Desk Study Checklist

March 2008

Prior to the drafting of the Terms of Reference, a desk study is prepared for each programme. The purpose of conducting a desk study is to set out basic, but essential, programmatic information. It is prepared by IOS with the relevant sector or field office contributing information as necessary. The relevant ADG provides assurance that the desk study is a complete and accurate representation of what is being evaluated.

The emphasis is on the results chain of the programme, i.e. inputs, activities, outputs, results, outcomes and impacts. Obtaining this basic set of information is essential for drafting meaningful a Terms of Reference and allows the evaluator to focus on the questions contained in the Terms of Reference.

Each question in the text below must be answered. If it cannot be answered, an explanation should be given as to why. The primary sources for completing the desk study will typically be: (1) needs analysis or feasibility study; (2) Executive Board papers related to the programme; (3) project documents; (4) the C/3; (5) the C/4; (6) the C/5; (7) EX/4 Board papers; (8) monitoring and progress reports (including mission reports); and (9) SISTER.

1   Programme title and summary

❑   What is the name of the programme (include predecessors)?

❑   Provide a brief summary of the programme: overall objective(s) and nature of the activities.

2   Nature of evaluation

❑   Is this evaluation a mid-term evaluation or ex-post evaluation?

❑   What period of activity does this evaluation cover?

3   Programme history

❑   What is the origin of the programme?

❑   When was the programme started?

❑   What have been the main developments in the programme over the last 5–10 years and why did these developments take place?

4   Programme duration

❑   Is the programme expected to terminate at a specific date? If so, when?

❑   Does the programme have an exit strategy?

5   Programme rationale

❑   What is the basic rationale for the programme?

❑   Why is there a role for UNESCO?

❑   Does UNESCO have a comparative advantage? If so, why (unique capabilities and capacity, monopoly etc)?

6   Inputs

❑   How much resource has the activity received over the evaluation period? Include:

- personnel figures
- staff costs
- regular budget funding
- extrabudgetary funding
- funding from recipient governments, NGOS and other donors that does not pass through UNESCO.

7   Activities

❑   What have been the programme's activities over the evaluation period?

❑   Is there a particular geographic focus? Is there a programmatic emphasis on UNESCO priorities or a focus on areas envisaged for targeted interventions? [1]

❑   Who is implementing the activities – UNESCO HQ, UNESCO Field Offices, UNESCO Institutes?

❑   Which of the five UNESCO functions (laboratory of ideas, clearing house, standard-setter, capacity-builder and catalyst for international cooperation) have been adopted (can adopt one or several)?

8   Outputs

❑   What have been the key outputs over the evaluation period? UNESCO outputs typically are the following:

- held X conferences and meetings
- trained X people
- provided X technical assistance to Y member states

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[1] In the UNESCO 34 C/4 Medium Term Strategy 2008-2013 priority is accorded to 'Africa ' and 'gender equality', whereas specific targeted intervention is envisaged for 'Youth', the least developed countries (LDCs), and 'Small Island developing states (SIDS).

- published X books and journals
- established X networks and supported Y networks.

Where applicable relevant key outputs shall be presented with a gender perspective in order to allow gender analysis where appropriate,

9   Outcomes and expected results

❑   What are the expected outcomes and expected results as set out in the C/4, C/5 and/or original establishing document? Identify the Main Line(s) of Action to which the programme is expected to contribute?

❑   Is the programme expected to contribute to any of UNESCO's intersectoral initiatives?

10   Impacts

❑   What are the programme's intended impacts?

11   Monitoring mechanisms

❑   What are the programme's performance indicators?

❑   Have any benchmarks been set? If so, what are they?

❑   What are the data collection methods and their frequency (e.g. surveys, interviews, observation)? Do they foresee gender-disaggregated data collection and allowing gender analysis ?.

❑   Have any progress reports been submitted to donors and/or HQ? If so, when and to whom?

12   Stakeholders and partners

❑   Who makes up the target population (i.e. beneficiaries of the programme)?

❑   Who does UNESCO cooperate with in implementing the programme (include other UN organizations)?

❑   Are there other UNESCO programmes that overlap with the programme or whose activities are undertaken jointly, or in cooperation, with the programme? If so, state the name of the programme(s).

13   Dissemination

❑   Is there a dissemination strategy? What are the key ways of disseminating outputs and results from the programme?

14   Documentation

❑   List all relevant documents and publications.