



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Expression of Interest

Evaluation of UNESCO's response to the Covid-19 pandemic

January 2022

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN). Its declared purpose is to contribute to peace and security by promoting international collaboration through educational, scientific, and cultural reforms in order to increase universal respect for justice, the rule of law, and human rights along with fundamental freedom proclaimed in the United Nations Charter. In addition to Headquarters in Paris, it has over 50 field offices, and employs about 2,000 staff

Reference: RFP/IOS/EVS/COVID-19/2022

Date: January 4, 2022

Request:

UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service – Evaluation Office – seeks proposals from qualified individual(s) to conduct the **Evaluation of UNESCO's response to the Covid-19 pandemic** described in the Terms of Reference (below). The evaluation is expected to take place between February 2022 and October 2022. The estimated effort for this exercise is 85-90 working days.

How to apply:

To enable you to prepare a proposal for this assignment, please find attached the Terms of Reference.

Interested individuals / companies should submit their application by **27 January, 2022 23:59** CET to Ms. Taipei Dlamini, (t.dlamini@unesco.org) with copy to Ms. Mariana Gamarra (mg.gamarra@unesco.org). Please specify 'Expression of interest – UNESCO Evaluation of UNESCO's Covid Response' in the email subject line

Your written proposal should comprise:

(a) A Technical Proposal consisting of:

- i. The person/team planning to bid on the evaluation. Include updated and abridged curriculum vitae for each member of the team, when applicable.
- ii. Description of how the evaluator/team cover all the qualifications as defined in the Terms of Reference (1-2 pages)
- iii. A statement indicating what experience, practices, areas of expertise and/or specialization distinguish you/ your team and make you a good fit for this assignment? (maximum half a page)
- iv. Provide 2-3 executive summaries from recent evaluation reports you have completed.

(b) A Financial proposal¹ consisting of:

¹ The Financial proposal is to be presented as a stand-alone document separated from the Technical proposal.

- i. The overall cost of the assignment quoted in US dollars or in euros only. Include the daily rates of the consultant (or team members) as well as other overheads or incidentals. (Please exclude any travel as it is contingent on the evolving sanitary situation)

UNESCO places great emphasis on ensuring that the objectives of the work assignment, as described in the Terms of Reference, are met. Accordingly, in evaluating the proposals for the assignment, attention will focus first and foremost on the technical elements. From those proposals deemed suitable in terms of the criteria in the Terms of Reference, UNESCO shall select the proposal that offers the Organisation best value for money.

Thank you for your interest in this UNESCO assignment; and we look forward to receiving your proposal.

Claudia Ibarquen
Head of Evaluation
Internal Oversight Service
UNESCO

TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)

Evaluation of UNESCO's Response to COVID-19 Pandemic (2020-2021)

I. Background

1. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an immense disruption to lives, livelihoods and prospects for billions of people. The unprecedented health crisis, unique in our lifetime, has produced an economic crisis which is on course to reverse years of gains in the reduction and alleviation of poverty and undermine global efforts to meet the development objectives established in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (i.e. Agenda 2030), including SDG 4 on quality education and SDG 5 on gender equality. The widespread disinformation witnessed during the pandemic and people's desire to identify reliable information has also highlighted the importance of SDG 16 target 10 on ensuring public access to information.
2. UNESCO's mission is to contribute to the building of a culture of peace, the eradication of poverty, inequalities, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information. It is a wide mandate spanning work in several fields, all of which have been deeply affected by the pandemic.
3. On the education front, the effects of COVID-19 are alarming. In 2020, at the peak of the pandemic, 94% of the world's student population were affected by the closure of educational institutions. A year and a half later, many students have been able to resume in-class learning, but millions have yet to return to the classroom.² The period of closures has resulted in long-term learning loss and gender specific effects on health, well-being and protection.
4. For culture, including cultural heritage in all its forms, the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) and cultural institutions, the impact of the pandemic has been heavily felt by the sector. For instance, UNESCO estimates a US\$750bn contraction in the gross value added by the cultural and creative industries in 2020 compared to 2019, which corresponds to a loss of more than 10 million jobs in the sector. Venue and site-based activities, such as theatre, live music concerts, festivals, cinemas and museums were shut down around the world. For example, 84% of museums (of an estimated 104.000) were closed during 2020 and 90% of countries closed their World Heritage sites.³ Artists and

² <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse#schoolclosures>

³ https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/special_issue_en_culture_covid-19_tracker.pdf

culture professionals have also been profoundly affected by lockdowns and physical distancing measures, exacerbating what are already in normal times often precarious work conditions.⁴

5. The COVID-19 pandemic has underlined the key role of free and professional media, and the importance of the right to access information in times of crisis. The pandemic has resulted in a wave of disinformation and misinformation, creating confusion about medical science with potentially dangerous impacts on health⁵, and amplifying distrust and hateful narratives. It has also highlighted the impacts of unequal access to digital technologies and digital illiteracy.
6. In all areas, the pandemic exacerbated inequalities and particularly gender inequalities⁶. Vulnerable populations, particularly women and girls, have been more affected by stay-at-home rules, school closures and reduced access to technology and the internet. The most vulnerable students such as adolescent girls might not ever return to school.⁷ From an economic perspective, the informal economy, which 740 million women depend on, shrank significantly (ILO), with many losing their jobs and associated income. The successive lockdowns have further led to an estimated 35% increase in domestic violence and reduced access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, clean water and sanitary conditions in many parts of the world. Being over-represented in formal health care⁸ and informal care⁹ roles, women also endured the most of the direct health consequences of the pandemic. Women and LGBTIQ communities are further underrepresented in leadership, decision-making, and senior research roles. Several studies also show that the pandemic has hit female scientists harder¹⁰.
7. The purpose of these Terms of Reference (TOR) is to guide the evaluation team and specify expectations during the evaluation process. The TORs are structured as follows:
 - A brief overview of the United Nations system and UNESCO's response to COVID-19. It provides a summary of both the immediate response in the first 3-4 months following the outbreak of the pandemic, as well as longer term initiatives.
 - The purpose and use of the evaluation
 - The potential evaluation questions and proposed scope
 - The overall approach and methodology

⁴ Estimates are of a US\$750 billion contraction in the Gross Value Added (GVA) generated by the cultural and creative industries globally, relative to 2019. UNESCO Cultural and Creative Industries In the Face of COVID-19 An Economic Impact Outlook, June 2021.

⁵ Disinformatic Deciphering Covid 19 disinformation, Policy Brief, UNESCO

⁶ Most information reflected in this paragraph has been drawn from the UNESCO Gender Equality Division's note on UNESCO, Gender Equality and Covid-19 (Spring 2021).

⁷ UNESCO, When schools shut, Gendered impacts of COVID-19 school closures, 2021

⁸ In 104 countries examined by the WHO, women comprise an estimated 67% of the health care workforce — risking disproportionate exposure to the virus. See: <https://data2x.org/an-intersectional-approach-to-a-pandemic-gender-data-disaggregation-and-covid-19/>

⁹ Nearly 1 in 5 women is employed in the care sector (UN Women)

¹⁰ Survey of Covid-19 impact on 5,000+ women scientists in developing countries, 2020 (Box in chapter 3 of UNESCO Science Report 2021)

- The organization of the evaluation including phases and deliverables, roles and responsibilities and the profile of the evaluation expert(s).
8. In April 2020, UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service carried out a real time advisory. The purpose was to provide senior management with shorter and longer-term lessons learned from the Organization's initial reaction to the COVID-19 crisis. The results of this review can be found in Annex 1. This evaluation will build on the findings and results drawn from this advisory.

Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

9. There have not been clear cut phases of the pandemic. The effects have been felt at different times and with different degrees of severity depending on the specific region or country. Nonetheless on the side of the response, both from the UN system and UNESCO, it is possible to identify two general phases. The first was the response and activities launched in the immediate aftermath of 11 March 2020, when the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of a global pandemic. The context was characterized by a sense of emergency and the responses were deployed to counteract a still unpredictable scenario. During the second phase, which was affected by continuing uncertainty, responses were developed with a longer-term outlook and with the overall goal of recovering, getting back on track to reach the SDGs and "building back better." For instance, the motto of UNESCO's education response is "from disruption to recovery." It signals that the initial emergency phase of responding to the crisis has given way to a recovery and reconstruction period.

United Nations' Response

10. The United Nations structured its response through three main plans: i) the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, coordinated by WHO and financed by the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), ii) the Global Humanitarian Response Plan, coordinated by OCHA and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)¹¹ to ease the impacts of COVID-19 in the 50 most vulnerable countries and to set out the priorities for the response to the pandemic in vulnerable and poor countries; and iii) The UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 (*the UN Framework*) which established the overarching structure for planning and programming of the UN development system response at country level to deliver rapid recovery.¹²
11. In early April 2020 the UN Secretary General launched the Multi-Partner COVID-19 Response and Recovery Trust Fund (*the Fund*) for a period of two years. Led by UN Resident Coordinators, the goal of the Fund is to offer a cohesive UN System response to national governments through a common financing mechanism. UN entities, including UNESCO, have signed agreements with the Fund Secretariat.

¹¹ The Inter-Agency Standing Committee is an inter-agency forum of UN and non-UN humanitarian partners founded in 1992, to strengthen humanitarian assistance.

¹²<https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/UN-framework-for-the-immediate-socio-economic-response-to-COVID-19.pdf>

12. To deliver on the priorities laid out in the *UN Framework*, United Nations Country Teams elaborated Socio-Economic Response and Recovery Plans (SERP). SERPs were finalized in 121 countries with estimated financing requirements of \$28.7 billion. As of October 2021, the contributions to the Fund hovered around 83 million dollars.¹³ Of this figure UNESCO had an approved budget of 1.7 million with a delivery rate of 12%.¹⁴

UNESCO's Response

13. Early in the crisis UNESCO outlined its areas of action in line with its mandate: fair, inclusive, and equitable education systems; making open science a priority; supporting the culture sector and culture professionals and ensuring access to free, reliable information.¹⁵ UNESCO's response can be grouped into the following four types of intervention:

- i. **Support to international coordination and dialogue**, including high-level dialogue amongst national authorities, thinkers, and experts, global campaigns, and the reorientation of global celebrations led by UNESCO to address COVID-related topics.
- ii. **Advocacy and awareness-raising** through global campaigns targeting thinkers and the general public and the reorientation of global celebrations led by UNESCO to address COVID-related topics
- iii. **knowledge production, data sharing and analysis**, including policy briefs, monitoring and think pieces
- iv. **Provision of policy and technical support** to strengthen capacities and support authorities' resilience to the crisis at the country-level especially. This included specific UNESCO projects developed by UNESCO Field Offices as well as involvement in UN Country Team initiatives.

14. In response to the crisis UNESCO developed and launched new initiatives. It also adjusted ongoing programmes to focus on the emerging needs and challenges brought about by the pandemic. In April 2020, 84% of UNESCO staff urged the Organization to place a greater emphasis on the gender dimensions of the Covid-19 crisis. Amongst these, three times more female staff than male staff believed this to be important.¹⁶ That same month, the Division for Gender Equality further developed internal guidance to help the Sectors address the impacts of the pandemic on women and gender minorities.

15. The following is a non-exhaustive register of UNESCO global initiatives. A mapping of the wide array of regional and national COVID responses as well as the individual projects implemented by UNESCO alone, or as part of United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs), will form part of the inception phase.

16. Coordination and dialogue

¹³ https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/COV00?fund_status_month_to=10&fund_status_year_to=2021

¹⁴ The organization with the highest delivery rate (October 2021) is WHO with 84% followed by UNODC (79%) and UNICEF (77%)

¹⁵ Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on UNESCO's Programme and Activities, May 2020

¹⁶ IOS Real Time Advisory, April 2020.

Education:

- Global Education Coalition (GEC)¹⁷: Starting in March 2020, countries around the world began closing schools to counter the spread of the COVID-19 virus. UNESCO mobilized partners and launched the GEC with the goal of supporting countries as they transitioned to remote and distance learning solutions. The GEC is organized around three pillars: in-country interventions, the 3 Global Flagships (Connectivity, Teachers and Gender) and data, knowledge and advocacy. It brings together more than 175 members from the UN, private sector, civil society and academia. UNESCO serves as a convening, coordinating, and link-making founding member. The GEC will adapt to the evolving crisis, focusing on the recovery phase of the pandemic, and ensuring alignment with the priorities of the global education community.
- UNESCO's strengthened partnership with UNICEF and the World Bank through the Consortium of Grant Agents, with funding from GPE, is another notable example of coordination efforts. Through the Consortium, the grant agents have, among other activities, conducted joint surveys on national education responses to COVID-19.

Natural Sciences:

- Ministers of Science Online Dialogues: Mobilization of Ministers and representatives from 122 countries with participation of the Africa Union, the European Commission and WHO to promote open science and reinforced cooperation in the face of COVID-19. Some of the topics featured in the discussion on 30 March 2020 were how scientific research can be best supported and knowledge gaps reduced; how decision-makers, researchers, and civil society can be mobilized to allow free access to scientific data, research findings and educational resources; and the reinforcement of links between science and policy decisions to meet social needs.

Culture:

- Meeting of Ministers of Culture: On April 22, 2020, UNESCO brought together more than 130 ministers of culture from around the world for an online meeting on the impact of COVID-19 on culture. The meeting was preceded by an online meeting of intergovernmental organizations and development banks on April 17.

17. Advocacy and awareness-raising initiatives

Culture:

¹⁷ UNESCO, Supporting learning recovery one year into COVID-19 The Global Education Coalition in action, March 2021.

- ResiliArt: A global movement spanning 116 countries, culture professionals and decision-makers worldwide, that discusses and examines the effects brought to the entire culture value chain by the pandemic. It aims to ensure the continuity of exchanges, data sharing – including cultural strategies and policies, and advocacy efforts long after the pandemic subsides. Culture professionals are encouraged to join the movement and replicate the Resiliart debate sessions in their respective regions¹⁸ and thematic focus areas by following publicly available guidelines. The opinions expressed during the events organized by UNESCO are shared with governments, decision makers and the private sector to feed into debates aimed at improving the existing support mechanisms and build resilience in the culture sector.

Social and Human Sciences:

- Imagining the World to Come. As part of its work as a laboratory of ideas, UNESCO convened consultations and seminars with theorists/ academics and intellectuals and drafted “think pieces” to stimulate a collective reflection on how to build back better and discuss the lasting effects of the crisis. For instance, in "How does Africa envision COVID-19 and its aftermath?", a group of leading African intellectuals and actors of the African social, economic and cultural life were invited on 7 May 2021 to debate on African, multidisciplinary and future-oriented reflection on the impact of this crisis on the continent and rethink the Africa they want for the future.
- Regional Expert Consultations against Racism and Discrimination. The series of six online regional consultations, undertaken between September 2020 and February 2021, aimed to deconstruct racism, and unpack the societal challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic related to racism and discrimination. It provides a collective understanding with diverse perspectives of racism and discrimination in the context of the pandemic. The Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination highlighted how COVID-19 has exposed many of these new manifestations of racism, not least those related to inequities in the access to, and benefits from, digital technologies.

Communication and Information:

- #DontGoViral campaign: To combat the spread of disinformation in Africa, UNESCO launched the #DontGoViral campaign in April 2020, together with the Innovation for Policy Foundation. The online campaign aimed to crowdsource local openly licensed content (for instance, public service announcements, music videos and songs) to inform communities across Africa about COVID-19.

¹⁸ There was for example, the ResiliArt Middle East Mediterranean Summer Summit, which explored the challenges and opportunities faced by art and culture in the Middle East Mediterranean region

17. Knowledge production, data sharing and analysis

Policy Briefs and Issue Notes for government-level decision makers were drafted to provide guidance and ideas on how to manage challenges brought about by the pandemic.

Education:

- Global Monitoring of School Closures Caused by the COVID-19: UNESCO provides daily figures on the status of the schooling system according to the closures of school and the methods selected for delivery across the world since the outbreak of the pandemic.
- The Education Sector produced a series of [Issue/Guidance notes](#) on the educational dimensions of the Covid-19 pandemic, covering themes of equity and gender to distance learning strategies, connectivity, health issues and the impact on higher education that were accompanied by a series of webinars.:
 - Among its policy guidance and advocacy efforts, the advocacy paper from July 2020 “How many students are at risk of not returning to school” was an important guideline for the general UN response regarding education, as well as a call to governments and other partners to increase investments and efforts to remove barriers to education and warn them of possible consequences of the pandemic to advancements made in the past decades in the Education field.
 - The ‘[Framework for reopening schools](#)’, jointly developed by UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, World Food Programme and UNHCR also gave important guiding directions to countries on the safe reopening of schools.
 - The “[Building Back equal: girls back to school](#)” and a recently published report on the [gender impacts of Covid-19 school closures](#), further placed an emphasis on the various effects of the pandemic on girls’ education.
- In addition, the Education Sector curated and made publicly available 103 [distance learning resources](#) including distance learning applications and platforms as well as teaching resources packages, in more than 50 languages, together with 472 [national learning platforms and tools](#) from 180 countries.

Natural Sciences:

- the UNESCO science report released in May 2021 devoted substantial space to “Science and the pandemic”, and the role and impact of science on scientific research. The Engineering report issued in March 2021 also included large space to the impact of the Pandemic.

Social and Human Sciences:

- Youth mobilization: the platform called U-INSPIRE (Youth and Young Professionals on Innovation, Science, and Technology Platform for Disaster and Climate Change Resiliency) established by UNESCO supported the mobilization of Asia and the Pacific Youth and Young Professionals engagement on COVID-19. A toolkit was developed with good practices, lessons learnt, success factors, and challenges on the establishment and journeys of 11 National Platforms and 1 Regional Platform. The toolkit also documented innovative local actions where youth and young professionals have successfully used their science, engineering, technology and innovation (SETI) to support disaster risk reduction activities in their countries including responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Access to vaccines: UNESCO's International Bioethics Committee (IBC) and the World Commission on the Ethics of Science and Technology (COMEST) issued a number of statements on the importance of universal access to the vaccines and other ethical issues that emerged during the Covid-19 crisis¹⁹.

Culture:

- A series of reports on the impact of COVID-19 on the culture sector from World Heritage, living heritage, cultural and creative industries, museums and cities were published. These include a "[Policy guide for a resilient creative sector](#)" (2020), which constitutes practical guidance material for policymakers on how to include cultural and creative industries in the COVID-19 recovery plans, "[World Heritage in the Face of COVID-19](#)", which shines light on the impact of site closures on local communities and highlights key challenges brought about by the pandemic, and "[Living Heritage in the Face of COVID-19](#)", which highlights the impact of the pandemic on the ability of communities to engage in and transmit their living heritage, as well as the way communities turned to living heritage as a source of solace and resilience. In addition, "[Cultural and Creative Industries in the Face of COVID-19: an Economic Impact Outlook](#)" provides an overview of the economic impact of the pandemic on the cultural and creative industries, while
- "[Museums Around the World in the Face of COVID-19](#)", UNESCO's second report on the impact of COVID-19 on museums, analyzes the situation of these cultural institutions in the current context, raising the alarm on the importance of public support for museums during this time. In the urban context, the position paper "[Cities, Culture, Creativity: Leveraging Culture and Creativity for Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth](#)" was jointly published by UNESCO and the World Bank, putting forward a framework (the CCC Framework) for cities to become more creative, and "UNESCO Creative Cities' Response to COVID-19" was also presented, gathering good practices of culture-based responses to the pandemic from across the 246 UNESCO Creative Cities.

¹⁹ See the statement here: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/ethics-science-and-technology/ibc>

- Global Monitoring of World Heritage site closures, using UNESCO's regular tracking mechanisms, along with the distribution of a survey on 5 February 2021 to all World Heritage site managers. The survey elicited responses for a range of questions concerning access to sites by visitors during the COVID-19 crisis in 2020 as compared to 2019 and information on impacts resulting from or exacerbated by the ongoing pandemic. Information was also sought on whether staff members were still able to conduct conservation activities at properties during the pandemic.
- Culture & COVID-19: Impact and Response Tracker is a weekly overview (issued on a monthly basis since September 2020) of the evolving situation and public strategies and policies launched at the regional, national and city levels. It has been describing the immediate impact of the pandemic on the culture and creative sectors including examples of how countries around the world were adapting to the situation.

Communication and Information:

- In 2020, UNESCO published two policy briefs on the “disinfodemic” – the spread of COVID-related disinformation, with the aim to help people understand the bigger picture on the issue of disinformation on COVID-19, and to provide insights on the types of responses and how they are being implemented.

18. Technical support

Education:

- UNESCO, through the GEC, and other ongoing programmes, has been convening and coordinating the implementation of some 230²⁰ projects ranging from standalone actions and support to implement countries' response plans to comprehensive initiatives on three central themes: gender, connectivity and teachers. In contribution to these efforts, the Capacity Development for Education (CapED) Programme, for example, reprogrammed a portion of its budget to support targeted, country-led COVID-19 response interventions in twelve least developed countries. Likewise, as part of the Consortium of Grant agents, UNESCO in cooperation with UNICEF and the World Bank, developed a wide range of projects that supported the continuity of learning at country level through technical assistance.

Communication and Information:

- Capacity-building for journalists to cover the COVID-19 pandemic: Among several initiatives aimed at building the capacities of journalists to cover the crisis professionally, UNESCO notably launched, in partnership with WHO and the Knight Center for journalism, a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) titled “Journalism in a pandemic: covering COVID-19 now and in

²⁰ Global Education Coalition Progress Report (September 2021)

the future”, which has trained around 9,000 journalists from 162 countries. In follow-up to this initiative, UNESCO launched in March 2021 a new MOOC titled “Covering the COVID-19 Vaccine: what journalists need to know” for journalists, communicators and fact-checkers around the world.

- Building youth’s technological capacities: in April 2020, UNESCO launched the Code the Curve Hackathon urging youth to share their ideas on how to use technology to respond to the pandemic on the one hand and empowering others, namely young women and girls, to learn more about the use of digital tools.²¹

II. Purpose and Use

Purpose

19. This evaluation will be an opportunity for UNESCO to take stock and reflect on its response in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis. It will identify good practices to be maintained, replicated or upscaled and areas needing further improvement. Lessons drawn from this evaluation should further inform management’s strategic thinking in preparation for potential future crises and improve resilience to future shocks. As such, this evaluation will predominantly focus on learning. The evaluation will also include an accountability element, exploring how well UNESCO responded in its areas of mandate and expertise, mobilized its strengths and knowledge, and worked in conjunction with others.

Use

20. The evaluation will elicit the views of and be useful to a wide range of internal and external stakeholders presenting an opportunity for corporate learning. The primary users for this product will be the Cabinet of the Director General, senior management from UNESCO Programme Sectors, Category I Institutes and Field Offices. Secondary users will be UNESCO Member States, donors, partners, staff and the general public.

III. Evaluation Scope and Evaluation Questions

Scope

21. The pandemic broke out close to two years ago. The evaluation comes at a point in time (starting in January 2022) when countries worldwide are not subject to as much disruption as at the beginning, but they still remain vulnerable to intermittent waves of heightened sanitary crises at the emergence of new variants. No longer in a constant emergency mode, we are now dealing with a “protracted crisis”. The evaluation will therefore combine elements of ex-post review, looking back to gauge how well UNESCO responded in the immediate aftermath (the first 3-4 months) with a “real-time” approach, assessing responses with a longer-term perspective and that are still ongoing.

²¹ See here: <https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-launches-codethecurve-hackathon-develop-digital-solutions-response-covid-19>

22. The pandemic compelled the UN system, including UNESCO, to conceive “new” initiatives to help countries specifically manage and mitigate the effects of COVID-19. At the same time many ongoing efforts had to recalibrate priorities and adjust to better respond to the developing needs and a changed environment. The evaluation will review a selection of both new and adjusted initiatives, and the extent to which this recalibrated approach has had an effect on UNESCO’s post-Covid programming (c.f. UNESCO’s Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 (41C/4) and its Programme and Budget for 2022-2023 (41C/5)).
23. The Organization’s work is guided by two Global Priorities endorsed by the Member States: Priority Africa and Priority Gender Equality. The evaluation will integrate UNESCO’s global priorities by specifically collecting data on the COVID-19 response from a gender equality perspective and UNESCO’s response in the face of the multi-dimensional needs and challenges of the African continent ensuring throughout the process and in its end products that the evaluation will also be useful for and inform the future implementation of the two global priorities. The evaluation will also give special consideration to initiatives which focused on them or integrated their implementation of the global priorities.
24. In terms of time, the evaluation will cover roughly a 22-month period from March 2020 to December 2021. It will divide the universe of responses into two: i) Immediate responses in the first 3-4 months of the pandemic, roughly from March to August 2020; and ii) Longer term responses with a medium to longer term outlook after August 2020.
25. In terms of geographical scope, the evaluation will integrate a review of both global responses, for the most part developed at Headquarters, and regional and or national responses conceptualized and implemented by Field Offices. The latter include projects implemented as part of UN SERPs by UNCT.²²
26. Finally, the evaluation will focus on UNESCO’s programmatic response. During the inception phase it will assess Management’s appetite to also include institutional dimensions and aspects of business continuity and operational delivery, such as efficiencies or other benefits that could be consolidated in the future, which could involve an audit component.

Possible Evaluation Questions and Criteria

27. The evaluation will organize the questions it seeks to answer around 6 OECD/DAC criteria.²³ Together, criteria describe the desired attributes of an intervention or a programme. All interventions/programmes should be relevant to the context, coherent with other interventions, achieve their

²² In this regard the evaluation will coordinate with other COVID-19 system-wide reviews ongoing or to be launched in the coming months. The UNESCO evaluation office will be part of the reference group of ‘The system-wide evaluation of the UNDS Response to COVID-19’.

²³ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

objectives, deliver results in an efficient way, and have positive impacts that last.²⁴

28. The following are possible overarching questions. The evaluation team during the inception phase will consult the reference group as well as other relevant stakeholders and certain questions might be combined, adjusted or dropped.

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.

- To what extent was UNESCO's global immediate response and medium/longer-term response to the pandemic in line with the needs and priorities of Member States and national authorities?
- Has UNESCO been able to identify and integrate into its responses, elements that consider the needs of the most vulnerable, and hardest hit by the pandemic, as well as UNESCO's predefined priority groups? (e.g., women, Africa)
- To what extent did ongoing interventions adjust, in order to ensure they remained relevant when faced with the pandemic?
- To what extent are COVID-19 related needs and priorities being balanced adequately with other (non-COVID) priorities?
- To what extent has UNESCO been able to anticipate and forecast the world after the pandemic leveraging on its laboratory of idea function?

Coherence

The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.

- To what extent has UNESCO played a role as a partner in the collective response at country level, coordinated and implemented by UN Country Teams?
- To what extent has UNESCO maintained and broadened its global and national partnerships during the crisis?
- To what extent has UNESCO's response been in line with its global priorities Gender Equality and Africa?

Effectiveness²⁵

The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.

²⁴ Better Criteria for Better Evaluation Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation

²⁵ Effectiveness analyses progress towards objectives along the results chain / causal pathway. In contrast to impact, which looks at higher-order effects and broader changes to which an intervention may be contributing, effectiveness is concerned with more closely attributable results

- What have been the results of UNESCO's support in coordination, dialogue and awareness-raising?
- What have been the results of UNESCO's work in knowledge production and knowledge sharing?
- What have been the results of UNESCO's technical cooperation initiatives/projects and those of programmes specifically designed to help confront the effects of the pandemic?
- How effective have been the responses for the most vulnerable groups?
- Did UNESCO make the best use of its strengths and areas of expertise in developing and implementing its COVID-19 response?
- How effectively did UNESCO mobilize its network of diverse partners to meet Member States' global and national needs?
- To what extent did UNESCO's response generate unintended results (both positive and negative?)

Efficiency

The extent to which the intervention delivers or is likely to deliver results in an economic and timely way.

- How did UNESCO's systems, structures and procedures adapt to the demands posed by the COVID-19 pandemic?
- To what extent did UNESCO rely on innovative tools to address the specific challenges raised by the COVID-19 health crisis?
- To what extent has UNESCO learned from this crisis? Are there specific examples of new ways of doing things that will make it more resilient and crisis ready? / allow UNESCO to generate operational efficiencies (e.g., savings)?

Sustainability and Impact

The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.

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

- To what extent is UNESCO better prepared, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, to address future crises of a similar scale?
- To what extent is the UNESCO response to the pandemic contributing to (or undermining) transformational change in terms of UNESCO strategy and programme delivery?
- In which ways has the response contributed towards long-term effects on gender equality and the SDGs?

- What are the consequences (if any) of the “displacement effect” of the COVID-19 response on other priorities, needs and programmes? What are the opportunity costs of shifted funding or changes to existing interventions?

IV Evaluation Approach and Methodology

29. As the pandemic is still ongoing and the situation still uncertain, IOS will continue to monitor developments and adjust the questions, approach and methods where necessary. The foremost consideration is the security and health of the evaluation team and the stakeholders and participants in the evaluation. It will follow the guidelines established at the start of the pandemic by the IOS evaluation office.

30. The evaluation may include some or all of the methodological elements below. The specific methods will be further refined during the inception phase, in consultation with the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) and the evaluation team, in due consideration of any developments related to the sanitary crisis.

31. The evaluation team will use a mixed method approach involving quantitative and qualitative data from multiple sources. Any findings require triangulation with more than one data source.

32. A recommended methodological approach will include:

- **Desk review.** The evaluation consultant or team is expected to exercise due diligence in canvassing the relevant literature;
- **Structured and semi-structured interviews** (for the most part through virtual means) with stakeholders including: UNESCO staff at Headquarters and in the field, selected representatives of permanent Delegations of Member States, partners;
- **Field visits to selected Regional Offices**, including at least one in Africa. The selection of countries will be discussed with the ERF, Programme Sectors and PAX. It is foreseen that 2-3 visits will take place (depending on the developing sanitary situation).²⁶
- **Survey** of UNESCO staff
- Questionnaire(s) and/or survey(s) of all Member States and UNESCO’s partners; and
- **Participatory workshop** to discuss preliminary findings, lessons learned and recommendations prior to the finalization of the evaluation report. The workshop will be prepared and facilitated in a way that gives equal

²⁶ IOS may consider leveraging some AUD field visits which will take place in Q1 of 2022.

opportunities to all stakeholders, including people of different genders, to participate and contribute.

33. Data collection, sampling and analysis must 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. All data will be collected and presented in a gender-disaggregated manner.

V. Roles and Responsibilities

34. The evaluation is scheduled to take place from January 2022 to September/October 2022. It will be managed by UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service (IOS) Evaluation Office and conducted by an independent evaluation team. A junior member of IOS will also be part of the evaluation team. If applicable, and depending on the final scope of the evaluation questions, the exercise will also have input and support from the IOS Audit Office.

35. IOS will be responsible for the quality assurance of the deliverables and ultimately responsible for the content of the evaluation. IOS will be the owner of the reports, the data collection tools and the raw data. The final evaluation report will also be assessed against the [UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports](#) by an independent external evaluation consultant selected by IOS.

36. The evaluation consultant(s) will be responsible for developing an inception report which will include adjusted/revised questions and further precisions on the methodology. The consultant(s) will conduct data collection, analyse the data and prepare a draft with initial findings by September 2022 (in English). The final report will be due in October 2022. The consultant(s) might be required to present preliminary findings and recommendations to UNESCO stakeholders, including Senior Management and Member States.

37. The evaluation team will oversee its own logistics: office space, administrative and secretarial support, telecommunications, printing of documentation etc. Depending on the evolving situation, 2-3 missions to Regional Offices might be planned. The selected locations will be discussed and agreed upon with the reference group during the inception phase, but at least one field visit will take place in the African region.²⁷ However, most interviews will be conducted virtually. It is critical that the consultant(s) have excellent internet connectivity and experience with virtual platforms.

38. IOS will support access to relevant documentation contact details and lists of stakeholders. It will also facilitate communication with relevant Member

²⁷ However, based on current local sanitary restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no consultant or evaluation team member will be expected to travel unless travel is a safe option and fully authorized by the relevant authorities. As an alternative, all data collection can be conducted remotely, and/or with the help of local consultants considering necessary adaptations to the overall methodological approach. Proposal should be developed without including travel costs. If travel is possible, this will be covered by a separate contract.

States, UNESCO staff from Headquarters, field offices and specialized institutes.

39. An Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) will guide the evaluation process and ensure the quality of associated deliverables. In consultation with relevant stakeholders IOS will establish this group to accompany the evaluation process and provide feedback on the ToR, the inception report and the draft evaluation report. The group will be composed of the evaluation manager from the IOS Evaluation Office, representatives from the Cabinet of the Director General and all of the Programme Sectors, the Sector for Priority Africa and External Relations (PAX); the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP) and the Division for Gender Equality. The selection members of the Reference Group will be guided by the principles of diversity and balanced representation in terms of age, gender, professional and geographical background.
40. In line with UNESCO's [Evaluation Policy](#), the evaluators will comply with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) updated 2016 [Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#), UNEG [Guidelines for Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations](#) and UNEG [Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation](#).)

VI. Qualifications of External Experts

41. The consultant(s) should collectively possess the following mandatory qualifications and experience:
42. Team Leader/Senior evaluator
- At least 10 years of experience evaluating UN agencies programmes and projects;
 - University degree at Master's level or equivalent in education, social sciences, political sciences, economics, or any related field;
 - Familiarity with UN mandates and its programming in the framework of the Sustainable Development Agenda
 - Understanding and application of UN mandates in Human Rights and Gender Equality
 - Demonstrated excellent drafting skills in English and good working knowledge of French.

Desirable skills:

- Knowledge of UNESCO's programmatic areas of work (i.e., education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, communication and information),

43. Verification of these qualifications will be based on the curriculum vitae provided and a sample of a previously completed evaluation. The selection process may also include an interview. Candidates are also encouraged to submit other references such as research papers or articles

VII. Deliverables and Schedule

Schedule

44. The evaluation will take place between January and September/October 2022.
45. The estimation is that the evaluation assignment will require approximately 85 professional working days (of one senior evaluator or a team of a senior and junior evaluator). Decisions on travel will be made in 2022. IOS and the evaluation team will monitor the sanitary situation closely.
46. The evaluation will consist of five main deliverables: inception report, initial findings, draft report, final report, and communication outputs.

Activity/Deliverable	Indicative Timing
Finalization of Terms of Reference	December 2021
Call for Proposals and Selection of Consultants	January 2022
Inception phase	February 2022
**Inception report	End of February 2022
Data collection and analysis phase	February-August 2022
**Draft evaluation report	September 2022
**Final report and communication outputs	October 2022
Communication outputs	October 2022

**deliverables

Deliverables

i. Inception report:

This is a plan outlining how the team will carry out the evaluation. It should include any adjustments to the methodology and evaluation questions from the ToRs. It is advisable to use an evaluation matrix that connects questions and indicators to data collection methods/sources and sampling. It should also include a communication plan for the evaluation products.

ii. Draft evaluation report

The evaluation team will prepare a draft evaluation report and IOS will circulate it for comments among the evaluation reference group. IOS will consolidate all comments for the evaluation team. The team will provide a table explaining how they addressed each comment. The report will be written in English or French according to UNESCO IOS's Evaluation Report Guidelines. IOS will share the guidelines and a detailed final report template with the evaluation team at the beginning of the assignment. The main body of the draft report shall not exceed 30 pages, excluding annexes.

iii. Final evaluation report:

As part of the UNESCO IOS quality assurance processes, all evaluation reports are subject to review by an external expert to ensure compliance with quality standards. The recommended actions from the quality assurance process will be addressed prior to finalization of the report

iv. Communication outputs:

The evaluation team will prepare a synthesis of the main findings from the evaluation in the form of a power point presentation or slides, a 2-page brief and an infographic.

References

Relevant Evaluation Resources

UNEG (2020). *UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation*. New York City: United Nations Evaluation Group. Retrieved 14 June 2021 from: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>

UNEG (2010). *UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports*. New York City: United Nations Evaluation Group. Retrieved 29 May 2020 from: <http://uneval.org/document/detail/607>

UNEG (2014). *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations*. New York City: United Nations Evaluation Group. Retrieved 29 May 2020 from: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/2107>

UNEG (2017). *Norms and Standards for Evaluation*. New York City: United Nations Evaluation Group. Retrieved 29 May 2020 from: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/27>

UNESCO (2013). *UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan (2014-2021)*. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved 29 May 2020 from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000227222>

UNESCO (2014). *UNESCO Operational Strategy for Priority Africa (2014-2021)*. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved 29 May 2020 from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000228745>

UNESCO (2015). *UNESCO Evaluation Policy*. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved 29 May 2020 from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000253907>

Relevant COVID-19 related Resources

[UNESCO Real Time Advisory \(May 2020\):](#)

- [Report on findings from the survey of all UNESCO staff members](#)
- [Report on findings from the survey of UNESCO Directors](#)

[UNESCO COVID-19 response website](#)

[UNESCO \(2020\), *Impact of Covid-19 on UNESCO's programme and activities*. Retrieved 20 November 2021 from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373757>](#)

Annex 1- IOS Advisory: Lessons learned on UNESCO's response to COVID-19

In May and June 2020, IOS embarked on a real time advisory (RTA)¹³ on UNESCO's response to COVID-19. The incentive was to provide immediate real time feedback to help steer an unfolding response. The exercise identified three main areas where the UN and UNESCO had to develop quick responses:

- i. supporting Member States with the ramifications of the public health crisis

- ii. ensuring business continuity through the deployment of new tools and/or strengthening of existing mechanisms, while providing regular support to staff; and
- iii. supporting the health and well-being of staff. At that moment, in May 2020, the IOS advisory focused on the response related to the support to health and staff well-being and business continuity

Two surveys were conducted during this exercise:

- i. Survey for all UNESCO staff: 56% Response rate (1971 staff responded)
- ii. Survey for UNESCO Directors: 33% Response rate 33% (36 responded)

Main findings from Staff Survey

Communication

Eighty percent of staff was happy with the level of communication received from UNESCO.

During the crisis, most staff feel adequately informed. For the return from the crisis staff expect more information (lower satisfaction with for this period affected by the information email being sent the same day as the survey).

Email is the primary way for staff to stay informed. A large majority, nine out of ten staff, have listened to the DG's messages and half have listened to the DG's interviews. Forty percent follow UNESCO Facebook and sixteen per cent the DG's Twitter page (at Director level primarily).

Well-Being

For many staff teleworking during the crisis has worked very well but overall it has resulted in an increase in workload and 29% of staff struggle juggling work and domestic responsibilities, this having disproportionately affected female staff and mothers in particular who often bore childcare and home-schooling responsibilities. This has had such an impact that for every man that called for the development of a flexible teleworking policy, two women deemed this extremely important. Work/life balance is a pressure point.

Not all staff face the same challenges, for example in Africa issues with connectivity and increases in internet and electricity costs can be a challenge. Other challenges identified by staff are home environments not adapted for work and no clear boundaries between work and personal life.

Many are satisfied with the stress management activities offered by UNESCO, but often do not have time to participate. Many in the field say the times are not always suitable and feel these initiatives cater mostly to HQ.

The most requested additional well-being initiatives are access to counselling or psychological support and workshops on stress management.

Business Continuity Telework-IT

The majority of staff feel that IT support (and the use of Teams) has worked well. However, lack of equipment such as computers, printers etc. has sometimes been problematic. One quarter of respondents said that UNESCO IT support had been fair/poor.

The highest ranked initiatives for the future by staff are: to develop and implement a flexible teleworking policy; to develop and implement an organization wide COVID-19 Strategy response, and to explore new modalities to hold public events online.

Recommendations and practical things that needs attention:

- Offer virtual psychological support to interested staff and workshops on stress management
- Consider compensating staff for increased internet/electricity cost in some areas.
- Provide wellness activities at different times to better serve field staff
- Communicate clearer rules/ expectations for work hours
- Make available computers to a larger cross- section of staff
- Develop a more flexible teleworking policy, harmonizing field/ headquarters and sectors
- Adopt new IT supported working methods to meet, discuss and consult

Main findings from Directors' Survey

Coordination with Headquarters and National Governments was rated the best and coordination with National Commissions and other Field Offices lowest.

Main suggestions to enhance programmatic coordination: work on strategic positioning of UNESCO, inform Field Offices of initiatives in advance and collaborate more closely with UNCT.

An overwhelming majority of Directors said they are developing Transversal initiatives and adapting UNESCO Global initiatives to respond to the COVID-19 Crisis.

Directors identified areas where UNESCO support is the greatest: reactivating culture/artistic sector; countering disinformation; distance and online learning; South-South cooperation in open science; training of teachers and redefinition of curriculums.

Concrete ideas of UNESCO engagement: post-pandemic education policies; support to return to school; support to revival of compliant tourism and heritage; facilitating open science and supporting freedom of expression.

Attachment A

Terms of Reference