UNESCO Publications Board
Meeting Minutes

Meeting date: 8 June 2011

Meeting time: 10 AM to 12 PM

Location: Room 5.021, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris

I. Call to order

ADG/ERI called the meeting to order at 10.05h and welcomed those members and observers present.

II. Attendees

An attendance sheet was circulated for signatures. The following persons were present:

Chair
Mr Eric Falt, Assistant Director-General, ERI

Members
Ms Angela Melo, Director, SHS/HPD
Mr David Atchoarena, Director, ED/PDE
Mr Indrajit Banerjee, Director, CI/INF
Mr Axel Plathe, Head of Kathmandu Office & UNESCO Rep. to Nepal (Member for Field Offices) attended via telephone
Mr Natarajan Ishwaran, Director, SC/EES [*representing* Mr A. Tejada-Guibert, Dir SC/HYD]
Mr Alain Godonou, Director, CLT/CIH [*representing Ms M. Apaydin, Dep. Dir. Mgmt. CLT/WHC*]
Ms Tania Fernandez de Toledo, Chief, ADM/HQD/WAP [*representing Ms J. Pearson, Dir ADM/CLD*]

Ex officio members
Ms Saniye Gülser Corat, Director, ODG/GE
Mr FW Russell-Rivoallan, BSP/ADG

Secretary
Mr Ian Denison, Chief, Publications Unit, ERI/DPI

Observers
Ms Anne Candau, Publications Officer, SC
Ms Vesna Vujicic-Lugassy, Publications Officer, CLT
Ms Natalia Denissova, Publications Officer, CI
Ms Ulrika Peppler-Barry, Chief, ED/EO/KMS
Ms Patricia Toigo, Publications Officer, ED

Mr Bert Keuppens, Director, IOS [*Guest speaker, Item 2*]
Mr Sameer Pise, Principal Auditor, IOS/AUD [*Guest speaker, Item 2*]

Mr Rudi Swinnen, Chief of Section, ADM/CLD/D [*Guest*]
Ms Amita Vohra, Chief Executive Officer, ERI/EO [*Guest*]
Mr Vincenzo Fazzino, Chief of Section, ERI/DPI/PBM [*Guest*]
Ms Xiao Hui Eng, Assistant Liaison Officer, ERI/MSO/APA [*Assisting Ms Fernandez de Toledo*]
Ms Samantha Wauchope, Publications Plan Coordinator, ERI/DPI/PBM

III. **Apologies for absence**

Deputy Director Management CLT/WHC was unable to attend and sent her apologies. She was represented at the meeting by Mr Alain Godonou, Director, CLT/CIH.

IV. **Item 1. Composition of the Board**

1. The Chair, ADG/ERI opened the discussion and called attention to the following *key points*:

▪ The Director-General has reiterated her commitment to improving the quality and impact of UNESCO publications and her strong support for the Publications Board as a key step towards achieving these goals.

▪ The 2008 External Auditor's report on UNESCO publications (179 EX/31) brought up very significant questions regarding the quality and quantity of UNESCO publications and their management and governance.

▪ While some progress has since been made, many issues have still not been satisfactorily addressed. Areas of continuing concern include a lack of systematic peer and gender review from the conceptual stages and inadequate planning and budgeting.

▪ Planning must realistically address the need for high-quality editing and design and adherence to UNESCO guidelines on multilingualism. Post-production aspects such as distribution, communication and impact evaluation are also vital to successful publications' budgeting and strategy.

2. ADG/ERI noted that the *purpose* of the Publications Board is to provide governance on the publications that UNESCO produces:

▪ To ensure that all publications are clearly aligned with and relevant to the Organization's programme priorities;

▪ To ensure that the highest quality standards are maintained for all publications;

▪ To form an integral part of the strategy for a cost-effective dissemination of knowledge and to improve the visibility and impact of UNESCO publications.

3. To fulfil its role, *membership* of the Publications Board must be placed at the highest level of the Organization. For this reason one Director per programme sector has been appointed by the relevant ADGs as well as a Director representing the Field Offices and a Director representing UNESCO Institutes. Ex-officio representation is also required from the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP), the Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs (LA), and the Division of Gender Equality (ODG/GE).

4. *Attendance* at the monthly meeting is necessary to maintain the Board's authority. Therefore, the Publications Board will not review any publication proposals from a sector if their Director or a delegated representative at the Director level is not present at the meeting.

5. **Action**: ADG/ERI identified the following initial principles as key to the success of the Publications Board, noting that operating principles would be fine-tuned as the process develops:

□ The Board needs to be **totally fair in all its assessments.** All issues should be clearly and consistently raised by the Board members so that they can be discussed openly and decisions made fairly without any hint of favouritism.

□ This implies that that the Board has to **work in a spirit of collegiality**. The common purpose is to improve the quality of UNESCO's work and reinforce its reputation. This means going beyond defending sector or other interests within the Organization and working for its common good.

□ The work of the Board will be enormously helped if those members who have been nominated by their sectors or bureaux regularly attend the monthly Board meetings. **Consistent representation and commitment will reinforce the functioning and cohesion of the group**. To help members to plan ahead, the Division of Public Information in the Sector for External Relations and Public Information (ERI/DPI) will provide a list of dates for all Board meetings to be held during 2011.

□ The establishment of the Board with its terms of reference for action is not an end itself. **The Board is setting in motion a process that obviously needs fine-tuning**. The members of the Board should feel free to comment on and help define these processes.

V.   Item 2. IOS Review of Printed Materials

6.   Director of UNESCO's Internal Oversight Services (IOS), provided an *overview* of the results of the IOS Review of UNESCO's Printed Materials produced in April this year (IOS/AUD/2011/04).

7.   The Review underlined the need to dramatically improve the *governance and management* of publications if UNESCO is to remain relevant. Consideration must be given to the added value of every publication proposed. DIR/IOS emphasized the importance of establishing the Publications Board to respond to this challenge and improve the outlook of UNESCO Publications.

8.   *Challenges*. UNESCO spent more than $25 million on producing publications and other printed materials in 2010, or 4.6% of its total regular programme and extrabudgetary expenditures. However managing this production is challenged by:

▪   Unreliable data on the publications produced and their budgeted and actual costs;

▪   Confusion regarding roles and definitions, especially regarding responsibility and accountability;

▪   Insufficient and ineffective monitoring and evaluation of results.

9.   The Principal Auditor, IOS/AUD, pointed to other *areas of concern* highlighted in the IOS Review, among which:

▪   Revenue from sales of publications is extremely low vis-à-vis production costs;

▪   65% of UNESCO publications are produced in just one language;

▪   Copyrights are not centrally managed;

▪   Field Offices do not always follow UNESCO publications guidelines.

10.   **Action:** The following key recommendations of the IOS Review were presented:

▪   UNESCO should develop tools for planning, budgeting, quality assurance and management of UNESCO publishing outputs;

▪   E-publication and distribution practices must be assessed and improved;

▪   Strategies should be developed for both free and for-sale publications;

▪   The Publications Board must be activated to manage and monitor publications:

▪   Programme Sectors should systematically manage and report to the Publications Board on the publications they produce.

11.   Questions were raised concerning how to implement the recommendations of the IOS and the need to develop guidelines on measuring impact, distribution and readership.

▪   **Action:** DIR/IOS agreed that the IOS will share their guidelines, however he noted that these are still in the developmental stage;

▪   **Action:** ADG/ERI drew attention to the ERI Monthly Report, which provides updated sales and downloads figures for UNESCO Publications. He urged participants to read this report regularly.

12. The representative from the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP) pointed to the non-systematic manner with which information on the monitoring and reporting of results relating to publications is dealt with in SISTER – at present, this happens at the activity level in work plans.

   ▪ He suggested that it would be useful to examine how Publication Officers and other staff serving in that capacity within the sectors review and monitor their publications.

13. ADG/ERI pointed to the importance of working together to ensure the quality of outputs, including agreeing on the type of material to be considered a "UNESCO publication" as defined in the UNESCO Publications Guidelines. ADG/ERI suggested that:

   ▪ Some printed matter produced by UNESCO can be classified as "vanity publications", including many conference proceedings and texts with little added value. These could more suitably be distributed via the Internet.

   ▪ Some outputs currently classified as "brochures" or "documents" should be presented as publication proposals and subject to quality control measures including review by the Publications Board.

   ▪ Too many UNESCO publications incorporate forewords by ADGs or other UNESCO staff members, which offer no added value.

   ▪ Too much printed matter is not distributed and is eventually destroyed.

14. The Director, ODG/GE noted that added value must be looked at from many angles and perspectives, including increasing the visibility of work within and outside UNESCO. She added that conference participants are very pleased to receive printed proceedings after the event, although the cost benefits of their production is an important consideration.

15. ADG/ERI emphasized the need to reduce the quantity and improve the quality of publications, observing:

   ▪ It is crucial to be honest in evaluating the impact of all outputs;

   ▪ Conference participants and other contributors to UNESCO's work can be recognized by publishing their texts on the Web; the Board agreed that publishing proceedings two years or more after a meeting or event would be appropriate only in very exceptional circumstances.

   ▪ Producing a single, high-quality publication can have far greater impact than producing many lesser quality publications and brochures, which are often quickly discarded.

16. Director, CI/INF proposed the increased use of mechanisms such as online citation mapping tools and peer review to measure the impact of publications. He also suggested that Creative Commons copyright licenses could broaden the dissemination of UNESCO material.

17. Chief, Publications Unit, ERI/DPI, agreed that increased use of monitoring tools was necessary and underlined the importance of systematically archiving all publications in UNESDOC to allow downloads from this repository to be measured. He also addressed the question of using Creative Commons copyright licensing, noting that this is under consideration. Concerns relate to such licenses being established under and governed by national laws, and therefore subject to the interpretation of national courts.

18. Director, ED/PDE took the floor and expressed the full support of the Education Sector for the Publications Board, calling attention to the creation within the Education Sector of a publications committee last year. He pointed out the importance of considering not only financial aspects but also publication objectives and editorial strategy when determining publications policies.

19. ADG/ERI acknowledged the importance of identifying a clear editorial strategy, and added that the 35 C/5 sectorial priorities and associated MLAs provide the framework for determining this.

VI.   Item 3. Publication proposal submission form

20.   ADG/ERI opened the discussion by pointing out that the present form was an initial draft only which would benefit from being further developed through the discussions and recommendations of the Publications Board.

21.   ADG/ERI briefly outlined the 22 questions on the form, noting the following points:

- *Name of series*. Consideration should be given to developing appropriate publications series, rather than producing one-off publications.

- *Author/volume editor* UNESCO publications are an institutional not a personal effort. Contributing authors and volume editors can be recognized as such, however their names should not appear on the cover or title page of the book.

- *Languages.* UNESCO's recommendations on multilingualism must be followed, with publications produced in at least two languages. Flagship publications should where possible be produced in six languages.

- *Summary of publication/ objectives/ added value/ target audience*. Thinking closely about all of these questions is crucial to planning any publication and determining the full scope of a potential publications project.

- *Peer review*. Coordinating an external review is a crucial element of the conceptual phase of all publication and must be determined in advance.

- *Gender considerations*. Gender equality is a global priority of UNESCO. Gender mainstreaming must be incorporated into all publications activities.

- *Distribution/promotion*. It is important to consider to these aspects from the outset. Giving away too many free copies of for-sale publications devalues the publication. UNESCO is initiating a three-tier system for sales, with prices set at 100% in developed countries, 50% in developing countries, and 25% in the Least Developed Countries.

- *Resources required*. The budget for a publication must include all costs from the outset, allowing sufficient funds for all stages and including editorial, design and layout, distribution and communications-related costs.

22.   The representative from BSP agreed that the questions were very appropriate and noted that the areas covered were all necessary considerations when planning a publication project. He suggested these questions should systematically be considered by Programme Officers and Publications Officers from the conceptual stages. He pointed out, however, that many respondents supplied only short, standardized answers to the three key questions concerning target audience, distribution/promotion strategy and monitoring. Mr Russell-Rivoallan suggested that these three questions on the form should be developed further to incorporate the following considerations:

- Why should this be published?
- What end results will the publication achieve?
- What purpose will these end results serve?
- Who will the publication be distributed to, and how?
- How will the impact of the publication be monitored?

23.   He also pointed out that the life of a publication extends well beyond printing, and that monitoring should continue even years after the launch of a publication.

24.   Director, ED/PDE, asked how UNESCO was to make best use of the Publications Board. He suggested that consideration should be given not only to the proposals to be presented at

meetings of the Board, but also to the signals or messages sent by the Board, noting the importance of the Publication Board in encouraging sectors to produce better publications.

25. Director, SC/EES proposed that all sectors should establish their own internal screening processes before submitting proposals to the Publications Board. ADG/ERIagreed with this suggestion.

26. Head of Kathmandu Office & UNESCO Rep. to Nepal (representing the field offices), made the following suggestions regarding the form:

▪ It would be useful to add a question on whether the publication was to be co-published or whether a co-publisher might be sought.

▪ The note to "attach all relevant documents" was unclear.

▪ The proposal form should be made available online.

27. The Secretary of the Board agreed with these suggestions and pointed out that, once finalized, the form would be made available on Sharepoint.

28. **Action:** ADG/ERI proposed that all suggestions regarding the content of the project proposal form be sent directly to the Secretary of the Board.

29. The representative from BSP suggested that all publications activities should be included in the workplans for C/5.

VII.   Item 4. Review of first publication proposals

Three publication proposals were reviewed and approved by the Board with comments to take into consideration.

Publication proposals reviewed:

0611_ED01	2012 Education for All Global Monitoring Report: Skills Development
0611_ED02	Atlas on Gender and Education
0611_ED03	World TVET Report

VIII.   Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 12.05pm