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**UNESCO's Management of Social Transformation
(MOST) Programme (1994-2001)
*Evaluation Report***

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MOST Evaluation Report (1994-2001)

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report contains the results of the evaluation of UNESCO's Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme (1994-2001), conducted between January and June 2002. The MOST Programme, part of the Social and Human Sciences Sector (SHS) of UNESCO, was launched in March 1994. It was created with the twin goals of (a) improving the understanding of social transformations by generating policy-relevant knowledge on three major issues of our time: multi-ethnic and multicultural societies; cities and urban development; and local and national strategies to cope with global phenomena, and (b) improving the communication between social sciences researchers and decision-makers. MOST promotes the use of social science research in policy formulation, and the development of methodological tools for evaluating the impact of social and economic development policies emanating from major UN Conferences. The principal strength of the MOST Programme is its capacity to mobilise networks, co-ordinate projects from UNESCO's headquarters and field offices, provide high level expertise for the upstream preparation of projects as well as their evaluation at both national and regional levels. This support system reflects the viability of the co-operation between research producers and users that UNESCO Member States deem critical for improved development policies. An Intergovernmental Council (IGC) and an independent Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) govern the Programme. Co-ordination is provided by a small secretariat in UNESCO Headquarters, and National MOST Liaison Committees (NLCs, presently established in 53 countries) which provide the link between the Programme and national social science and policy communities. Member States, United Nations Agencies, and Funding Agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, UNODCCP), as well as bilateral funding sources, can thus draw on the Programme for increased technical assistance in social policy planning. The MOST *Clearing House* on the Internet is an important tool for sharing and disseminating knowledge in the fields covered by the Programme.

II. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND METHODOLOGY ADOPTED

The goal of the evaluation is to assess the results of activities implemented within the MOST Programme between 1994 and 2001. The year 2002 is considered as a transitional year for the second phase of the Programme, and the particular purpose of this evaluation is to make specific forward-looking recommendations to improve the Programme after 2002, the continuation (of which?) for a second phase spanning over 2002 - 2009 was foreseen in UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2002 - 2007 (31 C/4, paragraphs 99 and 107), as well as in the Programme and Budget for 2002 - 2003 (31 C/5, paragraph 03301).

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The evaluation covers policy research networks, pilot projects, extrabudgetary projects, the MOST Clearing House and capacity-building activities carried out between 1994 and 2001. The External Mid-Term Evaluation Report (SHS-99/CONF.203/4) and the Report on the Refocusing of the MOST Programme (160EX/12) are background documents in this external evaluation. The present evaluation also draws on the observations and recommendations made by the evaluation of UNESCO's Information Services in Social and Human Sciences ¹, particularly as far as the dissemination and the communication strategies are concerned.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) of this evaluation, approved by the SSC and the IGC, indicate that the evaluation is carried out in accordance with the procedures and the evaluation plans of UNESCO, as well as General Conference resolution 1993 on its 27th Session, and Executive Board Document 140EX/11. It was carried out under the responsibility of the Division of Social Science, Research and Policy (SHS/SRP), with the active participation of the Office of Internal Oversight (IOS), in all stages of evaluation.

The main issues covered in this evaluation are:

- a) Assessment in terms of results of the implementation of the MOST strategies (considering the importance of national contexts in analysing the research-policy links);
- b) Assessment of organisational structural conditions of the MOST Programme;
- c) Assessment of the impact of capacity-building activities;
- d) Assessment of MOST as an international social science programme.

The evaluation team carried out its research and analyses by using the following methods: a) quantitative and qualitative analysis of MOST publications and documents; b) individual interviews with research network members and community policy leaders (from Asia, Europe, the Americas and Africa), members of the IGC, the SSC and the NCLs, as well as representatives of UNESCO National Commissions; c) meetings with Mr. Pierre Sané, the ADG/SHS, Dr. Ali Kazancigil, the Executive Secretary of the Programme, and the MOST Secretariat, as well as SHS staff members not directly involved in MOST projects; d) a survey with internal and external users; e) collection of statistical data on the use of the MOST Website. The collected data was analysed in a forward-looking perspective.

The evaluation team had three joint meetings, the first one in Paris on 14-18 January 2002, followed by a meeting in Helsinki (March 24-28), and in Paris (April 22-26). The first meeting served as preliminary contact between the evaluators and the UNESCO Secretariat, particularly the MOST Secretariat. In Helsinki, the team had discussions with Professor A. Shorrocks, Director of the UNU/WIDER (UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research). After a second meeting with the MOST Secretariat between 22 and 24 April, the team presented its preliminary findings to the SSC in Paris on April 26. Moreover, the evaluators made individual travels for interviews to Paris, several universities in the Netherlands, in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, the NLC in Montevideo, MOST network members in New Delhi, participated in the Nordic UNESCO Commissions meeting in Copenhagen (27-30 June 2002),

III. THE MOST PROGRAMME IN UNESCO

¹ HOBOHM, Hans-Christoph, 2001, Evaluation of UNESCO's Information Services in Social and Human Sciences.

As an expression of the recognition of the central and crucial role of social sciences for the development of society and the implementation of UNESCO's programme, MOST was launched in 1994 with three main objectives:

- a) Fostering the production of knowledge on social transformations;
- b) Enhancing the relevance of social science research and expertise for policy-making and development;
- c) Strengthening the scientific, professional and institutional capacities especially in developing countries;

Thematically speaking, the current priority areas of the MOST Programme are:

- a) Multicultural and multi-ethnic societies;
- b) Urban development and governance;
- c) Globalisation and governance.

Thus, MOST aims at fostering international, interdisciplinary, comparative research, towards policy-relevant knowledge. It is intended to generate new ideas and new approaches in solving social challenges and issues, such as growing inequalities and unequal access to wealth between and within countries, ethnic tensions and conflict prevention, international migration and multiculturalism, urban development policies, globalisation and democratic governance. Since policy formulation and problem solving cannot be devised on an *ad-hoc* basis, MOST is intended to complement short-term research. It is expected that MOST projects make significant contributions to policy-making partly because of their duration (long-term research), which allow deeper and more significant analyses of the local context and the international situation. Also among the functions of MOST is the provision of various kinds of expertise services, particularly through its networks.

Moreover, the MOST Programme participates in the implementation of the UNESCO's strategy towards poverty eradication. It also fosters interdisciplinary and intersectoral programme development and conceptual work with the different sectors of UNESCO (particularly Natural Science, Education and Culture).

IV. THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN UNESCO

A. The Medium-Term Strategy of UNESCO

The UNESCO's Medium-term strategy sets the general strategic objectives and targets for the period between 2002 and 2007. UNESCO's functions are described as a *laboratory of ideas*, a *standard-setter*, a *clearing house*, a *capacity builder in Member States*, and a *catalyst for international cooperation*.

The two overarching themes expressed in the strategy, namely *eradication of poverty* and *contribution of information and communication technologies to the development of education, science and culture and the construction of a knowledge society*, can both be interpreted as having implications also for the structure and execution of the MOST Programme. The first one especially concerns the geographical distribution of MOST projects (for example, what types of projects should the MOST Programme develop in developing countries and regions?), whereas the second one refers mainly to the tools and targets of the Programme (for example, how well has MOST disseminated its products through the new information technologies?). From the

thematic viewpoint, however, there is a danger that too many general themes, policy aims or crosscutting themes for MOST contribute to the lack of clarity of its stated objectives.

UNESCO has five intergovernmental and international scientific programmes, namely IHP, IOC, IGCP, MAB, and MOST. All other programmes were created before MOST, and have already established well-functioning networks and a science base. An interpretation of the Medium-Term Strategy seems to give the MOST Programme a special and central role among the science programmes of UNESCO: for instance, MOST should serve as a coordinating player between natural and social systems, especially in view of the developing global pressures; it should promote principles to guide policy making. Moreover, MOST is the only programme in UNESCO fostering and promoting social science research. It is thus in a very pivotal position in its relations with UNESCO's other science programmes, and in promoting UNESCO's overall goals. It also has close links with the International Social Science Council (ISSC). At the same time, MOST should be seen as an excellent tool for capacity building, especially in developing countries.

Finally, reading the Medium-Term Strategy can also lead us to the interpretation that the MOST Programme could and should link with and benefit more from the overall strategy of UNESCO, especially as far as capacity-building and education are concerned. The link with the Education sector is already well established in some of the MOST projects, but this could be further developed. It is commonly agreed that education and access to education at large are important tools towards social and economic development and the construction of human and social capital. Thus, the educational dimension could be reinforced in the future development of MOST.

B. The Multiple Contexts of the MOST Programme

The MOST Programme enjoys the advantage of being part of UNESCO's global network of activities, and in this respect it carries a good name and reputation.

On the other hand, the MOST research programme is a small part, at least in terms of volume, of the social science research that is undertaken globally. Thus it is important that it can carve for itself its own particular *niche* and particular objectives that give it the mandate and right to live and to succeed. However, it must also show leadership qualities in its chosen fields and tasks, because the Programme is dependent on the cooperation of and enthusiasm among the social scientists and social science organisations.

The beginning of MOST was characterised by a bottom-up approach whereby scientists were invited to submit proposals for research projects, which admittedly produced some positive diversity. But a strict top-down management of the MOST Programme by its Secretariat in project development may not work either, because it may not be attractive enough for the scientific community, which is the source of new knowledge and innovation. Therefore MOST aims at striking a proper balance between the bottom-up and top-down approaches, to serve both as a framework for developing social science research as well as contributing intellectually to UNESCO's policies and stances.

Indeed, a dimension of MOST which deserves to be further developed is its acting as a tool for generating well researched and documented analyse and policy proposals to be disseminated by UNESCO, in international fora.

The strength of MOST lies in its *international networking capacity*. If properly managed and if a cohesive vision is set up at the Programme level, these international networks should give MOST far more weight than what its mere financial size would imply. The social sciences are rather young from the historical point of view, at least when compared to natural sciences; and they are often characterised as 'national' or 'local'. This of course reflects the most common problem setting frames that social sciences have adopted in answering to social demands and tackling the social and human problems. The (local) cultural element in the practice of social sciences has a major role in the definition of methods, problems and the scientific agenda. Moreover, funding of social sciences often has a strong (and almost exclusive) national base.

The international networking, promoted and provided by MOST, also works for the benefit of the social sciences (and scientists) themselves, helping them to learn and understand possible paradigmatic differences, improve their internal cohesion, and add to a better understanding of the world's problems and challenges. Thus, the international networks also contribute to the proper and timely solution to these global complex problems. In many fields of social sciences, fostering regional and international networking and comparative research is becoming a high-priority for agencies, both in terms of cooperation and funding. One recent example is the European Research Area developed by the European Union.

International studies show that current scientific collaboration is not evenly distributed within and between the major world regions. In developing and transition regions, transnational collaboration is forced by scientific (information seeking) and also by economic needs (degradation of national scientific systems). This collaboration gives scientists better access to information, proper equipment and technologies. For obvious reasons, scientists from a relatively poor region seldom have the probability of collaborating within their region. Therefore, access to the scientific cooperation with the developed world is given priority in the developing regions, and can be interpreted as a modality of capacity building. However, at the same time, social scientists from the developed countries would benefit and learn by access to the new central issues in the developing world. New information technologies help go beyond both interdisciplinary and geopolitical borders. Several international publishing houses and journals have plans to provide free-of-charge access to scientists in developing countries of their electronic publications.

The major role given to MOST is the promotion of research and expertise for policy-making and development. Nowadays, there are new ideas about how to go about influencing policy making. In the past, the relationship between scientists and policy makers was seen as rather linear (i.e., scientist → policy maker, or vice-versa), but the experience has shown that this relationship is more complex and dialectic; therefore we should aim at setting up horizontal networks and lateral extensions under the concept of 'learning organisations'. This means that the scientists themselves are part of the learning process together with the decisions makers and the public at large, and the flow of information is two-way (if not a multiple flow of information and decision). This should also affect the structure and ways of management of MOST research projects.

The relationship between scientists, researchers and policy has many facets. Thus, research and the resulting knowledge can have a number of functions:

- it gives empowerment and legitimacy;
- it can contribute to the definition of public good;
- it can feed advanced warning systems to forecast future developments;

- it clarifies and contributes to the establishment of best practices (or at least tries to avoid bad practices);
- it gives alternative 'solutions' or pathways for policy;
- it contributes to setting aims for policy;
- it adds to the monitoring and evaluation of projects and policies;
- it can clarify the nature and causes of conflicts and differing views in the society and between people;
- it can also be a mutually beneficial learning tool when international and interregional experiences are compared, experiences in which research can have a mediating role;
- knowledge and experience can also move with people (e.g., a scientist moving into a government position and vice versa).

The relationship between research and policy is very complex, and its nature can hardly be clarified in a single research project. Research findings are seldom if ever applied as one-to-one policies. Societal issues and problems seldom appear 'simple', but involve a multitude of players and factors and special interests, good many of which cannot even be openly recognised. For social scientists, to *know* the problem is important, for policy makers, to *solve* problems is important. But to 'solve', many times, means to live with the problem, to adapt to it. And in the social field, problems are seldom 'solved' the same way as in the case of natural sciences, but they are *re-solved* time and time again. However, one can always learn from past successful and unsuccessful practices. And these cases could be documented and analysed.

One should also ask: who are the decision makers? In some instances and cases one can indicate a certain limited number of key decision makers and/or organisations that formulate policies, but in some other instances an informed public can also act as decision maker through pressure groups and NGOs or simply through a strong public opinion (through the mass media). Thus the actual stakeholders come from a very diverse group of interests in the society, from the World Bank to the UN, from the media to associations and population groups.

The definition of the 'public good' is also a complex issue, but certainly good research can also contribute to its formulation. Understandably, the environment for forging the links between research and policies may be quite different in character in different countries and regions of the world, and no single patent formula may be given. Contextual variations influence this relationship, which may assume very different forms.

Thus, the case of social research is very complex: the history of social research affecting public policies and decision making is often seen as less than successful if not quite disappointing. The value of research to potential users depends also on scientists' readiness to reflect on their own policy assumptions. Professionals often see this as a signal of weakness and a potential threat to their professionalism. As one of our respondents also described: "The tendency is for social science professionals to assume they know best. These barriers to change (i.e. the attitudes, assumptions, practices, conception of their own professionalism, etc.) constitute an important focus for research on social and organisational change as yet massively under-explored".

A social science research programme can be either *research-driven*, whereby the "problématiques" (central issues) and methods stem from the scientific domains, or *policy-driven*, whereby the problems and the overall approaches are linked and related to a policy that is being planned or formulated or is already being executed. Currently, social science research has become more policy and problem-oriented, and demands greater resources and better

organisational back up. A negative result of this historical development has so far been the fact that theoretical bases of social science knowledge have not been sufficiently strengthened despite the often-larger expansion in the research output.

The MOST Programme needs both visibility and a human face. Visibility is needed to attract the interest of the scientific community, to educate the general public and to build liaisons with the decision makers properly. Visibility can come in many forms, on many platforms, and it should be enhanced both at the project level (and also nationally), and at the entire MOST Programme's as well as the UNESCO's levels. Part of the visibility issue can be dealt with through the various ways and channels of disseminating the research findings and policy recommendations. The human face is also extremely important, and the role of the Executive Secretary and his colleagues in engaging a dialogue with the scientific and the policy community should not be neglected.

The three main themes of MOST were recognised as most pressing when the Programme was launched in 1994, and as time goes by, it appears that they are not only up-to-date, but they also require even more urgent solutions, since they also become global in nature. Themes including urbanisation, migrations, multiculturalism, democratic governance must not be tackled only in a national or regional perspective; rather, they must be analysed from the interregional and global point of view, particularly because they concern both developing and developed countries. Therefore, it is recommended that, for the sake of continuity, UNESCO maintain these main themes, building around them a cohesive thematic and strategic development. It is also important that, in re-thinking the thematic and strategic development of these themes, the underlying economic and technological factors be taken into consideration with more rigour. It seems, in fact, that economics and technology have not yet been fully integrated into the critical thinking being produced by MOST. Thus, the search for coherence should be rooted in the maintenance of the core identity and the overarching mandate of the MOST Programme: understanding *social transformations*.

The capacity building activities of MOST, be they scientific, professional or institutional, also appear to become very crucial in the future, particularly when we consider the overall 'field' where MOST is playing. Universities in developing countries are caught in the crunch of rapidly expanding their student base and tightening financial resources; and this is seriously hampering their capacity and commitment for research and development work. Investing in and promoting capacity building for social scientists in developing countries and countries in transition, as some projects have already tested in the first phase of MOST, could be a viable solution for the period 2003 onwards. In the eyes of the world social science community, MOST is to be seen as an important programme. It should and could perform a leadership function, also in terms of quality of its work, making distinctive contributions to social science research and capacity building in the international setting.

V. PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT

A. Programme Overview

Among the MOST Programme activities, the networks are the most prominent ones. Currently, there are twelve networks, one Best Practice project, one summer school programme, one working group on governance, research and policy, and a series of UNESCO Chairs directly or indirectly related to MOST. The networks cover all the continents. Furthermore, MOST

organises meetings, produces documents and newsletters and other publications, and it maintains the MOST Clearing House/Webpage, which had over 1,3 million visits last year (2001). It also collects and maintains various databases, among them the Best Practices and the National Liaison Committees Database. It is involved in various activities aimed at capacity building, through its networks or intersectoral projects. Several electronic publications (MOST Electronic Journal on Multicultural Societies, Exploring Religious Pluralism, The Public Management of Religious Diversity, Managing Religious Diversity in a Global Context - Debate Continued, Religious Diversity in the Russian Federation, Lesser used Languages and the Law in Europe, The Human Rights of Linguistic Minorities and Language Policies) were also organised.

Since the beginning in 1994, 105 seminars, conferences and workshops, as well as 12 regional meetings, have been held in the framework of MOST, on the various topics covered by its themes. The Programme publishes an *Annual MOST Report* and a *Newsletter*, in English, French and Spanish. The number of publications the MOST Programme and its projects is impressive, by academic standards.

The currently on-going MOST projects and capacity building activities include:

a) Multi-cultural and multi-ethnic societies

1. APMRN Asia Pacific Migration Research Network;
2. Ethno-Net Africa: a network for comparative studies, monitoring and evaluation of ethnic conflicts in Africa;
3. Monitoring of ethnicity, conflicts and cohesion. Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia;
4. Best Practices on Indigenous Knowledge.

b) Urban Issues, urban development and governance

5. Cities, environment and gender relations;
6. Growing up in Cities;
7. Urban Development and Freshwater Resources in Small Coastal Cities.

c) Globalisation and Governance

8. Coping locally and regionally with economic, technological and environmental transformations: a northern circumpolar perspective (Second phase to set up a UNESCO Chair);
9. GEDIM (« Globalisation Economique et Droits du Mercosur »), being followed by UNESCO Mexico Office ;
10. Gouvernance démocratique et réduction des inégalités dans les pays arabes (in partnership in UNESCO Beirut and UNESCO Rabat) ;
11. Personal and institutional strategies for management of transformation risks in Central and Eastern Europe.

c) Research-policy linkages

12. Factors that Improve the Use of Research in Social Policy Case Studies. Joint MOST Programme / Harvard University Project;

13. Governance, Research and Policy (Working Group composed of social science and civil society representatives).

d) Capacity-building

14. City Professionals (Latin American Network);
15. Summer School Programme (MOST /ISSC Summer School 2002: Comparative Research in the Social Sciences: Conceptual Models);
16. UNESCO Chairs in Social Sciences directly or indirectly related to MOST (forty in total).

B. Impact Assessment

The impact of the MOST Programme and its various projects cannot be estimated without reference to the very environment and context in which the Programme and its projects are evolving. Furthermore, the current and past MOST projects show a great variety in terms of their content and methodology, ranging from strictly scientific projects to others whose aims are rather developmental or of a demonstration nature (experimental projects). This reflects, at least partly, the diversified interests of Member States as well as the need to follow the various offers of extrabudgetary funds to MOST.

The impact and effectiveness may also vary according to the typology of projects. Some existing projects aim at rather immediate or short-term results. Some others focus on promoting better skills, knowledge and awareness among its participants and stakeholders, in which case the benefits may appear 'hidden' over a longer period of time. Thus, the MOST activities directed at capacity building, especially in developing and newly emerging countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, may carry such extra 'hidden' benefits.

Most of the projects have not had any particular monitoring system of their impact or relevance measurement, other than maybe counting the numbers of the seminars and their participants, numbers of publications, etc. In some cases the opinions of the policy groups and capacity building forums have been recorded. This has been done through progress reports for some of the projects. However, a global monitoring system has not been set up at the level of the Programme, which would have helped creating a more cohesive image and picture of the impact and results of MOST.

It is true that the table on the website visits (in the annex) indicates various interests towards different projects. It is estimated that the numbers of visits also indicate the quality of the projects and/or the width of their coverage. However, the MOST Clearing House represents a rather passive form of reaching and influencing the possible stakeholders and policies, since it supposes the visit of the interested parties. The MOST mailing list (announcing the new documents and upcoming events within the MOST Clearing House) is a means to avoid this problem, but it is not enough. This communication tool can be further developed, and accompanied by measures that could be actively directed at certain policy or civil society networks. For instance, there is need for the NLCs to take a stronger role in knowledge transfer, creating thus a better impact at the national level.

New concepts about how to plan and run scientific research at large are emerging. As presented in the Annex, the policy research community moves gradually from a mode wherein the problem definition stems from academic interests, to a new mode of research production

that concentrates on research application and consultation with different interests. Knowledge production is also moving from single-discipline to multidisciplinary and a heterogeneous approach. Organisationally, the research often involves temporary collaboration on a problem, as well as production at several sites and in several institutions at the same time. In this new research production mode, results are disseminated to policy networks and society at large, instead of merely going through institutional channels. Also, funding is raised for each project from a range of public and private sources. Also important for the planning of MOST projects, the impact evaluation should move from an *ex-post* perspective (wherein results are interpreted, lessons are learned and changes are disseminated) to *ex-ante* assessment (when the evaluation is thought already at the moment of defining the agenda, the problems and setting priorities for research). Moreover, quality control is not any more a matter of peer judgement alone, but is also the interest of a number and variable interest groups in the society. Quality evaluation of the scientific production is central (and should be fostered within MOST), but it should not be considered sufficient in assessing the qualitative impact of MOST policy research networks.

Although some MOST projects follow this new kind of knowledge production, it would be advisable and useful that this *ex-ante* approach be explicitly expressed in guidelines for partnership with the Programme. This should be a priority in redefining the terms of cooperation with MOST in the future. It would certainly add to the fund-raising for projects and their potential impact on social policies.

C. Efficacy of the Programme

A questionnaire on policy impact and capacity building of MOST projects was circulated in 2000 among the project members and the MOST secretariat. The returns provide inside opinions and analyse reasons for success and failure of each project. These results are summarised in individual project assessments in the annexes.

The MOST Programme has only provided seed money for projects. Usually a great majority of the funding has come from other sources (national and international). In this sense the MOST Programme has shown good efficacy, since its projects could draw the attention of funding agencies for the development of co-funding strategies. It is not always clear, however, whether or not projects have been executed with or without the MOST label and financial or institutional support. There is here a need to better qualify the label of the Programme, and the funding source of each project. It seems that some projects fall more appropriately within MOST thematic development than others, but it has not been possible to understand the reasons why this is so. What are the institutional constraints that steer some projects to have a MOST label and receive the support of the Programme? Why have some projects gone through the screening of the SSC and not others?

Supporting synergy and horizontal administrative practices within the Programme and between its projects can further enhance the efficacy of the programme. Moreover, results-based management in the Secretariat can contribute to achieve this synergy.

D. Strengths and Weaknesses

(1) *The MOST Programme and its capacity to adapt to a changing global environment*

Strength: Initially, the UNESCO/MOST Programme represents an excellent innovation and during the eight years of its existence it has established a good reputation. The promise of MOST lies in its international, comparative, interdisciplinary and policy-oriented focus. It has been one of the first international programmes to provide examples of the usefulness of social science, and to set up methodologies for research-decision interaction. Thus, it has been very important for social sciences in terms of its prolific scientific production.

Threat: MOST fails to respond to the rapid global changes, and has difficulties to maintain its proper niche within a very competitive world of social science programmes. It is unable to recognise and reach out the true target groups of its various activities. It has over-ambitious goals and expectations of (immediate) results.

Weakness: With a total of 17 past and current networks and numerous other projects and activities, and with a relatively heavy administration that involves several layers and institutional interests, the Programme may be too 'loaded' and slow to respond to the changing environment and societal problems. Currently, the themes as such are sufficiently general to include almost all of the contemporary societies' problems.

(2) The MOST Programme as a social science cooperation platform within UNESCO

Strength: Within UNESCO, the MOST Programme represents a unique platform that has numerous international and interregional networks. Also, its proximity to and possibility for cooperation with other UNESCO's scientific programmes is a clear advantage, if used properly. Increased use of social science knowledge, through interdisciplinary research, contributes to better social policy formulations. Achieving sustainable development critically depends on addressing social problems, too.

Threat: In some cases, the Programme is too loose and uncoordinated to fully benefit from the synergy between its various activities and UNESCO's platform at large. Also, the links between the various administrative levels (e.g., between the Secretariat and the NLCs) are weak if not disconnected.

Weakness: The projects seem to have little contact and interaction among them, and this seems to be the case also with the UNESCO Chairs created for MOST projects. Moreover, despite the large number of publications produced, at least by academic standards, their policy-impact may remain diffuse or unrecognised. Quality cannot be compensated by sheer quantity.

(3) The interdisciplinary dimension of MOST

Strength: The MOST Programme can serve as a learning experience and a scope-widening forum for all its participants, including also partner NGOs. The drive of the MOST Programme from research to policy-making, with emphasis in interdisciplinary approaches, is its very strength and pillar, but...

Threat: ... the social sciences structures and methods are always not prone to such an approach, which may be constrained by academic or institutional 'rules' that do not necessarily encourage social scientists to action-oriented and interdisciplinary research. Social scientists may not be that interested in or in a position to transfer pertinent knowledge to users. However, to be fair, policy makers may also resist to accepting the views of social sciences.

Weakness: There is a language barrier between social scientists and scientists from the natural and exact fields of research, particularly when it comes to defining concepts, areas of research, research methodologies, and priorities. Furthermore, the outreach of the Programme is still too much inward looking, and only partly academic.

(4) The dialectics between universal paradigms and the respect for local contexts

Strength: An international, comparative and interdisciplinary research programme is a good way to develop points of view and methods that can apply universally, regardless of the different paradigms and local contexts. The MOST Programme has networks with a very good potential to develop in this direction. Historically, social sciences are 'mature' sciences in developed countries, and in this sense they could have a lot to offer in terms of complex decision-making theories, but...

Threat: ... there is always a contradiction between the global and the local levels. Macro-level policies and global integration may benefit (a majority of) people, but they may also have serious negative consequences at the grass-root levels. Thinking globally and acting locally, but also thinking locally and acting globally are two important issues for MOST to take notice of, also for the sake of its credibility.

Weakness: Social sciences themselves may be too much nationally and locally oriented. They very often lack a true international perspective, which can contribute to the mutual understanding and knowledge of different cultures. They may not always claim to be universal, and paradigmatic gaps between South and North as well as between West and East still exist. Social sciences are only now emerging as part of the science forums in a number of countries, especially in many developing countries as well as in the former Soviet Union republics.

(5) MOST and the need for a more focused and cohesive cooperation platform

Strength: There certainly exists a window of opportunity for MOST if it can further streamline its networks and learn from its methods. Coherence (i.e., strictly following the goals and objectives of MOST, and measuring them) at the level of the Programme is a need for its second phase. During its first eight years, MOST gained an international reputation and became well established. Nevertheless, it must enhance its own solid 'brand' (give a quality status to the MOST label, and avoid its spreading out) and take on a distinctive 'face' of competitive edge and visibility (make the MOST label the result of a different and particular niche in which the Programme develops its projects). The administrative structure of MOST (with NLCs, IGC, SSC and the Secretariat), though heavy, could and should also be used to its advantage. These administrative structures should support (from a scientific, institutional, financial and managerial point of view) MOST and boost its image and role, nationally and regionally, as well as interregionally and globally. Again, MOST because of its institutional environment has a natural access to many stakeholders and linkages with decision-making instances which could better benefit from its networks and research results, but...

Threat: ...the MOST Programme is facing an increasingly tough, internationally competitive environment for scientists, funding, research development, etc. It seems that MOST cannot compete internationally on its funding capacity. Unless it finds its solid niche and role, it may encounter a danger of becoming obsolete or second rate.

Weakness: UNESCO's internal and external stakeholders need to accept that the MOST cannot engage in all thematic priorities of the UN system. There is a need for MOST to retrieve its founding objectives, streamline its expected results and develop a cohesive vision in terms of its main research and policy questions to be addressed in the coming eight years.

(6) MOST and capacity building in developing countries and countries in transition

Strength: New technologies offer new means of reaching people and organisations. This allows for a rather 'continuous' process of capacity building if the technologies are used in an innovative and creative way. For example, taking part in a virtual university project could open new windows for MOST to develop its capacity-building objectives. One of the real strengths of MOST is its role in the capacity building, where it is in an almost unique position within the social sciences international programmes. This long-term task is especially crucial for developing countries and countries in transition, but MOST can certainly contribute to this aspect in every region of the world.

Threat: Capacity-building projects are currently very diverse within MOST. Also in this domain there is a need to revisit the objectives of the Programme and set up a clear strategy for its second phase. Project profiles differ according to regions and countries, and methods for defining the capacity-building needs should be developed.

Weakness: The capacity-building sector is often seen as being a separate task from the research projects, while it should and could be an integral part of all MOST activities. One should not forget that Education is the major task of UNESCO. Also, MOST projects, when successful, could be planned and executed in such a way that they become autonomous and functional after their conclusion (the sustainability factor of projects). So far, this autonomous functioning of networks is often and exclusively a by-default outcome.

VI. THE GOVERNANCE OF THE PROGRAMME

A. The Intergovernmental Council (IGC)

The Intergovernmental Council (IGC) is composed of 35 Member States. The statutes give to this body the task of guiding and supervising the planning and implementation of the MOST Programme. In particular, it considers proposals on the development and adaptation of the MOST Programme, and define the broad substantive areas of MOST and recommend the broad lines of action that the programme should take. About its structure, the statutes indicate that it would be desirable if the persons appointed by Member States as their representatives were competent in the fields covered by the Programme. The Council meets every two years.

Furthermore, IGC should, as a mediator of policy concepts, be promoting participation of Member States in the MOST Programme, and seeking the necessary resources for the implementation of MOST. Also, it should facilitate the strategy of MOST Programme activities at the national level and also communication between them nationally, regionally and interregionally. In this respect, its role is partly overlapping with what is expected from the NLCs, though overlap in this case could only mean a stronger joint effort at the national level. In order to avoid an exclusively diplomatic setting, the member states should consider sending social scientists and science policy experts to the sessions of the IGC.

Serious thought should be given to fostering the role of the IGC in channelling the messages and opinions of the countries collaborating or interested in cooperating with the MOST Programme. Closer ties between the NLCs and the Secretariat and between NLCs and projects could also contribute to making the national priorities known in a more informal setting. Also, direct and regular feedback from the UNESCO National Commissions could also contribute to this task.

B. The Scientific Steering Committee (SSC)

The Committee consists of nine regular members, appointed by the Director-General in their personal capacity for a period of three years, and the President of the IGC is *ex officio* member of the SSC. The members are thus explicitly independent intellectuals and scholars.

The main task of SSC is the maintenance of high scientific standards of the MOST Programme, by assessing the scientific quality of projects submitted, and accepting only those proposals that conform to the thematic and methodological orientation of the Programme, thus meeting the required scientific standards. The SSC reports by its Chairperson to the IGC and the Director-General of UNESCO after each of the Committee's sessions.

Since the Mid-Term Evaluation of MOST in 1999, the SSC has not dealt with any direct budget matters for the projects. The SCC has the role for revising projects in terms of their scientific content (the subject, the policy relevance, the methods, the research team and its interdisciplinary). This scientific label should be a warrant for the Secretariat to seek for extrabudgetary contributions. However, this label has not always been enough for fund-raising.

Because SSC is the MOST body to deal directly with the research proposals, it could further strengthen MOST with some initiatives of its own members, such as:

1. To ensure the scientific quality control through regular reviews of MOST projects;
2. To conduct regular research surveys to revisit thematic development and priority setting within MOST;
3. To undertake meta-analysis in main social science fields, and identify major problems for future research (setting up an agenda for UNESCO and the UN);
4. To stimulate discussions on research needs, taking into account the different regions and local needs;
5. To develop suitable conceptual and operational frameworks and doing analysis on the "clustering concepts" for the Programme to work on (such as sustainability, governance, and social cohesion);
6. To help the Secretariat in identifying researcher/expert networks.

Some of these activities have been or are already being executed, mainly within the MOST policy paper series. However, here again, it would be very useful if these tasks were regularly planned and defined as a policy for the Programme (with a particular budget). These are cost-effective functions that may produce good results and increase the visibility of the Programme. The SSC should also plan and develop and implement the monitoring and evaluation schemes of the major projects, in cooperation with the MOST Secretariat and, where appropriate, with the NLCs.

C. The National Liaison Committees (NLCs)

As for the NLCs, the countries are free to set up their structure, functioning, and funding as they wish. They follow the models of the MAB committees or other UNESCO scientific programmes. There are now 67 NLCs, though their level of activity varies, depending on the available funding and the enthusiasm of their members. Some countries handle the MOST issues directly through their national Commissions for UNESCO.

The National Liaison Committees (NLCs), in co-operation with the MOST Secretariat, aim at:

(a) Participating in the MOST Programme's activities on knowledge use by and knowledge transfer to national and local decision-makers. This function of the NLCs will contribute to an increased impact of MOST projects at the national level.

(b) Initiating MOST related activities at the national and regional levels, in co-operation with the Programme's Secretariat.

(c) Disseminating the MOST Newsletter to relevant government bodies, and promoting the programme through use of its flyer, newsletter, and publications. This function of NLCs will contribute to a strengthened national support for MOST activities.

(d) Feeding the MOST Secretariat with research priority areas as defined by the national social science research council or equivalent funding body, within MOST themes. This will contribute to an increased awareness of MOST within national scientific and policy-making community.

(e) Participate in the MOST research-policy activities on knowledge use.

In general, the NLCs are expected to play a central role in linking national research communities, research funding agencies, and policy-concerns to network in the orbit of the MOST Programme. This function should be streamlined, Also because a new forceful player in research funding is the European Union: some of its Framework programmes aim at cooperation and networking between Europe and developing countries, in the context of the forthcoming European Research Area concept. The MOST secretariat should design a more forceful strategy in order to make this NLC function more effective. The possibility of fortifying this area through the good offices of the IGC member states and their delegations should also be considered (156 EX/12, Para 5.3.15).

The NLCs in different countries show very different levels of development, many of them being almost dormant, few working actively and successfully with the resources available. The main current problems of the NLCs are how to reach the scientific community, and especially the younger researchers, and how to secure supportive links with funding agencies and even how to reach out to the society and the national policy-making bodies. To count upon a variety of active scholars and policy makers who would have different skills and experience could really advance the goals of MOST within NLCs and constitute a partial solution to the problem of inactivity of NLCs. Moreover, Member States should ensure sufficient rotation of the NLC membership and leadership.

In some cases it has been reminded by Member States that NLCs need to have a picture of the funding structure of MOST and its projects. This would certainly steer the participation of Member States in fund-raising and scientific networking. If since its beginning a project can count on seed money only, it may take time and energy to find and secure additional funding to its development. This has been the case for many MOST projects, and the Secretariat had a difficult time in trying to obtain extrabudgetary funds for projects. Donors must be involved since the beginning. Therefore, the planning of projects requires also a certain time wise funding strategy, which emphasises once more the importance of active links between the NLCs and the Secretariat.

D. The Secretariat

The Secretariat of MOST is responsible for coordination, communication and dissemination of the research findings, especially through the MOST Website. The Secretariat also provides the necessary services for the sessions of the IGC and the SSC. The members of the Secretariat seem to be actively involved in their respective projects, and they constitute a good linkage between MOST and projects in different countries or continents.

However, there is a need to recuperate the internal coherence and streamline the functions of the Secretariat: the responsibilities of the Secretariat vary according to the profile of each Secretariat member. The members' backgrounds also vary: some of them have a more scientific profile (Ph.D. holders), while others are more "administrative" (project manager profile). This division of profiles may not add to the necessary cohesion of the work of MOST Secretariat. An emphasis on a stronger scientific background supported by an outward looking policy evaluation experience would certainly be an advantage for MOST. There is also a clear need to have integrate professionals with background in disciplines such as economics and anthropology.

An active teamwork with a strong participatory management of the entire MOST Programme is also a need. Participation, less vertical and cooperative schemes of work are essential for MOST to develop in a coherent way. Moreover, there is also a need to foster a 'results-based management' of projects, strengthening the overall MOST structure and its internal synergy with other UNESCO divisions and programmes.

E. The Budget

According to the approved UNESCO 30 C/5 for 2000-2001, the Programme funds were US\$2,984.800.

For 2002-2003, (document 31 C/5), the budget for the MOST activities are US\$2,300.000.

In general terms, the MOST projects directly paid by UNESCO consume about one half of the operational budget. The rest covers funding of meetings, statutory development of the Programme (SSC and IGC), publications, Clearing House/Website, general support contracts, among others. However, it seems that the approved budget does not always correspond to the *de facto* available budget figures for the implementation of the Programme. This is a major problem, since it prevents a regular planning of activities.

Extrabudgetary funds stand for a) funds that cooperation agencies (mainly bilateral) send to UNESCO for a particular project (and UNESCO manages these funds); b) funds that are given to a project by any donor without necessarily having UNESCO as manager of funds. In the former case UNESCO gets paid for the management of funds, while in the latter case, the project benefits from the financial aid directly.

The UNESCO/MOST is not a funding programme, but provides the seed money and the good services of its administrative bodies for the stated goals of the Programme. In the early phases of MOST, it was expected that the extrabudgetary portion or additional funds would be relatively higher, or that even all of MOST could be based on such funding. However, this could not be accomplished.

Apart from this, the Division of Social Science, Research and Policy (where MOST is located) seems to have less priority in the new institutional framework of SHS in 2002 - 2003. This can be a strategic issue for the Programme. The adequate funding and supporting structures of UNESCO, the goodwill and appreciation of its sectors, are imperative to the Programme to further develop its quality strategy in its second phase.

VII. OVERALL IMPACT

A. Interdisciplinary, Comparative and Policy-Relevant International Research

The analyses of the MOST projects indicate that the real strength of MOST is its interdisciplinary, comparative, policy-relevant and international research. As reminded by individual social scientists working in the MOST projects, these four elements have significantly contributed to widening the scope of social sciences research. It is very important the Programme maintain them as part and parcel of the project development methodology.

B. International, Regional, National and Local Policy

The analyses of projects show that it is possible to have a clear policy impact at the local or provincial level, sometimes also at the regional level (that has been the case, *inter alia*, of APMRN, City Professionals, Growing up in Cities, CCP project), but more seldom at the national and the international level. However, the research and approaches developed within MOST projects influence raising the awareness to the importance of social issues at every policy level. The impact assessment of this awareness raising is very difficult since it is highly qualitative and long-term. Experience shows, nevertheless, that policy-makers are also deeply interested in international comparisons and comparative perspectives on issues that they deem acute and important for social development.

A possible value-added piece of work in this connection could be the compilation of active lists of international experts/scientists with known skills and experience to be used internationally as advisors in policy making and monitoring the impact of MOST projects. This database could also be made widely available through the MOST Website.

C. Capacity Building (particularly in LDCs)

This evaluation has clearly indicated that capacity building in selected countries and regions, through needs assessment, should be one of the key transversal dimensions of the

Programme for the future. Capacity building in may not follow strictly the themes of MOST, but should show proper flexibility especially towards the LDCs. Africa should attract more attention in the Programme. There is a particular need for increased intellectual and institutional capacity building in the field of social sciences in this continent. If it is not always possible to directly support institutional capacity building, agreements, for instance, with the European projects could and should offer possibilities for students from developing countries to participate in the research and to obtain academic degrees. Actually, current trends within research funding agencies show that many countries require that every research they finance has also a sizable and measurable training and educational component.

One issue to be taken care of is the needs assessment in capacity-building projects: where and by whose initiative are the projects created? Projects may stem from top-down or some outside funding sources, and the grass root level may not always feel very comfortable with the criteria for choosing subjects and methods. These criteria need to reflect the real problems as perceived at the local and regional level. The NGOs can be used as very good source of information about the local problématiques, and they may be willing and capable of disseminating and transmitting new knowledge into the communities; however, they seldom fully participate in the MOST research projects. The role and value of the indigenous systems of knowledge need to be taken into consideration in the development of MOST projects; they need, however, to be linked more closely and transversally to the main themes and projects of the MOST Programme.

D. How to Measure the (Local) Impact of the Projects?

In higher education at large and in social science research in particular, impact evaluation is being practised at least in the developed countries; a new methodology is being developed. One difficulty to assess the impact of MOST is its international, policy-relevant, comparative and interdisciplinary approach, whose influence may (or may not) spread widely out to many spheres in the society (as it often should). Brussels, for instance, is interested in the regional impact of social science research and teaching institutions, and MOST could certainly draw from new evaluation methods that are currently being developed for this purpose.

The policy impact can be best achieved, as already described, in a situation where both the scientists and policy-makers work together or have frequent communication links. That is, the relationship is rather developed within a "net", and not in a linear way. This "net" resembles a learning organisation that is also rather diffuse in character. There are also numerous survey-type methods of such an assessment, using visits to the web pages, numbers of local articles published on newspapers, opinion surveys, etc. Formal or informal meetings and seminars between scientists and decision-makers (and other stakeholders) can also prepare both sides to evaluate the impacts and receive feedback for future actions.

Already in their planning phase, MOST projects should follow this kind of approach: the *ex-ante* research planning and execution. Of course, this means that the MOST Secretariat should also have the project registry up-dated and functioning properly. This is fundamental for project management and monitoring.

VIII. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

A. Review the Mandate and Refocus

The Document 31 5/C, under Programme III.3, indicates the results expected from MOST at the end of the biennium as follows: "Improved policy making on social issues such as international migration and multiculturalism, urban development and governance through the provision of scientific analysis, empirical evidence and policy recommendations to policy-makers and other stakeholders". The first part of this statement may be a bit too ambitious, and should not be the only and full measure of the success of MOST projects and activities. The latter part, "through the provision of scientific analysis (...)" sets a more realistic goal, also when evaluating and monitoring the projects. The impact of good research in policy making and in society in general may be considered in a broader sense, having many more targets than just the formulation of a social public policy in its narrow sense. MOST should be considered as an instrument within UNESCO to add and contribute to the policy-making, not as a body for the actual formulation of policies.

The real strength of the MOST Programme lies in its international, interdisciplinary, and comparative approach, through networks of scholars, and in some cases, NGOs and policy makers. MOST can show, particularly in developing countries, its comparative advantage as an international platform for innovative scientific cooperation. Its strength is rooted both in the possibility for opening national-based social sciences to international cooperation, and in the intellectual authority ensured by UNESCO.

This analysis has clearly revealed that there is a need to consolidate the MOST Programme, to cover fewer projects, but with the quality concern first and foremost. Thematically, MOST could also focus on building cluster concepts that should be well developed and have a clear strategy for each of the themes. Research surveys (through, for instance, literature review) should also be a focus for the MOST Programme in the future: for instance, MOST should promote the systematisation of research, building clustering concepts, and the review of methodologies and participatory research. But all these activities should be based on scientific quality that makes them open for the international social science society and NGOs.

B. Activities and Policy Interface

Dissemination of MOST research results needs improvement, and it is the responsibility of all MOST administrative levels from the Secretariat, the National UNESCO Commissions and also the IGC. This should also be a job for the professionals in communications and journalism, and it should be reflected in the composition of NLCs.

It would be very important for the Programme to open to NGOs and CSOs in general. The work of the MOST Programme during the World Social Forum, for instance, is an example of this necessary opening to new policy forums.

Another important policy interface is the MOST Clearing House Website. It is a rich source of information, but, unfortunately, it is not yet fully used as a forum for dynamic and targeted exchange. It requires more frequent updating. To an outsider it gives a rather passive or academic view. Although the MOST 'virtual library' presented in the CH is very rich and complex, it is not very policy-oriented, as required by the MOST mandate. Thus, its restructuring towards more immediate policy approach would be helpful; this could include

short pieces of news or abstracts of the results obtained, cross-linkages not only to other projects but also to international e-libraries that provide related information. MOST discussion and policy papers, though many of them are very good by their content and methods, may have little accessibility and impact outside UNESCO. The best of them should be catalogued internationally, if not even published in international science journals. If possible, the projects should also build their databases, and where feasible, make them available through Internet.

Some scientists are gifted with ability to write interesting and attractive articles for the public; news in some of the world's major newspapers or magazines would certainly make an impact. MOST should make an effort to have its conferences and seminars published on local journals: there are very few examples of this practice so far, but they should be encouraged.

Furthermore, one may ask if MOST publications are available in libraries, documentation centres, and policy think-tank bodies. The *International Social Science Journal* is an excellent platform, but should not be the only one. The programme lacks a clear dissemination strategy of its output. Every project could produce abstracts or 'pieces of news' for both the experts and the public in a concise form.

The MOST Secretariat should also assess the educational outreach of the Programme's output: what and how has its production influenced education (mainly higher education) policies and practices? How has the concept of interdisciplinary and comparative research had any influence in University practices?

C. Monitoring

The entire Higher Education sector is undergoing a transformation in Member States by introduction of various evaluation indicators, benchmarking, and quality assurance systems. This means that activities like research, teaching and learning, and various service functions are all being evaluated, which often forms also the basis for their financing. Activities judged to have good or sufficient quality would have always better possibility of becoming financed. An evaluated project with a quality label has a better chance of continuity, and it can also attract more additional funds.

Developing a consistent monitoring system would be an advantage for MOST to seek additional funding for its activities. Such a system should be built already when the project is being planned. An evaluation should not take, however, a disproportionate slice of the funds, but be supportive and a natural dimension of the project. A good evaluation is a good trademark for a project and the entire Programme.

It is essential for any project monitoring that the MOST Secretariat also maintain an adequate registry of the projects and update it regularly. This system should be structured to allow the study of the long-term trends, impacts, funding, network partners and other necessary links. It should have nearly real-time information about the projects and other MOST activities.

D. Refocusing of MOST

The future of MOST depends on its ability to maintain its niche as one of the five UNESCO scientific programmes. As suggested earlier, there is a need for refocusing of MOST,

particularly as far as its research component is concerned. Investing in less but better research networks is a *sine qua non* for its good credibility in the future. In the global field of research programmes, MOST is facing new competitors, which are interested in quality partnerships and would see in a UNESCO's social science programme an interesting partner to reach out governmental and non-governmental constituencies, as well as the general public opinion.

MOST can strengthen its role through the capacity building dimension of its networks, which do not need to be based on the particular themes. Certain regions in the world are very short of even the basic capacity in terms of social science knowledge and methods for innovative knowledge production. Also, every project, despite its thematic orientation, could be used as a vehicle for capacity building. There is need in universities of developing countries to obtain support and assistance in their curriculum development. For instance, the international expert pool could be used for many purposes, including for assistance to public organisations, educational institutions and universities, in the developing countries and countries in transition.

E. Profile of Projects (Typology)

The MOST projects show a wide variety in terms of their profile. There are some 16 on-going projects of different types (listed on page 8), and most of them meet the general relevance and quality criteria set for MOST. Some of them are very action-oriented (6 and 7), with little if any research involved; they may give a confusing signal in relation to the stated mandate of MOST. Some other projects have been built around a strong social science network, which was natural, for instance, in Eastern Europe and other emerging countries in the 1990s (1, 3, 5, 8, 9 and 12). One is focused on African countries in particular (2). Some of the networks were in place before the MOST phase (9), and it may give them some more continuity, while some were created for the purpose of becoming a MOST project (10).

Interdisciplinary approach is strongly present in several projects (1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9), although to some extent it is practised in all of them. The research component is strong especially in projects number 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10 and 12. The project on research-policy linkages number 13 set up a conceptual and contextual analysis, the results of which can also be used by other MOST projects. Almost all of the projects have also received additional funding.

In the second phase of the MOST Programme, the project typology could be narrower. This would help streamlining the vision and the image of MOST with universities and research institutes, as well as funding agencies.

The Evaluation Team sees at least two types of project profiles as possibilities for the future of MOST: one category within a call for projects (with a specific budget), and a second category in which the SSC, the MOST Secretariat, research and policy communities act together and initiate them (UNESCO/MOST used within a co-funding strategy). Quality should prime over quantity: for instance, MOST should have less networks (but secure their funding and result dissemination); it should refocus its activities related to capacity building (Summer Schools, grants for young researchers). In both categories of project profile, there is a need to use more systematically the IGC as a mediator of policy concepts (with a view to convey the message and the agenda of social transformations). In order to avoid an exclusive diplomatic setting, a clear message should be sent to member states to send social scientists and science policy experts to the sessions of the IGC.

F. Partnerships

The MOST Programme should continue and strengthen its partnership internally with UNESCO's sectors and field offices, particularly with the other scientific programmes. MOST could add substantially to the success of the Science programmes by helping building bridges between natural scientists and society in general. Such a co-operation is already ongoing in several cases. Partnership with the Education Sector should also be reinforced.

Externally, MOST should continue working with other UN agencies, development banks, the OECD, the UN University and the WIDER Institute, various foundations, as well as NGOs. The European Union's European Research Area offers many possibilities in the future, not only within Europe, but also through the new links that are developing in developing countries. Development Aid organisations in several countries can also offer channels especially for capacity building in developing countries. Thus, MOST could and should aim at arranging regular meetings with donors whereby it could present its own views and the possibilities it can offer in terms of project development.

IX. THE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **The second phase of MOST:** the continuation of MOST is already foreseen in the 31/C-4. According to the Evaluation Team, the continuation and implementation of the second phase of the MOST Programme is reiterated and highly recommended. The Programme has already established itself as a central partner amongst UNESCO's scientific programmes. However, some strategic measures should be taken in order to keep MOST competitive and effective in the future.
2. **MOST as an international, comparative and policy-relevant research programme:** the research dimension of the Programme needs strengthening. The current themes are still valid for understanding the main current world's affairs. However, the Programme needs to develop clustering concepts (such as social cohesion, sustainability and governance) and analyse their linkages with its three themes. The main questions and sub-questions that MOST wants to focus on under each theme must be clearly stated, from the epistemological, methodological and strategic viewpoints. It is suggested that indigenous knowledge be taken into account as a transversal dimension in all MOST projects.
3. **MOST research as an analytical and policy tool for UNESCO:** a major function of the Organization is the production of relevant and innovative policy proposals concerning major contemporary challenges and problems, relating to its fields of activity. Through relatively short-term projects on carefully defined issues, MOST can generate such analyses and policy proposals. It would thus powerfully contribute to UNESCO's analytical capacities and policy formulation efforts, on major contemporary issues in social and human sciences, but also in education, natural sciences, culture and communication.
4. **Capacity Building:** the capacity building actions need to be widened and their role in the entire MOST Programme must be enhanced. Even projects executed in developed countries could support students from developing countries through participation in research and training towards higher degrees. It should be mentioned that MOST has terminated the International Ph.D. Award, which is a good move, especially when the funds are being directed towards Summer Schools that address the needs of young social scientists. Though UNESCO/MOST is not a funding agency, it is advisable to provide higher level of funding to capacity building projects especially in developing countries in order to ensure their continuity.
5. **Chairs and MOST:** The entire UNESCO's Chairs programme was externally evaluated in 2000, and the recommendations seem to be valid also for the Chairs set up under MOST. The relationships between the Chairs and the existing MOST projects are weak. For instance, the Chairs could have an actual role in national policy making, and serve as resource bases for the development of virtual university programmes. It is advisable that the SSC get involved in the preparation of the Chairs under MOST.
6. **The Governance of MOST:** we recommend enhancing the Programme's management practices especially by strengthening its horizontal reach and links for better synergy; this should apply in equal terms inside and outside the Programme. Member States should be encouraged to send, as their representatives to IGC, professionals dealing with social sciences nationally. The

linkages between the administrative levels of MOST (NLCs, IGC, SSC, Secretariat) have to be reinforced.

7. **SSC Initiatives:** Because SSC is the body under MOST that deals directly with the research proposals, certain 'centralised' and forward looking actions can add to the strength of the Programme. Some of them have been identified in this report.
8. **The Secretariat:** the vertical relations between the Secretariat and the projects have been active, but the horizontal network and linkages within the MOST Programme and also with the rest of UNESCO and to the outside, need to be strengthened. Stronger scientific background would certainly be an advantage for the members of the Secretariat.
9. **Publication and Dissemination Strategy:** the Programme needs a clear publication and dissemination strategy of its output, and an assessment of its educational outreach. Dissemination of MOST research results needs improvement, and it is the responsibility of all MOST administrative levels including the Secretariat, the National UNESCO Commissions, the NLCs and the IGC. These actions can take a number of different forms. This should also involve communication professionals. An important policy interface, the MOST Clearing House Website needs to be put into more active use and restructured in terms of possible targeted publics.
10. **Visibility:** for the sake of both funding and policy impact, the Programme needs to take actions to increase its visibility both at the national and international levels. Annual Keynote Addresses by a prominent person could be a step in this direction. This has been used by MOST already, but it should be now implemented on a regular basis. Enhancing visibility requires coordinated effort at all administrative levels, including the NLCs and the Secretariat.
11. **Project Monitoring System:** the Programme and its projects should be monitored and evaluated for better management and for measuring their impact on the policies and the society at large. This would also add to their value towards securing proper funding.
12. **National Impact Assessment:** there is need for the NLCs to take a stronger role in knowledge transfer and impact assessment at the national level. The NLCs should be more active, with the help of the Secretariat, in their effort in both creating an interest in the MOST activities and funding possibilities. The composition of the NLCs should include persons with ties with the national and international funding agencies, those who are professional in disseminating research results to the public and those involved in planning and policy-making. Regionally, several 'like-minded' NLCs (regional networks of NLCs) could pull their efforts together towards building a functional platform for MOST at their level of action.
13. **The Budget:** The structure of the MOST budget is in apparent need of strategic planning to devote a higher percentage to projects. The use of the MOST budget should be strategically planned by the Secretariat with the guidance of the SSC and the IGC. There is a need for UNESCO's internal structures and monitoring systems to clarify the discrepancies between approved budget and the actual available funds for the Programme's development.

14. **Research Funding Strategy:** the research-funding arena is changing. The European Union's Research Framework programme, with the introduction of the European Research Area, for instance, can be considered as a potential partner but, if MOST does not take a strategic move, it can also be a potential competitor for the Programme. The MOST Secretariat should design a strategy to refocus the Programme and redesign the modalities of project development for its second phase.
15. **Regular Evaluation:** for the viability of the MOST Programme, regular and on-going evaluations of at least some key projects are fundamental. The establishment of a rigorous monitoring system has been an advantage; this system should be reinforced and built already at the level of projects. It is essential that, in any project monitoring and evaluation system, the Secretariat maintain an adequate registry of the projects and updates it regularly.

Summary Table of Recommendations

Secretariat	SSC	IGC	General
Rec. 1			Rec. 1
Rec. 2			Rec. 2
			Rec. 3
Rec. 4			
Rec. 5	Rec. 5		
	Rec. 7		Rec. 6
Rec. 8			
Rec. 9			
	Rec. 10	Rec. 10	
Rec. 11		Rec. 12	
Rec. 13		Rec. 14	
Rec. 14			Rec. 15