

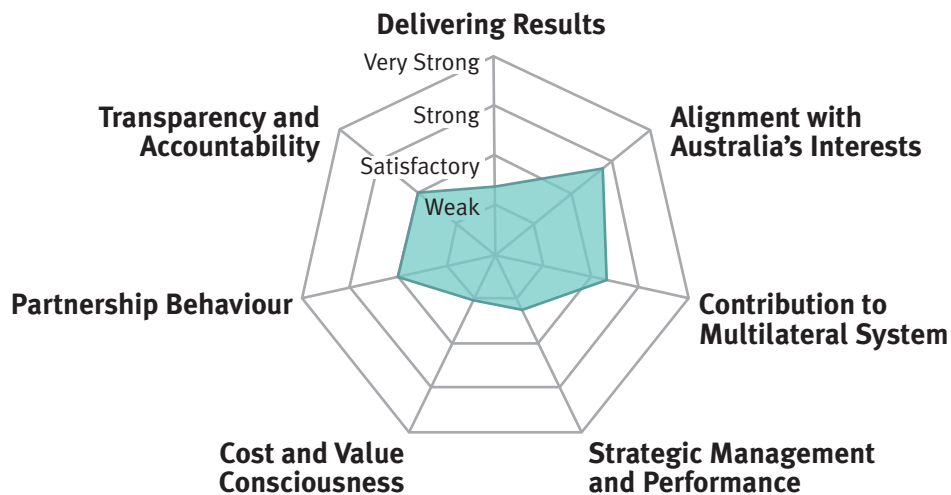


Australian Multilateral Assessment March 2012

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)



OVERVIEW OF ORGANISATION RATINGS



ORGANISATION OVERVIEW

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is a specialised agency of the United Nations (UN) with the mission of contributing to building peace, alleviating poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue, through education, sciences, culture, communication and information.

UNESCO is governed by an assembly of all member states which meets biannually, and by an executive board of 58 members which meets twice annually.

The largest segment of UNESCO's activities is a set of contributions to education, principally through advising member states on educational policy and related subjects and through operating a network of educational institutes. UNESCO's other activities include:

- > providing advice to member states on science, technology and innovation; managing the international hydrological program, small island developing states, biodiversity and biosphere reserves and geoscience programs as well as a network of scientific institutes and the International Oceanographic Commission, including its contribution to climate science
- > promotion of cultural diversity and heritage, including through the *Convention on World Heritage* (1970) under which the World Heritage List is established, the *Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003) and other conventions as well as a focus on culture and development, especially through cultural and creative industries and an Atlas of World Languages in Danger
- > promotion of for freedom of speech and media freedom
- > formation of codes of bioethics
- > cooperation with UNESCO National Commissions in member states. There is a UNESCO National Commission in Australia
- > activities in conflict prevention, reconciliation and peacebuilding by all its sectors as well as in relation to disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management, and
- > providing key education statistics and monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All targets via the Global Monitoring Report and International Institute for Educational Planning.

In 2010–11, Australia contributed \$7.0 million to UNESCO, comprising \$6.3 million of assessed contributions and \$0.7 million in non-core funding.

Australia also provided extra-budgetary funding for a range of activities outside of the aid program for activities in areas such as world heritage, anti-doping in sport and cultural diversity.

RESULTS AND RELEVANCE

1. Delivering results on poverty and sustainable development in line with mandate

WEAK

UNESCO pursues a development agenda through various aspects of its mandate. There are some clear indications of positive results from some of UNESCO’s activities, for example its highly regarded work on global education statistics, world heritage and oceanographic activities.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to define and measure results in most areas of UNESCO’s work, particularly at regional and country-levels. In education, UNESCO collects and reports information about its results, but reports give most weight to general outcomes or to UNESCO’s own outputs (such as meetings and conferences). There is insufficient information on impacts that are attributable to UNESCO’s own work. Recent efforts with a results-based management system are designed to overcome this problem. As part of its mandate as a specialised UN agency, UNESCO undertakes works on setting global normative standards and helping to operationalise these in member states. Such work is inherently difficult to measure, but there is no evidence that UNESCO has attempted to design ways of measuring the impact of its work in these areas.

For the most part UNESCO's work is designed for the benefit of all countries, and so does not only target the poorest. Nevertheless, in the education sector UNESCO is targeting the 38 countries (all least developed countries) that are furthest from achieving the MDG goals. Moreover, a significant proportion of activities in science policy, hydrology, biodiversity, and cultural industries benefit the poorest countries.

a) Demonstrates development or humanitarian results consistent with mandate	WEAK
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UNESCO contributes to development outcomes through various aspects of its mandate.

Education is the area of UNESCO's mandate most obviously central to development. But other areas of UNESCO's work have development benefits. For example, its objectives include the management of clean water and sanitation, the promotion of ethical behaviour in the application of science, promotion of media freedom, cultural industries and livelihoods, and acceptance of cultural diversity (including preservation of cultural and heritage sites). All of these contribute to create empowered citizens, enhance the quality of life in developing countries by developing industries such as tourism, and may help to avoid conflicts which might otherwise disrupt their development.

There are some clear indications of positive results from some of UNESCO's activities. For example in education, UNESCO's leading roles are education sector planning and policy advice on how to achieve education for all by ensuring quality and gender equality, or UNESCO's work on literacy corresponding to Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 2 and MDG 3, and compilation of global educational statistics related to various aspects of education, including on primary education enrolments. For example, in Nepal, UNESCO has worked to strengthen the capacity of approximately 450 education officials on the use and analysis of non-formal education data in planning, monitoring and evaluation. UNESCO's global education statistics work is highly regarded and widely used by stakeholders.

Clear positive results of UNESCO programs in areas other than education include are diverse including:

- > the Indian Ocean tsunami warning system
- > management of flood risks in Pakistan and several African countries
- > training of Tunisian journalists to cover the country's first free elections
- > post-conflict or post-disaster rehabilitation of world heritage sites, such as Angkor Wat
- > a capacity-building program in biodiversity management in arid zones in West Africa
- > safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage including indigenous languages, and
- > global efforts to advance scientific expertise in the developing world through the International Centre for Theoretical Physics.

Despite these positive achievements, UNESCO's broad mandate and focus on work at policy-level makes it difficult to consistently identify results that are directly attributable to UNESCO's work. This makes an overall assessment of the results from UNESCO's work difficult.

UNESCO's reporting tends to focus on broad development results where UNESCO's contribution is unclear, or on immediate program outputs such as meetings, training events and publications—though recent improvements in results-based management and reporting have been welcome by the governing bodies.

One prime example of the problem of attribution is seen in UNESCO's 2010 annual report, which shows that US\$72 million from assessed contributions was spent in the education sector, outlines a range of international achievements in the education sector. But the extent to which UNESCO's contribution had an impact on these achievements is generally unclear.

Program-level reporting reviewed by the Australian Multilateral Assessment (AMA) also made it difficult to assess the impact of UNESCO's programs. This reflects the weaknesses in the monitoring and reporting of results outlined in 1(b).

b) Plays critical role in improving aid effectiveness through results monitoring

WEAK

UNESCO's Programme and Budget, which is approved by the General Conference every two years, sets out the expected results for the forthcoming biennium for each of the five program sectors, with performance indicators and benchmarks. The Director General reports to each of the executive board sessions on program implementation in terms of main results achieved against the expected results, as well as challenges and lessons learned. At the end of the biennium, the Director General's *Report on the activities of the Organisation* reports on the achievements and challenges/lessons learned for each major program.

Nevertheless, the *Summary Report of the Independent External Evaluation of UNESCO* (185 EX/18, para 21, p5) observed:

It is difficult to track outcomes and impacts of the Organization given that the current reporting is based on the C/5 expected results at the Main Line of Action (MLA) level... It would also help if the reporting system enabled outcomes and impacts to be captured at the regional, sub-regional and country levels.

In response, management proposed, and the governing bodies endorsed, changes to improve the UNESCO system of results-based management. With these reforms continuing it is too early to judge the effectiveness of these measures.

At program-level UNESCO collects and reports information about results, but:

- > these reports give most weight to UNESCO's own outputs, rather than outcomes or impacts
- > outputs are not yet reported in a framework of indicators and expected measures, and
- > there is little indication of the lessons sections of reports being used to inform the design and delivery of future programs, or of reports being used as a basis for concluding poorly performing programs (see 4(c)).

Assessing the effectiveness of UNESCO's work in education is hampered by limitations of the material available from country-level evaluations. UNESCO has published on its

website an external evaluation of its education work as a whole, done in 2009 by Davis et al. The evaluation includes assessments of a sample of programs in individual countries and a meta-analysis of previous evaluations. The overall picture of effectiveness obtained from these annexes, and from the lists of ‘challenges’ in the main text, is equivocal. UNESCO management produced a detailed action plan to follow up on the external evaluation’s recommendations, which was welcomed by the executive board.

As part of its mandate as a specialised UN agency, UNESCO undertakes works on setting global normative standards and helping to operationalise these in member states. Such work is inherently difficult to measure, but there is no evidence that UNESCO has attempted to design ways of measuring the impact of its work in these areas.

c) Where relevant, targets the poorest people and in areas where progress against the MDGs is lagging	SATISFACTORY
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UNESCO targets additional education work in 38 priority countries which are furthest from the Education For All goals, all of which are least developed countries (which is a priority group of UNESCO, as are vulnerable and most disadvantaged groups). It should also be noted that Africa and gender equality are two global priorities for the organisation. Moreover, a significant proportion of activities in science policy, hydrology, biodiversity, and cultural industries benefit the poorest countries.

For the most part UNESCO’s other work is, according to its mandate, intended for all member states, developed and developing, and not so specifically focused on the poorest countries or poorest regions.

The organisation has over the last ten years increasingly made its competences available for countries hit by disaster or by conflict with positive results. For example, disaster risk management and reduction programs have successfully been implemented in countries such as Pakistan, Haiti, Indonesia, Namibia and Benin.

2. Alignment with Australia’s aid priorities and national interests	STRONG
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UNESCO’s education mandate aligns with one of the five key strategic goals of the Australian aid program—promoting opportunities for all. Australia values aspects of UNESCO’s work in the education sector, particularly in the area of statistics. The low levels of extra-budgetary contributions to UNESCO education programs through the aid program suggest in practice there is not substantial alignment between UNESCO and the Australian aid program. Australia has more extensive engagement in UNESCO’s work in areas such as world heritage and tsunami early warning systems.

Gender equality is a global priority for UNESCO. It makes useful contributions to gender in its advisory work on education and consistently applies gender disaggregation in its statistical compilations.

UNESCO makes credible contributions to environmental sustainability, both through elements of its education advice and through its work in ecological sciences, hydrology and oceanography.

UNESCO has implemented some good initiatives in some post-conflict and fragile states, such as hosting the Secretariat for the Inter-Agency Network for Education's Emergencies Working Group on Education and Fragility.

a) Allocates resources and delivers results in support of, and responsive to, Australia's development objectives	STRONG
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UNESCO's work aligns with Australia's interests in areas such as World Heritage and tsunami early warning systems.

UNESCO has developed a number of programs of high repute, such as World Heritage, leading oceanographic and freshwater programs, biosphere reserves, tsunami early warning systems, bioethics, promoting press freedom and the Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report.

UNESCO has also contributed to tsunami early warning systems in the Pacific (the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Pacific Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System) through its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.

b) Effectively targets development concerns and promotes issues consistent with Australian priorities	SATISFACTORY
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UNESCO's education mandate aligns with one of the five key strategic goals of the Australian aid program—'promoting opportunities for all'.

Australia values aspects of UNESCO's work in the education sector, particularly in the area of statistics.

The levels of extra-budgetary contributions to UNESCO through the aid program are relatively low (approximately \$750 000). This means that UNESCO is rarely the partner of choice for the Australian aid program investments managed by country or sector teams, including in the education sector.

c) Focuses on crosscutting issues, particularly gender, environment and people with disabilities	STRONG
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UNESCO treats gender equality as a global priority and has established a gender equality action plan for 2008–13. It makes useful contributions in its advisory work on education, integrating gender into its programming frameworks and working with UNICEF on the UN Girls Education Initiative.

UNESCO routinely applies gender disaggregation in its statistical compilations. Through emphasis on education for girls and women, it has contributed to making this a higher priority for many other agencies involved in education.

UNESCO makes creditable contributions to environmental sustainability, both through elements of its education advice (education for sustainable development, including climate change education) and through its work in ecological sciences, hydrology and oceanography. Its support for scientific work is adding to the evidence base on climate change. This includes the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the

International Hydrology Program, the Man and the Biosphere Programme (including Biosphere Reserves) and the International Geosciences Programme.

Further, UNESCO has a program for improving its own environmental impact and carbon footprint.

UNESCO's programs in the education sector include measures to support people with disabilities. It has produced *Guidelines for Inclusion* about including children with disabilities in education, and a related toolkit. Some of its educational training programs have focused on inclusive education. UNESCO has also produced a DVD, *A World for Inclusion: Ensuring Education for All through the UN Disability Convention*, which uses footage from Finland, Kenya and Turkey to address the situation of children with disabilities.

The *Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2010* focused on the theme of disability and gives attention to disability as one of the major factors holding back progress towards EFA.

d) Performs effectively in fragile states
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STRONG

There is no evidence that UNESCO has policies on programming or specific modalities for operating in fragile states. However, UNESCO delivers programs in post-conflict and post-disaster situations with some success.

For example, UNESCO has run large-scale education, media development, election preparation, and heritage conservation programs in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Lebanon and Cote d'Ivoire. In addition it has a range of intercultural dialogue activities aimed at reducing conflicts, and programs in conflict sensitive journalism.

UNESCO's Education Sector pays particular attention to countries in post-conflict, post-disaster (PCPD) states. One of the three composite criteria for selection of the 38 priority countries is the country's status in PCPD.

UNESCO is a member of the Steering Committee of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies Working Group for Education and Fragility and hosts the network's Secretariat.

Further, UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning has made an important contribution to education in fragile states.

UNESCO has set up a dedicated inter-sectoral platform to further enhance its strategies and operational capacity in conflict and disaster environments and its staff receive specific training and guidelines for working in post-conflict and post-disaster situations.

UNESCO has established a Chair in African Peace and Conflict Studies in the UK.

3. Contribution to the wider multilateral development system	SATISFACTORY
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UNESCO plays valuable coordinating roles in niche areas such as compiling and building capacities in education statistics and international recognition of educational qualifications. It has a mandate as global coordinator for EFA and has been designated by the UN General Assembly as lead agency for a range of issues across its mandate, such as the literacy decade, culture of peace, culture and development and freedom of the press. While these contributions are important, in practice UNESCO does not play a large coordination role at a country-level on education or on broader development issues.

For at least a decade, UNESCO has played distinctive roles in education, such as standard setting for statistics, preparation of Global Monitoring Reports on progress towards the EFA goals, and work on standards for international recognition of qualifications. Nevertheless development-related programs in other areas of education have been largely led by multilateral development banks and bilateral donors, and more recently the Global Partnership for Education.

Through the Inter-governmental Oceanographic Commission, UNESCO plays a valuable role in coordinating and encouraging international research into oceanic influences on weather patterns and the likely evolution of climate change.

a) Plays a critical role at global or national-level in coordinating development or humanitarian efforts	SATISFACTORY
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UNESCO has two coordinating roles in education:

- > it leads the international effort to standardise statistics on education for the purpose of monitoring the global Education For All goals, and
- > it leads the effort to formulate definitions or normative standards in education. It is a depository of 16 education-related conventions and recommendations on issues relating to, among others, right to education, adult education, technical and vocational education and training and higher education. It has initiated six regional conventions supporting mutual recognition of qualifications in higher education. These are of practical value to the international education sector in many countries, including Australia.

In several post-conflict or post-disaster joint UN/World Bank needs assessments, UNESCO has also been tasked with leading activities in the areas of media and democracy, and culture.

Since her appointment in 2009, UNESCO’s Director General Ms Irina Bokova has set about adding to UNESCO’s role as a coordinator in education. For example, she has brought together the executive heads and senior education managers of the five convening agencies in the Global Partnership for Education, suggesting an agenda focusing on current activities, addressing gaps in progress towards the MDGs and life after the MDGs.

While UNESCO is now more active in international coordination efforts, its particular value is sometimes unclear. The Australian Multilateral Assessment has not seen evidence of attempts to measure the success of UNESCO’s coordination role in the

education sector. However, the regular meetings of the five convening agencies of Education for All (World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNESCO) at executive head level have brought about agreements on the orientation and coordination of education programs and activities at the country-level in the context of common country programs.

UNESCO is the agency which promotes acceptance and implementation of the United Nations instruments for protection of cultural objects (the 1954 Convention and its two Protocols, and the 1970 and 2001 Conventions) and the development of museums, but these issues have few links to development beyond the promotion of sustainable tourism.

b) Plays a leading role in developing norms and standards or in providing large-scale finance or specialist expertise

SATISFACTORY

For at least a decade, UNESCO has had only a few distinctive roles in education standard-setting for statistics, preparation of Global Monitoring Reports on progress towards the global EFA goals, and work on standards for international recognition of qualifications. UNESCO's work in these areas is well regarded.

In other areas of education, leadership has largely been exercised by multilateral development banks, bilateral donors and more recently the Global Partnership for Education, which has taken on the role as the primary platform for donor coordination and resource mobilisation for basic education. In most areas of the education sector the World Bank plays a leading role in the provision of analytical and advisory services.

UNESCO develops norms and standards in a few other areas which are related to development, such as promoting standards of sustainable tourism, cultural diversity and freedom of expression. However, there is limited evidence of results attributable directly to UNESCO's work in these areas.

c) Fills a policy or knowledge gap or develops innovative approaches

STRONG

UNESCO is a unique source of valuable global statistics on education. Feedback indicates that stakeholders value UNESCO's work in this area, and Australia provides funding for the International Institute for Education Planning and Global Monitoring Report (GMR) because of the valuable work they undertake in this area. An evaluation of the quality and impact of the GMR in 2010 found that it contributes indirectly to government education policy and program development. The same evaluation also found that, 'while the relationship between UNESCO and the GMR is bearing fruit and has resulted in benefits for EFA, some confusion about GMR ownership and roles has limited their mutual impact'.

In addition, through the Inter-governmental Oceanographic Commission, UNESCO plays a valuable role in coordinating and encouraging international research into oceanic influences on weather patterns and the likely evolution of climate change. This work is supported by the International Hydrological Programme, which examines the impact of climate change on the availability and quality of freshwater. UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme has contributed to the new biodiversity platform adopted by the UN General Assembly.

ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

4. Strategic management and performance

WEAK

UNESCO's strategic objectives are not well translated into programs with clear priorities, corresponding budget allocations or expected results. Its 2010 independent external evaluation concluded that persistent efforts to improve the focus of its programs have been undermined by too many priorities, weak incentives to collaborate and lack of consensus in its governing bodies. In recent times UNESCO has made efforts to increase its programmatic focus and better clarify and improve its priorities, but it is too early to judge the success of these efforts.

The evaluation made clear that while UNESCO's evaluation system may be suitable in formal terms it is not supported by a strong evaluation culture.

UNESCO's executive board is large, with 58 members. The executive board has recently approved a range of measures designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Board following a 2010 Independent External Evaluation, although it is too early to assess the impact of these measures.

In 2010, UNESCO's Director General brought in new senior managers as part of a program to improve performance, but it is too early to judge the impact of these leadership changes.

a) Has clear mandate, strategy and plans effectively implemented

WEAK

The translation of strategic objectives into programs with clear priorities and corresponding budget allocations and expected results at country-level, in general seems to be weak. UNESCO operates an online tool, System of Information on Strategies, Tasks and the Evaluation of Results, which requires the person responsible for each activity to define expected results and ensure that if the activity is extra-budgetary, it is aligned with UNESCO's regular program and goals. Nevertheless, external evaluations have identified significant weaknesses in the implementation of UNESCO's strategy and plans.

The Summary Report of the independent external evaluation of UNESCO in 2010 observed (para 8, p 2):

There have been persistent attempts to "concentrate" work in larger programmes, promote "intersectorality" or cross-sector platforms and prioritize "objectives" in order to maximize synergies and impact. These efforts have been undermined by the continued autonomy of Sectors, weak incentives for collaboration, sectoral budget systems, too many priorities and crosscutting objectives, and lack of consensus in governing bodies and in the Secretariat. Instances of successful synergies are often the triumph of informal efforts by committed individuals over institutional barriers to cooperation.

On this basis, the report recommended increasing UNESCO's focus through a range of measures including:

- > the selection of a limited number of crosscutting strategic objectives with which all programs should be aligned
- > regular assessment of existing and planned programs in terms of their relevance, strengths and potential for cross-program synergies
- > administrative, budgetary, planning and human resources systems that support coherence, focus and synergy
- > exit strategies for some programs to support the continuation of activities where possible through their transfer to other parts of the UNESCO 'community' or even other host bodies
- > putting in place a permanent program review process linked with independent evaluation, and
- > developing new ways of reporting results that demonstrate high-level outcomes and impacts linked with coherent programs.

In 2011 a program of organisational change, formulated by the Director General and a working group of the executive board and drawing on the recommendations of the evaluation, was approved by both governing bodies.

Some of the program has already been adopted: the General Conference has agreed to significantly reduce the number of priorities, including halving the number of inter-sectoral platforms. If this program continues to be vigorously implemented it is likely to bring improvements.

b) Governing body is effective in guiding management

WEAK

The executive board is large, with 58 members. The size of the board and the consensus nature of decision making makes it difficult to provide strategic guidance to management.

The Summary Report of the independent external evaluation observed (para 34, p7):

UNESCO governance is highly dispersed with many intergovernmental and expert committees (for the culture conventions, intergovernmental programmes and category 1 institutes). This dispersal of governance reflects the near-impossibility of unitary governance in a highly heterogeneous agency and is reinforced by high volumes of extrabudgetary resources over which the main governing bodies have limited control.

Member States, while emphasizing the need for 'greater focus', have themselves contributed to the current lack of coherence both by funding decisions (for example, reducing regular budget contributions while increasing extrabudgetary resourcing) and by lobbying to sustain weak programmes or introduce incoherent activities.

Following the findings of the evaluation, the executive board adopted the recommendations of a specially convened working group to address these issues.

The endorsed recommendations include the need to:

- > formulate clear, precise criteria for introducing new and maintaining existing programs in the Programme and Budget
- > ensure that programs are aligned with UNESCO's overarching/strategic objectives, and
- > ensure that programs are in areas where UNESCO has a real comparative advantage.

It is too early to assess how fully these recommendations will be implemented and the impact they will have on strategic direction.

c) Has a sound framework for monitoring and evaluation, and acts promptly to realign or amend programs not delivering results	WEAK
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The observations of the independent external evaluation make clear in their assessment that while UNESCO has a suitable evaluation system in formal terms, it is not supported by a strong evaluation culture.

There is a flow of program evaluations, and reports to the executive board describe how their recommendations are being acted on. But there are shortcomings in evaluation coverage, and in resources for direct consultation of beneficiaries.

d) Leadership is effective and human resources are well managed	SATISFACTORY
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Since being appointed in 2009, the Director General has set out a comprehensive agenda of reform. In the foreword to the 2010 Annual Report, the Director General notes:

We must take this deep change much further, refocusing our priorities to become more effective. UNESCO's message will resonate best through concrete results.

In 2010, the Director General brought in new senior managers as part of a program to improve performance, but it is too early to judge the impact of these leadership changes.

The Summary Report of the independent external evaluation listed (in para 24, p5) a series of weaknesses with human resource management:

overcentralization; poor coordination within headquarters and between Headquarters and field offices and institutes; the absence of career planning for staff; unwillingness to trust or grant discretion to decentralized offices; poor partnering skills; and in some locations weak delivery capacity on the ground.

5. Cost and value consciousness	WEAK
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While there has been some progress on scrutiny of costs in the last decade, in general UNESCO does not give adequate attention to cost control and value for money. Administration costs are high, and there is little evidence that it focuses on value for money of programs.

There is little evidence that UNESCO’s executive board challenges programs that have poor value for money. With the United States having announced in November 2011 a freeze on its funding of UNESCO, the executive board may be compelled to take a fresh interest in cost cutting measures, including terminating underperforming programs.

Beyond standard practices of having programs and units audited, the Australian Multilateral Assessment has no evidence that UNESCO gives systematic attention to cost effectiveness in forming and reviewing its programs.

The Australian Multilateral Assessment did not find evidence that UNESCO challenges partners on value for money.

a) Governing body and management regularly scrutinise costs and assess value for money	WEAK
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While there has been some progress in the last decade, there seems some way to go towards giving adequate attention to cost control and value for money. Administrative costs are high. The 2010–11 UNESCO staff cost budget comprised 60 per cent of UNESCO’s Regular Programme budget.

There is little evidence to date of the executive board challenging programs for representing poor value for money. With the United States announcing in November 2011 a freeze on its funding of UNESCO, the executive board may be compelled to take a fresh interest in cost cutting measures, including terminating underperforming programs.

b) Rates of return and cost effectiveness are important factors in decision making	WEAK
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Beyond standard practices of having programs and units audited, there is little evidence that UNESCO gives systematic attention to cost effectiveness in forming and reviewing its programs.

c) Challenges and supports partners to think about value for money	WEAK
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There is little evidence that issues related to value for money are a widespread feature of UNESCO’s interactions with its partners.

Although UNESCO adheres to standard UN procurement requirements, some external audits have noted cases of contract management procedures not being followed, competition being limited and individuals repeatedly being awarded contracts.

UNESCO is in the process of developing new partnerships, including with national/regional institutes and with private sector entities—which may allow the delivery of results at more advantageous cost to UNESCO in the future.

6. Partnership behaviour

SATISFACTORY

The 2010 independent external evaluation of UNESCO was critical of aspects of its partnership behaviour, including its lack of engagement with newer forms of global public–private partnerships and innovative financing vehicles. In response, UNESCO has established new partnerships over the past 12 months with a range of private sector organisations and a new partnership strategy is being developed.

UNESCO performs adequately in aligning with partner government priorities and systems, particularly with policy advice and capacity building work.

UNESCO’s national commissions provide a direct voice for and means of participation for civil society in UNESCO programs. UNESCO has a good record of engaging and working with a wide range of civil society organisations.

UNESCO has a good record in developing policies for the inclusion of marginalised groups, particularly women in science and marginalised groups, including through community media based information and communication.

a) Works effectively in partnership with others

WEAK

The independent external evaluation of UNESCO observed:

- > there is little engagement with newer forms of ‘global public–private partnerships’ and innovative financing vehicles
- > although UNESCO maintains formal and operational relations with NGOs—the General Conference now has a Partners Forum and the executive board an NGO Committee—relationships are often formalistic and mostly focused in the North, and
- > UNESCO is perceived by civil society as bureaucratic with complex procedures and weak partnering capacities.

In terms of private sector engagement, over the past 12 months UNESCO has launched a number of major new partnerships with the private sector. These include a partnership on literacy, teacher training and girls’ education with Procter and Gamble, Microsoft, the Packard Foundation and GEMS Education under its overall framework of ‘Global Partnership for Girls’ and Women’s Education’; and a partnership on water management for the urban poor with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

As well as actively seeking new partnerships, UNESCO is developing a broader policy framework for strategic partnerships. The executive board has directed the Secretariat that all partnerships must align with the principles and mandate of UNESCO, information on partnership needs to be presented in a transparent manner and that a set of clear criteria be developed for the selection, approval, evaluation, renewal and termination of partnerships. To this end a new partnership strategy is being developed to improve the building and managing of partnerships.

Further, over the past two years the Secretariat has worked hard to establish relations with NGOs from developing countries, particularly Africa.

Less positively, an Australian overseas mission commented that in an education program jointly implemented by UNICEF and UNESCO, the boundaries and mandates of the respective partners are not clear, they fail to coordinate effectively, and this has resulted in duplication of work. As mentioned above, UNESCO is coordinating the newly established 'EFA Coordination Architecture' to work strategically between all EFA convening agencies including UNICEF by establishing clear divisions of labour, which may address some of these challenges in the future.

b) Places value on alignment with partner countries' priorities and systems
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SATISFACTORY

UNESCO performs adequately in aligning with partner government priorities and systems, particularly with policy advice and capacity building work such as:

- > organising ministerial meetings at global and regional levels on policy in UNESCO's areas of competence
- > offering to coordinate governments' relations with donors, for example, in the UN Education Sector Strategy framework, and
- > providing policy advice and capacity building for line ministries or institutions in UNESCO's areas of competence, often in the context of larger amounts of assistance from other donors.

c) Provides voice for partners and other stakeholders in decision making

STRONG

UNESCO performs well in this respect.

The UNESCO national commissions are country-led partners in its fields of operation as well as advisers to their governments' delegates to the governing bodies. The national commissions can provide a direct voice and means of participation for civil society in UNESCO programs. UNESCO has a good record of engaging and working with a wide range of civil society organisations.

UNESCO also has a good record in advocating policies for the inclusion of marginalised groups, particularly women in science and marginalised groups in education.

7. Transparency and accountability	SATISFACTORY
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UNESCO does not have a disclosure policy or a presumption of disclosure. However, substantial amounts of operational and organisational information are easily accessible on its website. Information on current programs is available on its internal system, to which delegations of member states have access, but not the public.

UNESCO has no clear process for allocating resources across countries. This is in large part due to its heavy reliance on extra-budgetary resources for programs.

UNESCO has an Internal Oversight Service, an independent Oversight Advisory Committee and an Ethics Office. External audits are conducted to international standards by the national audit office of a member state elected for a six-year term by the General Conference—currently the Cour des Comptes of France. UNESCO has consistently obtained unqualified audit opinions on its financial statements. It is one of the few United Nations organisations that have adopted the international public sector accounting standards. Its Internal Oversight Service is regularly subject to external peer review and has been rated strongly.

The Australian Multilateral Assessment found little evidence that UNESCO promotes transparency of its partners, although certain programs, such as those relating to freedom of expression, promote accountability within recipient countries.

a) Routinely publishes comprehensive operational information, subject to justifiable confidentiality	SATISFACTORY
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UNESCO does not have a disclosure policy, nor a presumption of disclosure. It is not a signatory to the International Aid Transparency Initiative.

Nevertheless, substantial amounts of operational and organisational information are readily accessible on the UNESCO website.

Information on current programs is available on its internal system, to which delegations of member states have access, although not publicly.

b) Is transparent in resource allocation, budget management and operational planning	WEAK
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UNESCO has a regular biennial programme and budget, which is allocated to its various Sectors, Bureaus and Offices through negotiations among member states in the executive board and the General Conference, which has the ultimate decision making power. The biennial program and budget resources are allocated by each program sector to regions and then to (some 50) field offices covering all developing countries (and four liaison offices in New York, Geneva, Addis Ababa and Brussels).

UNESCO has no clear process for allocating resources across countries. The recent selection of 20 target countries by the Education Sector was based on transparent criteria, however this is not currently standard practice across UNESCO's programs. Additional resources are allocated in connection with needs established at country-level for UNDAFs

and One UN programs, where UNESCO activities have been chosen as priority components of UN common country programs.

The absence of clear processes to allocate resources is partly due to a heavy reliance on extra-budgetary resources for program activities. To provide for much of its core functions, UNESCO depends on attracting voluntary contributions and deducting charges from them for administrative overheads in line with the UN cost recovery policies (13 per cent for funds in trust; seven per cent for UN Delivering as One programs).

Allocations in the budget are made by program, and not by country except that priority is to be given to Africa as global priority and Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States as priority groups.

c) Adheres to high standards of financial management, audit, risk management and fraud prevention	STRONG
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UNESCO has an Internal Oversight Service, an independent Oversight Advisory Committee, and an Ethics Office.

External audits are conducted to the highest international standards, by the national audit office of a member state elected for a six-year term by the General Conference—currently the Cour des Comptes of France. UNESCO has consistently obtained unqualified audit opinions on its financial statements. It is one of the United Nations organisations to have adopted the International Public Sector Accounting Standards. Its Internal Oversight Service is regularly subject to external peer review and has been rated strongly.

However, some recent audits—notably in the water science sector—found that policies which provide appropriate safeguards have not been followed, for example, in managing consultant contracts.

d) Promotes transparency and accountability in partners and recipients	SATISFACTORY
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The Australian Multilateral Assessment found little evidence that UNESCO promotes transparency of its partners, although certain programs, such as those relating to freedom of expression, promote accountability within recipient countries.