United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Item **7** of the provisional agenda

COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR THE MOST PROGRAMME

SUMMARY

The attached document, which is circulated for the information of the Executive Board in connection with item 7 of the provisional agenda, constitutes the comprehensive strategy for the Management of Social Transformations programme adopted by the Bureau of its Intergovernmental Council at its meeting on 27-28 January 2016.

Meeting of the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Council
Paris, 27-28 January 2016
Agenda Item 3 – Final Outcome Document

Comprehensive Strategy for the MOST Programme, 2016-2021

This document contains the final version of the Comprehensive Strategy for the MOST Programme, 2016-2021, as requested by the Twelfth Ordinary Session (1-2 June 2015) and Extraordinary Session (14 November 2015) of the Intergovernmental Council and formally adopted by the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Council at its meeting in Paris on 27-28 January 2016.

I.   Overview

1.   MOST is an intergovernmental science programme on the management of social transformations.

   – 1.1 <u>Intergovernmental</u>: MOST is designed with and implemented by its Member States, both collectively, through mechanisms adopted by its Intergovernmental Council (IGC) and implemented under its supervision, and individually, through policy decisions at national and sub-national level following up on decisions made by the IGC or by other mechanisms such as regional ministerial forums. The secretariat's role is to support Member States in the implementation and management of the programme, duly recognizing the specific features of their institutional arrangements.

   – 1.2 <u>Science</u>: MOST derives its intellectual legitimacy and credibility from a strong anchor in knowledge production in the social and human sciences, working closely with other sciences to ensure this.

   – 1.3 <u>Programme</u>: MOST operates through an Action Plan with a coherent focus, to be periodically re-assessed by its governing bodies in terms of delivery and of forward-looking relevance and effectiveness.

   – 1.4 <u>Management of social transformations</u>: MOST is defined thematically by the dynamics shaping fundamental change in the contemporary world. The strategic orientation of the programme is determined by a broadly shared assessment of what these dynamics are and what dealing with them might imply for Member States and for institutions within Member States with specific territorial or sectoral competence.

2.   MOST operates through three programmatic pillars:

   – 2.1 The research pillar of MOST networks social science and humanities communities as well as other sciences in order to support the readiness of a systematic and organized body of knowledge acquired through the scientific methods, which can be relevant for policy-making in the context of the 2030 international development agenda.

   – 2.2 MOST intergovernmental forums enable MOST to seek the decisive support of Member States. Those forums may include MOST Ministerial Forums in those regions where they will be suitable and well-established meeting platforms that exists in other regions, the IGC itself, UNESCO governing bodies and other UN Forums.

   – 2.3 MOST knowledge brokering offers positive mechanisms for transferring research evidence into public policy and practice under different contexts. It adopts a broad and flexible notion which includes diverse approaches to knowledge brokering (i.e. knowledge management, linkage agents, and capacity builders) as well as the coexistence of different models of interaction between science and public policy. It may combine policy support to help policymakers to develop policy options and capacity-building mechanisms that strengthen the capacities of national researchers, research institutions, research systems, policymakers and civil society.

3.   Affirming its identity and deploying its programmatic pillars within UNESCO's ongoing Medium-Term Strategy (2014-2021), MOST will put priority emphasis on:

   – 3.1 encouraging the establishment of MOST national committees on the flexible basis offered by the operational guidelines included in annex 2;

   – 3.2 establishing cooperation mechanisms with organizations from the UN system and its specialized agencies as well as with other relevant regional organizations;

– 3.3 strengthening links with civil society, in particular by the activities of MOST national committees and where appropriate by the involvement of civil society representatives in events such as Ministerial Forums and MOST Schools.

II. Background and Context

4. The definition of a comprehensive strategy for MOST is crucial in the international context afforded by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in particular by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015. The expected contribution of UNESCO to the implementation of the new international development agenda requires that MOST demonstrate its public value and practical effectiveness, consistently with the resolution of the General Conference at its 38th session, which stressed *"the importance of the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme in the design of public policies based on foresight and scientific evidence to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"* and further underscored *"the need to define a clear and effective communication strategy for the programme and to establish coordination mechanisms for its activities and cooperation with other United Nations agencies and regional organizations"* (38 C/Res. 104, paragraph 5).

5. The Twelfth Session of the Intergovernmental Council (IGC) of the MOST Programme, held in Paris on 1-2 June 2015, requested the Director-General to submit to the IGC a comprehensive draft strategy for the MOST Programme with a view to presenting to the Executive Board at its 199th session in April 2016 a MOST strategic approach looking towards the 2021 horizon for the completion of UNESCO's ongoing Medium-Term Strategy as adopted by the General Conference.

6. The development of the MOST strategy drew on a number of strategic frameworks or analyses previously made available to the IGC, including – in addition to the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy (2014-2021) and Programme (2014-2017) – the 2009 Review of Major Programmes II and III; the 2010 Formative Review of MOST; and the 2011 UNESCO Independent External Evaluation; as well as past decisions in related areas by the IGC itself. In addition, account was taken of the Expert Meeting convened by the secretariat in March 2015 on strategic directions for MOST, with the participation of members of the IGC Bureau and of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC).

7. After initial consultations and further discussion, taking account *inter alia* of the deliberations of SAC, which met in Paris on 26-27 October 2015, of the Executive Board on "MOST Programme Contributions to the Post-2015 Development Agenda", as well as its decision thereon (197 EX/Dec. 40), and of the deliberations of the General Conference, with reference to its aforementioned resolution 38 C/Res. 104, paragraph 5, the Extraordinary Session of the IGC, held in Paris on 14 November 2015, requested *"its Bureau, after further consultation with members of the IGC, and taking account of the input of the Scientific Advisory Committee, to adopt at a meeting to be convened for that purpose in late January 2016 a comprehensive draft strategy for the MOST Programme for submission to the Executive Board at its 199th session"*.

8. Further consultations were conducted by the IGC Bureau in December 2015 – January 2016, on the basis of which the present strategy was considered, revised and adopted at the meeting of the IGC Bureau held in Paris on 27-28 January 2016.

III. MOST Strategic Mission, Vision, Objectives and Priorities

9. UNESCO's mission, as spelled out in the Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021, is to contribute to "*the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, and sustainable development and intercultural dialogue*". Within this Organization-wide mission, MOST responds to Strategic Objective 6 of the Medium-Term Strategy "*Supporting inclusive social development, fostering intercultural dialogue for the rapprochement of cultures and promoting ethical principles*". MOST is furthermore directly relevant to the Overarching Objectives – contributing to lasting peace and

contributing to sustainable development and the eradication of poverty – as well as to the achievement of UNESCO's Global Priorities: Africa and Gender Equality.

10. In the context of this broad assignment, **MOST's specific mission** is to support Member States in improving participatory policy-making processes on the basis of intercultural dialogue through a strengthened research-policy interface that uses science-based knowledge focused on human needs and human rights, primarily from the social sciences and the humanities, to contribute to the establishment of a culture of evidence-informed decision-making policies.

11. **MOST's vision** is defined by attaining a culture of transformational social and human science in which policy decisions are effectively informed by the systematic assessment of the evidence base that may be relevant to crucial areas of public policy-making. MOST does not regard the social sciences as scientific only. As a programme to manage social transformations, MOST takes the lead in making the social sciences transformational.

12. Crafting policies for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development entails significant changes in the context of international cooperation and will thus place new demands on intergovernmental programmes such as MOST. As emphasized by UNESCO in other contexts, "*The new development agenda needs to empower people and harness the power of cross-cutting multipliers. In a world of limits, more must be made of the boundless energy of human ingenuity – through education, the sciences, culture and communication and information – to craft solutions that are just and sustainable.*"[1]

13. In the new context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the **main objective** of MOST is to enhance, by the end of 2021, the capabilities of Member States to generate evidence through high quality and autonomous research and make use of it in the formulation and choice of policies resulting from participatory policy-making processes which may be relevant to UNESCO's fields of competence towards the attainment of the SDGs.

14. Within the research-policy nexus, MOST will address a set of well-defined **priorities** of the 2030 development agenda in the context of UNESCO's institutional competence, in particular – but not exclusively – those related to SDG 16 "*Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*". Other SDGs of relevance for MOST within the overall UNESCO mandate are SDG 5: "*Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"* and SDG 10: "*Reduce inequality within and among countries".* MOST will put particular emphasis on the role of intercultural dialogue in the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies.

IV. Enhancing Ownership

15. Achievement of MOST's strategic objectives depends on broad stakeholder recognition of the distinctive value of the programme and extensive engagement in its mechanisms and activities. Researchers, policymakers and other MOST stakeholders will find value in a programme that:

  – 15.1 supports knowledge brokering to assist Member States to organize the interaction between the producers and users of knowledge so that they can co-produce feasible and research-informed policy options;

  – 15.2 advocates for an articulated understanding of the complex and non-fully predictable ways in which contemporary science can contribute to policy formation.

16. The governing and advisory bodies of MOST ensure that decisions made about the programme as a whole, at international level, recognize the diversity of research and policy-making

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[1] "*UNESCO's Participation in the Preparations for a Post-2015 Development Agenda. Overview of Goals and Targets Proposed*". Executive Board document 194 EX/14.INF.2. Paris, 8 April 2014.
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002273/227355e.pdf

systems at national and where relevant at sub-national level, as well as differences in the social and cultural contexts in which the research-policy nexus operates. The flexible operational mechanisms promoted by MOST foster ownership by recognizing national diversity:

– 16.1 in establishment and resourcing of research systems, which need to focus, within MOST, on producing knowledge on the policy-research nexus, transmitting this knowledge, and improving connections between evidence and policy-makers. The aim is to contribute to the development of research-policy governance, identification of national priorities, and formulation and implementation of policy frameworks to enhance the effectiveness of the national research effort.

– 16.2 in promotion through appropriate policies of active participation of diverse stakeholders in the policy process, especially those potentially affected by new policy decisions based and informed by research, including representatives from civil society.

17.　Ownership of MOST is assessed by two distinct and complementary criteria: political support and scientific credibility.

18.　Based on strict compliance with standard practices that ensure the quality control of scientific productions, MOST strives to mobilize only top quality scientific knowledge. MOST offers a forum where conceptual, methodological and empirical issues relating to social transformations can be discussed, with particular reference to innovative directions in systems thinking and foresight that can offer alternatives to the kind of mechanical, linear and top-down thinking that might otherwise be associated with the phrase "management of social transformations".

19.　MOST mobilizes political support, anchored in the governing role of the IGC, by:

– 19.1 Ensuring the leading role of National Commissions for UNESCO and MOST National Committees in promoting engagement with the programme at the national level, within the flexible framework defined by the guidelines laid out in annex 2, notably by strengthening multisectoral relations, in particular between academic research and public policies, and mobilizing National Commissions and National Committees to support international cooperation within the programmatic scope of MOST;

– 19.2 Mobilizing MOST as a framework to contribute to international agendas on political, social and economic transformations, particularly with respect to key issues, such as reducing inequalities, achieving social justice, fostering the institutional conditions required for equitable and universal inclusive and sustainable development, and promoting intercultural dialogue;

– 19.3 Demonstrating public value in making society aware of its social nature and showing usefulness in delivering technical services to individual Member States on the basis of solid analysis, moral vision, and refined understanding of the research-policy nexus and in particular of the nature of evidence and how it can support policy effectiveness.

– 19.4 Proposing actions in support of traditionally excluded or deprived social groups or individuals and contributing to the provision of effective equal opportunities for all.

V.　Operational Mechanisms

20.　MOST operates through **three main programmatic pillars**, which reflect the overall logic of the research-policy nexus:

– 20.1 **The research pillar** of MOST networks social science and humanities communities as well as other sciences in order to support the readiness of a systematic and organized

body of knowledge acquired through the scientific methods, which can be relevant for policy-making in the context of the 2030 international development agenda.

– 20.2 MOST **intergovernmental forums** enable MOST to seek the decisive support of Member States. Such initiatives may include MOST Ministerial Forums in those regions where they will be suitable and well-established meeting platforms that exists in other regions, the IGC itself, UNESCO governing bodies and other UN Forums.

– 20.3 MOST **knowledge brokering** offers positive mechanisms for transferring research evidence into public policy and practice under different contexts. It adopts a broad and flexible notion which includes diverse approaches to knowledge brokering (i.e. knowledge management, linkage agents, and capacity builders) as well as the coexistence of different models of interaction between science and public policy. It may combine policy **support** to help policymakers to develop policy options and **capacity-building** mechanisms that strengthen the capacities of national researchers, research institutions, research systems, policymakers and civil society. It can include, *inter alia*, MOST schools, UNESCO Chairs on management of social transformations, established within the existing administrative framework as defined by the General Conference, and specific international postgraduate programmes on management of social transformations. MOST pays special attention to the development of young professionals, whether coming from the research, policy or social arena, and provides spaces and mechanisms to support the role of young professionals in terms of innovation and creativity in the policy analysis.

21.   In response to the principle of "universality" embedded in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, MOST will conduct activities for developed and developing countries alike to ensure that Member States from all regions feel that the programme is relevant to them. Through its regional groupings, the IGC periodically identifies differentiated and regionally relevant research priorities which will provide a better contextual fit to the need to implement the common aspirations of the programme under dissimilar circumstances.

22.   Within the overall primary emphasis on SDG 16, as noted in paragraph 14, the thematic focus of MOST includes particular emphasis on topics of high contemporary relevance, such as policies for social inclusion; the future of the planet; citizenship, good governance and peace-building; migration and displaced people; and the socially transformative dynamics of digital technologies.

23.   Based on the three interconnected pillars, the MOST strategy will be operationalized through the following **priority actions**.

24.   In order to ensure that **MOST research** produces high-quality and relevant knowledge, mobilizing relevant stakeholders through selected high-level scientific partnerships, MOST will:

– 24.1 strengthen interdisciplinary partnerships with major social science and humanities stakeholders, especially with the International Social Science Council (ISSC), as well as with other sciences to shape intellectual and policy-relevant agendas relating to social transformations in a way that contributes to advance the comprehension of complex social systems;

– 24.2 develop innovative mechanisms for experimentation and policy analysis;

– 24.3 establish a series of branded publications, building on the series established in earlier phases, designed to federate researchers from all regions, and based on rigorous quality control through SAC in particular, and to work with relevant partners to disseminate them widely. Publications and other documentation will facilitate to share experiences and to showcase the tangible benefits of MOST, providing a written record of

how the programme has supported Member States in strengthening their research capacities and science-informed policy-making processes.

25.   In order to ensure that **MOST intergovernmental forums** serve to mobilize knowledge, set agendas and generate political support, MOST will:

–   25.1 organize intergovernmental forums, including MOST Ministerial Forums in those regions where they will be suitable, and in well-established meeting platforms that exist in other regions;

–   25.2 strengthen cooperation with the UN Secretariat and other specialized agencies and programmes of the UN system to design and conduct joint activities which may enhance the contribution of MOST in the context of making the UN "fit for purpose", with a view to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

26.   In order to ensure that MOST provides effective knowledge brokering, the following tools will embody differentiated options for **policy support and capacity-building**:

–   26.1 Gradual development of MOST Schools through the partnership and branding mechanisms elaborated in annex 1, in those regions where they will be suitable, focused on capacity-building to enable evidence-informed decision making. Conceived on the basis of bottom-up demands arising from specific needs in concrete contexts, MOST Schools will prioritize – but will not be circumscribed to – interventions to develop the capacity of researchers and decision makers to transfer knowledge into action in low- and middle-income countries. Their primary goal is to support long-term sustainable development in contexts where capacity gaps may be a major constraint to transforming research into action.

–   26.2 Utilization of the Future Knowledge Laboratory (FKL) – successfully adopted by the UNESCO Youth Forum in 2015 – as an innovative and inclusive process that helps people make sense of a complex world and assists participants to better understand the assumptions they use to imagine the future. Equipped with this evidence, participants are better able to make informed decisions about the present.

–   26.3 Operationalization of the Inclusive Policy Lab with its three functional components: (i) an inclusive policy clearinghouse which is set to analyse and gather a critical mass of policy models and practices, diffuse such data in appropriate quarters, and boost its usage in inclusive policy and planning processes; (ii) a crowdsourcing and co-innovation hub which will stimulate co-production of knowledge and its innovative use in the design and delivery of inclusive policies; and (iii) capacity building and technical advice for registered policy practitioners.

27.   The strategy is operationalized through an Action Plan compiling content submitted by all Member States and updated periodically under the responsibility of the Bureau.

VI.   Communication and Outreach

28.   Overall communication on MOST will adopt a strategic approach in direct support of programme objectives through vigorous utilization of communication strategies and optimization of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in MOST, such as uploading content and information on the MOST website about statutory meetings, Ministerial Forums, MOST Schools and any other activity of the programme.

29.   Internal and external communications will be pursued in a planned and proactive manner, both as modalities to contribute towards specific results and as a means to profile and position MOST as a leading reference among key audiences.

30. Communication within MOST will focus on the managerial and governing structures of the programme, involving mechanisms to strengthen information dissemination between the various entities to reinforce a solid base for speaking with one voice and pursuing a coherent messaging strategy. Efforts to fortify linkages between national, regional and global levels further aims to streamline a greater sense of MOST programmatic culture and strategic vision across the divisions.

31. Internal communication will also focus on dissemination of social science content and on mobilization of specialized communities, emphasizing innovative use of ICTs such as video conferencing to improve outreach and facilitate active knowledge management. Collaborative workspaces will continue to provide a focus for interaction within communities of practice, in connection with MOST Schools, and between the secretariat and sources of external expertise, while publications serve to underwrite academic and policy credibility and contribute directly to a cumulative process of active knowledge management.

32. External communication will serve as a long-term strategic lever to reinforce and raise awareness of MOST through improved visibility on the programme itself, with a view to strengthening institutional commitment and political buy-in. Specific focus on demonstrating programme results will seek to inform and contribute to relevant policy processes within the international community, while also supporting mobilization of stakeholder communities. It will rely on both traditional (the website) and innovative (thematic blogs) uses of ICTs, including the use of electronic means of communications such as electronic newsletters and social media as well as outreach through mainstream and specialized media. Particular emphasis will also be placed on engaging with professional social science communities through partner organizations and their regular high-profile events.

VII. Monitoring and Evaluation

33. In addition to substantive work by MOST relating to monitoring and evaluation as components of the policy cycle, the latter is a key requirement for the strategic framework itself. Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy proceeds through periodic review of the Action Plan by the IGC and periodic reporting to UNESCO governing bodies. To the extent possible, risk analysis will be conducted for the different MOST activities at the beginning of each biennial programme cycle, informing the monitoring process.

34. In addition, the Strategy will undergo a mid-term review in 2018 and a final evaluation at the end of the C/4 period which will examine, evaluate and reassess the implementation process by highlighting challenges encountered and lessons learnt and suggesting possible adjustments to increase efficiency. It will assess the level of attainment of the objectives taking into account the available resources, the biennial expected results and the impact of the initiatives.

VIII. Resources

35. Resources for implementation of the present strategy derive from three main sources:

- 35.1 The regular budget adopted every two years by the General Conference, which secures funding for the permanent staff of the secretariat and for core statutory activities, including meetings of the IGC and SAC.

- 35.2 Extrabudgetary support to UNESCO, provided by its Member States or by partner institutions, which makes it possible to enhance the activities implemented by the secretariat, consistently with the requirement in the Statutes that the IGC, by mobilizing Member States to support MOST's overall objectives within the framework established by the General Conference, should seek "*the necessary resources for the implementation of the MOST programme*".

– 35.3 In-kind support from Member States and other sources, which either synergizes with the resources available to the secretariat – e.g. in the organization of Ministerial Forums and Schools – or enables Member States to implement their own activities to fulfil the objectives of the present strategy. Partnerships and the resources mobilized by partners to support their own actions are essential in order to achieve MOST strategic objectives, beyond the specific activities within the competence of the secretariat.

36.   As an aspect of the ownership-oriented strategy for MOST, available resources, whether from the UNESCO Regular Programme or from extrabudgetary support, act as a funding facility to assist end-recipients to partially support MOST selected activities in Member States, using a differentiated approach, taking into consideration the type of activities and the categories of end-beneficiaries. Guidelines address the application process, selection of proposals, monitoring and evaluation, as well as the limits applicable to both the range of funding amounts to be granted and the top rates that those amounts represent in the total cost of activities.

ANNEX I

GUIDELINES FOR MOST SCHOOLS

I. PRESENTATION

This document presents streamlined guidelines for the branding of MOST Schools which draws on the lessons learnt from MOST Schools in Latin America and the Caribbean since 2003 and more recently in Morocco, Tunisia, Mongolia and the Russian Federation. The guidelines establish, for the first time, a simple set of principles and criteria that will assist stakeholders anywhere to distill the essence of MOST Schools and to create their own versions of them.

Consistently with established practice, MOST Schools are events, not institutions. They enhance knowledge brokering, which constitutes the third operational pillar of the MOST Strategy. The Schools are not envisioned from a narrow "technical" perspective because establishing science brokerage within policymaking systems machine is essentially a public policy governance problem that involves different actors across multiple research and policy networks which are heavily influenced by the culture and behaviour of context- specific policymaking systems.

Thus, to a large extent, successful knowledge brokering depends not just on acquiring thematic knowledge about given topics but are contingent on a set of skills related to the nature of scientific consensus, the understanding of complex science, the critical appraisal of scientific findings, and the comprehension of horizontal decision making processes which are unique in each context.

MOST Schools are capacity-building activities focused on strengthening the competences for evidence-informed decision making in Member States. Conceived on the basis of bottom-up demands arising from specific needs in concrete contexts, MOST Schools prioritize interventions aimed at developing the capacity of researchers and decision-makers to transfer knowledge into action, mainly in low- and middle-income countries. Their primary goal is to support long-term sustainable development in contexts where capacity gaps may be a major constraint to transforming research into action.

The main objective of MOST Schools is to enlarge the pool of qualified young professionals from different backgrounds (academia, government and civil society) that may assist to strengthen the research-policy interface in the context of the challenges of the implementation of the 2030 international development agenda. Branding proposed activities as MOST Schools follows four principles: a) *Flexibility*: MOST Schools need to be responsive to specific contexts; b) *High quality*: capacity development through the schools must comply with scholarly standards of excellence and with advanced training practices; c) *Accelerating dissemination*: Schools must adopt an escalating strategy for spreading knowledge; d) *National ownership*: MOST Schools need to be driven by the incentives of communities of practice operating in Member States

The proposed guidelines codify the core tenets of the MOST Schools concept, with a view to ensuring consistency and identity. However, implementing MOST Schools is essentially a context-specific enterprise and the guidelines are designed flexibly to engage local stakeholders to work with MOST in their own specific contexts, using as much as possible their own resources, skills and training capabilities. Therefore, the guidelines reflect an approach to "frugal project design" based on simplicity and scalability, and on principles rather than detailed rules.

By allowing national stakeholders to perform a crucial role in the design and implementation of MOST Schools, the guidelines support a democratic and empowering model of capacity development as well as facilitating continuous improvement at the level of the MOST Programme, on the basis of shared learning arising from a network of multiple events working in the same capacity building domain, in diverse contexts.

The proposed guidelines combine discerning standardization and context-sensitive design to foster quality assurance, rapid knowledge dissemination, and national ownership. They are designed to protect the "MOST Schools" brand, increase its reputation, and enhance awareness of MOST within UNESCO and eventually at the level of the UN system.

II.   GUIDELINES

<u>Three layers of guidance</u>

Stakeholders that might be interested in organizing MOST Schools encompass a diverse group of governmental entities, academic institutions, and organizations from civil society, from any Member State. In order to meet the varying needs of these audiences, three layers of guidance are provided in this document: overall *principles*, general *guidelines*, and testable *success criteria.*

- **Principles** - At the top are four principles that provide the foundation for planning MOST Schools.

- **Guidelines** - Under the principles are 8 guidelines that provide the basic indications that stakeholders should follow in order to ensure the consistency of the MOST Schools. The guidelines provide the framework to help stakeholders understand the success criteria and may assist in identifying specific techniques to support delivery.

- **Success Criteria** - For each guideline, testable success criteria are provided. They describe specifically what must be achieved in order to conform to the standard defined by the guideline. They act as "checkpoints". Each Success Criterion is written as a statement that will be either true or false when expected outcomes are tested against it.

<u>The overall principles</u>

MOST schools embody the following four **principles**, which lay the foundation necessary for anyone to engage in their organization:

*Flexibility***:** MOST Schools need to be responsive to specific contexts

*High quality***:** Capacity development through the schools must comply with scholarly standards of excellence and with advanced training practices

*Accelerating dissemination***:** Schools should adopt an escalating strategy for spreading knowledge

*National ownership***:** MOST Schools need to be driven by the incentives of communities of practice operating in Member States

> **Failure to observe these 4 <u>principles</u> precludes recognition by UNESCO of a particular event as a MOST School.**
> **(Flexibility is allowed, however, at the level of the 8 "guidelines")**

> The use of the name, acronym and/or logo of UNESCO in relation to MOST Schools must comply with the specified conditions and procedures subject to rules laid down by the governing bodies of UNESCO which empower, by delegation, the Director-General and the National Commissions for UNESCO to authorize such use to other bodies. Regulations can be consulted at http://www.unesco.org/new/en/name-and-logo/

Principle 1: **Flexibility**: MOST Schools need to be responsive to specific contexts

Guideline 1.1 Make plans for diversified thematic Schools within the common domain of knowledge brokering.

Success Criterion 1.1.1: **Thematic Responsiveness**. The particular thematic focus of each MOST School reflects the specific needs that in terms of knowledge brokering exists in the national contexts in which Schools are organized.

Intent of this success criterion: To enable organizers of Schools to flexibly decide the thematic and sub-thematic agendas of Schools.

Guideline 1.2 Utilize a context-sensitive format for MOST Schools.

Success Criterion 1.2.1: **Context-driven format**. The format of all MOST Schools reflects context-specific cultural notions and practices, the availability of local resources for training, and differentiated levels of envisioned training.

Intent of this success criterion: To enable local stakeholders to design their own organizational arrangements for the Schools.

Principle 2: **High quality:** Capacity development through the Schools must comply with scholarly standards of excellence and with advanced training practices

Guideline 2.1 Utilize updated and trustworthy knowledge for the preparation of the Schools

Success Criterion 2.1.1: **Pedagogical soundness**. All MOST Schools incorporate state-of-the art participative pedagogical models

Intent of this success criterion: To ensure the application of a pedagogical model in which the trainees partake in experiences that involve actively constructing new knowledge and understanding.

Success Criterion 2.1.2 **Valued knowledge**. MOST Schools make use of the best available social science knowledge which might be appropriate for the specific circumstances of the School.

Intent of this success criterion: To ensure that trainees develop skills and abilities which are up to the task of disseminating knowledge of high scholarly standards.

Guideline 2.2 Prepare MOST Schools centered on comprehensive training.

Success Criterion 2.2.1: **All inclusive training**. MOST Schools provide in-classroom and workplace training plus supplementary services such as mentoring and supporting the operation of communities of practice.

Intent of this success criterion: To support the quality of skills training interventions through the combination of different training approaches which goes beyond the theoretical components.

Principle 3: **Accelerating dissemination:** Schools must adopt an escalating strategy for spreading knowledge

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Guideline 3.1 Utilize, as much as possible, a "Training of Trainers" (TOT) approach for MOST Schools

Success Criterion 3.1.1: **Consistency**. The TOT approach is the cross-cutting methodology utilized in all MOST Schools, notwithstanding their contextual particularities.

Intent of this success criterion: To provide organizers of Schools, whenever feasible, with a core platform for minimal standardization that will allow to operate in specific contexts while at the same time achieving "economies of effort" (i.e. possibility of designing a standard TOT module for part of the core curriculum of the training).

Success Criterion 3.1.2: **Learning and adaptation**. The TOT approach facilitates swift adaptive upgrading of MOST Schools by drawing on the experiences of a diversified network anchored on a common training approach.

Intent of this success criterion: To enable organizers of Schools to ensure a common basis for improving collective learning, for reducing learning times, and for eventually improving the project.

Guideline 3.2 Conduct "second tier" national capacity development programmes to be delivered by trainees from MOST Schools, whenever possible

Success Criterion 3.2.1: **Rapid knowledge diffusion**. MOST Schools function as a tool for optimizing the utilization of local training resources in disseminating relevant knowledge.

Intent of this success criterion: To enable the multiplication of stakeholders, in a given jurisdiction, with adequate knowledge on the research-policy nexus that might contribute to enhanced public policies.

Principle 4: **National ownership**: MOST Schools need to be driven by the incentives of communities of practice operating in Member States

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Guideline 4.1 Ensure that MOST National Committees (NCs) – where they exist – or National Commissions for UNESCO (NatComs) are fully informed about proposals for MOST Schools and that support is sought in conformity with national rules and practices

Success Criterion 4.1.1: **Institutional accountability**. MOST NCs and/or NatComs are fully informed about all proposals for MOST Schools, and where necessary invited to approve them, and are involved in resource mobilization as appropriate in national circumstances.

Intent of this success criterion: To ensure that MOST schools will not be stand-alone learning exercises but a more stable mechanism for context-specific learning organized by Member States with the assistance of the MOST Programme.

Success Criterion 4.1.2: **National capacity-building programmes**. MOST NCs and NatComs facilitate alignment of Schools with national training initiatives.

Intent of this success criterion: To ensure the effective deployment of the capabilities of MOST NCs and/or NATCOMS to optimize the tailored application of MOST Schools to specific training needs in Member States.

> Guideline 4.2 Build Communities of Practice around MOST Schools, whenever possible

Success Criterion 4.2.1: **Consolidation of Communities of Practice**. MOST Schools transform and/or consolidate a given group of young trainers (young social scientists, government officials and representatives from civil society) into a relatively stable social configuration: a TOT community of practice.

Intent of this success criterion: To strengthen TOT communities of practice of young stakeholders who have the capacity, ability, incentives and time to train others on issues that may be relevant to the research-policy nexus.

III. EVALUATION

The performance of MOST Schools is assessed through a two-tier system:

- **Short-term assessment** based on the evaluation process conducted during each school (grounded on participatory evaluation)

Performance Objectives	Indicator	Numerator	Denominator	Benchmark
Individual & collective assessment of the in-classroom experience of trainees	Positive satisfaction of trainees	Number of participants who assigns a "positive" value to individual evaluation questionnaires at the end of the in-classroom phase of the school	Total participants in the school	At least 70%

- **Mid-term assessment** based on the assessment of one performance objectives: (a) enlargement of the pool of trainers; and (b) participation in a TOT community of practice

Performance Objectives	Indicator	Numerator	Denominator	Benchmark
Continuity	Follow-up rate	Number of MOST Schools implemented in subsequent year	Number of MOST Schools implemented in previous year	At least 110%
Sustainability	Local funding rate	Share of total budget provided by local organizers	Total costs of the school	At least 80%

IV. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The presentation below is designed to be compatible with the monitoring & evaluation methodology utilized by UNESCO (System of Information on Strategies, Tasks and the Evaluation of Results – SISTER). Specific indicators in these guidelines refer to 2016-17 and will be subject to periodic revision and updating.

Key Output/Deliverable N°1

Relevant skills for knowledge brokering communicated to stakeholders

	Performance indicator (PI)	Quantitative and/or qualitative Target/Benchmark (T) 2016-2017
1	Number of trainees in MOST Schools	Total trainees: 150 At least 30 trainees in each region (Eastern Europe; Latin America and the Caribbean; Asia and the Pacific; Africa; Arab Region)
2	Continuity	Increase of 10% in the number of MOST Schools implemented in subsequent years

V. GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY

Capacity development: The approaches, strategies and methodologies used to improve performance at the individual, organisational or broader system level.

Source: Bolger, J. (2000) 'Capacity Development: Why, What and How'. Capacity Development Occasional Series 1(1). Gatineau: CIDA

Communities of Practice (CoPs) are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor. CoPs are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. Three elements are crucial in distinguishing a community of practice from other groups and communities: (a) *the domain* (A CoP is something more than a network of connections between people. It has an identity defined by a shared domain of interest. It implies a commitment to the domain, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people; (b) *the community* (Members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other); and (c) t*he practice* (Members of a community of practice are practitioners. They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems – in short a shared practice. This takes time and sustained interaction)

Source: The originators of the concept were Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, in 1991, and it was refined later. **http://infed.org/mobi/jean-lave-etienne-wenger-and-communities-of-practice/**

Social Integration is a dynamic and principled process in which societies engage in order to further human development. Successful social integration processes encourage "coming together" while respecting differences, and consciously and explicitly putting great value on maintaining diversity. Social integration represents the attempt not to make people adjust to society, but rather to ensure that society is accepting of all people

Source: "Working" definition adopted by UNDESA.
http://undesadspd.org/socialintegration/definition.aspx

Social inclusion is the process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities - that everyone, regardless of their background, can achieve their full potential in life. Such efforts

include policies and actions that promote equal access to (public) services as well as enable citizen's participation in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Source: "Working" definition adopted by UNDESA.
http://undesadspd.org/socialintegration/definition.aspx

Social cohesion is a related concept that parallels that of social integration in many respects. A socially cohesive society is one where all groups have a sense of belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition and legitimacy. Such societies are not necessarily demographically homogenous. Rather, by respecting diversity, they harness the potential residing in their societal diversity (in terms of ideas, opinions, skills, etc.). Therefore, they are less prone to slip into destructive patterns of tension and conflict when different interests collide.

Source: "Working" definition adopted by UNDESA.
http://undesadspd.org/socialintegration/definition.aspx

Training of Trainers (TOT): Theoretical or practical training for teachers and trainers which may include the following cases: (a) is for teaching/training personnel, either practising: (i) as professional teachers or trainers (ii) as professionals in a given field who accompany trainees in their work environment (occasional teachers or trainers); (b) covers a wide range of skills: knowledge specific c to the field in question (general, technical or scientific c); educational, psychological and sociological skills; management skills; familiarity with the world of work; and knowledge of training schemes and target audience; (c) also covers training related to course design, organisation and implementation as well as the content of training activities, i.e. imparting knowledge, know-how and skills.

SOURCE: Terminology of European education and training policy-a selection of 100 key terms. CEDEFOP, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2008 http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/13125.aspx

ANNEX II

GUIDELINES FOR MOST NATIONAL COMMITTEES

1.   Introduction

These guidelines are designed to frame the thinking and guide the efforts of relevant country-level parties throughout the initial stages of designing and establishing MOST National Committees as recommended by the MOST strategy. Recognizing variations in national systems of social science knowledge valorisation across policy and planning circles, the guidelines are flexible. They provide three possible scenarios on which interested parties can draw when designing and deciding upon the functioning of such bodies with reference the sectoral and national needs of each jurisdiction.

2.   Definition

MOST National Committees are country-level extensions of the MOST Programme. The term "National Committee" stands for a platform with a defined mandate, structure, membership and institutional affiliation put in place to pursue a coherent agenda that furthers valorisation of social science research across policy and planning processes at national and, where applicable, sub-national levels. A MOST National Committee is thus more than just a national focal point for MOST or a research network established under MOST. As further discussed below, National Committees also have functions in relation to international cooperation and reporting to government bodies.

National Committees may be permanent or ad hoc mechanisms. In both case, due consideration is paid to continuity and sustainability of the work of the Committees in the jurisdictions they belong to.

3.   Relation to the MOST Programme

MOST National Committees are anchored in the MOST Programme through their cooperation with:

(i)   The IGC and its Bureau which review requests and approve a MOST designation for a newly-created National Committee, as well as receive, through the MOST Secretariat, and consider periodic reports on the work of the Committees.

(ii)   SAC which may be requested by the IGC and its Bureau to review periodic reports on the work of the Committees from a technical and scientific perspective and to advise the aforementioned governing bodies accordingly.

(iii)   The MOST Secretariat (at Headquarters and regional levels) which may be requested to provide technical support on the establishment and functioning of Committees; receives, aggregates and presents the IGC and its Bureau with the report on the work of the Committees; and links the Committees with the MOST Programme and its other relevant components.

The Committees also liaise regularly and explore avenues for cooperation with similar bodies within and beyond their respective regions.

When it comes to reaching beyond the MOST Programme, the Committees are advised to establish and maintain strong and meaningful relations with the UNESCO National Commissions of their countries, as per UNESCO established practice. Such relations allow the Committees to participate more fully in UNESCO affairs, as well as to contribute to international discussion and decision making for UNESCO in which the National Commissions play an important role.

4. Mandate and lines of work

MOST National Committees are mandated with improving the fit of social sciences with policy and planning processes at the country level. Such a mission typically takes the Committees in the directions of:

(i) Building institutional and human capacity for quality social science research;

(ii) Addressing structural barriers, loopholes and challenges faced with respect to valorization of social science knowledge in different institutional and sectoral settings; and

(iii) Fostering research demand and capacities to utilize such knowledge in policy and planning processes.

In other words, these lines of work focus both the capacities of all stakeholder groups and on the efficiency of the processes that link these actors.

Underlined should be the fact that, like MOST itself, the Committees are typically concerned with both factual and normative issues related to social science research valorisation. That is, their work goes beyond determining what is and what is not the case to advancing proposals and measures for how positive developments in this area can be brought about and sustained. However, depending on the type of Committee, one of the aforementioned aspects may be more prominently featured than the other in its work.

4. Types of MOST National Committees

Depending on how the Committees are established, three broad types can be distinguished. The indicative areas of work and possible institutional configurations/settings for each of the three types are elaborated below. Note that these are flexible and may vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. A hybrid of these three types may also apply.

4.1 Type 1: Policy and advisory committee

Such Committees are usually established by a governmental body. Their institutional affiliation at the country level may be with Parliaments, through relevant parliamentary commissions and committees, line Ministries (e.g., social development, science and technology, international cooperation), National Academies of Science and/or National Research Councils. Given that such Committees stem from a political decision, they are may be expected to be authoritative bodies.

The primary role of these Committees is the establishment of sound policy and regulatory frameworks that enable valorisation of social science knowledge across policy and planning circles. This is typically pursued through:

(i) Provision of strategic and policy advice to parliaments, line ministries and other relevant governmental institutions at national and, where applicable, sub-national levels.

(ii) Direct participation in relevant policy (not limited to science policy) processes to adequately reflect and, where applicable, mainstream main concerns related to the social science-policy nexus.

(iii) Analysis of normative and structural conditions in different institutional and sectoral settings that impact the aforementioned nexus.

(iv) Formulation of proposals for corrective measures and publishing of recommendations targeting, in particular, policy and decision makers from all stakeholder groups;

(v) Advocacy and awareness raising, particularly at the upstream level, on the need and options to foster the fit of social science and policy.

(vi) Provision of a high level forum for debate and deliberations that bring together all concerned stakeholder groups.

Given the scope of these Committees, they are usually composed of members with expertise in normative and structural issues related to social science research and its infrastructure, on the one hand, and policy and planning, on the other. The size of these Committees should be kept manageable to encourage efficiency and consensus building, especially under time constrains often associated with policy and decision making processes in which the Committees are involved. Smaller size, however, should not jeopardize the representativeness of these bodies.

4.2 Type 2: Practice-oriented committee

This second type of MOST National Committee is typically established by non-governmental bodies, such as professional organizations, research institutes or research centres, universities, or NGOs. Irrespective of the organization they are affiliated with, these Committees bring on board, due to the very nature of the MOST Programme, representatives of all stakeholder groups (i.e., should a Committee be attached to a university or a social science research network, its outreach and work will still extend to non-academic actors and matters of policy and planning rather than only social science infrastructure).

Recognition of such a body as a MOST National Committee requires formal approval by the relevant governmental authorities according to nationally applicable regulations.

The main concern of such Committees is the establishment and support of sound professional practices that advance a stronger fit of social sciences and policy. This implies focused efforts to:

(i) Enquire into the conditions of social science knowledge valorization and publish actionable and, *inter alia*, practice-oriented proposals and recommendations.

(ii) Participate in policy and decision making, especially by seeking, aggregating and feeding into such processes the views of the practitioners.

(iii) Support, particularly through capacity building in all stakeholder groups, social science research infrastructure, as well as data diffusion and utilization processes in various sectoral and institutional settings.

(iv) Form and sustain hybrid communities of advanced producers and users of social science research who are well positioned to identify and advance able and innovative practices.

(v) Advocate and raise awareness, particularly at the practitioner level, on the need for an adequate social science-policy nexus and on options to deliver against such a target.

(vi) Advance exchanges and debate amongst and beyond the immediate members of the Committee.

These Committees are usually composed of advanced practitioners – producers and users, as well as those with hybrid roles, of social science research. The reach of the Committees may extend beyond their immediate members to tap into their respective networks and institutions. In such

cases, which are potentially beneficial, the Committee becomes, in essence, a network of networks.

The size of these practice-oriented Committees varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. But, given their broader membership and scope, they are typically larger than the first – policy and advisory – type of MOST National Committee. This fact allows for the creation, if necessary, of sectorally and/or geographically-focused sub-committees.

4.3 Type 3: National Commission-affiliated Committee

The third type of MOST National Committee refers to those structures that are established by, and function as a part of, National Commissions for UNESCO. They may be designed as separate structures within the National Commissions or as parts of broader sub-Committees for Social and Human Sciences or Sciences, depending on the specific institutional structures established in the relevant National Commission. The work of the MOST National Committees may extend, however, beyond the Ministries or any other governmental bodies the National Commissions may be attached to. If the National Commission for UNESCO is, for example, a part of the Ministry of Education, the MOST National Committee may need to reach to, and work with, other relevant governmental bodies and actors outside the traditional education community.

These Committees tackle the goal of social science research valorisation through a mix of policy- and/or practice-oriented interventions. What differentiates these Committees from the other two types is not necessarily the level of their interventions but the ways in which they operate. That is, these Committees typically work through, and as part of, their host National Commissions. This allows them to tap into the existing networks of national counterparts and established channels to:

(i)   Feed into, and contribute to, national agenda and priority setting processes related to the fit of science and policy in which National Commissions play an important role.

(ii)   Conduct, especially in conjuncture with other sub-Committees, integrative research and enquiries into the aforementioned matter.

(iii)   Formulate and adequately integrate advocacy messages and recommendations, be they policy and/or practice-oriented, into those of the Commissions.

(iv)   Develop and implement joint programmatic interventions with the rest of sub-Committees and arms of the host organization.

(v)   Include the MOST stakeholder groups into the relevant forums and deliberations managed by the Commission.

This type of Committee may be easier to set up. They should not be, however, approached as add-ons with sporadic activities but as permanent platforms with a well-defined and coherently pursued course of action.

The size of these structures is typically smaller as compared to the other two scenarios, especially when they are set up as parts of existing sub-Committees for Social and Human Sciences or Sciences. This fact informs the need for a careful selection of a limited number of individuals who are able to consistently invest the required efforts into the MOST agenda.

5.   Composition

The size of a MOST National Committee is dictated by sectoral needs, internal organization of the jurisdictions they belong to, and the considerations of design discussed section 4. In all cases, however, the trade-off between manageable size, efficiency, including of consensus building processes, and representativeness of these bodies is to be duly considered.

All Committees are transparent in their procedures of appointment and renewal of membership, as well as the application of such regulations. Throughout these processes, due attention is paid to the following:

(i)   Balanced representation of all stakeholder groups, so as to include relevant governmental and non-governmental social science research actors, policy makers and planners, civil society, development community and, if applicable, private sector.

(ii)   Adequate coverage in terms of both sectoral policies and social science disciplines represented in and by the Committees.

(iii)   Full inclusion of traditionally underrepresented groups, particularly of women and young people coming from all stakeholder groups.

6. Funding

MOST National Committees should carefully consider how they acquire funding for their programmatic interventions and their own functioning. The National Committees and the concerned Member States are responsible for the sustainability of these bodies and their work.

Typical sources of funding include, but are not limited to, governmental allocations, including through national research councils and national research grants; contributions, including in-kind, from host institutions; work of the Committees themselves, such as revenue-generating publications and conferences; bi- and multi-lateral funding mechanisms; private and other non-governmental donors; and UNESCO Participation Programme. It is to be underlined that, although not assuming responsibility for direct funding of the National Committees, UNESCO can, to a limited extent, provide assistance through the Participation Programme for particular projects. Such applications follow the standard process and are subject to a competitive selection.