



**DRAFT STRATEGY FOR UNESCO'S  
NATURAL SCIENCES-RELATED  
CATEGORY 2 INSTITUTES AND CENTRES**

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## **DRAFT STRATEGY FOR UNESCO'S NATURAL SCIENCES-RELATED Institutes and CENTRES**

### **Background**

1. As a follow-up to 34 C/Resolution 90, which authorized the Executive Board to adopt and apply an integrated comprehensive strategy for category 2 centres and to submit the strategy to the General Conference at its 35<sup>th</sup> session for approval, a proposed strategy was presented in document 180 EX/18 to the 180<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Board. Pursuant to the corresponding decision, the Director-General invited Member States to submit written comments on the proposed draft integrated comprehensive strategy and this item was included in the agenda of the 181<sup>st</sup> session of the Executive Board. A revised proposed strategy was presented to (181 EX/INF.13) and approved (181 EX/Decision 16) by the 181<sup>st</sup> session of the Executive Board, which recommended that the “General Conference, at its 35<sup>th</sup> session adopt the new strategy to all new proposals for establishment of category 2 institutes and centres, as well as in the renewal of existing agreements”. This strategy was subsequently approved by the General Conference through resolution 35C/103.
2. As part of the integrated comprehensive strategy UNESCO's programme sectors are required to prepare specific sector strategies for engagement and interaction with relevant category 2 centres and institutes on specific themes. The Director-General shall designate, from within existing staff resources, a global focal point for issues pertaining to category 2 institutes and centres to be responsible, inter alia, for (a) a biennial mapping of all category 2 institutes and centres; (b) monitoring the preparation of the sectoral strategies and providing backstopping to sectors as needed; (c) maintaining a central database for all category 2 entities; (d) providing information to Member States; and (e) implementing the global comprehensive communication plan for category 2 institutes and centres. The Director-General is invited to establish sectoral review committees, should this be considered appropriate, as is envisaged by the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), to assess the contribution and impact of an institute/centre and to recommend its continued association or a discontinuation of the category 2 designation.
3. Against such background, the Natural Sciences Sector has taken proactive steps to respond to both developments in the wider context of UNESCO. The objectives of such a strategy for UNESCO's natural sciences-related centres are as follows:
  - to provide a strategic vision of how the centres will function in the longterm in a synergetic manner to contribute to UNESCO's mission by using science to build peace, to eradicate poverty and to promote sustainable development;
  - to determine how category 2 institutes or centres, as a network, will contribute to the implementation of UNESCO's activities and objectives in the Natural Sciences Sector;

## Networking

4. While recognizing diversity, equity and ownership of each natural sciences-related institute and centre, the institutes and centres will work together to contribute to the strategic programme objectives of UNESCO and its Natural Sciences Sector, through maximizing the level of cooperation and the synergy among them.
5. It is proposed that the institutes and centres address their thematic and geographic priorities within their capabilities, and complement each other in finding viable solutions to regional and global natural sciences challenges.
6. In order for the natural sciences-related institutes and centres to contribute in a coherent and complementary manner to enable UNESCO's activities in natural sciences to have a greater impact and higher visibility, the centres will be brought together through purpose-driven processes.
7. The following modes of collaboration and networking among UNESCO's natural sciences-related centres under the auspices of UNESCO are foreseen, in order to ensure that these centres function as a network within UNESCO's Natural Sciences Sector:
  - a) encourage appointment of directors of the category 1 or 2 institutes or centres as observers on the governing board of other institutes or centres that share common interests, especially on similar themes and regions;
  - b) share workplans with all natural sciences-related institutes and centres, harmonizing with the Natural Sciences Sector work plans;
  - c) coordinate closely with other centres working on the same or on complementary issues/topics;
  - d) exchange information on activities such as training/educational materials, and funding opportunities;
  - e) exchange staff, most notably professionals and students;
  - f) initiate joint activities, such as workshops, conferences, training programmes, joint projects, field visits, software and data sharing, knowledge exchange and publications; and
  - g) hold regular meetings, for example, twice in the period of UNESCO's medium term strategy, in order to plan, evaluate and review collaboration.
8. It is foreseen that the centres, both separately and collectively as a network, will work in collaboration with other members of UNESCO's natural sciences family to address regional and global science problems. This collaboration would be strengthened through the following:
  - a) designing of a consultative structure (details to be decided given the communication strategy of each centre), which would encourage networking among all centres;
  - b) appointment of a contact person in each centre in charge of collaboration;
  - c) appointment of representative(s) of UNESCO's related programmes and intergovernmental bodies such as IBSP, IGCP, IHP, IOC and MAB —e.g. a member of the National Committee of the host country or of the region—as member(s) of the governing board or advisory committee of a centre;

- d) appointment of director(s) of centre(s) as member(s) of the scientific board of UNESCO field office (where it exists), and/or member(s) of the Intergovernmental National Committee of the host country/region, and/or other institute(s) of UNESCO's Natural Sciences Sector Centres family;
  - e) consideration of strategic plans of centres while preparing the plans and activities of the Natural Sciences Sector;
  - f) engagement with relevant technical and scientific non-governmental organizations; and
  - g) link with other relevant UN agencies, particularly at the country level (especially those in "One UN" pilot countries), and funding institutions.
9. Other initiatives to strengthen the networking and collaborative activities are also included in sections "Resourcing and future cooperation" and "Common corporate image of UNESCO's natural sciences-related institutes and centres" below.

### **Resourcing and future cooperation**

10. Fulfilling the mandate of the Natural Sciences Sector and contributing to UNESCO's strategic programme objectives would require greater agility in terms of partnering and fundraising among the various natural sciences centres under the auspices of UNESCO. These cooperative activities will strengthen not only institutes and centres, individually, but also their network as a whole. This is based on the understanding that UNESCO will, to the best of its capacity, facilitate the institutes and centres' access to funding mechanisms, but cannot in any way contribute to the operational costs of the institutes and centres.
11. However, activities that are part and parcel of the Natural Sciences Sector workplans could be implemented by the institutes and centres under normal contractual agreements.
12. The institutes and centres shall develop their workplans in a coordinated fashion with UNESCO's short-term and the medium-term programmes and vice versa.
13. Concrete cooperative activities to be implemented include the following:
- a) jointly identify sources of regional and global support and undertake joint fund raising, not only to implement joint activities, but also to create and maintain the network of institutes and centres;
  - b) share geo-referenced and other data, information and knowledge, through a system accessible to all institutes and centres, preferably based on existing ones available to UNESCO;
  - c) undertake joint collaboration on education, capacity building, and training activities;
  - d) exchange professionals;
  - e) create sub-networks based on thematic and/or regional clusters; and
  - f) implement other joint activities.

### **Common corporate image of UNESCO's science-related institutes and centres**

14. UNESCO's science related centres, if their situations allow and if they so choose will share their e-mail distribution lists with the Natural Sciences Sector and vice versa, to exchange newsletters and other information.

15. Science-related institutes and centres will submit to the Science Secretariat an annual activity report, which will be incorporated into a proposed annual corporate report of the UNESCO's science report.
16. A unified communication strategy should also include a joint website, a common brochure, publications, an updated series of logos and potentially, a joint information system and an intranet platform for collaborative activities and information exchange.

#### **Mapping of natural science-related institutes and centres and their activities**

17. In order for UNESCO's natural sciences-related institutes and centres to understand what each centre is doing, and to identify areas of cooperation, it is necessary to have basic information on each centre. Mapping of centres will be carried out by the Natural Sciences Sector for every short term strategy.

#### **Collaboration with UNESCO Chairs and University Networks**

18. Category 2 Institutes and Centres, Chairs and University network in the UNESCO Natural Sciences Sector form a system of academic and non-academic institutions which work on joint training programmes and sharing of expertise to promote a multi-disciplinary approach to natural sciences issues, involving scientists, engineers, economists, legal experts and sociologists.