Concept note

UNESCO FIT FOR PURPOSE for post-2015

A. Background

1. The UN is currently assessing its readiness to support Member States to meet the challenges and leverage the significant opportunities of the post-2015 period. These include the development of a new generation of universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will replace the MDGs, as well as the rapidly changing development context and financing situation, the emergence of new actors, and the erosion of traditional boundaries between developed and developing countries.

2. The post-2015 development framework offers a unique opportunity to shift from an agenda focused primarily on human progress in the poorest countries, towards one that is **transformative, universal, inclusive, and consistent with the use and preservation of global public goods**.

3. **A universal post-2015 sustainable development agenda also requires a UN that is "fit for purpose" to support Member States at the country level to deliver the next generation of SDGs.** Becoming "fit for purpose" requires the UN system to accelerate efforts to work more coherently and cohesively so as to help Member States respond effectively to increasingly interlinked and complex development challenges. This will require the system to address the skills gap and responsive structures which are needed to achieve this transformation at the country level.

4. The Chief Executives Board (CEB) has already moved forward on this topic. The HLCP and HLCM have presented a joint contribution in framing the commitment of the three CEB pillars to support in a complementary and coherent manner, the effort by the UN system to make the transition to a new post-2015 agenda, combining a programmatic focus (universality, equality, human rights, integration, data revolution) with a management and operational focus (people and skills, new business models and communication, transparency and accountability). Signals are thus clear that the future UN system must work in a more integrated way with a focus on both programmatic and managerial aspects.

5. **These developments have implications for UNESCO and its ongoing reform efforts as some of these will need to be aligned with the larger system-wide reform agenda, while others will need to be completed as a matter of priority to respond to current pressing needs.**

B. Putting Programme Delivery at the Core

6. Reorienting UNESCO into a more focused, effective and future oriented organization was guided by the Director-General's Action Plan to address the recommendations of the Independent External Evaluation (IEE) in 2010. The IEE recommended stronger strategic programme focus, improved field presence, enhanced collaboration with the UN system, improved governance and stronger partnerships. In parallel, to respond to the institutional financial crisis, a roadmap of 18 targets was established by the Director-General to move forward on many reform issues aimed at improving internal services, results-based management and budgeting etc. As a consequence of these efforts, UNESCO managed to reduce in a measurable way its global work force by over 20 percent, to streamline processes, and to improve working methods. While most of the IEE recommendations and the roadmap targets have been achieved, those regarding improved governance are yet to be realized. The External Auditor is currently undertaking an audit of the "Governance of UNESCO and dependent entities, funds and programmes" in line with

37C/Resolution 96 and the Director-General has launched her review of the Secretariat's internal governance system to ensure it is "leaner, even more effective and accountable" (DG/Note/15/03).

7. Since then, the goal posts have shifted, and this is mainly articulated through the emerging post-2015 agenda which will have many important implications for how the UN system including UNESCO works and adapts. This must be addressed in future strategies and goals. In this regard, UNESCO, bearing in mind its normative and programmatic roles, its human capital, networking capabilities and ability to support governments and peoples with expertise, ideas and policy development, will need to identify how best to use its comparative advantages in a shifting multilateral landscape. UNESCO sees this as an opportunity to work in tandem with its key partners in the United Nations system, by adapting new, innovative, more efficient and effective programme delivery systems that will enable agencies individually as well as the system as a whole in order to meet the programmatic challenges of the post-2015 agenda.

8. UNESCO must also tackle the future challenges by better supporting its programmatic work through the right type of operational support. This means that unlike previous reform efforts, **fit-for-purpose should put programme delivery at the core of the initiative and seeks to reconfigure/adjust/improve its operational support services so as to "fit the purpose i.e. achieving the core mandate(s) of the organization".** Thus, UNESCO should build on past lessons learned and experiences, identify holistic solutions, scale up successes and transfer/hand over activities and processes it is not best placed to undertake. UNESCO must reach out and work with its partners through its rich networks. In doing so, UNESCO needs to be bold, think out of the box and become a true learning institution all along being aware of parallel initiatives in the UN system and in the global agendas.

C. Positioning UNESCO for the future

9. **The main goal of this initiative is to strengthen UNESCO's capacity to achieve its main mandates in line with Member States' expectations in a leaner, more robust, targeted and effective organization that finds its place in the broader UN context**. The initiative will build on ongoing reform efforts in UNESCO. Some of these will be linked, as feasible, to the operational and programmatic Fit for Purpose (FfP) Agenda of the CEB, tapping into new opportunities arising out of system-wide initiatives, while seeking to solidly position UNESCO within the broader FfP Agenda of the United Nations system.

UNESCO's FfP agenda will encapsulate the following two key objectives:

1. **Establish operational modalities that are better suited to deliver, both globally, regionally and locally and tailor-made, UNESCO's programmes;**

2. **Achieve a better, clearer and more strategic global, regional and country-level positioning and leadership of UNESCO within the context of the post-2015 Agenda**

In order to achieve these objectives, UNESCO will develop a tailor-made UNESCO Fit for Purpose strategy that encompasses ongoing as well as new initiatives aimed at improving programme delivery, efficiency and effectiveness on the ground and while doing so, work closely in tandem with other actors in the UN system so as to better identify synergies, complementarities and cost effectiveness.

D. Implementation

10. UNESCO's Fit for Purpose initiative, as indicated in the diagram below will follow a two-phased approach: (i) Track 1, which is immediate, aims at undertaking further internal UNESCO realignment and reforms (ii) Track 2 aims at aligning the Organization with relevant post-2015

agenda developments and ensuring the global coherence of internal reforms/realignments with the larger system-wide reform agenda.

Two track approach – UNESCO's FfP Initiative

Track 2
Align to post-2015 agenda

Track 1
Phase 1 Internal
Reforms
May 2015 – May
2016
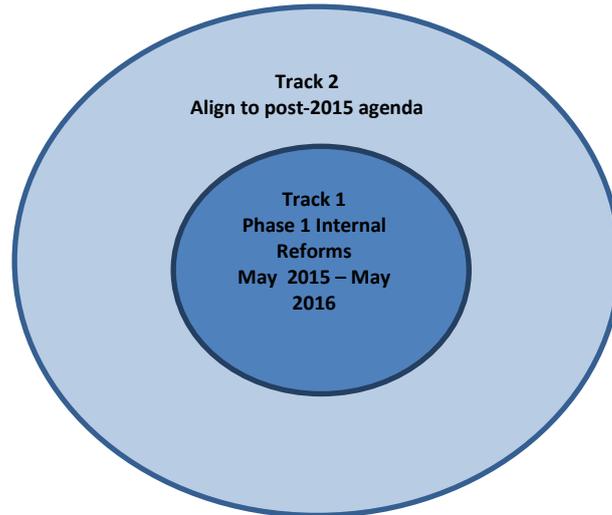
11. Track 1 will focus mostly on UNESCO's internal realignment and reforms. Based on a multi-year strategic vision, track 1 is expected to develop operational modalities that are better suited to deliver, both globally, regionally and locally and tailor-made, UNESCO's programmes.

12. The initial time frame for track 1 is for one year (May 2015 – May 2016), to be reviewed once the individual project timetables are finalized. A series of mostly internally focused projects would be developed. Priority areas include an external review of all corporate services: HRM, MSS, BFM, BSP, KMI, etc tools/policies; internal capacity for planning, monitoring & managing programmes and projects; strengthened and tested accountability framework; RBM/RBB; resource mobilization; reflecting on culture change (e.g. learning organization); increasing cross-sectoral synergies; strengthening internal governance mechanisms (e.g. SMT); improving and investing in knowledge sharing & management; results reporting; defining and redefining UNESCO networks & partnerships; A proposed priority list of potential projects is attached in Annex I including areas outlined above. **The four main axes as shown below – programme planning and delivery, corporate services review, strengthening field delivery and enhancing resource mobilization – will need in the next stages of the FfP initiative to be broken down to pragmatic and concrete goals set out with a detailed time line. This will be done in coordination with "project sponsors"** (see paragraph 15 below).
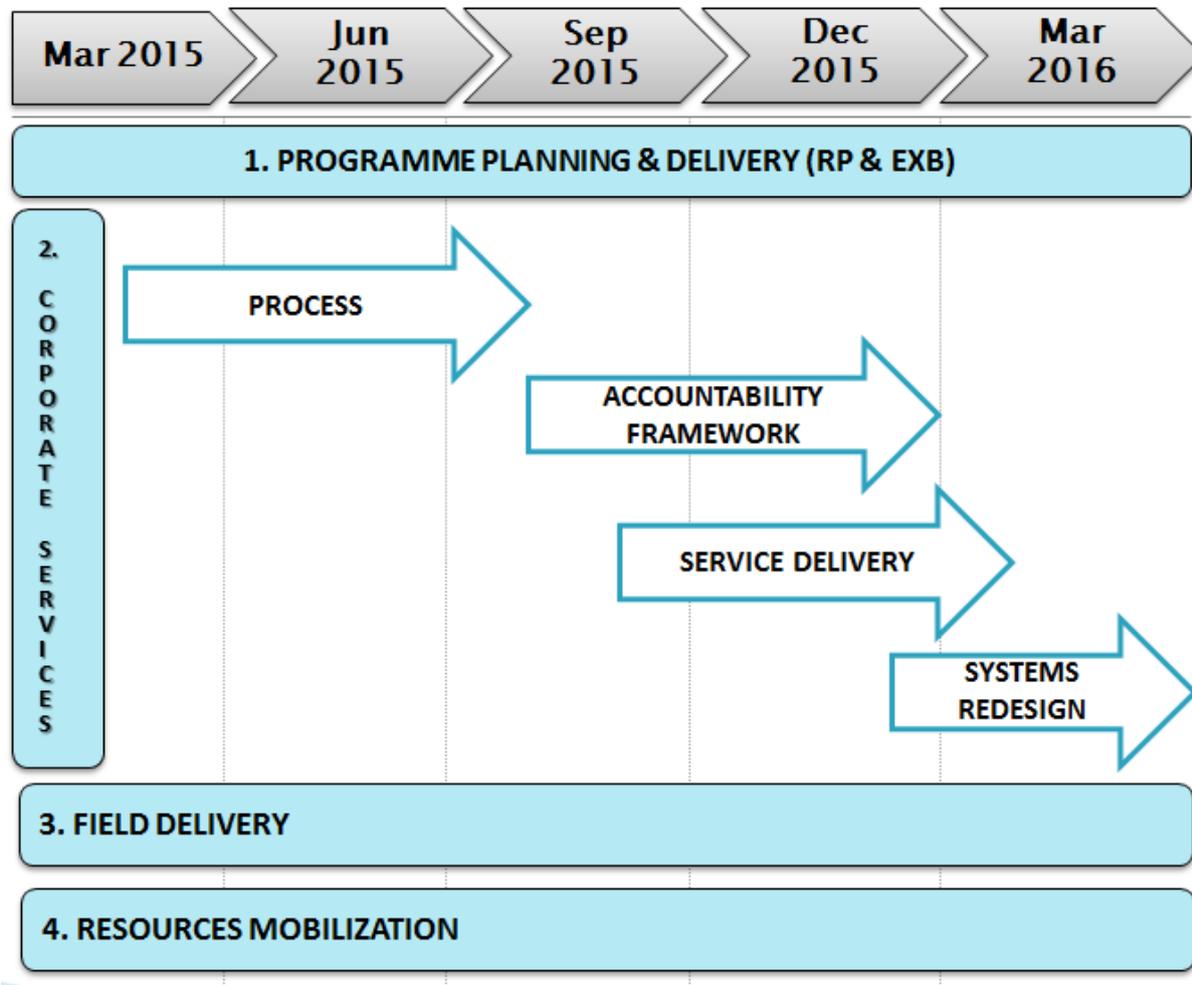
13. Track 2: Achieve a better, clearer and more strategic global, regional and country level positioning and leadership of UNESCO within context of the post-2015 Agenda (May 2015 – May 2016)

14. This track will focus on the developments at the CEB/HLCM/HCLP, so as to identify opportunities for synergies and partnerships. Some of the indicative priority areas that are being discussed are: the development of issues-based coalitions as an instrument to mobilize partnerships, capacities and resources in support of the post 2015 agenda; engagement in the development of coherent, integrated system-wide policies and strategies in support of post 2015 goals; development of joint results frameworks with partners; deepening Delivering as One (DaO) at country level; development of a global UN system workforce; UN system digital agenda; joint knowledge management; common or pooled service delivery.

A first step will be to take stock of existing FfP initiatives and best practices within the UN. Currently at the UN wide level, detailed action plans are at an inception stage and discussions are ongoing as to how the general reflections to date on the subject are to be translated into coherent, effective and efficient ways to implement post 2015 agenda on the ground. The outcomes of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development to take place in July 2015 in Addis Ababa and the High-Level Summit in September 2015 will provide further elements.

The relationship between the two tracks is dynamic: track two, as and when the UN system wide detailed action plans emerge, will impact on areas such as mandate, field presence, reporting or accountability, whereas track 1 will provide a feedback mechanism on issues and constraints faced by a specialized agency.

E. FfP project governance

15. The proposed governance structure is as follows:

SMT

FFP Senior Coordinator

FFP coordination group (project leads)

PMO

| Project 1 | Project 2 | Project 3 | Project 4 | Project 5 |
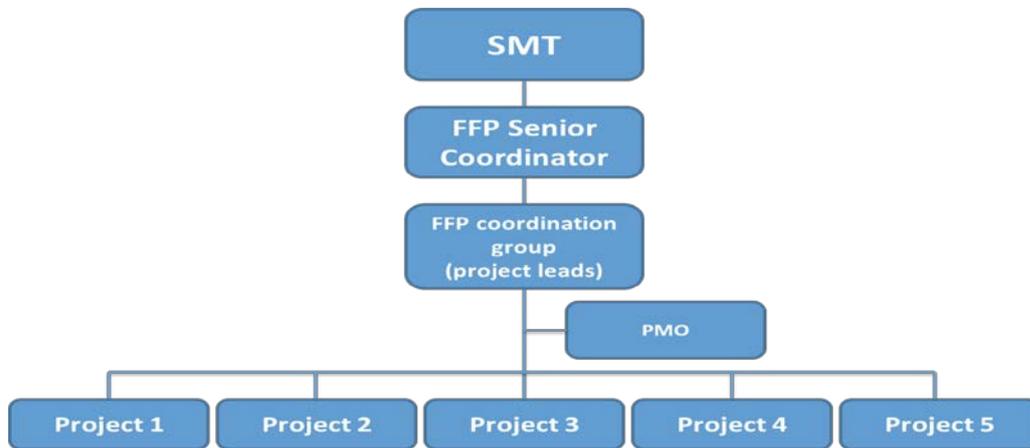
A strengthened and refocused **SMT will function as the FfP steering committee**.

- The SMT defines and prioritizes projects, approves resource allocation.
- The SMT advises the Director-General for decisions on proposals received from the various project teams.
- **Each project will have where feasible two declared SMT sponsors** who are senior managers, one from the business area the activity/project belongs to and the second from a programme sector or field office to ensure that programme delivery concerns are kept at the core.
- **The sponsors are accountable to the SMT for delivering on the agreed deliverables within time and budge**t. This will imply responsibility for pre-defining project methodology, ongoing communication strategy, ensuring field input to ensure the relevance of deliverables within Delivering as One, impact on eventual Staff training needs and membership of individual project steering committee as applicable.
- A FfP Senior Project Coordinator reporting to ADG/BSP is responsible for the coordination of and between projects, facilitating the monitoring and reporting of progress and issues and/or changes to the SMT.
- Project Leaders designated by the project sponsor(s) will form part of a Fit for Purpose coordination group which will meet on a regular basis. Project leaders will report to their sponsor(s)

16. Project leaders of active projects meet every two weeks as a group with the senior coordinator/secretariat to ensure information sharing and synergies between the various projects. The projects will be implemented through formal project management along the following lines (using PRINCE2):

- Define and prioritize deliverables within projects with Sponsor (avoid overload);
- Within an overall project management methodology, tailor appropriately to take into account project specificities;
- The FfP coordination group will manage the pre-defined project portfolio (programme management) and ensure alignment between projects and optimization of resourcing;
- Recognize where applicable the need for organizational change and adapt communication strategy
- Capitalize on existing reviews and studies conducted…IOS reports & evaluations, External audit recommendations, outcomes of the AO/EO reform, Efficiency working group and TASCO recommendations, etc.

A focal point for KMI will be included in the meetings to ensure full knowledge and history of issues to facilitate any future required systems development.

The FfP senior project coordinator will provide global methodology including reporting templates.

F. Proposed milestones

Phase I	Proposed date

Project Structure
    1. Appointment of the Senior Coordinator
    2. Appointment of Project Management Office (PMO)
	February 2015
	
	TBD

Presentation to SMT	mid-March, 2015
Detailed project plans	mid-May, 2015
FfP Project Review (Track 1) Midterm Review Final Assessment	December 2015 May 2016
FfP Project Review (Track 2) Midterm Review Final Assessment	TBD as detailed action plans on a system wide level are at the inception stage

G. Budget

17. The project will be implemented to the extent possible within existing resources. A detailed budget is to be developed when the senior project coordinator is appointed and as projects are being designed with the appropriate Sponsors and project leaders. The indicative staffing resources required are as follows:

- Senior Project Coordinator, the function is considered to be at D1 level equivalent
- Project Management Office – Staffed with Full-time/Part-time staff [tbd]

H. Critical Success Factors

18. The following risks factors can influence the planned outcomes of the FfP initiative:

- Internal buy-in and motivation for the initiative due to little structural relays for change management actions to bring about real cultural change;
- Change fatigue and ability to function;
- Decisions by Governing Bodies requiring focus of resources on other priorities than post-2015 agenda;
- Conflicting calls on time and resources to sustain long term commitment;
- Perceived lack of coherence amongst various projects;
- Overambitious and non-prioritized agenda;
- A compromise culture which may hinder a results based approach and decision making.

Risk mitigation:

- Development of a communications strategy throughout phase I that includes plans for open and ongoing communications on planned initiatives, decisions taken and their implementation; a dedicated on-line webpage providing status reports, periodic updates to all staff etc. which reflects the senior manager's ongoing commitment;
- Phased approach using project management (PRINCE 2) methodology;

- Mobilizing partnerships to resource the projects adequately;
- Monitoring global developments (UN GA, CEB etc.);
- Close follow-up of the work within HLCM/HLCP so as to ascertain opportunities for UNESCO while at the same time flagging potential areas that may be difficult for UNESCO to align with.
- **Each main phase corresponding to a deliverable within individual projects will be accompanied by relevant training and/or information meetings**

I. Frequency of meetings

19. Keeping the initiative on track will require identifying rapidly any bottlenecks and taking rapid remedial action. This pre-supposes frequent meetings at all levels over phase I proposed as follows.

Phase I category of meetings	Proposed frequency
SMT/Director-General	Quarterly and as needed
FfP Coordinator/Individual Sponsors	Twice monthly stand up meeting
FfP coordination group	Twice monthly meeting
FfP Coordinator/ ADG/BSP	Weekly stand up meeting
Sponsor/FfP Coordinator/ project manager/Individual project steering committees	Monthly and as needed
Executive Board	Every six-months

24 March 2015

Annex 1 – Illustrative list of priority projects within the FfP Initiative (Track 1)

(May 2015 to May 2016)

Global objective:
Keeping programme delivery at our core and better aligning organizational work with the post 2015 agenda whilst: • Reducing overhead costs (cost saving) and achieving cost efficiencies, achieving synergies where possible and streamlining work processes; • Ensuring structured delivery in the Field to meet SDG goals and DaO; • Streamlining overall structures and re-aligning to become more effective and accountable; • Optimizing resource mobilization and use of extrabudgetary funds received.

Area	Possible deliverables (to be finalized)	Proposed Sponsor(s)/Team Leaders (tbd)	Support Resources (tbd)
1. Programme planning and delivery (RP & ExB)	1. Design of improved programme monitoring mechanisms and reporting & structures including PMC 2. Redefining networks & partnerships including strengthening coherence with Cat I and II institutes	ADG ED/BSP/ED/CLT	
2 a. Corporate services review: focus on BFM and HRM in consultation with BSP and KMI	1. Process blueprint 2. Realigning AO/EO functions 3. Impact on structures	ADG/ED & DIR/HRM a.i.	Input from external consultancy firm
2. b. Corporate service review: focus on MSS and ERI	Further to **the work linked to the current integration to be done outside FfP,** review of additional synergies impacting on other projects	ADG/ERI & DIR/MSS	Issues to be dealt with as and when they arise Input from DIR/IOS
2. c. Accountability framework	Global framework and high level table of delegated authorities and link to specific field accountability framework (see 3 below)	ADG/SC & DIR/CFO	
2. d. Review of	1. Identified	ADG/IOC & DIR/LA	External Facilitator

service delivery opportunities	modalities to streamline work processes and enhancing efficiencies

2. Roadmap including timetable and costings to implement decisions under 2. a, b and c above | | |
| 2 e. Redesign of programme & Management systems | Go-live updated SISTER, STEPS & FABS to meet requirements under 1, 2 a, b, c & d & 3 | DDG/CI & DIR/KMI | External IT resources |
| 3. Strengthening Field delivery | 1. Strengthened field networks

2. Revisited headquarters field support structures and

3. Readjusted field accountability policy | ADG/AFR & DIR/GE; DIR/UBO & DIR/RAB | IOS input from lessons learnt from Africa Reform on coordination, communications and structures |
| 4. Enhance resource mobilization: focus on fund raising and partnerships | Revised strategy reflecting: 1. global financing for dev. agenda 2. Strengthened country focus 3. clarification of roles and responsibilities, 4. Updated instruments, tools/modalities for partnership and ExB cooperation, 5. Enhanced cooperation with govt. donors and innovative approach to the private sector, 6. monitoring tools | ADG/BSP & ADG/SHS | |