
COMPUTER SYSTEM SUSTAINABILITY TOOLKIT

UNIT 2:

Establishing Your Team

2



Selecting the right mix of people with the experience, interest and time to participate is essential to the success of the Sustainability Planning Team. This unit will help you select, organize and inspire a well-balanced team at your school to manage the process of creating and implementing your CSS plan.

How can we establish and manage a Sustainability Planning Team (SPT)?

The best CSS plans are created and implemented by a team comprising men and women who are representative of your school and the surrounding community. This does not need to be a completely new team or committee; it can be developed from an existing team that is working to improve the school's performance and infrastructure. However, based on experience from schools around the world, and from the six Indonesian schools that pioneered the development of this Toolkit, a successful SPT should be broadly representative and include the following members:

- the **principal and another member of the school's administration**, preferably the school's bursar or finance officer;
- at **least three teachers** (men and women unless your school is only for boys or girls and only has men or women teachers) representing different disciplines—not just the ICT teacher;
- at **least three students**, boys and girls, (unless your school only has boys or girls) who are selected by the student body to represent its interests;
- at **least three representatives**, men and women, from the school's parent-teacher association (PTA) (or three parents if



the school does not have an active PTA); and

- at **least two local business owners** from the community.

What roles will the SPT member have?

Each member of the SPT will play many important roles, including: a) being an active participant in the SPT; b) representing the interests, concerns, and needs of his or her constituents; c) communicating the work being done by the SPT to his or her constituents; and d) mobilizing his or her constituents to help implement different aspects of the school's CSS plan. It is important to select team members who can carry out these responsibilities and remain active members of the team for a full school year. The amount of time required by SPT members depends on the size of

It Takes a Team

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SCHOOL
ADMINISTRATION

TEACHERS

PARENTS

LOCAL BUSINESS
OWNERS

STUDENTS



your school, the complexity of your school's computer system, and the goals the team decides to achieve. Experience from schools in Indonesia and elsewhere shows that SPT members may need to spend four to eight hours a month with routine meetings. Some members will need to spend more time depending on the different sustainability plan activities that they either lead or participate in.

Do SPT members need to be computer experts?

It is not necessary for each member of the team to have extensive knowledge about computers, but all members should be interested in learning about computers and, most important, in helping the school build a self-sustaining computer system. At least one member of the team should have some knowledge about and experience with computers. If your school has a computer teacher, staff member, or volunteer who is responsible for managing and/or maintaining the school's computer system, he or she should part of the SPT.

The above suggestions and those that follow are based on experience with successful SPTs at schools in Indonesia and in other countries around the world. While each SPT is similar in many respects, it is also different since it reflects the school's local culture and norms. Not all SPTs are equally effective. The skills, experience, and commitment of the team members will determine, to a great extent, how effective your SPT will be. Also, experience shows that over time, teams become more effective as they gain new skills, as their members get to know and trust each other, and as they start to make substantive progress toward creating their CSS plan.

What are the primary goals of the SPT?

Before selecting people to become active

members of the SPT, it is important to provide candidates and the larger school community with a written statement about the purpose of the SPT and the responsibilities members of the SPT will have.

The following page has a sample statement of purpose from a hypothetical school. You can use this sample to create your own statement of purpose using the worksheet, titled **SPT's Statement of Purpose**, which you will find on the accompanying CD, along with all other Toolkit documents. It is important to distribute this statement of purpose to teachers, students, parents, and members of the local business community. This will help raise their awareness of the school's efforts to improve the quality and performance of its computer resources by creating and implementing a CSS plan. This will also raise the profile of the SPT so people with the necessary skills and commitment will want to participate. Also, distributing your SPT's statement of purpose will demonstrate to the school community your commitment to transparent communication.

Furthermore, this will help members of the community start to understand that creating a self-sustaining school computer system depends on the participation of all stakeholders, not just the principal and the ICT teacher. Over the course of the school year, the SPT will need to ask members of the larger school community to contribute time and possibly money to the school's efforts to create the plan and, more important, to implement the plan's strategies and activities. Starting a broad-based communication effort with this statement of purpose and continuing with ongoing communications will make it easier for the SPT to secure the active support from the larger school community.

Sample:

Sustainability Planning Team's Statement of Purpose

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The Whitmore Secondary School is establishing a Sustainability Planning Team (SPT) that will be responsible for developing and implementing a Computer System Sustainability (CSS) plan for our school's computer system. The SPT will be made up of at least 13 volunteers from the school staff, students, parents, and other members of our school community. The mandate of this team is to work together, using the Sustainability Toolkit, to enable the school to build, sustain, maintain, and grow our computer system so it can provide ongoing educational benefits to our students, teachers, and school community.

Members of the SPT do not need to be computer experts. The most important criterion for being selected to join the SPT is your commitment to helping the school improve its educational services by creating a self-sustaining computer system. I am pleased to report that our school's ICT teacher, Ms. Smith, has already agreed to be part of the SPT and provide expert knowledge about our computer system and the technical requirements for sustaining our present system and increasing its capacity over time.

I, the school's principal, will also be a member of the SPT, along with Mr. Reid, the school's finance officer (bursar). To complete the SPT, we will recruit two other volunteers from the teaching staff who will represent non-ICT disciplines. We will also recruit three student volunteers to represent the three upper grades at Whitmore Secondary School. To complement the staff and student SPT members, we will recruit three parents from our Parent-Teacher Association and two members of the business community surrounding the school. The members of the SPT should be recognized as dedicated members of the school community.

During the first few months of operation, the SPT will meet once a week and meetings are expected to last at least one hour. Once the team is established, we will determine the day and time we will meet each week, and we will prepare a calendar for the first three months of the SPT's activities so members can schedule their responsibilities. During our first meeting, we also will establish the rules that will govern our meetings and elect members of the team to chair the meetings and keep records. Later, as the team's tasks are defined, different members will take leadership roles for different activities and tasks. The team will use the Sustainability Toolkit to guide its work and lead us through the process of, first, developing a Computer System Sustainability plan, and then implementing and monitoring the plan during the school year. We expect the plan to be fully operational during this school year.

Each member of the SPT will have the following main responsibilities: a) be an active participant of the SPT; b) represent the interests, concerns, and needs of his or her constituents; c) communicate the work being done by the SPT to his or her constituents; and d) mobilize his or her constituents to help implement different aspects of the school's CSS plan.

HELPFUL HINT



Download a fully customizable version of this sample from the accompanying CD-ROM.

Over the first three to four months of operation, the SPT will engage in the following main activities:

- 1) Assess the current state of our school's computer systems, how teachers and students use the school's computers, how much money the school spends on the school's computer system and what types of computer equipment members of the school community believe should be part of our computer system over the next five years.
- 2) Establish a low-cost means to improve the performance of and maintain the school's current computer system.
- 3) Brainstorm on how the school can raise the funds needed to cover the costs of sustaining the school's computer system, including how the computer system might be used to generate revenue.
- 4) Select and implement the best revenue generating plans.
- 5) Develop and use a budgeting tool to track the costs involved in running and maintaining the computer system, projecting prices for different revenue-generating strategies, and managing revenue earned from the school's computer system.
- 6) Monitor implementation of the school's CSS plan and updating the plan over time to improve sustainability and the benefit the school gains from our computer system.

Over the next two weeks, I will approach active and dedicated members of our teaching staff and members of our school's community to ask them to join the SPT. If you would like to be considered for this important team, please contact me directly so we can add your name to the list of SPT candidates. The teaching staff will also organize the election of students from each of the three upper grades at the school to join the SPT. As part of this process, we will identify boys and girls from each of these grades whom we feel should run in the election to represent their grade in the SPT. Ultimately, we will strive to create a team that includes a balanced number of men and women.

I am excited at the opportunity to work with a dedicated team of concerned educators, students, and other members of our school's community to help improve our school by enabling us to sustain and grow our computer resources. I am sure that our efforts will strengthen our school and provide our students and teachers with continuous access to computer technologies and the Internet as an important means of preparing them for a positive and productive future.

Alex Robinson

Principal of Whitmore Secondary School

How should the SPT be organized and operate?

Once you have identified the members of the school's SPT and secured their commitment to participate actively in all SPT meetings and activities, you will need to organize the first meeting. At this meeting you and the other members of the team will need to achieve several important objectives. The following is a list of suggested objectives, which you should use to create the agenda for your first meeting using the Toolkit form, titled **First SPT Meeting Agenda**. A template of this form can be found at the back of the Toolkit and on the accompanying CD.

Suggested Objectives for Your SPT's first Meeting

Getting to know each other – All members of the SPT probably will be somewhat familiar with each other. However, since you want them to work well with one another, you will want to organize an activity that enables the team members to learn more about each other and understand why each one wants to be part of this team.

One enjoyable way to achieve this is to organize the team members into pairs, making sure to link each member with someone outside of his or her peer group. For example, a teacher might be linked with a parent, a businessperson with a student, and a student with an administrator, etc. Next, ask each member of the pair to interview the other as if he or she is a reporter for a local newspaper or radio station. The "reporter" will then have to deliver a report on the results of the interview to the rest of the SPT.

Before starting this exercise, have the whole group brainstorm about the questions that should be asked during the interview. This will ensure that each team member will share

common set of information with the group. Below are some good questions for the interview activity that you and the team members may want to include.

- What is one thing about you that the members of this team may not know?
- Why did you want to be part of the SPT?
- Which of your skills, experiences, and knowledge do you think will be especially important to enable the SPT to achieve its objectives?
- What do you expect to learn as a member of the SPT?
- Do you believe that computers and the Internet are important resources for quality education at our school? Why or why not?

Creating an effective team structure and defining the team's core functions:

All teams need to have some type of structure to run meetings effectively, define the team's routine activities, keep track of the team's proceedings, communicate progress toward stated goals, and carry out the team's different tasks and activities. One important element of an effective team is to identify a person or persons to be responsible for preparing the agenda for the meetings and to chair the meetings. Some schools select the principal to organize and chair the meetings of the SPT; others create a rotational system where a different member of the team organizes and chairs each meeting. Regardless of the system you choose, it is important to build a strong sense of ownership by all members to ensure effective functioning of the SPT. A strong sense of ownership is encouraged through authentic participation in the meetings and in making decisions. If you use a rotational system, more-experienced members of the team should chair the first few meetings

Sample: First SPT Meeting Agenda



Date:



Time:



Meeting called by: School Director



Proposed Participants:

School Director ICT Teacher Teacher #2
 Teacher #3 Student #1 Student #2
 Student #3 Parent #1 (PTA member) Business Leader
 Administrative Staff School Finance Officer/Accountant



Proposed Agenda Items:

TIME	TOPICS
Topic #1 – School Director	Welcome and Introduction to the Sustainability Planning Team (SPT): a) Getting to know each other activity b) Roles and responsibilities of the SPT; c) SPT meeting schedule; and d) Defining the goals and objectives for the SPT and the school's sustainability plan.
Topic #2 – School Director	Step-by-step overview of each unit in the Computer System Sustainability Toolkit
Topic #3 – School Director	Establishing the different SPT committees (3 members per committee): a) b) c)
Topic #4 – School Director	Prepare an initial calendar of main SPT activities for the year
Topic #5 – School Director	Assign responsibility for the SPT's first task: a) Carry out a detailed assessment of the school's computer system
Topic #6 – School Director	Any additional business that SPT members may have
Topic #7 – School Director	Set a draft agenda for the next meeting, including topics, roles and responsibilities



Additional Instructions:

Establish rapport through activities that allow team members get to know each other



so less-experienced members of the team will learn what needs to be done. Teams often choose the rotational system because it distributes the work of organizing and chairing the meetings among all members equally, ensures participation, and results in all members feeling that they are important members of the SPT.

In addition to identifying someone to organize and chair the meetings, the team will need to decide on an effective way

of maintaining a record of each meeting, especially of all decisions made and the assignments for different activities that are made. This documentation should be shared with the larger school community so all stakeholders can be kept informed about the SPT's progress toward creating and implementing the CSS plan. The meeting records will also make future meetings more effective, and the team will be able to make good progress toward achieving its objectives.

During future meetings, the team will need to assign members to take leadership roles for different activities outlined in the Toolkit, which will enable the team to prepare and implement the CSS plan.

Reviewing the contents of the Toolkit: All SPT members will need to become very familiar with the Sustainability Toolkit and the different core activities the team will carry out to create their school's CSS plan. If possible, the school should make copies of sections of the Toolkit (the Toolkit's CD includes a digital copy of the Toolkit for printing) for each member of the team so he or she will be able to study the content and bring copies to each SPT meeting. After the copies of the Toolkit are distributed to each team member, we recommend that the principal and the ICT teacher (if the school has one) provide a brief overview of the different units so team members have a general understanding of what they will be engaged in over the school year. They should also encourage the members to read the statement of purpose letter again so they gain a detailed understanding of the team's responsibilities.

Preparing a calendar for future SPT

meetings: We recommend that, for the first three months of the school year, the SPT meet once a week so the team will be able to make rapid progress on developing the school's CSS plan. You can use the **SPT**

Calendar Template in the Annex and on the CD, along with the sample on the following page, to help with this process. The goal is to create a draft plan within the first quarter of the school year so the team will have the rest of the school year to implement different parts of the plan. This will enable the school and the team to start experiencing the benefits of their CSS plan quickly. Each team meeting will likely last one to two hours,

depending on what needs to be accomplished and what decisions need to be made.

Assigning responsibility for the team's first

task: Which activities need to be done first will depend on whether your school has an existing computer system or is exploring establishing a computer system for the first time. If your school has a computer system, then one of the first tasks in developing a quality CSS plan is having a clear understanding of the status of the school's current computer system. This is accomplished by carrying out a detailed assessment of the system (see Unit 5 for details on this task). We recommend that at least three members of the SPT be responsible for carrying out this task and preparing an assessment report on the state of the school's current computer system for a future team meeting. The assessment team might include the school's ICT teacher, one student and one parent. If your school is exploring establishing a computer system for the first time, then the SPT will need to work on Unit 3.

Any other business: The acting chair may want to ask members to suggest any other business to discuss before the meeting is closed.

Next meeting: The acting chair may wish to confirm the date, time, location, and, if necessary, the chair of the next meeting.

As you are probably starting to understand, establishing an effective SPT and creating a CSS plan are not simple tasks. However, the results of your efforts to enable your school to create a self-sustaining computer system, improve the performance of this system, and increase student and teacher access to computers and the Internet at your school will make your hard work worthwhile.

Sample: SPT Calendar

Month	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
September	School year begins	Develop SPT statement of purpose (Unit 2)	Distribute SPT statement of purpose	Select SPT members
October	Hold first SPT meeting	Determine total cost of ownership of new computer system (Unit 3), or Carry out detailed assessment of the school's computer system (Unit 5) Conduct computer usage surveys SPT MEETING	Create summary report of assessment Compile the results of the computer usage survey SPT MEETING	Distribute summary assessment report to community Assess internet connectivity options for your school (Unit 4) SPT MEETING
November	Organize focus group discussions (Unit 6) SPT MEETING	Focus group discussions take place	Summarize wish list mentioned by focus groups SPT MEETING	Present wish list to SPT Brainstorming session on fundraising ideas SPT MEETING
December	Rank and select the best fundraising ideas (Unit 7) SPT MEETING	Present draft CSS plan to the SPT for review and comment SPT MEETING	Refine CSS plan draft SPT MEETING	Break
January	Break	Review final CSS plan SPT MEETING	Present final CSS plan to community	Develop cost & revenue systems (Unit 8) SPT MEETING
February	Begin implementation of selected fundraising ideas	 SPT MEETING		Develop monitoring & evaluation strategy (Unit 9) SPT MEETING
March		Review and finalize M&E strategy SPT MEETING		Implement M&E strategy SPT MEETING
April		SPT MEETING		SPT MEETING
May	Update M&E tracking form	Create comprehensive M&E summary SPT MEETING		Review M&E summary and update CSS plan SPT MEETING
June	School event to share results of M&E summary and plans for next year		School year ends	
July				
August				



Important items to remember:

1. Computer System Assessment, 2. Focus Group Discussions, 3. Brainstorm & select fundraising ideas, 4. Develop CSS plan, 5. Develop cost & revenue systems, 6. Develop monitoring and evaluation strategy