



## **Guidelines and Procedures for the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme**

### ***Introduction***

UNITWIN is the abbreviation for the university twinning and networking scheme. This UNESCO programme was established in 1992, in accordance with a resolution adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 26th session (1991). The UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme consists of the establishment of UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks in higher education institutions.

This UNESCO programme serves as a prime means of building the capacities of higher education and research institutions through the exchange of knowledge and sharing, in a spirit of international solidarity. Thus it promotes North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation as a strategy to develop institutions. These institutions work in partnership with NGOs, foundations and public and private sector organizations and play an important role in the field of higher education. The UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme opens avenues for the higher education and research community to join forces with UNESCO to contribute to the implementation of its programme and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme covers training, research and exchange of academics and offers a platform for information sharing in all fields within the competence of UNESCO. The majority of the projects are interdisciplinary and intersectoral and involve all the programme sectors of UNESCO, with the active cooperation of its field Offices, Institutes and Centres. National Commissions play an important role by helping to promote the programme nationally, facilitating its execution and evaluating its impact. Because it is totally multidisciplinary in nature, the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme is one of the Organization's most intersectoral programmes.

Relevance, anticipation and effectiveness are among the prime goals of the UNITWIN Programme. So far UNESCO Chair and UNITWIN Network projects have proven useful in establishing new teaching programmes, generating new ideas through research and reflection, and facilitating enrichment of existing university programmes while respecting cultural diversity.

Because of the nature and flexibility of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme, universities can respond more readily and with greater autonomy to the demands for new learning and research in a world undergoing rapid economic, social and technological change.

The Guidelines and Procedures for the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme constitute a set of basic rules to be followed in order to maximize the benefits of the programme. The Guidelines and Procedures aim at clarifying and defining the criteria and procedures governing the establishment and functioning of a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network.

Since the adoption of new strategic orientations for the UNITWIN Programme by the Executive Board at its 176th session in April 2007, emphasis has been laid on:

- the dual function of UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks as “think tanks” and “bridge builders” between the academic world, civil society, local communities, research and policy-making;
- aligning the new UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks with UNESCO's priorities as defined in its Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013;

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001499/149999e.pdf>

- strengthening North-South, South-South and North-South-South cooperation;
- creating poles of excellence and innovation at the regional or subregional level;
- reinforcing the dynamism of networks and partnerships.

Accordingly, this document supersedes earlier guidelines. Its aim is to assist all interested parties in taking the steps needed to participate optimally in the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme and to make the most of its the benefits.

Director, Division of Higher Education  
September 2008

### **Which institutions can host or be affiliated with a UNESCO Chair or a UNITWIN Network?**

The programme is open to universities and other institutions of higher education and research that are recognized as bona fide institutions by the competent national authorities in the respective country and accepted by UNESCO; NGOs working in the field of higher education and research; other academic associations; inter-university and other academic networks that wish to establish a link between their own activities and the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme; national, regional and international public or private institutions and agencies that currently have or intend to develop cooperative links and arrangements with UNESCO in the field of higher education.

Proposals for a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network should be submitted to UNESCO by an institution eligible to participate in the programme.

However, UNESCO Chairs or UNITWIN Networks may only be established at:

- universities;
- other institutions of higher learning;
- research institutions in higher education.

### ***How to establish a UNESCO Chair?***

A UNESCO Chair can be established as a new teaching and research unit at a university or other institution of higher education and/or research for an initial period of four years.

Such a unit should include:

- (i) a Chair holder as its academic head;
- (ii) a team composed of lecturers and researchers from the host institution and from other institutions, both in the country concerned and in other countries, who are associated with the activities of the UNESCO Chair;
- (iii) students and researchers from the host country and from other countries who are pursuing postgraduate studies or high-level training and research under the UNESCO Chair.

A UNESCO Chair may be developed within a university department by reinforcing an existing teaching/research programme in a particular field within the domains of competence of UNESCO, and giving it an international dimension.

An agreement is concluded between the Director-General of UNESCO and the rector or president of the university.

Since the UNESCO Chairs are joint undertakings in which UNESCO joins forces with interested institutions, associations, agencies and organizations as well as with potential donors, the Chairs may have a joint designation, for example, UNESCO/IGO Chairs; UNESCO/NGO, agencies Chairs; UNESCO/Consortium of universities Chair(s); UNESCO/Industry Chairs.

UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks are not usually named after individuals, except when they are intended to commemorate an outstanding and universally acknowledged contribution made to the field of study concerned by a person (for example, Cousteau Ecotechnie Network, Oliver Tambo Chair in Human Rights).

### ***How to establish a UNITWIN Network?***

A UNITWIN Network consists of a number of universities in different countries that join forces and collectively sign a joint agreement with UNESCO.

A group of universities in different countries (North-South, South-South or North-South-South) may decide to pool their competences to address a need in the development context, and in so doing establish a network. Within this network, each participating institution may or may not have an individual Chair. However, in practice, institutions in the network progress towards establishing individual chairs. The partnership is formal and is established through a memorandum of understanding (MoU) among the participating institutions. It is concluded for a period of six years and sets out the purpose of the network, its expected outputs, how it will function and how it will be sustained.

Existing inter-university networks may express an interest in becoming a UNITWIN Network by gearing their activities towards the priorities of the Organization and the needs of higher education institutions in the developing countries.

Universities and other higher education institutions hosting UNESCO Chairs may come together to form a UNITWIN Network. In this case, the network is formalized by an exchange of letters between UNESCO and the hosting institution.

Universities, already twinned with other universities by virtue of bilateral agreements, may decide to expand these bilateral agreements into a multilateral one and apply to become a UNITWIN Network.

University cooperation programmes (training and research) in a particular field may be turned into more stable mechanisms of co-operation by the participating institutions agreeing to associate their activities with the goals and objectives of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme.

### **Procedure for submission of the project proposals**

Interested institutions should prepare and submit to the Director-General of UNESCO – under the signature of the executive head of the institution – a detailed project proposal according to the project outline in the Annex. It is important to note that a UNITWIN project is established between UNESCO and the institution and not with an individual.

When the project proposal concerns the establishment of an inter-university network, it can be submitted either by the heads of all institutions involved, or by a single institution which takes the lead, acts as the focal point and ensures the development of the network. When this is the case, the respective participating institutions should provide a letter of commitment to the proposed network, signed by the head of the institution.

UNESCO encourages a tripartite relationship in the preparation of the proposal for a UNESCO Chair. The national level team should comprise the university, the UNESCO office and the National Commission for UNESCO. When this is the case, the proposal should be submitted to the Director-General of UNESCO by the university with evidence of the cooperation process (for example, meeting report, covering notes signed by the Head of UNESCO office and the Secretary-General of the National Commission respectively). In countries where there is no UNESCO office, participation in this mechanism is not feasible, and the proposal should be submitted through the National Commission and the Permanent Delegation.

In the case of a UNITWIN Network, it is preferred that the proposal be prepared in consultation with the UNESCO staff responsible for the area of focus. However, submission of the

network to the Director-General of UNESCO should be made by a representative of the host institution (President, Rector ...).

Every project must be accompanied by a letter of support from the National Commission and supporting documents from institutional and financial partners.

The deadline for submission of new proposals is 30 April of each year. Projects submitted after that date will be considered the following year.

### ***Assessment and approval of the proposal***

Once UNESCO receives the project proposal, a process of review and analysis is undertaken.

In the light of the growing number of requests for the establishment of UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks and the need to maintain a geographical balance between Chairs in the North and in the South, it is not possible for UNESCO to accept all the requests it receives for the establishment of Chairs or networks.

When the project proposal has completed its cycle for evaluation, the Division of Higher Education informs the institution of the results. If UNESCO evaluates the project positively, then the relevant agreement is drawn up and signed by the Director-General of UNESCO and the representative of the host institution president (Rector or President...). A funding source can also be a signatory to the agreement. The agreement signed by the host institution must be received by UNESCO within 60 days of the date of its signature by the Director-General of UNESCO.

### **Recruitment and appointment of personnel involved in a UNITWIN/UNESCO Chair project**

#### ***UNESCO Chair holder or Network coordinator***

The host institution makes individual proposals for a UNESCO Chair holder or a coordinator of a UNITWIN Network. The appointment of a UNESCO Chair holder/coordinator does not necessarily entail the creation of a specific post and does not always constitute an employment opportunity. All appointments will be subject to approval by UNESCO and the competent academic bodies of the institutions hosting a UNITWIN project, for a period of time limited to the agreement establishing the UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network. The appointees shall enjoy the rights and privileges provided for personnel of similar rank at the host institution.

Criteria for the selection of a Chair holder or coordinator:

- (i) academic reputation (he or she should be a renowned specialist in the domain(s) to be covered by the Chair or network);
- (ii) have the capacity and experience to promote cooperation at national, regional and international levels;
- (iii) be willing and able to mobilize resources from private and public sectors.

In its efforts to promote gender equality, UNESCO encourages the nomination of women as UNESCO Chair holders or heads of UNITWIN Networks.

Appointments to a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network may also be made on a rotating basis among partner institutions.

The most common practice nowadays is to select the candidate for a UNESCO Chair holder or UNITWIN Network coordinator position from among academics working in the same institution.

In order to strengthen the international dimension of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme, the Organization may accept a proposal for a joint leadership in cases where one of the professors is a national candidate and the other is from a partner institution in another country.

Visiting professorships may be established at various higher education institutions. They may also teach at several institutions in a subregion that wish to benefit from the programme's activities.

### ***By whom are UNITWIN projects financed?***

The overall success of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme depends on financial and in-kind support. UNESCO, not being a funding agency, cannot be a major donor. For this reason UNESCO encourages the institutions to mobilize financial partners at the time when they are preparing the project proposals and also offers its services in helping to mobilize resources.

There is a wide range of possibilities for mobilizing resources:

1. **Bilateral cooperation** – many bilateral donors (individual country cooperation development agencies such as CIDA (Canada), SIDA (Sweden), French Development Agency, DFID (United Kingdom), NORAD (Norway) and Italy and Japan) have funds reserved for research and training and will promote cooperation among universities across borders.
2. **Multilateral cooperation**, including intergovernmental organizations (UNDP, UNICEF, UNIDO, World Bank, EU, ISESCO, ALECSO) – accessing resources from such agencies normally requires that the project fit into the development initiatives at country, regional and international levels. Development banks that implement technical assistance programmes could be explored.
3. **Private sector organizations** (TOYOTA, SHELL, MITSUBISHI) – these are the prime sources of financial support for the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme.
4. **Non-governmental organizations and private foundations** tend to be more flexible and dispose to finance innovative ideas.
5. **Host institutions** – many universities have allocations for promoting international cooperation.
6. **UNESCO Participation Programme** – a proposal for funding a UNITWIN project may be made to the National Commission for UNESCO in the country concerned.
7. **UNESCO regular programme budget** – under special circumstances “seed funding” may be considered by UNESCO, principally for least developed countries and post-conflict countries.

### ***How does a UNITWIN project function?***

#### ***(i) Role of the UNESCO Chair holder or the Network coordinator***

The performance of the project depends largely on the quality of the work of the UNESCO Chair holder and/or coordinator of the UNITWIN Network and their team. He or she is responsible

for the programming, organization, promotion of academic activities, dissemination of publications and fund-raising. Effective coordination will ensure better cross-border involvement in the project and ultimately improve its impact nationally, regionally and internationally.

Activities undertaken in the framework of a UNITWIN project must correspond to the goals to be achieved. They may include in particular:

1. programme development in non-traditional areas at undergraduate and postgraduate levels;
2. exchange of lecturers, students and researchers;
3. lectures on topics relevant to the field covered by the UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network (some of which could be made available online);
4. research corresponding to the research strategies of UNESCO's various Sectors;
5. workshops, seminars, national, regional and international meetings/conferences;
6. publications;
7. establishment of or participation in virtual communities of practices.

A diploma or certificate associated with a UNESCO Chair may only be issued by the university and must be signed by its Rector or President. It cannot under any circumstances be issued directly by the UNESCO Chair. Likewise, prizes may not be awarded by the UNESCO Chair but by the university hosting the Chair.

Whatever the type of activity and forms of their implementation, they should complement the relevant UNESCO programmes and activities approved by Member States of the Organization. Close cooperation with ongoing UNESCO activities and programmes is of utmost importance.

**(ii) UNESCO Chair and UNITWIN Network progress reports**

Annual progress reports must be submitted every year, following the format specified by the Organization. It is the responsibility of the university or other implementing institution to ensure that UNESCO receives such reports before 31 May of each year, in electronic form if possible, at the following address: [unitwin@unesco.org](mailto:unitwin@unesco.org). The initial report should cover the outcomes of a UNESCO Chair and a UNITWIN Network after the first 12 months of its implementation. Special attention should be given to the impact on capacity-building and knowledge sharing and on national and regional policies.

**(iii) Use of the UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network logo**

The UNESCO logo in the form of a temple cannot be used alone for UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network activities. Consequently, UNESCO has developed a model logo for UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks which is composed of the UNESCO logo and the host institution logo. The host institution should send its logo to UNESCO by electronic mail so that the UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network logo can be created. The period of use of the logo is limited to the period of the agreement and any extension thereafter. All publications, papers and documents should carry the following disclaimer:

*The authors are responsible for the choice and presentation of views contained in this ... and for opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization.*

**(iv) Communication**

UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks should maintain regular communication with the UNESCO Secretariat for intellectual guidance, technical support and possible involvement in the planning and implementation of events of UNESCO (meetings, conferences, publications, studies).

**(v) The UNESCO UNITWIN portal**

One of the most frequently visited portals of the Organization, the UNITWIN portal is an integral part of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme. Its database is managed by the Division of Higher Education and is regularly updated. Each biennium, the Division of Higher Education publishes/produces a CD-ROM containing a directory of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme. However, the usefulness of the portal and the CD-ROM depends on the accuracy of the information that it contains and the relevance of the activities of the UNESCO Chairs or UNITWIN Networks. It is for these reasons that participating institutions are encouraged to provide good quality information on the UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks. In addition to that role, the UNITWIN portal is a tool for learning and thematic networking and serves as the support for establishing a virtual community of practices among UNESCO Chairs.

**(vi) Renewal of agreements**

The renewal of agreements is processed through an exchange of letters between the parties-signatories to them (UNESCO and the host institution of a UNESCO Chair or a UNITWIN Network). The institution or institutions concerned send a letter requesting renewal of the agreement to the Director-General of UNESCO or to the Director of the Division of Higher Education. Whether or not UNESCO approves the renewal of the agreement will depend on the assessment of the work done by the UNESCO Chair or the UNITWIN Network (quality and relevance of the work and concordance with the objectives and mandate of UNESCO).

**(vii) Termination clause or not renewal**

When a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network does not fully comply with the terms of the agreement, UNESCO will exercise its right to close the Chair or Network.

Circumstances under which UNESCO will cancel or not renew the agreement are as follows:

1. failure to submit progress reports for Chairs and Networks;
2. progress reports received by UNESCO are evaluated negatively;
3. the activities of the UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network do not correspond to UNESCO's mandate

### ***Evaluation and monitoring***

Quality performance is of paramount importance to the UNITWIN/ UNESCO Chairs Programme. The intention is for UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks to become poles of excellence and innovation. The first level of evaluation should be the university itself to ensure that the UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network is making a difference, particularly in improving capacity in developing country partners. UNESCO expects the university/institution hosting the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme to take a results-based management approach. Other forms of evaluation are organized by UNESCO with the National Commissions for UNESCO playing a key role. Evaluation may be internal or external. UNESCO will undertake an internal evaluation every biennium, the results of which will form the basis of decision-making in the subsequent UNESCO programme and budget. Evaluation and monitoring can also take the form of consultation meetings, workshops that include partners, or visits by UNESCO staff to the UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network.

### ***Poles of excellence and innovation***

From its vantage point of observer, UNESCO will play its role as a catalyst to the full by encouraging UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks to become poles of excellence and innovation. A pole of excellence is "a combination, in a specific geographical location, of universities, higher education institutions, training centres, foundations, and public or private research units working together on joint projects of an innovative nature. Such a partnership is structured around a specific field or theme that is consonant with UNESCO's priorities, and must reach a critical mass in order to achieve a certain level of quality and international visibility". A pole of excellence and innovation should:

- (i) conduct research activities fostering partnerships between research and services and industries;
- (ii) master the use of technology, in particular distance learning technology, to provide high-level training in its field;
- (iii) integrate public and private sources to ensure successful applications and developments;
- (iv) offer industry the possibility of using research results to implement profitable activities that have an impact on sustainable development;
- (v) innovate today for building tomorrow;
- (vi) provide leadership in technology innovation in education (by creating for example, ground-breaking software);
- (vii) act as a strategic resource pole offering a forum for sharing of knowledge and experience;
- (viii) contribute actively to developing the respective sector of activities at the national and/or regional level;
- (ix) offer research activities at international level that interfaces with the environment, and attract its own resources by having the capacity and the autonomy to bid for projects, which permit its implementation;
- (x) create institutional space, which can be virtual, for research and training and documentation, and an Internet site.

### **Coordination of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme**

Coordination of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme is a shared responsibility of UNESCO. The Section for International Cooperation in Higher Education, within the Division of Higher Education of the Education Sector, has global responsibility in close cooperation with the programme Sectors, field Offices, and UNESCO Institutes and Centres involved in the Programme.

At the regional and national level, National Commissions are expected to be partners with UNESCO Offices, Institutes and Centres in assuring the coordination of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme.

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