESCO's mandate and policies and with the Organization's Strategic Objectives 1, 2, and 9, as laid out in the Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021. In line with SDG 4 – Education 2030 as well as the Qingdao Declaration and Beijing Consensus on Artificial Intelligence and Education, the Prize advocates for the ethical use of technologies to accelerate the achievement of inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all.

Article 2 – Designation, amount and periodicity of the Prize

2.1 The Prize shall be entitled "UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Education".

2.2. The Prize shall be funded by the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain and shall consist of a one-time contribution sum of US $758,600, which shall cover both the monetary value of the Prize and the costs of administering the Prize. Any interest that may accrue will be added to the overall contribution. As determined by the Director-General and in consultation with the Donor, the Prize shall consist of a sum of US $50,000 to be equally divided between two prize-winners.

2.3 All funds received and the interest accrued thereon shall be kept in a special interest-bearing account for the Prize (see Financial Regulations in Annex II).

2.4 The full staff support and operating/management costs of the Prize, including all costs related to the award ceremony and public information activities, estimated at a maximum of US $458,600, shall be fully covered by the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain. To this end, the Director-General shall determine a mandatory overhead cost amount to be applied and charged against the funds in the Special Account, which is to be established under the Financial Regulations of the Prize.

2.5 The Prize shall be awarded every year for a six-year period, starting from the 2021 edition of the Prize, it being understood that this period may be adjusted to take into consideration fluctuations in administration costs.

Article 3 – Conditions/Qualifications of candidates

Candidates shall have made a significant contribution to the creative use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to enhance learning, teaching and overall educational performance. Prizes may be conferred upon individuals, institutions, other entities or non-governmental organizations.

Article 4 – Designation/Selection of the prize-winners

The two prize-winners shall be selected by the Director-General of UNESCO on the basis of the assessments and recommendations made to her by a jury.

Article 5 – Jury

5.1 The Jury shall consist of five independent members, being personalities with a recognized reputation in the field covered while also taking into consideration the need for equitable geographical distribution, gender equality and the principle of non-payment of honoraria. They shall be appointed by the Director-General for a period of two-years, eligible for re-election for a maximum term of three consecutive two-year periods. Representatives and alternates of Members of the Executive Board cannot be appointed as jurors. Jurors involved in a real or potential conflict of interest shall recuse themselves from further deliberations or be asked by the Director-General to do so. The Director-General may replace members of the Jury for reason.

5.2 The Jury shall elect its own Chair and Deputy Chair. Members shall receive no remuneration for their work, but will receive allowances for travel and accommodation, where required. A quorum of three jurors present will be required for Jury deliberations to proceed. The working languages for deliberations by the Jury shall be English and French.

5.3 The Jury shall conduct its business and deliberations in conformity with these Statutes, and shall be assisted in the performance of its task by a member of the UNESCO Secretariat designated by the Director-General. Decisions shall be taken by consensus to the extent possible, and otherwise by secret ballot until a simple majority is obtained. A member shall not take part in a vote concerning a nomination from his or her country.

5.4 The Jury shall meet once every year.

5.5 The Jury shall send an assessment of nominations and accompanying recommendations to the Director-General of UNESCO no later than 14 days after the completion of the deliberations of the Jury.

Article 6 – Nomination of candidates

6.1 When UNESCO has received the funding of the Prize, as indicated in Article 2 above, the Director-General of UNESCO shall officially invite the submission of nominations to the Secretariat of the Prize by 15 October every year from the governments of Member States, in consultation with their National Commissions, as well as from the non-governmental organizations maintaining official partnerships with the Organization and active in the field covered by the Prize. It is understood that the deadline may be adjusted to take into consideration unprecedented crises or emergencies.

6.2 Nominations shall be submitted to the Director-General by the governments of Member States, in consultation with their National Commissions, and by non-governmental organizations maintaining official partnerships with UNESCO. A self-nomination cannot be considered.

6.3 Each nomination shall be accompanied by a written recommendation, which shall include, in English or French, *inter alia*:

(a) a description of the candidate's background and achievements;

(b) a summary of the work or the results of the work, publications and other supporting documents of major importance, submitted for consideration;

(c) a definition of the candidate's contribution to the Prize's objectives.

Article 7 – Procedure for the awarding of the Prize

7.1 The Prize shall be awarded by the Director-General at an official ceremony held for that purpose at UNESCO Headquarters or online based on the agreement with the Government of

Bahrain no later than 31 March, the date to be mutually agreed upon. UNESCO shall present to the prize-winners a cheque for the amount of the Prize as well as a diploma. UNESCO shall officially announce the names of the prize-winners.

7.2 If a work being rewarded has been produced by two or more persons, the Prize shall be awarded to them jointly. In no case may a prize amount be divided between more than three persons.

7.3 The prize winners, if possible, shall give a lecture on a subject relevant to the work for which the Prize has been awarded. Such a lecture shall be organized during or in connection with the Prize ceremony.

7.4 The work produced by a person since deceased shall not be considered for the Prize. If, however, a prize winner dies before he or she has received the Prize, then the Prize may be presented posthumously.

7.5 Should a prize winner decline the Prize, the jury shall submit a new proposal to the Director-General.

Article 8 – Sunset clause – mandatory renewal of the Prize

8.1 Six months prior to the agreed end of the term of the Prize, the Director-General of UNESCO together with the donor will undertake a review of all aspects of the Prize and decide about its continuation or termination. The Director-General will inform the Executive Board of UNESCO about the results of this review.

8.2 In case of termination of the Prize, any unspent balance of funds shall be returned to the donor unless otherwise agreed, in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the Prize.

Article 9 – Appeals

No appeals shall be allowed against the decision of UNESCO with regard to the award of the Prize. Proposals received for the award of the Prize may not be divulged.

Article 10 – Amendments to the Statues of the Prize

Any amendment to the present Statutes shall be submitted to the Executive Board for approval.

ANNEX II

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS OF THE SPECIAL ACCOUNT FOR THE UNESCO KING HAMAD BIN ISA AL-KHALIFA PRIZE FOR THE USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN EDUCATION

Article 1 – Creation of a Special Account

1.1 In accordance with the Statues of the UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Education (ICT) and Article 6, paragraphs 5 and 6, of the Financial Regulations of UNESCO, there is hereby created a Special Account for the "UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Education", hereafter referred to as the Special Account.

1.2 The following regulations shall govern the operation of the Special Account.

Article 2 – Financial period

2.1 The financial period for budget estimates shall be two consecutive calendar years beginning with an even-numbered year.

2.2 The financial period for accounting shall be an annual calendar year.

Article 3 – Purpose

The purpose of the UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Education is to reward projects and activities of individuals, institutions, other entities or non-governmental organizations for excellent models, best practice, and creative use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to enhance learning, teaching and overall educational performance.

The amounts deposited in the Special Account shall be used to finance the UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Education, and its operational and related costs.

Article 4 – Income

The income of the Special Account shall consist of:

(a) voluntary contributions from States, international agencies and organizations, as well as other entities;

(b) such subventions, endowments, gifts and bequests as are allocated to it for purposes consistent with the object of the Special Account;

(c) miscellaneous income, including any interest earned on the investments referred to in Article 7 below.

Article 5 – Expenditure

The Special Account shall be debited with the expenditure relating to its purpose as described in Article 3 above and the Statutes of the Prize, including administrative expenses specifically relating to it and programme support costs applicable to it.

Article 6 – Accounts

6.1 The Chief Financial Officer shall maintain such accounting records as are necessary.

6.2 Any unused balance at the end of a financial period shall be carried forward to the following financial period.

6.3 The accounts of the Special Account shall be part of the consolidated financial statements presented for audit to the External Auditor of UNESCO.

6.4 Contributions in kind shall be recorded outside the Special Account.

Article 7 – Investments

7.1 The Director-General may make short-term or long-term investments of sums standing to the credit of the Special Account.

7.2 Revenue from these investments shall be credited to the Special Account in line with UNESCO's Financial Rules.

Article 8 – Reporting

8.1 At the end of each financial period, a financial report showing the income and expenditure under the Special Account shall be prepared and submitted to the donor(s) to the Special Account.

8.2 An annual narrative report shall be submitted to the donor(s) to the Special Account.

Article 9 – Closure of the Special Account

The Director-General shall consult the Executive Board at such time as he/she deems that the operation of the Special Account is no longer necessary. Any balance upon closure of the Special Account shall be returned to the donor(s) of the Prize unless otherwise agreed.

Article 10 – General provision

10.1 Any amendment to these Financial Regulations shall be approved by the Director-General after consultations with the donor(s) of the Prize. The Executive Board shall be informed accordingly of any such amendments.

10.2 Unless otherwise provided in these Regulations, the Special Account shall be administered in accordance with the Financial Regulations of UNESCO.