

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Evaluation of the Knowledge Products of the Social and Human Sciences Sector (SHS)

#### 1. Background

1. Serving as a laboratory of ideas, UNESCO helps countries adopt international standards and manages programmes that foster the free flow of ideas and knowledge sharing. Producing and disseminating high quality knowledge is a central activity of the Social and Human Sciences (SHS) sector of UNESCO. This includes the collection, analysis and production of data and information in the form of tools, databases, policy briefs, international norms and standards, thematic research-based publications, etc.

#### *Brief description of SHS*

2. UNESCO is composed of five Programme Sectors. The Social and Human Sciences (SHS) sector is tasked with supporting the creation and use knowledge to support people in understanding each other and working together to build lasting peace and just and inclusive societies. The work of the SHS Sector focuses on achievement of social inclusion and gender equality; advancing youth development; the promotion of values through sports; anti-racism and the ethics of artificial intelligence.
3. The SHS sector is organized under 5 sections:
  - i. Research, Policy and Foresight;
  - ii. Inclusion and Right;
  - iii. Intercultural Dialogue;
  - iv. Bioethics and Ethics of Science and Technology; and
  - v. Youth and Sport Section.
4. The overall budget of SHS as reported in the 2020-2021 Programme and Budget (40 C/5) represents 6% of the total budget of programmes and programme-related services in UNESCO. In comparison, the Education sector is allocated 41%; the Culture Sector 20%; the Natural Science sector 14%; and the Communication and Information sector 5%. Staff wise, 70% of the professional staff of SHS are based in HQ and the remaining 30% are distributed among the UNESCO field offices.
5. From a programmatic perspective, SHS's work is structured around one of the nine Strategic Objectives of UNESCO reported in the 2014 – 2021 Medium Term Strategy, namely **Strategic Objective 6: Supporting inclusive social development, fostering intercultural dialogue for the rapprochement of cultures and promoting ethical principles**. The sector's work corresponds to two main lines of action:

**Main line of action 1:** Mobilizing knowledge and embedding rights and ethics to foster and achieve social inclusion and equitable societies, with the following expected results (ER):

  - Public policy-making in Member States strengthened, based on scientific evidence, humanities-based knowledge, ethics and human rights frameworks;
  - National institutional and human capacities strengthened at all levels to generate, manage and apply knowledge for inclusive, equitable development that is based on ethical values and human rights;

**Main line of action 2:** Fostering intercultural dialogue and engaging young women and men for peaceful and participatory societies, with the following expected results (ER):

- Youth-led action enabled, from local to global levels, to address societal challenges and consolidate peace;
- Member States' commitments to the global agendas in favor of inclusive, sustainable and peaceful societies demonstrated through targeted advocacy campaigns and awareness-raising initiatives;

### *Rationale for the evaluation*

6. The evaluation was requested by the SHS sector to IOS. IOS included the evaluation in its workplan in the latter half of 2021.
7. The choice to assess knowledge production reflects the importance of this function within SHS. MLA 1, which is mainly dedicated to knowledge generation and dissemination, receives 55% of the sector non-staff budget in the 2020-2021 biennium<sup>1</sup>. In addition, a recent organizational diagnosis of the sector<sup>2</sup> conducted by an external consulting firm, identified the **need to produce more knowledge and engage better with policy makers** as key priorities for the sector. The evaluation also comes at a time when a new management team has recently taken over, with a clear objective to strengthen the knowledge production function within the sector.
8. In her memo to SHS staff, detailing her vision and strategy for the sector, the Assistant Director General (ADG), who took up her office on July 2020, highlighted the following:

**MISION:** *The SHS Sector stays ahead of the curve and serves as a resource of excellence for UNESCO's delivery of innovative solutions to complex public policy challenges through the mobilization of frontier social (including economics) and human sciences. It does so in a timely and effective manner and engages with Member States and stakeholders to support change. A sector that connects with high-level decision-makers in different fields (but particularly with governments) to advance joint solutions. A sector that produces the evidence to influence policies, institutions and current practices....*

*A sector that can measure its impact also in a consistent way. Research, with data at the core, with empirical knowledge, with comparative analysis, with rigorous thinking. Global instruments that do not only inform the narrative, but that are effectively implemented with our support. Strong link with policy and decision makers, that can rely on our insights to advance meaningful agendas; and impactful programs on the ground that translate the common knowledge in impactful interventions.*

**AMBITION:** *SHS products becoming as important and top of mind as culture and education. Developing programs, in the social fields, that are as powerful or visible as the Biosphere Reserves, the program for protection of journalists, or the cultural sites. A sector that is recognized by its innovative contributions to advance the well-being of people, and people-centred growth. That joins the best causes of the world; the fight against climate, the fight against inequalities, the defence of human rights, the support to the most vulnerable, a more equitable digital transformation<sup>3</sup>.*

9. The new SHS vision document, emphasizes the need for the SHS sector to produce more flagships, improve quality and focus and enhance dissemination through innovative methods and using real

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<sup>1</sup> 40 C/5 Approved programme and budget 2020-2021

<sup>2</sup> The SHS organizational diagnosis was initiated by SHS management and conducted by E&Y in March 2021

<sup>3</sup> Message from ADG/SH to staff. Version # 4 (11 November 2020)

time communication with the goal of becoming more visible to prominent advocates and key decision makers around the world.

## 2. Purpose and Scope

10. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide SHS management and teams with evidence on the positioning and contribution of the sector's knowledge products to SHS strategic objectives. The evaluation will assess the relevance, coherence, and added value of SHS's knowledge products. It will seek to provide a better understanding of how the SHS sector identifies knowledge needs and how it produces, shares, and ensures the quality of its knowledge products. It will also explore uptake that is who is reading SHS products and how are they being used. The evaluation will also assess the extent to which the knowledge products have achieved or contributed to the sector's expected results at the global and field level.
11. The evaluation period will be from 2018 to 2021, and will cover all the SHS knowledge products at global and field levels.
12. The evaluation will integrate UNESCO's global priorities Gender Equality and Africa by seeking to collect data on gender-relevant matters as well as focusing, when appropriate, on the needs of the African continent.

## 3. Evaluation objectives and questions

13. The main objectives of the evaluation are to:
  - Assess the strategic relevance of SHS knowledge products;
  - Assess the usefulness and value of SHS knowledge products to Member States and other relevant stakeholders;
  - Assess the SHS knowledge products contributions to the sector as well as UNESCO's strategic objectives;
  - Generate lessons learned and draw forward-looking recommendations to inform the future of the knowledge production function of the SHS sector.
14. To achieve these objectives, the evaluation will seek to answer the following overarching questions:
  - To what extent are the SHS knowledge products relevant to global social challenges and to national needs of Member States?
  - To what extent are SHS knowledge products coherent with the sector's strategic objectives?
  - To what extent is the design of the knowledge function appropriate for the achievement of the sector objectives?
  - What is positioning of the SHS knowledge products in their respective thematic areas?
  - What is the added value of SHS knowledge products?
  - How efficiently has SHS used its human and institutional resources in the production and dissemination of knowledge products?
  - How is SHS monitoring, reporting and communicating about its knowledge products?
  - How visible are SHS knowledge products within and outside of UNESCO?
  - What does SHS do to ensure its knowledge products achieve its intended uses, including informing policy makers?
  - What results have SHS knowledge products achieved, or contributed to achieving?
  - To what extent has SHS used partnerships to develop and/or promote its knowledge products?
  - What have been the main enabling and hindering factors for SHS to fulfil its objectives in terms of knowledge production?

## 4. Methodology

15. The evaluation will adhere to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms & Standards and will adopt a consultative and transparent approach with internal and external stakeholders throughout the process. Triangulation of evidence will underpin its validation and analysis and will support conclusions and recommendations.
16. The evaluation questions listed under section 3 will guide the assessment. They will be complemented with an evaluation matrix (including evaluation sub-questions, methods for data collection, and source of data for each question) to be contextualized according to the knowledge products, countries, and stakeholders involved. A theory of change summarizing the underlying logic of SHS knowledge products, and a stakeholder's analysis will also be developed to inform the design of the evaluation.
17. In answering all evaluation questions, the evaluation will rely on multiple sources of primary and secondary data for data collection, and use mixed-methods approach for data analysis, triangulation and validation.
18. Sources of data and methods of collection will include interviews; document review; synthesis of evidence from relevant evaluations; and surveys. It could also include a global media scan and bibliometric analysis to assess coverage of selected SHS products in scholarly and policy journals and the global media. The specific evaluation methods will be further refined during the inception phase.
  - The evaluation will establish an **inventory of knowledge products** developed by SHS over the last 4 years, including detailed information about the products owners and audience. The inventory will serve as the basis in determining the key informants to be interviewed as well as the survey clients. A mapping exercise will also be carried out based on the inventory, to harvest outcomes linked to SHS knowledge products.
  - **Interviews:** to be conducted with UNESCO staff (at HQ, and field-level), representatives of the development partners (including UN partners), government officials, academia, research organizations and civil society. The interviewees will be identified by the evaluation team based on the inventory, and together with the SHS Team during the evaluation process. Protocols for interviews will be developed by the evaluation team prior to the data collection phase.
  - **Document review:** the evaluation will review (i) key corporate and global documents including the UNESCO current and future Medium-Term Strategy, Programme and Budget documents over the last 4 years, and the draft Programme and Budget for the next biennium (ii) SHS specific documents, including the sector Vision, the SHS Organizational Diagnosis; SHS Partnership and Outreach Strategy, Status of implementation of SHS partnerships strategy, key publications, and relevant IOS evaluations<sup>4</sup>.
  - **Survey:** the evaluation team will develop and administer online survey(s) targeted at SHS's partners and clients, to collect feedback on SHS's knowledge products from main users as well as information on knowledge needs in themes relevant to SHS work.

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<sup>4</sup> Evaluation of UNESCO's work in the thematic area of History, Memory and Intercultural Dialogue – Finalized in September 2020; Evaluation of the NET-MED Youth Project (2014-2018); Evaluation of UNESCO's Bioethics and Ethics of Science and Technology Programme (August 2017); Evaluation of UNESCO's International Convention against Doping in Sport (August 2017); Evaluation of UNESCO's thematic area of work "History, memory and intercultural dialogue for inclusive societies" (2020); Evaluation of Mid-Term Review of the UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth (OSY- 2014-2021); Review completed in December 2018.

- **Country visits:** the evaluation will visit a sample of UNESCO field offices to meet with country level stakeholders including national government officials and local partners to get their feedback on the relevance of the SHS knowledge products to the national priorities, as well as to assess the coherence of these products with the work of SHS in these countries and their results at field level.
- **Global media scan and bibliometric analysis** of selected publications.

19. Data collection, sampling and analysis will incorporate a gender equality perspective, be based on a human rights-based approach, and take into consideration the diverse cultural contexts in which the activities are being implemented. Covid

## 5. Evaluation in the Context of COVID-19

20. As the global COVID crisis is not totally over and its intensity varies from one country to another, the evaluation team will be closely monitoring the sanitary situation in the countries selected for field visits. Should the situation evolve negatively, the principle of prudence will be applied, and travel halted. In such scenario, remote data collection tools will be used, and involvement of national consultants will be considered.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

21. The evaluation will be based on a hybrid approach and managed by UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service (IOS). It will be co-led by a senior evaluator from the IOS Evaluation Office and an external evaluator with expertise in knowledge management, research and/or capacity development. The latter is expected to contribute specific expertise in **Knowledge management** in order to strengthen the technical quality of the data collection. The role of the external expert will be to contribute to the evaluation methodology, data collection and analysis and to draft the evaluation report.
22. An Evaluation Reference Group will be established to guide the evaluation process and ensure the quality of associated deliverables. The group will be composed of the evaluation manager from the Evaluation Office and representatives from the following entities: the Executive Office of SHS Sector; the Research, Policy and Foresight section; the Inclusion and Right Section, the Intercultural Dialogue Section; the Bioethics and EST section; the Youth and Sport Section; and SHS team members from UNESCO Field Offices.

## 7. Qualifications of External Experts

23. The evaluation team will be composed of individual(s) with expertise in the following topics: *Evaluation of complex development interventions, Knowledge management, and/or capacity development.*
24. Expressions of interest will be sought from individuals with the following qualifications:
- Strong knowledge and understanding of knowledge management and capacity development - demonstrated with examples of previous work experience, research, publication, etc. on the subject area)
  - Minimum 10 years' work experience conducting evaluations of complex development interventions

*Furthermore:*

- No previous involvement in the implementation of UNESCO activities under review (occasional attendance of events or meetings may be accepted);

- Advanced university degree in areas relevant to the evaluation such as social science, international development, economics, or related field to the subject of the evaluation
  - Understanding and application of UN mandates in Human Rights and Gender Equality (for example through certification, training, examples of assignments)
  - Excellent analytical and demonstrated drafting skills in English: ability to collect and analyze information, to synthesize ideas and feedback and prepare reports in a clear and concise manner;
  - Knowledge of and experience in applying qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques and Results Based Management (RBM) principles;
  - Other language skills, particularly official UN languages (French, Arabic, Spanish, Russian, and Chinese) will be considered an advantage.
25. Verification of these qualifications will be based on the provided curriculum vitae and possible reference checks. Candidates are also encouraged to submit other references such as research papers or articles that demonstrate their familiarity with the field. Attention will be paid to establish an evaluation team that is gender- and geographically balanced.

## 8. Deliverables and Schedule

26. The main evaluation phases will be conducted between end of November 2021 and June 2022.
27. The assignment will consist of the following main deliverables:

### *Deliverables*

28. Inception note: An inception note containing the purpose and expected use of the evaluation (based on the desk study and preliminary interviews), an evaluation workplan with a timeline, detailed methodology including an evaluation matrix (with a full list of evaluation questions and subsequent methods for data collection), a stakeholder analysis and a list of documents.
29. Draft evaluation report: The draft evaluation report should be written in English, be comprised of no more than 30 pages and follow the IOS Evaluation Office template.
30. Communication outputs: The evaluation team will prepare communication products targeting different users: PowerPoint presentations for Stakeholder Workshops, including to update the Evaluation Reference Group on progress and to present preliminary findings, a 2-page synthesis of the main findings from the evaluation, and any other products to be decided.
31. Final evaluation report: The final evaluation report should incorporate comments provided by the Evaluation Reference Group without exceeding 30 pages (excluding Annexes). It should also include an Executive Summary and Annexes. The final report must comply with the [UNEG Evaluation Norms and Standards](#) and will be assessed against the [UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports](#) by an external reviewer. The evaluation will refer to the [UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation](#).

### *Tentative Schedule*

Activity / Deliverable	Date
Desk Study and Scoping Interviews	November -December 2021
Finalization of Terms of Reference	November 2021
Call for Proposals and Selection of Experts	October – November 2021
Inception Note	December 2021
Data Collection and Analysis	January - February 2022
Consultants' deliverables	March 2022
Stakeholder Workshop with Presentation of Preliminary Findings	April 2022
Draft Evaluation Report	April – May 2022
Final Evaluation Report in English	June 2022
Communication products (Newsletter, Videos)	June 2022

## 9. References

- [31 C/4 Approved Medium-Term Strategy 2002-2007](#)
- [40 C/4 Approved Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2021](#)
- [41 C/4 Draft Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029](#)
- [40 C/5 Approved programme and budget 2020-2021](#)
- [41 C/5 Draft programme and budget 2022-2025](#)