Item 34 of the provisional agenda

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO IN THE DECENTRALIZATION PROCESS

SUMMARY

In accordance with 171 EX/Decision 64 (Greater cooperation between National Commissions and UNESCO field offices), the Director-General hereby presents a document on the involvement of National Commissions in the decentralization process.

The primary objective of this document is to address the cooperation between National Commissions and UNESCO field offices, outlining the respective roles of National Commissions and field offices in the context of the decentralization process, the steps that have been taken to this end, the challenges ahead, and recommendations for next steps. A proposed decision is attached.

Decision proposed: paragraph 22.
I. INTRODUCTION

1. In 2005, having examined document 171 EX/58 entitled “Greater cooperation between National Commissions and UNESCO field offices”, the Executive Board, by 171 EX/Decision 64, reaffirmed the need for the UNESCO field offices and the National Commissions to work in close cooperation through mutual and regular consultations, in accordance with UNESCO’s Constitution and the Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO. The decision invited the Director-General to prepare guidelines for such cooperation and consultation, to report to the 33rd session of the General Conference on steps taken on this issue, and to submit to the 174th session of the Executive Board a document on the involvement of National Commissions in the decentralization process.

2. In response to that decision, guidelines have been prepared, attached as an annex and are elaborated upon in this document. In addition, the requested report to the 33rd session of the General Conference was provided in document 33 C/INF.4.

3. The present document responds to the request to submit a document on the involvement of National Commissions in the decentralization process to the 174th session of the Executive Board.

4. This document for consideration by the Executive Board reports on the involvement of National Commissions in the decentralization process by examining the respective roles of National Commissions and field offices, the synergies between the two, and the status of the ongoing effort to assure full cooperation, and the challenges ahead. A recommendation for consideration by the Executive Board is included in paragraph 22.

II. NATIONAL COMMISSIONS

5. National Commissions constitute a unique network within the United Nations family of agencies because they were established in each Member State to act as a bridge between governments and non-governmental bodies with a view to helping UNESCO promote its objectives and expand its activities. National Commissions participate in the elaboration, implementation and evaluation of UNESCO’s programme in accordance with Article VII of the UNESCO Constitution, and the Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO adopted by the General Conference in 1978. According to the Constitution and the Charter, National Commissions should advise both their governments and national partners on issues related to UNESCO, facilitate contacts and cooperation between UNESCO and their country, disseminate information on UNESCO activities to the public, and implement the various programmes and projects of the Organization in their country.

6. In playing this recognized role, National Commissions have contributed to the advancement of the decentralization process through their varied and expanding cooperation with the field office network and with recognized UNESCO institutes and centres. In this regard, National Commissions exemplify the recommendations for country-specific action, advocated in the 2004 Report of the High-Level Panel on Relations between the United Nations and Civil Society (i.e. the Cardoso Report) commissioned by the Secretary-General as part of the United Nations reform with the aim of expanding and optimizing outreach activities to deal with development issues more effectively.

7. In its 2000 report, the Task Force on UNESCO in the Twenty-First Century recommended the renovation and fuller mobilization of the National Commissions’ network. Consequently, over the past five years, both Member States and the UNESCO Secretariat have given priority to further empowering National Commissions so that they may assume their responsibilities with enhanced effectiveness. The Capacity-Building Plan of Action for National Commissions, established in
2001, offers training through a menu of some 60 topics of vital importance for these bodies. Within this framework, some 93 training activities involving 2,000 staff of National Commissions have taken place.

8. This action has included a number of key objectives: refocusing the Statutory and Quadrennial Conferences of National Commissions to concentrate on major programme initiatives; streamlining the Director-General’s regional consultations on the draft programme and budget by basing these first on cluster and then on regional meetings so as to assure a bottom-up approach to planning on the draft C/4 and draft C/5 documents; the holding of numerous training seminars and workshops for all levels of National Commission staff both at Headquarters and in the field with particular attention to promoting the cluster concept that underpins the decentralization process; and the provision of office equipment, mainly via the Participation Programme, to support the managerial capacities of National Commissions.

9. Solid outcomes and positive impact have resulted from these activities, according to an informal survey conducted among National Commissions by the UNESCO Secretariat in early 2005. Significant progress has been made in the following areas where National Commissions better promote the presence of UNESCO in its Member States:

- **Governance**: An informal group of Presidents and Chairs of National Commissions has been established to examine the global issues affecting National Commissions and to sensitize the governing bodies and the Director-General to the status and roles of National Commissions;

- **Programming**: National Commissions take a more proactive part in the planning of UNESCO’s programme through regular cluster consultations, which ensure a grass-roots approach leading to the wider regional consultations;

- **Visibility**: UNESCO activities (as well as those of National Commissions) are better known in their respective countries as a result of the extensive media relations training regularly conducted by the ERC Sector in cooperation with the Bureau of Public Information and the ICT tools and services developed are now widely used by National Commissions;

- **Partnerships**: National Commissions cooperate more closely with both UNESCO key partners and longstanding programme networks at the country level. These include National Committees for UNESCO intergovernmental programmes (MAB, IHP, IOC, MOST, WHC, IPDC, etc.), Associated Schools, the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme, Clubs, Centres and Associations for UNESCO, parliamentarians, cities, the private sector, and local NGOs.

- **Networking**: National Commissions share their respective rich expertise and experience through staff exchanges, joint projects, and twinning arrangements.

### III. DECENTRALIZATION

10. To enhance its global efficiency, UNESCO has reorganized its decentralized network into a system comprising 53 offices throughout the world. This structure brings the programme closer to the Member States while, at the same time, assuring the unified nature of the Organization’s reflection and action. The key approach has been to organize cooperation around 21 cluster offices, which serve groups of countries. Large countries (e.g. E-9 States) or those facing particular
problems have national offices. All these offices receive support from the regional bureaux, each of which has a specific area of expertise.

11. As a tenet of the reform process and of results-based management, this structure forms an overall whole with UNESCO’s Headquarters and the institutes. It works in tandem with the National Commission network, which effectively mobilizes knowledge and operational networks that promote UNESCO’s objectives in Member States. As the front line of that overall structure, UNESCO’s cluster offices are in particular expected to:

- represent UNESCO, namely the Director-General, in the Member States of their cluster;
- facilitate cooperation between Member States of the cluster in the Organization’s fields of competence, both inside the cluster and with the rest of the world;
- provide support for all consultation processes resulting in the draft C/4, C/5 and other programming documents;
- manage UNESCO’s resources and leverage in the delivery of programmes in or with the Member States of their cluster;
- undertake, back up, support operations pertaining to the Organization’s fields of competence in the Member States of their cluster; and
- help bring international relevant expertise to the Member States of their cluster in UNESCO’s fields of competence.

12. Due to this strong and wide-ranging presence throughout the world, UNESCO can take part in all decentralized programming exercises conducted by the United Nations. The Organization’s own programming, based on cluster and regional consultations and carried out in close cooperation with National Commissions, is ever more linked to country-specific policies and strategies.

IV. SYNERGIES BETWEEN THE NATIONAL COMMISSIONS AND THE FIELD OFFICES

13. It is apparent that extensive synergies that greatly benefit UNESCO as a whole exist between the National Commissions and the field offices, a result of the close cooperation and involvement of National Commissions in the decentralization process. These synergies include:

- the sharing of networks and contacts;
- joint work on planning, budgeting and implementation;
- joint consultations and exchange of information; and
- liaison and outreach.

Assuring cooperation and collaboration between the National Commissions and UNESCO’s field offices should result in these synergies being released.

14. A major effort has already been mounted to foster these synergies, in the form of guidelines, as called for in 171 EX/Decision 64, which establish the basic principles of how National Commissions and field offices should work together. Even prior to the Executive Board decision, a
first draft of the recommended guidelines had already been elaborated in 2004 by a group of experienced National Commission Secretaries-General from Chile, Lebanon, Namibia, Slovenia and Uzbekistan and field office directors from Bamako, Beirut, Jakarta, Lima and Venice. This draft text was widely circulated for comment and improvement during 2004, including at the five regional consultations on the Draft Programme and Budget for 2006-2007 in Aruba, Mozambique, New Zealand, Switzerland and Yemen. Comments from National Commissions and field office directors were duly incorporated into the text. These guidelines were again discussed in 2005, put into the present form in October 2005, and most recently distributed at the regional meetings of the National Commissions during the General Conference. They were also made available to the delegates at the 33rd session of the General Conference, to complement document 33 C/INF.4.

15. These guidelines, entitled “Guidelines for interface and cooperation between UNESCO field offices and National Commissions for UNESCO” provide a description of the functions, roles and responsibilities, and, most importantly, modalities of cooperation between National Commissions and field offices. In specific terms, the guidelines describe how National Commissions and field offices should work together with respect to consultation for the C/4 and C/5 documents, country-level consultations, cluster-level consultations, bilateral consultations, exchange of information and participation in events.

16. While these guidelines have been widely discussed, they do not have a particular status. Steps that the Executive Board could consider, in order to take advantage of the work that has been done, and to assure that a framework for cooperation is put into place at the earliest opportunity, would be to take note of them, giving them the support of the governing body; to encourage making them operational, so that both National Commissions and field offices are charged with implementing them; and to indicate that these guidelines should continue to be improved and updated to allow them to evolve based upon experience and the challenges ahead.

V. CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

17. It is clear there are challenges ahead to which the field offices and the National Commissions will need to adapt. For instance, the growing role of UNESCO’s action in the overall integrated programming of each country reflects the streamlined coordination under way at the highest levels of the United Nations itself. In turn, this may affect the way in which the Organization profiles and manages its activities at the national level to participate in broader national strategies and programmes, rather than to implement sporadic or scattered field operations. In several domains (EFA, culture, free flow of information, preventive education to combat disease and natural disasters, the culture of peace), UNESCO is well placed to play a lead role. However, its ability to play this role is directly related to the diverse competencies that it can mobilize throughout the world. This, in turn, opens the possibility of a larger role for one of the essential functions of the National Commissions, which is to map, assess and mobilize the wide range of competencies available in their respective countries. In the new landscape of international cooperation, this may present a golden opportunity to deepen the integration between National Commissions, with their informed access to the potential of their country, and the Secretariat, which is charged with implementing UNESCO’s programme.

18. In addition, there remains the challenge of assuring that the implementation of the policies on cooperation is carried out as intended. The General Conference, for instance, reinforced the role of National Commissions in 33 C/Resolution 72, authorizing a plan of action that pays particular attention to “enhancing the role of National Commissions as UNESCO’s main intermediaries in its activities at the national level”. There are also a number of General Conference resolutions, including 27 C/Resolution 13.12 and 30 C/Resolution 83, requiring the Secretariat to consult the
National Commission of a Member State on activities that involve that Member State or its nationals. In addition, the UNESCO Constitution itself, in its Article VII, establishes as one of the responsibilities of National Commissions to function as “agencies of liaison in all matters of interest to it”. The guidelines also speak of the responsibilities of the directors of field offices and Secretaries-General of National Commissions to regularly inform each other on their activities.

19. For these ongoing challenges, it would be advisable to assure an ongoing consideration of issues arising in the relationship between National Commissions and field offices in the context of the fora in which they come together – the country level, cluster level and bilateral (i.e. field office-single National Commission) consultations, to assure that the modalities for cooperation between National Commissions and field offices continue to be refined. Consequently, the Executive Board may wish to recommend that the involvement of National Commissions in the decentralization process be part of the agenda of the upcoming C/4-C/5 consultations, as well as other consultations and training opportunities during the biennium, leading to an evaluation of the success of this cooperation as part of the overall evaluation of decentralization to be undertaken in 2008.

VI. CONCLUSION

20. The relationship between the National Commissions and UNESCO’s field offices is of great significance to the development of UNESCO’s capacities in Member States. National Commissions are the component of UNESCO that can enhance the Organization’s presence, visibility, networks and partnerships in Member States. Field offices, through the cluster office structure, mediate UNESCO’s in-country programmatic activities and increasingly participate in the decentralized United Nations system country programming exercises to develop country-specific policies and strategies. There are obviously many synergies that arise from the close cooperation of National Commissions and field offices in planning, information sharing, networking and increasing the visibility of UNESCO. Field offices and National Commissions each need to take advantage of the strengths and capacities of the other.

21. The work that has been accomplished on assuring greater cooperation between field offices and National Commissions, particularly the “Guidelines for interface and cooperation between UNESCO field offices and National Commissions for UNESCO”, needs to be recognized and endorsed. The next steps require the operationalization of the guidelines by making explicit how this cooperation will be put to work in terms of the challenges ahead, including UNESCO’s participation in United Nations system-wide planning for in-country activities and assuring the implementation of the decisions, policies and guidelines now in place to assure that the tight and integral cooperation envisioned becomes a reality. This should be on the agenda of the upcoming consultations for the C/4 and C/5 documents in particular, as well as other consultations and training opportunities in the upcoming biennium. Progress could then be monitored through the overall evaluation of decentralization to be undertaken in 2008.

Proposed draft decision

22. Taking into consideration the above-mentioned points, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 171 EX/Decision 64,

2. Having examined document 174/EX 34,
3. Acknowledging the previous steps taken in response to 171/EX Decision 64, including the development of guidelines, and the report to the 33rd session of the General Conference, contained in document 33 C/INF.4,

4. Desirous of assuring that the modalities of achieving cooperation between National Commissions and UNESCO field offices are in place,

5. Takes note of the “Guidelines for interface and cooperation between UNESCO field offices and National Commissions for UNESCO”, dated October 2005;

6. Urges that they be implemented by National Commissions and field offices and updated continuously to meet evolving challenges and ongoing needs;

7. Recommends that an examination of the implementation of the guidelines be part of the upcoming evaluation of decentralization in 2008;

8. Requests the Director-General to remain seized of the issue of assuring greater cooperation as part of the upcoming C/4 and C/5 processes and other upcoming consultations and training events;

9. Further requests the Director-General to take all appropriate steps to assure that full implementation of the modalities of cooperation between National Commissions and field offices, including consultation, be undertaken and assiduously followed.
GUIDELINES FOR INTERFACE AND COOPERATION BETWEEN UNESCO FIELD OFFICES AND NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO
The National Commissions for UNESCO and the UNESCO Secretariat pursue the same purpose under the Constitution of UNESCO, namely “to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations”.

These constituent elements of the common purpose, all unifying by nature, primarily require intellectual and moral solidarity on the part of all those who work to achieve it.

The directives below, drawn up by a joint group, seek to translate this principle into operational and practical arrangements.

The development of the Secretariat’s decentralization process, of which cluster offices are the key element, reflects the goal of providing better support for the efforts that Member States have undertaken by ratifying the Constitution of UNESCO “to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other’s lives”. A cluster office is by nature dedicated to fostering such cooperation.

The existence of specialized regional offices, institutes and national offices in some particular cases pertains to the Secretariat’s internal organization for operating the closely knit system composed of its Headquarters and its cluster offices.

The Organization’s unity of action remains the key concern of the National Commissions for UNESCO and the Secretariat, at Headquarters and in the field, which work together to accomplish UNESCO’s mandate. Such unity is all the more important in the light of the concerted pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals through ever closer, if not organic, cooperation among the organizations of the United Nations system and, even more broadly, with the international community. This ongoing dialogue is a vital element aimed at further strengthening cooperation among the various stakeholders guided by the Organization’s lofty endeavour in order to secure the expected results.
GUIDELINES FOR INTERFACE AND COOPERATION BETWEEN UNESCO FIELD OFFICES AND NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO

Introduction

The following guidelines have been developed in response to a need expressed repeatedly by National Commissions for UNESCO and were discussed by an informal Working Group of Secretaries-General and Directors/Heads of UNESCO field offices from all regions who met at UNESCO Headquarters on 28 and 29 January 2004.

These Guidelines outline the main areas of interface and cooperation between the UNESCO field network (and notably cluster offices) and the National Commissions for UNESCO: definition of each entity, their respective responsibilities and roles, and the modalities for planning and implementing UNESCO’s programme within the framework of the decentralization policy. They are based on legal texts of the Organization and decisions of its governing bodies in this respect. Furthermore, they were widely circulated for comments and suggestions and agreed upon by all concerned.

Mission statement

National Commissions and field offices together promote UNESCO’s ideals and principles.

WHO’S WHO?

National Commissions

- Are set up by Member States in accordance with Article VII of UNESCO’s Constitution and form a network for cooperation with Member States which is unique in the United Nations system;
- Are national entities responsible to their governments;
- Are broadly representative of governmental institutions and national bodies active in UNESCO’s fields of competence, as specified in the Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO;
- Contribute to the overall achievement of UNESCO’s mission as a key actor in helping to forge Member States’ views on the Organization’s strategies and programmes and in endorsing and promoting the visibility of UNESCO’s activities at national level;
- Cooperate among themselves and with other bodies at the regional and international level on matters of common concern that come within UNESCO’s competence, so as to optimize the impact of its programme and action.

Field offices

- Are an integral part of UNESCO’s Secretariat;
- Are responsible to the Director-General;
• As cluster or national offices represent UNESCO in, and cooperate with, United Nations country teams in the Member States they cover;

• Cooperate with relevant IGOs and partners as appropriate;

• As cluster or national offices, are the primary platform for the preparation and implementation of UNESCO’s regular programme and extrabudgetary activities in Member States.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**National Commissions**

**Advisory function**

- Advise representatives of their government on the Executive Board and their alternates as well as their delegations to the General Conference and other meetings convened by UNESCO;

- Advise national institutions and partners on UNESCO-related matters;

- At the invitation of the Internal Oversight Service (IOS), provide inputs to the biennial evaluation of field offices in the context of IOS’s reporting to the Executive Board;

- At the request of the UNESCO Secretariat, provide advice on possible linkages with national partners;

- Advise UNESCO’s Secretariat on other relevant issues, either on request or on their own initiative.

**Contribution to UNESCO’s planning/programming processes**

- Conduct timely national consultations with relevant governmental bodies and other stakeholders in order to identify and develop national priorities and strategies for cooperation with UNESCO, taking into account UNESCO’s mandates and priorities;

- Participate in consultations and cooperate with field offices and other National Commissions at the subregional, regional and interregional levels.

**Liaison and outreach function**

- Foster the linkage with and involvement in UNESCO’s activities of relevant governmental bodies, national institutions and other civil society stakeholders and individuals in order to obtain intellectual and professional inputs useful to the Organization, encouraging interdisciplinary dialogue and cooperation in the process;

- Help to forge new partnerships with national civil society organizations – grass-roots and volunteer groups, NGOs, the academic and professional communities, parliamentarians, local authorities, trade unions and the private sector – and promote UNESCO’s various networks (such as Associated Schools (ASP)) and programmes (such as UNESCO Chairs);
- Play proactive role in encouraging national entities to propose candidates for UNESCO prizes, participating in searching for candidates for vacant posts at UNESCO and placing UNESCO fellowship holders.

**Implementation function**

- In accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Conference, submit to UNESCO every biennium, after consulting with constituents’ Participation Programme requests;
- Evaluate their implementation and report back thereon to the Organization;
- Contribute on a contractual basis to activities under UNESCO’s regular programme and to extrabudgetary activities, ensuring that requirements for efficiency, effectiveness and accountability are observed;
- Provide, upon request, relevant information for programme execution, notably on the most appropriate national contractors, experts and partners;
- Coordinate national responses to UNESCO-conducted surveys and reports on national implementation of UNESCO’s standard-setting instruments;
- Undertake on their own initiative other activities at the national level in line with the general objectives of UNESCO;
- Seek support from potential donors at the national level for their own activities and where appropriate support field office initiatives in this respect;
- Assume responsibility for the proper use of the Organization’s name and emblem in their respective country.

**Information and advocacy function**

- Promote UNESCO’s ideals and disseminate information on the Organization’s activities and achievements, in order to strengthen UNESCO’s impact in the national community;
- Work actively with the national media in order to bring the above to the attention of the public at large.

**Field offices**

**Advocacy**

- Promote and advocate UNESCO’s ideals and objectives and disseminate them to governments, civil society, professional communities and the public at large;
- Assist governments, at their request, in the implementation of UNESCO’s standard-setting instruments.
• Planning function

- Analyse trends in the Organization’s fields of competence in the countries they cover in order to inform policy-making and action at national, subregional, regional and global level;

- Develop and coordinate national/cluster/regional strategic frameworks and operational plans, for both regular programme and extrabudgetary activities, as a major input to UNESCO’s overall planning process;

- Ensure that national priorities in UNESCO’s fields of competence are duly reflected in the United Nations Country Team’s Common Country Assessment (CCA), in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), and in joint activities for the advancement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as in the World Bank’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP);

- Draw up work plans for regular programme activities following consultations with National Commissions and ensure coherence and complementarities with Participation Programme requests.

• Implementation function

- Assist Member States in defining/refining policies and strategies in UNESCO’s areas of competence;

- Help Member States and other stakeholders to enhance and expand their capacities;

- Act as broker for good practice and expert services;

- Be responsible for the implementation of UNESCO’s regular programme and extrabudgetary activities in the countries they cover, consulting the National Commissions concerned and/or keeping them informed of progress, as appropriate;

- Within the framework of the approved programme respond to unforeseen challenges and opportunities arising in the field;

- Identify suitable contractors and partners for programme execution in line with efficiency, effectiveness and accountability requirements;

- Document successes, failures and lessons learned in the execution of activities.

• Fundraising function

- Assist Member States in identifying and formulating development projects and mobilize funds for UNESCO activities.

• Contributing to the visibility of UNESCO

- Promote international events which come within UNESCO’s fields of competence (e.g. international days and decades, launch of UNESCO reports, major conferences and meetings) in cooperation with National Commissions as appropriate;
- Maintain close relations with the media to ensure wide visibility, consulting National Commissions as appropriate to ensure complementarities;

- Disseminate information about UNESCO, and in particular field office activities, in order to strengthen UNESCO’s impact in the national and international communities.

**Clearing-house function**

- Gather, transfer, disseminate and share available information, knowledge and good practices, on innovative solutions in UNESCO’s fields of competence.

### MODALITIES OF COOPERATION

**Consultation for the C/4 and C/5 documents**

The modality of consultation for the preparation of the C/4 and C/5 documents emphasizes building regional inputs to the process from a base in country-level consultations. Country-level consultations are the province of Member States, through their National Commissions. Management of the linkage between country, cluster and regional consultation is the province of the Secretariat.

**Country-level consultations**

- **Who is in charge?**
  - The National Commission.

- **Who participates?**
  - All governmental and non-governmental stakeholders at country level. UNESCO field office(s) may also be invited to take part.

- **When do they take place?**
  - Ideally, one meeting before the cluster and regional consultations.

- **What are the outcomes?**
  - The countries’ input to the consultations on the C/4 and C/5 documents.

**Cluster-level consultations**

- **Who is in charge?**
  - The cluster office.

- **Who participates?**
  - National Commissions and within budget available, other stakeholders and experts as appropriate and as defined in consultation with National Commissions, National UNESCO offices in the cluster, representatives of regional bureaux and UNESCO Institutes, UNESCO programme sectors and central services as well as other United Nations agencies and other partners may participate in some of the meetings.
When do they take place?
- Ideally, at regular intervals during the biennium. The meetings on the preparation of the C/4 and C/5 documents should be held prior to the regional consultations of National Commissions. In between meetings, collective consultations may be conducted by email.

What are the outcomes? They include, at the appropriate times:
- Cluster/national strategic frameworks and operational plans to guide the implementation of the decentralized regular programme by the cluster office and any existing national offices, the identification of projects for submission to extrabudgetary funding sources and also action involving advocacy and communication;
- Assessment of results achieved and follow-up of the implementation of activities and projects;
- Review of management and coordination issues arising between the cluster office and National Commissions;
- Agreement on joint activities and increased synergy among National Commissions.

Bilateral consultations

Heads/Directors of cluster/national offices regularly consult the Secretaries-General of National Commissions on:

- The conceptualization of activities to be carried out at national level, within the cluster/national strategic frameworks agreed on at the cluster consultation;
- The identification of national partners.

Secretaries-General of National Commissions:

- Consult as appropriate with Heads/Directors of field offices to ensure complementarities between:
  - Participation Programme requests and UNESCO’s programme priorities and activities;
  - Events and activities organized by the National Commission and those organized by the national/cluster office and apply to regional bureaux for advice on the design of programmes, projects and activities coming within the Bureaux’ areas of competence and in consultation with the representative field office.

Exchange of information

Heads/Directors of field offices regularly inform Secretaries-General of National Commissions of:

- Visiting missions of UNESCO staff and consultants;
- Results of activities and projects carried out at the national level or which involve national participation;
- Significant developments at UNESCO.
• Secretaries-General of National Commissions regularly inform Heads/Directors of national/cluster offices of:

- National issues, statements, events, developments, policies that may affect UNESCO’s activities within its fields of competence;
- Their interactions with other parts of UNESCO;
- Their cooperation with regional IGOs and with NGOs active in UNESCO’s domains.

PARTICIPATION IN EVENTS

National Commissions and field offices reciprocate invitations to events they organize at the national level.