



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

## UNESCO'S NEW PUBLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION POLICY

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UNESCO's publications are essential for achieving its goals, and represent the public image of the Organization. UNESCO's new publishing policy stresses the importance of relevance, quality and targeted distribution.

#### Defining publications

Books now compete with CD-ROMs, e-publications and other products in the publishing world. Rather than focusing on form, UNESCO's policy therefore defines publications in terms of the nature of the content, the audience, and the quality control:

- All *substantive* material published for an *external audience*, whether in print or electronic form, free or for sale, is considered as a **publication**, carries an ISBN or ISSN and is subject to *standardized quality control procedures*.

Other categories of content are considered as:

- **Documents** (material produced mainly for the purpose of the Organization's governance);
- **communication materials** (material for raising visibility e.g. flyers, brochures, information kits, posters);
- **content destined for inclusion on the web portal**; and
- **databases and software**.

The revised version of the Administrative Manual will give more detailed information on these types of content, which shall be categorized, as a whole, as '**UNESCO Information Materials**'.

#### Aligning publications with programme objectives

It is taken for granted that publications fit in with programme objectives. Yet, too often, publications are produced without proper reflection and planning. Via the Publication and Distribution Plan, all publications must now be integrated into the programming and planning exercise for the biennium. Planning must address objectives, relevance to programme priorities and target readership, and provide estimated production and printing costs, as well as cost efficiency, distribution strategies, expected impact and evaluation.

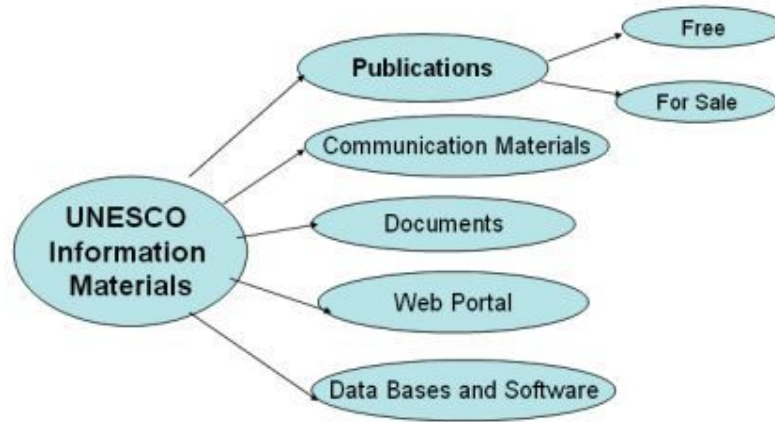
#### Standardized quality control

Until now, quality control procedures have varied widely across the Organization. BPI has therefore worked with sector publication staff to define standard procedures and prepare 'Publishing Guidelines'. Attribution of ISBN/ISSNs is subject to respect of the procedures given in the guidelines, which cover all stages of the publication cycle:

1. Planning and project definition
2. Content preparation
3. Production
4. Cataloguing and archiving
5. Promotion and visibility
6. Distribution and stock management
7. Evaluating impact.

#### Securing copyright to facilitate dissemination

Electronic versions and different language versions of important publications have on occasion been blocked, simply because the Organization had not previously obtained all



the necessary rights. To facilitate publication in as many languages and forms as possible, and to minimize exposure of the Organization to rights-related litigation, publishing projects must respect the following principles:

- Standard author contracts established for all authors.
- Comprehensive written permission obtained for any non-UNESCO copyright material.
- BPI's clearance obtained for any negotiations with co-publishers.

**Promotion, distribution and evaluation**

Promotion, distribution and evaluation are a vital part of the planning process. They must be thought about from the beginning, and not once the publication is on the table.

UNESCO caters to a wide variety of audiences. Defining target groups and their needs from the outset of each specific project makes it easier to establish the distribution channels to be prioritized: UNESCO networks, the Internet, sales distributors, as well as the possibility of co-publishing and licensing agreements for different language versions and local editions. It also makes it possible to establish realistic print-runs, thus avoiding obsolescence or destruction of undistributed works.

**Who does what?**

Successful planning, implementation and follow-up relies on the existence – and availability – of competent staff.

ADGs and Directors of Central Services, Field Offices and Institutes are ultimately responsible for the publications produced and distributed by their programmes. Each sector is also expected to designate a Publications Officer, responsible for providing guidance to programme specialists and ensuring that quality control standards are respected. They will follow through the production of publications for free distribution.

The Publication Unit in BPI (BPI/OPP/PUB) looks after the production, distribution and evaluation of for-sale publications. It will also give guidance and monitor adherence to procedures throughout the Organization. BPI will be organizing appropriate training for both Publications Officers and Programme Specialists, as part of the internal training programme of the Organization.

**To Find Out More**

**Link :**  
<http://eppsandbox.hq.int.unesco.org/SiteDirectory/BPI/PUB/Lists/UNESCO%20Publications%20Plan/Allterms.aspx>

**DG/NOTE/08/22 :**  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0016/001610/161009e.pdf>

**Contact :** [publicationplan@unesco.org](mailto:publicationplan@unesco.org)