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2022 Synthetic Review of UNESCO Evaluations

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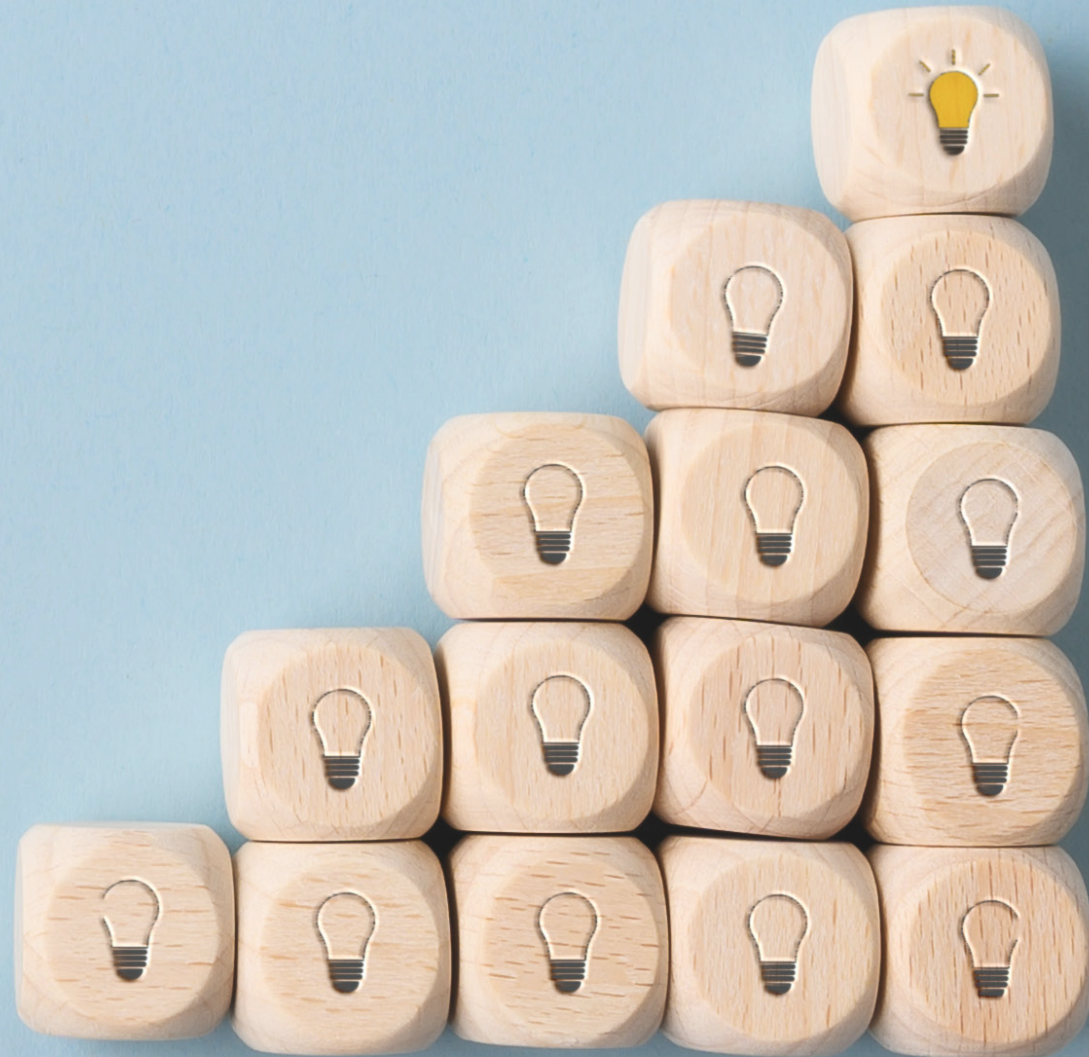


Table of Contents

Acronyms	4	4. Contributions to 40 C/5 Expected Results	18
Abstract & Acknowledgements	5	4.1 Major Programme I – Education	18
1. Introduction	6	4.2 Major Programme II – Natural Sciences	24
2. Overview of the portfolio	8	4.3 Major Programme III – Social and Human Sciences	25
3. Crosscutting findings	10	4.4 Major Programme IV – Culture	26
3.1 Effective, flexible project management adds value to UNESCO initiatives	10	4.5 Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC-UNESCO)	29
3.2 UNESCO leverages its convening power for collective policy support and influence	10	4.6 Intersectoral	30
3.3 Covid-19 conditions accelerated UNESCO readiness to support digital transformation	12	5. UNESCO performance against evaluation criteria	32
3.4 UNESCO's growing attention to inclusion still rarely addresses persons with disabilities	12	5.1 Relevance	32
3.5 Progress is evident on intersectoral collaboration, but it remains more the exception than the rule	12	5.2 Coherence	33
3.6 Resource constraints may demand strategic responses	14	5.3 Effectiveness and Impact	34
3.7 Many initiatives still lack clear results frameworks tied to effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E)	15	5.4 Efficiency	34
3.8 Improved strategic communication could increase UNESCO visibility, which is often limited	15	5.5 Sustainability	36
3.9 UNESCO Global Priorities appear inconsistently addressed in past interventions whose focus was not gender or Africa	16	6. Quality of UNESCO Evaluations	37
		6.1 Areas requiring attention	37
		6.2 Good practices in evaluation	38
		Appendix 1: Evaluation reports reviewed	40
		Appendix 2: Quality assessment of UNESCO evaluation reports	42
		Appendix 3: SDG Alignment	47
		Appendix 4: Management response to crosscutting findings	50
		Appendix 5: Consultants biodata	59

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1. Major Programme Coverage in the 2022 Synthetic review portfolio of evaluations	9
Figure 2. Major Programme Coverage by evaluations over the last four synthetic reviews (2019-2022)	9
Figure 3. SDG Coverage of evaluated initiatives	10
Table 1. Coverage of 40 C/5 Expected Results by evaluations in the 2019 -2022 Synthetic Reviews	10
Table 2. UNEG Legend	43
Table 3. UNEG Scores Corporate Evaluations	43
Table 4. UNEG Scores Decentralized Evaluations	44
Table 5. SDG Alignment	48

Acronyms

BSP	Bureau for Strategic Planning	MTS	Medium-term Strategy
CapED	Capacity Development for Education	NGO	Non-governmental organization
CI	Communication and Information Sector	OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
CLT	Culture Sector	OSPA	Operational Strategy for Priority Africa
CS	Corporate Services	OWSD	Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World
CSE	Comprehensive Sexual Education	PAX	Sector for Priority Africa and External Relations
ED	Education Sector	PWD	Persons with disabilities
EI	Education international	QA	Quality Assurance
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems	SC	Natural Sciences Sector
ER	Expected Result	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development	SHS	Social and Human Sciences Sector
GE	Gender Equality	SIDS	Small Islands Developing States
GEAP II	Gender Equality Action Plan II	SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
GEN	Gender Equality Division	STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths
HQ	Headquarters	ToC	Theory of Change
ICH	Intangible Cultural Heritage	ToR	Terms of Reference
ICT	Information and Communication Technology	TTF	International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning	TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission	UN	United Nations
IOS	Division of Internal Oversight Services	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
IPHAN	Institute of National Historic and Artistic Heritage (Brazil)	UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
JP	Joint Programme	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
LDCs	Least Developed Countries	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation		
MP	Major Programme		
MS	Member State		

Abstract & Acknowledgements

Abstract

The 2022 Synthetic Review contributes, at an organization-wide level, to the three purposes of evaluation defined in the revised *UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029*, namely, learning, accountability, and decision-making. It describes the overall characteristics of this synthetic review's portfolio, draws out crosscutting findings, summarizes features of programmes and projects covered by each evaluation and contributions to each Major Programme's 40 C/5 Expected Results, and assesses the quality of the evaluations themselves.

UNESCO's Education sector represented 14 of the 27 evaluations in this year's portfolio, and seven evaluations covered Culture sector programmes/projects. However, sectoral coverage in the four synthetic reviews carried out during the 2018-2021 quadrennium (39 and 40 C/5) is roughly in proportion with the distribution of Regular Budget resources. All Expected Results in each Major Programme have also been covered by synthetic reviews over this period. Programmes/Projects covered in this year's evaluations align with 16 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Many areas of UNESCO's strengths emerge from the evaluations. Effective and flexible project management was especially important in the unpredictable context of the COVID-19 pandemic and UNESCO's convening power was reaffirmed as an important asset supporting contributions to policy reform and influence. In line with the 2030 Agenda's pledge that "no one will be left behind" and that efforts will be made "to reach the furthest behind first," many evaluations considered the extent to which programmes/projects reached persistently marginalized groups; however, there is considerable room for improvement on inclusion of persons with disabilities. Despite progress, room for improvement also remains in other areas that have been highlighted in past reviews, such as intersectoral collaboration, monitoring and evaluation, and alignment with Global Priorities Gender Equality and Africa. The review also highlights how adaptations required by the COVID-19 pandemic incited UNESCO and its partners to explore the potential of ICTs. This has accelerated the Organization's readiness to support digital transformation, but also underlines the need to address digital equity gaps.

UNESCO performance was strongest in relation to the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria of relevance and effectiveness, as the Organization harnessed its strong stakeholder relationships to support programmes and projects responsive to the needs of Member States, partners, and targeted beneficiaries. UNESCO and its partners effectively contributed

to outcomes ranging from improved vocational and life skills for secondary school students in rural communities in Peru, to facilitating global collaboration on ocean science and policy. Common enabling factors for effectiveness included strong partnerships, access to expertise, good project management, and stakeholder engagement. Evaluations also found strong coherence of UNESCO programmes and projects with other actors and initiatives in its ecosystems. In terms of efficiency, several evaluations noted that resources were inadequate relative to expected results and pointed out the need for strategic efforts on resource mobilization. However, almost all evaluations found that available resources were used efficiently, budgets were executed as planned, and activities were conducted and outputs delivered in a timely manner. Limited financial resources were also frequently identified as a constraint to sustainability. Positive prospects for sustainability that appeared across the evaluations were often linked to a strong sense of ownership by government and other partners, and efforts to work closely with national or local partners, aligning efforts to their existing priorities and strategies.

The quality of evaluations showed a slight improvement compared to previous years. Findings and Recommendations were almost universally rated as meeting standards, and despite significant room for improvement in relation to the UNEG criterion of Gender and Human Rights, quality in this area was rated higher this year than last. The support and capacity-building provided by the IOS Evaluation Office remain crucial for ensuring continued improvement on all criteria.

Acknowledgements

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IOS extends sincere thanks to the Executive Offices and staff of the Programme Sectors, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the UNESCO Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP), the Gender Equality Division (GEN), the Sector for Priority Africa and External Relations (PAX), for their comments on the draft report and contributions to the management response. The IOS Evaluation Office also provided important inputs into the draft and quality assurance of the final report.

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Director of the Division of Internal Oversight Services

1. Introduction

1. Since 2016, the Evaluation Office of UNESCO's Division of Internal Oversight Services (IOS) has commissioned synthetic reviews of each year's portfolio of UNESCO evaluations.¹ This year's report draws on evidence from 27 evaluations covering a range of projects, programmes, strategies, and other initiatives and thematic topics. The report will be presented to the 215th session of the Executive Board in October of 2022.

1.1 Rationale

2. The annual synthetic review contributes, at an organization-wide level, to the three purposes of evaluation defined in the *UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029*— learning, accountability, and decision-making – by presenting and analyzing evidence of UNESCO's performance and progress on goals and directions set in its strategic guiding documents. In the period covered by the evaluations that contribute to this review, the main point of reference is the 37 C/4 Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2021 and its associated biennial C/5 Programme and Budget documents.² The review also assesses the quality of UNESCO evaluations, as a contribution to the Organization's ongoing commitment to meeting high standards aligned with the *UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029* and with *UNEG Norms and Standards*.

1.2 Review Questions

3. The following principal questions guided this year's synthetic review:
 - What are the characteristics of the synthetic review's evaluation portfolio in terms of programmes and projects and results covered?
 - What learning and contributions to decision-making emerge from an analysis of the evaluations about systemic issues or opportunities that UNESCO may wish to address to support ongoing adaptation and improvement in programming and operations?

¹ At its 186th session the Executive Board requested continued annual reporting on completed evaluations (186 EX/Decision 6(VI)).

² The 2022 review primarily refers to Expected Results in the approved 40 C/5 Programme and Budget, which covers 2020-2021.

- What contributions have various projects, programmes, and other initiatives made to relevant Expected Results (ERs) for each of UNESCO's Major Programmes (MPs) and to other relevant objectives, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
- Where does UNESCO stand in relation to the OECD-DAC standard evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact (or orientation towards impact) and other standards identified in its evaluations?
- What conclusions can be drawn about the quality of UNESCO evaluations?
- How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected programmes/projects and the conduct and quality of evaluations?

1.3 Report Structure

4. The report has six parts. This introductory *Part I* is followed by:
 - *Part II*, which presents metadata on the 2022 synthetic review portfolio of evaluations, including MPs, ERs, and SDGs covered;
 - *Part III*, which builds on last year's review and highlights ongoing and new crosscutting areas of achievement, gaps, opportunities, and other programming and operations issues; Appendix 4 presents a Management Response to the crosscutting findings explored in Part III;
 - *Part IV*, which provides brief summaries of evaluation findings that show how the work of UNESCO covered in this review's portfolio contributes to various ERs as defined in the 40 C/5 Programme and Budget under the MPs;³

³ While the formulation of individual ERs or their numbering may change over the biennia, for the purpose of this comparison and to ensure consistency, ERs as defined in the 40 C/5 Programme and Budget have been applied.

- *Part V*, which presents trends from the evaluations in UNESCO's performance against the standard OECD-DAC evaluation criteria; and
- *Part VI*, which highlights the performance of the evaluations themselves against the UNEG quality checklist and discusses common areas of strength and weakness.

1.4 Approach

5. The review team drew on the questions presented in section 1.2, the UNEG criteria, previous years' synthesis reports, relevant UNESCO policy and planning documents, and input from the Evaluation Office to identify categories of information and evidence to be extracted from the evaluations. A review tool was created, with headings such as MPs, ERs, SDGs, Global Priorities, thematic and cross-cutting issues, UNEG criteria, and more. This was used to capture evidence from each evaluation and facilitate summary and analysis.
6. Each evaluation's ratings against the UNESCO-adapted UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports were also recorded in the review tool. For corporate evaluations, the Evaluation Office provided the quality assurance (QA) reports that had already been carried out by external reviewers, while for decentralized evaluations, QA was carried out as part of the synthetic review process.⁴
7. Once all relevant data was entered into the review tool, it was systematically assessed and analyzed to inform summaries under relevant 40 C/5 ERs,⁵ to identify and explore crosscutting issues, and to synthesize performance against the OECD-DAC and UNEG quality criteria.

⁴ All UNESCO corporate evaluations undergo external QA. This practice is less common for decentralized evaluations, for which programme staff provide QA with support from Evaluation Focal Points and/or the IOS Evaluation Office.

⁵ Some interventions contributed to more than one ER but, for consistency, only one principal ER was associated with each initiative. The exception was the corporate evaluation of *UNESCO's Strategy for Action on Climate Change*, which is crosscutting and has not been assigned an ER. 57% of evaluations reviewed did not identify the relevant ER so assigning ERs was part of the review process; assigned ERs were then validated by UNESCO staff. When evaluations identified contributions to SDGs, this was also recorded, and where SDGs were not identified, the review team identified relevant SDGs. This was also validated by UNESCO programme staff.

1.5 Limitations

8. This report represents the review team's best efforts to extract and analyze information that is robust and pertinent from the portfolio of evaluations. Nonetheless, the depth and reliability of the synthesis are limited by several factors, including the following:
 - *Variations in the type of evidence available*: Significant differences in scope and approach among the evaluations, and in the size and type of initiatives they cover, affect the potential for comparison and synthesis.
 - *Variations in the quality of evidence available*: All the evaluations provide valuable insights, but their quality varies, which means that the amount of robust and relevant evidence available to feed the synthesis varies across the portfolio.
 - *Limited outcome-level evidence*: As in previous years, many of the evaluations focus primarily on activities and outputs, with limited analysis of results at outcome level. Many also still lack logic models or theories of change to structure synthetic learning about how initiatives they cover contribute to broader UNESCO strategic objectives.
 - *Varied use of evaluation criteria*: Not all evaluations use the standard OECD-DAC criteria as the framework for assessment and reporting. This complicated the extraction and comparison of data across the evaluations.
 - *Sampling issues*: Since the review is limited to independent external evaluations completed in 2021 and early 2022,⁶ it only partially represents UNESCO's active or recently completed programmes and projects. Reading the synthetic review in combination with those from previous years and other reports, such as recent UNESCO Strategic Results Reports (SRRs), provides a more complete picture.
9. These limitations were mitigated by ensuring that the development of synthetic findings considered the quality and relative significance of the available evidence. Except in Part IV, which highlights specific programme/project contributions to ERs and notable findings from individual evaluations, the focus is on themes with broad applicability and learning value.

⁶ All evaluation reports included in this synthetic review were completed in 2021 or early 2022, with one exception. The Final Evaluation of Phase II of the Strengthening Pre-Service Teacher Education in Myanmar (STEM) Project was completed towards the end of 2020 but had not been included in last year's synthetic review.

2. Overview of the portfolio

10. This year's synthetic review covered 27 evaluations – five corporate and 22 decentralized. The number of corporate evaluations over a comparable period remains similar to previous years, and the number of decentralized evaluations also remained stable in comparison to last year.⁷ This can be attributed to proactive outreach by the Evaluation Office and strengthened engagement of evaluation focal points in backstopping and collecting reports. UNESCO's *Evaluation Policy* defines the categories of evaluation as follows⁸:

- *Corporate evaluations*: Thematic or cross-cutting evaluations of large UNESCO programmes or areas of work, assessing areas of high strategic importance. They are conducted and/or managed by the IOS Evaluation Office.
- *Decentralized evaluations*: Evaluations of a project, a portfolio of projects implemented within a country or across a spectrum of countries, or a larger programme or entity. They are directly managed by the concerned Programme Sector, Field Office, or Category 1 institute responsible for the intervention.

11. Figure 1 illustrates the Major Programmes (MPs) represented in this year's synthetic review.⁹ Figure 2 illustrates the MPs covered by the 84 evaluations reviewed under the quadrennium (2018-2021) 39 C/5 and 40 C/5 Programme and Budget documents. The distribution of evaluations across Sectors in the four synthetic reviews over the quadrennium is roughly in proportion with the distribution of UNESCO Regular Budget resources (i.e. assessed contributions) during this period.¹⁰

⁷ This number remains significantly higher than in earlier years, with 18 in the 2019 and only six in the 2020 synthetic review.

⁸ See detailed definitions in the 2022-2029 Evaluations Policy (Chapter VI and Glossary of Key terms)

⁹ The corporate evaluation of UNESCO's Strategy for Action on Climate Change was the only intersectoral evaluation included in this review.

¹⁰ Following is a list of the number of evaluations per MP in the quadrennial period of 2018-2021 in 39 C/5 and 40 C/5 followed in brackets by the budget allocated to each MP: 32 ED evaluations (US\$ 736,948,100), 12 SC evaluations (US\$ 272,510,300), 1 IOC evaluation (US\$ 18,564,000), 11 SHS evaluations (US\$ 95,489,7000), 24 CLT evaluations (US\$ 268,842,600), 4 CI evaluations (US\$ 70,648,600).

Figure 1. Major Programme Coverage in the 2022 Synthetic review portfolio of evaluations

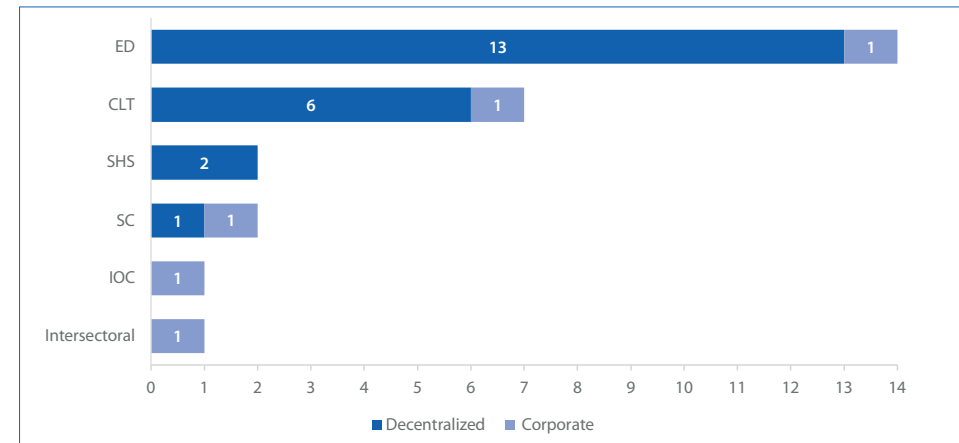
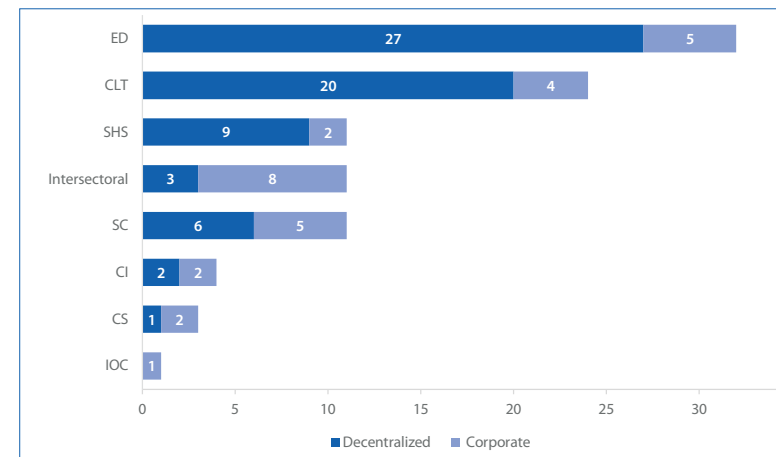


Figure 2. Major Programme Coverage by evaluations over the last four synthetic reviews (2019-2022)^{11,12}



¹¹ Covering evaluations conducted during the Quadrennium 2018-2021.

¹² "CS" in the graph refers to Corporate Services.

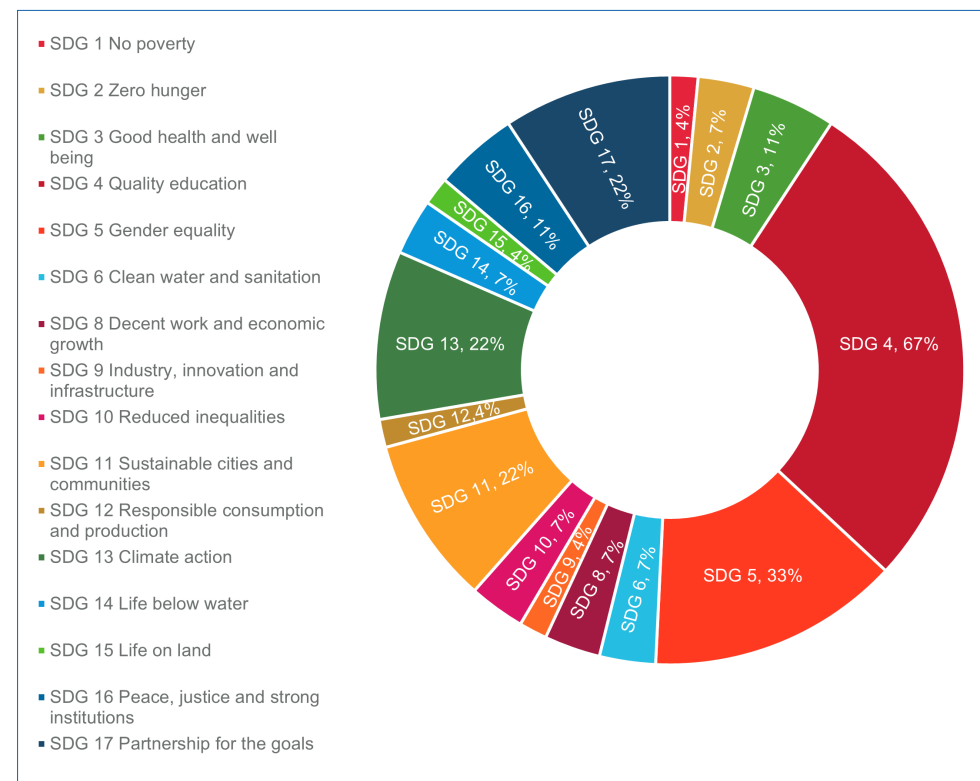
12. **Table 1** shows that all the 40 C/5 ERs in each MP have been covered by evaluations included in synthetic reviews over the last four years.

Table 1. Coverage of 40 C/5 Expected Results by evaluations in the 2019 -2022 Synthetic Reviews¹³

	ER1	ER2	ER3	ER4	ER5	ER6	ER7	ER8	ER9	ER10
ED	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
SHS	✓	✓	✓	✓						
CLT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
CI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
IOC	✓									

13. UNESCO seeks to align and report on its efforts in relation to the 2030 Agenda SDGs. As shown in Figure 3, initiatives covered in this year's portfolio are aligned with sixteen of the seventeen SDGs, showing a major focus on SDG 4 Quality Education, SDG 5 Gender Equality, SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG 13 Climate Action, and SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals. Percentages indicate the proportion of the 27 evaluations in this year's portfolio that are aligned with a given SDG. For example, 67% of the 27 initiatives covered by the reports are aligned with SDG 4. Most cover more than one SDG.

Figure 3. SDG Coverage of evaluated initiatives



¹³ Shaded cells indicate absence of ERs for that MP in C/5 40 Programme.

3. Crosscutting findings

14. A year's worth of evaluation reports from across UNESCO provide a rich source for identifying common or significant themes, recurrent issues, and trends. The crosscutting findings of this year's synthesis include achievements to celebrate, challenges to address, and opportunities that UNESCO may choose to build on as the Organization initiates the new 41 C/4 Medium-Term Strategy period. Like last year, the review highlighted recognized UNESCO strengths, as well as progress on challenges. However, it also identified weaknesses, sometime persisting in areas already highlighted as concerns in past reviews.

3.1 Effective, flexible project management adds value to UNESCO initiatives

15. Successful project management relies on positive relationships with partners, timely attention to administrative and financial matters, fluid communication and coordination, and commitment to project objectives. Project management by UNESCO staff teams was an enabler of results in many interventions covered by this review's evaluations. Stakeholders in the *Education for Sustainable Development* (ESD)

Flexibility is a critical asset in many UNESCO programme/project environments – and all the more during the COVID-19 pandemic. The final evaluation of the *Joint Programme on Empowering Adolescent Girls and Young Women through Education* included a section on how partners responded to the pandemic, which led to extended school closures and restricted freedom of movement. According to the evaluation, “Project managers in all three countries agreed that flexibility was the only means to respond to often fast-changing circumstances.”

Project risk management under pandemic conditions in Nepal involved classifying three tiers of activities: “possible to implement immediately,” “possible to implement with certain COVID-19 restrictions lifted,” and “possible to implement with all COVID-19 restrictions lifted.” The first tier included online, television, and radio-based advocacy and online training, workshops, and consultations. The second involved in-person activities with limited numbers of participants.

project, for example, expressed appreciation for UNESCO's close engagement with implementation, clear and timely communication, and support on administrative procedures. UNESCO regional offices appreciated the ESD Section at UNESCO HQ for accommodating differing needs and circumstances across programme regions and countries.

16. The importance of flexibility was also highlighted. The UNESCO team managing the *Conservation and Management of World Heritage Sites China* project accommodated timeline and activity changes resulting from the state reform process and the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the evaluation, “flexible and timely adaptations [...] ensured the progress of the project and minimized the impact.” Good communication and coordination – in a project that had cooperation agreements with 29 different partners – was also noted. Similar observations emerged from the evaluation of the *Horizons* project in Peru, which reported that the UNESCO team “kept the programme design open and flexible.” This allowed new elements to be added and others adapted and facilitated implementation in “very adverse conditions.”
17. Like in last year's review, several evaluations pointed out that UNESCO's internal procedures created bottlenecks that hindered performance. An exception was the Brazil-based project on *Training for Cultural Heritage Management*. Its evaluation highlighted excellent project management and relationships with the UNESCO Brasilia office and noted that UNESCO handling of finances eased contracting by avoiding cumbersome government procedures. By contrast, stakeholders in the *FIT VALE/UNESCO Cooperation-National Museum Reconstruction* project attributed some project delays to UNESCO procedures perceived as “unclear and cumbersome”.

3.2 UNESCO leverages its convening power for collective policy support and influence

18. UNESCO's profile as a neutral broker, and its expertise in key mandate areas, allows the Organization to bring stakeholders together for dialogue on policy issues at various levels. This was evident in several initiatives covered this year – and especially with

respect to major cross-sectoral themes and strategic initiatives, such as shown in the evaluations of the *Strategic Positioning of IOC-UNESCO* and the *Strategy for Action on Climate Change*. Along these lines, the midterm review of *Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Futures* (O3), advancing Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in 33 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, underlined UNESCO's added value as the main coordinator of the programme at both country and regional levels. As the lead UN agency for SDG 4 on quality education for all, and partner of ministries of education, UNESCO uses its strategic position to promote CSE in schools. The O3 evaluation found UNESCO also has the relationships needed to advocate for CSE within institutional structures that other UN agencies and health sector organizations have found difficult to integrate.

19. The evaluation of a joint project on rights-based approaches to disability in Morocco (*Changing Attitudes and Promoting a Human Rights-based Approach to the Perception of Disability in Morocco*) also highlighted the value of UNESCO's close partnerships with ministries and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as a success factor. The project's coordination of multiple channels and agencies was considered a major success and UNESCO's reputation and credibility was credited with engaging partners to mobilize the human and financial resources needed for the project. However, evaluations show that UNESCO coordination with partners is not always smooth. A central objective of the *Strengthening Multi-Partner Cooperation to Support Teacher Policy and Improve Learning* project was to overcome fragmentation among actors involved in setting and supporting teacher policy. The evaluation of this initiative found that although it improved coordination at national level, UNESCO faced serious challenges in facilitating horizontal communication and cooperation among the seven international consortium members. Some evaluations also noted that UNESCO's convening power can be offset by scarce financial and human resources at country level, limiting tangible support to local programming.

3.3 Covid-19 conditions accelerated UNESCO readiness to support digital transformation

20. Beginning in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic required UNESCO and its partners to adapt implementation, often by shifting in-person events, training, and other interactions online, as indicated for example, in the evaluation of the 2003 Convention, which described how capacity building on periodic reporting adopted the online modality. Overall, this synthetic review's evaluations found that UNESCO was successful in using digital and other remote means to adapt its work. In the

face of school closures and lockdowns, for example, the O3 programme invested in digital channels to reach adolescents and youth, adapting and using technological solutions to ensure continued delivery of CSE curricula and support for learners and teachers. In some cases, moving activities online made them more accessible. In the *Taking ESD into the Future* project, the Southern Africa Regional Bureau reported that moving an important global event online allowed them to invite and engage with stakeholders who would not have been able to attend in person.

21. Growing attention to ICTs is aligned with UNESCO's ever-stronger focus on technology and digital transformation, evident in the new MTS 2022-2029, and several evaluations observed that the pandemic underlined the potential of digital tools. The evaluation of *UNESCO's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Strategy* noted that while the "digital and green transformation" is not new, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased its relevance. The Evaluation of *UNESCO's action in the framework of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* further demonstrated the effective use of ICTs to enable the training of focal points in Latin America and the Caribbean for the timely completion of periodic reporting on the implementation of the Convention. The evaluation of *Capacity Development for Education (CapED) Programme's Country-level Interventions in Lao PDR and Madagascar* also noted that "COVID-19 had a significant impact on education in each country and has illustrated the growing importance of digital education and of more flexible education delivery mechanisms." The O3 evaluation recommended that UNESCO and the programme seek a critical role in the current digital transition in education. They highlighted UNESCO's intersectoral mandate as a basis for providing countries with holistic support "as they embark on transforming their education systems through digitalization." The evaluation of the *Joint Programme on Empowering Adolescent Girls and Young Women through Education* also found that COVID-19 led the programme to experiment with ICTs and online learning, with longer-term potential beyond the pandemic context.
22. Yet, notwithstanding the promise of digital ICTs, these same evaluations pointed out the reality of digital equity gaps. The O3 evaluation observed that IT-based solutions, which had been critical for programme continuity, also risk further marginalizing those with little or no digital access. The *Joint Programme on Empowering Adolescent Girls and Young Women through Education*, also noted barriers to access. In Nepal, for example, girls often lacked connectivity since they were not given priority when families bought mobile phone units. The evaluation also observed that developing online content was complicated in areas where multiple languages were in use.

3.4 UNESCO's growing attention to inclusion still rarely addresses persons with disabilities

23. UNESCO's commitment to inclusion and equity is aligned with the 2030 Agenda pledge that “no one will be left behind” and that efforts will be made “to reach the furthest behind first.” In this spirit, many evaluations in this review's portfolio considered the extent to which programmes and projects reach persistently marginalized groups and those most at risk of discrimination. For example, the evaluation of the *FIT VALE/UNESCO – National Museum Reconstruction Project* notes the project's attention to social outreach through consultations with Indigenous, Black, and other populations and groups represented in the museum's collections, while the evaluation of *Support for Adult Literacy in Afghanistan (SALA)* points out that despite responding to a high-need population – youth and adults, and especially women, with limited literacy skills – restricting implementation to secure and accessible communities meant the project may have neglected some of those who could have benefited most. Other evaluations cover initiatives with a strong focus on inclusion, such as the *UNESCO-UNFPA-UN WOMEN Joint Programme on Empowering Adolescent Girls and Young Women through Education*, which addresses educational needs of vulnerable in- and out-of-school adolescent girls and young women in Mali, Nepal, and Tanzania.
24. In the context of the “leave no one behind” agenda, rights-based inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWD) is gaining increased attention in UNESCO, beyond the longstanding focus on including children with disabilities in education. UNESCO is guided by the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the UN System-wide Disability Inclusion Strategy Accountability Framework, and in January 2021 created an Intersectoral Task Team on Disability Rights and Inclusion. Two evaluations in this year's portfolio had a sole focus on disability. The SHS project on *Changing Attitudes and Promoting a Human Rights-based Approach to Disability in Morocco* was implemented in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with funding from the UN Partnership to Promote the rights of PWD. Aligned with the Moroccan government's gender equality plan, it integrated a gender approach across activities, recognizing that experiences and needs of PWD vary, including by gender. Another disability-focused initiative was the *IIEP-UNESCO/UNICEF Online Course: “Foundations of Disability-Inclusive Education Sector Planning.”* It provided training to help education ministries in Eastern and Southern Africa mainstream disability-inclusive education into sector plans. All course participants

indicated they were eager to apply what they had learned, and the evaluation found that the course led to concrete, institutional changes on disability planning and procedures, as well as increased focus on disability inclusion in programming.

25. Only a few other evaluations touched on disability. According to the evaluation of *UNESCO Education Sector's Work on Inclusion in Education*, the sector addresses disability through an intersectional pillar promoting safe, inclusive, and healthy learning environments and calling for consideration of intersecting forms of discrimination based on characteristics such as ethnicity, disability, or migratory or Indigenous status. However, the evaluation noted that in the field of education, inclusion is often understood solely or primarily in terms of disability issues and as such the evaluation was also concerned with addressing other dimensions of the broader “leave no one behind” agenda. The evaluation of *Phase II of the Strengthening Pre-Service Teacher Education in Myanmar (STEM Phase II)* noted disability inclusion within the broad definition of inclusion promoted by the project and reported that sensitization on disability issues was included in the pre-service curriculum. The O3 evaluation, meanwhile, noted the programme's efforts to integrate disability inclusion by using needs assessment, inclusive education approaches, and teacher capacity-building to adapt Comprehensive Sexual Education (CSE) for youth with disabilities. However, this was at an early stage and progress was uneven across the 33 countries involved, requiring more investment. The Lao PDR country study of the *Capacity Development for Education Programme* also found progress on disability very limited. In this context, inclusion was linked almost exclusively to girls' access to education.

3.5 Progress is evident on intersectoral collaboration, but it remains more the exception than the rule

26. The introduction to UNESCO's MTS 2014-2021 highlights interdisciplinarity as a guiding principle for the Organization. In the new MTS 2022-2029, a major step forward is taken with the shift from a results framework closely aligned to the five MPs to an integrated framework of “four interlinked and cross-cutting strategic objectives” designed to “allow for synergies and multi-sectoral approaches throughout the Organization.” Reflecting this growing commitment, several evaluations mention intersectoral collaboration – a positive sign that stakeholders and evaluation commissioners see this as a critical issue.

As reported in this year's corporate evaluation of the *Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) programme*, LINKS offers several examples of good practice in *intersectoral collaboration*.

The evaluation observed that the LINKS programme is "intrinsically multisectoral" and its efforts to bridge the sciences and culture and "break the artificial silos that exist between knowledge streams" align with UNESCO's commitment to interdisciplinarity and holistic approaches.

LINKS successfully facilitated collaboration amongst UNESCO sectors during the development of the UNESCO Policy on Engaging with Indigenous Peoples. Other examples of good practice include the programme's coordination of the work of Intersectoral Working Group on Indigenous Peoples Issues, and of UNESCO-wide reporting to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples on the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

27. The corporate evaluation of the Strategy for Action on Climate Change (SACC) noted collaborative efforts between SC and IOC to raise the profile of the Convention on Biological Diversity and increase awareness on the negative impacts of pollution on ocean biodiversity and marine life. The IOC-UNESCO has reportedly broadened understandings of climate change to include the impact of pollution on oceans, marine life, fisheries, and aquaculture and UNESCO has played a critical role to garner widespread acceptance on this expansion, engaging policymakers and scientists, and disseminating insights through noteworthy publications. The case study of the Jakarta field office in the SACC evaluation also described how ED, SC, CLT, and CI sectors each brought complementary contributions to an initiative in which youth camps raised awareness on climate change through training in a biosphere reserve. The evaluation also noted "strong leadership in place to encourage intersectoral collaboration" in the Harare field office, with project and programme development that draws on all sectors.
28. Yet, many evaluations pointed out untapped intersectoral potential. Among others, the decentralized evaluations of the *Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archives Preservation and Digitalization project*, the *Programme to Strengthen the Arabic Language in UNESCO*, and the *Regional Center for the Living Arts in Africa* all noted missed opportunities for connection across MPs that could have strengthened results. The Arabic language programme, for example, funds activities proposed by any sector or field office that are linked to the objectives of the Programme and is overseen by a coordination

unit within SHS. Focal points in different sectors/field offices help to channel the communications and information related to the Programme. Of the 24 projects approved throughout the four years of the programme under assessment (2017 – 2020) several activities were directly implemented by SHS (HQ or field offices) and the remaining by different UNESCO sectors and entities. An example of an intersectoral activity implemented within the Programme is the activity "Arabic outreach" by the Division for Communications and Public Engagement (CPE), which provides support to all UNESCO sectors and field offices in disseminating information and maximizing communication on the main priorities and outcomes. However, the evaluation found that projects were not selected with a view to building synergies across sectors and entities which could have maximized Organization-wide impact. Despite the positive examples cited above, missed opportunities for intersectoral collaboration were also found by the SACC evaluation. The strategy was "designed to bring coherence to UNESCO's climate change engagement," in part by mobilizing intersectoral approaches. A large cross-sectoral Task Team was established to steward implementation, but as an informal, voluntary network, meeting only occasionally, it lacked capacity and resources to fully realize the strategy's commitment to intersectorality. The evaluation of the SACC found that collaboration on climate action across MPs has been constrained by reliance on extrabudgetary resources at field level and "pervasive siloing across the Major Programmes" – notably at HQ.

The evaluation of the International Task Force on Teachers (TTF) for Education 2030 highlighted financial and resource shortages as a significant challenge facing the network. It recommended several actions to increase and diversify sources of funding and ensure sustainability. These included:

- Developing a partnership and resource mobilization strategy, supported by strengthening resource mobilization capacities within the Secretariat and developing a resource mobilization guide for members (thus drawing a line between lagging member engagement and the network's poor financial health)
- Establishing a membership renewal mechanism that encourages investment in TTF activities
- Undertaking revenue generating activities.
- Leveraging in-kind support from members, such as secondments to the Secretariat from national governments.

29. Missed opportunities for collaboration and synergy were evident not only between MPs but also within them. The corporate evaluation of the *Education Sector's Work on Inclusion in Education* mentioned opportunities for stronger interlinkages and cooperation between ED and social inclusion initiatives in SHS, but also between the different sections of the ED Sector. It noted that, “[d]espite the recognized importance of the topic, there is not a single, organization-wide coordination mechanism for mainstreaming inclusion across the Education Sector and beyond.” The evaluation recommended addressing this gap using existing structures such as gender focal points in the ED sector, the Intersectoral Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, and the Intersectoral Task Team on Disability Rights and Inclusion, or by creating an organization-wide community of practice on inclusion.

3.6 Resource constraints may demand strategic responses

30. Resource constraints can limit UNESCO's capacity to support partners, ensure sustainable results, and pursue coherence across the Organization – especially when it comes to cross-cutting strategies and initiatives. This theme arose frequently in

Several evaluations included M&E-related recommendations, including the following:

- UNESCO should develop and adapt its Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system to improve the tracking of outcome level results from its climate change activities across all Major Programmes and the IOC in the next 41C/5, with particular attention to cross-cutting priorities. (SACC)
- A new and improved M&E structure should be used from now on [...] through planning a detailed framework for monitoring, evaluation (and learning). (International Centre for Underwater Archaeology, Zadar, Croatia)
- Further develop the theory of change and develop an M&E framework (STEM in Myanmar project)
- Ensure all project development processes include comprehensive – ideally participatory – theory of change exercises to ensure agreement and clarity among key internal and external stakeholders on expected change pathways, and associated risks and assumptions. Develop results frameworks [...], with meaningful performance indicators and targets, associated with tools and opportunities for systematic program reflection, knowledge sharing, and learning. (Taking ESD into the Future)

this year's evaluations. The corporate evaluation of the *Strategic Positioning of IOC-UNESCO* noted that the Commission's budget has not expanded in parallel with its activities. Lack of core funding leads IOC-UNESCO to pursue extrabudgetary funding opportunities when they arise and makes the Commission “more opportunistic than strategic” in its work. Budget constraints also produce personnel gaps. In a similar vein, the evaluation of *Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS)* noted that limited resources in the programme prevent it from serving all the programmes and sectors that need its expertise. The SACC evaluation also described how resource gaps undermine efforts at coordination across the Organization. Field offices face pressure to raise their own project funding, and while this can produce partnerships supporting valuable standalone initiatives, these are not always aligned to priorities in the MTS or the SACC. The evaluation noted that the recently created role of Regional Resource Mobilization Officers may assist in improving such alignment.

31. The evaluation of the TVET strategy identified budget limitations as a challenge for implementing activities, accessing TVET expertise at field level, supporting knowledge exchange and learning on TVET within UNESCO, and responding to emerging needs and opportunities. UNESCO is recognized as a leader in supporting Member States' TVET reform, but resource gaps mean there is a significant mismatch between demand and the Organization's capacity to provide support. According to the evaluation, this is a barrier for supporting critical functions related to upstream policy advice, an important UNESCO comparative advantage. The evaluation also noted that more core funding is needed to mobilize internal synergies by supporting coordination on TVET across relevant sectors.
32. Some evaluations noted strategic approaches required to adapt programmes and projects to resource limitations. The CapED evaluation recommended that, given budget limitations, UNESCO should maintain focus on well-targeted sectors and strategies and ensure ownership by national partners. However, more realism is sometimes needed about the extent to which partners can sustain results without more support. The *Horizons* project with rural secondary schools in Peru worked with local education authorities that had very scarce human and financial resources at their disposal, making them dependent on UNESCO and other external donors to institutionalize new capacities gained through the project. Many stakeholders felt schools would not be able to implement the new approaches on their own, and the project did not have resources to continue supporting them. A similar concern emerged in the Pacific region component of the *ESD* project, where some stakeholders worried that national ministries of education and others lacked the resources needed to disseminate and promote the use of materials created by the project.

3.7 Many initiatives still lack clear results frameworks tied to effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

33. Many of this synthetic review's portfolio of evaluations echo concerns about monitoring and evaluation (M&E) noted in previous years. Issues include gaps in tracking and assessing progress on outcomes, inconsistent efforts to situate initiatives within UNESCO's broader results framework, limited attention to M&E, limited M&E capacity, and barriers to capturing cross-sectoral contributions. UNESCO's enhanced efforts to strengthen M&E of its operations are likely to bear fruit in new programmes and projects under the most recent MTS, which will be covered in future synthetic reviews.
34. Some evaluations recognized the need for robust theories of change or similar frameworks, and collective exercises to create them, to ensure alignment amongst stakeholders on results and change pathways, especially in more complex or multi-partner endeavours. The evaluation of *UNESCO's Action in the Framework of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* developed a theory of change to better connect the results of the Living Heritage and Education Programme to the overall Convention results framework. The management response welcomed this as a contribution to defining the programme's scope and providing a basis for joint contributions from the CLT and ED sectors.
35. In a few cases, evaluations noted that results frameworks and performance measurement tools were entirely or largely missing from programme documentation, despite acknowledging the achievement of results based on the annual workplans. This was the case for both the *Programme to Strengthen the Arabic Language in UNESCO* and for the International Centre for Underwater Archaeology, Zadar, Croatia.. The *IOC-UNESCO* evaluation also highlighted the lack of a clear results framework to guide and track work on the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, a gap which it noted could jeopardize the success of this important institutional achievement. This was noted in the recommendations and followed up in the management response and subsequent planned actions.
36. Several evaluations in this year's portfolio also connected weaknesses in gender equality mainstreaming to the failure to include gender adequately – or at all – in results frameworks and performance measurement systems. In part, this reflects the reality reported in last year's synthetic review, that UNESCO lacked a strong organization-wide basis for incorporating gender into M&E, given inconsistencies between the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) II results framework and the baselines, indicators, and targets in Programme and Budget documents such as the 40 C/5.

3.8 Improved strategic communication could increase UNESCO visibility, which is often limited

37. UNESCO's prestige and profile are important assets that support partnerships, convening, and the Organization's role in facilitating policy dialogue. Visibility is important for maintaining and expanding these assets – and for resource mobilization. However, several evaluations noted limitations on this front. For example, the evaluation of *UNESCO Education Sector's Work on Inclusion in Education* rated the internal communication and visibility of UNESCO's achievements as "low," and external visibility as "slightly low." It recommended greater focus on promoting UNESCO's research and data on inclusion within the Organization and beyond. The evaluation of *UNESCO's Action in the Framework of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)* identified a need for UNESCO to prioritize communication on ICH and outreach to include the public, with a special focus on youth. The *IOC-UNESCO* evaluation also concluded that the Commission lacks a recognizable brand and found that its visibility within the UN system, and with Member States and the wider public remains limited. The Commission has not always been credited for its work, despite playing an instrumental role in pushing ocean science forward. Stakeholders cite narrow target audiences, indigestible technical writing, and resource constraints as its main barriers to effective communication. The evaluation recommended learning from the work of similar organizations such as the International Council of Science, which draws on its network of scientists to communicate its stories and champion its work, or pooling communications via the "Big Five" of UN Oceans to maximize IOC-UNESCO's visibility.
38. Limited visibility for programmes and initiatives within UNESCO itself sometimes contributes to programming siloes, undermining synergy. The evaluation of the *Programme to Strengthen the Arabic Language in UNESCO* found that improved visibility within the Organization could mobilize more interest in making strategic use of the funds. The evaluation noted that only 20 percent of the programme's communications and visibility budget had been spent by Year 3 of implementation. Similarly, the work of *LINKS* was found to lack visibility within UNESCO, despite the programme's intersectoral character. Its evaluation concluded that resource gaps limited attention to monitoring, documenting, and communicating achievements and lessons.
39. In a few cases, evaluations highlighted the difficulty UNESCO faces in spotlighting its role and contributions given that it is often a small player among many others, albeit providing specific value. The country evaluation of *CapED's* programme work in Lao PDR noted that UNESCO's work on "specific policy and system level changes

in teacher education at pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education levels” constitutes appreciated and important groundwork that nevertheless “often remains invisible, particularly for stakeholders that are not directly involved.” Along similar lines, the O3 midterm review reported that UNESCO would benefit from improved strategic communication since its contributions, as an “embedded powerbroker” promoting collective action and building partnerships on CSE receive less visibility than other partners. The evaluation of the *Consolidação da Rede de Escolas SESI como referência para a Educação Básica no Brasil* project (Consolidation of the SESI Schools Network as a Reference for Basic Education in Brazil) also recommended visibility and communication actions to increase public support for new approaches to TVET.

3.9 UNESCO Global Priorities appear inconsistently addressed in past interventions whose focus was not gender or Africa

40. UNESCO’s 2014-2021 MTS set out how UNESCO’s work should address the Organization’s two Global Priorities (Gender Equality and Africa), and the Gender Equality Action Plan for 2014-2021 (GEAP II) and the Operational Strategy for Priority Africa, 2014-2021 (OSPA) provided more detailed guidance. Yet, attention to the Global Priorities in this synthetic review’s portfolio of past interventions and consequently in their evaluations is uneven and often superficial. References to the priorities are often pro forma, accompanied by minimal analysis. Especially for interventions whose focus is not gender or Africa, how and how much they meaningfully address African development challenges or gender issues is often unclear. This partly reflects the absence of broader UNESCO objectives in many programme/project results frameworks. The synthetic review found that fourteen (52 percent) of the evaluations covered programmes or projects that target women or address gender equality at least to some degree – although sometimes minimally. Eighteen (67 percent) of the evaluations covered programmes/projects that respond to Global Priority Africa, implemented or focused entirely or in part on the continent.
41. Evaluations of organization- or sector-wide programme/project strategies and thematic approaches were found to address both Global Priorities, to varying degrees. The corporate evaluation of UNESCO’s Strategy for Action on Climate Change, for example, noted that the strategy refers to both Global Priorities. However, despite gender equality being part of a SACC focus area, the evaluation found it has not been consistently addressed in practice, constrained by a lack of concrete guidance on

Below are recommendation headlines on gender from some of this year’s evaluations:

- Assume a leadership role in the area of gender equality and women’s empowerment in marine science, supporting its existing data efforts such as the Global Ocean Science Report with dedicated action (IOC-UNESCO)
- The gender approach could be strengthened, beyond early pregnancy prevention activities. (Horizons)
- For projects involving HQ and field offices, support field office personnel and implementing partners with more guidance and tools on gender analysis and “leave no one behind” mainstreaming. (ESD)
- LINKS should develop practical guidelines on how to mainstream gender in its different type of interventions, to ensure a harmonization of approaches as well as minimum quality standards. (LINKS)

mainstreaming gender equality in the strategy, and significant capacity gaps within programmes on how to integrate gender into climate work. The ongoing issue of weak capacity on gender equality was echoed in several other evaluations and confirms last year’s synthetic review finding that greater support is needed, especially on gender transformational approaches and intersectional analysis¹⁴. Assessment of SACC performance on Global Priority Africa was more positive, given the SACC’s emphasis on programming in the region and its alignment with several Agenda 2063 goals. For example, the evaluation found that UNESCO Regional Strategies have aligned with climate change priorities of important regional partners, such as the Southern African Development Community.

42. The decentralized evaluation of the *TVET Strategy* also found that Global Priority Africa was well represented in the Organization’s TVET work, though it was not explicitly incorporated into the strategy document. TVET, which is a major issue for African countries, is addressed through many UNESCO projects on the continent, and by the IIEP-Pôle de Dakar Platform of Expertise in Vocational Training (PEFOP), established in 2015 to strengthen expertise in vocational training in agricultural, rural, and informal sector training in the region. Meanwhile, gender equality features in one of the TVET strategy’s three priority areas: “Promoting equity and gender equality.” The evaluation reports that UNESCO met the corresponding target, “At least ten Member States

¹⁴ It is to be noted that this will be the focus of a new peer-to-peer learning exercise with gender transformative approaches and intersectional analysis introduced for the first time through the 41 C/5.

have benefited from UNESCO's support in mainstreaming gender equality in TVET," by January 2020.¹⁵ However, little evidence is provided about how gender equality results have been promoted, and there is no discussion of the gender transformative approaches called for in GEAP II. The mid-term evaluation of *OWSD activities, "Supporting Women's Leadership in Science, Technology and Innovation"* stands out for explicitly highlighting alignment with Global Priority Gender Equality and discussing how programme/ project activities contribute to gender-transformative outcomes, observing specific discriminatory norms and gendered barriers faced by women in science, and which these activities are designed to address.

43. To meaningfully embed the Global Priorities across all UNESCO's areas of work, more effort is needed to clarify how programmes should respond to the OSPA and its successor, and to encourage evaluators to use it as a starting point for assessing how programmes engage in the African continent. On gender, resources, supports, and mechanisms are needed to deepen capacity to adopt approaches that go beyond women's numerical participation. Several evaluations in this review's portfolio formulated recommendations to this effect.

15 The action plan contains one expected result each on equity (disadvantaged groups) and gender equality, each with its own target. However, the associated performance indicator is a combination: "Number of countries which have taken measures to ensure greater access to TVET for disadvantaged groups and mainstream gender equality in TVET." This makes it difficult to know whether monitoring data confirms achievements specifically on gender mainstreaming. (Evaluation of UNESCO's TVET Strategy, p. 33-35).

4. Contributions to 40 C/5 Expected Results

44. UNESCO contributions to 40 C/5 Major Programme (MP) Expected Results (ERs) identified across this synthetic review's evaluation portfolio are summarized in the sections that follow.^{16,17}

4.1 Major Programme I – Education

45. The ED sector was heavily represented in this year's portfolio, which included one corporate and 13 decentralized ED evaluations. Several evaluations assessed initiatives contributing to ERs 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, and 8 as well as SDG 2 – Zero Hunger, SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being, SDG 4 – Quality Education, SDG 5 – Gender Equality, SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 13 – Climate Action, and SDG 17 – Partnership for the Goals.

ER 1: Improved national education policies and plans to advance access to equitable and quality early childhood care and education, primary and secondary education through a systemwide lifelong learning approach

46. This review's portfolio included a second component of the midterm evaluation of the *Consolidação da Rede de Escolas SESI como referência para a Educação Básica no Brasil* project (Consolidation of the SESI Schools Network as a Reference for Basic Education in Brazil), represented last year by an activity-focused report. This year's report focused on outcomes. The project contributes to updating SESI's curricula

¹⁶ In some cases, the formulation or numbering of ERs changes from one biennium to the next. In the following sections, the discussions refer to ERs as they are articulated in 40 C/5 Approved Programme and Budget 2020-2021. For the purposes of this report and to ensure consistency, ERs, as defined in 40 C/5, have been applied. (See Appendix 1 for a list of evaluation reports reviewed.)

¹⁷ Note CI (Communication and Information) is Major Programme V, but it is not represented in this year's portfolio.

and management systems to align with the Brazilian government's new educational model for high schools and continuing education, aiming to make the SESI network a national model for technical education management and teaching. Specialist consultants help SESI improve and disseminate more interactive and practical Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Design and Mathematics (STEAM) teaching methods and management approaches to better connect education to the world of work. Supporting SESI's own strategic plan and facilitating positive partnerships with SESI, the Ministry of Education, and SENAI (the National Industrial Training Service), UNESCO was valued for contributing core functions related to knowledge production, capacity building, technical advisory services, and project management.

47. The evaluation found the project efficiently managed and on track. The evaluation highlighted the challenges of promoting a pedagogical paradigm shift, but also noted that dropout rates in schools applying the new methods had already declined and judged that prospects for replication are good. Many recommendations were oriented to disseminating the project's emerging results and evidence base – for example through partnerships with educational institutions and the private sector, creating a good practices observatory and data bank to track promising innovations, and research to evaluate the impact of the new approach. The evaluation also recommended creating a special parliamentary group to push for innovations in vocational training and organizing workshops and seminars to promote awareness of the importance of vocational training on the part of media, opinion leaders, and the general public.
48. Another programme contributing to this ER contributed to education quality in Haiti through improved planning capacity. The 2018-2022 programme, entitled *Améliorer le système éducatif haïtien par la planification et le pilotage stratégique* (Improving the Haitian Education System through Strategic Planning and Management), was financed by the European Union and implemented by UNESCO's IIEP in partnership with Haiti's Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training. It was developed following a needs assessment that identified a weak culture of strategic planning in the education sector, weak human resource capacities, a limited role in planning for decentralized districts (Department Directorates of Education, or DDEs), challenges

in applying the relevant normative frameworks, and difficult working conditions in the sector. Focused on all of Haiti's ten DDEs, the programme was delivered via four main components: support for creation and use of educational planning tools; support for completing the development of the Ten-year Plan for Education and Training; training and coaching in educational planning; and support for trainers.

49. The evaluation was conducted using the participatory Outcome Harvesting methodology, gathering evidence on a range of results identified by stakeholders. Among the most important were the establishment of new practices in the DDEs, especially on data collection and use in planning, improved collaboration between technical departments, and a strong sense of ownership on the part of DDE personnel. Most of the outcomes occurred at DDE level, where the evaluation found significant positive changes in skills, capacities, and practices; however, the relationship between district and national levels was unchanged. Evaluators noted an unrealistic assumption built into the programme theory of change – that intervening in DDEs would strengthen capacities throughout the education system, including nationally. Nevertheless, the evaluation confirmed the relevance of focussing on DDEs and recommended that this should continue and be complemented by integrating non-state actors.

ER 2: Equitable and responsive TVET systems established to equip youth and adults, both men and women, with relevant skills for employment, decent work, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning

50. *UNESCO's Technical and Vocational Education and Training Strategy* for the 2016 to 2021 period outlined how the Organization would support Member States, in alignment with the TVET Recommendation,¹⁸ to enhance their TVET systems to contribute to the SDGs. Its three priority areas were: i) fostering youth employment and entrepreneurship, (ii) promoting equity and gender equality, and (iii) facilitating the transition to green economies and sustainable societies. The strategy included cross-cutting interventions to facilitate dialogue on recognition of skills and qualifications and support monitoring of progress towards SDG 4. Relying heavily

¹⁸ UNESCO, *UNESCO Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training*, 2015. This "TVET Recommendation" was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 38th session in November 2015. It provides key guidance on transforming and expanding TVET and lifelong learning to contribute to sustainable development through an integrated and intersectoral approach.

on a 2020 midterm review, the decentralized final evaluation was mainly oriented to informing the upcoming TVET strategy. It confirmed the continued relevance of the three priority areas, but identified opportunities to incorporate other and emerging issues such as pandemic recovery, digitalization and technology, migration, and Priority Africa.

51. UNESCO TVET activities and initiatives have generated benefits such as strengthened capacities and networks in support of TVET reform. However, the evaluation found that turning outcomes into tested approaches, models, guidelines, and tools could expand the effectiveness and impact of this work beyond the countries of direct intervention. The evaluation also identified opportunities for collaboration across MPs, and within ED (as noted in section 3.5). It also noted that leveraging natural connections with CLT and SC sectors in areas such as crafts and heritage, greening, and innovation would underline TVET contributions to the 2030 Agenda, beyond SDG 4, and could support resource mobilization.
52. Among other recommendations, the evaluation stressed that the new strategy should clearly position UNESCO's support for TVET not only in relation to SDG 4, but within the broader SDG agenda – addressing, for example, TVET's contributions to sustainable agriculture (SDG 2), productive employment and decent work (SDG 8), and inclusive and sustainable industrialization and innovation (SDG 9); retain the existing strategy's priorities but also apply a lifelong learning perspective and promote flexible, modularized, personalized approaches based on quality assurance, recognition of prior learning, and tackling issues of inclusion; further address the digital and green transformation, which has been on the agenda for some time but has increased in relevance as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; better tailor approaches to regions; Strengthen knowledge-sharing and cooperation on TVET within UNESCO; and strengthen the UNEVOC network, with a greater focus on peer learning to support the institutional capacity of ministries, national bodies, training providers, and research institutions in delivering TVET aligned with the strategy, the TVET Recommendation, and the SDGs.
53. Also contributing to ER 2 on TVET, the Dutch philanthropic organization Porticus supported UNESCO Peru to implement the *Horizons* programme. The programme supported secondary education to allow young people in rural areas to develop life plans grounded in both socioemotional skills and technical training. Using an intercultural approach to address the distinct needs of boys and girls in four regions where inequalities are great and traditional beliefs regarding gender roles largely prevail, it sought to enhance young people's inclusion in their communities and

their labour market entry. The programme's robust yet flexible methodology granted it significant legitimacy and students who participated reported improvements in resilience, self-regulation, self-knowledge, social awareness, and critical thinking. The midterm evaluation found *Horizons* well aligned with national policies and regional education strategies. It coordinated with other institutions and programmes, building synergies with inter-institutional networks for prevention and service provision on violence and on early pregnancy, and with the Ministry of Education's school "coexistence protocols."¹⁹ The affiliation of country and partner teams into established regional organizations contributed to programme success. However, teachers and other stakeholders lacked confidence in their ability to continue the process, and resources, capacities, and commitment were limited in the regional and local education authorities set to take over the programme.

ER5: National teacher policies developed and/or implemented and teacher-training programmes improved to increase the supply of qualified and motivated teacher

54. A major item in this year's portfolio was the evaluation of UNESCO's flagship *Capacity Development for Education (CapED) Programme's Country-level Interventions in Lao PDR and Madagascar*. CapED work in Madagascar contributes mainly to ER 2 (related to TVET) while CapED in Lao PDR contributes to strengthening teacher policies and training (ER 5).²⁰ The evaluation produced two country-level reports and a synthesis brought together important findings and lessons, including those with broader relevance for CapED programming globally. Initiated in 2016, the programme currently supports 26 least developed countries (LDCs), with a focus on countries with Post Conflict Post Disaster status, in three priority areas: sector-wide policies, planning and reforms; TVET; and teaching quality. Supported by funds from Finland, France, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden during the 2020-2021 biennium, the programme's 2016-2021 annual global budget was approximately US\$ 8 million, and annual average expenditures per country were about US\$ 320,000.

¹⁹ School coexistence protocols focus on prevention of and protection against violence in schools. The protocols, and coexistence management committees, also look to improve coexistence among the different actors of the educational community, preventing violent acts and protecting youth.

²⁰ The CapED programme as a whole covers other areas but the evaluation focused on these two country cases.

55. For Lao PDR, the evaluation identified outcome-oriented results including improvements in teacher training, in gender sensitivity and commitment to gender equality in teaching, in recognition for teachers in the workforce, and in reach of teacher education to rural and remote areas. In Madagascar, stakeholders highlighted the development and implementation of the country's first National Policy for Employment and Vocational Training, improved recognition capacity for TVET in the education system, strengthened public-private cooperation on TVET, and improved matching of skills training to labour market needs. CapED builds on the Capacity for Education for All programme that began in 2003 and this long-term UNESCO support was found to be critical to the emergence and maturation of behavioural and system changes. Also important is the focus on building closer linkages between the programme's upstream, midstream, and downstream work – how various levels are addressed varies between countries.

56. The synthesis report highlighted several recommendations applicable to future CapED design, planning, and implementation. These include improving integration of the 'Leave No One Behind' agenda into programme priorities, adapting capacity development approaches to address sub-national needs and constraints in the context of education system decentralization, and fostering more cross-fertilization among CapED countries by strengthening knowledge management and lesson-sharing.

57. The *Strengthening Multi-Partner Cooperation to Support Teacher Policy and Improve Learning Project* contributed to target SDG 4.c on teacher supply and training by improving coordination among partner organizations involved in setting teacher policies at global and national levels and supporting the development of national teacher policies.²¹ With UNESCO as the project manager, it was implemented in four countries (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Malawi, and Uganda) as a partnership of seven international organizations.²² The seven partners sought to address the fragmented state of teacher policy assistance by developing a cooperation framework to steer their collaboration. According to the evaluation, the project stimulated the development of national cooperation frameworks on teacher policy development in the four participating countries. However, the international partnership was

²¹ SDG target 4.c is: "By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states."

²² The implementing partners are UNESCO, UNICEF, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, International Labour Organization, the Global Partnership for Education, Education international, and the World Bank and four participating countries Burkina Faso, Ghana, Malawi, and Uganda

hampered by coordination challenges, inadequate human and financial resources, high turnover at global level, and a short implementation timeline. Participation by the international partners was also uneven. Several stakeholders felt UNESCO provided inadequate strategic guidance, although the Joint Programme Description identified this as a task for all global partners in the steering committee, not only for UNESCO as the project manager. The project sought to address these challenges through staff training, regular coordination meetings, and three project extensions, and the evaluation concluded that the partnership approach ultimately added great value to teacher policy design and cooperation in this area.

58. Another initiative in support of teaching is the *International Task Force on Teachers (TTF) for Education 2030*. With 150 member institutions, primarily national governments and predominantly from Africa, the TTF promotes improvements in teaching through advocacy, knowledge creation and dissemination, and country support. The evaluation of the TTF 2018-2021 Strategic Plan found the TTF had made significant strides in its role as the main global network supporting teachers and teaching in line with the 2030 Agenda target SDG 4.c.²³ Most activities and outputs in its strategic plan were delivered, and most stakeholders considered it successful, especially in its advocacy and knowledge mandates. Its flagship Knowledge Platform and Policy Dialogue Forum have generated valuable results. However, results on country support have been weaker. The evaluation found limited evidence of tangible policy changes linked to activities by TTF, which lacks resources and delivery mechanisms to generate much influence at country level. Despite a growth in membership, a relevant mission, improvements in outreach and communications, and effective management by a dedicated secretariat, member engagement, with some exceptions, is limited. The TTF brings together many organizations and individuals, but its work is driven by a relatively small core group, with missed opportunities to leverage the broader membership.
59. With support from the Governments of Finland, Australia, and the United Kingdom, *Phase II of the Strengthening Pre-Service Teacher Education in Myanmar (STEM Phase II)* contributed to ER 5 and SDG 4 by strengthening national teacher training to improve the supply of qualified teachers. The final evaluation of STEM Phase II found that its most important contribution to Myanmar's education system was the revised content of its teacher education curriculum. This output is expected to improve the quality of teacher graduates by 2023. However, achievement of higher-level outcomes and goals was hindered by several factors, including the need for

extensive awareness-raising and capacity building for Education College and Ministry of Education stakeholders on central teacher education reform concepts – which meant UNESCO had to play a major role in curriculum development. The very short curriculum development and teacher education training timeline, understaffing in the country's teacher education system, and complications related to the COVID-19 pandemic also affected outcomes.

60. Nonetheless, STEM Phase II was credited with establishing a broad definition of inclusiveness, encompassing gender, disability, and ethnolinguistic background, as well as integrating human rights, education for peace and sustainable development, and education on HIV/AIDS. UNESCO has also been able to create policy development linkages between STEM Phase II and the *Capacity Development for Education (CapED)* project and with the HNA Regional project on gender,²⁴ as well as drawing on UNESCO internal expertise – for example, drawing IIEP simulation modelling, Education for Peace and Sustainable Development, and HIV/AIDS. While the evaluation concluded that the project's attention to inclusiveness has not yet resulted in substantial behavioural change by key national stakeholders, STEM Phase II has succeeded in raising awareness on the issue, which can be further developed and leveraged.

ER6: National capacities strengthened to equip learners with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed to live healthy lives, promote sustainable development and engage with the world as responsible global citizens

61. In line with this ER, the *Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future (O3)* programme uses a Comprehensive Sexual Education (CSE) approach to strengthen the capacity of national education systems to promote healthy lives for adolescents and young people in sub-Saharan Africa, through improved sexual and reproductive health (SRH), greater gender equality, and improved education outcomes. The largest CSE programme in the region, O3 works in 33 countries and is expected to reach 24.9 million learners in primary and secondary schools, 51,000 pre-service teachers and 402,000 in-service teachers, as well as a broader population of 31 million partners, guardians, religious leaders, and young people out of school, through community

23 See footnote 25.

24 HNA regional project on gender refers to the HNA Group – UNESCO joint project on Women and Girls education.

engagement activities. It also seeks to reach 10 million young people through social and new media. The programme has four objectives, related to generating political commitment and support for CSE and SRH services access, delivering CSE programmes, supporting safer, healthier, and more inclusive school and community environments, and strengthening the evidence base on CSE and safer school environments.

62. According to the midterm review, the programme has made good overall progress on its objectives, providing significant technical and financial support to CSE delivery and strategically adapting its support to each country's stage of CSE development and enabling environment. It has contributed to increased visibility, awareness, and dialogue on gender-based violence (GBV) in the education sector in several countries, and helped mitigate barriers to learners, especially pregnant learners and adolescent mothers. It has also invested heavily in research to generate evidence on CSE and SRH access, as well as supporting national efforts to integrate HIV, GBV, and SRH indicators into education management information systems (EMIS) – although progress in this area is mixed. The programme has facilitated national government partner ownership of commitments, despite limited domestic funding for – and in some cases, opposition to – CSE. UNESCO's willingness to adapt approaches and find feasible entry-points that sidestep opposition has been a success factor. However, the review noted that this involves a "subtle balancing and compromise" of rights-based, inclusive, and non-discriminatory principles against the need for political buy-in and consensus. The review concluded that the programme would have to continue addressing this challenge as it moves forward.
63. With USD 2,679,876 in support from the Government of Japan, *Taking ESD into the Future: Concluding the Global Action Programme (Phase I) and Preparing Its Follow-up* was intended to support coordination and implementation by UNESCO and its ESD partners and stakeholders of the five ESD priorities outlined in the Global Action Programme (GAP). Targeting three of UNESCO's four priority groups – youth, Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and LDCs – the project was structured into four broad components: 1) a global, youth-oriented campaign to raise the visibility of ESD; 2) advocacy on ESD among decision-makers and comprehensive guidance for countries' ESD initiatives; 3) support of ESD practitioners in the Pacific SIDS and Central America through capacity-building activities; and 4) coordination of the GAP and its key partners through global networking and consultation. Together, activities in these four areas sought to raise awareness and empower stakeholders to take action on problems that threaten sustainability, including climate change and inequality.

64. The project succeeded in meeting most of its planned output targets, and the evaluation found it was well-managed, despite some delays caused by administrative issues and external factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This was credited to committed personnel at all levels, good relationships between HQ and field offices, and appropriate partnerships. A notable feature of the project was its attention to local context. In the Pacific capacity building component, for example, extensive and culturally appropriate consultation processes led by the implementing partner ensured ESD materials integrated ancestral knowledge and traditional practices. However, the evaluation concluded that opportunities were missed for cross-fertilization between components and leveraging synergy among external partners, beneficiaries, and within UNESCO at HQ and field office level. The evaluation also noted that a more transformative, gender analytical approach at design stage, and attention to other inclusion issues, could have facilitated a stronger "leave no one behind" focus.

ER7: National capacities strengthened to address gender equality holistically in national education systems

65. The *UNESCO-UNFPA-UN WOMEN Joint Programme (JP) on Empowering Adolescent Girls and Young Women through Education* was implemented in Mali, Nepal, and Tanzania as part of UNESCO's Global Partnership for Girls and Women's Education. The JP focuses on quality education, health and well-being, enabling environments, and building a data and evidence base. As the programme's global coordinator, UNESCO was responsible for its quality education and data and evidence elements. The evaluation found the JP highly relevant and internally coherent. Linkages between the health and education sectors were strengthened, and access to SRH information, life skills, and social protection programmes improved. Community-based platforms and safe spaces for girls aged 10 to 19 were supported.
66. The final evaluation found that in rural and poor areas, the JP has generally been described as transformative and suitable to address gender norms, gender-based discrimination, and other structural inequalities that may prevent adolescent girls and young women from participating in and completing their education. This transformative potential results from the combined efforts and complementary strengths of the three implementing agencies. However, the evaluation also found that there was a gap between the theoretical approach embedded in the

results framework and implementation in some cases. The JP is rooted in a gender-transformative approach designed to promote social norm change, for example, in the case of readmission of pregnant girls and young mother to public schools, but the programme has been challenged to meaningfully advance sustained social or cultural transformation regarding gender.

67. UNESCO was accountable for programme financial and administrative management and reporting. The evaluation found that use of funds was well documented, but that the imbalance in the distribution of funding (with UNESCO receiving 80 percent and UN Women and UNFPA just 10 percent each) led to inefficiencies in implementation and affected collaboration.
68. The USD 1.75 million *Support for Adult Literacy in Afghanistan (SALA)* project, funded by the Government of the Republic of Korea, was a collaborative effort of UNESCO Afghanistan and the Afghanistan's Deputy Ministry of Education for Literacy. It was designed to support youth and adults, especially women, in fulfilling their right to quality continuing education and livelihoods by strengthening their literacy skills. The project targeted 5,000 learners in five provinces with basic general literacy courses and another 500 with skill-based literacy courses. 80 percent of learners reached by the project were women. Initially planned for one year, two no-cost extensions brought the project to September 2019, for a total of 18 months.
69. Building on UNESCO's work with the deputy ministry since 2008 to support the national literacy program, the project was broadly effective in achieving its objectives, generating positive and sustainable improvements in beneficiaries' literacy and overall well-being as well as improvements in local economies. This was thanks to good performance by project facilitators at field level, adaptation to local conditions, strong partnerships between UNESCO and Afghan ministerial bodies, and generally efficient management, despite some issues with quality of materials, delays, limited monitoring, and problems with the payment system. Recommendations identified opportunities to enhance future efforts, for example, by increasing the duration of the literacy courses – which learners found too short to consolidate their learning. The evaluation also recommended that UNESCO leverage its networks to seek opportunities for facilitators to continue teaching via other programs, allowing them to keep using the training received through the project.

ER8: Improved policies, plans and learning opportunities to expand inclusion in education for vulnerable populations, with particular attention to persons with learning challenges, including disabilities, and to crisis-affected population

70. The 2021 corporate evaluation of the *UNESCO Education Sector's Work on Inclusion in Education* defines inclusion as “a continuing process that helps identify and overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners.” As the UN system's lead agency and coordinator of SDG 4, UNESCO's approach to this issue is rooted in the comprehensive principle that “every learner matters and matters equally.”²⁵ This expresses the commitment by Agenda 2030 to “leave no one behind,” as summed up, for education, in SDG 4: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all” and captured for UNESCO in Strategic Objective 1 of the 2014-2021 MTS: “Supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all.” The 40 C/5 ER 8 (above) addresses inclusion specifically.
71. The Education sector devoted an estimated US\$ 78 million to activities directly addressing inclusion between 2016 and 2021, including research, knowledge development, and dissemination; normative work and policy guidance; and capacity building and support for implementation of inclusion in education – such as enhanced inclusion for specific groups of learners, such as refugees and people with disabilities. However, both internal and external stakeholders expressed concerns that work on inclusion is fragmented across largely siloed organizational units and entities, with no mechanism for coordination across the ED sector and beyond. The evaluation found the Sector largely successful in achieving planned results, but also found that Member States' increased awareness had - in most countries - yet to be translated into action to create conducive environments for inclusion. The evaluation also observed that while the concept of inclusion has gained traction in the SDG context, the “leave no one behind” principle is often perceived as too general to guide specific action in the education field. More work is therefore needed to elaborate a comprehensive, holistic approach that considers and addresses the full diversity of learners and their varied needs.

²⁵ Evaluation of the UNESCO Education sector's work on Inclusion in Education (2016-2021), p. 3.

72. Despite some promising results, progress in this area remains at times limited by insufficient clarity on concrete approaches to supporting inclusion in education through UNESCO's programming, lack of sufficient specialized staff in some field offices, insufficient links with organizations that represent marginalized groups, and inadequate systems for tracking and learning from results across various UNESCO entities such as different ED sections, field offices, Category 1 institutes, and other MPs. Moreover, the quality of project evaluations is not consistently strong enough to feed organizational knowledge. Nevertheless, the evaluation found that there is "momentum for UNESCO to sharpen its focus and strengthen its work" on inclusion at all levels. To support this effort, the evaluation recommended that UNESCO builds on its normative and research work and strengthens the visibility and use of available data on vulnerable and marginalized learners and on barriers for inclusion. It further recommended strengthening resources, systems, and processes to promote, mainstream, and operationalize inclusion more explicitly and consistently across all thematic areas of the ED sector and with other Sectors, by building on existing organizational expertise, working groups, and intersectoral task teams. To support Member States in translating the holistic concept of inclusion into practice at the grassroots, the evaluation recommended emphasizing engagement with local education authorities, NGOs, organizations representing vulnerable or marginalized communities, as well as with teacher-parent associations.
73. Also contributing to SDG 4 and ER 8, the *IIEP-UNESCO/UNICEF Online Course: 'Foundations of Disability-Inclusive Education Sector Planning'* was jointly developed by UNESCO (IIEP) and UNICEF. The overall goal of the course was to provide education ministry staff in Eastern and Southern Africa, and key development partners, with foundational knowledge and skills on disability-inclusive education sector planning, to prepare them to take an active role in mainstreaming. The course is intended to strengthen education policy planners' capacity to address the needs of children with disabilities in planning processes and move towards a truly inclusive education system. The evaluation found that all countries reported changes in their education management information systems (EMIS), to include individual data or data around specific disabilities. Course participants identified outcome level results of the course involving institutional-level changes in their departments, units, organizations, most frequently changes in disability planning processes and procedures and increased focus on disability-inclusive issues in programming. These outcomes were most often seen in relation to learning support materials, data collection and use, teaching, and policy changes.

4.2 Major Programme II - Natural Sciences

74. One corporate and one decentralized evaluation in this year's review covered programmes/projects led by the Natural Sciences (SC) sector.²⁶ These initiatives contributed to ERs 2 and 3 as well as SDGs 4 – Quality Education, SDG 5 – Gender Equality, SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities, and SDG 12 – Climate Action.

ER 2: Member States have strengthened their institutional and human capacity to produce, disseminate and apply science, technology and innovation (STI).

75. The *Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD)* is a UNESCO programme that contributes to strengthening gender equality in Member State science, technology, and innovation capacities. Specifically, it seeks to increase the participation of women from developing countries in STEM research, teaching, and leadership and to promote recognition of their achievements. This year's portfolio included a midterm evaluation of OWSD's activities on "Supporting Women's Leadership in Science, Technology and Innovation." These include a Sida-funded South-South PhD fellowship programme and an International Research Development Centre (IDRC)-funded early career fellowship programme which provides a prestigious award of up to US\$ 50,000 per fellow over two years.
76. The evaluation found the design of both programmes highly relevant to the needs of the scientifically and technologically lagging countries (STLCs) targeted by OWSD efforts. A strong, dedicated staff team in the OWSD secretariat manages the fellowships and the evaluation noted their progress in improving M&E of the programmes since the last evaluation. It also found that the number and quality of applications received by the PhD fellowship programme has improved and most performance indicator targets related to the capacity, mobility, and visibility of PhD fellows have been exceeded. The Early Career fellowship programme has achieved significant results in strengthening both the individual capacity of fellows and their institutions. 70 percent of survey respondents who had held these fellowships reported that they had been promoted or granted additional responsibilities,

²⁶ Another corporate evaluation covered the SC-led Strategy for Action on Climate Change (SACC), which is presented in section 4.6 since its work cuts across all sectors.

and fellows who were interviewed mentioned that they had gained respect and recognition within their institutions and/or in their scientific field. These activities are good examples of UNESCO-supported work that contributes to gender transformative outcomes. Discriminatory social norms and professional practices mean that women researchers in STLCs are often seen as less credible than men. The evaluation found that fellows see the programmes as very successful for increasing the visibility of their research, enhancing their profile, and generating role models for women scientists in STLCs.

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

77. UNESCO's *Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS)* programme was created in 2002 to promote recognition in contemporary science-policy-society fora of the importance of Indigenous and local knowledge in biodiversity and ecosystems assessment and management, climate change assessment and adaptation, natural disaster preparedness, and sustainable development. Well-aligned with ER 3 and SDGs 4, 10, and 13, LINKS works at local, national, and global levels to promote engagement by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities as essential partners in environmental management. It also seeks to change perceptions of their capacities to contribute to knowledge, problem-solving, adaptation, and sustainable natural resource management.
78. LINKS is coherent and complementary with other SC sector work, providing a non-western perspective on people and nature and contributing to healthy debate within the sector. It has also facilitated collaboration on Indigenous peoples across UNESCO Major Programmes (MPs).. The multifaceted dimensions and intrinsically multisectoral nature of LINKS are in harmony with UNESCO's mission and growing commitment to the principle of interdisciplinarity. The evaluation found that LINKS contributes to UNESCO Global Priority Gender Equality, mainstreaming gender to varying degrees in most of its work, although this could be further improved by adopting an explicit approach based on operational guidelines and adapted to the specificities of Indigenous peoples' diverse conceptualization of gender. In response to Priority Africa, the Programme sought to document Indigenous and local knowledge and address priorities related to weather and climate in six African countries – Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania.

79. The evaluation found LINKS effective and efficient, achieving substantive results with limited financial and human resources. The programme has made lasting contributions to global policy processes related to climate change and biodiversity, furthering the broad and systematic attention received by Indigenous peoples and Indigenous knowledge in the IPCC 5th Assessment Report published in 2014 and ensuring that the initial mandate of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services was informed by understanding of Indigenous knowledge systems. LINKS has also established a network of renowned transdisciplinary scientists working on Indigenous peoples' issues and created a strong relationship with a network of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities organizations in many regions of the world. These efforts have laid the foundation for the Programme's recognition among its partners as a hub of expertise on Indigenous knowledge. However, despite the valuable and tangible results achieved, the evaluation found inadequate efforts to monitor, report, and communicate on results, with negative impacts on LINKS' visibility, recognition, and outreach.

4.3 Major Programme III - Social and Human Sciences

80. Two evaluations covering SHS programmes/projects were included in this review. They assessed initiatives that contribute to ERs 2 and 4 and SDG 3 – Health and Well-being, SDG 5 – Gender Equality, SDG 10 – Reduced Inequality, and SDG 17 – Partnership of the Goals.

ER 2: National institutional and human capacity strengthened at all levels to generate, manage, and apply knowledge for inclusive, equitable development that is based on ethical values in human rights

81. One of the few UNESCO projects directly targeting outcomes for people with disabilities (PWD), *Changer de regard et promouvoir l'approche fondée sur les droits humains*²⁷ dans la perception du handicap au Maroc (Changing Attitudes and Promoting a Human Rights-Based Approach to the Perception of Disability in Morocco) was implemented between 2017 and 2021 as a partnership between UNESCO, WHO, UNFPA, and UNDP.

²⁷ The original project title: 'Changer de regard et promouvoir l'approche basée sur les droits de l'homme' has been adapted in line with the terminology applied in the new UNESCO 41 C/4 referring to "droits humains".

The project supported Government of Morocco efforts to promote the rights of PWD in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which it ratified in 2009. By working closely with several government ministries, the National Council for Human Rights, and the Mohammed VI National Disabled People's Centre, the partners adapted their approach to Morocco's institutional and cultural context. The project sought to strengthen the capacities of national institutions and local governments to develop rights-based disability policies; raise awareness on rights-based approaches to disability; strengthen the capacity of reproductive health and gender-based violence services to meet the needs of PWD; and pilot disability mainstreaming in two school health service sites.

82. According to the evaluation, the project made a relevant and effective contribution to what it described as the “long road ahead” towards recognition of PWD rights in Morocco. Key success factors included effective cooperation among the partners and active participation and strong ownership by the Moroccan ministries and NGOs involved. The integration of gender equality across the project's activities (including a component to improve SRH and gender-based violence services for PWD), and use of internet, radio, and audiovisual tools for awareness-raising work, were also notable features. Most of the evaluation's recommendations were geared to following up achievements to promote scaling and sustainability. The evaluation also recommended that project implementers should compile all the materials it produced and create a platform to share them with other civil society, government, and international institutions working in the field of disability.

ER 4: Member States' commitments to the global agendas in favour of inclusive, sustainable and peaceful societies demonstrated through targeted advocacy campaigns and awareness-raising initiatives

83. The US\$ 5 million, five-year *Programme to Strengthen the Arabic language in UNESCO*, supported by the Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud Foundation, contributes to this ER through a unique effort undertaken within UNESCO itself to improve “understanding of the contribution of Arab language and culture to the world and to contribute to the promotion of linguistic diversity and intercultural dialogue.” The programme supports activities that can be proposed by all sectors and units across UNESCO. Between January 2017 and December 2020, it financed 24 projects, in five categories: publication and translation of existing material, activities to promote the Arabic language, production and dissemination of knowledge in Arabic, production of web

content in Arabic, and interpretation services in Arabic. The evaluation found that the programme was carried out in accordance with the partnership agreement, and that governance and management were adequate. However, it also noted room for improvement in terms of establishing a clear strategic direction for the programme. Linked to this, the evaluation noted that opportunities had not been sought to generate synergies between financed activities that could have helped adopt a more intersectoral perspective and make the programme something “greater than the sum of its parts.”

4.4 Major Programme IV – Culture

84. Seven evaluations from this sector were reviewed for this year's synthesis report. Together, the initiatives assessed contributed to ERs 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8 and SDG 1 – No Poverty, SDG 4 – Quality Education, SDG 5 – Gender Equality, SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG 15 – Life on Land, and SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

ER 1: Tangible heritage identified, protected, monitored, and sustainably managed by Member States in particular through the effective implementation of the 1972 convention

85. UNESCO's commitment to protecting and monitoring tangible heritage in the context of the 1972 Convention includes, among other priorities, harnessing “the power of heritage as a positive and unifying force that can help prevent conflict and facilitate peace-building as well as recovery and reconciliation,” offering “new perspectives on disseminating and teaching knowledge of history,” and promoting “the role of museums as educational institutions [...]”.²⁸ *The Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archives Preservation and Digitalization* project advanced this goal by strengthening the museum's capacity to protect and share information about Cambodia's past as a means to foster reconciliation and dialogue on peace and non-violence amongst young people, Khmer Rouge survivors, and the public. According to the evaluation, the project was highly relevant, and its success built on ownership by the government and museum staff involved. The project strengthened staff technical skills via training in digitization, document preservation, and related skills; upgraded the archive

²⁸ UNESCO, *Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2021*, p. 24-25.

facility in line with international standards; and supported networking with similar institutions to share and learn about good practices in building a peace museum. The project faced some challenges related to the technical skills of the teams, delays, and UNESCO administrative requirements and the evaluation also noted missed opportunities to leverage synergies with other UNESCO sectors with expertise in peace education, global citizenship, or museum management. However, overall, the evaluation found that the project made a significant and sustainable contribution to developing the museum into an educational site where Cambodians can learn about the Khmer Rouge era and support peacebuilding.

86. Another museum-related evaluation was that of the *Projeto de Cooperação Técnica FIT VALE/UNESCO – Reconstrução Museu Nacional* (FITVALE/UNESCO – National Museum Reconstruction Project), financed by a charitable foundation linked to the Brazilian mining multinational Vale, to rebuild and reinvigorate Brazil's oldest museum, which was destroyed by fire in 2018. The midterm evaluation found the project's objectives clear and coherent and observed that the process was moving forward efficiently, despite some delays. A strong governance structure, involving all partners and with consistent participation by UNESCO, has laid the foundation for good management of the museum when it reopens, although the evaluation identified a need for greater involvement by museum technical staff. The project's vision of the museum as a public, accessible educational space is linked to public consultation processes and efforts to integrate the reconstructed museum into the surrounding cityscape. The evaluation recommended that information about the reconstruction process be collated to serve as a reference for others and the project's successful management procedures formalized to facilitate their continued application once the museum re-opens.
87. The *Formação para Gestão do Patrimônio Cultural no âmbito da Cooperação Sul-Sul* (Training for Cultural Heritage Management Based in South-South Cooperation) was launched through a 2010 agreement between UNESCO, Brazil's National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN), and the Cooperation Agency of Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It supports the operations of the Lucio Costa Regional Training Centre for Heritage Management, a UNESCO Category 2 Centre designed to fill the gap in training opportunities for heritage managers in Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries of South America, Africa, and Asia. The Centre is intended to provide comprehensive training that goes beyond built heritage management to address complex issues at the intersections of urban policy, environmental issues, and social development. The project's objectives were to establish the centre's

institutional structure; design, test, and assess its training activities and approaches; and develop and promote applied research and extension programs.

88. At the time of the evaluation, the centre was operational, covered eight of the target region countries (including two Lusophone countries in Africa), and had an international network of NGOs, managers, teachers, and researchers from regional heritage institutions, with representatives from participating states, international faculty, and expert reviewers active in its work. A planned Heritage Management Observatory had not been created, and the evaluation judged this an essential mechanism for achieving the centre's goals. UNESCO was a key enabler of project achievements, providing efficient management and oversight, facilitating partnership with IPHAN, promoting country membership, and making substantive contributions on heritage issues via the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. However, confused boundaries between the centre and IPHAN, where the centre was housed – and the use of significant project resources for non-project activities – limited the centre's autonomy and hindered results. Pandemic-related slowdowns and changes in the national political context also posed challenges. However, the evaluation confirmed that while this Category 2 Centre is still developing, it meets an important need and its courses, publications, and other activities have already gained recognition from heritage managers, researchers, and others working on these issues in the target regions.

ER 4: Underwater cultural heritage identified, protected and sustainably managed by Members States, in particular through the wide ratification and effective implementation of the 2001 Convention

89. The *Category 2 International Centre for Underwater Archaeology, Zadar, Croatia* is supported by UNESCO through an agreement with the Government of the Republic of Croatia, in line with efforts to promote the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Heritage. Its objectives are: to promote the 2001 Convention and its implementation in the European Union, Southeast Europe, and other UNESCO Member States; serve as a focal point and provide a platform for dialogue in the field of underwater archaeology; train underwater archaeologists and conservation specialists; improve and participate in international efforts on scientific research on underwater cultural heritage sites; foster and facilitate knowledge exchange on underwater archaeology; organize international conferences and workshops; and educate the public to raise awareness on underwater cultural heritage.

90. The evaluation of the Centre was undertaken in preparation for renewal of the 2017-2023 agreement to support the centre, undertaken by UNESCO and the Government of the Republic of Croatia to support the Centre. This followed a previous agreement, renewed after an evaluation in 2015. The evaluation found that the Centre was fulfilling its objectives, had strengthened some areas flagged in the earlier evaluation, and was appreciated for its projects, training sessions, public events, and publications. The Centre has maintained an active international presence and increased its publications activity, in addition to increasing its focus on public education and awareness through a number of creative events and campaigns. Its success has been facilitated by the good partnership between UNESCO and the Government of Croatia, and especially the Ministry of Culture and Communication. Nevertheless, the evaluation recommended that UNESCO support cooperation and interaction with other thematically related Category 2 institutes or centres to generate knowledge exchange that would improve effectiveness and sustainability.

ER 6: Intangible cultural heritage identified and safeguarded by Member States and communities in particular through the effective implementation of the 2003 convention

91. The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) was adopted by UNESCO's General Conference in October 2003. The main purposes of the Convention are to safeguard intangible cultural heritage; ensure respect for communities, groups and individuals concerned with this heritage; raise awareness of its importance at the local, national, and international levels; and provide for international cooperation and assistance.
92. The evaluation of *UNESCO's Action in the Framework of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* found that the Convention has to some extent been a victim of its own success. As demand for UNESCO support related to the Convention has grown, the Secretariat has been unable to respond adequately to all requests. Despite this challenge, the 2003 Convention is considered highly successful, not only because it reached nearly universal ratification only fifteen years after entering into force, but also for its success in raising awareness of the distinct nature and importance of intangible cultural heritage. Stakeholders attribute this achievement largely to the Convention's Representative List and UNESCO's capacity-building programme.

93. As the lead coordinating agency for SDG 4 on inclusive and equitable education and the only UN agency with an exclusive mandate in the field of culture, UNESCO is well-positioned to undertake initiatives at the nexus of culture and education. The Convention is well aligned with ER 6 and has made contributions to Priority Africa through its international assistance mechanism, which has provided financial and technical support to many countries on the continent and has achieved some significant results. These include raising awareness of the 2003 convention at national community levels, developing much needed national infrastructure for the safeguarding of ICH, building capacities in safeguarding and inventorying, and helping state parties respond to emergency situations.
94. A central challenge to successful ICH protection is that while the Convention's mechanisms are designed for States Parties ICH lies within communities. The evaluators recommended that to reach the bearers of ICH, UNESCO should prioritize communication and outreach to include the public, with a special focus on youth. ICH was found to have been neglected and undervalued, particularly in countries that have been impacted by colonization. In these contexts, valuing and ensuring respect by communities for their ICH could allow them to reclaim their past, foster a sense of belonging, and enhance pride in their identity.

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

95. The *Centre regional pour les arts vivants en Afrique* (Regional Centre for Living Arts in Africa) aims to strengthen action in the field of the living arts and culture and the CERAV's status as a centre of expertise in Africa on the implementation of the 2005 Convention and is expected to contribute to SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities. The evaluation of the Centre found its activities relevant to UNESCO's strategies and priorities for the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions (2005 Convention). CERAV has good quality partnerships and relationships with UNESCO, Burkinabe National Commission for UNESCO, government agencies, public and private partners, and donors. However, the evaluation recommended that relationships with other thematically related Category 1 and 2 institutes and centres should be further developed. It also noted that rapid development and improvement of CERAV's organizational performance in terms of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness are urgently needed if CERAV is to achieve its mission and vision. To provide concrete

support to public policies in the field of the living arts in Africa and fully accompany implementation of the 2005 Convention, CERAV must improve its capacity to offer relevant and accessible expertise and resources in a timely manner.

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

96. The 2017-2021 *UNESCO-China Youth Development Foundation Mercedes-Benz Star Fund Conservation and Management of World Heritage Sites China Project* aimed to strengthen national conservation and management capacity and explore approaches that balance the conservation and development of cultural and natural heritage sites, in alignment with the cultural development goals in China's 13th Five-Year Plan²⁹. The project was organized around four main areas of activity: strengthening the capacities of World Heritage Site frontline staff and management agencies, improving management effectiveness, developing sustainable livelihood initiatives linked to the sites, and awareness-raising and public outreach. The evaluation found that training activities contributed to managers' capacity to protect heritage sites, as well as unexpectedly fostering increased communication among the sites. Although materials linked to the training had not yet been published, these were expected to complement results. However, the evaluation noted the difficulty of capturing capacity-building outcomes given lack of follow-up on training and turnover of personnel at the sites.
97. The evaluation highlighted sustainable livelihood activities carried out at four pilot sites as an outstanding component of the project, combining the conservation of natural and cultural heritage – including ICH – with poverty alleviation. With a strong focus on women, and especially women from ethnic minority communities, these activities also contributed to women's improved livelihoods and empowerment. In many cases, women not only gained technical skills for handicraft production, but also improved their self-esteem and social status, acquired new business capacities, and took on community leadership roles related to ICH preservation. Livelihood activities in one pilot community attracted attention and leveraged resources and participation at county level, achieving significant policy influence with potential for

²⁹ The project also contributed to 40 C/5 ER 1 (see above) and ER 3 (Protection of cultural property improved by Member States, in particular through the wide ratification and effective implementation of the 1954 Convention and its two Protocols (1954 and 1999)).

scaling. Awareness-raising and public outreach produced somewhat weaker results, and institutional reorganization in China's State Council hindered the project's management effectiveness component. The project was also seriously affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to timeline extensions and a shift to online channels. However, the evaluation found that negative effects were minimized by UNESCO's flexible and efficient management and effective communication and coordination.

4.5 Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC-UNESCO)

98. The corporate evaluation of *the Strategic Positioning of IOC-UNESCO* examined contributions to ER 1 and SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG 13 – Climate Action, SDG 14 – Life Below Water, and SDG 17 – Partnership for the Goals.

ER 1: Science-informed policies for reduced vulnerability to ocean hazards, for the global conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources, and increased resilience and adaptation to climate change, developed and implemented by Member States, towards the realization of Agenda 2030

99. The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC-UNESCO) is the only UN body specializing exclusively in ocean science, observation, data and information exchange, and dedicated ocean services. In 2019, UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission was tasked to lead the UN Decade of the Ocean. This opportunity, combined with a fast-evolving ecosystem of international actors and a growing ocean and marine policy space, prompted IOC-UNESCO to request an evaluation of IOC-UNESCO, with a focus on its strategic positioning within the UN system and broader ocean policy and science community. IOC-UNESCO contributes to ER 1 and is the custodian of the indicators for SDG 14.3 on Ocean Acidification.³⁰

³⁰ IOC-UNESCO also supports the development of an observation methodology for SDG 14.3 on Ocean Acidification through the work of the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network and SDG 14.a on Marine Scientific Research. Through the Global Ocean Science Report, IOC-UNESCO has contributed to reporting on SDG 14.a. IOC also supports the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) develop measurement methodologies for SDG 14.1 on Marine Pollution and SDG 14.2 on Coastal Eutrophication.

While Priority Africa is represented by a number of projects and initiatives on the continent, UNESCO's global priority Gender Equality is not sufficiently resourced and lacks visibility in the ocean space within and outside IOC-UNESCO. Attention to other UNESCO regional priority groups such as Pacific SIDS was also found to be insufficient.

100. The evaluation noted that IOC-UNESCO has made technical contributions towards its high-level objectives, providing access to the data, information, and science needed by UN agencies and the extended oceanographic community.³¹ It has also made policy contributions, notably in the area of marine spatial planning, helping countries develop their protected areas through the development of innovative information systems. However, a clear results framework is lacking to support performance monitoring and capture results and learning from IOC operations. The evaluators also found the establishment of the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development to be the most important strategic institutional achievement of IOC-UNESCO in recent years, as IOC-UNESCO is recognized as its driving force. The Decade presents an opportunity for IOC-UNESCO to play a more active role, linking ocean science to the science-policy interface, but it has reportedly been treated as an add-on to existing programs, rather than an independent, unifying framework animating ocean work across the UN system and beyond. A key constraint highlighted by the evaluation is that the increasing expectations of Member States from the IOC are not accompanied by sufficiently sustainable resources.. Strategic advocacy at the national level, engagement at the regional level, and resourcing and visibility of gender equality and women's empowerment in the ocean space within and outside IOC-UNESCO are among the areas identified by the evaluators for further improvement.

31 IOC High-level Objectives: 1. Healthy Ocean ecosystems and sustained ecosystem services, 2. Effective early warning systems and preparedness for tsunamis and other ocean-related hazards, 3. Increased resiliency to climate change and variability and enhanced safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of all ocean-based activities through scientifically founded services, adaptation, and mitigation strategies, and 4. Enhanced knowledge of emerging ocean science issues. IOC Medium-term Strategy, 2014-2021.

4.6 Intersectoral

101. While some evaluations of this year's portfolio, including the LINKS Programme, the IOC-UNESCO's Strategic Positioning or the evaluation of Inclusion in Education highlighted some level of cooperation among programme sectors or revealed some potential or missed opportunities for intersectorality, the corporate evaluation of the *Strategy for Action on Climate Change (SACC)* was the only evaluation in this year's portfolio to assess a truly intersectoral or crosscutting initiative. In 2017, UNESCO General Conference adopted the SACC, outlining how it would support Member State climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts over the 2018-2021 period. The corporate evaluation of the SACC, carried out in 2021, assessed its effectiveness with a view to determining whether it should be renewed. The SACC was found to contribute to SC ERs 3, 4, 5, and 6, IOC ER1, and SDG 13 – Climate Action. Aligned with key international frameworks such as the Paris Agreement, Agenda 2030, the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, and the African Union's Agenda 2063, the SACC positioned UNESCO as an active contributor on climate change issues, organized around four main thematic areas: climate education and public awareness programmes and policies, interdisciplinary climate knowledge and scientific cooperation, cultural diversity and cultural heritage safeguarding for climate change, and inclusive social development, intercultural dialogue and ethical and gender principles in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation.
102. The evaluation found that climate change programmes and projects across UNESCO's MPs have increased since 2018, particularly at country level, and that this work is valued by partners and Member States. UNESCO has leveraged its reputation as a norm setter and standard bearer to bridge scientific enquiry and policy debates in this area. However, most SACC activities are embedded in existing programmes funded through extrabudgetary resources, leading to ad hoc work that is not always aligned with priorities in the C/5 Programme and Budget. This, coupled with weak intersectoral cooperation has led to divergent implementation strategies and a lack of cohesiveness, even though intersectoral collaboration was expected to be a hallmark of the SACC. The evaluation also showed that relevant programmes and projects have focussed more on mitigation than adaptation, and that activities have focused more on raising awareness and promoting behaviour change by citizens than on root causes – such as the role of the energy sector and fossil fuel industry in driving climate change. Moreover, while the SACC addresses the need to integrate priority groups and cross-cutting themes into UNESCO's work on climate change, in practice, the various initiatives under its umbrella did not consistently address these issues.

103. Recommendations aimed at strengthening UNESCO's climate change programmes and projects included taking action to improve internal collaboration, improving M&E to better track outcome level results, including on cross-cutting priorities, and identifying and maintaining best funding and implementation partners. From a substantive perspective, a critical recommendation was to strengthen the mitigation side of UNESCO's climate change programmes and projects to further address Member States' growing concerns about energy transition, with a knowledge mobilization agenda focused on connections between science and policy. Another important recommendation was to strengthen gender mainstreaming, which the evaluation found was uneven across design, implementation, monitoring, and implementation of climate change projects. While the SACC is aligned with the Revised UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan for 2014-2021 (GEAP II), the evaluation noted capacity gaps across MPs regarding how to operationalize this. Moreover, while the GEAP II promoted transformational, gender-specific programming, the SACC refers to gender-responsiveness and does not address fundamental changes in gender norms or power relations.
104. The SACC is intended to guide how UNESCO supports Member States in addressing climate change and does not address how UNESCO itself mitigates climate change. Nevertheless, the evaluation observed that the Organization has made significant progress on reducing its carbon footprint and adopting measures to make its operations more environmentally sustainable, in line with the "United Nations Strategy for Sustainability Management 2020-2030" and "Greening the Blue" initiative.³²

32 UNESCO, "Progress Report on the Implementation of the Environmental Management System and the Strategy for Sustainability Management in the United Nations System 2020-2030 (Phase 1)," Headquarters Committee, 23 March 2022.

5. UNESCO performance against evaluation criteria

105. UNESCO's revised *Evaluation Policy* continues to recognize relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact as the main criteria for assessing the Organization's work, in line with OECD-DAC guidance.³³ Some evaluations in this year's portfolio were framed around all these criteria; others used only some of them or complemented them with others, and others were organized along different lines. To facilitate synthesis and comparison, the review sought to capture findings against the standard criteria and this section aggregates observations about UNESCO performance in relation to these.³⁴

5.1 Relevance

Relevance – The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities and continue to do so, if circumstances change. Responding to the question: "Are we doing the right things?"³⁵

106. Almost all evaluations found that the objectives and design of the initiatives they examined were responsive to the needs of Member States, partners, and targeted beneficiary groups and aligned with policies and commitments at various levels, from the SDGs and UN Conventions to national sector plans and institutional strategies. Relevance was sometimes ensured through needs assessments early in

33 UNESCO, *Evaluation Policy* (2022), p. 7. These OECD-DAC criteria are the standard most commonly used to assess initiatives in the field of international development and beyond.

34 Even when evaluations did not organize their findings in relation to the OECD-DAC criteria, the review sought to extract information and organize it under these headings (e.g. considering information about governance or project management under "efficiency;" however, in some cases reports did not contain significant information about certain criteria. This was most commonly the case for coherence, impact, and sustainability. However, it should be noted that both OECD-DAC and UNESCO evaluation guidance observe that it is not always necessary or relevant to apply all criteria, provided this is duly justified.

35 This and following definitions are taken from UNESCO's *Evaluation Policy* with slight adjustments in the wording.

the design stage, and consultation and close collaboration with stakeholders such as government ministries. The project on strategic planning in the Haitian education system, for example, was designed in response to an assessment conducted by the IIEP in partnership with Haiti's Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training. Relevance is also linked to UNESCO support for partners' own plans and strategies – for example, Sub-Saharan African countries' sector policies and strategies on inclusive education in the case of the IIEP-UNESCO/UNICEF disability-inclusive education course, the SESI and SENAI 2020-2024 Strategic Plan in the case of the *Consolidation of the Schools Network* project in Brazil, national legislation on education for rural communities in the case of *Horizons* in Peru, and the Government of Morocco's launch of a national inclusive education programme for children with disabilities in the case of UNESCO's project to promote a rights-based approach to disabilities in Morocco.

107. Many evaluations assessed initiatives that supported upstream policy work, strengthened institutional or management capacity, or otherwise involved minimal direct contact with ultimate beneficiaries and communities. For projects that did support work closer to communities, evaluations generally reported positive findings on relevance. This sometimes reflected efforts to adapt programmes/projects to local contexts and cultures. The *Horizons* project in Peru was organized locally around the decentralized educational system and integrated Indigenous cultural elements and local languages into teacher training and materials. Grounding pedagogical materials in diverse local cultures was also a hallmark of the Pacific SIDS subcomponent of the ESD project, which built on sustainability practices embedded in local cultural traditions, supported by a key implementing partner's substantial experience, contacts, and cultural competence in the region.³⁶

108. Despite these positive experiences, relevance was sometimes hindered by inadequate attention to local realities, including constraints on partner resources and capacities to adopt programme/project outputs. This was the case to some extent in both the *Horizons* and ESD projects. The evaluation of the *Support for Adult Literacy in Afghanistan* project also pointed out that although the project was relevant to the needs of community

36 This subcomponent of the project was implemented by the University of the South Pacific Institute of Education.

members – and especially women – some communities that might have benefited most may have been neglected since the project was confined to secure and accessible locations. In addition, across the evaluation portfolio, evidence was at best mixed on how the voices of marginalized or priority groups – including women, young people, PWD, ethnic minorities, LGBTQI individuals, and others – were included in design, planning, implementation, and follow-up.

5.2 Coherence

Coherence – The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector, or institution. There are two types of coherence:

Internal coherence refers to the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by UNESCO as well as their consistency with relevant international norms and standards to which UNESCO adheres.

External coherence refers to the consistency of UNESCO's interventions with those of other actors in the same context [...] This includes complementarity, harmonization, and coordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.

109. Although many evaluations did not address coherence explicitly, their findings usually provided evidence on performance in this area. In general, external coherence was stronger than internal coherence, facilitated by UNESCO's recognized value as a convener, its extensive networks, and strong partnerships. For example, the successful livelihoods component of the *Conservation and Management of World Heritage Sites in China* project was strengthened by the commitment and involvement of key

national partners. UNESCO's external coherence is also facilitated by its well-defined international role on certain issues – for example, as UN lead agency on SDG 4.

110. Stakeholders confirmed that most UNESCO initiatives brought complementary or unique value to their programme/project ecosystems. However, confusion on roles and responsibilities was sometimes noted, reflecting coordination gaps or lack of consultation with relevant actors during design and planning. The *Evaluation of the Strategic Positioning of IOC-UNESCO*, for example, observed “a substantial and increasing overlap with the work of other UN organizations, leading to some uncertainty about mandates and duplication of efforts.” The evaluation advised IOC-UNESCO to remedy this through improved coordination with other UN system organizations.
111. Findings on internal coherence were more problematic. In most cases, UNESCO programmes/projects were found to be at least broadly aligned with the 2030 Agenda. As the lead UN agency and coordinator for SDG 4, UNESCO has a special responsibility to advance and support efforts on “inclusive and equitable quality education” and “lifelong learning opportunities for all” and over two thirds of the initiatives covered by this year's portfolio made contributions to SDG 4. Yet, some evaluations called for UNESCO's work to be positioned more concretely in relation to the 2030 Agenda and the various SDG targets, both by situating results within the SDG framework and by better integrating crosscutting SDG issues. Many evaluations stated that the interventions they assessed were aligned with one or more SDGs or SDG targets, but provided little discussion of tangible contributions.
112. Many evaluations highlighted general alignment with the results framework set out in the UNESCO MTS 2014-2021 and corresponding Programme and Budget documents, but few referred to Strategic Objectives and only about a third of the evaluation reports identified ERs.³⁷ References to UNESCO Global Priority Gender Equality and – especially – Global Priority Africa, or to UNESCO Priority Groups such as Youth, SIDS, or Indigenous peoples, were minimal and tended to indicate merely whether the evaluand touched on gender issues, had a connection to or geographically covered the African continent, or involved one of the priority groups. In most cases – and especially in the decentralized evaluations - there was little analysis of how these priorities were (or were not) integrated into programme design, results frameworks, or implementation. Various interventions covered by the evaluations did address one or more of these UNESCO priorities, to varying degrees, but evaluations pointed

³⁷ Only nine of the 27 evaluations (33 percent) identified ERs in their reports. During the review process, ERs identified in the reports or (when this had not been done) ERs identified during the review were validated by relevant MP staff.

out room for improvement, especially when it came to translating plans into action. The SACC evaluation, for instance, noted that priority and cross-cutting themes and groups – Africa, Gender Equality, Youth, Indigenous Peoples, SIDS, and more “have been well structured into the design of the SACC, but variably integrated into UNESCO’s climate change programming.” The *IOC-UNESCO* evaluation also reported room for improvement on integrating Global Priority Gender Equality and attention to SIDS in IOC-UNESCO work. Similarly, the TVET strategy evaluation advised that the new strategy should further operationalize Global Priority Africa through a more regionally tailored approach, developed in collaboration with regional partners and stakeholders.

113. Internal coherence was weakest in relation to intersectoral collaboration. Although there were exceptions, many evaluations highlighted missed opportunities to identify and leverage synergies across – and even within – MPs, as noted in section 3.5. Reasons for this persistent underperformance on internal coherence include resource constraints (hindering efforts to facilitate collaboration and coordination), siloed working styles and institutional structures, as well as difficulties in capturing collaborative work in M&E systems.³⁸

5.3 Effectiveness and Impact³⁹

Effectiveness – The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results, including any differential results across groups, and taking into account their relative importance.

Impact – The extent to which the intervention has generated, or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects. [Impact refers to] ... effects of the intervention that are longer term or broader in scope than those ... captured under ... effectiveness.

³⁸ Such as SISTER, the System of Information on Strategies, Tasks, and the Evaluation of Results.

³⁹ These are treated together since evaluations offer limited evidence on impact, which is rarely addressed separately.

114. This year’s evaluation portfolio presented evidence of important UNESCO contributions to the outcomes and of some emerging impacts set out in results frameworks and other guidance. Common achievements resulted from improvements in the capacity of national government bodies and other partners and interlocutors at various administrative levels, increased awareness and commitment by local, national, regional, and global actors convened and coordinated by UNESCO on key themes aligned with its mandate, and increased access to data, information, and tools to support action in these areas. These results are aligned with the five interlinked UNESCO functions identified in the new MTS 2022-2029 as channels through which the Organization will leverage its comparative advantages to deliver support to Member States: its function as a laboratory of ideas, as a clearing house, as a standard-setter, as a catalyst and motor for international cooperation, and as a capacity-builder.⁴⁰

115. The effectiveness sections of many evaluations – especially the decentralized ones – devoted significant space to describing the implementation of activities and, in several cases, presenting collated indicator data at activity and output level. This was not always a sufficient basis for assessing results at outcome level. This difficulty was compounded by the absence of results frameworks from some evaluations, and the fact that results frameworks and reporting sometimes did not adequately express posited programme change pathways. The Lao PDR evaluation of the CapED programme, for example, noted a strong focus on activities and outputs in country-level planning and reporting, and less attention to change processes at outcome level. A few evaluations also commented on the challenge of identifying specific contributions made by UNESCO’s programmes and projects, given its often limited resources in arenas with many players and multiple, complex influences. The evaluation of the TVET strategy, for example, found it “difficult to provide conclusive evidence that UNESCO’s work directly caused countries to work on TVET reform” – although it reported evidence that larger UNESCO interventions had contributed to reform efforts.

116. Most evaluations demonstrated that UNESCO and its partners effectively delivered programmes/projects in line with their plans, in ways that were well suited to implementation contexts and produced useful benefits. Many evaluations also provided valuable insights into stakeholder views of programming. In general, evidence showed that partners and beneficiaries, ranging from other UN agencies and government ministries to community members, appreciated contributions made with

⁴⁰ UNESCO, *MTS 2022-2029*, p. 11.

UNESCO support. Outcome harvesting evaluations (as discussed further in section 8.2) were especially helpful in identifying how stakeholders saw evolving results associated with UNESCO programming.

117. Many evaluations identified enabling factors and constraints that influenced effectiveness. Not surprisingly, one frequently cited constraint was limited financial resources (as discussed in more detail in section 3.6.). Effectiveness was also affected by changes outside of UNESCO's control, in national or institutional implementation contexts – as was the case in the *Training for Cultural Heritage Management based in South-South Cooperation* project and the *UNESCO China Youth Development Foundation Mercedes-Benz Star Fund Conservation and Management of World Heritage Sites in China* project, both affected by changes at national government level. In a related vein, the evaluation of the *Education Sector's Work on Inclusion in Education* illustrated how Member State priorities and political commitment ultimately drive change, while UNESCO can only provide support and guidance. The COVID-19 pandemic was another variable beyond UNESCO's control, but most evaluations found that, aside from occasional delays, implementation was successfully adapted to the pandemic conditions. Common enabling factors for effectiveness, as noted elsewhere in this report, included strong partnerships, access to expertise, good project management, and engagement on the part of stakeholders.
118. This year's portfolio did not include any impact evaluations in a strict technical sense and most lacked the resources to systematically answer questions related to impact. However, some evaluations provided reflections on pathways towards impact or evidence of emerging impacts. In some cases, they found that despite effective activities, delivery of outputs, and contributions to outcome, there was limited evidence of higher-level effects. For example, the evaluation of the *Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 2018-2021 Strategic Plan* found that while the TFT successfully advocated for teacher development and provided a global space for teacher development stakeholders to exchange views, it was unclear that this had impact at upstream policy levels – reflecting resource limitations and lack of engagement from the task force's membership base. Meanwhile, the LINKS evaluation pointed to a broad achievement of the programme's efforts to champion Indigenous knowledge within UNESCO, noting a general increase in awareness and uptake of the issue. The evaluation cited as evidence the appearance of the phrase "Indigenous knowledge" 45 times in the 41 C/5 MTS, as compared to eight times in the 40 C/5.

5.4 Efficiency

Efficiency – The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic[al] and timely way (i.e., conversion of funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc., into outputs and outcomes). Responding to the question: "Are we doing things right?"

119. Most evaluation in this year's portfolio assessed programme efficiency in terms of the availability and use of human, financial, and other resources, and considered issues such as project management, coordination, and the quality of M&E systems and reporting. Several evaluations also assessed communication and visibility. In several cases, resources were considered inadequate to fully achieve expected results, and several evaluations emphasized the need to further leverage partner resources and focus on resource mobilization. At the same time, with only a few exceptions – such as the evaluation of the *Centre regional pour les arts vivants en Afrique* – the evaluations observed that project managers and partners made efficient use of resources at their disposal, that budgets were executed as planned, and activities conducted and outputs delivered in a timely manner. Overall, initiatives covered in the portfolio were completed or on track, although several had faced delays and received no-cost extensions. However, like last year, a few evaluations noted that administrative and financial procedures created unnecessary burdens and delays. Delays related to the COVID-19 pandemic were also observed in many cases.
120. Several evaluations highlighted weaknesses in knowledge dissemination, strategic communication, and visibility (as discussed in section 3.8), as well as in monitoring and evaluation (as discussed in section 3.7). Despite the relevance and effectiveness of UNESCO interventions, the knowledge they generated and UNESCO's own value added are not always adequately communicated to internal or external stakeholders. Better performance in this area could support resource mobilization efforts and contribute to improved intersectoral collaboration and leveraging of resources and cooperation from development partners and others.

5.5 Sustainability

Sustainability – The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue.

121. Despite its obvious importance – since results that do not last have limited value – sustainability is often challenging for development interventions. Not all the evaluations addressed this criterion directly, but insights on sustainability nevertheless emerged from the review. They confirm that strong performance in this area often relies on stakeholder buy-in and ownership and the degree to which changes promoted through an intervention are institutionalized. Other important factors are the scalability of models and approaches, access to resources for stakeholders to continue implementation, and the extent to which an intervention leaves behind new capacities of various kinds and at various levels.
122. Evaluations of several very different interventions – *Support for Adult Literacy in Afghanistan*, the *Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archives* project, the *O3* project, and the project on *Promoting a Rights-based Approach to Disability in Morocco* – linked positive prospects for sustainability to a strong sense of ownership by government and other partners, and efforts to work closely with national or local partners, aligning efforts to their existing policies and strategies. In the case of the literacy project, the evaluation observed that delivering the programme through the Afghan government, which put responsibility largely in the hands of government staff, with UNESCO in a supporting role, helped build local institutional capacity and foster relationships with target communities, with positive implications for sustainability. The evaluation of the *Strengthening Pre-Service Teacher Education in Myanmar* project similarly noted the project's alignment with national policy frameworks and significant ownership by education ministry personnel; however, this was offset by the fact that much of the curriculum development was coordinated by UNESCO.
123. Limited financial resources to continue or expand interventions was identified as a hindrance to sustainability in several evaluations. The evaluation of the *International Task Force on Teachers Strategic Plan 2018-2021* was one of the few to analyze sustainability in-depth, and it highlighted resource gaps – as well as limited engagement by task force members – as a significant threat to the TTF's ability to continue its work.

6. Quality of UNESCO Evaluations

124. The evaluations in this year's portfolio were assessed using the UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports (see Appendix 2). For corporate evaluations, quality assurance (QA) involves a two-step process by both IOS staff and external QA consultants that allows evaluation teams to make revisions based on feedback. This ensures corporate evaluation reports meet the standards in the UNESCO *Evaluation Policy*. The IOS Evaluation Office, in collaboration with Evaluation Focal Points, also offers to backstop and provide guidance to decentralized evaluations. However, these do not undergo systematic external QA while they are being finalized and QA for the decentralized evaluations was carried out during the synthetic review. This assessed the quality of the evidence base for the review as well as identifying areas of relative strength and weakness to be addressed in evaluation capacity strengthening and the management of future evaluations. The differences in QA processes for corporate and decentralized evaluations may give corporate evaluations an advantage over decentralized ones which, in addition, generally benefit from fewer resources and less guidance.⁴¹ This was considered in the QA of the decentralized reports and should be considered when comparing QA ratings.
125. The quality of evaluations was generally good, as the tables in Appendix 2 show, and this year's assessment continues seeing a slightly positive trend in performance over several years of synthetic reviews. Most of the evaluations (17 of the 27) met UNEG standards overall, and the remainder partially met the standard. Moreover, Findings and Recommendations were almost universally rated as meeting standards, making this portfolio a solid source of evidence for the synthetic review. Table 2 in Appendix 2 shows that this year's sample of corporate evaluations demonstrated improvements in Report Structure; Object of Evaluation; Evaluation Purpose, Objective and Scope; Recommendations; and Gender and Human Rights as compared to that of 2021.

41 In the context of the revised Evaluation Policy 2022-29, the IOS Evaluation Office has undertaken a number of initiatives to strengthen capacities and support for decentralized evaluations, including through an enhanced training programme for focal points and programme staff, an evaluation webinar series, and a revamp of the Evaluation Knowledge hub. An updated Evaluation Manual and a revised quality assessment template are also forthcoming.

The decentralized evaluations demonstrated overall improvements (as seen in the QA final score) and performed better than the 2021 synthetic review portfolio of evaluations on Object of Evaluation; Evaluation Purpose, Objective and Scope; Conclusions; and Recommendations.⁴²

6.1 Areas requiring attention

126. Despite some improvements noted over time, evaluation quality was weakest across the board in relation to the UNEG Gender and Human Rights criterion. Under this criterion, quality benchmarks include the extent to which both the object of evaluation and the evaluation itself incorporate a gender equality perspective and human rights-based approach, use of gender-sensitive and human rights-based language, disaggregation of data, the responsiveness of data collection processes and methods to gender and human rights issues, and whether these issues are addressed in every part of the evaluation – including in findings, conclusions, recommendations, and lessons. Only 10 of the 27 evaluations met the standard fully, and many of these were evaluations of targeted gender- or rights-focused interventions. Weakness in this area suggests the need for improved understanding of the human rights and gender equality agenda and improved evaluation capacity in this area. It also points to limitations in the interventions themselves, and in the terms of reference prepared to guide evaluations. More generally, it illustrates the need for enhanced support to assist programme staff in integrating these issues into programmes/projects and M&E.
127. Another area of concern is the lack of standardization in the use of evaluation criteria. While section 7 of the synthetic review is organized around the OECD-DAC criteria, many evaluations did not apply the criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability or use them systematically to organize reporting⁴³ and understanding of these criteria appears to vary. This may reflect

42 It is important to recall that the evaluations included in the 2021 and 2022 synthetic reviews differ in a variety of areas including, budget, team size and expertise, location, and theme.

43 Although this was sometimes intentional and justified for the purpose of utility and readability.

differing views on the part of evaluation commissioners about what is pertinent to assess from a learning and accountability standpoint, and their concern to ensure that certain issues, such as communications and visibility are included. However, the proliferation of criteria may create confusion. Rather than applying an array of different criteria, it may be more helpful to assist commissioners and evaluators to gain a common understanding of the OECD-DAC criteria and help them categorize diverse evaluation themes, concerns, and questions under headings that are related in consistent ways to the OECD-DAC criteria. Reports that consistently locate certain kinds of information under the same OECD-DAC criteria headings would likely facilitate understanding and uptake by evaluation users, as well as facilitating efforts at comparison and synthesis.

128. About half (14) of the evaluations fully met the quality standard for Methodology, but even the ones that met the standard were sometimes relatively weak in this area. Typically, the weakness lay in how methodologies were described, rather than actual methodological flaws, but the absence of adequate descriptions makes it difficult to be confident of methodological rigour. Information was often missing, especially in decentralized evaluations, about how stakeholders were sampled for data collection, or how many interviews or other data collection events were conducted, making it difficult to assess whether findings reflected a diversity of stakeholder views and the broader universe of stakeholders. Discussion of how evaluation methodologies were adapted to evaluation objectives was frequently missing. Many decentralized evaluations also lacked a matrix linking questions to data collection methods and sources – a basic tool to guide systematic and comprehensive assessment – and many evaluations could have been strengthened with discussions of methodological limitations and provision of annexes presenting interview and survey questionnaires, or lists of stakeholders included in data collection.

6.2 Good practices in evaluation

129. The review contained many examples of good evaluation practice. The following is a selection that may provide inspiration for future evaluators and commissioners.
- A few evaluation reports were presented in notably clear, visually engaging formats that highlighted important content. The evaluation of the *International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 2018-2021 Strategic Plan* used colourful graphs and figures to illustrate survey results and other key information, and tables to organize some key material, such as a summary showing how evaluation conclusions corresponded to theory of change elements. The evaluations of *Support for Adult Literacy in Afghanistan* and of the *OWSD “Supporting Women’s Leadership in Science, Technology, and Innovation”* activities also created a reader-friendly report with helpful tables, visual icons, and other formatting features to organize content. Far from superficial, these formatting and aesthetic considerations are important to facilitate understanding and uptake of findings and respond to the UNESCO *Evaluation Policy* quality requirement that findings and recommendations be “presented in a manner that is readily understood by target audiences.”⁴⁴ Corporate evaluations and several decentralized evaluations have also developed various communications tools including evaluation briefs, infographics, videos, and social media outreach to strengthen dissemination and use of findings.
 - Some reports presented recommendations that responded meticulously to UNEG benchmarks. The evaluation of the *2018-2021 Strategic Plan of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030* introduced its recommendations with an explanation of their development, which involved initial drafting, discussion with members of the Task Force steering committee and the evaluation reference group, and revision. The recommendations are also prioritized, detailed, and divided into strategic and operational categories. The evaluation of the *Programme to Strengthen the Arabic Language in UNESCO* also included a subsection detailing the rationale for developing recommendations jointly with stakeholders and explains that a workshop was held for this purpose.

44 UNESCO (2022), p. 8.

- Evaluations of the following three interventions were conducted using outcome harvesting (OH), a well-established though not frequently used methodology: UNESCO's *Capacity Development for Education (CapED) Programme's country-level interventions in Lao PDR and Madagascar*; *"Améliorer l'éducation par la planification et le pilotage stratégique* in Haiti, and the *IIEP-UNESCO/UNICEF Online Course: 'Foundation of Disability-Inclusive Education Sector Planning'*. The use of OH was warranted by the nature of the interventions and evaluation objectives that prioritized stakeholder views and assessment of outcome level results. The methodology can involve some challenges, as it may be time-consuming and resource-intensive and does not systematically provide clear evidence on all OECD-DAC evaluation criteria. Moreover, since it is highly participatory, its implementation in at least one case was significantly hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴⁵ For the disability inclusion course evaluation, OH produced limited insights into the achievement of specific course objectives. Nevertheless, it was found to be helpful for identifying outcomes and engaging stakeholders. All three evaluations produced useful, detailed, context-specific, and stakeholder-oriented insights into the programmes/projects they assessed. An additional good practice was the inclusion of a thoughtful annex in the CapED evaluation report reflecting on the use of OH, its benefits and challenges, and its suitability for future CapED country programme evaluations.⁴⁶
- A handful of evaluations used case studies or modified case study approaches to sample certain aspects of complex initiatives or multi-site programmes/projects via more in-depth coverage. This was a useful approach in larger corporate evaluations such as for the SACC, which organized three virtual field missions to explore climate-related activities linked to UNESCO's offices in Harare, Jakarta, and Kingston. The evaluation of the *Education Sector's Work on Inclusion in Education* supplemented a broad-ranging sample of interviews with focused data collection on two issues that were examined in a small number of countries or regions.⁴⁷

45 The Lao PDR country-level study conducted in the CapED evaluation was "seriously hampered" by pandemic conditions since in-person activities were not possible and internet connectivity issues prevented a complete shift online. The Haiti evaluation also faced challenges in gaining consistent access to relevant stakeholders.

46 The evaluation also applied capacity self-assessments based on the five-capability approach, and the methodological annex also presented some lessons and reflections on the use of this approach.

47 The cases were: inclusion-specific work in education with focus on crisis-affected people on the move in Jordan, and inclusion mainstreaming in sector planning and policy development in Lao PDR and Mozambique.

The smaller, decentralized evaluation of Taking ESD into the Future, a multi-component, multi-level, and multi-region programme, used a modified case study approach to complement its broad scan of programme performance with a more detailed exploration of capacity-building activities in two regions.

130. All corporate evaluations include a management response in the final version of their reports, and the revised UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029 identifies a management response as a required step for all evaluation processes. The response elaborates on recommendations and states whether management agrees with and accepts each one – or not.⁴⁸ This is critical to supporting evaluation use, providing a starting point for an action plan (also specified as a requirement in the evaluation policy) that details how and when the accepted recommendations will be implemented. In the past, decentralized evaluation reports have not included a formal management response. However, comprehensive management responses were prepared for two decentralized evaluations in this year's portfolio – for Taking ESD into the Future and the Capacity Development for Education Programme, steps that can be commended.

48 Close to 100 percent of recommendations are accepted, across evaluations. Non-acceptance is rare.

Appendix 1: Evaluation reports reviewed

The following table presents the 27 evaluations included in this synthetic review. The reports are organized by MP and identify the evaluation category (corporate or decentralized) and alignment with ERs from the 40 C/5 Programme and Budget.⁴⁹

Major Programme	Title of Evaluation	Evaluation Category	40 C/5 Expected Result
Education	Evaluation of the UNESCO Education Sector's work on Inclusion in Education	Corporate	ER 8
	Avaliação do período intermediário do Projeto Consolidação da Rede de Escolas	Decentralized	ER 1*
	Evaluation of UNESCO's Capacity Development for Education (CapED) Programme's country-level interventions in Lao PDR and Madagascar	Decentralized	ER 5*
	Evaluation of IIEP-UNESCO/UNICEF Online Course: 'Foundations of Disability-Inclusive Education Sector Planning'	Decentralized	ER 8*
	Final Evaluation of UNESCO's Technical and Vocational Education and Training Strategy	Decentralized	ER 2
	Evaluation of the UNESCO-UNFPA-UN WOMEN Joint Programme on Empowering Adolescent Girls and Young Women through Education	Decentralized	ER 7*
	Midterm evaluation of Horizontes Program - Rural Secondary Education	Decentralized	ER 2*

Major Programme	Title of Evaluation	Evaluation Category	40 C/5 Expected Result
	Strengthening multi-partner cooperation to support teacher policy and improve learning project evaluation	Decentralized	ER 5*
	Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future (O3) Mid-term Review	Decentralized	ER 6*
	Evaluation Report Support for Adult Literacy in Afghanistan (SALA) Project UNESCO Afghanistan	Decentralized	ER 7*
	External Evaluation of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 for its 2018-2021 Strategic Plan	Decentralized	ER 5*
	Évaluation récolte des effets; améliorer le système éducatif haïtien par la planification et le pilotage stratégique	Decentralized	ER 1*
	Final Evaluation of Phase II of the Strengthening Pre-Service Teacher Education in Myanmar (STEM) Project	Decentralized	ER 5*
	Taking ESD into the Future: Concluding the Global Action Programme (Phase I) and preparing its follow-up	Decentralized	ER 6

⁴⁹ A number of evaluation reports (18/27) did not identify an ER or highlight the initiatives' internal coherence with UNESCO's 40 C/5 ERs. Starred (*) Starred ERs* denote cases where the ER was provided by MP staff.

Major Programme	Title of Evaluation	Evaluation Category	40 C/5 Expected Result
Culture	Evaluation of UNESCO's action in the framework of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage	Corporate	ER 6
	Final Evaluation of the project Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archives Preservation and Digitalization (TSGMAPD)	Decentralized	ER 1*
	Formação para Gestão do Patrimônio Cultural no âmbito da Cooperação Sul-Sul	Decentralized	ER 1*
	Projeto de Cooperação Técnica FIT VALE/ UNESCO – Reconstrução Museu Nacional	Decentralized	ER 1*
	UNESCO -China Youth Development Foundation Mercedes-Benz Star Fund Conservation and Management of World Heritage Sites in China	Decentralized	ER 1, ER 3, ER 8 ^{1*}
	Évaluation du centre régional pour les arts vivants en Afrique	Decentralized	ER 7
	Renewal evaluation of the International Centre for Underwater Archaeology, Zadar, Croatia (category 2 Centre)	Decentralized	ER 4

1 The evaluation report highlights the alignment of this project with the main action directions (4, MLA 1 and 2) of the UNESCO 38 C/5 and 39C/5, however, no ERs are explicitly identified. A review by the MP identified alignment of the project with CLT ERs 1, 3, and 8.

Major Programme	Title of Evaluation	Evaluation Category	40 C/5 Expected Result
Social and Human Sciences	Évaluation finale du projet: changer de regard et promouvoir l'approche fondée sur les droits humains dans la perception du handicap au Maroc ²	Decentralized	ER 2*
	Programme to strengthen the Arabic language in UNESCO	Decentralized	ER 4*
Natural Sciences	Evaluation of the UNESCO's Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) programme	Corporate	ER 3 ³
	Mid-term evaluation of OWSD activities, "Supporting Women's Leadership in Science, Technology and Innovation"	Decentralized	ER 2
IOC	Evaluation of the strategic positioning of IOC-UNESCO	Corporate	ER 1*
Intersectoral	Evaluation of UNESCO's Strategy for Action on Climate Change	Corporate	N/A ⁴

2 The original project title: '*Changer de regard et promouvoir l'approche basée sur les droits de l'homme*' has been adapted in line with the terminology applied in the new UNESCO 41 C/4 referring to 'droits humains'.

3 The evaluation of LINKS was completed in early 2022, as such the evaluators reported the programme's alignment to outputs under the new 41 C/5 Programme and Budget. Under 40 C/5 Programme and Budget the LINKS programme is aligned with SC ER 3.

4 While the MP review of the evaluation overview did not identify any ERs, the evaluation report identifies alignment between UNESCO's Strategy for Action on Climate Change and ED ER6, SHS ER2, CLT ER5, CI ER2, IOC ER1, and SC ER4, ER5, ER6.

Appendix 2: Quality assessment of UNESCO evaluation reports

The tables below summarize the performance of this year's portfolio of corporate and decentralized evaluations against the UNEG quality criteria. The two types of evaluation are presented in separate tables because their QA results may not be compared directly, considering the differences between the evaluations in context, scale, and resources and the different procedures for quality assurance.⁵⁰

Table 2. UNEG Legend

Fully meets UNEG Criteria	Partially meets UNEG Criteria	Does Not meet UNEG Criteria
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Table 3. UNEG Scores Corporate Evaluations

Corporate Evaluation	QA Final Score	Report Structure	Object of Evaluation	Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Scope	Evaluation methodology	Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations	Gender and Human Rights
(ED) Evaluation of the UNESCO Education Sector's work on Inclusion in Education									
(CLT) Evaluation of UNESCO's action in the framework of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage									

⁵⁰ As discussed in section 8, the five corporate evaluations underwent quality assurance (QA) by external consultants while the reports were being finalized, whereas QA for the 22 decentralized evaluations was conducted by the synthetic review consultants only after the reports were complete.

Decentralized Evaluation	QA Final Score	Report Structure	Object of Evaluation	Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Scope	Evaluation methodology	Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations	Gender and Human Rights
(CLT) Projeto de Cooperação Técnica FIT VALE/ UNESCO – Reconstrução Museu Nacional									
(CLT) UNESCO -China Youth Development Foundation Mercedes-Benz Star Fund Conservation and Management of World Heritage Sites in China									
(CLT) Évaluation du centre régional pour les arts vivants en Afrique									
(SHS) Évaluation finale du projet: changer de regard et promouvoir l'approche fondée sur les droits humains dans la perception du handicap au Maroc ⁵¹									
(SHS) Programme to strengthen the Arabic language in UNESCO									
(SC) Mid-term evaluation of OWSD activities, "Supporting Women's Leadership in Science, Technology and Innovation"									

⁵¹ The original project title: 'Changer de regard et promouvoir l'approche basée sur les droits de l'homme' has been adapted in line with the terminology applied in the new UNESCO 41 C/4 referring to 'droits humains'.

Decentralized Evaluations	SDG 1	SDG 2	SDG 3	SDG 4	SDG 5	SDG 6	SDG 7	SDG 8	SDG 9	SDG 10	SDG 11	SDG 12	SDG 13	SDG 14	SDG 15	SDG 16	SDG 17
(ED) Final Evaluation of UNESCO's Technical and Vocational Education and Training Strategy				✓		✓			✓				✓				
(ED) Evaluation of the UNESCO-UNFPA-UN WOMEN Joint Programme on Empowering Adolescent Girls and Young Women through Education		✓		✓	✓	✓											✓
(ED) Midterm evaluation of Horizontes Program - Rural Secondary Education				✓													
(ED) Strengthening multi-partner cooperation to support teacher policy and improve learning project evaluation				✓													
(ED) Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future (O3) Mid-term Review			✓	✓	✓												
(ED) Evaluation Report Support for Adult Literacy in Afghanistan (SALA) Project UNESCO Afghanistan			✓	✓				✓									
(ED) External Evaluation of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 for its 2018-2021 Strategic Plan				✓													
(ED - IIEP) Évaluation récolte des effets; améliorer le système éducatif haïtien par la planification et le pilotage stratégique				✓													
(ED) Final Evaluation of Phase II of the Strengthening Pre-Service Teacher Education in Myanmar (STEM) Project				✓													
(ED) Taking ESD into the Future: Concluding the Global Action Programme (Phase I) and preparing its follow-up				✓								✓	✓				

Decentralized Evaluations	SDG 1	SDG 2	SDG 3	SDG 4	SDG 5	SDG 6	SDG 7	SDG 8	SDG 9	SDG 10	SDG 11	SDG 12	SDG 13	SDG 14	SDG 15	SDG 16	SDG 17
(CLT) Final Evaluation of the project Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archives Preservation and Digitalization (TSGMAPD)																✓	
(CLT) Formação para Gestão do Patrimônio Cultural no âmbito da Cooperação Sul-Sul																✓	
(CLT) Projeto de Cooperação Técnica FIT VALE/ UNESCO – Reconstrução Museu Nacional				✓							✓						
(CLT) UNESCO -China Youth Development Foundation Mercedes-Benz Star Fund Conservation and Management of World Heritage Sites in China	✓				✓						✓				✓		
(CLT) Evaluation du centre régional pour les arts vivants en Afrique											✓						
(CLT) International Centre for Underwater Archaeology, Croatia					✓						✓			✓			
(SHS) Évaluation finale du projet: changer de regard et promouvoir l'approche fondée sur les droits humains dans la perception du handicap au Maroc ⁵²			✓		✓					✓							✓
(SHS) Programme to strengthen the Arabic language in UNESCO																	✓
(SC) Mid-term evaluation of OWSD activities, "Supporting Women's Leadership in Science, Technology and Innovation"				✓	✓												✓

⁵² The original project title: 'Changer de regard et promouvoir l'approche basée sur les droits de l'homme' has been adapted in line with the terminology applied in the new UNESCO 41 C/4 referring to "droits humains".

Appendix 4: Management response to crosscutting findings

1. UNESCO senior management appreciates the 2022 synthetic review of evaluations, which highlights a number of critical new and persisting crosscutting findings and challenges. The UNESCO Programme Sectors and relevant entities have initiated and/or implemented relevant measures to respond to specific recommendations addressed to them in the individual evaluations of the portfolio presented in this synthesis. In addition, the crosscutting challenges highlighted in the synthetic review are also addressed in an organization-wide effort and in the context of the strategic transformation and other organizational reform processes as already undertaken over the 37 C/4 and/or continued in the 41 C/4 Medium-Term Strategy.
 1. **Effective, flexible project management adds value to UNESCO initiatives**
2. With the aim of addressing the need for “an agile, accountable and proactive Organization”, the new draft HR Strategy for 2023-2027 foresees a number of initiatives to continually strengthen the professional competences as well as the wellbeing of the UNESCO workforce. These include an increased training offer of both in-person and online training programmes on topics ranging from Results Based Management (RBM), evaluation, gender equality, diversity and inclusion to modules aiming at *managing teams for high performance*. The enhanced mobility programme, as well as health and wellbeing initiatives, such as flexible working arrangements also contribute to an effective workforce.
3. The Education Sector will continue to promote different types of training opportunities for staff, including on project management, such as the Results-Based Management training workshops conducted by BSP RBM unit in June 2022, where a high number of ED staff participated, and other training workshops organised periodically by the Administration office in the Executive Office of the Education sector. The ED sector continued to apply the agile approach, notably in the lead up to the Pre-Summit and the Transformation Education Summit.
4. The Culture Sector has equally promoted capacity-building in project management, notably through active participation in the Results-Based Management training workshops organized by BSP in June 2022, as well as the sharing of good practices within the framework of such workshops on monitoring impact in line with the 41C/5 and the development of performance indicators in this aim. Further trainings are envisioned as from September 2022 in cooperation with BSP RBM Unit, notably to enhance monitoring and reporting for more effective project management at the workplan, output and outcome levels. Internal coordination meetings have also been held with the different Entities and Field Offices to streamline processes and ensure greater coherence in programme implementation and monitoring along the Sector’s strategic lines.
5. From the perspective of the International Convention against Doping in Sport, the deliverables produced in 2020-2021 and the outcomes of the eighth session of the Conference of Parties (COP8) illustrate the importance of flexibility and innovation in the implementation of activities. In particular, the use of virtual platforms and the organization of virtual regional consultations with States Parties were beneficial to the work conducted under the Convention, for the consensual adoption of strategic instruments. The Secretariat of the Convention will continue to apply a flexible approach to the management of its work, and to support the COP Bureau and the Fund’s Approval Committee.
6. Well-designed projects and programmes such as the Programme to Strengthen the Arabic language in UNESCO also contribute to broader UNESCO initiatives, offering new connections across UNESCO that are also adding value to the programme.
7. Among other, the SHS Sport Section has also increased the use of virtual platforms and the organization of virtual regional consultations with Member States which are beneficial to the work conducted, for the consensual adoption of strategic decisions by the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS). The Sport Section will continue to apply a flexible approach to the management of its work, and to support the CIGEPS.

2. UNESCO leverages its convening power for collective policy support and influence

8. The Education Sector has led a long process to reinforce collective action towards SDG4 through the new Global Cooperation Mechanism for Education adopted last year and the establishment of a renewed High Level Steering Committee for Education 2030. This process together with UNESCO's lead role in the Pre-Transforming Education Summit (TES) and the TES, as well as the organization of three world conferences this year in the area of Higher Education, Adult Education and Early Childhood education, is strengthening UNESCO's convening role and position to influence policy and practice in education at global, regional and national levels.
9. The Culture Sector has been supporting collective policy support across its six Culture Conventions and three Recommendations, and through its programmes in Headquarters and Field Offices. In particular, the 3rd Global Report "ReShaping Policies for Creativity: Addressing culture as a global public good", launched internationally in February 2022, provides a global overview and data on the state of the cultural and creative sectors and puts forward policy recommendations to foster creative ecosystems that contribute to a sustainable world by 2030 and beyond. In addition, the launch of a joint publication of UNESCO and the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi, "Culture in Times of COVID-19: Resilience, Recovery and Revival", launched in June 2022, has provided an evidence base to support UNESCO's call for a new value proposition for culture and provided a framework to promote the recovery and resilience of the sector going forward.
10. Moreover, the Sector has supported the integration of culture, for the first time, into the G20 processes, most recently under Indonesia's presidency, and is driving advocacy to reposition culture as a global public good, supporting intergovernmental dialogue on cultural policies and sustainable development within the context of the United Nations' Our Common Agenda and the upcoming 2023 Summit of the Future. It is reinforcing inter-ministerial dialogue through the preparation of the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development – MONDIACULT 2022, which builds on the findings of five online regional consultations organized by UNESCO between 13 December 2021 and 17 February 2022 with Member States
11. In addition, an Interagency Platform was developed to build a structured dialogue with UN agencies, development banks and IGOs and foster concerted, joint action on culture and development. Specific partnerships were expanded with regional IGOs and development banks, notably to tackle the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and inform regional and national response.
12. The Secretariat of the Anti-Doping Convention will continue to enhance UNESCO's convening power for collective policy support and influence, based on the positive experiences led in 2020-2021 through the organization of Ministerial webinars on 'traditional pharmacopoeia, sport values and the impact of COVID-19', of virtual regional consultations with States Parties, as well as the high-level dialogue with ECOWAS Sport Ministers on sport values, ethics and integrity..
13. The convening power of UNESCO has also repeatedly been demonstrated in the development and adoption of global standard-setting instruments, most recently the Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, the first ever global normative instrument in this domain. Moreover, as the SHS sector assists Member States to implement the Recommendation, it extends the convening power to the partners and stakeholders from private sector, academia and the civil society. Concretely, the convening power for collective policy support and influence is being used in the development of capacity-building tools for the implementation of the Recommendation, as well as the series of Global Fora on the Ethics of AI, organized by UNESCO and assembling the key stakeholders in the AI world.
14. The programme to strengthen the Arabic language in UNESCO is another example that demonstrates how UNESCO is leveraging its convening power for collective policy support and influence, through World Arabic Day. The SHS Sector Sport Section will also continue to enhance UNESCO's convening power for collective policy support and influence, including through the upcoming 7th International Conference of Sport Ministers in charge of Sport and physical Education to be held in Azerbaijan in March 2022.
15. In the field of youth, UNESCO will continue leveraging its experience and expertise of more than 20 years in convening youth development stakeholders to address youth issues. In this biennium, UNESCO is or will be engaging with 20 Member-States to bring together policy-makers, youth organizations, development actors, academia and civil society to produce knowledge on youth, build capacities, hold inclusive policy dialogues and design participatory action plans and youth policies. In addition to the country-specific work, UNESCO announced a Global Coalition of Actors to support youth-responsive pandemic recovery, which was endorsed by policy makers attending the High-Level Policy Conference "Youth as Researchers on COVID-19" (25 March 2022). The Coalition is open to a variety of actors (governments,

civil society, private sector, academia, youth organizations) and will integrate a Grant Scheme to fund youth-led research and grass-root solutions.

16. The Natural Science Sector (SC) has also leveraged its convening power in different ways. The Sector organized multi-stakeholder consultations, which led to the adoption of the Recommendation on Open Science in November 2021 and has since launched a call to collate best practices in open science around the world. SC has also leveraged multi-stakeholder partners with a view to the designation of 2022-2023 as the International Year of Basic Sciences for Sustainable Development, launched on 8 July 2022, and the implementation of related events over the next 12 months. SC has further used its convening power to launch a series of thematic dialogues with the Small Island Developing States to identify the challenges and opportunities they face to facilitate the design of custom-made activities. The first dialogue in the series in early 2022 focused on disaster risk reduction. SC also brought together stakeholders to address water security challenges during the 9th World Water Forum (March 2022) and the Dushanbe international water conference (June 2022), key preparatory events for the UN 2023 water conference for the mid-term review of the Decade for Water Action (2018-2028). The Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme also continues to lead, on behalf of UN-Water, the campaign seeking to make invisible groundwater resources visible, culminating in the UN Groundwater Summit in December 2022.

3. COVID-19 conditions accelerated UNESCO readiness to support digital transformation

17. The Covid-19 pandemic gave the Education sector the opportunity to accelerate support for the digital transformation, by providing the evidence base, by leveraging its own and partners' expertise to reduce digital gaps, notably through the work of the Global Education Coalition, and its three flagships on teachers, connectivity and gender. It also allowed UNESCO to employ large scale programmes that support the continuity of learning, including by establishing regional platforms for distance and blended learning, and help build institutional and human capacities reinforcing digital skills and preparedness. The health crisis also gave the opportunity to expand its normative reflection around the right to education taking into account the digital transformation, and to launch the Rewired Global Declaration on Connectivity for Education.

18. The COVID-19 pandemic was a turning point for the Culture Sector to harness the digital transformation, including by developing new partnerships to enhance the protection and promotion of culture through digital technologies, by addressing the digital divide through projects such as the "Digital Creativity Lab", which is supporting 12 Member States in addressing the impact of the digital environment on the cultural and creative industries, and by stimulating international dialogue - notably with civil society - through the ResiliArt movement, which provided tools and guidance to organize culture debates across all regions in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic through digital platforms. In addition, the Sector contributed to the inclusion of culture as an area of policy action in the Recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence.
19. The Culture Sector itself has also adapted to the accelerated digital transformation by transforming capacity-building trainings, monitoring activities, expert meetings and awareness-raising campaigns to an online format. In addition, major statutory meetings, took place in an online format for the first time. Existing training materials were also adapted with the support experts to be able to deliver distance learning.
20. The shift to digital or hybrid meetings enabled SHS to widen the coverage across regions and to secure a higher number of participants. The increased reliance on digital modalities accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemics has shown the potential offered by the digital and AI but also the need to ensure an inclusive and equitable access and use. The Recommendation on the Ethics of AI confirms this need for an ethical framework. In the implementation phase, SHS helped Member States and national/ institutional actors build their capacities for an effective implementation.
21. The Secretariat of the Anti-Doping Convention has also generalized the use of digital tools to consult with States Parties and to facilitate the work of the governing bodies and of Task Forces. The programme to strengthen the Arabic language in UNESCO has taken several steps to cope with the effects of the COVID pandemic on the Programme's activities for example virtual round-table discussions on the occasion of the World Arabic Language Day, online experts meetings of the Arabic Atlas activity and online region trainings on the Arabic edition of World Water Development Report (WWDR). The Sport Section has generalized the use of digital tools to consult with Member States, and to facilitate the work of CIGEPS, its bureau and working groups.
22. The successful conceptualization and implementation of the "Youth as Researchers on COVID-19" global initiative illustrates UNESCO's readiness and capacity to support digital transformation. Relying exclusively on the use of digital technologies,

UNESCO mobilized 10,000 young people from across the globe, to undertake and support youth-led research that produced relevant knowledge addressing the key challenges of the pandemic and its impact on young people. Management will build on this experience and move expeditiously to consolidate it as an institutional best practice, in light of a transforming global environment, where digital technologies now play a central role in the lives of citizens.

23. The Natural Sciences Sector handled negotiations to adopt the Recommendation on Open Science (2021), which demonstrated to stakeholders the value of scientific information- and data-sharing in a pandemic to accelerate the advancement of knowledge and problem-solving. The Covid-19 pandemic also accelerated virtual (distance) training for scientists participating in projects implemented by the Natural Sciences Sector.

4. UNESCO's growing attention to inclusion still rarely addresses persons with disabilities

24. In the context of the Agenda 2030, rights-based inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWD) has been gaining increased attention in UNESCO. Guided by the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the UN System-wide Disability Inclusion Strategy Accountability Framework, a UNESCO Intersectoral Task Team on Disability Rights and Inclusion is coordinated by the SHS Sector.
25. The Education sector promotes a broad concept on inclusion in education, which considers the needs of all learners without discrimination, and this is a guiding principle for all its normative and policy work as well as in its capacity development efforts. However programmatically, depending on defined needs and available resources, the sector implements targeted activities that address the needs of persons with disabilities. This year, the Sector for example finalized an online teacher training course to support children with disabilities in Asia and some 600 teachers from seven countries have so far completed the course.
26. The Culture sector seeks to promote the participation of all, including persons with disabilities, in cultural life through its programmes. Most recently, the XIV UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) Annual Conference (Santos, Brazil, July 2022), was

dedicated to the theme "Creativity, Path to Equality" and featured an opening speech by a Member of the Advisory Board of the Brazilian Federation of Down Syndrome Associations, which served to raise awareness among Member Cities of the need to enhance inclusion for persons with disabilities, and allowed to share good practices at the local level, on initiatives carried out to favour this.

27. The Recommendation on Ethics of AI, in its principles on fairness and non-discrimination and across its different policy areas, calls on AI actors to ensure the inclusion and effective participation of person with disabilities. Particular attention will be paid to persons with disabilities in the implementation phase.
28. Youth being a priority group for the Organization, and based on its tool on meaningful Youth Engagement, the Youth Programme continues efforts to train UNESCO staff in integrating youth engagement aspects in all programmes. A guidance to assess youth engagement has also been developed and is available for staff. The Youth Section, supported by a network of Youth Focal Points, also provides backstopping to colleagues working on and with youth, notably by sharing know-how and profiles from youth-led networks to ensure young people are actively engaged in UNESCO's action. Mainstreaming and working with youth as priority group are integrated in UNESCO's RBM Guiding Principles.
29. Inclusion is also intrinsic to the Anti-Doping Convention. Some projects financed by the Anti-Doping Fund target directly athletes with disabilities. Efforts are being made by the programme to strengthen the Arabic language in UNESCO to reinforce aspects of inclusion. Persons with disabilities were included in the activity related to Education and it will be further enhanced by a follow-up activity to take place during 2023. Two editions of the executive summaries of the World Water Development Report (WWDR) were made available as online audiobooks at to respond to the needs of vision impaired. The coordination unit will continue to encourage colleagues to include persons with disabilities when designing and implementing activities.
30. The SHS Sector Sport section's approach is based on the 'Sport for All', as laid out in the International Charter for physical Education and Sport and in the Kazan Action Plan. Strong involvement of the Paralympic movement in the development of our sport initiatives is also part of the Sport section work.

5. *Progress is evident on intersectoral collaboration, but it remains more the exception than the rule*

31. In line with the United Nations reform, UNESCO, as other UN organizations commits to adopting an integrated and multidimensional programming approach. To this effect, the new Medium-Term Strategy (41 C/4) framework, articulated around four strategic objectives and related outcomes to which sectors contribute, based on their expertise, areas of competence and clear comparative advantage, captures and reflects the Organization's interdisciplinary targeted approach to address the complexity of global challenges. It showcases how in line with the universal and interlinked nature of Agenda 2030, transversal approaches can bring integrated and multidisciplinary responses in support of Member States' needs, priorities and achievement of the SDGs. This translates in the 41 C/5 into a limited set of intersectoral outputs, notably through intersectoral programmes and flagship programmes for Africa. Sectors at Headquarters and in the Field are required to search for intersectoral and cross-sectoral synergies to ensure greater, more tangible impact and contribute meaningfully to the 2030 Agenda and other internationally agreed development frameworks.
32. The new 41 C/4 provides an enabling framework and the new 41 C/5 offers increased opportunities for all sectors to interact and deliver together through the intersectoral outputs and platforms. Relevant colleagues from all sectors have been closely working on the intersectoral platforms in the implementation of the 41 C/5. For example, the SHS sector 'Fit for Life' initiative has been developed in close cooperation with the Education Sector.
33. In the context of the 41 C/4 and C/5, intersectoral cooperation has been enhanced, notably through the two intersectoral programmes (IP 1 and 3) co-led by the Culture Sector on strengthening synergies between culture and education and promoting indigenous knowledge, cultures and languages respectively. The Culture Sector has been closely collaborating with all Programme Sectors through the various Task Forces and working groups established to advance these programmes, and to support the implementation of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032) and the revision of the framework for Culture and Arts Education.
34. The Recommendation on the Ethics of AI, which was elaborated through an intersectoral approach, has policy action areas on culture, communication and information, education and research, environment and gender, among others, cutting across all UNESCO's programmes. It is the outcome of an inclusive consultative intersectoral exercise and its implementation concerns all UNESCO's sectors and thus implies intersectoral work. The Intersectoral Programme (IP) 5 in the 41 C/5 offers a platform for advancing intersectoral collaboration and synergies and joint projects are being identified in the field of Ethics of AI.
35. Intersectoral aspect are also being considered for the future activities of the programme to strengthen the Arabic language in UNESCO, both with other sectors at HQ, but also with UNESCO field offices.
36. UNESCO demonstrates a significant comparative advantage in the area of youth. Thanks to its rich multidisciplinary mandate, UNESCO's work on youth can leverage the wealth of knowledge, expertise and capacities in all its different programmes and provide holistic responses to a number of youth issues. Building on lessons from earlier (NET-MED Youth project, the work on violence prevention) and existing intersectoral initiatives (UNESCO Youth Climate Action Network - YoU-CAN) and strengthening internal coordination mechanisms (such as the Youth Focal Points network), the Organization will continue investing in intersectoral initiatives to produce knowledge on youth issues, provide multidisciplinary policy advice on youth and support youth-led action.
37. Staff in the Natural Sciences sector have been working on the intersectoral platforms introduced in the 41 C/5 for 2022-2025, which offer greater opportunities to collaborate with other programme sectors. In parallel, SC leads three intersectoral platforms which offer opportunities for intersectoral collaboration: indigenous peoples (via SC's Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems programme), Small Island Developing States and Disaster Risk Reduction.
38. As stated by the UN Joint Inspection Unit, given their common imperatives "RBM provides a framework for addressing the 2030 Agenda". Accordingly, 'Interdisciplinarity towards collective results', one of the five RBM Principles, remains at the core of the 2022 RBM Guidance (RBM Guiding Principles; Project templates; eLearning modules), practices and events.
39. In line with the 2030 Agenda, this also favours UNESCO engagement with the UN's whole-of-government, whole-of-society, whole-of-UN approach. Guidance and advice were continuously provided to managers and staff at strategic and operational levels through coaching support and RBM events organized within the resources dedicated to RBM and the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.
40. Staff capacities on both RBM application and intersectoral work are also being strengthened. Organized by the BSP RBM Unit in collaboration with a range of subject matter experts from Sectors and support Services, trainings helped showcasing how

support services work jointly to support programme colleagues. Specific processes and tools (in SISTER and in the future UNESCORE planning tool) have been developed to enable intersectoral work both at programming and reporting levels as well as resource mobilization for joint projects.

41. Along these lines, Field Offices online workshops as well as an in-person intersectoral workshop with participants from across all Programme Sectors were organized by the BSP RBM Unit. 'From project design to implementation' workshops organized at Headquarters in June 2022 jointly with corporate support services empowered staff to engage in intersectoral work, strengthened capacities on RBM and associated areas and helped showcasing how support services work jointly to support programme colleagues.

6. Resource constraints may demand strategic responses

42. Limited resources remain a challenge for UNESCO and can indeed limit the Organization's capacity to ensure its functions, support partners, ensure sustainable results, and pursue coherence across the different entities in the Organization. Initiatives such as the integrated Budget framework and initiatives and targeted events in the framework of the Structured Financing Dialogue, as for example planned for the IOC, are supporting the Organization in its efforts towards more strategic prioritization and resource mobilization approaches. Several strategic level partnerships across all sectors and the recent appointment of five resource mobilization officers across the field shall also contribute to a positive trend towards more strategic and larger scale resource mobilization opportunities.
43. Significant efforts have been deployed to optimize the resources dedicated to the statutory functioning and monitoring of the Culture Conventions, including by seeking synergies with programmes supported by voluntary contributions, and by promoting resource mobilization.
44. The active involvement of several Convention's and Fund's governing bodies has proven to be an efficient use of strategic and political thinking leading to consensual decisions and concrete impact despite scarce resources. This approach will continue to be followed in 2022-2023.
45. To respond to the high expectations for the Recommendation on the Ethics of AI to shape the digital transformation, and to build up UNESCO's capacity to deliver on this instrument's ambition, SHS is pursuing a comprehensive resource mobilization

strategy for the implementation of the Recommendation. This strategy focuses on mobilizing funding from major donors (funds from Japanese Government and the European Commission have been secured), as well as innovative partnerships with regional developmental/financial institutions (such as CAF in Latin America) and the private sector (Telefonica). Expert networks were set up to tap into a valuable hub of knowledge partners and help advance the implementation of the Recommendation.

46. Key partnerships with private sector and sporting goods industries have also been developed and led to an increase of the extrabudgetary funds for the Sports programme. Increased engagement of Member States in the work of the SHS Sports Section will also result in more concrete results.
47. Considering significant resource constraints facing multilateral organizations, including UNESCO, the Youth Section at SHS has also embarked on a medium- and long-term strategy to build partnerships and mobilize resources. This is informed by targeted attempts to increase the visibility of the programme, while simultaneously strengthening joint programme implementation with its core constituency, namely young people in Member States.
48. The IOC envisages exploring alternative financial modalities, and to convene a regular forum for high level decision-makers with the ability to engage in strategic discussion of sustainable planning and management and in financing the Commission. The Ocean Decade is also opening doors to discussion with new funding partners including industry and philanthropy. The recently established Ocean Decade Alliance has the potential to become a highly visible platform and network for unlocking resources for the Decade, both directly and indirectly.

7. Many initiatives still lack clear results frameworks tied to effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

49. The RBM guidance and tools provide support for developing Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks. The 2022 RBM Guiding Principles, the UNESCO RBM practice reference tool, and the 2022 project document template, were updated, and modernised in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) guidance and UN good practices. It provides concrete guidance, good practices and examples for formulating results, activities and key underlying assumptions statements as well as comprehensive Theories of Change, anchored to the C/5 results and national (e.g. UNSDCF),

regional (e.g. 2063 AU Agenda) and international (e.g. 2030 Agenda) frameworks.

Guidance and advice were continuously provided at strategic and operational levels through coaching support and RBM events organized within the resources dedicated to RBM and the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The IOS Evaluation Office facilitated the evaluation session of these workshops, reflecting the enhanced focus on the strengthening of decentralized evaluation quality and their use. In the context of the revised Evaluation Policy 2022-29, the IOS Evaluation Office is supporting the decentralized function through training, webinars, and a knowledge hub. An updated Evaluation Manual and a revised quality assessment template are also forthcoming.

50. In addition, several initiatives are underway to further facilitate RBM outreach and application. These include a Performance Indicator (PI) technical methodological note and a generic toolkit. A second phase will focus on the development of a generic Theory of Change around normative work and its operationalisation. Moreover, a mapping of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officers in Field Office entities is currently being conducted in preparation to the establishment of the M&E Officers Network co-led by the BSP RBM Unit and the IOS Evaluation Office.
51. At the level of programme sectors, the Education sector strives to quality assure new projects and programmes and to provide guidance on the development of results frameworks. It also consistently advises project officers to set aside some resources for strengthening M&E. The Education sector has developed the first ever theories of change per outputs and will engage in revising the corresponding results framework.
52. The Culture Sector is also working to enhance clear results frameworks in the design of new projects and programmes, through the provision of direct guidance from the Executive Office and by exploring new training opportunities for all CLT staff on Results-Based Management. In addition, the Culture Sector has developed the theories of change for its outputs, including intersectoral programmes.
53. The work conducted under the Anti-Doping Convention and its Fund responds to the recommendations of the external evaluations (2017 and 2018), based on a clear Theory of Change. The Fund's M&E have been rebooted through the adoption of the Operational Strategy for 2020-2025 by COP7 (2019). Clear results frameworks have been developed for the SHS outputs in the 41 C/5. For the programme to strengthen the Arabic language in UNESCO, a performance monitoring framework that identifies the Programme's intended results, i.e., outputs, outcomes, impact, in the form of a theory of change, is being implemented (in consultation with BSP). The key initiatives

developed by the Sport Section have also been developed based on a clear Theory of Change, and in consultation with UNESCO relevant services such as BSP

54. To better keep track of progress towards achievement of programmatic goals and their associated challenges, the Youth Section at SHS has developed a Section-wide M&E framework/mechanism that monitors progress towards implementation, helps identifies challenges and takes correct measures to address these. The framework delineates all elements of the key pillars of the Section's programme activities, agreed timelines and key deliverables. This internal tool has significantly contributed to efficiency in programme delivery, and it is hoped that as it becomes more consolidated in the everyday work of the section, it will contribute to enhancing delivery outcome. In parallel, the Youth Section integrates RBM-based results frameworks in RP workplans and all extrabudgetary proposals.
55. The newly developed overarching results framework for the Ocean decade, with at a minimum outcomes, intermediate outcome, outputs, baselines and indicative owners is being rolled out in the second half of 2022, and will, collectively with UN Ocean Partners, progressively integrate strategic ambitions and targets across the ten Ocean Decade Challenges. It will also undergo a regular review process.

8. Improved strategic communication could increase UNESCO's visibility, which is often limited

56. The ED sector invests strongly in communications through its dedicated knowledge management service in Headquarters but also through communication focal points across sections and divisions. In addition, and particularly for large scale projects, a communication plan for the project is defined in advance with dedicated resources.
57. The Culture Sector has been investing in communication, particularly around its strategic initiatives, which have ensured the development of communication plans, leading to enhanced visibility of key actions including on ResiliArt, the 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, through the Next 50 campaign, and MONDIACULT 2022.
58. Direct, immediate communication with the stakeholders, including through the use of social media, contribute to improve the visibility, such as of the Anti-Doping Convention and to foster UNESCO's key role in the sport integrity ecosystem. SHS has therefore upscaled its outreach and communication efforts ensuring that appropriate communication and visibility plans are fully embedded in its different

- programs. For instance, in the course of the first 6 months, over 60 events were held to sensitize and raise awareness on the Recommendation on the Ethics of AI. They were widely relayed through multiple communication channels.
59. The coordination unit within SHS has also developed a multi-annual communication plan for the programme to strengthen the Arabic language in UNESCO that considers both communication within and outside UNESCO and aims at enhancing the overall visibility of the Programme. Actions to broaden the scope of the Programme were taken by including like-minded institutions, such as the Arab Organization for Education, Culture and Sciences (ALECSO), or the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO).
 60. It is also critical to improve the visibility of the work undertaken by the Sport Section and to foster UNESCO's key role in the sport for development ecosystem. The co-chair role assumed by UNESCO in the UN interagency groups for sport for development is a step in that direction. Improved direct, immediate communication with the stakeholders, using social media, would further contribute to this objective.
 61. The Youth Section at SHS is dedicating resources to design and produce effective and up-to-date communication materials for all its workstreams. These include, notably, the re-design of the visual identity of the Youth Programme as a whole, the production of brief presentation documents and brochures, and the update of its Webpages, and social media. From September 2022, the Youth section will start collaborating with a communication agency to create a large-scale campaign to advocate for young people's voices to be heard and considered. This campaign will shed light on UNESCO's engagement with youth. A youth, media and communication partnership with a youth-led organization is also currently being negotiated.
 62. The Natural Sciences Sector has established the post of Communication Officer to improve synergies between its science programmes and the overall quality of communication to increase visibility. The aim is to demonstrate more effectively the extent to which the complementarity of many science programmes reflects the interlinkages between SDGs and, thus, the valuable contribution that these programmes make to their achievement. As part of this strategy, the communication focal points in different sections and divisions are being encouraged to interact more and the Sector has launched a regular electronic newsletter on its work. The sector is also stepping up communication via policy briefs on water security and biodiversity conservation. Policy briefs based on the UNESCO Science Report (2021) have been produced to highlight trends and issues in cross-cutting technologies such as artificial intelligence and robotics and related to the SDGs, such as on clean water and sanitation (SDG6), industry, innovation & infrastructure (SDG9), climate action (SDG13), life below water (SDG14), life on land (SDG15), etc. Interested programme specialists are also being trained in how to communicate about their programme for different audiences via different channels (such as in web, press releases, videos).
 63. IOC also seeks to improve its branding and communications effectiveness with the development of a dedicated IOC Communication strategy with the assistance from a communications expert. The IOC envisages strategic messaging around an IOC wide guiding framework of Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management and to strongly position this framework within the Ocean Decade.
 64. In compliance with governing bodies decisions, reporting to Member States has been streamlined in a way to focus efforts on the preparation of more comprehensive, high-quality strategic results reports. Therefore, starting from the 215th session of the Executive Board annual reporting on programme implementation will be made through a combination of programme and financial information instead of the previous practice of presenting these reports separately. At the third spring session of a quadrennium, the UNESCO Strategic Results Report will include an assessment of progress towards the C/4 Outcomes drawing on information on programme implementation and outputs delivered. It will highlight future trends, challenges and opportunities and present proposals for the way forward.
 65. The 2022 project document template was also aligned with the 2022 RBM Guiding Principles. Further guidance was elaborated with regards to communication and visibility. A working group composed of subject matter experts from the Division for Partnerships (BSP/DPA) and the Division for Communication and Public Engagement (CAB/CPE) and the BSP RBM Unit is further developing resources notably to foster meaningful reporting with an emphasis on showcasing human results stories and relevant data. This cross-support services collaboration also seeks to gather an inventory of good practices and examples within the Organization and the UN System.
 66. To contribute to the Organization's knowledge management function through evaluation, the IOS Evaluation Office continues its outreach and communication strategy by developing communication outputs that are tailored to various audiences. These include evaluation insights, infographics, presentations, and videos, and the dissemination of key messages resulting from evaluations.

9. UNESCO Global Priorities appear inconsistently addressed in past interventions whose focus was not gender or Africa

67. Gender equality was re-confirmed as a global priority by Member States during the 41st session of the General Conference, and has been mainstreamed in the core strategic planning, programme and budget documents of the Organisation. To help address the findings of last year's synthetic review on the inconsistencies between the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP II), its results framework and baselines with the performance indicators and targets presented in the 40 C/5 Programme and Budget documents.
68. Reinvigorating a culture of gender equality throughout UNESCO requires it to become "everyone's business". To this end, the coordination function of the Division for Gender Equality is strengthened. The overall gender equality architecture is being redesigned by an internal working group made up of Executive Officers and gender specialists from each Sector in a Gender Equality Task Team (GETT).
69. This will also help address the Recommendations of the IOS evaluations of priority gender equality (2020, 2022) for the Organisation to act as "One" within the framework of strategic objectives defined in the Medium-Term Strategy (41 C/4). In addition, programme sectors and intersectoral programme teams will work closely with the Gender Equality Division through a peer-to-peer learning modality to design gender transformative actions to be implemented before the end of the quadrennium. It is expected that as the strategic and knowledge management functions of the Division expand, more impact related information will become available.
70. Overall, both global priorities are strongly integrated across the work of the programme sectors in the 41 C/5 for 2022/23. For example in Education, Priority Africa represents nearly 30% of ED's Integrated budget framework (IBF) which is decentralised to the region and most of ED programmes and projects are operated in Africa. Gender equality is mainstreamed across the programme strategy and thematic strategies of the sector and in addition, gender equality in education is a dedicated programmatic output.
71. The two Global Priorities have also been mainstreamed across Culture programmes, with the support of dedicated Focal Points appointed at each entity. The establishment and implementation of Flagship Programme 3 on Fostering Cultural Heritage and Capacity Development in Africa has also contributed to strengthening collaboration with Field Offices in Africa and ensuring coordination and coherence to address Global Priority Africa in all relevant actions. Concerning Global Priority Gender Equality, two performance indicators have been specifically devoted to measuring the impact of the Sector's actions on gender equality across the work of different entities,
72. SHS is paying particular attention to maximize its contribution to UNESCO's two global priorities on gender and Africa. Concerning gender, a specific standalone output and dedicated performance indicator has been defined in the 41 C/5. SHS is focusing on the gender bias and discrimination aspects of its ethics of AI mandate. All activities to assist Member States in the implementation of the Recommendation on the Ethics of AI will have specific gender related components, and a specialized network on Women for Ethical AI is being established. Concerning Africa, within the framework of the operational strategy for priority Africa, SHS is implementing projects that are specifically targeting African Member States to build their capacity to implement the Recommendation.
73. The implementation of initiatives under the Anti-Doping Convention and its Fund also pays particular attention to UNESCO's Global Priorities - Africa and Gender Equality. For example, Africa is the second biggest beneficiary of the Fund since 2008. Gender equality is promoted both through the governance of the Convention (the Fund's Approval Committee is led by a woman since 2020) and through the projects financed by the Fund.
74. The coordination unit of the programme to strengthen the Arabic language in UNESCO is looking into options to broaden the scope of the programme and increasing the international dimension of the implanted activities, this includes examining options to consider UNESCO Global Priorities while designing the future activities.
75. The Sport Section pays particular attention to ensure UNESCO's Global priorities - Gender Equality and Africa – are systematically considered and integrated in the implementation of all its activities. UNESCO's critical role in the establishment of the Global Observatory for Gender Equality and Sport in Switzerland is just one example, along with the close collaboration developed with the African Union and the African Union Sports Council to ensure the African continent plays a leading role in sport field.

76. Both Global Priorities are integrated into the delivery of SC programmes. Most current SC projects target Africa, and gender equality has been mainstreamed in SC programmes. In water sciences, for instance, SC has developed a guide to using sex-disaggregated indicators to inform gender-transformative policies. SC also monitors the global situation regarding gender equality in science through a dedicated chapter in each edition of the UNESCO Science Report.
77. The IOC envisages to institute a working group including gender experts from the IOC's UN Oceans counterparts as well as from UNESCO to develop a roadmap through which gender can be better mainstreamed throughout the Ocean Decade. The Commission will also work with an HR expert to target qualified female candidates for senior management positions within the Commission. Gender guidelines for new committees established by IOC are being developed jointly with the Gender Equality Division.
78. A Guiding Questions tool was elaborated with subject matter experts to further operationalize Global Priorities, Priority groups, groups (e.g. indigenous peoples) and cross-cutting approaches (e.g. Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA); environmental sustainability) throughout the programme cycle.
79. Furthermore, the overall review of the Generic toolkit and Performance Indicator (PI) technical methodological note to be undertaken with subject matter experts will further integrate Global Priorities, other priority groups and cross-cutting approaches in the statements of activity, results and their performance indicators and associated information.
80. Regarding inter-agency efforts, UNESCO is a Member of the Inter-agency Working Group on Gender Equality Results Tracking and Reporting led by UNWomen and of the OECD Results Community Leave No One Behind (LNOB) Thematic Dialogue Reference Group.

Appendix 5: Consultants biodata

Melissa MacLean, PhD, a senior consultant with over twenty years of experience in international development, completed the synthetic review on behalf of Le Groupe-conseil Baastel Itée. She has led, participated in, and provided quality assurance on numerous evaluations for UN, international organization, government, and civil society initiatives. She has also supported clients through developing monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems; gender analysis and mainstreaming; strategic planning and programme support; training and facilitation; and social science research. Dr. MacLean's thematic expertise includes decentralization and local government, democracy and political systems, development policy and programming, gender equality and inclusion, and women's leadership and empowerment. However, her work has covered a wide range of topics such as climate change, digital justice, youth participation, and women's economic empowerment. In recent years she has led or contributed to several initiatives related to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. She has often supported networks and coalitions with knowledge, research, policy development, and advocacy mandates. Dr. MacLean holds doctorate and master's degrees in Political Science from the University of Toronto.

Naomi Harris is an evaluation consultant at Le Groupe-conseil Baastel Itée with experience in international and rural development research, evaluation, planning, and implementation. Her thematic experience includes gender equality and social inclusion, climate smart agriculture, producer and financial cooperatives, migration, food security, rural development, rural and participatory planning, and fair trade and sustainable consumption. Ms. Harris holds a master's degree in Rural Planning and Development, with a specialization in International Development from the University of Guelph. Naomi has supported the development of M&E frameworks and other MEL and RBM tools, developed RBM learning content, supported evaluations of complex programmes, and conducted quality assurance reviews. She has worked collaboratively with stakeholders across sectors and regions in areas ranging from migration to disaster risk management and conservation.



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