



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Internal Oversight Service

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## Synthetic Review of Evaluations - 2019

IOS Evaluation Office

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## **Abstract**

This report synthesizes key findings from evaluations commissioned in the 2018 and early 2019 period. It draws on a total of 8 corporate and 18 decentralized evaluations to shed light on UNESCO's achievements with respect to the Expected Results identified in its Approved Programme and Budget for 2018-19 (39 C/5). It concludes that UNESCO has made progress towards both achieving its own Expected Results across the five Major Programmes as well as towards fulfilling its commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs). UNESCO's work is seen as relevant and effective and Member States particularly value the organization's support in advancing SDG targets in key priority areas in their country contexts.

Unsurprisingly, the Organization continues to face significant resource constraints, both financial and human. Efforts to address these constraints through targeted fund raising strategies and stronger partnerships with a wider range of partners are beginning to bear some fruit. There are a number of instances where partnerships have contributed to the efficient implementation of projects by bringing in additional resources, both financial and in-kind, and these efforts need to be embedded across the Organization. Paying closer attention to strategically positioning UNESCO in the areas where it demonstrates comparative strengths for its contribution to the 2030 Agenda and enhancing intersectoral and multidisciplinary cooperation is likely to reap rich dividends for the Organization going forward.

Many of the evaluations show an inconsistent use of monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess programme effectiveness and impact. The Synthesis concludes that there is a continued need a) to consistently apply UNESCO's results-based management frameworks across its programmes so as to ensure robust monitoring of outcomes; b) to strengthen monitoring practices to provide more robust quantitative and qualitative evidence about progress that is underpinned by Theory of Change frameworks; and c) for the Internal Oversight Service (IOS) Evaluation Office to more strongly facilitate and promote learning.

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## Acronyms

ANESI	African Network of Earth Science Institutions
AP	SIDS Action Plan
AU	African Union
BR	UNESCO Biosphere Reserve
C/5	UNESCO Programme and Budget
CI	Communication and Information Sector
CLT	Culture Sector
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ED	Education Sector
ER	Expected Result
EU	European Union
FUST	Flanders / UNESCO Science Trust
HQ	Headquarters
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IHP	UNESCO International Hydrological Programme
IOS	UNESCO Internal Oversight Service
MAB	UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme
MENFP	Haitian Ministry of National Education and Professional Training
MPFEF	Ministry for Women, Children and Families
MIL	Media and Information Literacy
NET-MED	Networks of Mediterranean Youth
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
PCA	Programme Cooperation Agreement
QPR	Quadrennial Periodic Reports
RBM	Results-based management
SC	Natural Sciences Sector
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SHS	Social and Human Sciences Sector
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SRR	UNESCO Strategic Results Report
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
UCH	Underwater Cultural Heritage
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
WWAP	World Water Assessment Programme

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# Introduction

## Rationale

1. At its 186<sup>th</sup> session, the Executive Board requested the Director-General to continue to report periodically on evaluations completed (186 EX/Decision 6.VI). The Internal Oversight Service (IOS) commissioned a synthesis of key findings and crosscutting issues from evaluations commissioned in 2018 and early 2019. The synthesis draws on 8 corporate<sup>1</sup> and 18 decentralized<sup>2</sup> evaluations to shed light on UNESCO's achievements with respect to the Expected Results (ER) as approved in the Programme and Budget 39 C/5.

2. The structure and format for this synthesis replicates the report presented to the Executive Board at its 205<sup>th</sup> session in order to facilitate comparison across the two years. The synthesis builds on IOS's efforts to present a cohesive, integrated story of UNESCO's performance against its C/5 Expected Results and identifies areas of strengths and improvement. The primary focus is on achievements and the report is intended to serve as an input into the Strategic Results Report, due to be presented to Member States in 2020.

## Evaluation synthesis questions

3. The synthesis provides evidence and insights to answer four questions:
- What are the systemic crosscutting issues that appear to help and/or hinder UNESCO's performance against the Expected Results?
  - How does UNESCO perform against the Expected Results identified in its Approved Programme and Budget 39 C/5 (2018-19) in each of its major programmes?
  - Where does UNESCO stand in relation to the standard evaluation criteria? What do the evaluations indicate about the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of its efforts?
  - What assessment can be made about how the evaluations fare vis-à-vis the United Nations Evaluation Group's (UNEG) Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports?

4. The report is structured in five parts. Part I presents an overview of the portfolio of evaluations completed in 2018 and early 2019. Part II presents a discussion of themes that emerged consistently across the evaluations reviewed for this synthesis. Part III synthesizes the evidence against the 39 C/5 Expected Results. Part IV presents an analysis of UNESCO's performance against the evaluation criteria. Part V presents an overview of the quality of the evaluation reports.

## Approach

5. A *desk review* was conducted of 8 corporate and 18 decentralized evaluations and findings were synthesized under each of the Organization's Expected Results contained in the Programme and Budget 39 C/5. Common threads were identified across the evaluations within each Major Programme including issues that helped and/or hindered UNESCO's ability to achieve stronger performance. While the scope of the individual evaluations in some

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<sup>1</sup> The detailed findings, conclusions and recommendations of corporate evaluations are presented in the full evaluation reports, which are available along with management responses on the IOS website: [www.unesco.org/ios](http://www.unesco.org/ios).

<sup>2</sup> Corporate evaluations are commissioned and managed by the IOS Evaluation Office, whereas decentralized evaluations are commissioned and managed by the Programme sectors and/or UNESCO field offices. Decentralized Evaluation Reports are available on UNESCO's intranet (UNESTEAMS).

instances cover more than one ER, for reasons of consistency and to avoid double counting, the primary ER has been considered. There are two exceptions:

- i. *Evaluation of the Natural Sciences Sector components of the Partnership Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between UNESCO and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)*: the eight components contained within this Agreement cut across a range of ERs in the Natural Sciences sector and the evaluation report provides in depth analysis of achievements for each component. Consequently it is possible to present these components against the appropriate ER. In our view, this approach allows for a more accurate reflection of the true contribution of UNESCO's activities within this Agreement.
- ii. *Evaluation of UNESCO's work in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Education*: the area of work covers a heterogeneous set of interventions. Recent efforts to mainstream ICT across the Education (ED) sector's portfolio signals UNESCO's aspirations to see ICT as a means and not an end. UNESCO's work in this area contributes to several ERs across the Major Programmes (in particular, ER 5 for the Communication and Information (CI) Sector and several ERs in the ED Sector).

6. Consequently, findings from these evaluations have been presented under a heading '**Intersectoral cooperation and multidisciplinary themes**' to better reflect the Organization's efforts to deliver its interdisciplinary mandate to support Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

## Limitations

7. The findings outlined in this synthesis and its conclusions rest solely on the review of evaluation reports. Consequently, there are some limitations and readers should take these into account when reviewing the findings. The analysis is constrained by a number of factors as outlined below.

- The quality and robustness of the evaluative evidence contained in the reports is variable.
- The evaluations that were compiled for this synthesis do not cover all programme areas equally. Therefore, not all Expected Results have been covered. Among all decentralized evaluations, the synthesis covers only those decentralized evaluation reports from 2018 and early 2019 that the IOS Evaluation Office was able to collect.
- Most of UNESCO's evaluation reports give weight to outputs rather than capturing results at an outcome level. There is therefore insufficient information to demonstrate the contributions of UNESCO's work at the higher results level.
- Furthermore, many of the evaluations do not specifically link the findings back to the Expected Results as formulated in the 39 C/5. This makes it challenging to synthesize results at an organizational level. Despite these challenges, efforts have been made in this synthesis to extrapolate findings from the evaluation reports to demonstrate achievements against their respective ERs.
- The scope of the evaluations varies significantly ranging from the evaluation of micro level programmes to evaluations that assess the global effects of UNESCO's interventions. This makes it challenging to capture the scale of UNESCO's interventions in the synthesis. For example, it would be unrealistic to determine UNESCO's achievement at the global level based on one or two evaluations of smaller-scale projects.

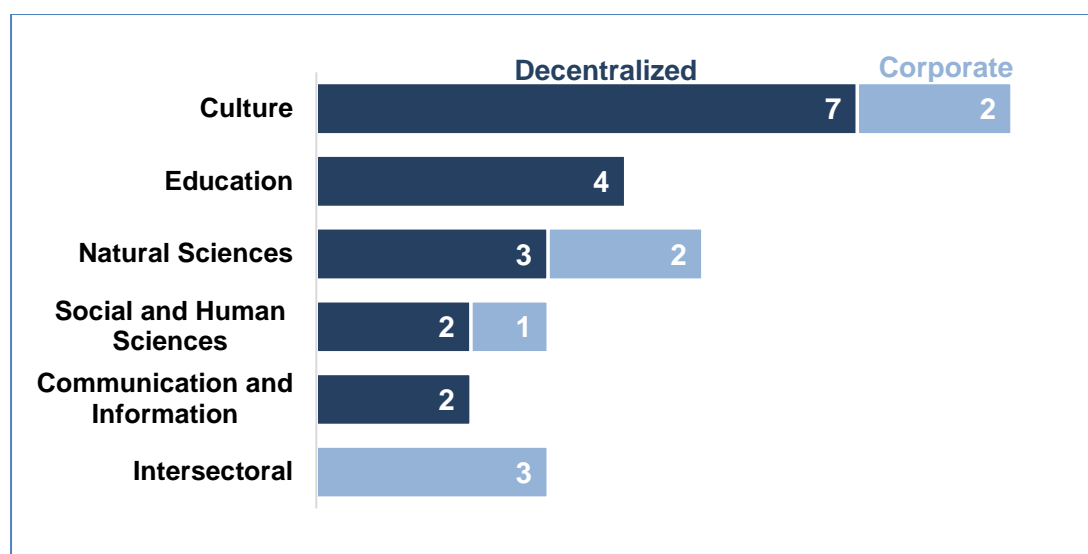
8. In light of these limitations, the assessment of progress against Expected Results is to be regarded as indicative only and limited to the evaluation evidence available for this synthesis.

## Part I – Basic Portfolio Data

9. This section provides basic data on the 26 evaluations considered in this synthesis. In terms of the total number of evaluations completed (corporate and decentralized), data over the past few years indicate that, on average, twenty-five reports are published per year.

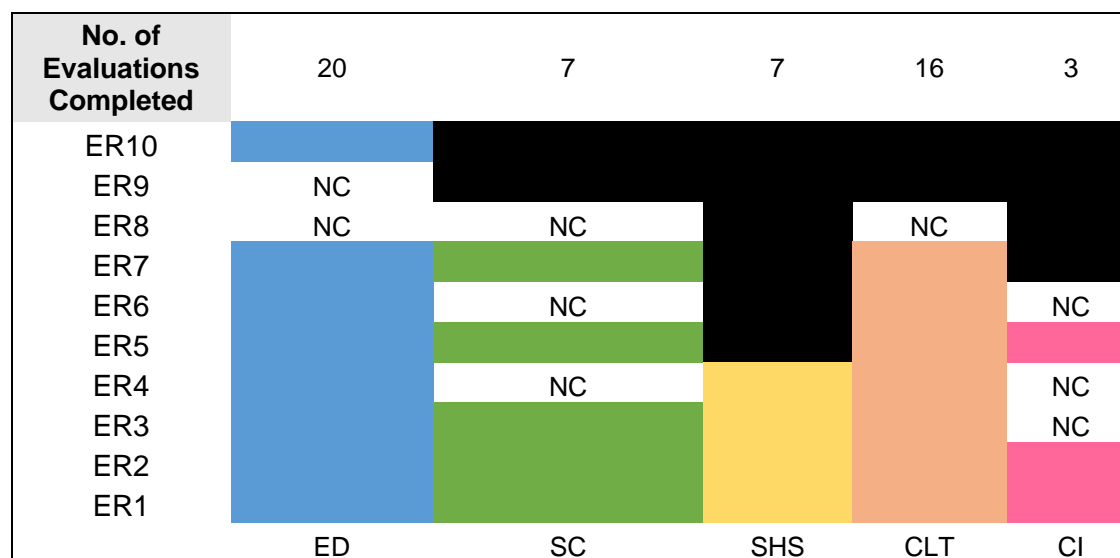
10. Figure 1 illustrates that the majority of evaluation reports (nearly 75%) cover the three programme sectors (ED, SC, CLT) with the largest overall programme budgets. The distribution of completed corporate evaluation reports (one-third) vs. decentralized evaluation reports (two-thirds) is also consistent with past years.

**Figure 1 Programmatic Sector coverage of the 26 completed evaluations**



11. Figure 2 illustrates the degree to which the completed evaluation reports of the past **two** Synthetic Reviews cover the Expected Results of the 39 C/5. A brief analysis indicates that more evaluations are needed in order improve the evidence base for the Strategic Results Report (SRR).

**Figure 2 Evaluation coverage by 39C/5 Expected Result (both 2018 and 2019 Reviews)**



NC = no coverage

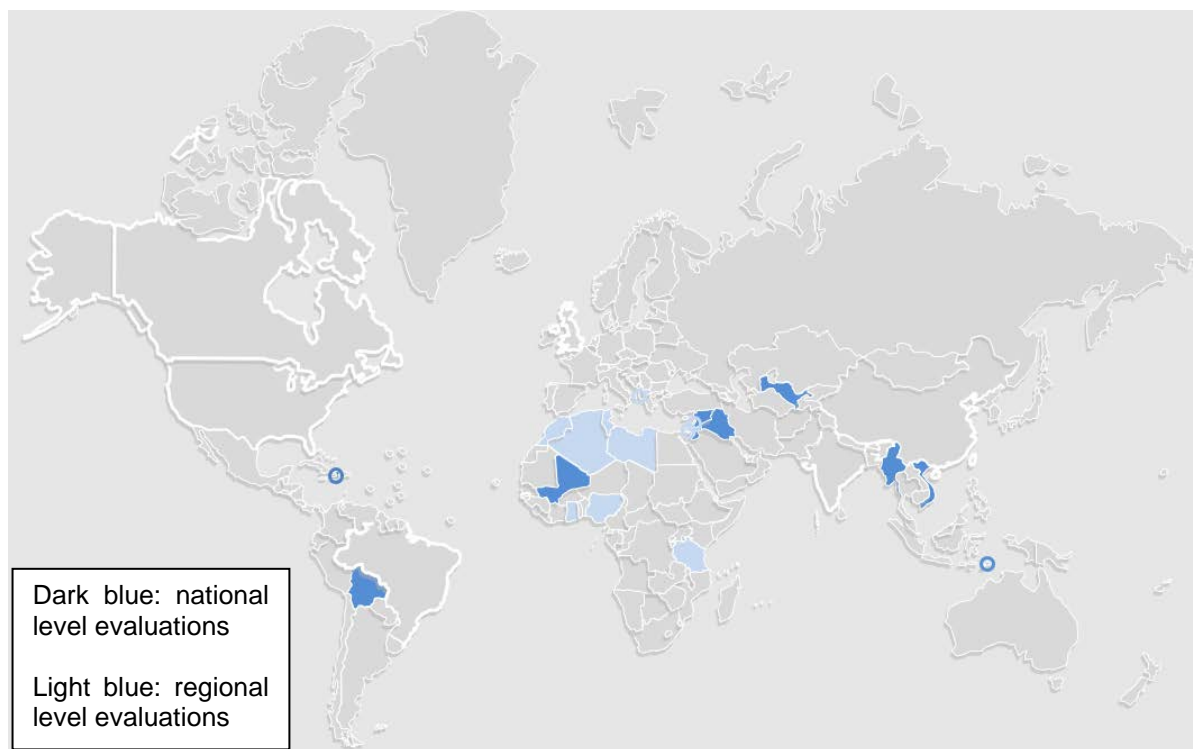
**Figure 3 Geographic and thematic spread of the 2018 evaluations**

**Regional (3)**

SC	Green Economy in Biosphere Reserves (GEBR)
SHS	Networks of Mediterranean Youth (NETMED) project
CLT	Towards Strengthened Governance of the shared transboundary natural and cultural heritage of the Lake Ohrid Region

**National (10)**

ED	Timor-Leste :Quality Education for All – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Cycle Mathematics and Science Curriculum
ED	Haïti: Amélioration de la qualité de l'enseignement
ED	Vietnam: Gender Equality and Girls' Education Initiative
SHS	Mali : Appui aux enfants et jeunes femmes avec enfants victimes des violences liées à l'occupation du nord du Mali
CLT	Bolivia: Preservation and conservation of Tiwanaku and the Akapana Pyramids
CLT	Myanmar: Safeguarding Natural Heritage within the World Heritage Framework
CLT	Iraq: Enhancing Capacities in the Documentation and Conservation of Historical Religious Buildings and in the Refurbishment of Contemporary Mosques in Historic Contexts
CLT	Syria: Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage
CLT	Jordan: Managing disaster risks in Siq of Petra
CI	Uzbekistan: Promoting media and information literacy and building media capacities in quality non-news programming



Dark blue: national level evaluations

Light blue: regional level evaluations

**Global (13)**

ED	Global Education Monitoring Report
SC	Flanders UNESCO Science Trust Funds Phase IV
SC	UNESCO SIDS Action Plan
SC	International Hydrological Programme (IHP)
SC	Natural Sciences Sector components of the PCA between UNESCO and SIDA
SHS	UNESCO's Fund for Elimination of Doping in Sport
CLT	UNESCO's 1954 Culture Convention

CLT	UNESCO's 2001 Culture Convention
CLT	Enhancing fundamental freedoms through the promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions
CI	Promoting democracy and freedom of expression
Intersectoral	Revised Anniversaries Programme
Intersectoral	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Intersectoral	ICT in Education



## Part II – Crosscutting Issues

12. This section discusses the themes that emerged consistently across the evaluations. Focusing on these crosscutting issues provides an important opportunity for the Organization to reflect on its strengths, including its comparative advantages vis-à-vis other multilateral actors to identify areas where there is room for improvement.

### ***UNESCO’s convening power and the power of its collaborative processes***

13. Across all the evaluations, UNESCO’s convening power and its ability to bring together global, regional and national stakeholders and facilitate meaningful dialogue on issues that matter is described as incomparable, unequalled and unique. The evaluations report many examples of meetings where there were policy makers, non-governmental organizations, private sector, community representatives, and multilateral organizations sitting side-by-side having robust, animated conversations on topics of shared interest. For instance, the UNESCO-SIDA project on *‘Enhancing fundamental freedoms through the promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions’* successfully brought government and civil society to discuss cultural issues under the *2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*. The evaluation report stated that in countries such as Ethiopia and Zimbabwe this type of dialogue had never taken place before and the project was instrumental in promoting transparency and informed policy-making. Such an approach also allowed new voices to be heard in policy-making circles such as media actors who had never been previously involved.

14. While there may be comparable organizations that offer equally robust platforms, it is UNESCO’s power and technical expertise in bringing these issues to the attention of senior policy makers that ultimately makes it so formidable. UNESCO has the unique advantage of enabling South-South dialogue and exchange, in contrast to many regional and global events that emphasis North-South exchange and often is not focused on developing countries, and/or the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

15. UNESCO excels in this aspect and engages in dialogue in a low-key, understated way to focus the conversation – not through naming and shaming or stigmatizing like some of the advocacy groups, but by creating the platform and providing tools and frameworks by which practitioners and policy makers can become more literate. In this way, it gives visibility, prominence and salience to key issues and encourages informed debate. UNESCO’s technical expertise particularly in the education and culture sectors, receives special mention: its moral authority and strong reputation at both national and global levels combined with its basket of tools, frameworks and international networks of experts and partners adds its own ‘seal’ validating the Member States’ efforts globally.

### ***Clear, explicit focus on contribution to the 2030 Agenda within the areas of UNESCO’s mandate at a project/programme level***

16. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. The 17 SDGs and 169 targets represent an urgent call for action by all countries, both developed and developing, and brings together the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. UNESCO contributes to the implementation of SDGs through its work in education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture and communication and information.

17. UNESCO’s Programme and Budget (39 C/5) document clearly sets out the Organization’s support for Member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda with

respect to each area of its mandate and maps how each Major Programme and its expected results contribute to the SDGs. This provides a strong imperative to programme specialists from both Headquarters (HQ) and Field Offices to ensure their projects align with the SDGs and discuss how they contribute to the outcomes expressed in the SDGs. However, staff have found it easier to establish the relevance of their programmes to the SDGs, while the practice of monitoring against the SDGs is still in its infancy. Staff interviewed in many evaluations highlighted the challenges in making the connection between their work and the SDGs at the country and global levels. All those involved are grappling with reporting against the SDGs as in many instances the indicators for measuring the achievements of a particular goal do not adequately capture most of the normative work undertaken by UNESCO (e.g. work undertaken by the Culture sector). Despite this, a small number of evaluations have made concerted efforts to comment on performance against the appropriate SDG targets. The development of UNESCO specific indicators would enable better tracking of progress on the contribution of UNESCO's work towards the SDGs.

### ***The Organization continues to face ongoing financial and human resource constraints***

18. The positive impact of UNESCO's endeavour to contribute to the 2030 Agenda, especially those of particular importance to the Organization, is greatly hindered by a significant lack of funds. The decline in Regular Programme funding over the years has had a significant impact on its ability to deliver consistently across its portfolio of projects and also created financial and human resources challenges. UNESCO is in a unique position within the UN system and in the international development community globally to cover a large part of the sustainable development challenges including topics such as climate change, education for sustainable development and preservation of natural and cultural heritage.

19. The Organization's mandate has grown and the Education Sector now has a lead role to play in supporting Member States in the implementation of SDG 4 that builds upon the comprehensive and holistic vision of the Education for All movement. SDG 4 represents the shared global ambition and intergovernmental commitment for education up to 2030. In addition, there are also expectations of intersectoral cooperation to bring integrated solutions to global and local challenges. While these aspirations have the potential to yield significant returns in the long term, it places a significant burden on the Organization and its already stretched resources in sustaining engagement from governments and key partners alike.

20. The completed evaluations, as demonstrated by examples in the Natural Sciences and Social and Human Sciences sectors as well as some intersectoral themes, highlight the resource challenges faced by the Organization and their impact on the effective and efficient delivery of programmes. These constraints often led to a lack of follow through on projects, resulted in limited capacity for tasks to support sustainability and/or thwarted efforts to support implementation of the different Conventions. In many instances, across all Programmes, it has led to an increased reliance on extra-budgetary funding and Funds-in-Trust modalities that create different challenges. For example, the units relying on these funding streams focus on their own staff and expertise. They design their respective projects with limited collaboration with other units and since they are often contracted positions, there is a high turnover resulting in the loss of continuity and loss of institutional knowledge.

### ***Significant shift in leveraging partnerships and collaborations within and outside UNESCO, but opportunities exist***

21. Partnerships and collaborations offer an important opportunity for UNESCO to deliver on its mandate with limited resources, particularly as most of UNESCO's programmes depend on extra-budgetary resources. There has been concerted effort on UNESCO's part to develop fundraising strategies across many of its programmes. There is widespread belief that UNESCO is in an excellent position to bring new partners, including non-state actors, because

of the respect it receives from governments, institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Working in partnership also contributes to the efficient implementation of projects by bringing in additional resources, both financial and in-kind. They also contribute to effectiveness by obtaining local commitment and ensuring a broad network for information dissemination.

22. The last synthesis report noted that this is an area in which UNESCO struggles. However, the evaluation reports considered for this synthesis indicate a shifting trend in this regard. For example, all of the projects implemented within the scope of the Programme Cooperation Agreement between UNESCO and SIDA involved partnerships. These partnerships included within UNESCO and its networks, with relevant departments within national governments, with local, national or international NGOs and with the private sector. The International Hydrological Programme (IHP) evaluation also noted that many activities of the IHP are delivered in partnership with others at the international, national and local level. This added significant value to IHP's results.

23. The ability to develop and work in partnership requires continued emphasis for UNESCO to ensure extra-budgetary funds, in-kind support and political buy in for its work. However, UNESCO's ability to leverage new partnerships is severely hampered by resources. Building and sustaining partnerships takes time and resources that UNESCO does not currently have.

24. For instance, the evaluation of the Natural Science Components of the Programme Cooperation Agreement between UNESCO and SIDA identified opportunities for new partnerships: e.g. collaboration with the East Africa Institute for Fundamental Research, the International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa, the International Centre for Girls and Women's Education and the International Centre for Higher Education Innovation. Additional partnerships were also identified in the evaluation of the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage that had been largely left unexplored including law enforcement organizations, museums and organizations that work in oceans and the environment more broadly. The medium-term evaluation of IHP noted that to cope with resource limitations, measures were taken, such as establishing priorities for the implementation of focal areas and specific objectives, leveraging in-kind resources available through the UNESCO Water Family, raising extra-budgetary funds from external donors and the creation of a special account meant to enable the Programme to receive the financial assistance it needs to meet the demands of Member States.

25. This area will require ongoing attention as the global and national contexts in which UNESCO operates are changing constantly. The evaluations also identified opportunities for new partnerships, particularly with the private sector and in areas such as ICT in Education and the Organization needs to be agile and proactive to leverage these opportunities.

***Some progress towards promoting intersectoral and multidisciplinary cooperation in areas of UNESCO's mandate, but challenges remain***

26. Progress towards the SDGs calls for intersectoral and multidisciplinary approaches that bring integrated solutions to global and local problems. The SDGs are interdependent and there is a growing recognition of the need to go beyond the traditional silo approach. UNESCO's interdisciplinary mandate offers the Organization a strong comparative advantage to effectively support Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda and in addressing the complexity of the related challenges. The Programme and Budget (39 C/5) conveys the Organization's aspirations to harness this advantage by designing intersectoral programmes that will be implemented by UNESCO's field offices with technical backstopping from Headquarters units.

27. However, insufficient human and financial resources severely limit UNESCO's delivery on many fronts, and the potential for intersectoral cooperation has not been fully realized across many of its thematic areas – examples include the review of the SIDS Action Plan, the evaluation of UNESCO's work in ICT in Education and the evaluation of the 2001 Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage.

28. There are also institutional reporting constraints. In UNESCO, reporting is organized by Major Programme in the C/5 document. Programmes are evaluated against the achievement of Expected Results linked to the Major Programme. There are no joint budget codes for implementing joint projects. The coordination costs of organizing and implementing intersectoral initiatives and scarce resources in UNESCO's regular budget severely impede progress towards fulfilling these aspirations.

*Collaboration between Natural Sciences, Education and Social and Human Sciences sectors within UNESCO will greatly benefit the utilization of the GO-SPIN tools and approach at field level. The GO-SPIN tools have elements of information being collected that lie within the mandates of other divisions e.g. basic education, secondary and TVET.*

*Source: Evaluation of Natural Science Components of the Programme Cooperation Agreement between UNESCO and SIDA*

29. In spite of these challenges, there are examples of emerging good practice that need to be recognized – e.g. projects implemented under the PCA between UNESCO and SIDA have actively sought to promote synergies across Major Programmes and the creation of a SIDS Unit and focal point network to support implementation of the *SIDS Action Plan* is enabling greater cooperation. The evaluation of the *2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* reports that the development of positive synergies between the Culture and Communication and Information sectors at HQ and at the field level was one of the most important results of the project. Initiatives such as the joint launch events held across the globe and the inclusion of media diversity as a topic of discussion at the World Press Freedom Day signalled a strong commitment to intersectoral cooperation by both sectors. Sustaining these efforts requires consideration of a wider range of strategies including, but not limited to, better use of National Commissions and network of UNESCO Chairs, developing a small number of flagship intersectoral projects and actively partnering with Member States and non-governmental actors. With the NET-MED Youth Project, UNESCO provided an innovative platform for interdisciplinary and inclusive approaches in the field of Youth and the Project succeeded in incorporating in its design and implementation the aspirations and views of youth in a more holistic manner.

### ***Ongoing challenges with reporting on results at both project / programme and organizational levels***

30. All evaluations identified significant challenges in defining and measuring results in most areas of UNESCO's work, at global, regional and national levels. While recent efforts to strengthen results-based management (RBM) system have served the Organization well, the findings from many evaluations show that more can be done to further promote consistency in the application of RBM at a project / programme level.

31. For example, many projects / programmes still lack an overarching Theory of Change, or a results framework, that can enable the systematic monitoring of progress against results in the short, medium and longer term. Even in instances where monitoring frameworks are in place and comprehensive reports prepared, the information is captured at the output level, not outcome level. A number of evaluations of UNESCO Conventions report the lack of well-designed monitoring systems and/or poor compliance rates. As a result, little is known about the actual results and how they have been achieved.

*The lack of a Theory of Change or an intervention logic makes it difficult to assess achievements. A Theory of Change sets out the causal links between the inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes along with the key assumptions underlying the change process. The current programme logic is limited to outputs.*

*Source: finding emerging from several evaluations*

32. At an organizational level, the evaluations do not address questions relating to the ER as stated in the C/5 document e.g. the extent to which the project and/or programme contributes to the ER remains unanswered across most evaluations. The evaluations are often limited to capturing information relating to the achievements of the implemented project or programme. The analysis does not go further to determine the project/programme's contribution to, for instance, building / strengthening national institutional and human capacities to respond to identified development challenges. A well-articulated Theory of Change to demonstrate the link between the intervention and the ER is necessary if these evaluations are to be used to report against organizational results (i.e. outcomes). This practice also places the ER at the front and centre of all those involved in design and implementation of the project / programme and provides a sharper focus to UNESCO's work.

33. Perhaps most importantly, the synthesis revealed that insufficient attention is being paid to socio-cultural contexts and/or consideration of culturally responsive evaluation approaches in the design, implementation, analysis and reporting of results. As a result, there is little discussion of the importance, role, and influence of culture in many evaluations. The evaluation of *Girls' Education in Vietnam* specifically identified the lack of culturally responsive approaches in the design and implementation of the initiative that resulted in missed opportunities and minority ethnic communities being excluded from the scope of the activity.

34. This is not satisfactory as the SDGs reflect growing global concerns about the future of the planet as signalled by the focus on sustainability and the urgent need for social inclusion to ensure 'no one is left behind.' The ambitious goals presented in the SDGs, while offering opportunities to give voice to a much broader range of groups, also present new challenges. From an evaluation perspective, the focus on social inclusion points to the need to pay closer attention to more holistic approaches that consider the socio-economic and socio-cultural contexts, both in programme design and implementation, and evaluation that promotes the integration of indigenous perspectives and worldviews. However, this requires significant investment in building the cultural competence of both UNESCO staff and/or the evaluation community who undertake the work.

### ***Further strengthening the integration of Global Priorities Africa and Gender Equality***

#### **Gender Equality**

35. The UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan 2014-2021 (GEAP II) sets the strategic objectives for the Organization and reflects its commitment to ensure consistency and complementarity of efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. This includes supporting the improvement of the collection and analysis of consistent, reliable and comparable sex-disaggregated data in fields in which UNESCO operates, efforts to address gender disparities in specific programming areas, promoting women's leadership in areas of UNESCO's domains of competence, strengthening institutional gender mainstreaming into all relevant policy, strategic, operational and administrative documents and processes, and coordinating and strengthening existing partnerships and networks, both internal and external, to lift visibility of UNESCO's work in women's empowerment and gender equality.

36. The synthesis of completed evaluations finds that UNESCO has made significant progress in this regard and the Organization's efforts to improve staff capacities and provide strategic and technical guidance for gender mainstreaming has led to gender equality considerations in the design of many projects. Adding a gender equality component to performance indicators of all expected results in the 39 C/5 also sets clear expectations and as a result, more evaluations in the 2018/19 period reported explicitly against this priority compared to the previous period.

37. For instance, the evaluation of the *Enhancing fundamental freedoms through the promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions* project found that the gender dimension was effectively positioned in project tools (e.g. training module on participatory monitoring), formats (e.g. quadrennial periodic reporting format), frameworks (Global Monitoring Framework) and discussions (such as capacity building activities at the national level and Global Report launch events). Project documentation and communication materials used gender-sensitive language and images. The *ICT in Education* evaluation identified some excellent gender-responsive and gender-transformative projects implemented by a variety of different UNESCO entities downstream and closer to the learning environment (e.g. *Empowering Women and Girls in Mobile Technologies in Myanmar* by UNESCO's Myanmar Office; *Mobile Literacy for Out of School children in Thailand* by UNESCO Bangkok, a partnership with Microsoft).

38. However, the reporting against this global priority is not consistent and many evaluations show that monitoring tends to be focused on output level indicators rather than outcome indicators. Evaluations typically measure numbers of men and women that have benefitted from interventions but not much beyond that. The analysis of the evaluations indicates that greater commitment should be shown by managers to ensuring that gender equality considerations – going beyond questions of parity alone – are adequately addressed in activities.

39. Currently, the integration of gender-specific approaches is under the responsibility of UNESCO Programme Specialists that coordinate with the gender focal point in their respective sectors or Field Offices or directly with the UNESCO Division for Gender Equality. However, some sectors work more closely with the Division than others and field offices do not always have a gender specialist who is familiar with the local context and the implications of gender. As a result, progress against this global priority is often patchy. A broader use of the various existing guidelines for the inclusion of gender equality in the implementation of the various projects would strengthen mainstreaming efforts.

## **Priority Africa**

40. An operational strategy for Priority Africa based on the Vision of the African Union forms the foundation of UNESCO's work in Africa. The Organization has continued to implement the flagship programmes for Priority Africa. The Africa Department plays an important role in terms of strategic facilitation and backstopping, including the mobilization of financial and in-kind resources through its in-house knowledge of African regional, sub-regional and national institutions.

41. All completed evaluations indicate that there are deliberate efforts by the Organization to respond to Global Priority Africa across its programmes either by directly targeting the project or programme in the region and/or ensuring the African voice in its evaluation endeavour. Examples include:

- The *ICT in Education* evaluation was strongly focused on Africa, from different funding modalities and in particular of extra budgetary projects. 24% and 28% respectively of all ICT in Education interventions in 2014 and 2017 were implemented entirely in Africa, without considering initiatives with a global scope.

- UNESCO's Priority Africa was reflected in the number of countries (38%) and experts (25%) selected from Africa within the scope of the *UNESCO-SIDA* project to support the development of systems of good governance for culture as stipulated in the *2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*.

42. Strengthening the focus on outreach and communication initiatives is likely to foster an enhanced understanding and improved visibility of Priority Africa among all stakeholders. Additional levers are available through the governance and management structures that have been put in place across many projects and these need to be better utilized. For instance, the Steering Committee and the Approval Committee established to oversee the *FUST* and *UNESCO Fund for the Elimination of Doping in Sport* respectively actively sought to consider projects that directly addressed activities in Africa. On the other hand, the Meeting of the States Parties to the 2001 Convention that serves the main statutory body of the Convention did not have a special focus on the African context and did not consider UNESCO's Global Priorities sufficiently in their work. The governance and management structures must serve as the custodians of UNESCO's global priorities and ensure that these priorities are considered in their decision-making.

## Part III – Analytical Summary of Expected Results

43. UNESCO pursues a development agenda through various aspects of its mandate covering education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture and communication and information. The largest segment of UNESCO's projects is a set of contributions to capacity building and generating innovative ideas, principally through advising Member States on policy development and implementation in the areas of its mandate. Contribution through other implementation mechanisms occurs through promoting international cooperation, knowledge sharing and partnerships, normative work, including capacity building for implementing and monitoring a range of conventions, and maintaining focus on UNESCO's global priorities on Africa and Gender Equality.

44. While the evaluations in some instances cover more than one ER, for reasons of consistency and to avoid double counting, the primary ER has been considered.

### Major Programme 1: Education

45. A total of four evaluations were considered for this synthesis<sup>3</sup>. The outcomes achieved against the Expected Results are outlined below.

#### ER #1

#### **Improved national education policies and plans to advance access to equitable and quality ECCE, primary and secondary education through a system-wide lifelong learning approach**

The *Timor-Leste Quality Education for All – 3<sup>rd</sup> Cycle Mathematics and Science Curriculum* contributes directly to this expected result. Implemented by the UNESCO Jakarta in close partnership with the Timor-Leste Ministry of Education through the UNESCO National Commission, this project supported the Government of Timor-Leste to take a systemic approach to curriculum development that is both indigenous and in line with international standards. The curriculum transformation initiated by this project included consolidating the national curriculum, finalizing the syllabus, developing learning materials and assessments and training for teachers to deliver the new curriculum.

The evaluation of the project showed strong performance on key evaluation criteria:

- Activities and outputs had high relevance for all participants: Timor-Leste government; UNESCO's mandate as defined in the Medium-Term Strategy and the associated C/5 and to teachers and education professionals.
- The components of the Project led to an improvement in teachers' subject matter knowledge, the curriculum and pedagogical content knowledge as well as their understanding of various forms of assessment.
- While a team of Subject Matter Experts were built in the scope of this project, the numbers were too small to implement outreach activities. Sustaining the capability and professional growth of the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) was identified as an area of opportunity for the future.
- Strong coordination among stakeholders led to ownership of the curriculum transformation programme.

#### *Global priorities Africa and Gender Equality*

The project was implemented in Timor-Leste. While UNESCO Global Priority Gender Equality was given consideration in the implementation of this project, the evaluation itself is gender-

<sup>3</sup> A fifth evaluation that covers several ERs of the ED sector i.e. the evaluation of ICT in Education is listed under intersectoral evaluations below.



blind. There is no gender-based discussion in the report about the relevance of the curriculum or indeed its outcomes.

#### **ER #5**

#### **National teacher policies developed and/or implemented and teacher training programmes improved to increase the supply of qualified and motivated teachers**

After the 2010 earthquake, the Haitian government developed a reconstruction plan including an Operational Plan aimed at reforming the country's education system. From 2010, UNESCO started to work closely with the AMC ('Affaires Mondiales Canada'), and the Haitian Ministry of National Education and Professional Training (MENFP) to design the project '*Amélioration de la qualité de l'enseignement en Haïti*'. The project was set up to sustainably respond to the challenges identified in the Plan by developing teacher policies and standards; implementing training programmes to lift quality of teaching, and supporting regional teacher training centres to provide ongoing professional learning and development. The Project started in 2012 for an initial period of 4 years, and was later extended by another year to enable new policies and practices to be embedded in the education system of Haiti.

An evaluation undertaken in 2018 showed that while the project successfully contributed to teacher policy development and training, its benefits are yet to be fully realised. Up to now most of the project's efforts have been at a strategic level (to support and redefine the education sector in Haiti) and the policies have yet to be fully operationalized on the ground. Despite this, the project successfully delivered a documented set of policies to support teacher training in Haiti, developed a systematic approach to teaching training, and delivered training materials, teacher policy development guides and tools to improve teacher training standards and competencies. The evaluation did find that key relationships between partners (Affaires Mondiales Canada AMC, UNESCO, MENFP) were fragile, there was a lack of a rigorous monitoring and evaluation system to track progress and lack of alignment between the ambition of the project and its implementation (e.g. high turnover of Ministers, project personnel, lack of structured documentation management system).

*Global priorities Africa and Gender Equality*

The project was implemented in Haiti. The project is silent with respect to Global Priority Gender Equality. Consideration of gender equality has not gone beyond the discussion stage.

#### **ER #7**

#### **National capacities strengthened to address gender equality holistically in national education systems**

Education and gender equality are central concerns in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as emphasised particularly through SDGs 4 and 5. UNESCO contributes to these objectives by strengthening gender mainstreaming throughout UNESCO's education programme, advocacy and partnership building and supporting targeted gender-specific programming.

The evaluation of *Gender Equality and Girls' Education Initiative in Vietnam* provides useful insights about UNESCO's success in this regard. Funded by UNESCO Malala Fund for Girls Right to Education and the Vietnam One Plan Fund of the United Nations, this project's design and implementation successfully supported Member States in their efforts to eliminate gender disparities. The evaluation concluded that:

- The Initiative was well-aligned with national and global gender priorities.
- It led to increased awareness of the importance of gender-related education in country amongst all stakeholders.
- It was implemented efficiently and in a timely manner with strong engagement from national implementing partners.

- Planned results and impacts identified for each component of the initiative were met.
- The benefits of the initiative are likely to be sustained and advanced further by stakeholders. The findings show institutionalization of practices and strategies for gender equality and girls' education had also occurred.

Clearly this initiative has served as a catalyst for change. It demonstrates UNESCO's success in fulfilling the Performance Indicator relating to this Expected Result: Vietnam now has a holistic, multisectoral Action Plan on Gender Equality of the Education sector for 2016-2020 developed and approved by the Ministry of Education and Training.

*Global priorities Africa and Gender Equality*

The Initiative was implemented in Vietnam. The entire project relates to Gender Equality.

## **ER #10**

### **Research and foresight, monitoring and reporting on SDG 4 – Education 2030 has effectively generated evidence, recommendations and insight to advance progress towards SDG 4**

Following the adoption of the SDG, UNESCO has been entrusted with the task of leading and coordinating SDG 4 – Education 2030 through its advocacy, sector coordination, and implementation and monitoring activities. The Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM Report) along with its supplementary products such as the Gender Review, Youth Report, and online Report, serves as the platform for UNESCO to monitor trends and review progress towards SDG 4 and other education-related SDGs.

The Evaluation of the GEM Report undertaken in 2018 focused on determining how effectively the GEM Report fulfilled its mandate. The findings showed that:

- GEM continues to be an authoritative, independent, evidence-based tool in monitoring progress towards education in the SDGs focused on themes that matter for policymakers globally and regionally as well as national education communities.
- The effectiveness of GEM Report's outreach strategy was mixed with the report reaching some audiences better than others and the evaluation recommended using UNESCO Field Offices and National Commissions to promote the key messages to its intended audiences.
- With respect to impact, all stakeholders involved reported that the GEM Report positions and promotes education within the 2030 Agenda and national priorities and that the Report was successful in promoting dialogue on education at national, regional and international levels.
- There are opportunities to increase the value of the GEM Report team and Advisory Board's processes to enhance value for money.

In particular, the evaluation highlighted inherent tension between the GEM Report's mandate to monitor progress on SDG 4 and the extensive range of outputs expected including policy impacts. These expectations while critical are not proportionate to the current level of resourcing allocated to the GEM team.

*Global priorities Africa and Gender Equality*

The GEM Report was seen as highly responsive to UNESCO Global Priority Gender Equality. The Evaluation found that Member States and gender experts commented on the notable improvement in treatment of gender across the Report and that the introduction of the Gender Reviews contributed to improving understanding of gender issues.

## Major Programme II: Natural Sciences

46. Two corporate and three decentralized evaluations were considered within this programme for this synthesis. The evaluations indicate UNESCO's activities in Natural Sciences sector are seen as highly relevant and valued by Member States. However, performance continues to be hampered by financial and human resource constraints. There is more opportunity for UNESCO to increase its leadership in this Programme and to focus its efforts on upstream work.

### ER 1

#### **Member States have strengthened their capacity to develop and monitor inclusive science, technology and innovation (STI) policy and knowledge system**

In order to strengthen and focus UNESCO's work in support of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) and support Member States to build comprehensive systems to collect, monitor and make available data on STI policy instruments, two important initiatives were implemented within the auspices of the Programme Cooperation Agreement between UNESCO and SIDA: STEM and Gender Advancement (SAGA) project and the Global Observatory of Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Instruments (GO-SPIN).

The evaluation findings show strong results for both projects. Specifically,

- The Projects were seen as highly relevant to the SDG's and to UNESCO priorities for supporting the development and monitoring of inclusive STI policy and knowledge systems.
- Both Projects met or exceeded performance targets:
  - SAGA:
    - 29 Member States contributing to and/or using SAGA data. Target was 15.
    - Launch of SAGA toolkit at the World Science Forum with 15 media articles covering the launch.
    - More than 40 instruments added to SAGA database. The target was 15.
    - 29 countries participated as pilots in SAGA. The target was 15.
    - More than 10,000 downloads of SAGA publications occurred. The target was 100.
  - GO-SPIN:
    - Seven associations were using the evidence. The target was six.
    - 17 environmental assessments of mine sites were completed. The target was eight.
    - Six policy briefs were prepared, meeting the target.
    - In addition the project made significant contributions to skill development with eight PhDs, 18 on going PhD, 26 Masters completed and nine are still on going.
- The projects were deemed to be highly efficient: they were delivered to budget, implemented in collaboration with key partners including national, regional offices, national governments, institutions and NGOs, capacity building and training events were undertaken in conjunction with other events to minimise burden, and collaborations between projects within the wider PCA portfolio were explored whenever possible.
- Both projects had built in adequate elements for sustainability. As a result, there is a strong likelihood of long-term sustainability and sustained impact of the work done so far.

#### *Global priorities Africa and Gender Equality*

SAGA and GO-SPIN addressed UNESCO's Global priority Africa and Gender Equality.

- SAGA was entirely focused on gender equality. More than 350 women (70%) participated in training of officials. Of the 11 pilot countries where SAGA was implemented, three were in Africa.

- GO-SPIN programme is relevant to UNESCO priorities through its work in Africa and a focus on gender.
  - For instance the country profile has a chapter on gender that has ensured the issue of gender and science is addressed and incorporated. A new STI policy project is being developed to further progress the GO-SPIN and the SAGA project in order to better address the needs of STI policy-makers in Member States.
  - Of the seven GO-SPIN reports currently available, four are from African Member States.

### **ER 3**

#### **SIDS Member States, local communities and indigenous peoples have increased their capacity to mobilize local knowledge systems, and build synergies with science, so as to address challenges of sustainable development**

UNESCO's contribution to this Expected Result occurs through a multi-pronged approach. Mobilizing local knowledge systems and building synergies with science including SIDS is central to improving global understanding of complex and diverse systems of climate knowledge, associated vulnerabilities and reinforcing the adaptation capacities and resilience of indigenous communities. Evaluations of three projects (two in Africa and one global project) implemented by UNESCO were made available for this synthesis including:

- Implementation of the SIDS Action Plan adopted in April 2016 and led by UNESCO to address the unique sustainable development challenges facing SIDS.
- Trans-disciplinary research on climate change adaptation for vulnerable indigenous communities in sub-Saharan Africa: fostering indigenous-scientific knowledge co-production (LINKS Climate Change), aimed at mobilising indigenous knowledge of weather and climate to improve existing knowledge base regarding climate change.
- Building and Mobilising Developing Country Capacity to participate effectively in the Future Earth Initiative, a 10-year research driven, action-oriented project.

All three evaluations showed that UNESCO's efforts were highly relevant from a global perspective and directly contributed to its priorities as outlined in the Medium-Term Strategy (37 C/4) and UNESCO's C/5. Specifically,

- The wide range of activities implemented within the scope of the SIDS Action Plan demonstrated good progress towards objectives of the Action Plan and the SAMOA Pathway. The Action Plan is well-aligned with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and echoes the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Stakeholders consistently commented on the value of the projects and activities implemented by UNESCO in SIDS. However, the Action Plan's contribution to making these initiatives a reality was less clear. Some on-going challenges were identified relating to current level of resourcing available for implementation of the Action Plan, poor communication resulting in missed opportunities and the absence of an Action Plan-specific monitoring framework.
- The evaluation of the LINKS Climate Change project showed strong results – the project was seen as highly relevant in the context of climate change, UNESCO's Priority Africa and to SDG 12 on climate change. The project for the most part exceeded its performance targets.
- Future Earth initiative was seen as a highly effective pilot to ensure developing countries, especially in Africa, are not left behind. The project successfully engaged with a unique variety of stakeholders across all six participating countries, met or exceeded performance targets, delivered on strong partnerships with academia, civil society, government and other UN agencies.

#### *Global priorities Africa and Gender Equality*

While the LINKS Climate Change and Future Earth project addressed UNESCO's Global Priorities Africa and Gender Equality, the SIDS Action Plan evaluation indicated poorer results.

- SIDS Action Plan: the findings showed that alignment with UNESCO's global priorities Gender Equality and Africa is not sufficiently explicit in the Action Plan.
  - With respect to Priority Africa, only five out of the 174 SIDS projects are implemented in sub-Saharan Africa.
  - With respect to gender, the analysis of the SIDS Action Plan shows that only a small number of objectives are gender specific. Further analysis of the 38 C/5 shows that a limited number of SIDS-related performance indicators are gender specific.
- LINKS Climate Change: In addition to addressing UNESCO's focus on Africa (focused on sub-Saharan Africa), the project reinforced gender sensitivity by including women in the performance measures and integrated the perspectives of pastoral women and their knowledge.
- Future Earth: five out of the six countries in this pilot were in Africa. With respect to Gender Equality, the evaluation reported high participation of women and all national Capacity Building Action Plans have included special actions to promote women in science.

#### **ER #4**

#### **Member States have strengthened management of both geological resources and geohazards risk towards the achievement of related Sustainable Development Goals and targets.**

Earth science research and education in Africa faces great challenges due to weak cooperation among African institutions, limited resources and isolation of Earth scientists. In response to these challenges, two projects were launched through the Partnership Cooperation Agreement between UNESCO and SIDA: the *African Network of Earth Science Institutions* (ANESI), to foster greater collaboration among university departments of Earth sciences, research institutions and Earth Science related industries in Africa, and *Abandoned Mines* project, to map and assess the adverse impacts of abandoned mines in sub-Saharan African countries.

Both projects showed strong results with respect to strengthening institutional capacity for sustainable management of their natural resources. The evaluations concluded that:

- Both projects were relevant and effective. Despite reduced resources the projects were able to achieve or exceed most of their performance targets.
- The projects had high visibility with ANESI receiving recognition with the African Union as a tool that contributes to achieving the African Mining vision, an important AU-led initiative. The *Abandoned Mines* project contributed to skill development in the region with eight completed PhDs, 18 PhD underway and 26 Masters completed.
- The projects impacted on other aspects of Earth sciences in Africa through the involvement of Africa in the Country of International Geoscience Programme and boosting Geoparks in the continent.
- ANESI has proven its ability to serve as a platform for collaboration and exchange between African Earth sciences institutions and impact on the research and training in Africa.

The evaluation also cautioned that while ANESI offers great value, the network is still fragile and on-going investment is needed to strengthen it and support it to mature well.

#### *Global priorities Africa and Gender Equality*

Both projects contributed to UNESCO's priority on Africa. While the *ANESI* project contributed to progress towards Africa's Agenda 2063, and building a network of capacity building institutions across Africa, the *Abandoned Mines* project was implemented across 15 African

countries to raise awareness and reduce adverse effects of abandoned mines on the ecosystem.

In the ANESI project, Gender Equality was incorporated into this project in a variety of ways:

- The progress of involvement of women in ANESI activities grew from 32% in 2015 to 40% in 2017/18.
- ANESI Mobility Grants awards, to encourage women geoscientists to embark on post-graduate and PhD studies, presented to 12 women over the Project period (target was 8).
- ANESI supported the Association of African Women in Geosciences and facilitated participation of young female geoscientists in international conferences.

The *Abandoned Mines* project did not address gender equality directly, the evaluation noted that 33% of the scientists involved were women and 39% of the project leaders were women.

#### **ER #5**

#### **Member States have strengthened management of natural resources towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals and targets related to biodiversity and climate change resilience**

The evaluation of the *Project Green Economy in Biosphere Reserves: A means to biodiversity conservation, poverty reduction and sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa* provides invaluable insights into UNESCO's contribution to this ER. The project, developed by the Secretariat of the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) of UNESCO, used the UNDAF priorities in each participating country. The evaluation reported:

- The project strengthened the capacity of beneficiaries in a holistic manner and diversified community livelihoods by providing training in production, maintenance and marketing of selected livelihoods in each participating country. For example, Ghana traditionally focused on cocoa explored palm oil processing, snail rearing, beekeeping and mushroom production within the scope of this project. These livelihoods helped reduce poverty among community members in line with the national policy and plan for the conservation of natural resources.
- The project led to improved mechanisms and partnerships in the establishment of sustainable biodiversity business to diversity community livelihoods.
- Positive outcomes were achieved in all three participating countries including increase in household revenue, heightened awareness of the need to preserve the biodiversity or the ecosystem of the Biosphere Reserves, the creation of a revolving fund and formation of green business associations.

#### *Global priorities Africa and Gender Equality*

This project is well aligned to UNESCO Global Priority Africa as it was entirely implemented in sub-Saharan Africa.

With respect to Gender Equality, the evaluation findings provide some data on women's participation in capacity building training workshops.

#### **ER #7**

#### **Member States have strengthened their response to water security challenges towards the achievement of water-related sustainable development goals and targets, and other targets from relevant international water agendas**

A number of evaluations provide insights with respect to UNESCO's contribution to this Expected Result.

#### Evaluation of *Flanders/UNESCO Science Trust Fund (FUST) Phase IV [2014-2018]*

This project was financed by the Flemish Government to support UNESCO's efforts in mobilizing scientific knowledge and policy for sustainable development and in promoting research and technical capacity building for the sound management of natural resources, particularly water, and for disaster preparedness.

The evaluation indicates strong performance both at the level of FUST (in terms of governance and management and sustainability of the Fund) and the level of FUST- financed projects (in terms of results achieved by the individual projects funded by FUST).

FUST is identified as a relevant cooperation mechanism for advancing the interests and needs of both the Government of Flanders and UNESCO. With respect to FUST-supported projects and activities, the evaluation finds strong alignment between country priorities and project activities. There is also evidence to show that FUST is strengthening the capacities of Member States from a science and evidence-based perspective of natural resource managers and policy practitioners around the globe. Additional results linked to the implementation of the fourth phase include:

- Strengthened visibility of UNESCO and UNESCO programmes.
- Strengthened visibility of the Flemish Region internationally.
- Development of inter-programme collaboration within UNESCO's Natural Sciences sector as well as between FUST-funded programmes and third-party programmes and initiatives.
- Increased evidence of national/beneficiary country co-financing of FUST.

#### Evaluation of *Emerging Pollutants in Wastewater Reuse in Developing Countries* and *African Drought Early Warning System Expansion to Southern Africa*

These evaluations provide further evidence of UNESCO's success with respect to this ER. Raising awareness of health and environmental risks associated with new and emerging pollutants in water resources and wastewater and monitoring of drought is critical to UNESCO's commitment to supporting Member States to build resilience with respect to water-related hazards and water security challenges. The two projects, designed to respond to these challenges through the Programme Cooperation Agreement between UNESCO and SIDA, were implemented as part of the International Initiative on Water Quality of UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme in the Natural Sciences Sector.

The evaluation findings for both projects showed positive results with respect to all aspects of the project. Specifically:

- The projects met or exceeded all of their performance targets at both output and outcomes level.
- There is strong evidence that the projects are beginning to influence water policy and thinking in the field. Examples include HELCOM Convention officially agreeing to include a pharmaceutical (Diclofenac) as a test indicator of aquatic environment monitoring. The Drought Early Warning System project has had an impact on the drought mitigation policies, strategies and management plans of 15 countries.
- All projects have been implemented in partnership with other institutions, extending the resources directly available through SIDA funding.
- There is strong evidence of sustainability and legacy benefits as the projects were able to secure funding from other sources to augment its work.

#### Mid-Term Evaluation of IHP Phase VIII

UNESCO contributes to strengthening knowledge and strengthening capacities at all levels to achieve water security through the implementation of specific activities under IHP-VIII. The mid-term evaluation finds that IHP is uniquely placed within the wider UN Water context owing to its *scientific basis* for understanding water management issues and its *intergovernmental nature* that enables drawing in experience and expertise from not only UN staff at HQ and regionally, but also of the National Committees along with the UNESCO Water family

(Category II Centres Chairs and the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP). IHP's work is also seen as well aligned with key global agendas, including the SDGs with many areas of its work contributing to key areas within SDG 6 such as water stress, water quality and water-related ecosystems.

The evaluation found that the IHP is delivering on the targets set out in Phase VIII despite its limited resources. However the targets mostly achieved concern outputs (e.g. reports and/or maps produced, research commissioned, creation of new alliances) rather than outcomes (e.g. changes affecting water management policy or practice at the global, regional or country level).

Perhaps most importantly, IHP faces ongoing challenges in managing the breadth and depth of its work, particularly in light of the wide-ranging global agendas and its intergovernmental nature that create pressures to reflect Member State needs. These issues need to be urgently addressed to ensure IHP's ongoing efforts to science diplomacy while advancing the science base for policy development and water cooperation. The IHP network and partnerships have been critical in ensuring extra-budgetary funds, in kind support and political buy in and the evaluation indicate these efforts require continued emphasis.

With respect to outreach and communications, the evaluation finds a more proactive approach to communication is needed to lift the visibility of IHP's work.

#### *Global priorities Africa and Gender Equality*

The *Flanders/UNESCO Science Trust Fund* reported low priority to UNESCO's gender equality in FUST projects. The IHP directly addresses gender equality through a range of activities and keeps track of gender-specific results through a set of gender-sensitive indicators. However, the IHP programme does not contain gender-specific objectives or focal areas. Across the six thematic areas of IHP Phase VIII, an explicit gender component is virtually absent. These evaluations point to the need for a more proactive approach on gender and the collection of gender-specific data across these activities.

With respect to Priority Africa, the importance of Africa for the IHP is reflected in two elements: first, in the allocation of the budget and secondly, the creation of designated performance targets and indicators adopted under the 39 C/5. However, the evaluation revealed it is difficult to assess the extent to which IHP has effectively contributed to this priority through its activities. This is because no data is available regarding progress towards the achievement of the targets set out in 39 C/5.

By contrast, the projects funded under the PCA between UNESCO and SIDA show strong alignment with UNESCO's global priorities. UNESCO Global Priority Africa were met in the projects through:

- The inclusion of 4 case studies from Africa in the *Wastewater* project – Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and Rwanda; in addition, UNESCO Water Centre Nigeria made a significant contribution to the Project.
- The implementation of the *Drought* project in 16 countries in Southern Africa.

The Projects incorporated gender equality by including case studies specifically addressing women's health and by tracking women's participation in technical workshops and seminars – of the 300 participants in the technical workshops and meetings, 110 were women.



## Major Programme III: Social and Human Sciences

47. Three evaluations were considered within this programme for this synthesis: one corporate and two decentralized evaluations. The outcomes and achievements of the Organization against Expected Results identified within this Major Programme have been outlined in the table below. Overall, the Social and Human Sciences Programme shows mixed performance with respect to Expected Results. The primary reason identified across all three evaluations relates to the significant financial and human resource constraints faced by this Major Programme. Addressing these issues is critical if UNESCO is to optimize its influence within this area of its mandate.

### ER #2

#### **National institutional and human capacities strengthened at all levels to generate, manage and apply knowledge for inclusive, equitable development that is based on ethical values and human rights**

UNESCO is committed to supporting Member States and relevant stakeholders to generate, manage and apply pertinent and relevant knowledge to respond to contemporary challenges including ethical dilemmas raised by scientific and technological advancements. The key modality for UNESCO's contribution to this expected result includes national projects under the Fund for Elimination of Doping in Sport (the Fund). The evaluation of the Fund shows that UNESCO's performance has been mixed:

- While 107 States Parties have had projects approved under the Fund and, a greater number of States Parties have benefited through various regional projects, UNESCO has failed to sufficiently leverage its investment of the Fund to strengthen implementation of the Convention and/or increased States Parties compliance with the Convention.
- While there is evidence to show that national institutional and human capacities have strengthened, projects have focused narrowly on anti-doping education and other priorities identified by the Conference of Parties. For example, policy advice and capacity building projects, have not received the same level of attention.
- The Fund operates effectively and the Secretariat's customer-centric, hands-on support is valued by States Parties. However, applicants do not make the strategic link between the projects and the wider objectives of the Convention.
- The evaluation concluded that there were opportunities to tighten the application process and introduce robust decision-making criteria to assist with prioritization and to ensure the Fund contributes to strengthening the impact of the Convention, especially regarding the enforcement of its provisions.
- The Fund, as it currently operates, was unsustainable and without substantive reform, all remaining funds will be quickly exhausted.

#### *Global Priority Africa and Gender Equality*

The analysis identifies results achieved for Africa in some detail indicating UNESCO's commitment to Global Priority Africa in the implementation of the Fund. Sixty-one of the 218 projects funded were implemented in Africa. Africa also leads in the share of funding approved (28%) since the Fund was established.

With respect to Global Priority Gender Equality, the picture is less impressive. While the 39 C/5 notes that 'focus will be on capacity building and policy advice in the priority areas of gender equality', this is not followed through in the Fund's approval processes. Consequently, applicants limit the focus on gender to reporting on participation rates by men and women. The evaluation encourages the Secretariat to develop guidelines to help applicants mainstream gender equality into their project proposals and subsequent evaluations.

**ER #3****Youth-led action enabled, from local to global, to address societal challenges and consolidate peace**

The Operational Strategy on Youth (2014-2021) gives UNESCO an agreed framework to harness the potential of the young generation for constructive change, sustainable development and peace. The *Networks of Mediterranean Youth (NET-MED Youth) Project* represents a significant regional initiative designed by UNESCO to promote youth engagement and empowerment. The Project was implemented through interdisciplinary activities in three thematic areas relevant to the needs and concerns of young people in the region: youth policy development, fair and objective coverage of youth news, and youth skills development and labour market transitions.

The *Evaluation of the NET-MED Youth* found that overall the Project was a successful initiative that achieved significant results and created a momentum for youth empowerment in the respective beneficiary countries. The Project contributed significantly to capacity development at the individual level and brought about cultural changes at the institutional capacity, in particular at the level of youth organizations, media outlets and national governments. In addition, the Project helped to push the youth agenda forward within the respective national contexts and lifted the visibility of youth organizations and young people within their communities and in the public sphere. As a result, young people were perceived as making a constructive contribution to development through their engagement at the local and municipal levels. The evaluation suggests to integrate the lessons learnt from NET-MED Youth in the design of future projects and to build on the experience both in terms of success stories and challenges, such as regarding the development of comprehensive ownership, sustainability and exit strategies from a project's outset.

*Global Priority Africa and Gender Equality*

Gender Equality considerations were consistently prominent throughout the NET-MED Youth project both through mainstreaming, inclusive participation and within its content. More importantly, the gender equality perspective was appreciated and a valued component of the Project and its activities across all countries and all Expected Results. Future similar initiatives could provide an opportunity to embed gender equality and inclusion even more firmly as a thematic focus.

The Project was designed to meet needs of youth and youth organizations along the Eastern and Western basins of the Mediterranean Sea – in Algeria, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia.

**ER #4****Member States' commitment to the global agendas in favour of inclusive, sustainable and peaceful societies demonstrated through treated advocacy campaigns and awareness raising initiatives.**

In line with the SDG's commitment to 'leave no one behind', a series of innovative, participatory and results-oriented advocacy campaigns and awareness-raising initiatives were carried out by UNESCO in 2018-19. The project '*Support to children and young women with children who were victims of violence from the occupation of North Mali*' represents one such initiative, designed and delivered by UNESCO working in partnership with the Ministry for Women, Children and Families (MPFEF). The project aimed at raising awareness on the needs of children and young women with children who were victims of the 2012 crisis in the North of Mali and implementing interventions to address these needs so as to reduce their risks and vulnerability. Activities that sought to promote safety and self-esteem (e.g. psychological and social support; art, physical and cultural activities; training courses for educators and instructors from civil society groups) and build job-oriented technical competencies (e.g. courses in basic management, business planning and entrepreneurship)

were prioritized. Participants were largely illiterate and were selected from three districts (Bamako, Gao and Timbuktu).

The evaluation findings showed the project was hugely successful for participants who had no hope and no activity targeted at them prior to this project. Stakeholders' feedback gathered systematically throughout the project showed positive results including:

- Alignment with national and international documentation.
- Development of high self-esteem by the participants.
- Strengthened competencies in areas where the courses focused.
- Development of competencies in reading, writing and maths.
- Development of competencies for participants to develop their business plan.
- Development of competencies in basic technical competencies/jobs.
- Some financial support.
- Production of physical products, and the creation of funds related to the sales of these products.

The evaluation also identified opportunities for improvement relating to delivery (e.g. training in multiple dialects, insufficient time allocated for project preparation phase, the lack of context analysis prior to starting the project, sessions were too short and tight timeframes) that need to be taken into consideration for a potential second stage of the project. A focus on quality rather than the quantity of courses was recommended.

#### *Global priorities Africa and Gender Equality*

The project focused on Mali. With respect to Global Priority Gender Equality, the project was solely focused on young women and their children. Over the course of the year, 75 young women and their children benefited from this project.

## Major Programme IV: Culture

48. Two corporate and seven decentralized evaluations were considered within this programme for the synthesis (see Annex 1 for a complete list). Outcomes and achievements have been analysed against the Expected Results as outlined in the Programme and Budget for 2018-19 (39 C/5). Overall, the Culture Programme shows strong performance with respect to its Expected Results.

### ER #1

#### **Tangible heritage identified, protected, monitored and sustainably managed by Member States, in particular through the effective implementation of the 1972 Convention**

Three evaluations were undertaken in 2018-19 and findings from all three reports have been synthesised to provide valuable insights about progress against this ER. The reports are:

- *Towards Strengthened Governance of the Shared Transboundary Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Lake Ohrid region.*
- *Safeguarding Natural Heritage in Myanmar within the World Heritage Framework - Phase II.*
- *Preservation and conservation of Tiwanaku and the Akapana Pyramid, Bolivia.*

While the first two projects involved the preparation and submission of a nomination dossier and strengthening management and governance systems by raising national awareness and building institutional capacity for managing natural heritage, the project in Bolivia involved strengthening Bolivian capacities for the protection, conservation and management of the Tiwanaku archaeological site. All three projects were implemented successfully and generated positive results in relation to building local capacity and skills and promoting cooperation between key actors. Significant effort also went into strengthening the management and governance arrangements and safeguarding knowledge on cultural heritage values in the three projects.

While the nomination dossier was unsuccessful in the Myanmar project, the decision on the Lake Ohrid region is pending<sup>4</sup>. Many of the reasons relate to Myanmar's complex and constantly evolving political landscape and limited capacity in Myanmar for facilitating genuine and effective community consultation. The evaluation noted that as a result of this project Myanmar authorities improved their understanding about World Heritage processes and improved capacity to prepare such nominations in the future.

The *Preservation and conservation of Tiwanaku and the Akapana Pyramid in Bolivia* effectively promoted the development of national regulations and capacities for cultural heritage conservation through sustainable initiatives and community participation. The elaboration process surrounding the Management Plan led to a change in the collective imagination about Tiwanaku and the recognition of all its potentialities. Stakeholders commented that it has promoted institutional changes at the national and municipal levels. UNESCO's contribution through its expertise and ability to mobilize a wide range of actors were seen as significant contributors to the success of this initiative.

#### *Global priorities Africa and Gender Equality*

All three projects were implemented in regions other than Africa.

With respect to Gender Equality, both the Myanmar and Tiwanaku project were silent on gender and the issue of gender equality was not considered in the design or implementation

<sup>4</sup> While the decision on the Lake Ohrid region was still pending at the time of the evaluation, the extension of the existing World Heritage property "Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid region" (North Macedonia) to include the part of the site located in Albania has in the meantime been approved by the World Heritage Committee at its 43rd session in Baku, Azerbaijan (30 June – 10 July 2019).

stages of the projects.

The Lake Ohrid project appeared to take greater note of gender during the course of the project. While progress report for year one gave no attention to gender, reports for year 2 and 3 show increased consideration of gender and using gender-neutral language in the expression of the ideas and in implementation.

### **ER #3**

#### **Protection of cultural property improved by Member States, in particular through the wider ratification and effective implementation of the 1954 Convention and its two Protocols (1954 and 1999)**

The evaluation of *UNESCO's Standard-Setting Work of the Culture Sector – Part V – 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols (1954 and 1999)* provides useful insights with respect to this Expected Result. The findings showed that the 1954 Convention and its two Protocols are more important than ever as cultural property continues to be deliberately targeted during armed conflicts. The implementation of the Strategy for the Reinforcement of UNESCO's action for the protection of culture and promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict, adopted by the 38<sup>th</sup> session of the General Conference in 2015, was also viewed as having positive impact on the implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention and its Protocols.

UNESCO's efforts through the development of training manuals and assistance in organising capacity-building activities for the military and law enforcement agencies at the regional and national levels have supported the implementation of the 1954 Convention and its two Protocols. With a view to strengthening the understanding, acceptance and commitment to longer-term results, the development of a theory of change, as well as communication and outreach strategies are recommended for these treaties.

The evaluation also found evidence that the 1954 Convention and its Protocols have had an impact beyond what is documented in the periodic national reports submitted by the States Parties. In this regard, it was noted that a number of countries are carrying out activities such as trainings for the military and police, taking measures during armed conflict to protect cultural property, passing legislation to strengthen the protection of cultural property, restoring cultural property that has been damaged, and engaging with citizens to promote the importance of protecting culture.

On the other hand, it was underlined that the 1954 Convention and its Protocols do not adequately address the deliberate destruction of cultural property perpetrated by non-state armed groups. Although Article 19.3 of the 1954 Hague Convention gives UNESCO the authority to intervene, it is not clear what interventions would be most constructive in such cases. Therefore, the engagement with peacekeepers and other humanitarian actors, including NGOs, is recommended to spread awareness of the necessity to protect cultural property among all stakeholders.

#### *Global priorities Africa and Gender Equality*

The implementation does not take gender equality into account. While some of the military training and restoration efforts have consciously included women, the evaluation largely found that for many stakeholders, gender equality was not applicable for these particular treaties. The absence of guidelines for the inclusion of gender equality in the implementation of the 1954 Convention and its Protocols does not facilitate the task of the Secretariat in mainstreaming gender into its work.

**ER #4****Underwater cultural heritage identified, protected and sustainably managed by Member States, in particular through the wide ratification and implementation of the 2001 Convention**

The evaluation of *UNESCO's Standard-Setting Work of the Culture Sector – Part VI – 2001 Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage* provides valuable insights about the Organization's efforts towards this expected result. The findings signal the importance of UNESCO's role in supporting Member States in the protection of their underwater cultural heritage (UCH): the technical assistance missions through the Scientific and Technical Advisory Body (STAB), targeted capacity-building initiatives to support efforts of States parties to implement the Convention at the national level, and awareness raising and advocacy efforts are valued and appreciated by States Parties.

The evaluation found that much has been achieved in the ten years since the Convention came into force. UNESCO has supported countries in developing their capacity in underwater archaeology and drafting legislations to protect UCH and the expertise of the Secretariat, the STAB and the specialized networks provide an excellent foundation upon which to build and expand upon. UNESCO's convening power continues to bring stakeholders together at the country and regional levels to effectively raise awareness of the need to protect UCH.

The evaluation notes that the absence of a long-term vision and strategy as well as an under-resourced Secretariat severely hamper UNESCO's efforts resulting in a more reactive and ad hoc response. It recommends among others to revise the discourse around the 2001 Convention for its better outreach and to enhance the protection and awareness of the UCH through more interdisciplinary collaboration with other Culture Conventions and UNESCO programmes. Encouraging the participation of local communities in the STAB missions and linking them to other UNESCO activities are likely to contribute significantly to a long-term capacity-building approach. Strengthening collaboration with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission was also recommended in integrating UCH into initiatives such as marine spatial planning, marine scientific research and capacity building.

*Global priorities Africa and Gender Equality*

The evaluation notes that gender parity in underwater archaeology remains an issue as women are largely underrepresented in this field, despite the Secretariat's efforts to encourage participation of women in its activities. This imbalance is further reflected in the composition of the statutory bodies of the convention. Issues related to gender equality are also currently not reflected in the discourse around the 2001 Convention.

The evaluation findings provide some insights about progress against Priority Africa. The analysis disaggregates data to report on overall ratification rates by regions and also reports on progress towards implementation of the Convention by States Parties in Africa. Eleven African countries ratified the Convention so far and the region together with Latin America and the Caribbean had received the biggest share of national or regional training or consultation meetings organized by UNESCO. However, 41% of the States Parties surveyed indicated that the Meeting of the States Parties to the 2001 Convention did not have a special focus on the African context and issues whilst 36% indicated that they did not know whether these issue were being discussed.

**ER #5****Culture protected and cultural pluralism promoted in emergencies through better preparedness and response, in particular through the effective implementation of UNESCO's standard-setting instruments**

UNESCO has an important role to play in assessing risks and opportunities associated with culture in emergencies and strengthening Member States' resilience and capacities in preventing, mitigating and recovering the loss of cultural heritage in conflicts and natural

disasters. Evaluation data from three initiatives, financed primarily through extra-budgetary resources, were considered for this synthesis:

- The *Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage* (Project) initiative funded by the European Union (EU) and co-financed by the Government of Flanders and the Government of Austria to safeguard and protect Syrian cultural heritage in accordance with the international conventions on the protection of cultural property.
- *Enhancing Capacities in the Documentation and Conservation of Historical Religious Buildings and in the Refurbishment of Contemporary Mosques in Historic Contexts*.
- *Siq Stability III: Managing Disaster Risks in Siq of Petra*, Jordan, funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation aimed at ensuring enhanced management and preparedness against disaster risks.

The findings of the evaluations show very strong results in terms of project outcomes as well as UNESCO's role in these projects. The EU-UNESCO partnership enabled EU Member States to contribute their expertise and fulfil their obligations to the 2030 Agenda, in particular, global citizenship, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. The Project became a tool for cultural diplomacy under the leadership of UNESCO. Additional benefits accrued from this project include:

- Improved monitoring, documentation and conservation of various cultural sites, monuments and collections (e.g. the creation of an on-line Roster of Experts in the Syria project, strengthened capacity of staff; development of Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Plan).
- Networking and public awareness campaigns to mitigate the further loss or destruction of cultural heritage (e.g. a database of 700 experts and mobilizing 130 institutions).
- Enhanced capacity of national stakeholders and beneficiaries in several fields relating to protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage. All projects operated in a delicate political context yet managed to secure engagement from a wide range of stakeholders and captured good practices and success stories.

#### *Global priorities Africa and Gender Equality*

The Projects were implemented in the Arab States. The evaluations are silent on the contribution of the Project to UNESCO's Priority relating to Gender Equality.

#### **ER #7**

#### **Policies and measures to promote the diversity of cultural expressions designed and implemented by Member States, in particular, through the effective implementation of the 2005 Convention**

The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) provides a framework for the governance of culture and encourages governments to introduce policies for culture based on the fundamental principles of freedom of expression, gender equality, openness and balance to other cultures and expressions. The Convention has provisions to monitor compliance and Parties to the Convention share information and data through the preparation and submission of quadrennial periodic reports (QPR).

The UNESCO-SIDA project *Enhancing fundamental freedoms through the promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions* was designed to support the development of systems of good governance for culture that are based on fundamental freedoms and that foster the diversity of cultural expressions as stipulated in Article 2.1 of the 2005 Convention.

The evaluation found the project had high relevance to both governments and civil society actors and provided a contemporary interpretation of the Convention that placed increased focus on themes such as gender equality, civil society, media diversity, artistic freedom and digital production. Its adaptability and flexibility were seen as key assets for the project's

successful implementation. Perhaps most importantly, it successfully addressed the challenges of data collection and monitoring through its support to the QPR process. As a result, 12 QPRs were successfully completed as planned. The coordination between two UNESCO sectors involved in the initiative, namely the Culture and Communication and Information Sectors, and the invaluable role of UNESCO Field Offices, proved to be hugely beneficial for the overall success of this initiative. Sustainability was achieved through the strong engagement of a wide range of actors, international experts, and strong political commitment to ensure gains made through this project would continue in the future.

#### *Global priorities Africa and Gender Equality*

UNESCO Priority Africa was well reflected in the number of African countries (38% of the total) and experts selected (11 out of the 43 experts that made up the Expert Facility were African).

The inclusion of gender in the Convention's Global Monitoring Framework gave UNESCO's Gender Equality priority more weight in this project. The gender dimension was effectively positioned in project tools (training module in participatory monitoring), formats (QPR reporting format), frameworks (GMF) and discussions (such as capacity building activities at the national level and Global Report launch events). Project documentation and communication materials used gender-sensitive language and images. In addition there was gender balance in the Expert Facility, in the group of International Experts involved in the project and among the authors of the two editions of the Global Report. Despite these gains, the evaluation concluded that more work was needed to advance the gender equality agenda and support mainstreaming gender in the culture sector.

#### **ER #8**

#### **Culture integrated into policies and measures at the national and local levels by Member States for the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

The evaluations considered for the Culture sector show mixed results with respect to progress in this regard. While Member States and UNESCO staff can see the connection between culture and the 2030 Agenda, and the evaluations note the alignment between the project and SDG goals, there is insufficient evidence to show integration of culture into policies and measures in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. For example, there is no requirement for periodic reporting at the national level for the 2001 Convention. As a result, there is no data available to assess implementation and/or progress towards achievement of the objectives of the Convention and its contribution to the SDGs. With respect to the evaluation of the 1954 Convention and its two Protocols, the evaluation reports that *'the normative work undertaken by UNESCO (the interpretation of the Convention and its Protocols), providing implementation tools (e.g. the military training and the 1954 Convention toolkit) and expert support at the national and regional levels are not adequately captured in the indicator for SDG 11.'*

UNESCO has an important role to play in the UN Fora to demonstrate these links more clearly. The elaboration of a strategy and a well-articulated results framework will provide UNESCO's staff and Member States with the much needed direction to coordinate their efforts and communicate to partners and donors how UNESCO's work under the Culture sector can usefully contribute to the 2030 Agenda. The reorganization of the Culture Sector at HQ in November 2018 is a step in the right direction. It aims to build a more integrated approach to the cultural conventions and the implementation of sustainable cultural policies in the Member States. It also aims to generate the necessary evidence and data that are needed to better measure and assess the impact of culture on SDGs and other relevant development areas, such as, *inter alia*, education, social welfare, poverty reduction, gender equality, human rights, sustainability of cities and communities. This flatter, more balanced and accountable structure will help to better support Member States in addressing the challenges and opportunities of the 2030 Agenda through culture.



## Major Programme V: Communication and Information

49. Two evaluations were available for this synthesis within the Communication and Information Programme sector (see Annex 1 for details).<sup>5</sup> Outcomes and achievements identified in this evaluation relating to UNESCO's contribution towards the ERs have been outlined in the table below.

<b>ER #1</b> <b>Member States are enhancing norms and policies related to freedom of expression, including press freedom and the right to access information, online and offline, and are reinforcing the safety of journalists by implementing the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity</b>
<p>The SIDA funded extra-budgetary project <i>Promoting Democracy and Freedom of Expression</i> serves as an exemplar for UNESCO's efforts to contribute to this ER. Working collaboratively with national and international organizations, and leveraging its reputation and convening power, UNESCO was able to facilitate cooperation and dialogue between diverse actors to record new and improved media legislation in participating countries. Specific results reported in the evaluation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Media law reform in Myanmar, Somalia, Tunisia, Morocco and Paraguay</li><li>• Safety mechanisms for journalists in Somalia, Tunisia, Morocco and Paraguay</li><li>• Approved gender equality strategies in Rwanda and Morocco</li><li>• Improved understanding of international best practice in courts of law across Latin America</li><li>• Improved investigative reporting</li></ul> <p>The World Trends Report produced within the scope of this project is regarded as a flagship publication and has been downloaded more than 43,000 times and all stakeholders valued this report.</p> <p><i>Global priorities Africa and Gender Equality</i></p> <p>The project has global scope and four out of the 14 countries involved in this project were in Africa: Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, and South Sudan.</p> <p>While the evaluation report makes references to UNESCO Global Priority Gender Equality, there is no further analysis provided in the report about this.</p>

<b>ER #2</b> <b>Member States have benefited from enhanced media contributions to diversity, gender equality and youth empowerment in and through media; and societies are empowered through media and information literacy programmes and effective media response to emergency and disaster</b>
<p>UNESCO plays an important role in promoting and fostering media diversity and pluralism by encouraging diversity of content, audience, sources and systems through its capacity building activities. To this end, the UNESCO Office in Tashkent implemented the project <i>Promoting media and information literacy and building media capacities in quality non-news programme in Uzbekistan</i> with an explicit focus on developing skills on media and information literacy (MIL) amongst young teachers and journalists. An evaluation conducted in 2018 showed that UNESCO's efforts have made significant contributions to growing MIL competencies in the field of education and media. In particular:</p>

<sup>5</sup> A third evaluation that covers ER5, i.e. on ICT in Education is listed under intersectoral evaluations below.

- A resource hub on MIL providing targeted information, e-learning courses and publications was created for the first time in the country (e.g. launch of the first Massive Open Online Course in Uzbekistan and the opening of the non-governmental television channel in Karakalpakstan).
- The project successfully strengthened the capacities of teachers to integrate MIL into formal education provisions in secondary specified and professional level and of journalists to develop new formats for quality non-news programming content.
- The project was implemented in a timely manner and contributed to expanding MIL in the field of media and education.
- The strong engagement with government institutions and other partners led to positive sustainability outcomes (e.g. self-designed online training courses of the teachers in Samarkand, the launch of the first ever Massive Online Course on MIL and the launch of the private TV station in Nukus clearly signal the strong ownership of this project by stakeholders and reflect their commitment to taking the benefits of the project forward).

#### *Global priorities Africa and Gender Equality*

The evaluation reported that *“the project was designed and implemented in a gender responsive way and that regular gender analysis was conducted within the scope of the project to better understand the direct and unintended impacts of the project on the lives of men and women”*. However, a more in-depth review of the evaluation report showed minimal analysis by gender across all components of the project. For instance, a survey conducted with participants (teachers, students and journalists) of MIL capacity-building activities and outcome level analysis on key indicators were not disaggregated by gender.

## Intersectoral cooperation & multidisciplinary themes

50. In response to Member States' call for synergies and integrated, holistic solutions to address sustainable development challenges, UNESCO actively sought to work in an intersectoral and multidisciplinary fashion across its Major Programmes. UNESCO's work in *Information and Communication Technologies in Education (2014-2018)*, the *Evaluation of the Revised Anniversaries Programme* and the *Evaluation of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)* provides invaluable insights into the Organization's efforts in this regard.

### ***Evaluation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Education (2014-18)***

51. Aspirations for intersectoral linkages between the ED and CI Sectors were recognised in the C/5 and an evaluation was undertaken in 2018 to determine the extent to which these efforts have been effective and the challenges the Sectors face in making progress towards intersectoral cooperation. The evaluation findings and recommendations will feed into the formulation of future directions for UNESCO's work in the field of ICT in Education.

52. The evaluation findings indicate that promoting intersectoral and greater horizontal cooperation across the Organization in the field of ICT in Education is still work in progress. The evaluation concludes that:

- Compared to other organizations in the field of ICT in Education, UNESCO has a number of comparative strengths (e.g. its convening power, its reputation as a neutral and impartial actor in education and innovation, its global scope and its commitment to inclusiveness and quality of education from a humanistic perspective) that it leverages effectively to offer Member States and others a coherent vision in line with 2030 Agenda.
- The decision to align UNESCO's Major Programme I with SDG 4 targets and the subsequent manner in which ICT in Education was mainstreamed across Education-related ERs has reduced the visibility of achievements in ICT in Education within UNESCO's reporting system, as well as among Field Offices and UNESCO senior management and externally with donors. Furthermore, while the 39 C/5 states the relevant Sectors' intentions to cooperate in this field, it does not go further to describe the substantive modalities and linkages or list joint activities that would contribute to this shared thematic goal.
- Cooperation and multidisciplinary collaboration across the different UNESCO entities is critical to enhancing the work in this field. The most appropriate role distribution between entities in ICT in Education cannot be easily determined at this point, but would need to emerge from improved communication and increased understanding of complementarities between the relevant entities. A number of wider organizational trends and developments within UNESCO and deepening commitment from UNESCO senior management are likely to facilitate moves towards greater coherence and coordination between the entities involved.
- Important opportunities are emerging across many aspects of education that provide ample scope for partnership expansion especially with the private sector. The challenge for UNESCO is to identify where it can best exploit its intersectoral and multidisciplinary strengths with a focus on the holistic and humanistic approaches in education and innovation supporting the building of inclusive Knowledge Societies and ethical implications of ICT in Education.

- Organizationally, systems and processes are required to enhance UNESCO-wide intersectoral and multidisciplinary cooperation, knowledge management and fundraising and communities for the thematic area of ICT in Education.

53. As a leader and coordinator of SDG 4, UNESCO has the mandate and the foundation capacities and expertise to strategically reposition itself as an intellectual leader in the field. However, to achieve this, UNESCO must draw on the rich and diverse expertise from across the Organization and potentially consider positioning UNESCO's strategy on ICT in Education explicitly as an intersectoral and multidisciplinary theme.

### ***Evaluation of the Revised Anniversaries Programme***

54. An evaluation of the *Revised Anniversaries programme* undertaken in 2013 led to significant changes in the Programme with new criteria and procedures established that aimed at limiting the overall number of anniversaries and at achieving a more balanced regional and gender distribution. The Executive Board approved the Revised Programme and authorized the Director-General to relaunch a new round of applications from Member States and to evaluate the Programme after the 2016-2017 biennium with a focus on its results and financial implications. The 2018 evaluation focused on the programme's relevance and contribution to UNESCO's mandate, results-based management of the programme, selection criteria, selection procedure, visibility and communication.

55. The findings of the evaluation show mixed results and that many of the challenges identified in the first iteration of the Programme persist, particularly those relating to regional (89% of anniversaries approved were in two regions) and gender imbalances (only 4% of anniversaries celebrated during 2016-17 were of women personalities) in approved anniversaries. The revised criteria<sup>6</sup> have furthermore not encouraged the celebration of anniversaries in multiple countries to promote regional and/or international cooperation. The majority of celebrations were limited to the national level, which raises questions about the international nature of the Programme.

56. Since the launch of the Revised Programme, there have been some efficiency gains and new tools and procedures have facilitated the application process for Member States. The work undertaken by the UNESCO Secretariat is much appreciated by Member States. However in the context of a zero budget and already stretched human resources, strengthening the Revised Programme's communication initiatives has not been possible.

### ***Evaluation of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics***

57. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) is the statistical office of UNESCO and the UN repository for comparable statistics in the fields of education, science, culture and communication. The Institute produces data and methodologies to monitor trends and disseminate data at national and international levels. It delivers comparative data for countries at all stages of development to provide a global and informed perspective on UNESCO's areas of competence.

58. UNESCO's Approved Programme and Budget document (39 C/5) notes that the work programme for the period 2018-2021 of UIS will be based on four main lines of action and thirteen expected results including the priority given to Global Priority Africa and Gender Equality. However, over the last decade, UIS' expenditures exceeded income every other year

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<sup>6</sup> During the quality review of this report, the Gender Equality Unit commented that there are three criteria assessed in the framework of the anniversaries program: a) relevance for Gender Equality /women's rights / women's empowerment; b) relevance for Gender Equality work in one of UNESCO domains; c) relevance for women's movement beyond national borders.

on average. As a result, the UIS' general resources are close to depletion. UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service (IOS) initiated an evaluation of UIS, in parallel to a field audit of the Institute to better understand UIS's financial difficulties and to inform the ongoing discussions between UIS and UNESCO about the future of the Institute.

59. The findings of the evaluation showed that UIS is as (if not more) relevant now than it has ever been before. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is ambitious and the UIS, by design, is the only global agency to which national and statistical offices and line ministries report their administrations' education, science, culture, and communication statistics. This makes UIS indispensable to the effective global monitoring of the related SDGs. However, the evaluation notes that relevance does not automatically lead to funding. UIS, like other organizations, needs to continuously prove its worth, adopt and implement an effective and persuasive fundraising strategy.

Some of the challenges faced by UIS identified in the evaluation include:

- Its inability to meet the evolving demands and expectations of greater responsiveness by UNESCO and external partners
- Maintaining balance across all sectors that are within UIS' mandate: education and science, culture, communication and information
- UIS is an integral part of UNESCO and the two entities need to rediscover a mutually reinforcing relationship that benefits all Member States

60. The evaluation recommends that UIS should capitalize on its strong relevance in light of the Agenda 2030. Given the current demand for data and statistical expertise, there is an opportunity for UIS to further expand its products, services and secure sustainable funding.

## Part IV – UNESCO Performance Against Evaluation Criteria

61. The evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability are commonly used in programme evaluations and have been codified by the Organizations for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC). UNESCO recognizes these criteria and promotes their use in its Evaluation Policy 2014-2021. They are guiding principles and not expected to be used in every evaluation. The ultimate decision to use the criteria is a function of: (i) the information requirements of the intended users of the evaluation; (ii) the available resources for the evaluation (in terms of money, staff and time); and (iii) the evaluability of the evaluand along these criteria. This section provides a brief overview of where UNESCO stands in relation to the standard criteria.

### Relevance

62. Relevance concerns “the extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor” (OECD). UNESCO scores very well on this evaluation criteria. The projects implemented by UNESCO at the country, regional and global level are seen as highly relevant and address important development needs. Its work is recognised and acknowledged as being of value by Member States and international agencies and stakeholders frequently commented on the commitment of the Organization to support Member States despite facing significant financial and human resources constraints.

63. Many intervention areas are well-aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, support international conventions and UNESCO biennial Programme and Budget documents. The Organization is also described as politically neutral, staffed with experts, and having an international mandate that serves to promote cooperation and information exchange for national and international action.

### Effectiveness

64. Effectiveness is “a measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives” (OECD). Effectiveness concerns the attainment of medium or long-term outcomes. This constitutes a challenging criterion for UNESCO given the deeply complex issues it responds to, such as democracy and human rights, and the interconnectedness of its actions. The synthesis finds that all the evaluations report on effectiveness on the basis of effective implementation and by analysing the extent to which the expected outputs were delivered, in a timely manner.

65. While outputs are easier to track, there seems to be a ‘missing middle’ between the outputs and outcomes. As a result, the issue of how exactly the project’s activities can be expected to contribute to the outcomes is not always clear. Projects do not always have a Theory of Change and this means their effectiveness in terms of contribution to outcomes cannot be assessed credibly. Factors that impede a more in-depth assessment of effectiveness include:

- There is no consistent understanding of outputs and outcomes.
- There is a lack of a more systematic use of baseline data and targets.
- Projects often are missing monitoring and reporting data such as performance indicators as defined in project documents.

66. Evaluation teams appear to overcome this limitation by reconstructing the implicit Theory of Change underpinning a project and collect associated indicative evidence from numerous sources. However, this is inefficient and often laborious. This issue needs to be urgently addressed.

67. The effectiveness of UNESCO's efforts at an outcome level however is rarely measured.

68. For instance, the SIDS Action Plan evaluation reports that "while effective, the Action Plan does not have an Action Plan-specific performance framework. This impedes UNESCO's ability to monitor progress against outcomes."

69. The evaluation of the PCA between UNESCO and SIDA noted "the lack of outcome and impact performance measures makes it difficult to determine impact. The lack of explicit project-level Theories of Change makes it difficult to know whether the projects are moving towards desired results." A similar finding stems from other evaluations::

*"There is little quantitative evidence which accounts for the extent to which FUST projects have managed to generate expected outcomes. This is due to the lack of better-defined outcome indicators and related monitoring and tracking techniques/methods to measure progress achieved. For instance, the projects do not say much about whether the training and capacity building activities delivered through FUST activities are leading to improved natural resource management and increased human and institutional capacities in the broader sense of the term."*

*Source: UNESCO-Flanders Funds in Trust Evaluation*

70. In order to improve accountability, particularly outcome and impact level accountability, UNESCO could consider investing further resources in monitoring and evaluation:

- Improving and enhancing intervention logics and performance indicator quality and robustness. This should include the embedding of UNESCO level priorities in results frameworks and performance indicators.
- Simplifying and mainstreaming results frameworks.
- Strengthening capacities to measure outcomes and not only outputs.

## **Efficiency**

71. Efficiency "measures the outputs, both qualitative and quantitative, in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term used to assess the extent to which aid uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted" (OECD).

72. Across the evaluations considered in this synthesis, efficiency is determined by looking at whether a project is making a reasonable distribution of responsibilities and the best use of its resources, as well as looking at the adjustments made in order to adapt to changing financial considerations or to specific local conditions. However, assessing 'best use of resources' is not always possible as many projects are unique and comparators are either not available or detailed information on the comparators cannot be easily accessed. In the absence of this information, the evaluations assess efficiency by looking at whether the project was delivered within budget, delivered in close collaboration with key partners so as to leverage financial and technical expertise, and whether there is a clear allocation of roles and responsibilities across all those involved to avoid duplication of effort. The quotations below reflect these approaches to assessing efficiency across the evaluations.

*FUST general management and governance scheme is rated positively thanks to a lean and flexible management and governance structure.*

*Efficiency was determined by the extent to which the interventions were implemented in accordance with plans, target groups, timelines and within budget. The evaluation concluded that the initiatives were efficient. All activities were completed on time, managed and coordinated efficiently and key partners were involved at all stages.*

*Source: Evaluation of Flanders/UNESCO Science Trust Fund*

73. Most evaluations report that UNESCO's efforts to implement the various projects were efficient. Some problems were identified arising due to: (i) dispersion of resources over too many activities; (ii) understaffing of the global secretariat; (iii) the myriad of prevailing structures and committees that suck up stretched resources; and (iv) ongoing need to leverage partnerships and streamline resource mobilization efforts across the Organization. It must be noted, however, that when inefficiencies have been identified, the management response explicitly commits to addressing these challenges.

### **Sustainability**

74. Sustainability concerns "whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn" (OECD). Achieving sustainability requires UNESCO to work in strong partnership with national actors, to ensure buy-in and national ownership from the outset. This is an area that poses the biggest challenge for many development actors including UNESCO. The evaluations considered for this synthesis provide some insights about the factors that contributed to sustainability:

- Strong focus on ownership and capacity building across many UNESCO projects: in many instances, efforts were made from the beginning to ensure buy-in from a diverse group of stakeholders including public, private and civil society sectors.
- An explicit focus on maximising the utility of products produced within the scope of the projects: this ensured that the benefits of the project continued once the activities were completed.
- A number of scale up initiatives were being developed: for instance, the training modules developed within the scope of the 2005 Convention were being used to support capacity-building activities in countries outside the project.
- Investing in effective partnerships to sustain the gains made within the scope of the project: partnerships with academic institutions, private sector and government ensures financial sustainability of the project.
- Linking the project to existing frameworks such as the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework, UNESCO's priorities, Member States' strategies and plans is likely to enhance the long-term sustainability of the efforts.



## Part V – Quality of Evaluation Reports

75. This section presents an analysis of the quality of evaluation reports and assesses the extent to which the evaluations reports, both corporate and decentralized, meet the criteria set out in the UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports (UNEG 2010). The quality assessment task involved reviewing a total of 26 evaluation reports according to the following criteria:

- 1) Purpose statement: this is to include: “why the evaluation was needed at that point in time, who needed the information, what information is needed and how the information will be used.....the main evaluation questions.....and an explanation of the chosen evaluation criteria, performance standards or other criteria (to measure the evaluand against)”.
- 2) Report structure: reports are to be “logically structured with clarity and coherence”.
- 3) Evaluand description: evaluations require a clear and comprehensive description of the evaluand, including the programme/project’s purpose, background, size, (geographical) scope, components, duration, key stakeholders, governance, organization and financial resources.
- 4) Evaluation method: purposeful design, clear description of data collection methods and sources, triangulation of data sources and methods, and explicit mentioning of any limitations to the conduct of the evaluation.
- 5) Evaluative analysis: that “findings reflect systematic analysis and interpretation of data.....conclusions which are well-substantiated by evidence and are logically connected to the evaluation findings.....and reflect reasonable evaluative judgments relating to the key evaluation questions”.
- 6) Recommendations: to be “firmly based on evidence and conclusions, relevant to the object and purposes of the evaluation (and) clearly identify the target group for each recommendation”.
- 7) Gender equality: meeting the UNEG gender-related norms and standards. Gender equality is integrated into the evaluation scope of analysis, evaluation criteria and questions specifically address gender equality issues, there is a gender-responsive methodology<sup>7</sup> and evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations reflect a gender analysis (UN-SWAP Evaluation performance indicator).
- 8) SDGs: For the purposes of this year’s synthesis, an additional criterion was included and considered in the assessment of quality of the evaluation reports. This relates to the SDGs in order to “*assess the extent to which the evaluation reports acknowledge the SDGs and seek to determine the contribution of UNESCO’s efforts to the relevant Sustainable Development Goals.*”

76. Figure 4 below presents the quality rating for each of the 26 evaluations against the quality criteria. All eight corporate evaluation reports fully meet minimum quality requirements.<sup>8</sup> As for the overall quality of decentralized evaluations, the analysis shows a mixed picture. The percentage of available decentralized evaluations that meet minimum

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<sup>7</sup> None of the evaluations reflects a gender-responsive methodology.

<sup>8</sup> With the exception of the quality criterion on SDGs. This criterion is appearing in the Synthetic Review for the first time. As the criterion was not systematically included in all of the evaluation’s Terms of Reference, it was not included in overall analysis of quality. The criterion is also not taken into account in the presentation of Figures 5 and 6.

quality standards has declined over the past year (Figure 5). The decline in report quality is due to a slight decrease in the quality of reporting on gender issues, in line with IOS' self-assessment within the UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) framework. This must be seen in the broader context of a significant improvement in the overall reporting on gender since the adoption of Global Priority Gender Equality by UNESCO's General Conference in 2007.

77. However, when excluding the gender criterion from the analysis (Figure 6), all decentralized evaluation reports pass minimum quality standards. This is a positive development that demonstrates improvements in key report quality criteria such as the evaluative analysis and the formulation of recommendations.

78. The discrepancy in the overall quality of corporate versus decentralized evaluations is due to differences in the quality assurance systems used. As part of the IOS Evaluation Office's quality assurance system, all corporate evaluation reports undergo an external quality review prior to finalization. The draft reports are thus revised in response to any identified quality shortcomings and, in this way, the final reports generally meet all quality standards.

79. Decentralized evaluations do not benefit from the same degree of quality assurance. Decentralized evaluation reports do not systematically undergo an external quality check prior to publication. The IOS Evaluation Office is aware of this shortcoming and efforts are being taken to further strengthen the decentralized evaluation function in this regard e.g. advocating for the use of external review of reports and the wider application of guidance material such as report quality checklists.

**Figure 4 Quality Assessment of UNESCO's Evaluation Reports**

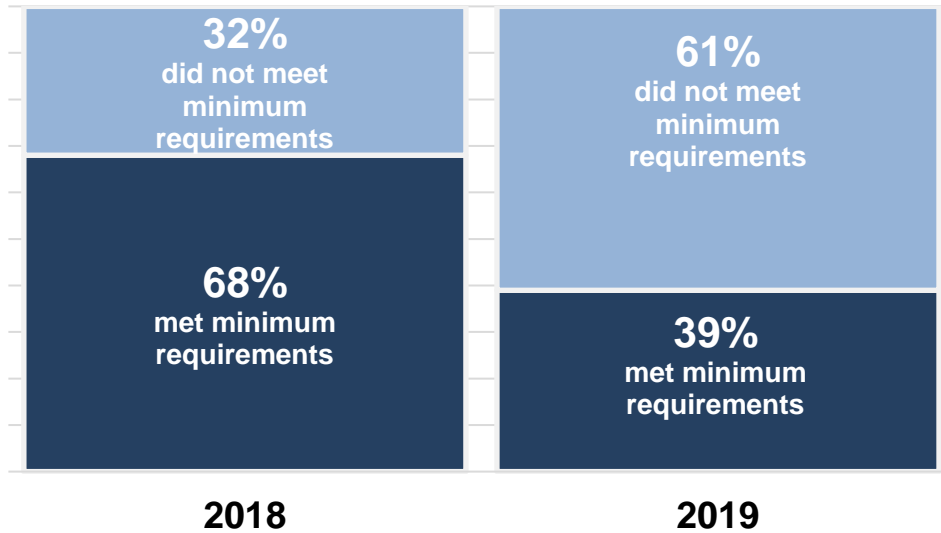
Legend	○ Fully meets criteria			■ Partially meets criteria			□ Does not meet criteria			
	Title of Report	Corporate or Decentralized	Purpose statement	Structure	Evaluand description	Evaluation method	Evaluative analysis	Recommendations	Gender equality	SDGs
<b>MP I: Education [4]</b>										
Gender Equality and Girls' Education Initiative in Vietnam: Empowering girls and women for a more equal society	Decentralized	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Evaluation of the Global Education Monitoring Report	Decentralized	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Timor-Leste Quality Education for All -3 <sup>rd</sup> Cycle Mathematics and Science Curriculum	Decentralized	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	□	□
Amélioration de la qualité de l'enseignement	Decentralized	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	□	□
<b>MP II: Natural Sciences [5]</b>										
Mid-Term Review of the UNESCO SIDS Action Plan (2016-2021)	Corporate	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	■	○
Evaluation of Natural Sciences Sector components of the Programme Cooperation Agreement between UNESCO and SIDA	Decentralized	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Evaluation of the Project Green Economy in Biosphere Reserves: A means to Biodiversity Conservation, Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa	Decentralized	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	□	□
Evaluation of Flanders/UNESCO Science Trust Fund (FUST)	Decentralized	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	□	○

Title of Report	Corporate or Decentralized	Purpose statement	Structure	Evaluand description	Evaluation method	Evaluative analysis	Recommendations	Gender equality	SDGs
International Hydrological Programme IHP-VIII	Corporate	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<b>MP III: Social and Human Sciences [3]</b>									
Networks of Mediterranean (NET-MED) Youth project	Corporate	○	○	○	■	○	○	○	■
Evaluation of the UNESCO Fund for Elimination of Doping in Sport	Decentralized	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	□
Evaluation finale du projet d'appui aux enfants et jeunes femmes avec enfants victimes des violences liées à l'occupation du nord du Mali	Decentralized	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	□
<b>MP IV: Culture [9]</b>									
Final Evaluation of the Project: Enhancing fundamental freedoms through the promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions	Decentralized	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage	Decentralized	○	○	○	○	○	○	□	□
Safeguarding Natural Heritage in Myanmar within the World Heritage Framework	Decentralized	○	○	○	○	○	○	□	□
Siq Stability III: Managing disaster Risks in Siq of Petra, Jordan	Decentralized	■	■	■	■	■	■	□	□
Enhancing capacities in the documentation and conservation of Historical Religious Buildings and in the Refurbishment of Contemporary mosques in Historic contexts	Decentralized	○	○	■	■	○	○	□	□

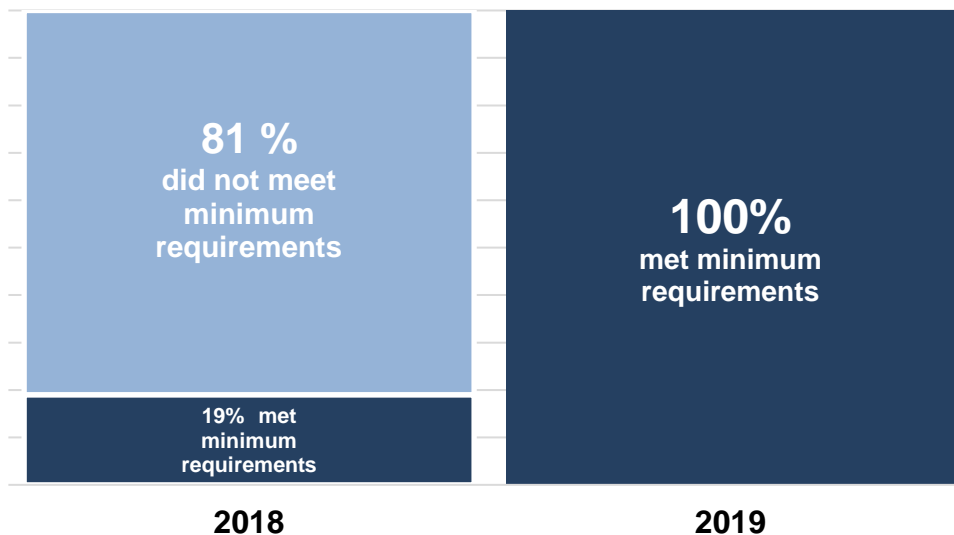
Title of Report	Corporate or Decentralized	Purpose statement	Structure	Evaluand description	Evaluation method	Evaluative analysis	Recommendations	Gender equality	SDGs
Towards strengthened governance of the shared transboundary natural and cultural heritage of the Lake Ohrid region	Decentralized	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no executive summary	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural property in the event of armed conflict	Corporate	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Evaluation of the 2001 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage	Corporate	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Preservation and conservation of Tiwanaku and the Akapana Pyramid, Bolivia	Decentralized	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>MP V: Communication and Information [2]</b>									
Promoting media and information literacy and building media capacities in quality non-news programming in Uzbekistan	Decentralized	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promoting democracy and freedom of expression	Decentralized	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Intersectoral and multi-disciplinary initiatives [3]</b>									
ICT in Education	Corporate	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Evaluation of the Revised Anniversaries Programme	Corporate	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation of UNESCO Institute for Statistics	Corporate	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

80. Figure 5 indicates that, as a whole, when measuring the quality of the decentralized evaluations against all seven quality criteria listed in the UNEG Quality Checklist, fewer decentralized evaluations met the minimum quality standards in 2019 when compared to 2018. However, Figure 6 shows that, when excluding the criterion 'gender equality', all decentralized evaluations in 2019 met the minimum quality standards. This is very encouraging.

**Figure 5 Percentage of decentralized evaluation reports that met evaluation quality standards (including the gender equality criterion)**



**Figure 6 Percentage of decentralized evaluation reports that met evaluation quality standards (excluding the gender equality criterion)**



81. The analysis provides valuable insights about the progress being made with respect to the quality of the evaluation reports. Attempts to improve the user orientation of the evaluations and/or consideration of mixed-methods design to ensure robust analysis has strengthened the quality of evaluations. All reports have a clear well-defined statement of

purpose, the structure of the reports is consistent and the analysis uses the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact.

82. However, some gaps remain and addressing these will help UNESCO better respond to expectations of quality. Potential areas of focus include: (a) support for mainstreaming gender considerations in evaluation practice; (b) analysing the contributions of the project to the SDGs; (c) the length of evaluation reports (as many evaluation reports are over 50 pages); (d) sharper, targeted recommendations that identify where the responsibilities for implementation of recommendations lie; and (e) lifting the quality of the executive summary.

83. The quality of the executive summary is particularly important given the length of evaluation reports. Skilful writing is required to ensure the executive summary focuses on the main issues and provides a clear, coherent analysis for readers. However, the synthesis reveals that in many decentralized evaluations the executive summary is unclear and repetitive and does not provide a clear rationale for the recommendations.

84. An important challenge for the IOS Evaluation Office remains with respect to ensuring use of the findings. The corporate evaluation reports include a Management Response and these make explicit statements about how the Organization plans to address the issues raised in the evaluation. However, the decentralized evaluations do not follow the same practice and it is unclear as to how the responsible office/unit proposes to act on the findings. This focus on use is important to shift mind-sets that view evaluation as merely serving an accountability function to one that equally serves an improvement and learning function.

## Appendix 1: List of Evaluations

Figure 7 List of evaluations reviewed for this synthesis

Sector	Evaluation Report Title	Corporate / decentralized evaluation	39 C/5 Expected Result
Education	Timor-Leste Quality Education for All – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Cycle Mathematics and Science Curriculum	Decentralized	ER # 1
	Amélioration de la qualité de l'enseignement – Haïti	Decentralized	ER # 5
	Gender Equality and Girls' Education Initiative in Vietnam	Decentralized	ER # 7
	Global Education Monitoring Report	Decentralized	ER # 10
Natural Sciences	International Hydrological Programme IHP-VIII	Corporate	ER #7
	Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) Action Plan	Corporate	ER # 3
	Project Green Economy in Biosphere Reserves (GEBR]	Decentralized	ER # 5
	Evaluation of Flanders/UNESCO Science Trust Funds Phase IV	Decentralized	ER # 7
	Evaluation of Natural Science Components of the Programme Cooperation Agreement between UNESCO and SIDA	Decentralized	ER # 1 ER # 4
Social and Human Sciences	Evaluation of UNESCO's Fund for the Elimination of Doping in Sport	Decentralized	ER # 2
	Network of Mediterranean (NET-MED) Youth Project	Corporate	ER# 3
	Evaluation finale du projet d'appui aux enfants et jeunes femmes avec enfants victimes des violences liées à l'occupation du nord du Mali	Decentralized	ER # 4
Culture	Preservation and conservation of Tiwanaku and the Akapana Pyramids in Bolivia	Decentralized	ER # 1
	Safeguarding Natural Heritage in Myanmar within the World Heritage Framework	Decentralized	ER # 1
	Towards strengthened governance of the shared transboundary natural and cultural heritage of the Lake Ohrid region	Decentralized	ER # 1
	Evaluation of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict	Corporate	ER # 3



Sector	Evaluation Report Title	Corporate / decentralized evaluation	39 C/5 Expected Result
Culture	Evaluation of the 2001 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage	Corporate	ER # 4
	Enhancing Capacities in the Documentation and Conservation of Historical Religious Buildings and in the Refurbishment of Contemporary Mosques in Historic Contexts	Decentralized	ER # 5
	Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage	Decentralized	ER # 5
	Siq Stability III: Managing disaster risks in Siq of Petra, Jordan	Decentralized	ER # 5
	Enhancing Fundamental Freedoms through the protection of the diversity of cultural expressions	Decentralized	ER # 7
Communication & Information	External Evaluation of UNESCO's Extra-Budgetary Project: Promoting Democracy and Freedom of Expression	Decentralized	ER # 1
	Promoting media and information literacy and building media capacities in quality non-news programming in Uzbekistan	Decentralized	ER # 2
Intersectoral & multi-disciplinary initiatives	UNESCO Institute for Statistics	Corporate	multiple
	Evaluation of UNESCO's association with the celebration of Anniversaries	Corporate	multiple
	ICT in Education	Corporate	multiple

## Appendix 2: Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals

As part of the assessment of report quality presented in Part V, only 11 of the 26 evaluation reports sought to determine the contribution of UNESCO's efforts to the relevant Sustainable Development Goals. The 11 concerned evaluation reports are listed below:

Evaluation #1: Gender Equality and Girls' Education Initiative in Vietnam

Evaluation #2: Global Education Monitoring Report

Evaluation #3: Small Islands Developing States Action Plan

Evaluation #4: Evaluation of Natural Science Components of the Programme Cooperation Agreement between UNESCO and SIDA

Evaluation #5: Evaluation of Flanders/UNESCO Science Trust Funds Phase IV

Evaluation #6: Enhancing Fundamental Freedoms through the protection of the diversity of cultural expressions

Evaluation #7: Evaluation of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict

Evaluation #8: Evaluation of the 2001 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage

Evaluation #9: ICT in Education

Evaluation #10: International Hydrological Programme (IHP-VIII)

Evaluation #11: Evaluation of the NET-MED Youth Project

The figure below details which Sustainable Development Goals each of these evaluations addressed.

**Figure 8 Alignment of evaluations with the SDGs**

	SDGs	Evaluation #1	Evaluation #2	Evaluation #3	Evaluation #4	Evaluation #5	Evaluation #6	Evaluation #7	Evaluation #8	Evaluation #9	Evaluation #10	Evaluation #11
1	No poverty			✓	✓							
2	Zero hunger											
3	Good health and well being			✓	✓							
4	Quality education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
5	Gender equality	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Clean water and sanitation			✓	✓	✓					✓	
7	Affordable and clean energy				✓							
8	Decent work and economic growth				✓		✓		✓			✓
9	Industry, innovation and infrastructure			✓	✓							
10	Reduced inequalities						✓					
11	Sustainable cities and communities			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓
12	Responsible consumption and production			✓	✓							
13	Climate action			✓	✓	✓			✓			
14	Life below water			✓		✓			✓			
15	Life on land			✓	✓							
16	Peace, justice and strong institutions			✓			✓					✓
17	Partnership for the goals			✓	✓		✓		✓			✓