



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# Executive Board

Hundred and eighty-first session

# 181 EX/19

PARIS, 13 March 2009  
Original: English

Item 19 of the provisional agenda

## REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON EVALUATIONS COMPLETED DURING THE 2008-2009 BIENNIUM

### SUMMARY

In accordance with 180 EX/Decision 27, the Director-General hereby submits a short report on three evaluations completed in 2008, together with his comments.

There are no additional policy implications of a financial or administrative nature.

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 6.

## **BACKGROUND**

1. At the 180th session of the Executive Board, by 180 EX/Decision 27, the Executive Board reiterated that the Director-General should continue to report periodically on evaluations completed, on the progress made in the follow-up to evaluation recommendations and in strengthening the quality of the evaluations undertaken. The IOS Annual Report 2008 (181 EX/33) addresses the follow-up to evaluation recommendations and quality issues, while the present report covers evaluations completed. They are given as summary tables in tabular form as instructed by the Executive Board (175 EX/Decision 26), with the recommendations positioned alongside the findings and/or conclusions they refer to. The last row of each summary table is a brief account of the actions that the Director-General has taken already or is taking in response to the recommendations made. In the second part, the Director-General presents the generic lessons that have emerged.

## **PART I – PRESENTATION OF EVALUATION REPORTS**

2. Strategic Programme Objective (SPO) 14: Support through UNESCO's domains to countries in post-conflict situations and post-disaster situations.
3. UNESCO recruitment policy and practice.
4. UNESCO's capacities to deliver on document 34 C/4.

## 2. Strategic Programme Objective 14 “Support through UNESCO’s domains to countries in post-conflict situations and post-disaster situations (PCPD)”

Brief description and background of the activities evaluated/reviewed	
<p>UNESCO has a long history of developing special responses for those countries facing PCPD situations. The peace agreement of 1991 in Cambodia after the civil war was an important trigger for UNESCO’s current engagement in PCPD countries; UNESCO was invited to help safeguard the cultural heritage in Angkor. In 1992, this site was placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. During the 1990s, UNESCO’s work in PC situations mainly occurred in Cambodia, the Balkans, Lebanon, and Haiti and, through the regional Programme of Education for Emergency and Reconstruction (PEER), the Great Lakes region and Horn of Africa. Since 2002, UNESCO has established several task forces and working groups to address the specific needs of countries facing PCPD situations in an intersectoral manner, including: Afghanistan in 2002; Democratic Republic of Congo in 2003; Iraq in 2004; Sudan in 2005; and Ivory Coast in 2008. After the Indian Ocean Tsunami of December 2004, UNESCO Office Jakarta, with the International Oceanographic Commission (IOC), developed actions around tsunami early warning systems. The Director-General set up a Task Force to develop a UNESCO strategy for PCPD in 2006 and a PCPD Intersectoral Platform was introduced with document 34 C/5.</p>	
Budget	
<p>In document 33 C/5, UNESCO worked in 20 PC countries and five PD situations with a total budget of approximately \$185 million, not including Participation Programme activities and other ad hoc requests. The budgets for the sample of 26 projects (from four countries) examined in this evaluation was \$34 million: Afghanistan (\$11.7 million); Cambodia (\$14.8 million); DRC (\$6.8 million); and Indonesia (\$0.7 million).</p>	
This Evaluation	
<p>The purpose of this evaluation was to assess results of programming interventions and provide recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of current programming approaches. In terms of scope, it mainly covers the period 2006-2007 (33 C/5). The methods used included document review, detailed review of a sample of projects in four countries, site visits, key informant interviews, a survey of all UNESCO field office Directors in PCPD situations and a debriefing meeting at Headquarters. It was conducted by a six-person external evaluation team from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Netherlands, Pakistan and Viet Nam from April to August 2008, at a cost of €57,000. The evaluation report is available on <a href="http://www.unesco.org/ios">http://www.unesco.org/ios</a>.</p>	
Findings and conclusions	Recommendations
<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Achievements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is increased recognition and commitment to PCPD responses and interventions, illustrated by the establishment of SPO 14 in document 34 C/4, the intersectoral platform on PCPD in document 34 C/5, and the reinforcement of PEER;</li> <li>• UNESCO’s specific competitive advantage in PCPD contexts is in linking implementation on the ground with upstream policy changes at national, regional or international levels. Results achieved in the four case study countries include: speedy preservation and protection of cultural heritage; restoration of radio-broadcasting after disasters; provision of literacy and vocational training in emergency situations; provision of advice on educational curricula and policies on education and cultural heritage; increased skills of national staff in counterpart organizations; and development of legislative frameworks on education, culture and communication and information;</li> <li>• UNESCO has been successful in leveraging regular programme funds to raise extrabudgetary funds for its PCPD interventions.</li> </ul>	

	Findings and conclusions	Recommendations
2	<b>Challenges:</b> UNESCO's current approach is to identify countries as being in conflict, post-conflict or post-disaster situations. This labelling is not appropriate as most countries include a mix of "standard" UNESCO interventions, specific post-conflict interventions and specific post-disaster interventions.	Label activities and projects, not countries, as conflict, PC or PD responses to enable more context-specific responses and to improve monitoring, learning and sharing lessons from specific PCPD contexts.
3	<b>Challenges:</b> UNESCO's capacity to contribute rapidly and flexibly to emergency responses, conflicts and disasters has been consistently low. Quick and flexible funding sources and instruments to step into PCPD responses are not yet sufficiently developed.	Create new and flexible mechanisms (such as the recently established revolving fund) to enable the immediate release of PCPD funding.
4	<b>Challenges:</b> UNESCO's compartmentalized sectoral set-up is not conducive to intersectoral initiatives and joint programming. Administrative rules and procedures do not yet sufficiently allow for quicker, more flexible and intersectoral actions.	Develop new incentives for flexible and intersectoral PCPD responses at all levels in UNESCO, by supporting field offices in developing their own specific PCPD responses and by supporting effective participation within coordination and planning mechanisms of United Nations Country Teams.
5	<b>Challenges:</b> The field offices in the case studies were not satisfied with the support in securing flexible and temporary staffing for field offices in PCPD situations.	Improve staffing in PCPD interventions by addressing staffing bottlenecks at the field office level, establishing more flexible mechanisms for hiring and transferring staff, and developing new mechanisms for quick, flexible and temporary deployment of UNESCO staff and experts in PCPD interventions.
6	<b>Challenges:</b> Monitoring information and results reporting for the projects sampled in the evaluation were not entered in SISTER.	Improve monitoring and knowledge-sharing by ensuring that data in SISTER, particularly for extrabudgetary projects, is complete and up-to-date.
<b>Actions taken/to be taken by the Director-General</b>		
7	<p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strategic approach:</b> The use of the intersectoral platform on PCPD was launched in early 2008 to further strengthen UNESCO's strategic approach to PCPD interventions. This platform allows focused discussions and coordination with all stakeholders including heads of relevant field offices, programme coordinators and sector and central service focal points. Field offices facing PCPD situations are provided with immediate guidance and backstopping through the intersectoral platform mechanism. UNESCO follows the United Nations system as a whole in the coordinated responses to "post-conflict (PC)" and "post-disaster (PD)" situations by strategically integrating its contribution within common United Nations coordination and funding mechanisms.</li> <li>• <b>Funding for PCPD interventions:</b> Dedicated RP budgets are now found in sectoral work plans; a budget line for the administrative support to field offices engaged in PCPD operations was provided for the first time in document 34 C/5 under BFC; a PCPD special account was established in 2008 for "rapid and high-impact response to post-crisis situations" following Executive Board decision 174 EX/48; the Additional Programme (coordinated by ERC/CFS) is giving special attention to raising extrabudgetary funding for interventions in countries facing PCPD situations;</li> </ul>	

**Actions taken / to be taken by the Director-General (Continued)**

7	<p>PCPD Programme Coordinators in the field are also involved in raising extrabudgetary funds. Finally, a communication strategy is also being developed to include a PCPD website and advocacy documents that will target donors, partners, and the public at large. Funds allocated to field offices involved in PCPD operations are normally used to support the participation of relevant programme specialists in rapid United Nations needs assessments, as well as hiring temporary assistance and expertise, and covering logistical costs as may be required;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Training for PCPD interventions:</b> BFC/CPO is coordinating house-wide training on positioning UNESCO within joint United Nations PCPD response mechanisms. Africa Department is conducting region-focused training for NATCOMs, PCPD focal points in field offices, subregional organizations, the African Union Commission and NGOs;</li> <li>• <b>Programming, monitoring and reporting:</b> Since 2008 SISTER-2 has incorporated enhanced monitoring and reporting functionalities for the RP. Work is ongoing for integrating extrabudgetary PCPD projects in SISTER-2. A PCPD knowledge management and “best practices” database is currently under development, and a systematic collection of PCPD analyses and historical documentation is under way, particularly on UNESCO’s participation in common United Nations Flash Appeals, Consolidated Appeals, Multi-Donor Trust Funds, and other United Nations transitional funding frameworks for PCPD.</li> </ul> <p><b>A detailed action plan</b> will be prepared for implementing appropriate recommendations from the evaluation.</p>
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### 3. UNESCO Recruitment policy and practice

Brief description and background of the activities evaluated/reviewed	
<p>Recruitment at UNESCO is “the process of seeking, attracting and appointing candidates to vacant posts in the Organization in accordance with Staff Regulations and Rules”. Guided by the Integrated Policy on Recruitment, Rotation and Promotion (2003), it articulates a decentralization policy that devolves responsibility to the sector management, to ensure a competent and efficient workforce, selected, appointed and promoted based on competence and merit, and through a competitive process. The process must secure the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity while ensuring an equitable geographical balance and a balanced gender distribution. External recruitment is essential for the renewal of staff profiles by seeking externally the best talents, skills and competencies, when not available internally.</p>	
Budget	
<p>Dedicated staff resources in HRM maintain the process and advise managers in the sectors.</p>	
This evaluation	
<p>The evaluation purpose was “To identify strengths and weaknesses of the current policy and practice by assessing the extent to which its objectives have been met since introduction in 2003”. The scope included recruitment of P-1 to P-5 Professional staff in the period 2004 to 2008. The methods employed included: surveys of managers and new hires; in-depth interviews with a range of UNESCO managers and staff, including staff representatives; a review of relevant UNESCO documents, recruitment processes, systems and statistics, a literature review, a review of practices in other international organizations and a day-long workshop with selected managers and HRM representatives. The evaluation was conducted by a team of four external evaluators from Canada at a cost of \$96,125. The evaluation report is available on <a href="http://www.unesco.org/ios">http://www.unesco.org/ios</a>.</p>	
Findings and conclusions	Recommendations
To what extent do the current practices <b>achieve the goals of the 2003</b> recruitment policy?	
<p><b>1</b> <b>Achievements:</b> The evaluation found that the UNESCO recruitment system works as intended and that it has several strong features including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is thorough with many “checks and balances”, and this makes it reasonably transparent and helps to reduce the potential for inequity;</li> <li>• It has tightened procedures while increasing the potential of getting the most qualified candidate through a transparent process, with no significant improprieties identified in the course of the evaluation.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2</b> <b>Challenge:</b> Participants in the process are not always well informed, some candidates get discouraged, and some managers are not clear about what they need to do to move the process forward.</p>	<p>Explain guidelines to candidates and managers, advise managers on the process and inform all candidates of its conclusions.</p>
<p><b>3</b> <b>Challenge:</b> Selection too heavily focused on candidates’ profile in regard to education and training.</p>	<p>Develop competency-based assessment tools and train recruiters and managers in the use of such tools.</p>
<p><b>4</b> <b>Challenge:</b> Reference checks are not consistently applied.</p>	<p>Develop standard forms to be used for consistent reference checking.</p>

Findings and conclusions		Recommendations
	To what extent do recruitment policies and practices <b>interact with other components</b> of strategic human resources management and UNESCO priorities?	
5	<b>Achievement:</b> Gender balance is moving in the right direction in UNESCO with gender parity (51% female staff) achieved at the Professional (P1 – P-5) grades.	
6	<b>Challenge:</b> Insufficient attention is given to the professional performance appraisal and career development as a tool to support the creation of a stronger pool of internal candidates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and draw on an internal pool based on a performance development system that focuses on supporting all employees to perform optimally.</li> <li>• Conduct exit interviews and use the results in refining the career development framework.</li> </ul>
7	<b>Challenge:</b> The probationary period is not actively used for measuring a candidate's qualities and competencies and for ensuring the highest possible performance from the individual.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce a comprehensive orientation programme.</li> <li>• Develop a performance review programme to evaluate staff members' skills and competences in line with UNESCO's operations.</li> </ul>
	To what extent is UNESCO's recruitment approach <b>aligned with leading-edge thinking and practices</b> in international public sector/intergovernmental organizations, including other United Nations organizations?	
8	<b>Achievement:</b> UNESCO has achieved 84% representation of its Member States in the staff composition and is continuing to press for geographic balance.	
9	<b>Achievement:</b> The various panels (i.e. Pre-selection, Evaluation and Personnel Advisory Board (PAB)) have had the effect of involving a wide range of senior-level people in the process.	
10	<b>Challenge:</b> Most recruitment processes are lengthy. The process is taking too long as acknowledged by both managers and candidates.	<p>Streamline the recruitment and hiring process including, but not necessarily limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessing staffing needs and anticipating vacancies (including succession planning) and beginning the hiring processes prior to the positions becoming vacant;</li> <li>• Ensuring the evaluation panels have concrete evidence of competencies through examples of previous work or other assessment tools.</li> </ul>
11	<b>Challenge:</b> One of the biggest challenges is dealing with the large numbers of mainly unqualified applications.	Pre-selection should be automated to a greater extent.

Findings and conclusions		Recommendations
12	<b>Challenge:</b> Evaluation panel meetings remain challenging with the inclusion of more panel members than necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adhere to the established policy, including the required size of evaluation panels, and</li> <li>• Distribute information (test results, self-evaluations) to panel members prior to the interview.</li> </ul>
13	<b>Challenge:</b> PAB review sometimes extends the length of the process, without additional value as HRM already holds oversight function.	PAB process should be reviewed and could be renegotiated to streamline time and resources.
14	<b>Challenge:</b> The established practice of multi-level approvals of all professional positions may not be in line with leading-edge practice.	Consider streamlining and delegating the approval responsibility for limited P-level positions (P-1 – P-3)
<b>Actions taken/to be taken by the Director-General</b>		
15	HRM is currently reviewing the recommendations in the Evaluation Report and will, with the collaboration of IOS, develop an action plan with concrete deliverables, defined timelines and costs.	



#### 4. UNESCO's capacities to deliver on document 34 C/4

Brief description and background of the activities evaluated/reviewed	
<p>The Medium-Term Strategy for the period 2008-2013 (34 C/4) contains a set of five overarching objectives, namely: (i) Attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning; (ii) Mobilizing science knowledge and policy for sustainable development; (iii) Addressing emerging social and ethical challenges; (iv) Fostering cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace; and (v) Building inclusive knowledge societies through information and communication. These are expanded into 14 Strategic Programme Objectives (SPOs) each with a set of Expected Outcomes (EOs), thus covering all the programmes envisaged for the medium-term period.</p>	
Budget	
<p>The budget for implementing document 34 C/4 is made up of both regular programme and extrabudgetary funding for the constituent biennia.</p>	
This evaluation	
<p>The 2008-2009 UNESCO Biennial Evaluation Plan (34 C/5) called for an evaluation of the Organization's capacity to deliver the Medium-Term Strategy (34 C/4) for 2008-2013. The original aim of the evaluation was to capture the overall institutional capacity in terms of the Organization's resources, its management systems and processes, and its structures and policies. However, this aim was very broad and was redefined to focus on the assessment and prioritization of risks associated with the attainment of document 34 C/4 SPOs and their respective EOs by using a risk-based approach. The 31 major organizational risks identified by the College of ADGs were assessed, rated and prioritized for each of the 56 EOs of document 34 C/4 according to relevance, impact and probability through an extensive consultation process via online surveys, involving section heads and field office directors. The exercise was undertaken by IOS/EVS. The evaluation report is available on <a href="http://www.unesco.org/ios">http://www.unesco.org/ios</a>.</p>	
Findings and conclusions	Recommendations
Identification of risks	
1	<p><b>Achievements:</b> Risk areas were identified by the College of ADGs including: resourcing UNESCO's programmes, governance, staffing, organizational design and accountability, corporate systems, financial management, RBM, quality of programme delivery and visibility, and delivering within the United Nations system. Risks linked to the priorities "Africa" and "Gender Equality" were later added.</p>
2	<p><b>Challenges:</b> An incident reporting system to regularly register and monitor the occurrence of risks should be put in place.</p> <p>Explore different options for setting up an incident reporting system and review the mechanisms in place to control the different types of risk.</p>
Prioritization of risks	
3	<p><b>Achievements:</b> There is an increased awareness of risks as reflected in the positive response rate to the IOS surveys for developing the risk prioritization model (a participation rate of 88% at Headquarters and 55% in the field offices).</p>
4	<p><b>Achievements:</b> The identified risks were validated and prioritized according to impact and probability using a survey. The top 10 priority risks facing the Organization were identified (and are listed below).</p>

Findings and conclusions		Recommendations
<b>Prioritization of risks (continued)</b>		
5	<p><b>Challenges:</b> Risk awareness and risk management capacities need to be further strengthened and built into regular programming planning and implementation throughout the Organization, at Headquarters and field office levels.</p>	<p>Build up risk management capacities through training and the application of risk management on a daily basis. Also embed the risk assessment approach into future planning (development of the C/5 document), management and reporting, and reinforce the risk management culture in UNESCO.</p>
6	<p><b>Challenges (The top 10 risk areas) are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) A gap between expected and available resources may lead to tensions in programme planning, a failure to deliver and a loss of credibility.</li> <li>(ii) Uncertainty about future levels of regular and extrabudgetary funding plus broadening responsibilities may compromise UNESCO's ability to deliver.</li> <li>(iii) The complexity of UNESCO's structure and a lack of incentive to work across organizational boundaries may create duplication of effort or gaps in programmes, and may inhibit intersectoral work.</li> <li>(iv) A lack of responsive systems and processes may inhibit UNESCO's ability to attract partners and put in place operational partnerships.</li> <li>(v) Inadequate information/network systems plus connectivity problems in the field increase challenges in implementing programmes, and consume considerable resources, with limited tangible organizational benefits.</li> <li>(vi) Tension between micromanagement and delegation of authority may challenge the assurance of stewardship of resources, and lead to a stagnation in decision-making.</li> <li>(vii) Inability to articulate, to achieve, and to report on quality results may lead to a loss of confidence in UNESCO's ability to deliver, a loss of visibility and eventually a reduction in funding.</li> <li>(viii) Lack of a succession plan may leave a gap in terms of competent senior staff, given the anticipated retirement of professional staff.</li> <li>(ix) An imbalance between a focus on process/control as opposed to programme delivery and quality may impinge on the financial and human resources dedicated to programme delivery.</li> <li>(x) An imbalance in influence and decision-making processes between central services and the programme sectors may impact on programme delivery and quality.</li> </ul>	<p>Formulate action plans to mitigate the identified risks (starting with the Top 10) and set up a regular monitoring system in line with RBM.</p>

**Actions taken/to be taken by the Director-General**

**7** **Achievements:** A risk management committee made up of senior managers representing all sectors and services was established in November 2008 to formulate action plans for the mitigation of the identified risks. The Terms of Reference for the committee were adopted on 2 December 2008. Regular meetings are chaired by ADG/BSP. UNESCO thus has a mechanism in place to keep track of risks and address them in a systematic way. This puts UNESCO in a best practice position in the United Nations family in regards to risk management. The Risk Management Committee will continue to meet on a regular basis and will also be responsible for the development of appropriate mechanisms to address the identified risks, as well as for the regular review of risk tolerance levels.

**8** **Further actions already taken/or to be taken include:**

- The Risk Management Committee systematically addresses the identified risks and formulates measures to mitigate the said risks.
- An internal control unit has been established in BOC to monitor and mitigate financial and reporting risks.
- An update of the risk assessment exercise is scheduled for autumn 2009.
- The Risk Management Committee will also identify risk tolerance levels during the assessment of risk areas and consider these for further development of risk responses and mitigation measures, as appropriate.
- The current risk control framework is considered sufficient, ensuring informal incident reporting. A formal incident reporting system may be considered at a later stage when a risk culture has further matured in UNESCO.
- A website on risk management is being established on the UNESCO Intranet, providing access to training material and regular updates on risk assessment and mitigation measures.
- A training module on risk management has been developed by BSP and is being offered to UNESCO staff and managers as of 2009.
- Results of the risk assessment exercise also feed into risk management training for field offices conducted by BOC.

## **PART II – CONCLUDING REMARKS OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

5. Lessons learned: The three evaluations reported on here are clearly of strategic importance in the ongoing development of the Organization: (i) a clear “baseline” assessment is now available with respect to our interventions in post-conflict situations, combined with an evolving strategic approach to ensure efficiency and effectiveness; (ii) the evaluation on recruitment highlighted the good progress made, particularly in matters of gender balance and geographic distribution; (iii) concerning the risk assessment with regard to UNESCO’s capacity to deliver on document 34 C/4, the evaluation shows that UNESCO has indeed introduced a best-practice approach to risk management among United Nations organizations. A major lesson emanating from the evaluations is that of the ongoing requirement to be strategic; as without this the achievements reported would not have taken place. The Organization will, of course, continue to implement appropriate recommendations for the improvements, and report to the Executive Board accordingly.

### **Action expected of the Executive Board**

6. The Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 180 EX/Decision 27,
2. Having examined document 181 EX/19,
3. Taking note of the recommendations made by the evaluators as well as the report of the Director-General on the actions taken or to be taken to implement these recommendations,
4. Invites the Director-General to implement in a timely manner recommendations which improve the programmes and services to which they relate, and to continue to improve the quality of evaluations by implementing the UNESCO Evaluation Strategy;
5. Requests the Director-General to continue to report to it on evaluations conducted on the Organization’s programme activities, on the progress made in strengthening programme management, in the follow-up to evaluation recommendations for each programme evaluated, and in strengthening the quality of the evaluations undertaken and their impact on the management culture of the Organization.