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## **MOST National Committee Guidelines**

### **Proposed decision**

The Intergovernmental Council of the MOST Programme may wish to adopt the following decision:

Having examined the document *MOST National Committee Guidelines (203/8a)*,

Recalling 27 C/Resolution 5.2, approving the proposals made in 140 EX/11 concerning the structures and *modus operandi* of the Management of Social Transformations programme, including at the national level,

Recalling Recommendation 7 of the MOST Intergovernmental Council during its first session of 7-10 March 1994, and Recommendation 2 of its second session of 3-7 July 1995, inviting Member States of UNESCO to establish MOST National Liaison Committees,

Taking into account the results and recommendations of the *Evaluation report of the MOST National Liaison Committees* of October 2005 (document 203/8b),

Following the proceedings of the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Council at its meeting of October 2008 on the elaboration of draft guidelines for MOST National Committees,

Welcomes the *draft Guidelines on MOST National Committees*, and

Requests the Director-General to finalise the MOST National Committees Guidelines and to make them available to the Member States, taking into account the feedback (Annex of document 203/8a), as well as the views expressed during the debate related to the MOST National Committees.

# Summary

## Draft MOST National Committee Guidelines

### Role and activities of MOST National Committees

- The role of a MOST National Committee is to provide a platform for activities making up the national contribution to the international UNESCO social science Programme Management of Social Transformations.
- Within this context, the main aim of the national MOST Committee is to facilitate the strengthening of research-policy dialogues among policy-makers, the social science research community and civil society representatives at the national level.
- For this purpose, the MOST National Committee can undertake three main lines of activities: (a) contribute to research agenda setting and facilitate research networks in the field of social sciences, (b) promote dialogues among policy-makers, social scientists and civil society representatives (c) facilitate debate on policy options based on research for national priorities related to social transformations. The activities could result in policy briefs, containing evaluated policy options, best practices and recommendations, based on the dialogue between researchers and policy-makers.
- The MOST National Committee liaises and cooperates with various national, regional and international networks, as well as with other MOST Committees and the MOST-secretariat.

### Membership of MOST National Committees

In order to be in a position to facilitate the strengthening of research-policy dialogues at the national level, the MOST National Committee should:

- Be composed of experts that have the capacity to promote and strengthen the research-policy dialogue at the national level.
- Represent relevant government bodies, the academic social science community, and civil society.
- Include members with sufficient status and position to serve as a liaison to promote networking among researchers, secure constructive links with policy-makers, and have the necessary audience to broad sections of civil society.

### Key partners of MOST National Committees

To achieve its objective, the MOST National Committee involves a range of key partners:

- The national and local government, the social science community, civil society and the private sector.
- The National Commission for UNESCO, UNESCO Chairs, UNESCO field offices, United Nations organizations, international organizations, and international professional organisations.

### Establishing MOST National Committees

Regarding the establishment of the MOST National Committee, the following *guidelines* are proposed:

- The MOST National Committee is established by the National Commission for UNESCO.
- The Committee can be institutionally affiliated and designated in various ways, depending on the national context in each State.
- Where appropriate, local and regional MOST Committees could be created.

- The MOST National Committee operates on the basis of a clearly defined and transparent mandate, elaborated at the national level in close cooperation between the National Commission for UNESCO and relevant stakeholders.
- The MOST National Committee adopts procedures for the recruitment of its members, as well as criteria for its membership.
- Although a minimum of general procedures is required, complex administration and rules of operation are to be avoided.
- The MOST National Committee informs the MOST-secretariat annually on its activities.
- The use of the MOST name, acronym and logo is guided by the existing UNESCO rules, and falls under the responsibility of the National Commission for UNESCO.
- The MOST National Committee should have funds for its own functioning, and could assume a role in attracting funds for its activities.
- At the national level, the MOST Committee is to be recognised by the National Commission for UNESCO. At the international level, the MOST Intergovernmental Council formally recognises the national structure as a MOST National Committee.
- The National Committee develops a communication liaison with the MOST-secretariat, and has its own responsibilities in the cooperation with the Intergovernmental Council, the Scientific Advisory Committee, and regional MOST structures, where appropriate.

# Draft MOST National Committee Guidelines

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## Background

Launched in 1994 as an Intergovernmental Scientific Programme, the **Management of Social Transformations Programme (MOST)** has gradually become a major line of action of UNESCO in the field of social science. MOST is an interdisciplinary programme that promotes research-policy linkages at all levels: national, regional and international. Over the years, progress has been made with regard to:

- Building efficient bridges between research, policy and practice
- Producing reliable and relevant knowledge for policy makers on critical social issues
- Building research capacity, especially in the developing countries
- Promoting the establishment of regional and international research networks.

The current Phase II of the MOST-Programme (2004-2013) has seen increased efforts to strengthen the research-policy dialogue as a means to contribute to better policy formulation. This approach was reinforced by the **International Forum on the Social Science-Policy Nexus** (Argentina and Uruguay, February 2006) as well as by the series of **Regional Forums of Ministers of Social Development** held over the last four years in 2 regions and 5 sub regions. Current developments at the global level, especially the financial crisis and the ensuing economic recession, endorse the principles on which MOST has been established and illustrate the need for strengthened research-policy dialogues.

Establishing appropriate and efficient structures in support of MOST at the national level is of paramount importance for increasing the impact of the social sciences on addressing real life social priorities. The constitutive documents of MOST include provisions requesting Member States adhering to the Programme to help establish MOST National Liaison Committees similar to those of other intergovernmental UNESCO Science Programmes. A thorough external evaluation of the MOST National Liaison Committees was undertaken in 2005-2006, stressing the need for a new approach to the support structures of MOST at the national level.

Based on the recommendations of this evaluation and on subsequent developments in the MOST-Programme, UNESCO's Social and Human Science Sector (SHS) and the MOST IGC Bureau launched a reflection on the new approach that MOST support structures at the national level could take. Ideas were exchanged with participants at several MOST related meetings and with members of the MOST Scientific Advisory Committee. At its meeting of 2-3 October 2008, the MOST IGC Bureau requested the Secretariat to elaborate guidelines for the establishment of MOST National Committees (MNCs). These guidelines will be submitted for approval to the next MOST IGC Session in July 2009.

SHS is in the process of elaborating the requested Guidelines. This document is a first draft. It puts forward the basic considerations and includes ideas and suggestions with regard to the objective, roles, functions and activities of a MOST Committee. It also presents some possible models of operation, and outlines practical steps that need be taken for their establishment. These draft guidelines for establishing MOST National Committees are not meant to be fixed rules and regulations on how to develop and create such a Committee. Each Member State will have to develop and adopt its own approach, building on and revising existing MOST national structures.

## **GUIDELINES ON MOST NATIONAL COMMITTEES**

### ***1. Basic considerations***

In establishing MOST National Committees, the starting point is the objective of **MOST Phase II**: “to promote the development and use of social science knowledge to better understand and manage social transformations, consistent with the universal values of justice, freedom, human dignity and sustainable development.” In the Programme and Budget of UNESCO for the current biennium 2008-2009 (34/C5), MOST activities are subsumed to sectoral priority 2 of Major Programme III: “Strengthening national and regional research systems in order to provide policy oriented research on social and ethical issues”.

The current gist of MOST underlines the importance of the **social science research-policy nexus**, defined as a process that promotes the production of knowledge for policy making, leading to the adoption of policies through a *participatory process* involving all stakeholders in social transformations. This sequence “*research – policy – action*” requires building policies on accurate data and valid research, as well as *strengthened links between policy makers, researchers and other stakeholders*.

Knowledge is more readily used in policy making if all stakeholders involved are closely associated to its production. However, although unanimously recognized as indispensable, dialogue between social science researchers and policy makers is not always easy to achieve because they operate in different cultures pursuing different agendas and targets. Policy makers may regard the contribution of social scientists as too theoretical and removed from reality, or ideologically biased, particularly if they differ from their own stands. In their turn, social science researchers may insist on setting their own research agendas, defending their autonomy, independence and academic freedom.

The participation of civil society may raise similar reservations of other stakeholders. With regard to social transformations, raising awareness and public involvement can be as important as policy making. The active participation of *civil society* in designing and implementing social policies is important in this respect. It is with civil society that awareness of social issues can be raised and consensus can be sought on policies to be designed, adopted and implemented.

Past experiences of the MOST Programme point to three main challenges at the national level which determine the link between social science and policy making:

- The research-policy *opportunities for dialogue* at the national level are weak
- The *impact* of the social sciences on policy making remains too low
- The relevance and *autonomy* of research for policy development require further attention

### ***2. The MOST National Committee - Overview***

A MOST National Committee aims to address these challenges at the national level by promoting the objectives of the MOST-Programme, and in particular by facilitating dialogue between policy makers, the social science community, and civil society. As such, the MOST

Committee acts as a national think tank on social transformations and the usage of social science research in policy-making processes. It is guided by the key principle that knowledge stands a better chance to contribute to accountable and effective policies if *co-produced* by governments, academics and civil society.

In its role as a think tank, it addresses questions such as:

- What are the areas in which the management of social transformations at the national level require further attention of researchers, policy makers, and civil society?
- How to organise research and promote research networks on these issues?
- How could a culture of dialogue between social scientists and policy makers be promoted for mutual benefit?
- How could relevant, qualitative, and evidence-based social sciences knowledge be made available to decision makers?
- What are innovative ways to bring professionals from different backgrounds together?
- How could civil society be associated to the dialogue leading to policy making?
- How could community engagement be linked to national and local level policy?
- How could relevant and quality policy briefs on selected topical policy issues be elaborated best?
- What approaches to adopt in order to raise public awareness on issues?

Rather than discussing these questions among themselves, the Committee members will use their experience, expertise and networking abilities to bring together relevant actors from various backgrounds. The MOST National Committee is not an advisory board or a decision making body. It does not develop policy as such. It functions mainly as a think tank facilitating dialogue among policy makers, the research community and civil society at the national level. Further, the Committee elaborates policy briefs on the basis of research-policy debates. In addition, it participates actively in regional and international networking and cooperation undertakings.

### **3. Objective and Activities**

The objective of the MOST National Committee is to strengthen the dialogue between policy-makers, the social science community and civil society.

By proposing mechanisms and creating appropriate spaces for dialogue at the national level, the Committee aims at facilitating innovative policy processes, involving actors with different expectations, agendas and preconceptions. The MOST National Committee develops activities along three main lines:

- (a) Increasing the **impact** of social sciences by agenda setting and the creation of research networks;
- (b) Promoting **dialogue** between policy makers, social scientists and civil society; and
- (c) Facilitating **debate** concerning policy options on national priorities.

The activities will result in policy briefs, containing evaluated policy options, best practices and recommendations.

### 3.1. Impact of Social Sciences

In order to increase the impact of the social sciences at the national level, the MOST National Committee aims at contributing to setting the national research and policy agenda, and promotes the creation of research networks. For this, the Committee:

- Identifies, discusses, and selects national priorities in the field of social transformations that need further attention. It raises awareness on researched topics that need further attention of policy makers. It identifies policy issues that require new research by social scientists. These could include recently emerged issues, or topics expected to attract attention. Also, the Committee could link national research to regional issues for regional reflection.
- Supports the creation of ad hoc research networks to promote the acquisition and use of new knowledge on social transformations. It brings together scientists from various research communities and academic fields to research particular issues of national interest. It facilitates the review of existing research in relation to policy needs and promotes the preparation of research on identified national priorities.

Through such contributions to agenda setting and supporting the creation of research networks, the MOST National Committee will enhance the visibility of MOST at the national level, and strengthen national research capacities and capacity building in the social science in developing countries, which is one of the major lines of action of MOST.

### 3.2. Dialogue

Even assuming that research produces knowledge that is relevant for policy, there is no guarantee that policy-makers will use it, or that they will do so effectively. For this reason, the second main line of action is to promote a continuing dialogue among the decision-making field, research communities, and civil society.

The MOST National Committee facilitates a **platform of dialogue** between representatives of different views on social transformations, belonging to different spheres of society. By promoting appropriate spaces for exchanges, trust can be strengthened between the research and policy-making communities.

This dialogue could be facilitated in different ways, depending on the specific situation in a Member State, and the topic that is addressed, including:

- **Forums** that bring together researchers, policy makers and a range of social actors to ensure wide circulation of available knowledge. The key to such forums is to avoid a priori definitions of what counts as “expertise” for policy purposes. The forums should be set up at a stage in the policy process when options are still genuinely open;
- **Conferences** on selected topics or themes; public discussions; seminars bringing together relevant professionals; informal discussions between civil servants of a specialised Ministry and social scientists on a topical policy issue.
- **Events** involving or associating Intergovernmental and International organisations, such as Social Science days;
- **Publications** and other forms of publicity, including at the internet.



### **3.3. Policy briefs**

Subsequently, the policy relevance of existing or new knowledge can be defined and validated by debating research results and policy alternatives on national priorities. The MOST National Committee promotes the creation of a favourable context and appropriate institutionalized procedures for this debate.

This process addresses the need to deliberate on complex issues with various stakeholders. The policy making processes need the input of sound autonomous research, as well as an assessment of likely responses to envisaged policy initiatives. The active participation of the academic community and the people affected by the policies (represented by the organized structures of civil society) is of importance. At the same time, it is crucial, however, to retain a balance between the capacities and responsibilities of all parties in the research-policy nexus.

On the basis of the research findings and the research-policy debate, the MOST National Committee prepares a policy brief on the national priority concerned. The policy brief reflects both the research results and the input of the various stakeholders. Using the MOST template these national policy briefs feed into the MOST Tool, and thus allow for sharing of experiences and ideas on research results and policy options.

In addition, the MOST National Committee develops strategies on **disseminating** policy briefs at the national and regional levels. The aim is to publish and to have them discussed by the media so as to reach the widest possible audiences.

### **3.4. Liaison and cooperation activities**

In order to be able to successfully organise the three main types of activities mentioned above, the MOST National Committee will have to maintain close links with the MOST-Secretariat. Further, they are 'natural' partners in regional and international networks and for cooperation with other MOST National Committees. Finally, the Committee could be involved in fundraising for activities.

## **4. Membership of the MOST National Committee**

The quality of the members determines the success of the MOST National Committee. To be effective, it has to consist of persons with the capacity to promote and strengthen the dialogue on social science and policy at the national level. The Committee should possess collectively the political, academic and public opinion clout to get things moving. It should include decision makers, as well as members recognised by the academic community.

Ideally, representatives of the research community, of government, and of civil society should be participating. The need for and the actual representation of all stakeholders in the MNC depends on the national conditions. It may not be essential that all sectors are represented. Above all, members should have the ability to communicate with, and to establish good working relations with, all stakeholders in the process. A MOST National Committee should include therefore top civil servants acknowledging the value of evidence based policies; policy makers with a solid background and expertise or experience in social sciences; scientists who have extensive networking links in the field of policy processes; and civil society representatives knowledgeable on social transformations.

At least one member of the MNC should have sufficient status and position, as well as the ability to promote networks among researchers; to secure constructive links and dialogue with policy makers; and have the necessary audience to broad sections of civil society. Above all, (s)he should have the willingness to serve in a central position, for instance as a chairperson, secretary, liaison officer, or focal point.

### **5. Key players and partners of the MNC**

The MOST National Committee involves a range of key players and diverse partners to achieve its objectives. At the national level these could include:

- *National and local government*: the offices of the president and the prime minister; ministries responsible for social development; parliaments and appropriate parliamentary commissions; policy makers at various levels of the decision making chain (in particular top civil servants), government agencies and bodies responsible for follow up on social agendas in general and the MDGs in particular, local government.
- *Social science community*: Social Science Institutes; Universities; Social Science journals, associations of young social scientists, and individual scientists,
- *Civil society and private sector*: National organisations, non-governmental organisations, community leaders, trade unions, companies, industry leaders, media, influential journalists, public opinion shapers, .

As a Committee meant to support a UNESCO programme, there should be close cooperation with:

- the UNESCO National Commission and its Sub-Commissions for Social Sciences
- relevant UNESCO Chairs in the country
- UNESCO field offices

At the regional and international level, cooperation is particularly important with:

- United Nations agencies and other international organisations
- Professional organisations such as the International Social Science Council and the International Council for Philosophy and Humanities, the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, the United Nations Institute for Social Development, the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLASCO), etc.

MOST National Committees should also associate closely to their activities (inter)nationally recognised *think tanks* on social science and policy development, in their function as 'laboratories of ideas'.

## **Establishing the MOST National Committee**

### **1. Establishment of a MOST National Committee**

The MOST National Committee is set up by the UNESCO National Commission of a Member State. The National Commission consults the Member State, the MOST IGC and the MOST Programme Secretariat on the establishment of a Committee.

### **2. Anchoring the MOST National Committee**

The MOST National Committee acts under the responsibility of the UNESCO National Commission. It can however be anchored institutionally in various ways. This allows for the Committee to be established on a basis appropriate for the needs and specific situation in a Member State. Existing experience with regard to the MOST National Liaison Committees could be of use in this respect. Structures to anchor the MNCs include:

- UNESCO National Commission
- Sub commission for Social Sciences of the UNESCO National Commission
- Ministries (e.g. Education, Research, International Cooperation)
- Parliament (parliamentary commissions and committees)
- Research Institute or Research Centre
- National Research Council
- Academy of Sciences
- University department
- Youth Council, Youth Association

In some Member States a MOST National Committee ‘proper’, i.e. as a Committee in its own right, may be feasible. The involvement of Ministries for Social Development (or equivalent) in MOST activities in recent years, especially through the convening of the Regional Forums of Ministers of Social Development, may provide feasible structures in other Member States.

The specific model to be chosen defines to a large extent how the Committee functions and how effective it could be. In some States, a relatively informal structure may provide the best model for MOST to be efficient at the national level. In other Member States it might only be possible to establish an effective Committee with proper formal foundations.

Further, anchoring could determine the legal provisions guiding the finances of a body, and in practical terms, it may determine the potential for government or external funding.

In the choice of a model it is important to give due attention to questions such as:

- What needs to be done in terms of formal requirements to establish the Committee?
- Where is the Committee based, and what are the consequences?
- Advantages/challenges of a government-based Committee?
- What is the ‘status’ of the MNC and its Members? Is the Committee, or are its Members, accountable to another entity?
- What is the level of independence of the Committee (to what extent is work assigned to, or decided by the Committee itself)?
- Does the status of the Committee create responsibilities for its Members?

Where structures of MOST at the national level exist, MOST National Committees could be built on these existing structures. Previous experiences of MOST National Liaison Committees may provide valuable guidance on the strengths and weaknesses of various alternatives in practice. However, the composition, status, and activities may need to be revised to respond to the current objectives.

### **3. Local and Regional Committees**

In larger states which have a federal form of government, it might appear effective to set up MOST Committees at the sub national, i.e. local level. Such **Local MOST Committees** could bring together local administrations, local businesses, universities and representatives of the local civic society. On the other hand, in the small island developing states (SIDS) the viability of MOST National Committees might be questionable, because of limitations in research capacity, human resources and budgets. In addition, communication constraints may exist. In these particular circumstances **Regional MOST Committees**, or existing sub-regional structures, may be the most efficient solution.

### **4. Mandate**

The MOST National Committee functions on the basis of a clearly defined mandate, elaborated at the national level by the National Commission in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders. The mandate has to be transparent, both for its Members, and for external partners.

The mandate should be based on the objective and activities as described in these guidelines, and takes into account the specific conditions of the Committee and the situation in the Member State.

### **5. Membership criteria and procedures**

Procedures for the recruitment of Members, and criteria for membership should be adopted.

- Who decides on Membership?
- To what extent should various constituencies be represented, e.g. researchers, policy makers, civil society?
- What expertise is needed of individual members, and in terms of expertise of the entire Committee?
- Which regulations determine the term of a Committee Member (fixed terms or not; removal of Members, etc).

The number of Committee members depends on the needs of the country, the MOST activities going on in the Member State, the specific needs in a particular region, as well as the preferences of Committee Members. The Committee does not have to be too sizeable, as it is a facilitating Committee bringing together people through its activities, rather than including members in the Committee itself. At the same time, the Committee should be large enough to include representatives of different backgrounds to bring in ideas, points of view, and different networks of researchers, policy makers and civil society representatives.

### **6. General procedures**

Complex rules of operation, a heavy weight administration and procedural complexity should be avoided. The model chosen and the way the Committee is 'anchored' do influence to a large extent the general procedures and policies that may be suitable. However, whatever model

selected, in all cases a minimum of proper procedures and policies are needed to ensure the functioning of the MOST National Committee. These include:

- How will the agenda of the Committee be set?
- How will the Committee deliberate and decide?
- In what way will record keeping and reporting be secured?
- What policy guides the media contacts of the Committee?
- What regulations should the Committee develop on minimum scientific standards and review; responsibility for the publication; clearance of information for the MOST online tool; sharing of information (e.g. research in progress shared with reviewers or international organisation)?

### **7. Reporting and Evaluation**

The Committee informs the MOST-Secretariat annually on its activities. The Secretariat includes such information in the documents presented to the IGC and IGC Bureau meetings.

The functioning of the Committee will be evaluated periodically at the national level by the UNESCO National Commission, and/or the body/institution to which it is affiliated. Information on this will be forwarded to the MOST-Secretariat.

### **8. Use of UNESCO MOST name, acronym and logo**

The use of the MOST name, acronym and logo is guided by the existing rules and under responsibility of the National Commission. The specific situation in a Member State should be discussed in close consultation with the UNESCO National Commission and the MOST-Secretariat before establishment of the Committee. The Mandate should include details on, for instance, the use of MOST and/or UNESCO logos for publications, conferences and other activities.

### **9. Finance**

A MOST National Committee would need a budget to cover the expenses of its functioning such as meetings and a small secretariat. Furthermore, in some cases the MOST National Committees could have to take on the role to facilitate external funding for activities related to increasing the impact of the social sciences; promoting dialogue; and debating and disseminating policy briefs.

Sources of funding could include:

- Contributions (including in kind) from host institutions;
- Bilateral and multilateral sources;
- Government allocations;
- Allocations from ministries and public agencies,
- National research councils, national grants councils
- Science foundations
- Private sector sources.
- UNESCO Participation programme

### **10. Recognition procedures**

At the national level, the MOST National Committee has to be set up and recognised by the National Commission. The UNESCO National Commission of the Member State informs the

MOST- Programme Secretariat. At the international level, the formal decision to recognise a structure as a MOST National Committee is taken by the MOST Intergovernmental Council.

Should a Member State withdraw from the MOST-Programme or otherwise terminate the MOST National Committee, it informs the UNESCO National Commission and MOST Programme Secretariat. The (*de facto*) termination of the Committee at the national level could further be reported to the Secretariat by the UNESCO National Commission, the host institute, or the Committee itself. At the international level, the MOST Intergovernmental Council recognizes the termination of the National Committee.

The MOST Intergovernmental Council may decide to terminate the recognition of a Committee on its own initiative, after consultation with the UNESCO National Commission, in case a MOST National Committee: has no members or activities; does not report on activities; has received a negative evaluation; or in case activities are not in line with MOST and UNESCO principles.

#### **11. Linkages and cooperation with MOST**

The MOST National Committee should develop a system to communicate with, receive information from, and report to the MOST-Secretariat on MOST activities at the national level.

National Committees find the proper place in the overall architectural structure of MOST through cooperation with the MOST IGC, its Bureau and the Scientific Advisory Committee, as well as with regional MOST structures.

# Annex I

## Feedback on the draft MOST National Committee guidelines

### 1. Introduction

The draft guidelines have been sent for feedback to National Commissions for UNESCO and Permanent Delegations to UNESCO, as well as a number of other stakeholders. Seventeen written responses have been received by 19 July 2009. The suggestions and comments have been summarised in the Feedback Table (below).

This annex outlines the main elements of the feedback on the draft guidelines, and presents proposals for the revision and finalisation of the guidelines based on this feedback.

### 2. The guidelines – general remarks

The majority of responses appreciate the initiative to elaborate guidelines, and establishing MOST Committees is widely viewed as a means to reinforce MOST at the national level. Some Member States question the need for a MOST National Committee because in their country effective networks in the field of the research-policy nexus already exist, or because the proposed objectives and structure of the MOST Committee are considered not to be relevant in the specific national context.

The expectations regarding the guidelines vary accordingly. Referring to national conditions, the feedback ranges from suggestions to include more detailed guidelines on the establishment and functioning of committees, to recommendations to reduce the current level of detail of the draft guidelines. Similarly, different views exist on the relevance of elaborating and revising particular elements of the draft. A common view is however, that national conditions should define the viability, objectives, activities and composition of the MOST National Committee.

*Concrete proposals for the Guidelines: (a) emphasise that the establishment of a MOST Committee is not mandatory (b) underline that the guidelines are indeed guidelines, rather than fixed regulations (c) focus on aims, objectives, and activities (d) recommend networking to share details on establishing committees. The guidelines should also include a supporting role for the MOST secretariat in this.*

### 3. Objectives and Activities

As far as adopting a think tank approach to the activities of the MOST Committee is concerned, some Member States observe that this concept is unrealistic, while others welcome the think tank approach as an innovative step forward. National conditions also define whether the proposed objectives and activities are regarded overambitious and too political, or pertinent and highly relevant.

A common view is that research plays an essential role in the research-policy nexus. Accordingly, the guidelines should include more explicit references to research, the promotion of social science research, the usage and valorisation of existing research in policy making, and to capacity building for research. Similarly, the networking function of a MOST committee is widely considered an essential element.

A recurring suggestion is to elaborate a clear mandate for the MOST Committee at the national level. Such a mandate could support the overarching objective of the MOST Programme to strengthen research-policy linkages, and take into account national conditions and priorities. The national mandate could describe the relevant aims and activities at the national level.

*Concrete proposals for the Guidelines: (a) recognise that the objectives and level of ambition of a MOST Committee depend on national conditions (b) emphasise the importance of research within the research-policy nexus (c) promote the networking function, including liaising with existing think tanks (d) encourage the elaboration of a national mandate for MOST Committees.*

#### **4. Membership and key partners**

A general view is that a committee has to be widely respected in order to be effective, and that membership is a key element to this. Membership influences the effectiveness of the committee, the availability of resources, and access to research. Suggestions on membership include promoting gender equality, observing transparency and ethics, and recognising the specific responsibilities of the various members.

Many suggestions have also been put forward concerning key partners of the committee, including government organs, professional organisations, international scientific organisations, think tanks and civil society.

*Concrete proposals for the Guidelines: (a) emphasise that membership is a key to successful committees (b) include the principals of gender equality, transparency and ethics (c) promote the sharing of expertise and best practices among national committees regarding membership and key partners.*

#### **5. Establishing the Committee**

In general terms, participation of the National Commission for UNESCO and support of the MOST programme in the establishment of the MOST Committee is welcomed, although views differ as to the exact form this involvement should take, related to the capacity of National Commissions and specific national conditions.

An important basic assumption is that relevant institutions in the Member State are in the best position to decide on how to set up and recognise the MOST Committee. Considering national institutions and networks to position and anchor the committee is essential in order to complement, rather than replace, relevant national structures. Further, the proposal to consider ad hoc committees could be relevant in several Member States.

The importance of a regional perspective is underlined by several suggestions on regional cooperation and regional committees.

Different opinions exist on the proposed administrative procedures, ranging from the view that they are too complex and detailed, to the view that some proposals are valuable for promoting an international standard.

*Concrete proposals for the Guidelines: (a) underline that a MOST committee is a national committee, set up by relevant institutions in the Member State, taking into account national conditions (b) emphasise the role of regional committees (c) consider how to secure the*



*responsibilities of UNESCO and the MOST programme (UNESCO mandate and principles; usage of name and logo; quality standards; development of MOST; legal aspect), at the same time avoiding excessive administration and control mechanisms.*

## **6. Finances**

Feedback on this topic ranges from the suggestion to consider seed money for the establishment of committees, to recommendations for excluding financial contributions by UNESCO or Member States.

*Concrete proposals for the Guidelines: (a) emphasise the existing provisions in the MOST programme (b) refer to existing UNESCO facilities, such as the Participation Programme.*

## Annex II

### Table Summary of the main items of Feedback

Member State and respondent	Summary of the main items of feedback
Cameroon  <i>SAC member</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility in establishing committees is needed.</li> <li>• Recognise that not in all countries the conditions of an open mind, cooperation and interaction in governing the sciences are present.</li> <li>• A number of fundamental structures and methodologies for committees should be fixed, others could be adapted nationally.</li> <li>• The MNC has to be independent scientifically, administratively and financially in order to function as a link between different actors. National Commissions cannot always guarantee this independence. The members of the committee play a major role in this respect.</li> <li>• Regional committees are important; MOST should promote regionalisation of research.</li> </ul>
Canada  <i>National Commission</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on existing research-related networks (ex. UNESCO Chairs, the Coalition of Cities against Racism and Discrimination, Metropolis, etc.) in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of work, time and expense.</li> <li>• Canada supports networking between its researchers/institutions/organisations and international research committees; and reinforcement of research-policy linkages at all levels, as well as the reinforcement of linkages between social and human research and current issues.</li> <li>• Recognise that Member States do not need to establish a MNC if there is no added-value.</li> <li>• Support studies by Member States of existing national structures, prior to developing a MOST National Committee. Consideration could also be given to supporting the creation of MOST National Committees in countries where no similar structure exists.</li> <li>• Add in the document an option to create ad-hoc committees. Ad-hoc committees allow for flexible membership, required expertise, and accurate representation in a specific issue, while avoiding expectations with regards to the frequency of meetings, the future of MOST and its funding.</li> <li>• Canada does not intend to create a MNC.</li> </ul>
Colombia  <i>Administrative Department of Science, Technology and Innovation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MNC is important for bringing together key actors for research and policy design.</li> <li>• Apart from being a laboratory of ideas the MNC could implement concrete action to strengthen the linkage between public policy and knowledge.</li> <li>• Promote research on analysing public policies, impact, recommendations, and adjustments.</li> <li>• Support research agendas to improve public policies. The MNC could act as a link between government and research agendas.</li> <li>• The guidelines focus on promoting dialogue and the impact of social sciences, rather than on establishing strategies and practices for real transformations to take place. Specify practical mechanisms on how to achieve the aims and objectives of the MNC, and how to carry out the activities.</li> <li>• Take into account domestic structures that are already in place.</li> <li>• Observe transparency and ethics in establishing a committee, to avoid favouring certain groups or interests over the common good.</li> <li>• Include institutions that promote science and technology, to promote the generation and circulation of knowledge.</li> <li>• Acknowledge that researchers and government are two different entities.</li> </ul>
Czech Republic  <i>SAC member</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MNCs have the potential to bring together social scientists and policy-makers and help establish dialogue, creating a neutral basis for this sometimes difficult and politicized communication.</li> <li>• The MNC has to be a widely respected and acknowledged body to be able to contribute to agenda setting, support the creation of research networks, and identify policy issues that require new research.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the MNC in close cooperation with the National Commissions to coordinate activities, and use the infrastructure, administrative support, and protection. Consider to what extent the MNC will be autonomous from the Commission.</li> <li>• The involvement of civil society organisations and think tanks into MOST related activities is particularly important (e.g. national professional associations like the Political Science Association, Sociological Association, etc.).</li> <li>• Revision of existing MOST national structures (NLCs) is necessary as some of these are empty structures.</li> <li>• Regional cooperation and cross-border cooperation is highly recommended.</li> </ul>
<p>Dominican Republic</p> <p><i>National Commission</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The guidelines are considered a useful, clear, systematic and opportune document.</li> <li>• The draft document is consulted in the establishment of the national MOST Committee.</li> </ul>
<p>Finland</p> <p><i>IGC Bureau Vice-president</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify the concept of MOST: is it a programme to promote social sciences; to promote the social science and policy nexus; or is it an international programme to have a concrete impact and to participate in national social policy making?</li> <li>• Clarify in the guidelines that MOST is a social science programme. Reflect how the social sciences have developed during the fifteen years of MOST.</li> <li>• The (implicit) suggestion to develop the MOST programme through the MNCs (acting as a social policy tool for policy making), might not belong to UNESCO's competence and field of action.</li> <li>• Add information on research.</li> <li>• The relation between researcher, civil servant and civil society is presented in a simple and mechanical way; dialogue and debate open new avenues to enable the researcher to adjust his/her research activities.</li> <li>• Defining the MNC as a national think tank may be too strong and raises too many expectations.</li> <li>• A MNC cannot replace national organs in defining and applying research programmes and social policies.</li> <li>• The proposed lines of activities are too ambitious. Avoid MOST getting involved in setting national agenda and policy options.</li> <li>• Avoid aiming at elaborating concrete politics through using policy briefs and MOST as a tool.</li> <li>• Proposed membership may be relevant in developing countries, but much harder to achieve in other countries. The proposed participation of high level political actors might be overestimated. Consider national and international organisations of social scientists: ISA, AISLF, IPSA, IPRA.</li> <li>• Rephrase the involvement of Member State, MOST IGC and MOST Secretariat in establishing a committee in a less binding way.</li> <li>• Establish a mandate at the national level by the National Commission for UNESCO.</li> <li>• Limit reporting of the MNCs to once every two years, to avoid and reduce administrative work.</li> <li>• Recognition of the Committee could be delegated to the National Commissions, or relevant national organs, and acknowledged the IGC Bureau.</li> </ul>
<p>Gambia</p> <p><i>National Commission</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the problem of research not being used by policy-makers.</li> <li>• Sensitisation on the use of research for policy making is required.</li> <li>• In smaller states such as Gambia, the members of the National Commission for UNESCO Social Sciences sub-Committee and the MOST Committee will overlap. The two committees will eventually compete for human and financial resources.</li> <li>• Allow Member States to explore the establishment of one national committee for social sciences (including MOST) for financial and human resource reasons.</li> </ul>
<p>Germany</p> <p><i>National Commission</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The level of flexibility as attempted in the guidelines is essential.</li> <li>• Some fundamental elements are too fixed in the draft, causing substantial problems for the viability and effectiveness of committees.</li> <li>• The objectives and activities are too fixed, however at the same time open a wide field. This is</li> </ul>

	<p>confusing and will be unproductive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The draft creates a vision of a meta-think tank and the objective to discuss how social science and policy should interact. The MNC as a think tank is unrealistic in developed countries (insufficient status, knowledge, and experience); and other networks exist.</li> <li>• Research-policy linkages are results of subtle processes, rather than of an overarching framework and mechanisms.</li> <li>• Avoid a top-down approach prescribing actors how to cooperate. Developing research-policy links in particular policy fields are more effective.</li> <li>• The MNC is to define itself achievable and urgently relevant tasks corresponding to national priorities.</li> <li>• Underline that the objectives and activities of a Committee must be realistic, without exaggerated ambition, defined independently of the MOST programme, and based on a national mandate.</li> <li>• Germany does not intend to create a MNC.</li> </ul>
<p>Japan</p> <p><i>National Commission</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the tight budgetary situation of UNESCO, budget allocations for the establishment of MNCs should be examined carefully.</li> <li>• No MNC is required in Japan as national committees, research institutes and scientific communities cover the think tank role, and existing networks cover the sharing of information.</li> <li>• State in the guidelines that the MNC is not mandatory.</li> <li>• Add a reference that no extra budgetary commitment is required for member countries and states that do not wish to establish such committees.</li> </ul>
<p>Kenya</p> <p><i>Permanent Delegation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is recommended for the guidelines to include: background; membership; advice to conduct wide consultations; suggestion on funding; advice on placing the Committee; staffing; the first draft guidelines; advice to elaborate a national vision and mission statements.</li> <li>• Add to the guidelines: best practices; and suggested ways forward on reporting.</li> <li>• Part I of the document (background, objectives and activities) is very good. For Part II there is a need for more details and guidelines. MOST could encourage Member States to elaborate a document containing: preamble; membership; chairperson; mandate; frequency of meetings; quorum.</li> <li>• Suggestions on the composition of the Committee: small numbers; all inclusive; encourage gender equality.</li> <li>• Member States decide best who should set up the Committee.</li> <li>• In funding UNESCO must be prepared to plant the seed.</li> </ul>
<p>Romania</p> <p><i>National Commission</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports UNESCO's efforts to reinforce MOST through the establishment of MNCs.</li> <li>• Part I of the draft guidelines is clear and convincing, especially focusing the objective of MOST on promoting dialogue through activities aimed at increasing the contribution of social science research to policy making.</li> <li>• The think tank function is particularly important, but it requires appropriate means to perform that function.</li> <li>• The elaboration of policy briefs is equally important. The following possible sequence of activities could be envisaged: the MNC identifies a priority need social issue; it initiates policy oriented research by multidisciplinary teams; organised by the MNC, preliminary results are published and debated; the finalised research and the debate will be published as a policy brief; the policy brief is submitted to a National Forum.</li> <li>• Concerning Part II, situations in countries differ. Based on the Romanian situation, suggestions on establishment: about 15 members; enhance diversity of members; establishment to be coordinated by the National Commission; close cooperation with presidential and parliamentary commissions; consider local ad hoc committees; underline think tank function by associating to national institutions; special attention to research networks; networks in the region; present appropriate solutions to issues, including funding.</li> </ul>

<p>Sri Lanka</p> <p><i>National Commission</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports Guidelines.</li> <li>• National Commissions may not have the capacity to lead MOST Committees. Therefore it is suggested to set up committees through collaboration of National Commissions, rather than by the National Commissions.</li> </ul>
<p>Sweden</p> <p><i>National Commission</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The guidelines are too detailed.</li> <li>• National conditions guide the methods, composition and activities of MNCs.</li> <li>• The administrative structures proposed are too complex and detailed; they seem to emphasize control rather than support the MNC.</li> <li>• Focus on objectives; networks; and support among MNCs.</li> <li>• Include references on the role of MNCs to contribute to regional and international MOST and UNESCO activities.</li> <li>• Underline that the guidelines are not imposed. It is up to Member States to decide whether and how to apply them.</li> <li>• Add reference that UNESCO does not finance the national committees.</li> <li>• The IGC may not decide to terminate recognition of a committee on the grounds that the committee does not report on its activities.</li> </ul>
<p>Tunisia</p> <p><i>National MOST Committee</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The relations between the key actors (decision makers; researchers, and civil society) are still too uneven to reach balanced results. There are however arrangements that may add to positive developments.</li> <li>• Include directors of laboratories and research units in the composition of the MNC.</li> <li>• An important aim is valorisation of research for policy making. As researchers are not equipped for this, the MNC may have a role in training.</li> <li>• The MNC is to participate in existing mixed research-policy structures.</li> </ul>
<p>Turkey</p> <p><i>National Commission</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcomes the draft guidelines and especially the think tank function.</li> <li>• The Turkish MNC has undertaken most of the activities proposed.</li> <li>• Challenges observed in practice are: policy-research priorities of the MNC are not always shared by policy makers; the MNC is not much recognised by relevant ministries. In practice the MNC has to identify research topics that should lead to policy development.</li> <li>• Secures representation of policy makers by including a permanent representative of the State Planning Organisation. In addition representatives of ministries are present when relevant.</li> <li>• The presence of research councils and academy of sciences in the MNC is essential for resources and research.</li> <li>• The proposal to include civil society is welcomed; civil society is understood as scientific and professional organisations.</li> <li>• Encourage regional networking; add a reference to regional networks.</li> <li>• Recognition of the MNC by the national government is most important. Include procedures for National Commissions related to establishing a role for MNCs in the policy development process of governments.</li> <li>• The proposed accountability of the MNC to the MOST IGC would help promote an internationally acceptable standard of the MOST Programme.</li> </ul>
<p>Uzbekistan</p> <p><i>National Commission</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the MNC within an existing agency working in the field of MOST.</li> <li>• The MNC should be a platform for: dialogue between academic institutions and government organisations; capacity building; interdisciplinary approaches; regional and international cooperation.</li> <li>• Include in the list of key stakeholders: leading academic institutions; universities; parliamentary commissions; ministries and state agencies; non-governmental organisations; mass media institutions; local municipalities; international organisations.</li> <li>• The MNC is to maintain a close network with target groups: the academic community, the educational community, government officials and policy-makers, representatives of non-governmental organisations and mass media, young researchers, postgraduate students and students.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elaborate the think tank methodology in all activities of the MNC.</li> <li>• Share experiences through the MOST online research tool.</li> </ul>
<p>Vietnam</p> <p><i>National Commission</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agrees with the proposed draft guidelines.</li> <li>• The establishment of MNCs will contribute to facilitate policy processes through enhancing dialogue between policy makers, the social science community and civil society.</li> <li>• Currently a focal point in the Sub Committee of Social Sciences of the National Commission for UNESCO carries out initiatives related to the MOST Programme.</li> </ul>
<p>SAC meeting</p> <p><i>Bergen, May 2009</i></p>	<p><i>Topics of discussion included:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding of MNCs and their activities.</li> <li>• Institutional affiliation of the committees.</li> <li>• How to achieve empowerment of the committee.</li> <li>• Functioning of the committee in practice: administrative conditions; (political) interest.</li> <li>• Linkages between MNC and National Commissions for UNESCO: SHS liaison person; differences between Social Science Committees and MNC.</li> </ul>