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REPORT ON REORIENTING THE SOCIAL SCIENCES PROGRAMME ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS (MOST)

SUMMARY

This document constitutes a refocused strategy for MOST, following discussions held at the Tenth Session of the MOST Intergovernmental Council (Paris, 14-16 March 2011); as well as at the Joint MOST Intergovernmental Bureau and Scientific Advisory Meeting held from 25 to 26 November 2010 at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris. These discussions included consideration of two evaluation reports generated in 2010. Annex I contains the complete Final Report of the MOST-2 Formative Mid-Term Review. Annex II contains the Recommendations adopted by the MOST Intergovernmental Council at its 10th Session (14-16 March 2011, UNESCO Headquarters).

The Director-General is called upon to allocate budgetary and human resources needed for delivering in accordance with the objectives laid down in the C/5 Main Lines of Action and the conclusions reached during the debates (paragraph 16).

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 18.

INTRODUCTION

1. Since the inception of the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme in 1994, the Executive Board of UNESCO has revisited MOST's focus twice before: after its mid-term evaluation in 1999/2000 (160 EX/12 and 160 EX/Decisions, Item 3.4.1); and after the evaluation of its first eight years (Phase 1) in 2003 (166 EX/41 – paras.19-23, 166 EX/Decisions, Item 3.1.4). The review focus adopted by Phase 2 in 2004, has been on research-policy linkages. While the bridging of these two communities – the ability to transfer research knowledge to the policy community – is still acknowledged as being of central importance, current social transformations are calling attention to crucial emerging themes that need to be addressed through strengthened social science capacities. The conclusions of the 2010 World Social Science Report point to the need for urgent action on the disparities in social science capacities, whether of individuals, organizations or at the systemic level.

2. At the same time, feedback from three important evaluations reports produced in the course of 2010, made this an opportune moment to revisit the future strategic direction of MOST, particularly given the overall institutional change taking place with the new Administration. Evaluations were carried out at three different levels:

- (a) The Independent External Evaluation of UNESCO (IEE), led by Professor Elliott Stern, (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
- (b) The Evaluation of Strategic Programme Objective (SPO) No. 7 “Enhancing research-policy linkages on social transformations” of UNESCO’s Medium Term Strategy 2008-2013 (34 C/4), commissioned by UNESCO’s Internal Oversight Service (IOS), as part of the systemized evaluations requested by the Executive Board of all the Strategic Programme Objectives (SPOs);
- (c) The statutory Formative Mid-Term Review of MOST Phase 2, finalized in January 2010 by Professor Jorma Sipilä (Finland).

3. The evaluations referred to above are important tools to help Member States as well as new senior management pave the way “to position the Organization to address the challenges of the 21st century and make the most of prospective opportunities” (quote from the Independent External Evaluation of UNESCO 2010, 185 EX/18). The IEE does not deal with MOST other than in ways of broad institutional guidelines applying to the whole of UNESCO. The evaluation carried out on Strategic Programme Objective No. 7 “Enhancing research-policy linkages on social transformations” was part of the system-wide evaluation mandated by the Executive Board of all SPO’s under the UNESCO’s Medium Term Strategy 2008-2013 (34 C/4). It is focused on the work of the Social and Human Sciences Sector while recognizing that the overall SPO7 theme is an underlying objective for larger parts of UNESCO. The predominant message of this evaluation was the need to demonstrate greater impact and results, and to make programme adjustments with a view to improving the “results-based management” approach in programme planning, implementation and monitoring. Both the IEE (185 EX/18) and a summary of the SPO7 evaluation report (185 EX/6 Part IV, Annex II, Pages 7-8 of the English version) have been addressed to the Executive Board at its 185th session (October 2010).

MOST Phase 2 Formative Mid-Term Review

4. Of the three evaluations referred to above, the “Final Evaluation Report of the Formative Mid-Term Review of MOST Phase 2” is the only one dealing specifically with the MOST programme (attached as Annex I). The Review was carried out following a request made by Member States during the 34th session of the General Conference (2007), with the overall purpose of assessing the relevance of MOST Phase 2 objectives and activities against the needs and priorities of Member States, as well as the effectiveness of MOST Phase 2 activities in contributing to MOST

Phase 2's stated objectives and expected results. The review was produced by Professor Jorma Sipilä, immediate past Chancellor of University of Tampere, Finland, who was selected by UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service (IOS) from a list of international candidates.

5. The Final Evaluation Report of the Formative MOST Mid-Term review of MOST Phase 2 acknowledges the significance of the MOST Programme and that the "UNESCO mandate to promote social sciences is more relevant than ever because of the globalization of social issues and the increasing need for their global governance". The aim of MOST Phase 2 "to bring the fruits of social research to improve decision-making" is endorsed, given that social science research is an indispensable tool in making social policies. The report strikes a positive tone, but acknowledges that "The potential of MOST2 highly exceeds its achievements until now". It calls for greater investment in social sciences. It emphasizes the importance of interaction between not just policy-makers and researchers on an issue, but also among citizens (their organizations and the media) and opinion leaders. The recommendations consider how priority themes are chosen, stressing that as the Programme has only modest resources, "attractiveness is crucial; MOST must be of interest [...] get young researchers and politicians to join the programme. This is easier if MOST examines future-oriented social issues, many of which are intrinsically interdisciplinary". Therefore, specific recommendations include abandoning regional thematic priorities in favour of an orientation on very few selected global issues. In requesting further efforts of MOST towards building targeted social science capacities at the individual, institutional and systemic level, the Formative Mid-Term Review concurs with the findings of SPO7 and of the World Social Science Report 2010 on "Knowledge Divides". This focus has been anticipated in draft 36 C/5, under MLA 3 of the second biennial sectoral priority; namely "Support Member States in responding to social transformations by building and strengthening national research systems and promoting social science knowledge networks and research capacities".

6. The Evaluation Report of the Formative MOST Phase-2 Mid-Term Review was finalized in early 2010. Together with the IEE and the SPO7 evaluation report, it was analysed and extensively commented upon during the Joint MOST IGC Bureau and Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting held from 25 to 26 November 2010; as well as being considered during the 10th Session of the MOST Intergovernmental Council held from 14 to 16 March 2011 (both at UNESCO Paris Headquarters).

The Joint MOST IGC Bureau and SAC Meeting

7. The Joint meeting of the MOST IGC Bureau and Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) in November 2010 had adopted a paper entitled "Future Strategic Directions of MOST", by which MOST IGC President H.E. Dr. Alicia Kirchner, Minister of Social Development of Argentina, had summarized the discussions and conclusions reached by participants. The paper suggested two major objectives in the context of reinforcing MOST's role as a bridge between research and policy. First, the capacity development of the social sciences needs strengthening, especially in developing countries, taking advantage of national and regional research systems, in order to facilitate the design and implementation of policies. Second, governments should be encouraged to improve the quality of policy and decision-making, through: demonstrating to decision-makers how social science research may benefit society; promoting participatory processes that encourage accountability and transparency; and strengthening the visibility of the MOST Programme and emphasising its significance for social science in the media.

8. To achieve these objectives, the meeting recommended concentrating on a select number of themes that will help Member States foster appropriate responses to social transformations by at the same time promoting sustainable development, democracy and culture of peace. Therefore, the MOST strategic focus for the short and medium term was proposed to be on social inclusion, by taking into account dimensions of social development, education, labour, science and technology, and environment; and concentrating on themes such as employment, youth, and social investment. The core strategic theme for the longer term was proposed to deal with social transformations arising from global environmental change.

9. The paper successfully guided Member States' deliberations at the 10th MOST IGC session and its conclusions were endorsed as the basis of the future strategic direction of MOST, being adopted on 16 March 2011 (attached as Annex II) by the IGC.

Synopsis of the 10th MOST Intergovernmental Council Session

10. The tenth session of the Intergovernmental Council (IGC) met in Paris from 14 to 16 March 2011, with the purpose of discussing the future strategic direction of MOST. The debates took into consideration the results of activities, the conclusions adopted by the Bureau and SAC, as well as the findings of the various evaluations referred to above. Members referred to different methods to build bridges and to consolidate the relationship between researchers and policy-makers, including the successful ministerial forums and other effective "pathways to policy". The need for Member States to increase their investment in national social sciences, in order to address complex development challenges, was recognized.

11. In describing the potential of MOST, the Council agreed that MOST relies on, *inter alia*: being an international platform that mobilizes Member State's support for social sciences in their countries; being a resource that in a highly visible way creates demand and awareness in policy-makers of their need for social science research in policy formulation; having the responsibility to promote and support capacity-building initiatives, particularly on systemic issues that require government action; the illustration of the credibility and relevance of MOST's objectives by working through a select number of globally-significant social transformations, in accordance with Main Lines of Action 2 and 3 in Major Programme III on Social and Human Sciences of 36 C/5; and, encouraging participatory processes, engaging with civil society, and creating greater sensitivity to the need for social sciences.

12. Member States agreed to two priorities. The first is for MOST to work on social inclusion, as an essential feature of fighting poverty, narrowing inequalities, and advancing toward social justice. The empowerment of vulnerable populations through democratic and participatory processes is to go hand-in-hand with social investment that creates employment opportunities, especially for youth and those in need. The second theme of MOST will focus on the social transformations arising from environmental change, in recognition of the imperative to address numerous crises ranging from the depletion of natural resources, food and energy shortages, the pressure of accelerating urbanization and population growth, to climate change and natural disasters. The social consequences of these developments include displacement and migration, growing social instability, potential for conflict due to competition over scarce resources, as well as rising inequalities, marginalization and ensuing intolerance. The notions of social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and economic development are clearly interdependent.

13. By concentrating action on the above two themes, MOST seeks to act on challenging and complex social transformations of global significance. This focus should assist MOST to demonstrate the relevance of its work and generate visibility. The two themes are also vehicles to illustrate the potential of transdisciplinary and integrated research, and the pressing need to strengthen knowledge links bridging the research and policy-making communities.

14. The World Social Science Report was recognized for its key messages including the importance of transdisciplinary approaches, the need to address disparities and for long-term investment in social science capacity-building and networking communities of researchers across regions and internationally. MOST needs to consider how it contributes to "knowledge brokerage" from all the various social science disciplines. One of the key strategic goals of MOST is to strengthen relationships with the higher education system, including how to mobilize universities and UNESCO Chairs. The importance of finding ways to reach young researchers was particularly emphasized. In trying to build bridges between researchers and policy-makers, MOST needs to focus on how to bring the relevance of social science results as to the attention of policy-makers, with a view to increasing the demand for social science research.

15. MOST in the largest sense should be in a position to be able to analyse dynamics as they emerge – for example of the social transformations taking place in North Africa – so as to foster a better understanding of the processes of change. UNESCO's main responsibilities in the social sciences could be summarized in three parts: to promote social sciences, especially in countries where they are less developed; to help governments to recognize how societies benefit from social sciences; and, to alert social scientists that their relevance depends on their ability to enlighten and offer solutions to their societies. MOST needs to reinforce integrated, transdisciplinary and culturally diverse research and to pool resources.

Financial and administrative implications

16. The Members expressed their concern to ensure that the MOST Programme receives sufficient resource allocation in UNESCO's regular budget, as well as human resources, to ensure the programme can implement its work plan in line with the Main Lines of Action and the conclusions reached during their debates.

17. The Members recognized that partnerships help implementation and that MOST should seek new alliances. The donor landscape creates certain challenges in respect of the impact of funding sources on social science research generally, and for MOST. The Members agreed that there should be more emphasis on visibility and on communicating relevance, in order to increase the appeal of MOST to donors.

Action expected of the Executive Board

18. In the light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 186 EX/10,
2. Welcomes the report on the reorientation of the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme;
3. Reaffirms its commitment to the importance of the MOST Programme among the intergovernmental scientific programmes of UNESCO;
4. Invites the General Conference, when considering the Draft Programme and Budget for 2012-2013 (36 C/5), to take into account the views formulated in document 186 EX/10;
5. Requests the Director-General, when preparing the next Medium-Term Strategy (document 37 C/4), to take into account the views contained in document 186 EX/10 and the views expressed thereon by Members of the Executive Board at its 186th session.



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Management of
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Programme

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JOINT MEETING
IGC-BUREAU - SAC
Paris, 25-26 November 2010

MOST-Phase 2- Formative Review (2004-2007) Final Evaluation Report

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December 2009

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme is an intergovernmental programme devoted to research and policy in the social sciences. It was conceived in 1992 and approved by the General Conference at its 27th session in **1993**. The fact that the first social science programme in UNESCO started much later than other science programmes is an instructive example of the precarious marriage of social sciences and politics.

MOST was formally launched in 1994 as a research programme to produce reliable knowledge and thus provide a strong background for policy-makers. The mandate was a strong commitment to promote research that was comparative, international, interdisciplinary, and policy relevant.

MOST started as a research programme to address social transformation and to produce reliable and relevant knowledge for policy makers. For the second phase MOST was reoriented both thematically and in its modalities of implementation. The mandate was focused as had been recommended in the evaluation report 2002. It should be mentioned that there have been several evaluations on MOST and UNESCO activities close to it. Their results have been taken surprisingly well into account.

The focus of MOST 2 is on building efficient bridges between research, policy and action. The programme is stated to promote a culture of evidence-based policy-making – at local and global levels. The mission statement defines that MOST will continue 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.

The objective is to reduce the gap between social science and policy, giving scientific meaning to policy concerns and providing political meaning to the knowledge produced by social science. It is imperative that mutual understanding is nurtured and creative environments are generated in order to make this possible. MOST involves social scientists, decision makers and other social actors in defining research problems and in the subsequent phases of the study to ensure acceptance and use of the findings in policy formulation while ensuring the integrity of research.

Formative Review

The overall purpose of the Formative Review is to learn lessons from UNESCO's and Member States action in MOST Phase 2 over the years 2004-7. According to the Terms of Reference the Formative Review will:

- assess the relevance of MOST Phase 2 activities and objectives against the needs and priorities of Member States, as decided by MOST Inter-Governmental Council;
- assess the effectiveness of MOST Phase 2 activities in contributing to MOST Phase 2's stated objectives and expected results;

- formulate recommendations to the Secretariat & the IGC of MOST aimed at further strengthening the relevance & effectiveness of the various activities & programmes.

The contract allowed Professor Jorma Sipilä as a consultant to run a small "formative review". In the absence of an earmarked budget, the exercise had to be downsized to a desk review with interviews. The review was performed from August to December 2009 by doing desk review; interviewing internal and external users; using participatory observation; discussing the preliminary report with the MOST IGC and testing the usability of the Policy Research Tool and the Digital Library.

Major findings

MOST is unequalled not only as a worldwide social science program but also because of the UNESCO brand and the advantages of an intergovernmental organization. This all means, for instance, that MOST has large potential for inviting researchers and partners to implement programs. It is also remarkable that in spite of the financial problems UNESCO has been able to recruit qualified and committed staff for MOST. The risk however is that because of a permanent and severe funding problem UNESCO does not meet partners' and participants' expectations.

Both politicians and researchers are often critical of the conditions of their interaction. However, there is also experience of serious interaction – better conditions for a dialogue can be created on different levels, among different actors, including media and NGO's. Studying, experimenting and systematically improving the conditions for a dialogue must be seen as a major task for MOST2.

The character of the budget of MOST2 is unusual, not only because of the proportion of extra-budgetary resources, but also because of the high degree of decentralization in the regular budget. Although it is not easy to formally assess the efficiency of MOST, there is no doubt that the funding over which MOST headquarters has control is extraordinary meagre and is moreover diminishing. Hence the number of activities listed in the Reports of the Secretariat on the Activities of the MOST Programme 2004-5 and 2006-7 both on the headquarter and regional level is indeed creditable.

Events like the IFSP Forum, the regular forums of Ministers of Social Development in four regions, the participation in the World Social Forums and smaller meetings and seminars bringing together researchers and politicians are indispensable for the MOST2 programme. As spaces for dialogue they represent simultaneously both the main objective of the programme and an arena of reflection and learning for the future. These meetings could have a more central role in learning and teaching how to create optimal conditions for the Research-Policy nexus. They also open up the possibility for experiments and action research: how to arrange inspiring events, how to engage politicians and researchers in in-depth discussion and analysis?

It has been an excellent idea to use the 2006 IFSP Forum material for serious basic research. The research report presents both high academic quality and political relevance and effectively reveals the current trends and approaches analysing the Research-Policy linkages as well as obstacles related to the aim of improving those

linkages. The difficulties included in this linkage cannot be tackled without fully understanding their origins, motives and forms of manifestation. MOST2 activity on this field is greatly appreciated because the linkage is not a key target of social research. If UNESCO can demonstrate the necessity of a major social research programme that could attract several governments' attention and funding it will be a most valuable outcome of MOST2.

At the moment we can say that MOST2 has had a remarkable capacity building impact concerning the Research-Policy nexus at both individual and institutional levels. However, the problem with present activities is their timely effect. If institutional capacity development needs 10- to 25-year timeframes as the "Review of UNESCO's Capacity-Building Function" suggests, more sustainable means must be considered. One useful and cost-effective method might be to encourage UNITWIN cooperation between university faculties in the field of social sciences. UNESCO chairs could also be useful actors for capacity building but at the moment they are quite fragmented actors.

Accepting the participation of specialized Non-Governmental Organizations in the MOST2 programme was an important step ahead. NGOs certainly enhance the prospects for fruitful interaction between policy-makers and researchers being an essential actor in democratic policy-making and a sponsor of social research themselves.

To raise broader interest toward the Research-Policy linkage there must be programmes intended to generate better policies by improving the interaction. MOST2 has decentralised such programmes to six UNESCO regions with separate regional priority themes. There are considerable differences in regional activities. These are apparently due to the attention currently devoted to social sciences in the regions and partly to the success in finding an attractive regional priority theme. As a result of a yearlong consultation process Latin America decided on the theme "Combating Poverty" which has often been presented as a regional success story. Following the strategy of UNESCO, Africa and the theme "Regional Integration Processes/ later Policies" have also attracted more attention.

MOST2 has put considerable expectations on National Committees as the decentralized part of its organization. The National Committees are exceedingly diverse; some of them have a national role to play, some do not. The programme may support National Committees with information and advice but material support can only be negligible.

During the period 2004-7 the core of the publication effort moved from traditional publications to digital publishing. Since 2005 there has been a Digital Library hosting MOST2 publications. Much attention has rightfully been paid to multilingualism. The importance of publications varies greatly; some of them are praiseworthy achievements, some only meant for minor audiences.

In 2007 MOST2 launched The Online Policy Research Tool, a policy research service that made it possible for users to create individual research profiles based on subject categories and to obtain customized replies. This was an innovation that in several ways serves the main aims of MOST2. The Tool is handy to use but the

volume of included information is too small. MOST2 has not been able to invest enough in the development of the Tool.

Recommendations

Social sciences are at their best when raising public discussion about necessary reforms and the means to achieve desired political aims. UNESCO's mandate to promote social sciences is more relevant than ever because of the globalization of social issues and the increasing need for their global governance.

There is every reason to continue MOST2. The mission of MOST2 is important and fruitful although realizing it is difficult. Impressive steps in understanding the conditions of successful Research-Policy linkage would generate worldwide interest and respect for MOST2. To take such steps the programme must show its potential for social scientists by being at the top of the scientific discourse, and for politicians by finding the means to engage them in profound discussion with researchers.

As a promising innovation at the heart of MOST Phase 2, the Online Policy Research Tool desperately needs more institutional support and resources for development. Outside partners investing in the Tool are of paramount importance.

For a program with only modest own resources attractiveness is crucial: MOST must be of interest. This is easier if MOST examines future-oriented social issues, many of which are intrinsically interdisciplinary. Another necessity for MOST2 is to cross disciplinary boundaries. From the viewpoint of policy-making social sciences remains insufficient without economics, and social questions today also require intensive cooperation with the natural sciences.

Regional priority themes make a solid base for MOST2 because functioning at regional level limits meeting costs and maintains the relevance of discourses. However, we should also agree that the issue that MOST2 tackles is global; the linkage between research and policy is a dilemma everywhere. Basic research is essentially global, even in social sciences, and MOST2 should not set administrative obstacles for researchers worldwide to take part in theoretically relevant research that supports global problem solving. MOST2 will continue to receive criticism for working with too many themes and it will neither utilize its full scientific potential nor live up to Member States' expectations if it mainly operates on a regional basis.

The potential of MOST2 highly exceeds its achievements until now. As social sciences help people to make informed decisions they also, by playing a central role in the development of genuine democracy, support people in realizing their common will and interest.

Finally, it is heuristic to think that MOST2 itself is a test of its goals. Every MOST2 event should demonstrate that a well-functioning linkage between research and policy is not only a distant aim but also something that can be reached in practice in UNESCO and beyond.

CONTRACT

The overall purpose of the Formative Review is to learn lessons from UNESCO's and Member States action in MOST Phase 2 over the past four years. The review should provide recommendations that can be practically implemented in the near future. It will also contribute to directly enhancing research-policy linkages and identifying different stakeholder groups to participate in the process.

According to the TOR¹ of the FR (see appendix 1), the FR will:

- assess the relevance of MOST Phase 2 activities and objectives against the needs and priorities of Member States, as decided by MOST IGC;
- assess the effectiveness of MOST Phase 2 activities in contributing to MOST Phase 2's stated objectives and expected results;
- formulate recommendations to the Secretariat & the IGC of MOST aimed at further strengthening the relevance & effectiveness of the various activities & programmes.

In a letter to the Director-General ADG Pierre Sané (April 15, 2009) further explains that the contract allows me as a consultant to run a small "formative review". In the absence of an earmarked budget, the exercise had to be downsized to a desk review with interviews.

MOST PROGRAMME

The Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme is an intergovernmental programme devoted to research and policy in the social sciences. It was conceived in 1992 and approved by the General Conference at its 27th session in **1993**. The fact that the first social science programme in UNESCO started much later than other science programmes is an instructive example of the precarious marriage of social sciences and politics.

MOST was formally launched in 1994 as a research programme to produce reliable knowledge and thus provide a strong background for policy-makers. The mandate was a strong commitment to promote research that was comparative, international, interdisciplinary, and policy relevant. It was also designed to organize and promote international research networks, give attention to capacity building and establish a clearing-house for social scientific knowledge. Since beginning MOST has been linked to two advisory bodies: the Intergovernmental Council (IGC) and the Scientific Steering Committee (SSC), now Scientific Advisory Council (SAC).

MOST started as a **research programme to address social transformation and to produce reliable and relevant knowledge for policy makers**. The original mandate established a strong commitment to the promotion of research that was comparative, international, interdisciplinary, and policy relevant. The programme was designed to organize and promote **international research networks**, to give attention to **capacity building** at the individual and institutional level and to establish **a clearing house of knowledge in the social science field**.

¹ See abbreviations in the annex.

For the second phase MOST was reoriented both thematically and in its modalities of implementation. The mandate was focused as had been recommended in the evaluation report **2002**.

The new focus of MOST 2 is on **building efficient bridges between research, policy and action**. The programme is to promote a culture of evidence-based policy-making – at local and global levels. As the only UNESCO programme that fosters social science research, it is placed in a pivotal position in the overall promotion of UNESCO's goals.

Mission statement: MOST will continue 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.

The objective is **to reduce the gap between social science and policy, giving scientific meaning to policy concerns and providing political meaning to the knowledge produced by social science**.

It is imperative that mutual understanding is nurtured and creative environments are generated in order to make this possible.

MOST involves social scientists, decision makers and other social actors in defining research problems and in the subsequent phases of the study to **ensure acceptance and use of the findings in policy formulation** while ensuring the integrity of research.

(UNESCO's MOST 2 Programme)

FORMER EVALUATIONS

A first **external mid-term review** of the UNESCO-MOST programme was undertaken in **1998**, producing an inventory of projects, activities and sequence of these activities, with related inputs and outputs. The Faculty of Social Science, Utrecht University, took responsibility for this evaluation through a contractual agreement. Among the main recommendations, the report pointed to strengthening the visibility of the programme both within UNESCO and towards the outside research and policy community, to improving the publication policy within the programme and to adopting more rigorous and consistent procedures relating to the MOST project portfolio.

In **2002**, the **first 8-years evaluation** of the MOST Programme for its Phase 1 (1994-2003), was conducted by O. V. Lindqvist (Finland), R. Radhakrishna (India) and R. de Oliveira (Brazil). The primary aims of this evaluation were to assess progress achieved in:

- improving the understanding of social transformations by generating policy-relevant knowledge on the three initial MOST themes²

² Multi-ethnic and multicultural societies; Cities and urban development; and Local and national strategies to cope with global phenomena.

- improving communication between social science researchers and decision-makers,
- making specific recommendations to be implemented after 2002.

The major findings of the evaluation were as follows:

- Despite its innovative character, the Programme often “failed to respond to rapid global changes” and had over-ambitious goals and expected results.
- The long-term scope of MOST research projects was found to be the source of a “significant” contribution to policy-making, owing to in-depth analysis of local contexts and global climate. Whereas this impact was clear on local and provincial level, national and international policy impact was found to be scant. Likewise, even though the MOST clearinghouse page views and the number of MOST publications were hailed as “impressive, by academic standards”, their policy-impact remained “diffuse or unrecognized”, according to the evaluation.
- MOST’s international networking capacity was highlighted as one of the Programme’s primary strengths, adding to the outputs of its successful capacity-building initiatives such as the summer school programme and the UNESCO Chairs related to the Programme. Even though the evaluation explicitly referred to the role of MOST as an excellent tool for capacity-building in this context, the educational dimension was said to need reinforcement.
- MOST’s proximity to other scientific UNESCO programmes was found to be an asset which remained at times under-exploited.
- The evaluation concluded that MOST was composed by too many themes, diluting the clarity of its objectives. The considerable divergence of methodologies employed as well as the difference of short term versus long term scopes of projects were likewise criticized as contributing to a scatter gram.

Following its analysis, the evaluation team recommended measures to be considered which can be summarized as follows:

- The MOST Programme needs to be consolidated by covering fewer projects and by the development of cluster concepts with clear strategies, framed into a clear overall strategy for Phase 2. Africa ought to gain greater attention.
- The Programme ought to be better integrated into overall organizational strategies, with the three central MOST themes of Phase 1 being developed at a UNESCO-wide level, to better grasp the interregional or global context.
- Capacity-building for social scientists in developing countries and countries of transition needs specific attention.
- The structure and management of MOST research projects should reflect the need to challenge the traditional linear interpretation of the scientist-policy-maker relationship to ensure that the information flows both ways.
- IGC’s and SSC’s roles should be strengthened; and the MOST NLCs encouraged to become more pro-active.
- The dissemination of MOST research results needs to be improved at the level of the Secretariat, the National Commissions of UNESCO and the IGC, with the NLCs playing a greater role in knowledge transfer, linked to the Clearinghouse.
- MOST ought to develop a consistent monitoring system where evaluations move from an ex post to ex ante assessment, taking into account a broader range of interest groups.

This evaluation was complemented by proposals for MOST Phase 2 by Elvi Whittaker. She suggested a simplification of the thematic orientation of the programme with the research-policy linkage as the main theme. The programme should be supported by a basic research approach to the very problem of the research-to-policy transformation. The coordination of research with the other science programmes at UNESCO and with the other divisions of SHS was also strongly recommended. The Scientific Steering Committee should be rethought, the Intergovernmental Council should be invited to strengthen its membership with leading social scientists and policymakers and the National Liaison Committees should be rethought with the aim of giving such groups an autonomous *raison d'être*.

The Director-General submitted the MOST evaluation and recommendations to the sixth MOST IGC session held in February **2003**. As their response, and in recognition of the increasing need to improve policy formulation, the 35 MOST member states representatives reoriented the MOST Programme both thematically and in its modalities of operation. To do so, the IGC adopted a strong set of recommendations on activities, capacity building, structure and governance, visibility, coordination and evaluation, and funding and assessment.

The MOST Secretariat undertook a review of the structure, operations and impact of the National Liaison Committees (NLC) in **2005**. This evaluation, made by Dumitru Chitoran, was largely based on gathering information on the situation of MOST NLCs through a questionnaire circulated to Member States. Chitoran's main conclusions were that the number of Member States having to set up proper NLCs or adequate arrangements, mechanisms and structures to handle MOST at the national level was still reduced, and even if such exist, they are highly diverse, which renders international cooperation difficult and they are not well geared to the reorientation of MOST 2 on the research/policy/practice interlink. There is a clearly felt need also to develop capacities for action at the regional level, especially in connection with the Regional Forums of Ministers of Social Development, and there is also a general complaint about lack of resources and a funding base for MOST. However, the evaluation also found sustained interest in MOST among the research community and a large majority of Member States, likewise interest in renewing and reactivating MOST. The proposals aimed at having at each level clear responsibilities, representative bodies, a system of research networks, and links with a wide range of partners. The evaluation emphasised the role of regional structures to support national activities and closer links with other science programmes of UNESCO and other UN projects and programmes, and step to associate a larger number of UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN networks to MOST.

MAIN SUBJECTS

The main questions for this review are the following:

Strategic emphases: Where programmes comparative advantages currently lie and where they potentially lie?

Relevance of activities: Evolving areas of strategic importance to which MOST 2 may need to pay more attention and vice versa?

Delivery mechanisms or modalities: Whether new programme delivery mechanisms or modalities need to be developed or existing ones diminished?

Adequacy of funding: Whether the current level of funding is adequate for the programme to achieve its aims?

Geographical spread of activities: Whether the geographical spread of programmes and activities best meets the aims of UNESCO?

Effectiveness and efficiency: Which capacities need to be built in order to more effectively meet the expected outcomes?

Sustainability: Sustainability of MOST and future status of social sciences in UNESCO? Will the benefits be maintained if the programme were to cease? Is the programme supported by the national institutional framework and well integrated with social and cultural conditions?

Risks and limitations: What kind of reasons may undermine the reliability and validity of the evaluation results?

Questions raised in former evaluations: Especially taking into account the recommendations of 2002 evaluation how has the programme reacted to problems raised?

REVIEW METHODOLOGY

Desk study: mapping of activities, summary of findings and recommendations of previous evaluations, normative instruments.

Document review: reports of the secretariat, planning papers, research publications.

Scope of the desk review:

Thinking: theoretical reflection on research-policy linkages.

Shaping: including the "Most Online Policy-Research Tool" Project, the MOST NLC, the MOST Summer Schools, the UNESCO Chairs related to MOST activities, the MOST Clearing House and Digital Library (networking, capacity building, dissemination and policy advice).

Debating: multi-stakeholder debates, policy dialogue, including the IFSP, the MOST Ministerial fora and dialogue spaces established (Discussions with a view of building consensus, new synergies, horizontal cooperation, democratic consultation).

Interviews with internal and external users UNESCO: SHS programme specialists, Experts, Representatives of National Member States. Interviews August 31-September 4.

Participatory observation: Intergovernmental Council Bureau and Scientific Advisory Committee, September 25-26. Intergovernmental Council, September 28-30. General Conference, November 15-20.

Presentation of a preliminary report to the 9th Session of the MOST IGC 28-30 September 2009; the members of the IGC took note of the preliminary findings and recommendations.

Testing the usability of the Policy Research Tool and the Digital Library.

It is important to concede the limitations of such an evaluation. A desk review as the main information source in addition to interviewing key persons in Paris does not create new information on MOST. Another main problem for an external reviewer is that it is almost impossible to define what has been done by MOST and what by others. The outputs and also the inputs of a networking organization like MOST are often hardly distinguishable as all major events are arranged together with other organizations. Regional activities consume a large part of the budget but the regional

staff is largely simultaneously responsible for other UNESCO activities. The same can be said of grants to organizations like the International Social Science Council and the International Social Science Journal. Publishing may appear to be the most authentic activity of MOST but even in this field there is significant cooperation with other organizations. Thus, such a formative review is basically motivated by the need to look at the activities as a totality from an external viewpoint.

BACKGROUND: POLITICS, POLICIES, AND SOCIAL RESEARCH

Research-policy linkage is the most essential topic for social sciences. The ability of social sciences to describe social reality, to compare social institutions and events, and to discover regularities in social processes was already acknowledged in the 19th century to be useful for politics and policymaking. The starting point for all policies is the presence of the society and the dominant trends – and there is nothing that describes these better than research in social sciences. Particularly during periods of rapid social change social sciences have been paid much attention specifically because of their potential for political influence. However, because of the normative character of both political life and social research there are also always manifest tensions between research and policymaking.

In principle social sciences are an indispensable tool in making social policies. For instance, in the field of social welfare policy examining social services and financial transfer systems can increase their rationality, efficiency, effectiveness, and legitimacy. A comparative approach including relevant international examples and statistical accounts is often of unparalleled merit for this purpose. Surveys and qualitative interviews are also most valuable methods to collect and analyse citizens' viewpoints. It is extremely fruitful to combine the professional competence of social scientists and the needs of the administrative system.

It is important to make a distinction between the concepts of policy and politics here. A policy is a deliberate plan of action to guide decisions and achieve rational outcome(s). Politics is a process by which groups of people make decisions. Basically politicians make politics but also experts are involved in making policies. Making politics is a different world from making policies.

If politics were only fighting for organized interests, perhaps politicians would mostly listen exclusively to social scientists on their own side. However, politics is also about recognizing and articulating interests, searching for ways to combine different group interests, and balancing long-term social investments with shorter-term economic goals. Social scientists can help politicians to understand how society functions, to identify long-term trends and changing needs, and to know what citizens want and desire, even if the scientists are not specifically supporters of their party.

No doubt, social scientists are sometimes a nuisance for politicians and particularly for the government. Scientists may loudly disagree with government's rhetoric and feel that their duty is to expose failures in its policies and politics. Totalitarian

governments often suppress social sciences or keep them under strict control just as they do with the media. Democracy is sine qua non for social sciences serving citizens; if there is no democracy it is possible or even probable that politicians will use social research against citizens. Freedom of the social sciences, like freedom of the media is again an indispensable precondition for a democratic society.

On the one hand, many social scientists like to be cautious about close relationships between politics and research. Government anyway has a strong influence on social research through its major role in financing. Many scholars in the field of social research feel it as their ethical responsibility to present the voice and views of people less visible to the elite. It is important that political issues are paid sufficient attention among researchers, but in a democracy government should not set the agenda for social research. Information should flow both ways. In a democracy we assume that policymaking is everybody's business. This idea cannot be realized without the media playing a major role. When speaking of the linkage between policy-making and research in democracy our discussion remains incomplete if the importance of the media is ignored.

On the other hand, some social scientists are themselves politicians. The assumption of social researchers serving politicians with neutral information may be far from such a setting. There is no reason to blindly trust everything that calls itself research. We have to ask who is speaking, for what purpose, and to whom.

Careful use of research results requires criticism of approaches, sources and research methods; thus, review should precede scientific publishing. However, the review process is no panacea; the power hierarchies of science may infiltrate it. Such hierarchies tend to bypass research conducted in places deemed peripheries and written in local languages. However, most people and politicians in the world live on the so-called peripheries and work best using their own language. In addition these are the places where carefully considered decisions have the greatest impacts. There are a multitude of reasons why policy-research linkage needs reliable organizations to select and publish the outcomes of relevant quality research in many languages. This has always been a core task for UNESCO and MOST.

Despite being a fruitful source of reliable knowledge, social research does not solve the problems of political decision-making. Successful politicians must make compromises taking into account the ramifications of their decisions on so many dimensions (economy, ethics, environment, power relations, media, citizens' support etc.) that making politics is creative work and often rather described as an art than a science. Optimal decisions cannot simply be a result of evidence acquired through research. Evidence-based policy-making does not mean that evidence gathered on the outcomes of previous policies provides ready-made solutions. Both politics and social research are contextual and the contexts are never the same; times and places, cultural and political situations are always different. This remark gains even more importance if the quantity of former research on a designated topic in a certain context is small. This is a special task for MOST and a reason to emphasize the dissemination of research done in developing countries.

The relationship between public administration and social research is inclined to be less tense than that between politics and social research. This difference may be of

significance to MOST. It is definitely an intergovernmental programme and as such its governance is more related to politicians than to the civil servants responsible for policies in the Member States. MOST2 reports show that the programme highly appreciates the participation of ministers and politicians in the highest positions. Of course, discourses on the highest political level are absolutely indispensable to MOST2. However, we have to understand that this introduces more complexity into the basic issue: not only research-policy but also the research-politics nexus will always captivate the minds of politicians.

Mentioning here some pitfalls of the policy-research linkage does not mean that building efficient bridges between research, policy and action is in any way unfeasible. On the contrary, as we can never expect it to be easy we should invest more in it. There is no doubt that the culture of evidence-based policy-making is something that societies need although they can only approach it step by step. Science is the measure of truth as far as we can approach it. In a complex world there is nothing that supports rational policy-making better than research. Hence it is extremely important that MOST has paid serious attention to the complexity of policy-research linkage.

Finally, we have to note that the character of societal problems and the means to alleviate them have changed. Global economy with global actors minimizing their social responsibilities, global overpopulation, and global climate change create multidimensional problems requiring cross-disciplinary research. On the one hand, world problems are social problems to the extent that they cannot be resolved without the contribution of social sciences. On the other hand social problems are world problems to the extent that their solution necessitates much broader knowledge than that of social scientists only.

FINDINGS

Strategic issues

1. UNESCO offers an extraordinary arena for numerous activities. MOST is unequalled not only as a worldwide social science program but also because of the UNESCO brand and the advantages of an intergovernmental organization. This all means, for instance, that MOST has large potential for inviting researchers and partners to implement programs. It is also remarkable that in spite of the financial problems UNESCO has been able to recruit qualified and committed staff for MOST. The risk however is that MOST2 does not, because of the permanent and severe funding problems, meet the partners' and participants' reasonable expectations.
2. MOST is a well-networked organization with a large number of partners, just as desired. Therefore it is difficult to define the borders and also the achievements of MOST. A networking organization like MOST seldom does anything alone and afterwards it is impossible to know exactly what the input of each partner was. This problem is reflected in the budget: in the period 2004-5 extra-budgetary resources accounted for some 90 percent of the total

expenditure and in 2006-7 for over 80 percent.³ To what extent these extra-budgetary outlays promote the aims of MOST2 or are truly controlled by MOST2 is a most difficult question that cannot be answered in this desk review.

3. Both politicians and researchers are often critical of the conditions of their interaction. Conventional conferences tend not to be the places for more in-depth interaction between top politicians and top researchers. However, there is also experience of serious interaction – better conditions for a dialogue can be created on different levels, among different actors, including media and NGOs, and even on the top level assuming the existence of mutual will and trust. Studying, experimenting and systematically improving the conditions for a dialogue must be seen as a major task for MOST2.

Financing

4. The character of the budget of MOST2 is unusual, not only because of the proportion of extra-budgetary resources, but also because of the high degree of decentralization in the regular budget. For example, in 2004-5, 31 percent of the regular budget was decentralized to the field offices and 50 percent to the International Social Science Council, the International Social Science Journal (which is not directly a MOST2 activity, see para. 19) and UNESCO Chairs/UNITWIN Networks (which are a cooperation platform inside UNESCO). Thus less than one fifth (\$300,000) was used directly for MOST Phase 2 by the headquarter. On the other hand, not all the headquarters' costs are visible in the regular budget.
5. With regard to the efficiency of MOST2, my evaluation cannot but be partial. However, although it is not easy to formally assess the efficiency of MOST2, there is no doubt that the funding over which MOST headquarter has control is extraordinary meagre and is moreover diminishing. Hence the number of activities listed in the Reports of the Secretariat on the Activities of the MOST Programmes 2004-5 and 2006-7 both on the headquarter and regional level is indeed creditable.

Progress

6. During the first years of MOST2 the program had to complete the tasks of Phase 1. The change was not easy as there were productive research networks that wanted to continue. There was a promise that UNESCO on a wider level would take over the three central themes of Phase 1. It is uncertain to what extent this really happened. The new start for the new phase to build efficient bridges between research, policy and action culminated in the 2006 IFSP Forum, which was an enormous task for the modest Secretariat. Of course, many partners were involved but this obviously increased the coordination function of the Secretariat.

³ Only 23 percent of the MOST ordinary budget were geared to headquarters operations in 2006/7.

7. Former evaluations have been respectable intellectual achievements. They have been carefully studied by the Secretariat and taken surprisingly well into account.
8. In particular, MOST2 has attempted to activate National Committees. In fact, UNESCO cannot much influence their functioning, which has also been mentioned in their responses to their last evaluation enquiry. Many of the rich, industrialized countries do not see that a National Committee would bring particular added value to the number of social research-policy linkages they already had when MOST was originally introduced.

Relevance of activities

9. Events like the IFSP Forum, the regular forums of Ministers of Social Development in four regions, the participation of MOST2 in the World Social Forums; especially the one held at Nairobi in 2007 and smaller meetings and seminars bringing together researchers and politicians are indispensable for the MOST2 programme. As spaces for dialogue they represent simultaneously both the main objective of the programme and an arena of reflection and learning for the future. These meetings could have a more central role in learning and teaching how to create optimal conditions for the Research-Policy nexus. They also open up the possibility for experiments and action research: how to arrange inspiring events, how to engage politicians in in-depth discussion and analysis?
10. It has been an excellent idea to use the 2006 IFSP Forum material for serious basic research. MOST2 has invested a considerable proportion of its small regular programme resources in this research. The research report presents both high academic quality and political relevance and effectively reveals the current trends and approaches analysing the Research-Policy linkages as well as obstacles related to the aim of improving those linkages. The difficulties included in this linkage cannot be tackled without fully understanding their origins, motives and forms of manifestation. MOST2 activity in this field is greatly appreciated because, in spite of being a traditional topic in both political and academic discourses, the linkage is nevertheless not a key target of social research. Thus, research on the linkage presents an important opportunity for a major social research programme that could attract several governments' attention and funding. If UNESCO can demonstrate the necessity of such an international research programme it will be a most valuable outcome of MOST2.
11. Conferences initiate things by raising interest, spreading ideas and starting relationships. Capacity building on the other hand requires institutions and longer-term processes like education, publishing and database construction. UNESCO's influence on capacity building among social scientists has mainly taken the form of education in regional contexts and the cooperation with the International Social Science Council. MOST2 has run summer schools for young academics, a network for city professionals, a social sciences school network and assisted the development of social science curricula. UNESCO originally established the ISSC and it receives a considerable grant from

MOST2 in compensation for serving the programme with scientific content, analysis, and publishing. Doing long-term work ISSC reasonably complements other activities of MOST2. At the moment we can say that MOST2 has had a remarkable capacity building impact concerning the Research-Policy nexus at both individual and institutional levels.

12. MOST did not finish with all research when it started the Phase 2, but is doing small-scale, high-quality research on the Research-Policy linkage. MOST2 cannot be a major sponsor of research but it could well be the heart of a large network of researchers working with this issue. As the linkage between research and policy is a dilemma everywhere and as basic research is essentially global, MOST2 should not hesitate to promote worldwide research that is absolutely necessary for its aims.
13. It is well understood among the actors responsible that the Research-Policy linkage as an abstract research object only interests some researchers and few politicians. To raise broader interest there must be programmes intended to generate better policies by improving the interaction. MOST2 has decentralised such programmes to six UNESCO regions with separate regional priority themes. There are many sound arguments for decentralization but a consequence of preferring regional effort is that there is no concentrated large-scale global effort to examine the main issue: Research-Policy Nexus.
14. Accepting specialized Non-Governmental Organizations in the MOST2 programme was an important step ahead. MOST2 opened a new policy dialogue space by capitalizing on NGOs in Nairobi 2007. NGOs certainly enhance the prospects for fruitful interaction between policy-makers and researchers being an essential actor in democratic policy-making and a sponsor of social research themselves.

Regional spread of activities

15. There are considerable differences in regional activities. These are apparently due to the attention currently devoted to social sciences in the regions and partly to the success in finding an attractive regional priority theme. Selecting a fruitful priority theme that truly combines the interests of researchers and policymakers and the expertise of UNESCO is problematic. Particular attention should be paid to finding a way to select such priority themes. As a result of a yearlong consultation process Latin America decided on the theme "Combating Poverty" which has often been presented as a regional success story. Following the strategy of UNESCO, Africa and "Regional Integration Processes/ later Policies" have also attracted more attention. Europe and North America have remained in the shadows with a meagre budget, no regional staff, without Ministerial Forums, and having ended with a less optimal priority theme "Ageing Populations".⁴ Ageing of the population certainly is a priority theme, at least in Europe, but MOST2 cannot become but a minor player in this field.

⁴ Europe had first selected "The Social Science-Policy Interface in Social Development".

16. Regional priority themes make a solid base for MOST2 because functioning at regional level limits meeting costs and maintains the relevance of discourses. However, today burning social issues are global more often than before and a comparative research approach is often more powerful when imposed on a worldwide perspective. Even if it is generally agreed that MOST2 channels the majority of its resources to developing countries, it is questionable to ignore the potential that European and North American scholars and politicians could bring to MOST2. The issue is not what the European research priority is, but how to use the massive amount of social research accomplished by scholars in Europe and North America for the common project of understanding the linkage between research and policy and basing this effort on theoretical and empirical studies.
17. MOST2 has put considerable expectations on National Committees as the decentralized part of its organization. The National Committees are exceedingly diverse; some of them have a national role to play, some do not. In spite of all the effort it is unfeasible to generalize that MOST2 National Committees have become more pro-active and fulfilled the ambitions of the directive bodies. The programme may support National Committees with information and advice but material support can only be negligible.

Products

18. During the period 2004-7 the core of the publication effort moved from traditional publications to digital publishing. Since 2005 there has been a Digital Library hosting MOST2 publications. Much attention has constantly been paid to multilingualism. Its importance is confirmed by the fact that one third of visits are directed to pages either in French or in Spanish. The number of publications has been remarkable. Some of the publications are results of cooperation with other organizations. The importance of publications varies greatly; some of them are praiseworthy achievements, some only meant for minor audiences.
19. In the end of 2007 MOST2 launched The Online Policy Research Tool, an online policy research service to be available on the MOST2 website. The Tool made it possible for users to create individual research profiles based on subject categories and to obtain customized replies to trans-disciplinary questions by drawing on select content from the original documents. This was an innovation that in several ways serves the main aims of MOST2. It provides easier access to the outcomes of selected but many-sided research that can be used in policy-making. The Tool also emphasizes material from the South and increases options for South-South interaction as desired. The problem with the Tool, however, is that it still stays in pilot status. The Tool is handy to use but the volume of information included is too small. MOST2 has simply not been able to invest enough in the development of the Tool.
20. During the evaluation period the International Social Science Journal spent a considerable part of the MOST2 funding. The Journal has a long history and it admirably fulfils the aims of MOST2 being unique in many ways (multilingual

character, interdisciplinarity, capacity to promote social sciences in developing countries). However, this kind of idealistic publishing is expensive and it had become too burdensome for UNESCO. It became evident that UNESCO was no longer the editor and publisher ISSJ needed. After the evaluation period the publication has been outsourced to South Africa.

Intersectorality and cooperation

21. International networking capacity has continued to be a primary strength of the Programme as confirmed by the reports of the Secretariat and the budgets. There is ample cooperation in the field of SHS but more generally the proximity to other scientific UNESCO programs remains still under-exploited as before. National Committees in some countries offer useful platforms for broader interdisciplinary cooperation. The cooperation with ISSC has already been mentioned. A very positive feature brought about by the IFSP Forum is the enhanced cooperation of MOST2 with United Nations agencies active in the fields of social sciences, such as for instance UNDESA, UNDP, UNU and others.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Actuality and continuity

22. UNESCO's mandate to promote social sciences is more relevant than ever because of the globalization of social issues and the increasing need for their global governance. Because of immense natural and socio-economic changes political strategies require updating. Social sciences are at their best when raising public discussion about necessary reforms and the means to achieve desired political aims. In our turbulent times social sciences are more useful than ever. Today, it is time to invest in social sciences. UNESCO for its part provides a good environment for this process because when UNESCO integrates science, education, culture and communication it also increases the impact of social sciences on policy making. However, we have to keep in mind that the interaction between policy makers and researchers is not enough for democratic politics: citizens, their organizations and media must also be involved. MOST2 should not only concentrate on talking with "policy makers" or "politicians" but more broadly with "politically influential persons" or "opinion leaders". The inclusion of NGOs was a positive sign.
23. There is every reason to continue MOST2. The mission of MOST2 is important and fruitful although realizing it is difficult and involves pitfalls, as already mentioned. Impressive steps in understanding the conditions of successful Research-Policy linkage would generate worldwide interest and respect for MOST2. To take such steps the programme must show its potential for social scientists by being at the top of the scientific discourse in this field, and for politicians by finding the means to engage them in profound discussions with researchers. MOST2 could function as a generator creating safe and open spaces where informed alternatives would be available to politicians wishing to make better decisions.

Considerations

24. As a promising innovation at the heart of MOST Phase 2, the Online Policy Research Tool desperately needs more institutional support and resources for development. Small data retrieval sources remain in the shadow even if they are extraordinary good. Outside partners investing in the Tool are of paramount importance.
25. From the viewpoint of capacity building the problem with present activities is their timely effect. If institutional capacity development needs 10- to 25-year timeframes as the "Review of UNESCO's Capacity-Building Function" suggests, more sustainable means must be considered. One useful and cost-effective method might be to encourage the UNITWIN programme between university faculties in the field of social sciences. The evaluation on UNESCO chairs by Paul N. Barry and Elisabeth M. Wilson shows that they could be useful actors for SHS capacity building and sustainability creation, but at the moment they are quite fragmented actors.
26. For a program with only modest own resources attractiveness is crucial: MOST must be of interest. The real dynamic force to take MOST forward is not only in the participation of top researchers; it is necessary to get young researchers and politicians to join the programme. This is easier if MOST examines future-oriented social issues, many of which are intrinsically interdisciplinary. A question is whether UNESCO can move fast enough to utilize its potential as a respected and influential worldwide meeting place, when some of the administrative rules underline the role of practices that increase slowness and decrease attractiveness. The Scientific Advisory Committee, in particular, is in a position to bring the expectations of researchers to the attention of the organization and to help to improve conditions for their participation. SAC should gain more independence and have more influence on the work plans for MOST2. Another necessity for MOST2 is to cross disciplinary boundaries. From the viewpoint of policymaking social sciences remains insufficient without economics, and social questions today also require intensive cooperation with the natural sciences.
27. There is every reason to emphasize the importance of contextuality in social research and to recognize the risks involved when majority of researchers examining international processes and relations live in rich countries. However, we should also agree that the issue that MOST2 tackles is global; the linkage between research and policy is a dilemma everywhere. Basic research is essentially global, even in social sciences, and MOST2 should not set boundaries for researchers worldwide to take part in theoretically relevant research that supports global problem solving. MOST2 will continue to receive criticism for working with too many themes and it will neither utilize its full scientific potential nor live up to Member States' expectations if it only operates on a regional basis.

28. The potential of MOST2 highly exceeds its achievements up to now. As social sciences help people to make informed decisions they, by playing a central role in the development of genuine democracy, also support people in realizing their common will and interest.

Finally, it is heuristic to think that MOST2 is a process testing its own goals. Every MOST2 event should demonstrate that a well-functioning linkage between research and policy is not only a distant aim but also something that can be reached in practice in UNESCO and beyond.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Formative Review of UNESCO's Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme, Phase 2 (2004-2008)

Approved Terms of Reference

9th revision, 19 December 08
Timetable re-adjusted on 8 August 2009

1. Background

The "Formative Review of MOST Phase 2" (FR) will be carried out upon the suggestion made by several Member States in Commission 3 of the last General Conference; in line with the reorientation of MOST towards its Phase 2 (2003). It will serve as a preparatory stage for the overall evaluation of Strategic Programme Objective (hereafter SPO7) scheduled in 35 C/5 (2010/11), as approved by the Executive Board⁵.

The mission of MOST for Phase 2 (2004-2008) is defined as follows: *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.* This mission is in tune with the SPO N°7 as spelled out in UNESCO's mid-term strategy (34 C/4): Enhancing research-policy linkages on social transformations.

SPO7 positions the MOST Programme at the core of all activities of SHS for the next 5 years. MOST-Phase 2 has thus as a mandate to concentrate on the improvement of the relation between policy-making and social science research. To this end, the main objectives of MOST-Phase 2 are to render scientific processes more transparent by seeking the involvement of decision-makers and other social actors in defining research problems, to table policy-relevant quality research results in easily accessible language, to use innovative methodologies to allow for comparison of policy-relevant research results from different sources, thereby enhancing the acceptability and use of research findings in policy formulation. At the same time, MOST is to offer a space ensuring the integrity of social research.

2. Purpose of the Formative Review

The overall purpose of the Formative Review is to learn lessons from UNESCO's and Member States' action in MOST Phase 2 over the years 2004-7. The review should provide specific recommendations that can be practically implemented in the near future. It also will contribute to directly enhancing research-policy linkages and identifying different stakeholder groups to participate in the process.

⁵ The FR is also meant to provide valuable input to further develop the concept of the research-policy nexus and related strategy for the period 2004-2012 of the Programme.

In particular, the Formative Review will assess:

- the ongoing relevance of MOST Phase 2 activities and objectives to the needs and priorities of Member States, as decided by MOST IGC;
- the adequacy of the financial and human resources available to the Programme in order to respond to those needs and priorities;
- the effectiveness of MOST Phase 2 activities in contributing to MOST Phase 2's stated objectives and expected results.

Several background reports on past evaluations and the Refocusing of the MOST Programme will serve as a basis for our exercise (see Annex 1). The beneficiaries of the FR are the MOST National Committees (NLC), MOST IGC members, MOST Scientific Advisory Council (SAC) and the MOST Secretariat as well as all MOST networks and scientific, professional and decision-making partners, including partners in other UNESCO Science Programmes and UN agencies/programmes.

3. Scope of the Formative Review

The Formative Review will cover the activities of the Programme during the 1st and 2nd biennia (2004-2005 and 2006-2007). During this first half of MOST Phase 2, the programme implemented the transition from a programme focused on the promotion of interdisciplinary, international and comparative social science research based on international research networks to a knowledge management (KM) programme focused on the links between social science research and policy making. Furthermore, MOST Phase 2 provided new policy spaces in which the social science –policy nexus is playing out, at international, regional, sub-regional and national level.

The scope of the desk review comprises:

- **Thinking** (Theoretical Reflection on Research-Policy Linkages).
- **Shaping** (Networking, Capacity building, Dissemination and Policy Advise), including the “MOST Online Policy-Research Tool” project (Innovative Knowledge Management Tool), the MOST National Liaison Committees, the MOST Summer Schools, the UNESCO Chairs related to MOST activities, the cooperation with other UNESCO ISPs , sectors and UN partners, MOST Clearing House and Digital Library.
- **Debating/brokering** (multi-stakeholder debates with a view to building consensus, new synergies, horizontal cooperation, democratic consultation, transparency and accountability, including the Flagship Event of the period: the International Forum on the Social Science-Policy Nexus (IFSP), as well as the MOST Ministerial Fora and dialogue spaces established at international, regional and sub-regional level.

The evaluator(s) will develop, in consultation with the Steering Committee, the key questions to be answered by this Review. The matrix found in the Annex 2 should guide the evaluators in developing the review questions.

4. Methodology and logistics

The evaluator/facilitator is expected to develop the methodology during the preparation period of the Formative Review. It is expected that the primary method will be desk review to be supplemented by a number of interviews

The responsibilities are shared as follows:

- Under the supervision of the ADG/SHS and the monitoring of the Chief SHS/EO and Dir/SHS/SRP, the MOST Secretariat is responsible for the implementation and the follow-up of the Formative Review. For this purpose, a Steering committee⁶ could be set up in order to assure participation and transparency. This committee is to facilitate communication and smooth work flow between the evaluator/facilitator, the Secretariat and other internal /external users. The Formative Review will be conducted by one or two external evaluator(s)/facilitator(s), in cooperation with the MOST Secretariat. The external evaluator(s)/facilitator(s) will lead the MTR-2 and be responsible for the final report.
- The external evaluator/facilitator will have professional background in social sciences and evaluation expertise.
- Practical aspects of their/his/her assignment (travel, working space and other facilities, organization of meetings, etc.) will be under the responsibility of SHS/SRP/POL.
- The SHS sector will provide the evaluators with all relevant information and available documents.
- IOS will provide the evaluator(s) with methodological backstopping and advice at various stages of the review.

5. Schedule

October 08:	Approval of Terms of Reference by MOST IGC Bureau session
November 08	TORs discussed at MOST Staff Retreat
December 08	Final approval of TORs by IOS
December 08:	TORs and call for interested candidates circulated to MOST IGC Bureau and SAC Members, as well as Field Colleagues
January/Feb 09:	Submission of candidacies to Secretariat
March/ April 09	Identification and contracting of evaluator(s),
July 09	Contract amended
31 August- 5 September	Meeting with evaluator at UNESCO HQs, list of resource persons to be spoken to
15 September 09:	Secretariat receives first outline (4 pages) in English
15-20 September	Translation of Outline to F and S
26 September 09	Draft Outline of Report discussed at Joint MOST/IGC/Bureau and MOST/SAC Meeting
28 September 09	Draft Outline of Report presented to and discussed with MOST Member States at 9 th Session of the MOST Intergovernmental Council
November/December 09	Finalization of Report

⁶ Could be composed by ADG/SHS, Chief SHS/EO, the Director SHS/SRP, Chef SHS/SRP/POL, IOS and the external facilitator(s).

6. Deliverables, Final Report and Recommendations.

Draft Final Progress Report (20-30 pages) which should be structured as follows: Executive Summary (maximum four pages), MOST Phase 2 Programme description, review purpose, review methodology, review findings, lessons learnt and recommendations to be applied in the short term.

Timeline of evaluation:

- Deliverables: Progress Report September 28 and Final Evaluation Report, December 15, 2009.

ANNEX II: PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Chitoran, Dumitru, Former Chief of Higher Education Division

Crowley, John, Chief of Section/Chief Editor of the International Social Science Journal, Ethics of Science and Technology Section

Coulomb-Herrasti, Daniel, Assistant Programme Specialist, Youth, Sport and Physical Education Section, Division of Social Sciences, Research and Policy

El-khoury, Golda, Chief of Section, Youth, Sport and Physical Education, Division of Social Sciences, Research and Policy

von Fursternberg, Christina, Chief of Section, Policy and Cooperation in Social Sciences Section, Division of Social Sciences, Research and Policy

Geurts, Geoffrey, Evaluation Specialist, Evaluation Section, Internal Oversight Service

Golden, Cecilia, Programme Specialist, Policy and Cooperation in Social Sciences Section, Division of Social Sciences, Research and Policy

de Guchteneire, Paul, Chief of Section, International Migration and Multicultural Policies Section, Division of Social Sciences, Research and Policy

Hackmann, Heide, Secretary General, International Social Science Council

van Langenhove, Luk, Director, United Nations University Programme on Comparative Regional Integration Studies

Melasuo, Tuomo, Professor, University of Tampere, Vice-President, MOST Intergovernmental Council

van Oenen, Erik, Assistant Programme Specialist, International Migration and Multicultural Policies Section, Division of Social Sciences, Research and Policy

Sané, Pierre, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences

Solinis, German, Programme Specialist, Policy and Cooperation in Social Sciences Section, Division of Social Sciences, Research and Policy

Tekaya, Chifa, Programme Specialist, Supervisor Coordination Unit - Anti-Poverty and Human Rights Programme, Human Rights and Gender Equality Section, Division of Human Rights, Human Security and Philosophy

Vanamo-Santacruz, Kirsi, Deputy Permanent Delegate, Permanent Delegation of Finland to UNESCO

ANNEX III: ABBREVIATIONS

FR	Formative Review
HQ	Headquarter
IFSP	International Forum on the Social Science-Policy Nexus 2006
IGC	Intergovernmental Council
ISP	Intergovernmental Scientific Programme
MOST	Management of Social Transformations Programme
MOST2	Management of Social Transformations Programme after reorientation
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NLC	National Liaison Committee, also National Committee
SAC	Scientific Advisory Committee
SHS	Social and Human Sciences Sector
SPO	Strategic Programme Objective
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNITWIN	University Twinning Programme of UNESCO

ANNEX II

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MOST INTERGOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL

16 MARCH 2011

Having examined the Report on the Independent External Evaluation as contained in documents 185 EX/18 and Add., the Evaluation of Strategic Programme Objective No. 7 “Enhancing Research-Policy Linkages on Social Transformations” (IOS/EVS/PI/108); and the Formative Mid-Term Review of MOST-2 finalized by Professor Emeritus J. Sipilä, Tampere University, Finland (2010),

Understanding that MOST is unique in that it is an intergovernmental body that brings together researchers, policy-makers and other stakeholders with a view to bridging the gap between research and policy at national, regional and global levels,

Recalling that UNESCO through MOST is active in promoting research in social sciences for the management of social transformation,

Cognizant of the conclusions reached in the World Social Science Report 2010;

Recognizing the importance for MOST to work at the global level,

Acknowledging the need for focus of MOST, based upon UNESCO’s constitutional mandate, within the scope of its overarching/strategic programme objectives and bearing in mind its five recognized functions,

Recognizing the need to strengthen MOST with a view to allocating a critical mass of its budgetary resources to activities permitting the attainment of relevant expected results and clear impact;

THE MOST INTERGOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL (IGC) TAKES THE DECISIONS AND MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS AS FOLLOWS:

1. The IGC approves the document “Future Strategic Directions of MOST” as discussed by the joint MOST IGC Bureau and SAC session of November 25-26, 2010, as reproduced in the Outline of the IGC Report.
2. The objectives of Main Lines of Action 2 and 3 in the 36 C/5 document for Major Programme III (Social and Human Sciences) should correspond both conceptually and as regards the budget with the priorities set out in the future strategic direction of MOST and in the following recommendations.
3. The mission of MOST is as follows:
 - to continue strengthening the links between research and policy;
 - to promote social sciences, especially in countries where they are less developed;
 - to help governments to recognize how societies may benefit from social sciences;
 - to alert social scientists that their relevance depends on their ability to enlighten and offer solutions to their societies.

THE MOST PROGRAMME SHOULD:

4. Set a limited number of thematic objectives, taking into account the Internationally Agreed Development Goals (including MDGs) and other relevant United Nations initiatives, such as the World Summit on Social Development. In particular, MOST shall prioritize two themes, as described in the accompanying IGC Report, namely: the promotion of social inclusion; and the social transformations arising from global environmental change.
5. Respond to the findings of the World Social Science Report 2010 by strengthening capacity-building in the social sciences at systemic, institutional and individual levels. This work should pay special attention to measures that support young social science researchers. There should be increased cooperation with higher education institutions, especially the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme. The MOST National Committees should be encouraged to play an active role in capacity-building at the national level. The Programme should encourage greater use of ICTs, such as for knowledge networking. Other initiatives could, by way of example, establish and scale social science summer schools, address issues of brain drain, create databases of social science diaspora researchers, and assist the exchange of best practices.
6. Leverage intersectoral cooperation and reinforce synergies within UNESCO, both in terms of programme development and implementation.
7. Develop effective “pathways to policy” by promoting and fostering policy-makers demand for and investment in social sciences.
8. Build upon prior achievements, such as the successful ministerial fora, by paying due attention to a contextually-adjusted methodology for careful preparation of and follow-up to such high-level meetings.
9. Improve policy coherence (planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting activities); pay due attention to the global focus of MOST; and link regional activities to the MOST global priorities.
10. Ensure that expected results are, where possible, expressed in terms for which the Organization can be held accountable; Review results-based approaches according to their contexts, time frames and applicability, and improve qualitative reporting methods.
11. Improve monitoring of the MOST programme’s implementation including providing for exit strategies based on decision-oriented evaluations;
12. Identify the necessary social science and other professional skills and competencies (both managerial and programmatic) required to meet the high quality standards necessary for the successful implementation of MOST.
13. Allocate budgetary and human resources needed for delivering in accordance with the objectives laid down in the C/5 Main Lines of Action.
14. Ensure that the above-mentioned criteria are also applied to activities financed through extrabudgetary funds.
15. Increase MOST’s presence and focus in the field, by taking advantage of ICTs to enhance connectivity with social scientists and stakeholders, to enhance visibility, and to leverage partnership.
16. Make better use of the information meetings of the Secretariat by allowing, through consultation among regional groups, for Member States to identify periodically the subjects which they would like to discuss.

17. Encourage MOST to strengthen participation in relevant United Nations initiatives (including key United Nations summits, task forces) and in particular, in joint United Nations planning processes, as well as other intergovernmental organizations.

18. Capitalize on opportunities to develop partnerships with United Nations agencies working in the fields relevant to MOST (such as in the context of ministerial fora).

19. Build on comparative advantage/added value as well as complementarity with the activities of other United Nations partners.

THE IGC ACKNOWLEDGES:

20. The need to further reform the governance of MOST through Member States' active support for the Programme, by strengthening:

- the role of Member States in strategic and policy formulation, priority-setting and decision-making;
- their participation in the work of MOST, *inter alia*, through programme delivery, strategic direction for the Secretariat, and enhancement of international cooperation; and
- the monitoring role of the three MOST organs: MOST IGC, MOST IGC Bureau and SAC, in the execution of the MOST Programme, including taking into account the relevant contributions of evaluations and considering related policy recommendations.

21. The need for MOST to develop a comprehensive policy framework for strategic partnerships that reach out to civil society, social and human science communities, the private sector, funding agencies, and international and regional organizations. It should cover all forms of cooperation, identify selection criteria, contain elements to help identify funding prospects, and address regional balance (particularly from the South).

22. The Programme should build upon the willingness of MOST IGC Member States and Observers to assist, especially through MOST National Committees, in the implementation of funding strategies. The important role of National Commissions and MOST National Committees, in liaising with national partners and civil society, must be underlined.