Introduction

1. RBM approach
2. UNESCO Reform
3. UNESCO key programming documents
4. Management tools
5. SISTER

The first module called "Introduction" gives an overview of SISTER's scope within the context of the Results-Based Management approach and of UNESCO reform. It will be divided into the following parts:

1. Results-Based Management approach.

2. UNESCO Reform.

3. UNESCO key programming documents (e.g. C/4, C/5).

4. Management tools.

5. SISTER: Programming, budgeting, management, monitoring, reporting and evaluation tool.

RBM: a pillar of the UN reform

In the "Programme for Reform" presented to the General Assembly in 1997, The Secretary-General proposed:

*"that Member States and he enter into a dialogue with the aim of shifting the United Nations programme budget **from a system of input accounting to results-based accountability**. Under this new approach [...] the General Assembly, through its relevant Committees, would **specify the results they expect the Organisation to achieve** within the relevant budgetary constraints. The secretariat would be held responsible for, and judged by, the extent to which the specified results are achieved."*

Programme for Reform, G.A. 1997

This approach entails:
- Emphasis on **results.**
- Shifting the **focus** from how things are done to **what is accomplished.**

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1. The Results-Based Management approach was introduced to the United Nations system as part of the reform process. In the "Programme for Reform" presented to the General Assembly in 1997, The Secretary-General proposed:

"that Member States and he enter into a dialogue with the aim of shifting the United Nations programme budget from a system of input accounting to results-based accountability. Under this new approach [...] the General Assembly, through its relevant Committees, would specify the results they expect the Organisation to achieve within the relevant budgetary constraints. The secretariat would be held responsible for, and judged by, the extent to which the specified results are achieved."

2. The Results-Based Management approach entails placing greater emphasis on results in its programming, budgeting, management, monitoring, reporting and evaluation and replacing the focus from how things are done to what is accomplished.

In line with the UN reform, UNESCO has shifted from a Budget-Based Management approach, with main focus on how the funds were programmed and spent, to Project Based Management, with main focus on how it will and has been done to a Results-Based Management approach with main focus on programming and attainment of results.

As requested by the Executive Board (in 33 C/6), Results-Based Budgeting (RBB) was integrated to the Results-Based Management approach in the 34 C/5, resulting in the identification of staff costs at the Main line of Action level.

2

UNESCO Reform

- **Delegated Authority** and **Accountability**
  - Line of authority
  - Line of responsibility

- **Decentralization** policy
  - Global scope and country specific needs
  - Antenna, National, Cluster, Regional and Liaison Offices/Bureaus

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In parallel to the United Nations reform, UNESCO is implementing its own reforms.

Apart from RBM, other reforms have impacted UNESCO such as the delegated authority and accountability and the decentralization policy.

 1. The delegated authority and accountability clarifies the line of authority.

Each level of the hierarchy is given the means to fully exercise its responsibilities through a delegation of authority; it is closely linked to the transparency of information and to reporting requirements.

Each professional is now accountable for programming, implementation and expenditure systems which have greatly increased the transparency of all operations.

As the Responsible Officer for an element, you will be accountable for the interventions undertaken for your activity.

2. The decentralization policy. UNESCO's decentralization policy is a tool, not an end, it is a means to ensure that UNESCO designs and implements programmes that, although global in scope, are adapted to the needs and specific circumstances of Member States. Particular attention is given to developing countries and their local socio-economic, geographical, cultural and political contexts. The Decentralization Action Plan is the grouping, or clustering, of Member States, through a network of Antennas, National Offices, Cluster Offices, Regional Bureaus and Liaison Offices.

Antenna's are established exceptionally to ensure UNESCO's presence induced by certain circumstances such as UN reform. A national office implements a national programme, which results from consultations within that country. They are established on exceptional basis only (post-conflict, transition and E9 countries). A cluster office serves a manageable number of Member States, with National Commissions as their interfaces through multidisciplinary teams, each Sector being represented. They are the main platform of programme delivery at country level. A Regional Bureau, with a pool of expertise in UNESCO's fields of competence, elaborates regional strategies and programmes, and provides backstopping to Cluster and National offices. There is no hierarchical relationship between Field Offices.

Liaison offices, under the overall authority of the Sector for External Relations and Cooperation (ERC), maintain close relationship with the Headquarters of the United Nations and other United Nations organizations.

The followings result from the decentralization reform:

- Established posts (including NPOs) in Field Offices have continuously increased since 2000 and now total 673. If all types of contracts are taken into account this figure increases to 1 711 persons.

- A reduction from 74 Field Offices to 53 (i.e. 52 Field Offices and the CEPES centre). 25 Fields Offices were closed since 2001 and three were opened in Post-conflict countries (i.e. Kabul, Baghdad and Khartoum/Juba). 16 Antennas have also been opened.

As indicated by the Director-General at the 175th session of the Executive Board, the Decentralization strategy is currently being reviewed to respond to current reforms of Sectors (such as ED) and in light of the UN reform in particular, to facilitate UNESCO's full participation in the "One United Nations" approach at the country-level.

Medium-Term Strategy 34 C/4 (2008-2013)

Programme and Budget 34 C/5 (2008-2009)
Programme and Budget 35 C/5 (2010-2011)
Programme and Budget 36 C/5 (2012-2013)

EX/4 and EX/4-C/3 Report of the Director-General on the activities of the Organization

K. MATSUURA

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UNESCO's official key programming documents are prepared in line with the Results-Based Management approach, the principles of the delegated Authority and Accountability and the decentralisation policy.

1. The Medium-Term Strategy, the C/4, represents one of the programmatic pillar of UNESCO. The Medium-Term Strategy sets out the strategic vision and programmatic framework for UNESCO's actions and interventions over the next six years. The 34 C/4 for the period 2008-2013, is built around the following mission statement which captures the strategic orientation of UNESCO: As a specialized agency of the United Nations, UNESCO contributes to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information. In this respect the programme segment of the 34 C/4 document is structured around five Overarching Objectives (OO) of relevance for the entire Organization. These Overarching Objectives respond to the most important global challenges in UNESCO's domains and delineate areas for which UNESCO has a unique profile and core competency in the UN system, indeed areas where internationally the Organization enjoys a comparative advantage. A limited number of Strategic Programme Objectives (SPO) – 14 for the entire Programme of UNESCO - then translates the Overarching Objectives in programme-relevant and thematic terms, combining **both** intersectoral and sectoral responses to the identified global challenge.
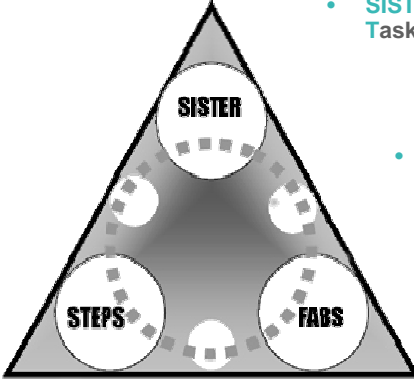
2. The other programmatic document is the Programme and Budget, the C/5, which is prepared on the basis on the Medium-Term Strategy. It serves as a framework for the biennial programming of UNESCO activities ensuring that the strategic objectives - including UNESCO Specific Priorities (e.g. Priority Africa, Priority Gender Equality), and Specific interventions in favour of priority groups and groups of countries (Youth, Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States), as well as other specific strategies - are duly taken into account at all stages of programme elaboration. The Programme and Budget is approved at the General Conference prior to the beginning of the biennium.

The link between the Medium-Term Strategy (34 C/4) and the Programme and Budget (34 C/5) and the subsequent two other Programme and Budget (35 C/5 and 36 C/5), due during the 2008-2013 period, is established by translating the SPOs of the 34 C/4 into a limited set of Biennial Sectoral Priorities (BSP) determining the programmatic profile for each Major Programme (MP). Furthermore, The two central programming documents of the Organization, the Medium-Term Strategy and the Programme and Budget, will display and apply throughout a strict results orientation. In the case of the 34 C/4, measurable expected outcomes have been formulated for each OO and SPO. These are then linked to measurable expected results, performance indicators and benchmarks at the MLA level in the 34 C/5, informed and adjusted by evaluations of results. This framework is intended to allow for a seamless passage from document 34 C/4 to the three successive C/5 documents.

3. The EX/4 is a report on the implementation of the programme produced every 6 month submitted to the Executive Board. The last of the four EX/4 documents is produced along with the C/3, constituting the joint EX/4-C/3 report. The latter represents the Report of the Director-General on the Activities of the Organization, it is a results-based report on the performance of UNESCO prepared at the end of each biennium for the General Conference. The report highlights achievements, challenges and lessons learned, sustainability and cost-effectiveness. These can therefore be taken into account when formulating the next Programme and Budget. The 34 C/3 provides a full account of the key results attained in the 2004-2005 biennium as well as the lessons learned.

4

The Results-Based Management approach induced changes in the Organization. An information technology master plan, established in 1997, planned ten tools among which three are of major importance, known as:
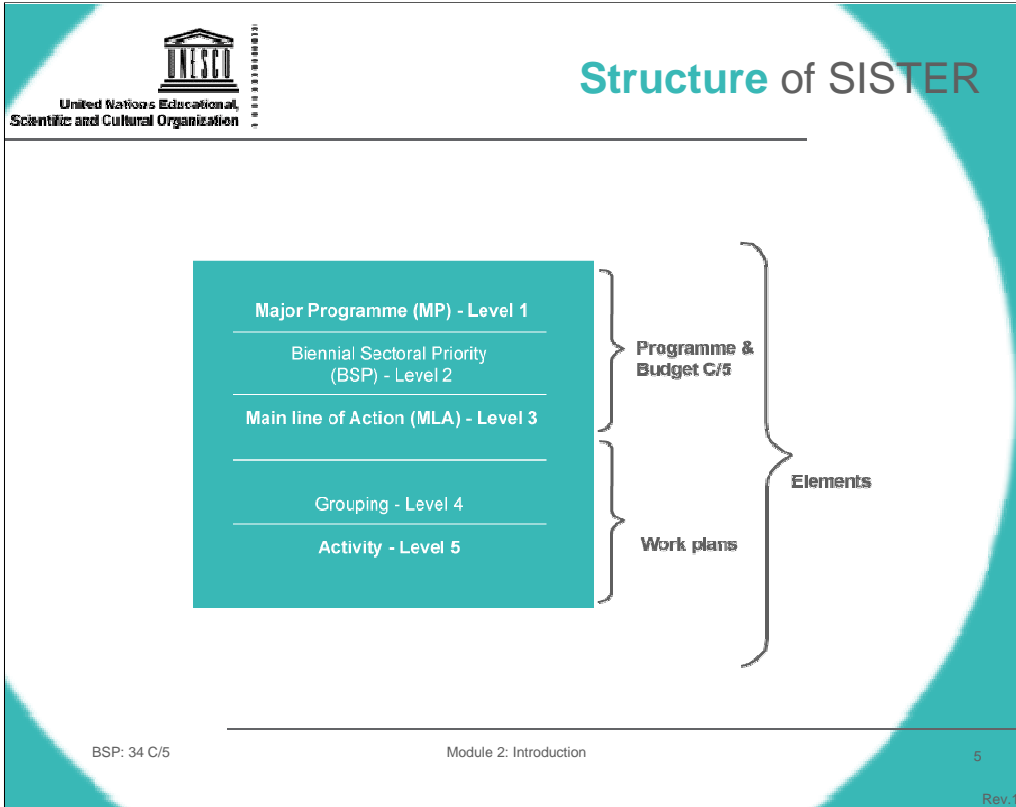
1. SISTER, System of Information on Strategies, Tasks and the Evaluation of Results which covers the preparation of the Programme and Budget, of the work plans and their implementation. The system was launched in 1999. It is UNESCO's programming, budgeting, management, monitoring, reporting and evaluation tool in line with RBM and RBB approaches.

2. FABS, Finance And Budget System operational since 2002 is used to record financial transactions, maintain accounts and provide data for budgetary and financial reporting.

3. STEPS, System To Enhance Personnel Services, covers human resources management and payroll. Training sessions have been launched since October 2006.

4. Each system has its own data and accesses, when needed, the data of the others. A minimum set of data identifying the elements are established enabling the different systems to communicate. As an example, FABS receives the Budget code, Project n°, Biennial and yearly Allocations, allotments, Total Project Allocation from SISTER, and SISTER receives the expenditures from FABS. Through STEPS, both SISTER and FABS will have access to basic information related to personnel (e.g. surname, name, grade and unit). Consequently, this data will be found in all systems. Furthermore, a link between STEPS and SISTER is to be established, as currently done via PerfoWeb (individual results and Sector's/Bureau's operational work plans are linked), to reinforce a Results-Based Management culture across the Organization.

5. The Results-Based Management approach implies that decisions are based on substantial as well as financial information. Therefore, it is only once the decision is taken in SISTER that the financial information is transferred to FABS. Approval of work plans (Programming phase) or approval of transfer of funds (implementation phase) are examples of the decision-making process. Consequently, the last step of this process, is the transfer of the financial information from SISTER to FABS. In turn during the implementation phase, open obligations and expenditures are entered in FABS and uploaded in SISTER. Thus decision makers are provided the overall view, thereby ensuring that decisions are based on the complete set of minimum required information (i.e. latest update of both substantial and financial information).

Structure of SISTER

Major Programme (MP) - Level 1

Biennial Sectoral Priority (BSP) - Level 2

Main line of Action (MLA) - Level 3

Programme & Budget C/5

Grouping - Level 4

Activity - Level 5

Work plans

Elements

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To respond to the Results-Based Management approach and emphasize the results attained, the programmatic structure of the Organization has been simplified. The previous 4 policy levels (i.e. Major Programme, Programme, Sub-Programme, Main line of Action) have been reduced to 3. This structure is reflected in SISTER.

1. Once the Draft Programme and Budget (C/5) is approved at the spring session (2007 for the 34 C/5) of the Executive Board, the policy levels: the Major Programme, the Biennial Sectoral Priority, the Main line of Action are integrated in SISTER by the Responsible Officers. Member States have access to these levels (C/5).

2. The operational levels are defined by Grouping and Activity and constitute the work plans of UNESCO, which are prepared on the basis of the Programme and Budget from spring to September/October (2007 for the 34 C/5). Once the Draft C/5 is approved at the General Conference, the work plans are to be finalized by the end of December (2007 for the 34 C/5).

Consequently, the previous 6 programming levels have been reduced to 3 programming levels and 2 administrative levels in the 34 C/5.

SISTER
System of Information on Strategies, Tasks, and Evaluation of Results

Programming, budgeting, management, monitoring, reporting and evaluation tool (RBM and RBB)

Programming period
- **Preparation of the Programme and Budget (C/5) and work plans**
- **Decision-making**

Validation cycle
- **Co-responsibility**

Implementation period
- **Monitoring**
- **Reprogramming**
- **Evaluation**

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The programme management cycle of UNESCO is reflected in SISTER via 2 major phases: the programming and implementation period.

1.Once the Director-General blue note on the preparation of work plans is sent out, every colleague may propose an element directly in the system in line with the draft Programme and Budget. Following the Results-Based Management approach, substantial and financial information are used as the basis for the decision making. As an example, the Responsible Officer of an activity will be able to request validation to the Responsible Officer at the Grouping level, only when all mandatory substantial and financial information has been defined. If the Responsible Officer at the level above agrees with the information defined, the activity will be validated (for decentralized elements they first need to be visad by Field Office/Institute Director); if not, it will be invalidated.

2.This cycle induces:

• Co-responsibility: when the Responsible Officer of an activity requests validation s/he takes on responsibility for the activity. In the same manner, the Responsible Officer of the Grouping above takes on co-responsibility of the activity if s/he validates it. Validation, implies that the element is comprehensive in itself and is in line with the Programme. A Responsible Officer (for levels 1-4) cannot request validation before all attached elements have been validated.

The finalization of the validation cycle takes place once the overall agreement reached by Responsible Officers and EOs has been validated by the relevant Sector ADG or Bureau Director. The Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP) and the Bureau of Budget (BB) analyze and transmit their recommendations on the work plans to the Director-General for his approval.

3. The Implementation phase starts the first day of the biennium, for the work plans approved by the Director-General.

Since the introduction of SISTER implementation has begun as follows:

-For the 30 C/5: in August, eight months after the beginning of the biennium, the funds have been allocated;

-For the 31 C/5: in April;

-For the 32 C/5: the first day of the biennium, 1st day of January;

-For the 33 C/5: in January.

Consequently, implementing the concrete measures induced by the RBM approach has considerably reduced the time needed for finalising the programming process, the last step being the allocation of funds. In fact it is only once the work plans are approved during the programming phase that the allocations are transferred to FABS. In return during the implementation phase, open obligations and expenditures are uploaded in SISTER from FABS.

Implementation includes monitoring, reprogramming and evaluation. During this period, only the changes to specific programming information will need to be validated by the Responsible Officer at the level above.

Reprogramming of the information is necessary for activities which need to be reviewed because of an event that hindered the expected implementation of the element.

Both the substance entered during the programming and implementation phase will serve for the evaluation.

United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization

- **Evolutive** tool**:** adjustment to UN and UNESCO reforms

- **Transparent** tool: full access authorized to everyone working for UNESCO

- **Communication** tool: to all, including Member States

- **Decision-making** tool: based on substantial and financial information

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SISTER is one of the Organization's management tools designed to support the transition towards Results-Based Management (RBM).

The system was first introduced in 1998 as a pioneering tool for programming, budgeting, management, monitoring, reporting and evaluation, essential for RBM.

It plays a key role in the programme reform process by helping to place clear emphasis on results and outcomes, thus emphasizing programme implementation and monitoring of progress attained.

The premise of the system lies in the definition of expected results - and the strategy to attain them - by the person responsible of each programming element at the various programming levels. This process is meant to be interactive, in the sense that the proposals from each level answer to the direction of the higher level and provide for a process of a programming and budgetary negotiation.
These agreements are the essence of a co-operative strategy, as they determine how and under which conditions the respective results will be reached and combined in achieving the higher-level results. This Results chain allows a seamless linkage from the C/4 to the C/5 to the work plans as well as from UNESCO's results to the UN (via among others the UNDAF or One UN Programme Result Matrix).

In brief, SISTER has been developed to adapt to the reforms of the UN and of the Organization such as the decentralization and delegation of authority. Each level of the hierarchy is given the means to fully exercise its responsibilities and is fully accountable for the programming and implementation of the interventions undertaken.

1. SISTER is a quickly evolutive tool, based on the concept of results and on the principles of delegation of authority and decentralisation.

2. SISTER is a transparent tool. Everyone working for UNESCO has access to SISTER: staff members, consultants, interns.

Moreover, all types of elements whether financed from Regular Programme or Extrabudgetary funds are registered in SISTER, ensuring that Extrabudgetary projects are in line with Regular Programme activities and contribute to the attainment of UNESCO's results.

3. SISTER is also a communication tool for all including Member States, which have access to the policy levels (i.e. levels 1 to 3). The application is a tool for both Headquarters and for Field-Liaison Offices/Institutes, as it operates throughout the Organization via Internet/Intranet.

4. As a transparent tool, SISTER facilitates and ensures that decision-making is based on both the substantial and financial information provided by Responsible Officers.

- **R**esults-**B**ased **M**anagement approach and the **SISTER** application
- **Policy levels** and the **work plans**, in line with the RBM approach
- **Programming** and **implementation** phases
- SISTER: an **evolutive, transparent** and a **communication** tool
- **Decision-making** based on substantial and financial information

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1. SISTER is in line with the Results-Based Management approach, thus demonstrating how theory (Results-Based Management approach and other reforms) is put into practice (the SISTER application).

2. The Results-Based Management approach influences the way we define policy levels (C/4-C/5) and work plans.

3. During the programming phase, the Responsible Officer of an activity will have to define all substantial and financial information. Implementation includes monitoring, reprogramming and evaluation. Reprogramming of the information is necessary for activities which need to be reviewed due to an event that hindered the expected implementation of the element. Both the substance entered during the programming and implementation phase will serve for the evaluation.

4. SISTER is an evolutive, transparent and a communication tool based on the concepts of results, delegation of authority and decentralization.

5. Decision making, reflected in the validation process, is based on the substantial and financial information available in the application.

Bureau of Field Coordination http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=1231&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Bureau of Strategic Planning www.unesco.org/bsp

FABS http://intranet.unesco.org/fabs (intranet)

Internal Oversight Service http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=24138&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

SISTER www.unesco.org/bsp/eng/sister

STEPS http://steps.hq.int.unesco.org/sites/intranet/default.aspx (intranet)

United Nations Reform http://www.un.org/reform/ (UN)

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For additional information you may consult the websites indicated.