

*Partnership with  
the Private Sector*



**Section for UNESCO Clubs and New Partnerships**

**Division of Relations with National Commissions  
and New Partnerships**

**Sector for External Relations and Cooperation**

# Partnership with the Private Sector

## Why does UNESCO work with the private sector?

For several years now, the United Nations system has attached growing importance to relations with the private sector. It is not only that the number and scope of such relations are growing steadily, but, above all, their nature has considerably diversified to range beyond purely financial objectives to ensure regular dialogue, consultation and interaction. Recent approaches to partnership with the private sector now aim to mobilize the full range of its specific resources in the service of sustainable development.

### Context

The policy for UNESCO's cooperation with the private sector derives from the Guidelines adopted by the United Nations in 2000. This is underpinned by the Global Compact whose nine universal principles provide a framework of standards for the business world and facilitate the integration of social values into the processes linked to the production of commercial goods and services. Private sector stakeholders involved in this development-oriented dynamic include multinational companies, foundations, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and professional bodies representing the business community. These partnerships serve to illustrate the close link between sustainable development and the creation of wealth through commercial activity.

### UNESCO's experience

UNESCO has worked with several hundreds of private sector partners: multinational companies, SMEs, private foundations, economic, academic and professional associations, philanthropic bodies and individuals. The co-operation demonstrates the breadth of interaction now under way with the private sector and includes partners such as the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, the International Chamber of Commerce and international business schools. There is now growing practical collaboration with the business sector itself beyond donations to UNESCO activities. Recently, institutional partnerships have been established with international commercial groups such as Rhône-Poulenc (Aventis), L'Oréal, DaimlerChrysler, Hewlett Packard and Suez. Their purpose – in a medium-term perspective – is to mobilize the business world, with its expertise and networks, its high-quality services, equipment and considerable financial resources, to assist in the achievement of UNESCO's objectives. Finally, UNESCO has cooperated with professional and volunteer groups from the private sector, such as Rotary International, Lions Clubs International and the Junior Chamber of Commerce (JAYCEES) to promote the involvement of citizens in UNESCO's activities. At the national level, UNESCO facilitates various operations carried out in synergy with governments and NGOs. Special attention is being paid to mobilizing contacts with and support from the private sector at country level since over 90% of each country's GNP is generated by local business. National Commissions for UNESCO, in accordance with their mandate defined in their 1978 Charter, are charged with mobilizing local outreach to these diverse private sector partners. Such partnerships, whether international, regional, national or local, can help ensure that commercial investments contribute to the overall goal of sustainable development.

### The objectives

The specific objectives pursued by UNESCO in its links with private partners are, in particular:

- ◆ to analyse strategic alliances established in the United Nations system and other global institutions enabling UNESCO's policy in this area to evolve constantly
- ◆ to organize consultations, in particular with intermediary professional and specialist associations, so as to take advantage of the wide-ranging expertise of the private sector
- ◆ to develop a practical partnership system to define the specific roles of current and future partners
- ◆ to develop further the regulatory and organizational framework for the establishment of partnerships (guidelines, a guide, internal manual for the sectors, field offices, National Commissions and other networks affiliated to UNESCO)
- ◆ to attract other partners, establish new links and mechanisms for cooperation with different types of partners, and implement flagship "multipartnerships" that could be used as models.

### Operational flexibility within an established partnership framework

UNESCO offers a variety of arrangements for partnerships between its global, regional, national and local networks, on the one hand, and private sector entities, both institutional and individual, on the other. A specific format is created for each partnership according to the interests of the partners and in the general context of the contractual standards and provisions governing all the Organization's partnerships. These provisions include:

- ◆ consultation of the National Commission of the Member State concerned, in particular to obtain assurances as to the reliability of the partner in question
- ◆ relevance of the partnership to UNESCO's strategic and programme priorities
- ◆ balance between the substantive contribution made by the partner and what UNESCO offers in return
- ◆ implementation of the partnership in keeping with ethical requirements, in particular transparency and accountability.

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