



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Executive Board

Hundred and eighty-ninth session

189 EX/11

PARIS, 1 February 2012
Original: English

Item 11 of the provisional agenda

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF UNESCO AND MONITORING BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD: REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

Pursuant to 36 C/Resolution 104 and 187 EX/Decision 17, the Director-General presents herein a report on progress in follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation of UNESCO.

The Ad Hoc Working Group on the IEE was highly productive in formulating concrete steps in response to the five strategic directions. Its work was supplemented by the action points of the Director-General. A number of these have been completed, while others are ongoing, despite the challenging budgetary situation. This item reports on progress achieved to date.

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed draft decision in paragraph 7.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The final report of the Independent External Evaluation of UNESCO (IEE) was presented to the 185th session of the Executive Board in response to 35 C/Resolution 102. The Executive Board decided at that time (185 EX/Decision 18) to establish an Ad Hoc Working Group to examine the report and develop proposals concerning its recommendations. In the same decision, the Executive Board requested the Director-General to submit to the following session a plan of action on the follow-up to the IEE by the Secretariat.

2. At its 186th session, the Executive Board endorsed the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group and the Director-General's action plan (186 EX/Decision 17 (I and II)). At its 187th session, the Executive Board noted with satisfaction the progress made in implementing the IEE recommendations and requested the Director-General to submit to it at its 189th session a report on the progress achieved in the implementation of the recommendations and planned actions contained in document 186 EX/17 Part I and Part II, respectively.

3. At its 36th session, the General Conference adopted a number of significant changes within the framework of the follow-up to the IEE. This included the adoption of (i) the 36 C/5 which contains a limited number of expected results, (ii) a new four-year programming cycle informed by a brief Medium-Term Strategy of a rolling nature with an eight-year time-frame (36 C/Resolution 105), (iii) the field network reform (36 C/Resolution 107) and, (iv) new directives concerning UNESCO's partnership with non-governmental organizations (36 C/Resolution 108).

4. The Director-General remains strongly committed to a constructive collaboration with the Governing Bodies in support of the reform of the Organization. Despite the challenging financial situation of the Organization, progress has continued to be made in the implementation of the recommendations resulting from the IEE, which is part of the ongoing reform process. Indeed, in the context of UNESCO's response to the current financial situation, efforts will be intensified to achieve the radical improvements in UNESCO's programmes and procedures that are needed in a context of financial strain.

II. PROGRESS REPORT

	Completed	Ongoing
Strategic Direction 1 – Focus	6	15
Strategic Direction 2 – Field	1	16
Strategic Direction 3 – UN	1	7
Strategic Direction 4 – Governance	11	16
Strategic Direction 5 – Partnership	7	7
TOTAL	26	61

5. The following section highlights completed and ongoing actions of the Secretariat. The progress made is summarized by each of the five Strategic Directions of the IEE final report. A detailed version of the action plan containing all of the planned actions, progress made thus far, and timetable for implementation is available on the *UNESCO.int* website for Member States and their National Commissions.

Strategic Direction One – Increasing UNESCO's Focus

- At its 36th session, the General Conference endorsed the introduction of an eight-year Medium-Term Strategy and a four-year C/5 programme cycle, starting with documents 37 C/4 and 37 C/5 in 2014, with appropriate mechanisms for possible adjustments. These changes allow for a longer horizon for planning, implementing and monitoring the programme, and a better alignment with the “quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system” (QCPR), which provides policy guidance for United Nations organizations in the area of development cooperation. The General Conference decided to maintain the biennial cycle for the appropriation of the budget part of the C/5 document.
- The Programme and Budget (36 C/5) adopted by the General Conference at its 36th session reflects adjustments in the scope of several Main Lines of Action and a reduced number of expected results.
- Pursuant to 36 C/Resolution 104 II, a quantitative and qualitative approach has been introduced to the questionnaire prepared for the consultations of Member States, National Commissions, NGOs and United Nations organizations on the next Programme and Budget (37 C/5) so as to facilitate decision-making and provide for more informed priority-setting.
- The Director-General's instructions for the preparation of the 36 C/5 work plans include a request for a clear focus on core or priority areas of the 36 C/5 where the Organization holds a comparative advantage.

Strategic Direction Two – Positioning UNESCO Closer to the Field

- At its 36th session, the General Conference approved a comprehensive reform of UNESCO's field network in order to enhance the delivery of services to Member States, ensure a more visible presence at the country level and improve coherence within the United Nations system. Due to the ZNG budget adopted by the General Conference, the reform of the field network will focus on Africa in the 36 C/5 biennium. Consultations with relevant government parties have been held to finalize the locations of the multisectoral regional offices, the national entities (national offices and desks), as well as the administrative support platform.
- The Director-General has further engaged in revisiting the reporting lines between field offices and Headquarters to clarify accountabilities. This is in line with the recommendations in the IEE report regarding the need to have further decentralized authority and accountability, and also with the feedback received from the governing bodies.
- Despite the current challenging financial situation, the Director-General is fully committed to implementing the field network reform in Africa. Implementation pace will, however, be heavily influenced by resources that will be available for the field reform. A detailed plan is being developed. Furthermore, the Director-General is committed to producing periodic progress reports to monitor implementation of the field reform.

Strategic Direction Three – Strengthening Participation in the United Nations

- A review of UNESCO's partnership agreements with United Nations partners was carried out. As a result, a number of the existing agreements were deemed to require revision. The review also identified several agencies with which partnership agreements could be initiated, such as UNFPA, WMO and UN Women.

- The Director-General issued an Ivory Note in December 2011, which clearly defines the roles, responsibilities, functions and objectives of UNESCO liaison offices, as well as their reporting lines.

Strategic Direction Four – Strengthening Governance

- The terms of reference and the methods of work of the Ad Hoc Preparatory Group of the Executive Board were approved by the Board at its 188th session. The Ad Hoc Preparatory Group will support the preparation of the work of the two plenary commissions of the Executive Board as from the 189th session.
- The Director-General has held consultations with the President of the General Conference and the Chairperson of the Executive Board over the recommendation of the Executive Board's Ad Hoc Working Group whereby the Director-General is invited *"to submit to [the Executive Board] at its 189th session a proposal for the establishment of a pilot monitoring mechanism involving representatives of Member States and the Secretariat to identify differences in expectations, duplications of functions and other "grey areas" in the interaction between the governing bodies and the Secretariat, in order to improve their working relations and enhance the efficiency of the Organization"* (186 EX/Decision 17 Part I. IV, para. 35). She wishes to inform the Executive Board that there is a common understanding among the three that such a mechanism, while of great importance, should not seek in and of itself to duplicate the dynamics and channels of institutional dialogue instituted by virtue of the Organization's constitutional provisions, nor for pragmatic reasons should it be sought to create new mechanisms unnecessarily. It is therefore proposed that the President of the General Conference, the Chairperson of the Executive Board and the Director-General – as highest representatives of the Member States and Secretariat respectively – institutionalize their meetings, and that at regular intervals or upon request by one of them, they meet together to discuss the matters addressed in the above recommendation.

Strategic Direction Five – Developing a Partnership Strategy

- The review of UNESCO's cooperation with National Commissions conducted by IOS has been completed and the full report is available online. As follow-up to this review, a tripartite working group composed of representatives of National Commissions, Permanent Delegations and the Secretariat is set up to meet in the course of 2012 to formulate recommendations for consideration by the Governing Bodies.
- At its 36th session, the General Conference adopted new directives concerning UNESCO's partnerships with non-governmental organizations. The main features of these directives include the change from three partnership categories to two and better geographical representativeness within the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee. The Executive Board, at its 188th session, further adopted new Terms of Reference for the Committee on Non-Governmental Partners, which aim to enhance and diversify the participation of external speakers, encourage youth participation to the Organization's work with NGOs, reinforce coordination between NGOs and National Commissions, and foster an exchange of views on specific issues of significance for the involvement of non-governmental partners in UNESCO's action with particular reference to the Committee's thematic debates.
- Consultation among Secretariat units is ongoing in order to provide consolidated and harmonized inputs that should feed into the existing partnership policy framework, as well as a time-frame for integrating the harmonized criteria on selection, approval, evaluation, renewal and termination of partnerships.

- Refinement of the strategy for engagement with the private sector is ongoing, with particular reference to sunset provision, criteria for selecting partners and evaluation of private sector partnerships. This process is informed by the feedback received from the governing bodies.
- Communication, promotion and co-branding have become crucial components of partnerships between UNESCO and the business community, including media partners. A clear definition and typology of such partnerships will be developed for ensuring their effective negotiation and implementation.

III. IEE FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM

6. The Director-General will continue to inform the governing bodies of progress made in response to the IEE through a progress report to the 190th session of the Executive Board and regular Information Meetings with Permanent Delegations of Member States. In addition, a dedicated website containing all relevant material on the IEE and its follow-up was developed and is accessible through the *UNESCO.int* website for Member States and their National Commissions.

Proposed action by the Executive Board

7. The Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 36 C/Resolution 104, 35 C/Resolution 102, 185 EX/Decision 18, 186 EX/Decision 17 (I and II) and 187 EX/Decision 17 (I and II),
2. Having examined document 189 EX/11,
3. Takes note of the progress made by the Secretariat in the implementation of the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Independent External Evaluation of UNESCO, and the Director-General's action plan with respect to the operational aspects of the report of the Independent External Evaluation;
4. Invites the Director-General to continue implementing the recommendations and planned actions;
5. Requests the Director-General to submit to it at its 190th session a report on progress in the implementation of the recommendations and planned actions contained in document 186 EX/17 Part I and Part II, respectively.
6. Endorses the proposal made by the Director-General, after consultations with the President of the General Conference and the Chairperson of the Executive Board, to institute meetings between the Heads of the three institutional organs of UNESCO at regular intervals, or upon request by one of the three, to identify differences in expectations, duplications of functions and other "grey areas" in the interaction between the governing bodies and the Secretariat, in order to improve their working relations and enhance the efficiency of the Organization, and expresses the hope that the functioning of this mechanism might be the subject of appropriate reporting through the normal channels.