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Ensuring that Publications and Other Materials Released from UNESCO Meet Appropriate Quality Standards

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Table of Contents

<u>1. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY</u>	10
<u>2. CURRENT STATE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN UNESCO</u>	13
2.1 GUIDELINES WITHIN UNESCO	13
2.2 CURRENT PRACTICE IN QUALITY ASSURANCE	16
2.3 MONITORING LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT (MLA) AND RELATED PROGRAMMES	18
<u>3. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS - WHAT DO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS DO ?</u>	23
3.1 COMPARABLE ORGANIZATIONS	23
3.2 OTHER RELEVANT SECTORS	25
3.3 SUMMARY	27
<u>4. WHAT FACTORS DETERMINE THE RISK THAT UNESCO FACES FROM THE MATERIAL IT RELEASES?</u>	29
4.1 FACTORS WHICH DETERMINE THE LIKELIHOOD OF POOR QUALITY	29
4.2 FACTORS WHICH DETERMINE THE IMPACT OF A POOR QUALITY DOCUMENT	31
4.3 SUMMARY	32
<u>5. PRINCIPLES OF BEST PRACTICE</u>	33
5.1 PLANNING	33
5.2 EDITORIAL CONTROL	34
5.3 SELECTION OF AUTHORS	34
5.4 MATERIAL REVIEW	35
5.5 TESTING EFFECTIVENESS	37
5.6 COPY-EDITING, LEGAL CLEARANCE AND TRANSLATION	38
5.7 OTHER ISSUES IN DEVELOPING BEST PRACTICE	38
<u>6. FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	41
6.1 A RISK-BASED FRAMEWORK	42
6.2 IMPLEMENTATION	45
6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS	47
ANNEX I: STOCKTAKE	48
ANNEX II: BENCHMARKING EXERCISE, ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	65

Executive Summary and Recommendations

Background

1. UNESCO produces a large range of publications with a reported 700 outputs of various kinds in the last biennium. The contents range from monographs of a scientific nature to training materials and pamphlets with advocacy purposes. Many of them relate to different UNESCO objectives such as its normative function, training and capacity building, awareness raising, and simple provision of information. They vary hugely in the technical nature of their contents, although most materials have some type of technical information.
2. There have recently been concerns that poor quality material may have been released from UNESCO, and that procedures for ensuring that the materials are of an appropriate standard need strengthening. Consequently, there was a need to conduct a stocktake of quality assurance mechanisms which are currently in place in UNESCO (see Annex I). This was particularly triggered by the recent review¹ of Monitoring Learning Achievement Programme (MLA), where concerns had been raised over the quality of the materials released.
3. This report suggests the processes and practices which should be in place for ensuring the quality of materials that are produced by, for or with UNESCO, and released outside the Organization. It describes the results of a stocktake of practices in the Organization and a comparative analysis of the practices in other organizations which helped to develop a model of best practice. This enabled the evaluation team to identify gaps between current and best practice and to propose some potential processes to resolve the gaps that have been identified.

Findings (concerns and best practice observed)

Guidelines

4. The UNESCO Manual contains the only Organization-wide description of quality control processes associated with the release of materials. However it is difficult to follow and it is out of date. The guidelines in it were intended to apply only to publications (i.e. 'for sale' materials), and only a minority of interviewees referred the Manual as a quality control point of reference. Most importantly it contains only limited guidelines for procedures to ensure that the content of materials released is of an acceptable standard.
5. A number of attempts over the last two decades to develop quality assurance procedures, e.g. the establishment of a Consultative Committee on Publications and a Publications Board, were found, but these all appear to have failed or become non-operational.

¹ Postlethwaite, N., May 2004, An Evaluation of the MLA Programme.

Current Quality Assurance Practice in UNESCO

6. In terms of current practice, the following concerns emerged:
 - There was a lack of guidance provided as to what was an appropriate quality standard for material released to programme specialists and others involved in releasing material.
 - There was an over-reliance on authors to produce high quality work. Some specialists mentioned that their main quality control procedure was to select the leading international experts in a field as authors, and that this was likely to result in a high quality document.
 - There was uneven use of independent review which was not standard practice within the Organization. In some cases the programme specialists fulfilled the main review function, even when they were the authors.
 - There was considerable pressure to publish regardless of the quality, which arose through the need to publish in order to complete the project, or from the need to meet other objectives associated with the project. These pressures could be both internal and external.
 - There was infrequent testing of material to understand whether it was likely to achieve its intended purpose. UNESCO needs to see the quality of materials released not only in terms of its content, layout and style, but also in terms of its effectiveness in achieving its intended purpose.
7. However, the project also identified some best practice in managing quality including:
 - examples of books that were produced by UNESCO to which extremely stringent quality control had been applied. This included independent editorial control, multiple authorship with internal and external peer review, and very high standards of copy-editing.
 - training material that included structured review through external stakeholders, independent testing of the material's effectiveness, and review of potential legal issues associated with publication.
 - a set of education policy guidelines that had been produced through an extensive process of external consultation and internal review. The development of the guidelines included a series of iterative external consultations with both expert and other stakeholders, and presentation of the results at a high-level conference and feedback. The response from stakeholders was sought in a structured manner with questionnaires and feedback forms provided. The development of the document also involved formally recording the feedback received and the actions taken to address concerns with the document.

8. Quality assurance within UNESCO is very uneven. While some oversight does occur in some Sectors, no evidence was found of Organization wide processes that would ensure that only consistently high quality material is being released. It was beyond the limit of this review to establish the extent to which poor quality publications are being released, but it is clear that the Organization is exposed to significant risk. Indeed, very high profile materials were observed as having only rudimentary quality control programmes, and quality was dependant on the capabilities of a single individual.

Monitoring Learning Achievements (MLA) and Associated Programmes

9. The evaluation report on the MLA programme² and associated materials was reviewed for related information on quality assurance. The evaluation team found no evidence of appropriate quality assurance procedures operating.
10. Two other programmes which have similar aims to the MLA programme were identified: SACMEQ, which is a network of Southern African countries run out of the IIEP; and LLECE, which is run out of UNESCO's Santiago Office in Chile. From the limited review undertaken, the arrangements for quality control as reported in both SACMEQ and LLECE appear robust. However, an independent review will be required to verify the implementation of these processes and the quality of materials released by those two programmes. The reported inclusion of leading international experts in their oversight arrangements means that serious problems such as those experienced with the MLA programme are less likely.

Comparative Analysis

11. The review of other organizations indicates that relatively few have a fully comprehensive quality management process, but they do follow practices from which UNESCO can learn and consider applying. These include: the categorization of publications; the use of a risk-based approach at the planning stage and the inclusion of targeted review processes.

² Postlethwaite, N., May 2004, An Evaluation of the MLA Program.

Risk Framework

12. The evaluation team developed a framework of risk factors associated with poor quality. The risk factors were divided into those which determine the likelihood that a poor quality document would be produced, and those which determine the impact that a poor quality document would have. These are summarized below:

Table 1: Key risk characteristics and their determinants

	Lower probability of poor quality	Higher probability of poor quality
Authorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single author • Selected by internal specialists • Good programme coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple authors • Selected by external party • Poor programme coordination • Operating in isolation
Media Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For sale Publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free documents • Free materials • Materials on website
Subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single subjects • Low technicality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple subjects • High technicality
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient time allocated to determine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tight deadline • Pressure for delivery
Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient budget for external reviews, external editors, copy editing and translation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate budget
	Lower impact of poor quality	Higher impact of poor quality
Purpose of the material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information • Raise awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Educational
Profile of material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low profile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High profile
Sensitivity of Subject Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less sensitive subject 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitive subject

Best Practice

13. Six key elements of best practice in quality assurance were identified. These elements are: planning; selection of authors; editorial control; review; testing of effectiveness; and the copy-editing, legal and translation stage. For each of these elements there is a range of practices that can ensure quality and the appropriateness of their use will depend on the circumstances in which they are employed.

14. Quality assurance is not a management tool that can be bolted on to an existing structure to fix problems. Implementation of a quality assurance programme would be eased by an explicit management direction that the Organization aims to develop a practice of excellence in its externally-released material, and leadership which indicates that UNESCO needs to produce better targeted and higher quality materials with its resources.

Framework for Quality Assurance

15. Considering the great diversity of materials released by the Organization, a single defined policy runs a considerable risk of not being applied due to not being applicable to many situations. Furthermore, every Sector, section and team faces a different set of circumstances, which could easily impede putting the policy into practice. For these reasons the quality assurance mechanism to be applied needs to maintain a degree of flexibility so that it can be adjusted to local contexts.
16. Giving flexibility does not necessarily mean tolerating a loose quality assurance process. Standards can be set in such a way that they are stringent, but allow staff to explore optimal, innovative, cost-effective and sustainable approaches to achieving quality. This report proposes a risk-based approach to managing quality. The approach seeks to minimize the risk of poor quality materials being released, yet allows tailoring of the quality assurance process to the circumstances of the Sector and the material being produced. The proposed framework has three main stages and an oversight role:³
- Step 1. Standard setting: establishment of quality assurance plans with quality standards to be met for different categories of material according to the risk they pose. These would be produced at the Sector, Central Service and Field Office level.
 - Step 2. Documentation: when material would be released, it is accompanied by documentation that describes the quality assurance process that was followed. The person who has the authority to approve release would need to review this before giving approval.
 - Step 3. Approval: a relevant delegated authority would consider the material and its associated quality control against the standards set for the area and material type. Approval means accepting accountability for the release of the material.
 - Oversight. Quality management of the process: a unit independent from the process periodically reviews the quality assurance arrangements set in place.

³ The proposed framework should apply not only to the Headquarters but also to the Field Offices.

Recommendations

17. UNESCO management should develop a quality assurance system for materials released externally that both delivers consistency in quality, and allows Sectors and other responsible units to tailor the approach adopted to the circumstances at hand.
18. The quality assurance system should be integrated with the changes to the management structure that promote responsibility and accountability. It should also be developed in the context of leadership that explicitly recognizes the need to produce better targeted and higher quality materials with the resources that are available.
19. A risk-based approach is recommended as the most suitable to accommodate the wide range of circumstances to be found within UNESCO.
20. This report and the proposed framework for moving forward should be used to consult widely within the Organization, including Central Services, Field Offices and Institutes. Feedback should be used to further develop the proposal, including areas of responsibility and modes of implementation.
21. The framework for quality assurance should be piloted before full implementation. One of the smaller Sectors or a division within Education Sector is recommended for the pilot programme. Methods and templates from the pilot programme can be used for more widespread implementation in the Organization.

1. Background and Methodology

Background

1. UNESCO produces a large range of publications and other materials covering a range of different objectives and a wide range of subject areas. While most relate to one of UNESCO's programme areas in a broad sense, some materials cover multiple subjects as well as cross-cutting themes such as the eradication of poverty.

2. Nearly 700 outputs of various kinds were produced in the last biennium, including publications, periodicals, toolkits and training manuals, journals, newsletters, policy briefs, CD Roms, websites and videos. Major media types used in UNESCO are:

- books (commercial and non-commercial);
- journals;
- documents in a printed form, such as guidelines and manuals;
- videos;
- newsletters;
- brochures, pamphlets and leaflets;
- handbooks, booklets;
- CD Roms; and
- websites.

3. The contents range from monographs of a scientific nature to advocacy pamphlets. Some relate to UNESCO's normative function, others to training and capability-building, awareness-raising, and simple provision of information. They vary hugely in the technical nature of their contents, although most materials have some type of technical information. Overall, the materials produced by UNESCO fall into one of the following categories:

- academic and scientific materials (books, journals, monographs, papers);
- materials to provide policy analysis and guidance (books, journals, policy papers, and reports);
- educational and training materials (guidelines and manuals);
- documents with reporting purposes (project reports and conference reports);
- advocacy materials (booklets and leaflets);
- informative materials (newsletters, brochures, and pamphlets); and
- reference materials.

4. These materials are also released in different contexts; some of them are periodic and some of them are on an ad hoc basis, e.g. as outputs of projects, conferences or discussion. Each piece of material targets different readers according to its objectives.

5. This report describes the basis of quality assurance for materials that are produced by, for or with UNESCO and are released outside the Organization. It also describes the results from the stocktake within UNESCO (see Annex I) and the comparative

analysis exercises, and discusses frameworks for assessing risk, applying best practice and how the Organization should move forward from here.

Methodology

6. The evaluation comprised the research phases of interviewing and benchmarking, followed by analysis and development of the conclusions and recommendations.

Stocktake interviewing⁴

7. The review team identified and contacted people within the Organization who were potentially able to contribute in terms of developing an understanding of quality assurance practice, particularly in the technical areas. The evaluation team undertook 24 formal interviews across the Sectors, with sampling undertaken of most divisions within the Sectors. Where available, the publications officer or team in each Sector were contacted, but as these are no longer present in the Education, Science and Communication and Information Sectors, other relevant staff members were interviewed. These included both chiefs of sections and programme specialists. The number of interviews undertaken is relatively small for the size of the Organization but is sufficient to provide an indication of guidelines that are used and procedures which are adopted⁵.

Comparative analysis

8. In order to compare the practices of UNESCO with those of other organizations, publications officers in a range of UN and other governmental sectors were contacted. Some general information on the practices followed was obtained from a number of similar agencies, and quality assurance materials from several academic journals and from audit guidelines used in the UK were also reviewed. The evaluation team attempted to obtain information on quality assurance practices in education ministries in several countries, but this met with limited success. The collated results of the comparative exercise were passed back to contributors for their information.

9. The time and resources available to undertake the evaluation were limited, particularly given the size of the Organization and the complexity of the issue. Nevertheless, the limited sampling of practices within UNESCO taken together with the comparative analysis of the practices of other organizations and the frameworks developed provide a useful reference point for management action.

⁴ An interview report was prepared after each interview and was passed back to the interviewee to check for accuracy.

⁵ Due to resource constraints and time limitations, sampling outside HQ was not conducted, and coverage of Institutes was limited.

2. Current state of Quality Assurance in UNESCO

Guidelines within UNESCO

UNESCO Manual

10. The UNESCO Manual has in place detailed guidelines for the commissioning, editing and publication of materials. This section outlines the processes described in the manual.

Publication Process

11. The Manual requires that the development of a publication follows a number of stages. The key stages related to quality assurance are described below⁶:

- **Planning:** For what audience is it intended and what type of book is it (reference, specialized, general public); what is its distribution category (for sale, free distribution; or a mixture of the two), length; form (including number of authors and need for a co-ordinating editor); language(s); budget (including author fees and publishing costs); timing; quantity to be printed and storage requirements.
- **Criteria for commissioning the manuscript:** Choice of author(s) (including their eminence in a particular field which is always the best criterion for the choice of an author); language and writing skills: knowledge of the writer's published works; his reputation as an author; detailed contracting requirements.
- **Work on the completed manuscript:** Review by the programme specialist; consideration as to whether other specialists, inside or outside UNESCO, should read the manuscript; detailed editing including checking of political implications, formatting, spelling, correction of evident mistakes and contradictions, preparation of a reader's report.
- **Sector Publications unit:** Following a check by the programme specialist, the Sector publications unit is then responsible for: checking the manuscript in relation to its stated purpose; carrying out more detailed editing; checking formatting style and other copy-editing matters; checking that relevant UNESCO directives, particularly those concerning the content of UNESCO publications adopted by the General Conference at its thirteenth session (Appendix 13A), have been respected; revising and, if necessary, rewriting of key sections; editing translations (the responsibility for revising translations remains with the Office of Languages, Conferences and Documents).⁷

⁶ Note that there is considerably more detail in the Manual on administrative matters such as responsibility, contracting arrangements, etc.

⁷ A detailed style guide is contained in the Manual, which covers the use of language, jargon, titles, paragraphs and layout, table of content guides, use of quotations, illustrations, names, footnotes, bibliographies, annexes and indexes.

- **Publishing Section** - Once all the detailed preparatory work has been completed, the final text should be forwarded to the UNESCO Publishing Section (BPI/PUB) that undertakes detailed technical checking and correction of proofs, and decides whether to publish or arrange a contract for publishing.⁸

12. The Manual is quite specific that the responsibility for content of manuscripts is assigned to the Sector preparing or commissioning the manuscript. The sector's publication unit is required to ensure that the policies are implemented.

Other Issues

13. **Disclaimers:** Publications which are produced by external publishers or are produced by partner organizations, are not regarded as UNESCO publications and should carry appropriate acknowledgement of UNESCO together with clarity as to UNESCO's actual role. All publications, apart from those expressing the Organization's official views, should carry an official disclaimer which disclaims responsibility for the contents. The Organization does assume responsibility for ensuring that the material does not contravene UNESCO's directives regarding mutual respect between the Organization and Member States, or the spirit of international understanding and cooperation, and that it does not run counter to decisions adopted by UNESCO or any other UN organization.

14. **Administration:** Each Sector is called upon to have a publications unit, which is required to oversee and approve manuscripts before they are passed on to BPI. The manual states that publishing projects are meant to be drawn up within the framework of a biennial publication plan. This sets out the publications which are in preparation or are to be published during the budgetary period, and the production planning sheets for individual manuscripts. The last publication plan appears to have been produced in 1996, although this followed a number of years of decline in which fewer and fewer publications were included. In recent years only limited information is available in the C/5 regarding likely publications.

Problems with the Manual

15. The manual is very difficult to follow, and although the various requirements are summarized in the Annexes, these were last updated in 1982.

16. The guidelines were intended to apply only to publications – i.e. 'for sale' materials. The Manual does not cover documents, which are distributed for free.

17. Only a small minority of interviewees mentioned the Manual in relation to quality assurance, and these were typically staff members with more experience concerning publications, using it in the context of: "according to the Manual, this is how ... is

⁸ Conferences, Languages and Documents (CLD) also has the authority to arrange contracts for external publishing, with the apparent division of labour being: BPI has responsibility for priced and sometimes free publications. CLD has a major responsibility for free publications. CLD provides a quota, which allows Sectors to print a certain number of pages free of charge. When the Sector wants to print the pages exceeding the quota, they can still do so by paying CLD.

meant to be done”. The clear implication was that matters were not proceeding according to the Manual guidelines.

18. With the virtual disbandment of the publications units in Sectors, it is not clear who now has responsibility for the tasks which were previously assigned to them.

19. There is only limited reference to procedures ensuring that the content of materials released is of an acceptable standard.

Other guidelines

20. During the study, two other internal examples were encountered where guidelines were in place - in both cases these are guidelines to authors. These detail steps required for a manuscript to reach publication and include detailed guides on formatting, style and layout. While they do not contain specific requirements for quality assurance measures in relation to content, they do spell out responsibility for content and in one case suggest external peer review. The hydrology section had an approach to managing quality whereby all publications were streamed into four series, with different guidelines for each series.

21. There have been other attempts to develop oversight, guidelines and quality assurance processes:

- According to an interviewee, in 1980 a publications board was established, which consisted of the ADGs and the Director of PUB. The aim of the board was to review and approve plans for a publication and its implementation. It was also intended to examine publications referred to it for conformity with approved policies. The Publications Board has not been operating in recent times.
- In 1984 a Consultative Committee on Publications was established, which was intended to read reviews⁹ and comment on publications plans, to examine manuscript plans, and to carry out studies and develop methods to improve planning and quality of publications. The Committee was intended to be comprised primarily of the heads of Sector publication units, and to act as an editorial board, considering external reviews of publications. However, problems were reported with the Committee because no one wished to halt another Sector’s publication, and so material was passed by the Committee when it should not have been. These problems were highlighted in a review of the Committee in 1989, but no record of follow up implementation of the recommendations of the review was found. It appears that this Committee ceased operating sometime during the early 1990s.
- In 1999 an evaluation was undertaken of the Education Sector publications. This recommended, *inter alia* that:
 - The Sector develops a comprehensive record of all sector publications;

⁹ One interviewee informed us that it used to be common practice for PUB to send all prospective publications out for external review. This appeared to have been discontinued for cost reasons.

- A publishing forum be created, comprising senior publishing staff, to help develop a policy and plans, propose new ventures, encourage co-operation, and give technical support and advice;
- There should be a review of existing quality assurance procedures which draws upon best practice to develop proposals on quality assurance that combine self and external evaluation.

22. During the course of our discussions in the Education Sector, several staff members mentioned that there had been previous attempts to develop quality control procedures, including an attempt to develop guidelines and the establishment of an editorial board. However there does not appear to have been extensive implementation of these quality-related recommendations from the evaluation, although one interviewee reported that an attempt had been made to start developing quality assurance guidelines. Resource constraints were reported as the reasons for the failure of these initiatives.

Current Practice in Quality Assurance

23. During the interviewing process a wide range of quality assurance practices were found. While, as noted above, the study does not provide a comprehensive picture of the Organization's quality assurance practices, it can give examples of different types of practice. These are discussed below.

Some poor practice

24. ***Lack of guidance:*** Programme specialists indicated they operate largely in a vacuum with respect to guidance on quality assurance. Most would have preferred guidelines indicating a standard their publications were expected to achieve, and expressed concern regarding the quality of material that was being released by the Organization – typically by other parts of the Organization.

25. ***Reliance on authors:*** In some Sectors there was an over-reliance on authors to produce high quality work. Some specialists mentioned that their main quality control procedure was to select the leading international experts in a field as authors, and that this was likely to result in a high quality document. In many cases further review was limited.

26. ***Uneven use of independent review:*** Independent review of material was not standard practice within the Organization. In some cases the programme specialist fulfilled the main review function, even when he/she was the author. Although the section chief was meant to have read each document prior to sign-off, a number of programme specialists indicated that they did not consider this had occurred consistently with their materials.

27. ***Pressure to publish:*** Considerable pressure to publish can arise during projects. The publication usually is the output from a project. Where the author has been paid on production of a draft and has subsequently left the project or the Organization (in the case of contractors), it is extremely difficult to get further work done on the material by the author. Because the publication may be the primary output from the

project, there is considerable pressure, particularly from the programme specialists, to publish regardless of the quality.

28. In other cases the team was told of situations where the pressure to publish came externally from partner organizations who were relying on the publication as a performance indicator for their funding sources. In such situations, UNESCO is at risk if it authorizes the release of sub-standard work.

29. ***Frequent release of unrefereed conference proceedings:*** In discussions throughout the Organization the team learnt of frequent publication of unrefereed conference proceedings. It appears that the organization of a conference and subsequent publication of proceedings is a common activity in UNESCO. The ability to manage this type of activity through a quality management process is constrained unless significant resources are introduced. Producing refereed conference proceedings is a weighty task, and it is likely that unrefereed proceedings will be the norm. Again UNESCO needs to develop guidelines on how such a common activity is to be handled.

30. ***Infrequent testing of materials:*** Even where quality assurance was implemented to ensure that the content of the materials was accurate, relatively few situations were encountered where the material was tested to understand whether it was likely to achieve its intended purpose. Whilst this may be understandable in some books and publications where a relatively limited technical audience is targeted, in situations where training or “awareness-raising” materials are involved, it is surprising not to see some testing of their effectiveness in their intended environment. UNESCO needs to see the quality of materials released not only in terms of its content, layout, style, etc, but also in terms of its effectiveness in achieving its intended purpose.

Some very good practice

31. The overall picture of quality control mechanisms within UNESCO is not universally poor. Some extremely high quality publications were observed across all Sectors. Some were high profile, and others were relatively low profile but had been produced in a professional manner. Some examples are:

32. ***Book production:*** Several books that were produced by UNESCO had extremely stringent quality control applied. This included independent editorial control, multiple authorship with internal and external peer review and very high standards of copy-editing.

33. ***Training material:*** There were examples of training materials which followed processes that were likely to result in very high standards. One in particular included:

- a review through external stakeholders of the contents using separate networks to address different types of technical issues (it integrated science and education technical material);
- independent testing of the material’s effectiveness; and
- a review of potential legal issues associated with publication.

34. Another set of training material had been through a long iterative process of testing and review in practical use prior to release, together with external review of the material content.

35. **Guidelines:** A set of guidelines was reviewed that had been produced through an extensive process of external consultation and internal review. The guidelines had considerable sensitivity in the stakeholder community and were of significant importance in their target sector. The development of the guidelines included the establishment of a set of objectives and project plan, a series of iterative external consultations with both expert and other stakeholders, and presentation of the results at a high level conference and further feedback. The response from stakeholders was sought in a structured manner with questionnaires and feedback forms provided. The development of the document also involved formally recording the feedback received and the actions taken to address concerns in the document.

Discussion

36. Quality assurance within UNESCO is very uneven. While some oversight does occur in some Sectors, on an organization-wide basis no evidence was found of processes that would ensure that consistently high material is released. This study cannot comment on the degree to which poor quality publications are being released, but it is clear that the Organization is exposed to significant risk. Indeed, very high profile publications had only rudimentary quality control, and are maintaining quality only through the capabilities of a single individual.

37. The evaluation team's impression based on the practices in the limited number of Institutes reviewed, was that their practices were possibly more rigorous than elsewhere in the Organization. This study cannot comment at all on material which is released directly from Field Offices, but it seems unlikely that the practice will be uniformly better in the field than at HQ.

Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) and related Programmes

MLA

38. The Monitoring Learning Achievement programme was a significant project for UNESCO. It absorbed approximately US\$30 million in resources through UNESCO and extra-budgetary funding in the 71 countries where it was implemented. There were approximately 24 workshops held at the national, regional and international level, and it produced approximately 66 country reports, 13 workshop reports or working documents, and a further nine books, manuals, and handbooks.

39. The MLA programme was one of the first concrete outcomes of the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (1990) at an interagency level. UNESCO and UNICEF collaborated in the design and implementation of a programme to assist in the following:

- To develop countries' capacities in monitoring basic education goals and to set up, train and support national monitoring teams;
- To develop a monitoring methodology that can be readily applied and adapted to various countries: core basic education indicators; sample frame for school surveys; model questionnaires; and a simple test of students' achievement in basic literacy and life skills;
- To put at the disposal of national and international decision-makers basic education indicators for monitoring Education for All goals; and
- To assist in the setting up, training and supporting national monitoring teams in these countries.

40. The project was one of the most extensive UNESCO projects in education yet had never been fully evaluated. In late 2003, an evaluation of the project was commissioned for the purpose of not only taking stock of a project that had been implemented over a period of 12 years, but also to assist UNESCO in determining how to move forward in the areas of indicators and learning achievement as they relate to the quality of education.

41. A four-person evaluation team delivered its report in early 2004.¹⁰ Upon delivery of the draft report, an independent expert was also contracted as a form of peer review to analyze and conclude on the findings made by the evaluation team. The findings and recommendations of the two coincided on all of the substantive issues. One issue of particular importance concerned the poor technical quality of the products (training material and national studies) and the absence of mechanisms or processes to ensure quality. They highlighted the following:

- A number of MLA published documents were judged to be of very poor quality and should never have seen the light of day. The evaluators questioned the quality assurance over MLA publications and raised concerns that staff could not judge the technical quality of the work.
- At no point did the MLA programme set up any form of quality control on the work. Furthermore, the programme itself did not set up any kind of technical committee to guide it in its work, and the coordinator of the work was not supervised on technical issues. They made note that similar projects usually have a number of technical experts working more or less full time on them.

42. In light of the seriousness of the evaluation findings, the Director-General took immediate action to suspend and then phase out the existing MLA programme to be replaced by a new programme which must include rigorous quality assurance arrangements.

SACMEQ and IIEP

43. What is SACMEQ? Who is accountable for it?

The quality assurance processes followed for SACMEQ follow those of IIEP and it is appropriate to consider both together.

¹⁰ Postlethwaite, N., May 2004, An Evaluation of the MLA Programme.

44. The IIEP is a UNESCO Category I institute focused on educational planning and evaluation. IIEP produces many publications on a variety of issues. It sees its quality management system as being “embedded” rather than being based on a series of externally imposed guidelines. Our cursory observations revealed considerable depth to the Institute’s approach to quality assurance. The Institute appears to rely on the measures below to ensure quality in its publications.

- ***Council of Consultant Fellows:*** A group of internationally recognized consultants who operate in the field of educational planning and research. This network is used to provide input and feedback into projects and publications as they develop.
- ***Peer network review:*** Publications appear to be produced in a process of constant internal and peer review. For example, five internationally known authors in the field produced a book on educational funding. This group authored a part of the book each, and then held several meetings where the group as a whole reviewed each chapter. The lead editor maintained a loose editorial control over the meetings, and the author under review was present but was not allowed to comment during the review of his/her chapter.
- ***Peer network review with oversight:*** An alternative to the peer network review is used for SACMEQ publications. These publications are seen both as a report on the activities of the SACMEQ group and also as a means of training and capacity building. The local peer network produces the material, with various modes of internal authorship. The material is then peer reviewed within the network in a series of iterations and further review. At the same time the process is monitored by external consultants (some of whom are selected from the Council of Consultant Fellows) who ensure that the process stays on track and that the review comments are appropriate.

This process does not always produce high quality material, but when quality issues arise they are clearly identified within the publications. Thus, for example, two of the early country reports within SACMEQ were issued as “Interim Reports” with detailed disclaimers stating that the problems that arose and that the results in the publications had not met SACMEQ internal quality standards. IIEP suggests that this was of significant embarrassment to the countries concerned, and the problems (relating to sampling) were rectified for the next country reports.

- ***Fundamental of Educational Planning:*** This is a series on applied issues in educational planning. The series has an editorial board of international experts, who review and exert editorial control over the product.
- ***Training material:*** This is developed internally over many years prior to release. Generally it is developed, reviewed and assessed during the course of IIEP training. It is typically subject to external and internal review, and further evaluation during training. Training materials takes many years to evolve to the point where it is ready for external release, although it will have been used within the Institute for many years.

LLECE

45. LLECE is a network run out of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC/UNESCO Santiago). This network aims to bring together the various national measurement and assessment systems for the quality and equity of education of sixteen Latin American countries, including Spanish-speaking Caribbean countries. The main LLECE lines of action are:

- 1) to carry out international quantitative and qualitative studies;
- 2) to carry out a research programme on factors associated with the quality and equity of education;
- 3) to enhance technical capacities *vis-à-vis* technology for assessment and measurement methodologies; and
- 4) to build regional standards for primary education.

46. Within the first line of action, the project has completed two major studies:

- The First International Comparative Study, which assessed the performance and its associated factors, of primary school children (3rd and 4th grade) in mathematics and language in fourteen countries.
- A qualitative study of schools in seven countries with outstanding results of schools coming through from the first International Comparative Study. The ‘outstanding result schools’ were those where, even when students’ parents had low educational levels, high results in the mathematics tests were obtained.

47. LLECE is currently working on the Second International Comparative Study (2004 – 2006), and is also producing a range of guideline and training material and activities on best practices in the field of assessing educational achievement.

48. LLECE received some criticism for its approach to the first study but since 1998 there has been a revision of its approach to undertaking and reviewing its studies. LLECE now operates on a multilevel quality assurance base:

- **Internal review:** Within LLECE there are a number of staff with specific expertise in the assessment of educational achievement.
- **Peer network review:** LLECE has facilitated a network of national coordinators from each of its participating countries. These coordinators, together with groups of technical experts from each country, review the major studies and have an active role on the “best practice” publications. In the case of the “best practice” publications, this has also included presentations by the authors at meetings of the national coordinators for direct feedback. There are two annual National Coordinator Meetings - supported by technical meetings and a constant virtual process of communication between the LLECE Staff and the National Coordinators.
- **High-level technical committee:** This committee, comprising leading international experts from the educational assessment field (IEA, OECD, Educational Testing Service, Qatar National Assessment System, Statistics

Canada) oversees the reviewing process, and provides technical support to the Studies.

Summary of MLA-related programmes

49. The arrangements for quality control in both SACMEQ and LLECE appear robust insofar as this can be determined from the review undertaken.¹¹ The status of these organizations in respect of international practice and the reported inclusion of leading international experts in their oversight arrangements means that serious problems of the nature experienced in the MLA are less likely. It is understood that there has been a degree of interaction between the IIEP and LLECE, which should ensure that best practice is maintained as it evolves internationally.

50. The proposed arrangements for a revised approach to MLA cannot be commented on, as these details had not been presented as a firm proposal at the time of this evaluation. However, it is expected that any arrangements for quality assurance in the revised programme will follow best practice in the area, including multilevel reviewing, developing peer networks to simultaneously review work and build capability, and oversight from a committee of leading international experts.

51. It is, however, very difficult for any quality assurance programme to prevent difficulties which arise out of isolation of a programme from best practice in its field and to prevent problems which arise from an unwillingness to collaborate with those who are seen as potential competitors – either intellectually or for funding resources. Thus it is expected that some structural arrangements will be put in place to access the expertise within IIEP and LLECE in developing these types of programmes, and that these arrangements will be of a nature that encourages collaboration and prevents a territory protection mentality developing within the new programme.

¹¹ It requires an independent review to verify the implementation of the quality assurance procedures reported and the quality of materials released by those two programmes.

3. Comparative Analysis - What do other organizations do ?

52. A number of comparable organizations and professionals were contacted by phone and email or were independently researched. The information provided here demonstrates what they say is their policy relating to quality assurance, but it is noted that this does not necessarily represent practice, as can be seen from the divergence within UNESCO between official policy and actual practice.

Comparable organizations

International Trade Centre (ITC)

53. The ITC has a comprehensive set of guidelines and policies relating to publications. Key policies are:

- Planning: All publications have a prepared summary sheet which state their purpose, how they fit into the organization's requirements, budgets, etc. including proposed quality control measures. A Publications Board reviews the summary sheet.
- Selection criteria: A variety of selection criteria are defined which determine the need for the publication. The division Director has responsibility for approving a publication.
- Publication categories: Publications are divided into categories of Books (individual or joint publications), Technical Papers, Bulletins, and the ITC's magazine *International Trade Forum*.
- Quality control: Full publications (books) proceed through a formal editing process, while technical documents are not always formally edited unless the section hires a freelance editor. The completed material is submitted with a quality control sheet that describes the procedures followed and has sign-off from reviewers, the accountable technical officers, section chief and director.

54. ITC divides reviews into a technical review and a comprehensive review. The technical review concentrates on the information presented in the document, while a comprehensive review also incorporates the writing style and language used in the document. The peer review guidelines list a number of criteria for reviewers:

- Technical quality: what are the main strengths and weaknesses of the document?
- Is it suitable for publication? If not, why?
- Is the document important and relevant to the target audience?
- Comprehensiveness and coherence: does the document tell a cohesive story?
- Originality: are there previously published documents covering the same material?

- Length: do any parts of the document need to be expanded? Condensed? Deleted?
- Approach: are there any errors in technique, fact, calculation, or interpretation?
- Are all tables and figures clearly labelled? Well planned? Necessary?
- Clarity: in general, is the writing concise, easy to follow and interesting?

55. ITC applies a risk approach to reviewing – the number of reviewers is determined by the print run size. Small runs of only 50 copies may require only one reviewer, but documents with larger runs would attract up to three or four reviewers.

World Health Organization (WHO)

56. WHO has a set of publishing policies which are seen as a framework of guiding principles. Treatment guidelines and reports of expert groups have specific processes and guidelines, and all statements and claims about incidence, prevalence, deaths and burden of diseases and risk factors and their associated economic costs are cleared by the organization's *Evidence and Information for Policy* cluster. Central review of material before publication was abandoned several years ago, and responsibility delegated to the heads of each cluster. The organization is developing policy to define the elements of quality more clearly and establish mechanisms for accountability.

World Bank

57. World Bank operates a multilevel approach to quality assurance:

- For the lowest level ("working papers") sign-off by a manager at a certain level is sufficient;
- For higher levels of publications they have both internal (in some cases including the Board of Directors) review processes and external (or mixed internal/external) review processes under the auspices of an Editorial Board.

58. In general the Office of the Publisher has final responsibility for the World Bank publications.

International Labour Organization (ILO)

59. Information was obtained only on priced publications within ILO. These go through a quality control process which includes:

- asking for a book proposal form to be completed;
- discussing the content and form of publication with the authors in advance including appropriateness to the target audience;
- identifying internal and external reviewers;
- review of manuscripts by the publications unit editing team;
- substantive editing and copy-editing (sometimes done by the same person in-house, or having copy-editing done by external collaborators under supervision).

60. The technical unit is responsible for the content, research data, etc. A new circular will place responsibility on the chief of section/department to ensure that research methodology and data are sound.

61. A major circular is being prepared on standards for ILO research and statistical material, but this is not yet available. Similarly a new circular is being developed on production aspects - ILO cover design, placing of logo, typographic styles, etc.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

62. No formal response was obtained from OECD, but informal information was obtained through a contact within the organization together with a copy of their style guide. Because the OECD was created to serve as a multidisciplinary research entity, and publications are principal outputs, the Council, its governing body, is very focused on papers of high quality. As a regular exercise, a draft paper is peer-reviewed by sector specialists first. Then, it is reviewed and discussed in a committee that is created in accordance with the research subject at the outset of projects. The discussed points are by and large taken into account for further revision. All publications are reviewed by an editor and by a publication board which meets weekly.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

63. Through its *Publications Board*, UNDP has procedures in place to guide the production of print publications. These include a corporate publications policy, guidelines on copyright, a style manual and a branding graphic standards to ensure adherence to corporate design, placement of the logo and integrating corporate branding language to describe the organization.

64. It has also instituted a policy on peer review mechanisms. Because publishing is decentralized in UNDP (each unit produces the publication that is deemed necessary and appropriate for its mandate and purposes), and because of the lack of capacity on the part of the *Publications Board* to review manuscripts, UNDP insists that peers, colleagues and/or external experts/consultants - review the manuscript to make sure that the content is acceptable, and insofar as is possible that the publication is also well written, before a product is designed and printed.

65. The *Publications Board* secretariat, which vets submissions, makes sure that the various criteria are abided by and that the unit has thought through why it is producing a publication or brochure and who will be receiving it (target distribution).

Other Relevant Sectors

Academic journals

66. The general policy of academic journals is to publish research that is high quality, accurate and of significant novelty and impact in the area in which the journal specializes. The editorial processes of a number of high standard academic journals were reviewed, and the key steps in their process appear to be:

- ***Self-selection and author quality criteria:*** The threshold for publication is typically high in more prestigious journals where authors strongly self-select for the suitability of the paper for publication. Most journals provide guides for submission including style and formatting guides to ensure that copy-editing is kept to a minimum. Journals may provide other tools to ensure quality before it reaches the editors – for example, the British Royal Society of Chemistry has developed an application to check papers for consistency in description of compounds¹².
- ***Pre-screening:*** The editors of most scientific journals have considerable expertise in the subject field. These editors pre-screen manuscripts for publication based on their knowledge of the field and the authors.
- ***Refereeing:*** Journals typically rely on refereeing as the primary mode of quality assurance. Referees are appointed by the journal, and with the more prestigious and wealthier publications may be paid for the service. A minimum of two referees is used, and in many cases more would be sought. While authors have some input into the choice of referees, the editorial board retains a high degree of autonomy in their selection. Referees have a set of guidelines that refer to the publications criteria. The main described criteria used are:
 - quality of research;
 - novelty;
 - fragmentation (one piece of research described in different papers);
 - suitability for audience.

Matters such as novelty and quality of the research tend to be major criteria of interest, and referees are asked to make a recommendation on the suitability of the paper for publication.

- Copy-editing can be referred to the authors or undertaken directly by the editorial team.

67. The quality assurance process at academic journals tends to exhibit considerable depth, with detailed quality assurance repeated at each decision-making stage (author, editor, referee), and a high degree of specificity in terms of matching the expertise of the assessors to the subject matter of the paper.

Audit review

68. Teams of auditors in private and public practice are required to meet international accounting standards for quality control procedures. The current version of these standards (ISA 220) requires the following.

- The audit team is required to implement quality control procedures that are applicable to the individual audit engagement. In doing this the firm has to

¹² See <http://www.rsc.org/is/journals/checker/run.htm>

establish a system of quality control designed to provide a reasonable assurance that the firm is complying with its legal and professional standards.

- The lead partner on the audit is required to be responsible for the overall quality on each audit engagement.
- The lead partner must ensure that the audit team meets required standards for ethical behaviour, independence of the firm, that the team has the required capabilities, and that the audit is carried out appropriately.
- Review procedures are required whereby more experienced team members review work by less experienced members.
- The lead partner is required to review critical areas of judgement, significant risks and other important areas to ensure that the audit conclusion is supported.
- For audits of listed entities, a quality control reviewer independent of the audit team is required to be appointed, and this person must review and approve the audit.
- The auditing firm must implement procedures for monitoring its quality control programme.

Summary

69. The comparative exercise has produced some useful information. As noted, some care should be taken with the results, because most of these comparable practices are designed for a much narrower range of subject matter or purpose than the wide range of mandate covered by UNESCO.¹³ Not all organizations appear to have a comprehensive approach to managing their quality assurance, although the material and information received from WHO and ITC was very good in this regard.

- **Categorization:** many organizations categorized their publications, and many applied different quality assurance standards on each category. Typically the categories represented some hierarchy of organizational importance.
- **Risk-based approach:** the ITC guidelines specifically mention a risk based approach to the quality assurance process, although a risk assessment is implicit in the approach to categorizing publications used by other organizations.
- **Document planning:** many organizations had a comprehensive document planning and approval process.

¹³ Readers should note that there might be a divergence between guideline and practice which cannot be detected using the process followed.

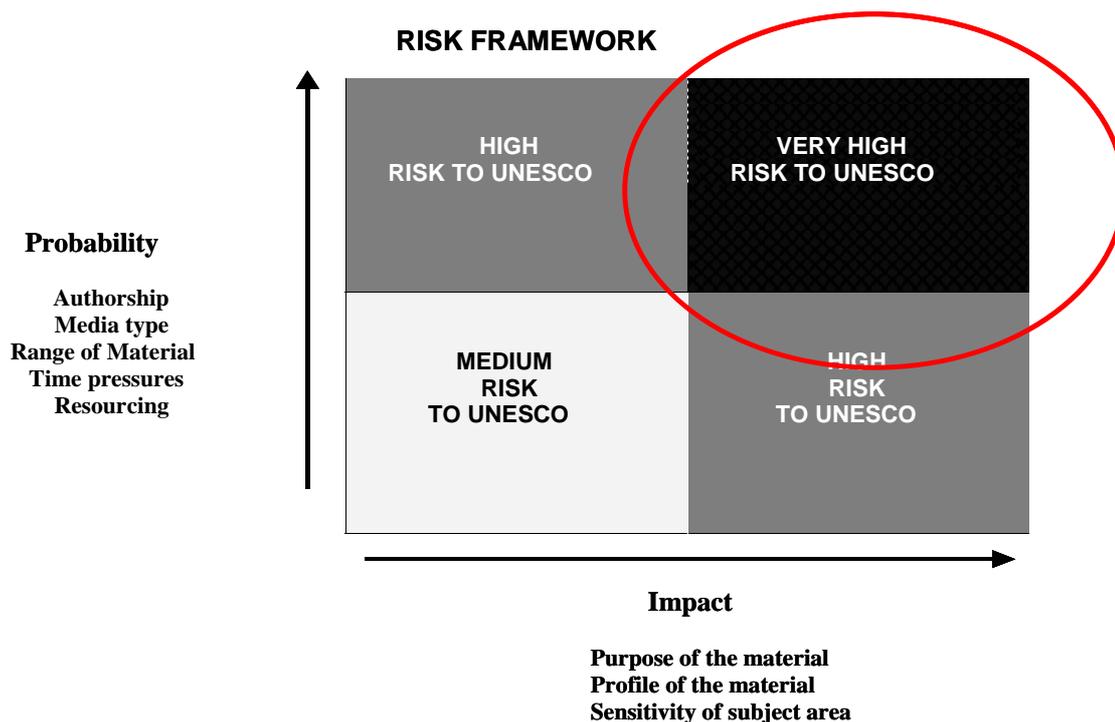
- **Review:** almost all organizations mentioned review as part of their quality assurance process, although not all organizations had formalized the review process.
- **Targeted reviewing:** one organization had a policy of targeted review for specific issues of technical importance in its field. Whenever these issues arose in a publication, they were automatically referred to a particular unit in the organization for review.
- **Quality assurance forms:** ITC provided an example of a quality assurance form. This was required to accompany all materials released, and had sign-off from the authors, reviewers, and those in the organizational hierarchy who were to be held accountable.
- **Use of process:** in some organizations there was a move away from centralized control of quality, toward the use of process to manage quality. There appeared to be a consensus that centralization was unwieldy and reduced accountability.
- **Corporate style:** most organizations had a corporate style guide which specified most of the key features of publication layout and formatting.

Table 2: Summary of Benchmarking Exercise

	ITC	WHO	World Bank	ILO	OECD	UNDP	UNESCO Manual	UNESCO practice
Categorisation	√	?	√	√	?	?	×	×
Risk based approach	√	?	?	?	?	?	×	×
Document planning	√	?	?	√	?	√	×	×
Review	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×
Targeted reviewing		√	?	?	?	?	×	×
Quality assurance forms	√	?	?	?	?	?	×	×
Use of process		√	?			√	×	×
Corporate style	√		?	√	√	√	√	×

4. What factors determine the risk that UNESCO faces from the material it releases?

70. Based on the research undertaken, a range of factors were identified within UNESCO that appear to impact on the risk that material produced will be of poor quality. These can be analysed by using a two-dimensional framework, as illustrated in the diagram below, in which the risk factors are divided into those which determine the *likelihood* that a poor quality document would be produced, and those which determine the *impact* that a poor quality document would have.



71. The key elements in each of these areas are discussed below. Achieving quality is a complex interaction of management and personal factors and, for this reason, while the discussion outlines the major factors, it should not be considered comprehensive.

Factors which determine the likelihood of poor quality

Authorship

72. A consistent theme in discussions throughout the Organization was that the quality of expertise and competence of authors and (where different) the programme specialist were a key characteristic in determining the quality of the final product. This would concur with external experience, where international journals which attract high quality authors typically publish the highest quality work. Selection of the author/s is therefore likely to be a key consideration.

73. However there are circumstances where it is not possible to be sure of the quality of the work an author is likely to produce. Sometimes even leaders in a field produce

poor quality work through time pressure or because work has been passed to a subordinate. From an organizational point of view there is no consistent means of confirming that an author is likely to produce high quality material. Attributes of authorship that can be confirmed as risk factors are as follows:

- Authors operating outside specialist areas of expertise: this is particularly an issue for internally-authored papers, where programme specialists are producing material which is in their general, but not specific, areas of expertise. The risks typically arise from the unconscious ignorance type of error (not knowing what you don't know). This risk area overlaps strongly with the risks which arise from the range of disciplines which are covered by the material.
- Multiple authorship: where multiple authors are involved in a piece of work, it appears more difficult to ensure consistent quality across the document. Several examples were encountered where multiple authorship resulted in a document where some parts were of high quality, but others were not of publishable standard. There were some cases where multiple authorship resulted in very stringent quality control as the authors reviewed and critiqued each other's work. It would appear that the approach to multiple authorship is the key feature, but as this cannot be identified *a priori* all multiple authorship works have been rated as potentially higher risk.
- Control over authorial selection: where control over the selection of the author is vested internally with a programme specialist with expertise and networks in the subject area, the risk of selecting an author who will produce poor quality work appears lower. Where the selection is external, or where the programme specialist is operating outside their specialist area of expertise, the risk is likely to be higher.

Media type

74. During the stocktake there was a continual focus by interviewees on hard copy publications, despite being told that the evaluation team was interested in all forms of material released by the Organization. While the study cannot distinguish between different media types in terms of risk, it has highlighted differences in attitudes toward different media types. In particular, there appears to be a hierarchy of quality in the eyes of many interviewees, for example, commercial publications (for sale) requiring higher quality than free publications and these again requiring higher quality than material placed on the Web. At least two concrete examples were encountered of material that was not deemed good enough for commercial publication, but which was released in a free form.

75. It is desirable that the Organization should not distinguish between different media types in terms of required quality. Furthermore there is no *a priori* reason why any particular medium should be rated as being of higher risk of poor quality. However because of attitudes to different media among staff, Web and free-published material have been rated as being of higher risk of poor quality currently in UNESCO.

Range of material

76. When the material being produced covers a wide range of disciplines, the ability of the programme specialist, much less the responsible director, to detect errors in the work diminishes. Materials that cover a range of disciplines are regarded here as being of inherently higher risk of quality problems because of the structure of current quality control mechanisms, and the difficulties reviewers have in covering the full range of expertise required.

77. Specific areas of expertise, such as statistics, may form special cases where the Organization is always at risk. For example, WHO routinely refers all statements and claims about disease incidence, risk factors and their associated economic costs to its *Evidence and Information for Policy Group*. It may be that UNESCO should identify specific technical areas that should always be reviewed through a particular process. It is suggested that statistical sampling and analytical procedures have self-identified as one such area.

Time pressures

78. While lack of time pressure introduces its own risk in terms of an inability to complete projects, overly tight time frames introduce a greater risk of poor quality. This arises through pressure on the authors, less time for reviewing of content, less time in proofing the text, and less time for planning of the print run and distribution. Whilst the time issues are clearly related to the level of resources available to the project, there are some stages, such as peer reviewing, which are simply time consuming and difficult to achieve within tight time frames. The length of time available, independent of project resourcing, will affect the risk of poor quality material being produced.

Resourcing

79. In conjunction with timing, the resources available will influence the risk of quality standards not being achieved. This arises through restrictions on the payment of authors and potentially selection of authors, restrictions on the ability to select and pay external reviewers, and restrictions on proofing and translation capability. The key feature of lack of resourcing is that it encourages those involved to 'cut corners', with the inevitable results that problems arise with quality. These do not necessarily arise universally, but the risk of poor quality work being produced increases.

Factors which determine the impact of a poor quality document

Purpose of the material

80. The purpose of the material is a key determinant of the type of risk which UNESCO faces in its release. Where material is intended to provide information or to raise awareness generally the impact of quality problems is limited to UNESCO itself. This will include material such as newsletters, brochures, posters, etc. that are general in nature. At the other end of the spectrum are training materials and UNESCO's

normative functions, in which quality errors have more far-reaching ramifications. Poor quality in these materials raises the risk of misdirecting decision makers.

Profile of material

81. UNESCO produces a range of publications, some of which have a very high profile internationally or a high profile in a specific area, and some of which have practically no profile at all. While it can be argued that regardless of the profile, a particular standard should be maintained, if one of the reasons for maintaining a high standard in publications is to maintain UNESCO's reputation in its stakeholder community, the higher the profile the document the greater damage poor quality will do to UNESCO's reputation.

Sensitivity of subject area

82. Where the subject matter is sensitive for political or academic reasons, the potential for poor quality material to create further difficulties for UNESCO is accentuated. For this reason materials in sensitive subject areas should be treated as higher risk for quality control purposes.

Summary

83. This framework for risk categorization can be used to tailor the quality assurance procedures used in a given project to its risk profile. For example high profile materials would potentially be required to have more stringent QA practices than lower profile ones, and those with a higher risk of poor quality again following more stringent procedures. The key characteristics and their determinants are summarized in the table below.

Key risk characteristics and their determinants

	Lower probability of poor quality	Higher probability of poor quality
Authorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single author • Selected by internal specialists • Good programme coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple authors • Selected by external person • Poor programme coordination • Operating in isolation
Media type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For sale publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free documents • Free materials • Materials on website
Subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single subjects • Low technicality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple subjects • High technicality
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient time allocated to determine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tight deadline • Pressure for delivery
Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient budget for external reviews, external editors, copy editing and translation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scarce
	Lower impact of poor quality	Higher impact of poor quality
Purpose of the material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information • Raise awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Educational
Profile of material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low profile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High profile
Sensitivity of subject areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less sensitive subject 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitive subject

5. Principles of Best Practice

84. This section aims to provide a condensed guide to the key elements of best practice in managing quality assurance mechanisms. Note that they are not intended to define particular actions that people should take, rather they define the nature of the actions which can be adapted to particular circumstances. For example, external review can be achieved through a variety of mechanisms – formal external refereeing, authorial committees, review panels, editorial boards, formal and informal consultation, use of networks, oversight consultants, and passing to other relevant experts in UNESCO. All of these achieve external input into the material, but their appropriateness varies with circumstance.

85. This section presents six key elements of best practice for bringing high quality material to a releasable stage. These elements are: planning; editorial control; selection of authors; review; testing of effectiveness; and the copy-editing, legal and translation stage.

86. Each part concludes with the key characteristics of the principle that will vary with the risk profile of the material.

Planning

87. Any material to be released should be appropriately planned from the beginning. This should include a description of:

- the objective of the material – what change is it trying to achieve?
- the audience – who is the material targeting and what are their characteristics?
- the need – why is the material needed, and what gaps in the range of materials available does it address?
- media – in what media will the material be produced?
- editorial control – who will make the final decisions on the content and effectiveness of the material, particularly where reviews indicate that the content and effectiveness are not of international standard.
- authors – how will the authors be selected, and what is their international standing in the subject?
- risk status – is the material likely to be high risk for the Organization in terms of impact or probability of substandard quality.
- reviews – how will the material be reviewed for accuracy of content?
- effectiveness – how will the material be tested to ensure that it will achieve its objectives?
- dissemination – how will the material be disseminated to its target audience? Is this dissemination likely to lead to the achievement of the objectives for the material?
- resourcing – what resourcing is needed for the document. Does this include sufficient funds for review, printing and dissemination?

Variable characteristics – none (all required)

Editorial control

88. The editor is the person who is responsible for achieving a particular standard. His/her main tasks are:

- select the authors;
- check the manuscript for appropriate standards;
- select reviewers and tests for effectiveness;
- settle disputes between reviewers and authors.

89. The editor makes the final determination on what is acceptable in terms of content and usefulness of the material. It cannot be specified in advance how this editorial control should be established, but in best-case practice it is independent from the author/s. For any document that is to be released there should be clear lines of editorial control since this defines responsibility for the material.

90. Typically the programme specialist will retain editorial control, but this will depend on the circumstances. If the material is of a very technical nature, external editors with specific expertise may be appropriate. If the programme specialist is an author, independent editorial control would also be appropriate, either internal or, in a specialist area, external.

91. Editorial boards can be particularly effective, since they allow coverage of a range of expertise. It is important however in these circumstances that the lines of responsibility and accountability are not blurred.

92. Reports on quality assurance by the editor should highlight the main issues that arise, and how they have been dealt with in the document. In the research undertaken only one example of this being formally undertaken was observed.

Variable characteristics – degree of independence, specificity of expertise in relation to subject matter

Selection of authors

93. The selection of the authors is a key task in the development of any materials, since the quality of the authors will ultimately determine the quality of the document. Best-case practice would have the editor selecting the author, since this establishes clear lines of authority and accountability. Experience within an organization suggests that selection of the authors by those who do not have responsibility for the quality of the product can be problematic.

94. An organization such as UNESCO, when operating in a specialist area, needs to be working with the very best in a field. Selection of the authors should be undertaken in the context of a description of the leading international experts in an area, and the standard of the selected authors in relation to those leading the field.

Variable characteristics – expertise, selection process

Material review

95. Any document should be reviewed by parties other than the primary author prior to its release. In many cases within UNESCO only the author and the programme specialist reviewed the document in any detail, and in some cases these were the same person. Best practice would indicate that there be at least one, and preferably multiple reviews undertaken of any materials released. The extent of review and editorial oversight will be influenced by the expertise credibility of the authors, but it is difficult to envisage any circumstances which would justify *no* review of the material.

96. Peer review processes are extensively used in academia and in other professions as a means of achieving quality. Peer review has many problems that are well documented in the literature. Some of these include:

- inherent conservatism: peer review tends to favour research that follows standard thinking in an area. Innovative thinking that breaks the bounds of current approaches is likely to be unfavourably reviewed by peer reviewers who are selected on the basis of their standing in the mainstream of thought in an area.
- peer review clubs: where authors known to each other provide favourable reviews of each other's work, assisting publication.
- bias against authors from developing countries: there is a suggestion that authors from these countries fare poorly in a peer review process for prestigious academic journals.
- conflicts of interest: conflicts can arise particularly where the field of study is small and most key players are known to each other.
- reviews outside areas of expertise: reviewers whilst being generally familiar with a topic may not have specific expertise in a methodology or subspecialty¹⁴.

97. A number of interviewees reported significant difficulties in getting people to undertake the refereeing task. Difficulties included internal reviews not being completed or not being completed with any degree of thoroughness, and external referees refusing to do the work, or accepting it and not completing it in a timely manner. Refereeing is a significant burden, and in the absence of any incentives can be difficult to implement.

98. Despite these issues peer review remains a key tool for managing the quality of publications, and within UNESCO some form of peer review was utilized as a quality control mechanism in all the best-practice cases identified. This report widens the scope of formal peer reviewing as practiced in academic journals. It includes all forms

¹⁴ E.g. see Dorothy L Lebeau, William C Steinmann, and Robert K Michael, 1997, A Survey Of Journal Editors Regarding The Review Process For Original Clinical Research. International Congress on Peer Review in Biomedical Research. <http://www.ama-assn.org/public/peer/are.htm>

of reviewing as part of the quality-control process, since formal peer reviewing will not always be appropriate.

99. Selection and management of reviewers are the key criteria in effective reviewing, and this is closely linked to editorial independence and authority. As with selection of the authors, selection of reviewers should be undertaken in the context of a description of the state of international expertise in the field being reviewed, and the suitability of the selections in this context. Reviews can take many forms and these are listed below in ascending order of independence and reliability.

- Internal review: review by other UNESCO staff members. These are typically used for general publications which refer to technical areas which are not too specific. Difficulties arise with a lack of accountability, and lack of payment leads to poor, or non-completion of reviews, particularly where timeliness is an issue. Problems are also likely to arise where the subject area is outside the specific areas of expertise of the reviewers.
- External review: documents are often circulated to a network or stakeholder group as part of a consultation mechanism. This can provide a valuable quality check, since comments are often received on content, usefulness and copy-editing. This approach however is of limited usefulness in assuring the quality of the content where specialist topics are involved, since the editor cannot be sure of the standard of the comments received.
- External peer review: in this approach the document is sent to known peer reviewers able to comment on the specific technical issues involved. The referees are preferably paid, and for maximum independence the reviews are 'double blind' and comments are sent to the editor rather than the authors. Selection of the referees is critical, and again best-practice indicates selection by the editor (rather than the author) of the leading international experts in a field. This requires some knowledge on the part of the editor of those operating in a field.
- Peer network review with oversight: while this approach is a composite type of external review, it has been included because of its apparent utility in managing the review approach under conflicting objectives of quality and capacity building. This approach involves a network of peers reviewing each other's work, with external oversight of the review process by leading international experts in the field.
- Review board: a variety of types of review board can be used. In cases of multi-author projects the authors can act as their own review board (where the expertise is appropriate). In others the review board can be entirely independent and composed of relevant experts. A review board lends its expertise and insight to help authors shape their work into high quality publications. It should not be confused with an editorial board, which sets the direction of the publication and takes the final decision on the content. They undertake different functions and should ideally be separated and maintained at arms length.

Variable characteristics – independence, number and extensiveness of review, specificity of the reviewers' expertise in relation to the subject matter

Testing effectiveness

100. Any material released has a purpose, which will have been defined in advance during the project plan. In educational circles, it is common for any material to have undergone extensive testing with the audience or subjects to ensure that it achieves its learning aims with maximum effectiveness. It was surprising how rarely any type of testing of effectiveness was undertaken within UNESCO. There were some cases of learning/training materials having been tested for effectiveness, but this was the exception rather than the rule. More commonly this was left to the judgement of the programme specialist, even where quite extensive training materials were being prepared.

101. Testing effectiveness can, again, take many forms, and these are listed in ascending order of reliability:

- internal review of effectiveness: the editor/programme specialist and possibly colleagues look at the materials and form a judgement based on their expertise regarding their suitability for purpose, by questioning the effectiveness. A professional editor can also be used in targeting the material to its audience and improving its effectiveness.
- external review: the materials are circulated to stakeholders and other experts for opinions as to their suitability. In some cases, such as where the stakeholders or experts are also the users, this can be very effective. In others, it produces results no better than internal review. For ongoing publications external review can come in the form of feedback or surveys on past issues.
- internal tests of effectiveness: the material developers test the effectiveness of the material, by using it preliminarily. Where practitioners are authors, this can be an iterative process, and it can produce very effective materials.
- independent tests of effectiveness: the materials are tested in the situations for which they were designed, with independent testers checking the way in which they are used and the results. In the education area there are evaluation companies and organizations which test materials for developers.

102. In the case of training material normal practice should be for an extensive programme of testing of its effectiveness. However, for other materials more generalized tests of effectiveness may be appropriate.

Variable characteristics – independence of testing, specificity to the situations in which the materials will be used

Copy-editing, legal clearance and translation

103. Copy-editing, legal clearance and translation are specialist tasks. Best practice in this area is that they be given to specialists, and it is noted that programme specialists are not usually qualified for any of these tasks. Where editors are not available in-house, qualified experts must be hired in and copy-editing should be undertaken in the primary language of the copy-editor. Translation services are available internally and externally. Best practice is for:

- translators to be translating into their primary language. There appear to be occasions of this not occurring, particularly with external translation services, which has not lead to high quality publications.
- where translation is critical, teams of translators can work together with the editor to check meaning and content.

104. A process should be established for the clearance of copyright and other intellectual property issues. Legal clearance should be obtained internally for any particularly sensitive issues where liability may arise.

Variable characteristics – quality of copy editors and translators, resources and time available. Copyright and legal clearance mandatory and material-specific

Other issues in developing best practice

Quality and management

105. Quality control is not a management tool that can be bolted onto an existing structure to fix problems. It has to be an integral part of good management practices which is supportive of producing high quality products. While the report proposes an approach to quality management in the Organization below, there is little confidence in it succeeding in the absence of wider structural and management reform. Quality management processes are too easily subverted in the context of other pressures on staff and management. Without the appropriate focus, resourcing, accountability and incentive structures in place, a consistent standard of quality will not be achieved in an enduring fashion. Some of the directions being taken in the Organization to improve lines of authority and accountability are noted with approval.

106. An explicit management direction that the Organization aims to develop a culture of excellence in its externally-released material would be useful. This leadership could include statements such as the need to release “better targeted and higher quality materials”. The outcome of the quality assurance programme could be fewer materials released, due to preventing release of poor quality materials but also because the resources required to produce high quality materials often mean that fewer projects can be undertaken. Leadership in this regard would facilitate the introduction of a quality management programme and enhance its chances of success.

Multiple Objectives in material release

107. An organization such as UNESCO often has multiple objectives *vis-à-vis* the outputs from any project. These may include:

- normative functions – guidelines and standards;
- awareness raising;
- capacity building – both during the project and through the outputs from the project;
- administrative – i.e. project completion, project milestones;
- developing ownership; and
- partnership.

108. Partnership can introduce difficulties, particularly where the authorship is the primary responsibility of the partner agency. One education programme specialist, working on producing a project report, remarked that her team had difficulty in securing quality in the report, particularly after the partner agency had reviewed and signed off on it. The project team had an internal discussion over the possibilities of suspending the report production but there was significant pressure from the partner and other stakeholders to produce printed material. For the sake of future partnerships, the team took a decision to produce a scaled-down and lower-priced material. In other cases where publication is the final output from a project, and is one of the project requirements, there can be considerable pressure to compromise quality. This is particularly the case where an author has been contracted to produce a draft, which is handed in at the end of a project, and there is no further funding to undertake further (sometimes extensive) revisions.

109. The issue raised here is the degree to which UNESCO should compromise its quality standards to achieve other objectives from a project. Should it tolerate the trade-offs between quality and partnership, or between quality and actually getting an output from a project?

110. There is no single answer to these questions, and UNESCO needs to develop a set of policies on how to handle such issues. For example, there should be a hard line on quality where it is only the internal project objectives that are being compromised – such as non-completion because the final product was not up to standard. However where external objectives such as partnership are involved other approaches may be more appropriate. For example SAQMEC published two early country reports despite concerns over the quality of data, but included a disclaimer that noted the concerns and indicated that the reports did not meet the accepted standards. The recommendations in this respect would therefore be:

- support for sector chiefs and directors in refusing to approve release of materials which had not met the quality standards expected; and
- implementation of a more comprehensive disclaimers policy.

Corporate style

111. The UNESCO Manual contains guidance on corporate style, but this is both out dated and not comprehensive. Most other organizations in the benchmarking exercise have reasonably comprehensive guides on style, formatting, placement of logo, and so forth, which attempts to produce a level of conformity in their publications. During interviewing the issue of corporate style, or lack thereof, was raised a number of times.

112. The detail and consistency of the style guide will depend on UNESCO's objectives in respect of defining a corporate style – i.e. what will it add to UNESCO's publications? These objectives should be determined before further work is undertaken in this area.

6. Framework for Quality Assurance and Recommendations

113. UNESCO's current approach to quality assurance is weak. Responsibility is effectively devolved to programme specialist level without any accountability. Most sectors do not have guidelines for quality assurance, and programme specialists are managing this aspect on their own. The feedback from interviews conducted points to problems with the quality of materials released as a result of this approach.

114. The feedback from interviews also suggests, that the past practice, such as routine external reviewing of publications, and substantial publications groups within each sector, has been breaking down over time as resource constraints impact on the Organization. In this context, UNESCO is facing a similar problem as other major international organisations, i.e. trying to over-deliver given too few resources. This is a systemic problem which will need to be addressed across the Organization, but the quality assurance process will be an important part of this because it indicates the standards required, and will therefore help to define what can be achieved with the given resources.

115. The highest standards of quality are achieved under the following circumstances:

- a strong commitment from senior management
- a culture and practice of excellence and appropriate supporting management arrangements;
- an editorial board of qualified experts;
- selection of leading international authors;
- independent peer review and/or a review board;
- independent testing for effectiveness and targeting of the audience;
- specialist copy-editors; and
- teams of translators working together on a document, translating into their primary language.

116. In addition, it should be kept in mind that UNESCO is not an academic research organization, and academic standards will not always be appropriate even if they are appropriate in some circumstances. Academic standards may even work against promoting quality in some areas – for example policy publications require a flexibility to explore concepts and present new ideas that is not easily accommodated in a traditional peer review system. The Organization needs to develop approaches to managing quality assurance which reflect the requirements of the material and the aims of the Organization and which reduce the risk of poor-quality materials being released.

The need for flexibility

117. As described earlier, UNESCO produces a variety of written materials with different objectives, in a wide range of subject areas. It is appropriate to argue that UNESCO is obliged to enforce stringent quality assurance policy on all publications, documents and materials. However, considering the great diversity of materials released by the Organization, a single defined policy runs a significant risk of not

being applied due to a high volume of material. Furthermore, every sector, section and team faces a different set of financial and managerial circumstances, which could easily impede putting the policy into practice. For these reasons a quality assurance mechanism needs to maintain a certain degree of flexibility.

118. Having flexibility does not necessarily mean tolerating a loose quality assurance process. Standards can be set in such a way that they are stringent, but allow staff to explore optimal, innovative, cost-effective and sustainable approaches to achieving quality.

119. A well-designed quality assurance process will have the following characteristics:

- Flexibility: the process should be adaptable to the huge variety of work which UNESCO undertakes.
- Ownership: the sectors and programme specialists will take ownership of producing high quality materials.
- Transparency: those involved in the process and those external to it will be able to determine what has been done to ensure quality in the materials.
- Accountability: there should be clear lines of responsibility for quality in the materials, and processes should be documented as the materials are produced.
- Oversight: the process should have clear requirements or standards to be met at each stage, and it should be documented in such a way that any material released can be checked to ensure that due process has been followed.

A risk-based framework

120. The purpose of this section is to outline a framework within which quality assurance processes can be developed. The framework is based on the principles of management and quality assurance and practice in other comparable organisations, together with observations of the Organization in which it needs to operate. However it should be noted that it should not be considered a finished piece, but more of a start point from which the Organization can begin developing its quality assurance processes.

121. The framework is a risk-based approach to managing quality. It seeks to minimize the risk of poor quality materials being released, yet allows tailoring of the quality assurance process to the circumstances of the sector and the material being produced. Responsibility for delivering high quality material would rest with the programme specialist and the accountable authority in the sector. The essence of the approach is the categorisation of materials according to their risk, and then setting standards of quality control according to the risks posed.

122. Our proposed framework has three main stages and an overview role:

- Step 1 - standard setting;
- Step 2 - documentation;
- Step 3 - approval;
- Oversight - management of the QA processes.

Step 1 - Standard-setting

123. In this stage the Organization would establish clear guidelines about what it expects in terms of quality. The devolution of developing these guidelines to at least the sector level is favoured for two reasons:

- the sheer diversity of sectors and materials produced by each sector makes a single organization-wide set of standards problematic;
- ownership is likely to be greater among those to be held accountable if the setting of standards is devolved to their level.

124. At this stage further devolution is not favoured because of the expertise and resources required in this exercise. However it is noted that in other comparable organizations there is further devolution of accountability, and it may be appropriate to devolve further to Regional Offices in some cases. The issue of how to include Field Offices in the framework is discussed later.

125. The standards would be set in the form of a Quality Assurance Plan (QAP). The QAP would:

1. describe the materials being produced by the sector;
2. describe the general risk characteristics of these materials. ;
3. develop categories of materials or risk which will be the basis for setting quality assurance standards;
4. define the minimum standards required in each category or subcategory. The standards should be described in terms of the general characteristics of the practice, rather than prescriptive. These standards could cover a wide range of matters including issues such as publication planning requirements as well as editorial and reviewing arrangements;
5. define the quality assurance documentation required to accompany any materials that are to be signed-off for release;
6. describe the sector's disclaimer and logo policy for managing trade-offs between the different objectives of any material released.

126. The time requirements will vary according to the amount of information that sectors have on the materials which they are releasing, which in some cases is very limited. In some sectors, such as SHS, the planning process may dovetail neatly into a proposed publications strategy. In other more diverse sectors it may prove more difficult, but the key issue is to ensure that it focuses on generic guidelines and standards, and does not get too detailed. The detail of quality assurance will need to be determined by the commissioning specialist with guidance from the QAP, rather than have it defined in great detail within the QAP.

127. Devolution creates problems of its own in an organization like UNESCO, where there is difficulty in obtaining any consistency across different activities. In particular there is the concern that different sectors would adopt widely differing approaches, which makes life difficult for those who have to monitor and manage across different parts of the Organization. The sector plans need to retain a degree of consistency, which could be achieved through the approach of piloting, use of templates, having sectors peer review each other's plans, and oversight which includes reporting on

individual plans but also the plans collectively. These matters are discussed further in the section on oversight.

Step 2 - Documentation of the quality assurance process

128. Any material that is to be released from the Organization would need to have an accompanying description of the quality assurance process that has been followed. While it is not released itself, this document goes to the person who ‘visas’ release and forms the basis of their approval and its associated audit trail.

129. Recommended key features of the documentation would be:

- the objectives and audience for the materials;
- the editorial control over the document;
- author selection in the context of leading international expertise in the field;
- the review process followed;
- the status of the reviewers in the context of leading international expertise in the field;
- how the document was tested for effectiveness;
- any significant issues which arose during review and testing and how these were managed in the final product;
- copy-editing process and the language capability of the copy editor;
- translation requirements and the language capability of the translators;
- that copyright and other intellectual property issues have been addressed, and that any necessary legal clearances have been obtained;
- how the document is to be disseminated and whether the required resources are available.

130. As noted above, the requirements would be tailored to the circumstances of the individual sectors through the QAP.

Step 3 – Approval

131. The relevant delegated authority will be required to approve the release of any materials. This person would inspect the document and its associated quality assurance documentation, and measure this against the guidelines in the Sector’s plan. Approval would constitute a recommendation that the quality assurance process meets the Sector’s standards. The delegated authority giving approval for release would assume accountability and would be checked against the standards in the plan.

Oversight - Management of the QAP

132. Management of the QAP is required at two stages:

- checking that QAPs had been produced and are of an appropriate quality. For this task a peer network review would work well, where sectors review and comment on each other’s QAP. A unit independent from the process would provide guidance and quality management of the process including periodic reporting back on the planning process.

- The oversight of the QAPs will need to ensure a degree of consistency across sectors. This should be assisted by the mutual reviewing and by quality assurance of the process. At the end of the process the unit assuring quality of the process could report back on the QAPs as a collective and on any consistency issues which had arisen.
- checking that the appropriate procedures had been followed in the production of materials released. This would only need to be undertaken on a limited basis, and preferably in conjunction with other management quality assurance procedures in the Organization.

Implementation

133. The implementation of the process is likely to be most effectively rolled out through a number of stages. The outline here is a suggestion only – circumstances and resources will determine what is most appropriate.

Seek feedback

134. This report should be more widely circulated for comment on the issues raised and the processes proposed. This will provide useful information on the information in the report and the proposed approach. Holding workshops in each sector and perhaps some major regional offices would also be useful as a source of input to the process.

Piloting the plan process

135. The process of developing a Sector Quality Assurance Plans (SQAP) could be piloted with a single sector, preferably a smaller sector initially. This would allow the unit in charge of oversight and the Organization as a whole to develop some expertise and experience in the process prior to full roll out, and to develop templates and criteria which will make rolling out the full process easier.

136. Full implementation would follow the piloting, and would depend on the expertise gained during the feedback processes and piloting. These processes can be finalized at a later date.

Potential early implementation

137. Management could consider implementing the documentation phase of the framework even before the QAPs have been completed. The requirement would be that any materials released from the Organization be accompanied by a Quality Assurance Report which discusses the matters such as those set out in the documentation section above. While implementing the documentation phase before the QAPs are completed would mean that there would be no standards against which the documentation would be judged, its immediate implementation would:

- encourage greater consideration by programme specialists and approving authorities of quality issues;
- prevent some of the worst abuses such as materials being printed without resources for distribution, and reports being authored and printed by a programme specialist without any external reference or review;
- provide necessary information for sectors to complete the QAPs to set standards against which approving authorities can judge the individual quality assurance reports.

138. Management should seek feedback on the implications of an early move in this direction.

Other implementation issues

Integration into UNESCO systems

139. Ideally the QA process could be integrated into existing UNESCO management systems without having to create new approaches. Options for doing so include use of performance agreements and use of the Tables of Authority and Accountability for all or parts of the process. The most appropriate mechanisms need to be determined after initial feedback on the report, and it may be that this occurs even after an initial plan has been piloted. Issues will include the detail at which the process is to be represented, and the extent to which and the parties to whom the authority is to be delegated.

Integration into Field Offices

140. The Field Offices appear particularly problematic in terms of implementing a quality assurance plan. The lines of reporting are often confused, and accountability does not appear to be strong. With a lack of direct experience with Field Offices and in the limited time available, it is difficult to comment on how effective any approach would be. However the following issues should be considered in designing a system which will accommodate the field network.

- ***Need to retain oversight:*** the requirement to retain oversight of the planning process limits the extent to which this can be devolved in the first instance. The sheer logistics of oversight make facilitating, reviewing and reporting back on plans from every Field Office unmanageable. The number of plans which are developed initially would need to be constrained to a manageable number – less than five to ten in the first instance.
- ***Resources and expertise:*** the availability of resources and expertise to undertake the development of a QAP is likely to be limited to only a few larger offices. (say Brazil and the Education and Science Regional Bureaux)
- ***Necessity:*** the need for a Field Office to develop a SQAP may be limited to situations where some other plan does not suit their purpose.

- ***Hierarchy of plans:*** plans must not be inconsistent with each other e.g. a Field Office's plan having lower standards than a sector plan. A hierarchy of plans would therefore be required – for example whereby any plan developed for the field could not have lower standards for publications than the relevant sector plans.

141. These issues all point to a need to involve the Field Offices at an early stage, including seeking feedback on this report and involvement in the development of sector plans.

Recommendations

142. The UNESCO management should develop a quality assurance system for materials released externally that both delivers consistency in quality, and allows sectors and programme specialists to tailor the approach adopted to the circumstances they face.

143. The QA system should be integrated with changes to the management structure that promote responsibility and accountability. It should also be developed in the context of leadership that explicitly recognizes the need to produce better-targeted and higher quality materials with the resources that are available.

144. A risk management-based framework is recommended as most suitable to accommodate the wide range of circumstances to be found within UNESCO. This would tailor the type of quality assurance to the probability and impact of poor quality materials being released.

145. This report and proposed framework should be used to consult widely within the Organization, including Field Offices and Institutes. Feedback should be used to further develop the proposal, including areas of responsibility and modes of implementation.

146. The framework for quality assurance should be piloted before full implementation. One of the smaller sectors is recommended for the pilot programme. Methods and templates from the pilot programme can be used for more widespread implementation in the Organization.

ANNEX I: STOCKTAKE

1. Bureau of Public Information
2. Sector for Administration, Division of Conferences, Languages and Documents
3. Secretariat of the General Conference
4. Education Sector
5. Natural Sciences Sector
6. Communication and Information Sector
7. Culture Sector
8. Social and Human Sciences Sector
9. Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
10. EFA Global Monitoring Report

1. BUREAU OF PUBLIC INFORMATION (BPI)

UNESCO Publishing Section (BPI/PUB)

BPI/PUB is the commercial publishing arm of UNESCO. According to the UNESCO Manual, all manuscripts delivered to BPI/PUB should have undergone editing (for content and structure). BPI/PUB is responsible for production: this includes copy-editing/corrections, typesetting, layout, proofreading, cover design, printing and binding. Although it is the individual Sector's responsibility to ensure the quality of a manuscript, BPI/PUB also evaluates the contents in order to protect the image and reputation of the UNESCO Publishing imprint.

In principle, the following quality-control measures are taken.

- **Pre-screening at the Sector level:** manuscripts should be circulated within the Sector and subjected to internal checks before submission to BPI/PUB for publication. In general, approximately 80% of the manuscripts are processed according to this procedure. In some instances, particularly in the case of scientific manuscripts, specialists also review the material before a decision is taken to publish it as a commercial publication.
- **Screening:** BPI/PUB evaluates manuscripts submitted for publication. Manuscripts that do not meet the required standards for commercial publication are rejected. If the contents appear to be appropriate but poorly written, BPI/PUB can accept the manuscript for publication on condition that the Sector undertake further editing. BPI/PUB can provide recommendations for editorial changes and, if necessary, the names of editors to carry out the work at the Sector's expense.
- **External reader's report:** BPI/PUB sends out certain manuscripts for external evaluation or peer review, particularly when the manuscript has not been subjected to internal peer review by the Sector, or because BPI/PUB believes that, given the subject of the manuscript, an external peer review is necessary.

External peer reviewers are given the following guidelines:

- ✓ to perform a critical evaluation of the manuscript's contents;
- ✓ to perform a critical evaluation of the manuscript's form (language and writing style);
- ✓ to indicate whether other books have been published on the same subject;
- ✓ to define the target audience and the expected level of readership in relation to the content and style of the book;
- ✓ to indicate necessary improvements and whether the manuscript deserves publication;
- ✓ if the reviewer believes the manuscript should not be published say why.

- **Co-publisher-commissioned reader's report:** for co-publications, manuscripts are often also peer reviewed by the co-publisher. BPI/PUB takes into account co-publisher's evaluations, as commercial publishers do not publish poor-quality books without heavy financial support. UNESCO Publishing's policy, however, is not to pay outside publishers to publish a book but to establish co-publishing agreements. These agreements are based on international book publishing standard practice, namely both sides share intellectual responsibility and financial risk. Therefore, if a co-publisher's reader's report is negative, BPI/PUB may also decide not to publish the manuscript.

BPI/PUB's interviewee reported that almost 50% of manuscripts were rejected, although of late BPI/PUB has received fewer poor manuscripts. This is probably because the Sectors are increasingly aware of BPI/PUB's selective policy regarding books to be issued under the UNESCO Publishing imprint. There is no data available, but as of 2005, BPI/PUB will register all manuscripts, including those that are rejected.

UNESCO's financial and staff reductions are reflected in the Organization's programme. Moreover, the suppression of publishing specialists in the Sectors makes it difficult to ensure proper screening of manuscripts. In this regard, the interviewee expressed concern about the decline in the number of good-quality manuscripts. In this context, BPI/PUB's role as publisher is to enhance UNESCO's image by establishing and maintaining both quality control and cost-effective measures regarding commercial publications.

2. ADMINISTRATION (ADM)

Division of Conference, Language and Documents (ADM/CLD)

The documents part of this unit has two main functions:

- printing of the General Conference and Executive Board papers;
- printing of 'Sector Quota' material – this is an allowance by sector for a number of pages of free printing. It is likely that the free quota printing will be phased out in the near future.

In both cases the material is received as content, with formatting and translation completed within the CLD division. Quality control is entirely the responsibility of the source. The group notes that in some sectors material is duplicated across groups because of a lack of communication, or material is printed and not distributed because no budget is available for this part of the operation.

3. SECRETARIAT OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE (SGC)

The process of preparing for the General Conference begins a year in advance, as follows.

- The provisional agenda is prepared by the Secretariat of the GC (then approved by the Executive Board at a later stage).
- Sectors are required to prepare reports for the agenda items foreseen. These are planned on a six-month schedule, according to three parameters:
 - availability of the information to be provided to the General Conference (according to the holding of meetings, the update of financial information, programme implementation, etc.);
 - rational allocation of the translation/reproduction services throughout the cycle;
 - respect, to the highest possible extent, of the statutory deadline for the dispatch of documents to Member States (25 days before the opening of the session).
- An extensive 'visa' process of originals (English or French) is undertaken within the sector (Unit --> Division --> ADG) and, -subsequently, other services concerned (Legal Affairs, External Relations) as appropriate.
- Some sensitive material is sent to the ODG for checking and visa.
- The documents proceed to translation services, where they are translated into the six working languages of the General Conference. Further text-checking (English, French, Spanish¹⁵) is sometimes undertaken by SCG (consulting the original authors when necessary) on the translations where particularly sensitive issues are involved. The text of proposed resolutions is systematically checked by SCG before reproduction.

Through this process the SGC maintains final editorial control.

After the Conference the Secretariat has two months to report the resolutions to the Member Countries. The resolutions and reports of committees and commissions are received by the SGC, and then proceed to proofing and translation. While proofing is limited because there is limited opportunity to change the resolutions as adopted, translation is a complex task. Two committees of translators meet in parallel with the secretariat personnel, and go through the resolutions line by line to resolve meaning and translation issues. In some cases legal services are also consulted to assist, particularly with normative resolutions.

No external review processes are involved in the production of the documentation for the General Conference.

4. EDUCATION SECTOR

Executive Office, Documentation and Information Service (ED/EO/SDI)

In the Education Sector, a media team established in 2002 merged with the Documentation and Information Service in 2004. Current activities of the Service include a documentation service, an Education Portal, a quarterly newsletter in seven languages,

¹⁵ The choice of these three among the six is purely due to the linguistic capacities of SCG

collaboration with BPI on media relations, and the production of layout of publications and promotional materials. There is little or no quality control of documents or websites and no overall coordination of what is being produced. Following the Senior Editor's retirement two months ago the Sector no longer has an English editor (there is one for French).

As a consequence, programme specialists contract outside English editors with their programme budget. However, concerns were expressed with this approach because external editors are not necessarily familiar with UNESCO terminology and institutional concerns, which could undermine UNESCO's corporate image in the long run.

Concern was also raised about the feasibility of producing the Education Portal in the six official languages, as decided by the Executive Board, taken into account the current financial and human resources.

Basic Education, Guidelines for Inclusive Education

The Guidelines are intended to be used in formulating national education (and/or EFA) plans, analyzing the effectiveness of existing plans, and assisting in planning and implementation of the plans overall. The Guidelines are currently in the finalization stage.

One of the key features of the Guidelines has been the evolutionary process of the draft that has been the result of incorporation of feedback from a number of stakeholders through a series of consultations. The reviewers include internal and external education experts, EFA coordinators, policy-makers of governments, NGOs, and other interest groups. More specifically, the Team has undertaken the following processes.

1. Self-evaluations by the Team members: the Team examined the effectiveness and logic of the contents based on an analytical framework for self-evaluation introduced by IOS. The guidelines were also tested by the Team to examine its effectiveness.
2. Consultation with stakeholders including staff from ministries of education, NGOs, EFA coordinators and other stakeholders: in total, three rounds of consultations were undertaken. The first round was undertaken with a reasonably early draft. As a broad range of stakeholders were targeted for the initial consultation, potential readers and reviewers were divided into different groups. The Team customized questionnaires according to the groups, in order to address the questions according to expertise and interest. The second and third drafts were circulated to a smaller group of selected contributors for further comments.
3. Reviews by internal and external education experts: concurrently with the broader consultation, the draft guidelines were circulated to internal and external education experts under the name of Chief of Section. The feedback was incorporated into the draft along with comments from the consultation. The second and third drafts were circulated to a smaller group of the key experts for further comments.

4. A presentation at an international workshop: the draft was presented at a Regional conference of EFA coordinators, international experts and members of civil society in Bangkok, Thailand which was attended by representatives from Asia-Pacific countries. A feedback sheet was distributed during the presentation and the comments on site were incorporated or taken into consideration when received subsequently via email.
5. Finalisation: in order to finalise the guidelines there will be one further round of consultations with directors in UNESCO and a consultation with the Steering Committee of the Flagship (including members from UNICEF, ILO, WHO, NGOs and disability organizations). A strategy for dissemination is being developed.
6. Documentation of feedback and response: at each stage, particularly for the major initial consultation, the key responses from reviewers were documented and the majority of feedback was incorporated or otherwise taken into account.

The Team notes the difficulties they had in undertaking a large consultation exercise, even in terms of identifying and contacting key staff in UNESCO such as the EFA coordinators. In terms of input from Field Offices, they had considerable assistance from one regional office, but feedback from other offices was limited. The group considers that the process has not only improved the quality of the document, but increased ownership by the stakeholder community.

Secondary, Technical and Vocational Education (ED/STV)

- ***Training kit for youth on responsible consumption***

This publication aims at introducing socially and environmentally sustainable consumption styles to young people. It was produced in collaboration with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Relatively strict quality control was applied to this handbook for two reasons. First, UNEP has established guidelines for publications in general and this handbook was required to comply with its standards. Furthermore, the foreword has been co-signed by UNESCO's General Director and UNEP's Executive Director. Secondly, as the handbook introduces diverse products of private corporations, it required more sensitivity in handling than usual.

When a draft was ready, the Programme Specialist consulted relevant sections in UNESCO, including the Legal Services, Bureau of Public Information, and Private Sector Collaboration. Chiefs of Sections of both UNESCO and UNEP closely reviewed the contents. After that, the draft was circulated to youth groups and professional groups for further comments. A pilot test to examine effectiveness and its applicability to school teaching is about to be launched in collaboration with the Associate School network (ASP).

- ***Report on partnership for education in Southern Africa***

A consultant was contracted to undertake research and prepare a report. Prior to a regional workshop, held in Namibia during which feedback as well as further enrichment of the report content, in particular with concrete case studies of public private partnership

practices in southern African countries. Upon completion of the draft, the Chief of Section and Programme Specialist reviewed the contents and made comments. The consultant finalized the report by reflecting the comments. An external editor was hired to check the language and style. There were no external peer-reviews for content.

- ***Report on environmental education in Asia***

The report was written to present an overview of environmental education TV schools in several Asian countries. The study was commissioned by a partner agency in the region. Several national specialists in each of the countries involved in the study were contracted to prepare each country study. Once all the study reports were ready, the partner agency reviewed them. However, the quality of report was found to vary significantly, depending on the capacity of the consultant preparing the chapters. Extensive review was undertaken, and the quality of the report was improved but it did not reach an expected standard.

After finalizing the report, there was a debate among UNESCO staff whether the report should actually be printed or should be placed on the website as an alternative. There was pressure to print from the partner agency as well as other stakeholders in the project. A compromise was reached and three hundred copies were produced in black and white with staple binding. No particular disclaimers were included, but the cover page stated that the report is a report of the partner agency, with support from UNESCO, rather than being a UNESCO publication.

- ***Book series on innovation in science and technology education***

This series is issued approximately every two years. Several experts from different regions of the world are asked to write articles on a particular theme. As a quality control process, one specialist reviews all the articles and ensures quality in content. As a next step, the articles are sent to an editor for copy-editing and ‘uniformisation’. As a last step, an editor at UNESCO publications does the formatting and style.

- ***Science education posters***

The programme specialists of the Section, taking into account the severe shortage of teaching materials in classrooms in developing countries expressed at various international expert meetings, decided to produce a series of posters to promote science education in developing countries. An outline was put together by the programme specialists, and sent to a science institute in India who developed the draft posters. They were then reviewed internally at UNESCO HQ, but there was no peer review process as the posters are considered to be a visual tool. One thousand copies were produced for each poster.

- ***Resource kit for technology education***

This guideline is intended for policy-makers and teachers to design and implement science education in secondary schools. It was commissioned by the World Council of Association for Technology Education, and it consists of twenty modules derived from different resources. These were reviewed internally, and there was a difficulty in unifying them into a single resource kit. In addition to the internal review by the Council and the

Programme Specialist, several external specialists were contracted to review each module. The draft was also circulated to several NGOs for further comments before finalisation.

- ***Science and technology resource kit for secondary level***

Following the need expressed by experts from developing countries with regard to the lack of teaching materials for school teachers of science and technology, this kit was specially designed with the help of experts from around the world. It contains twenty modules for teachers and students which were peer reviewed externally by experts. They were then sent to the Science Education Association in the U.K. for ‘uniformisation’ and production. The finished kit was sent to different countries to be further reviewed for specific regional needs. The kit has been designed in loose-leaf format in order to allow for addition or removal of modules according to specific country needs.

- ***Technology education guide***

This guide is intended for curriculum designers and teachers to promote technology education in secondary schools. It was developed by the World Council of Associations for Technology Education, and consists of eleven modules derived from different resources. These were reviewed internally. In addition to the internal review by the Council and the Programme Specialists, several external specialists were contracted to review each module. The draft was also circulated to several NGOs for further comments before finalisation.

- ***Guidelines for policy-making in secondary school science and technology education***

This document is the outcome of the International Conference on Science, Technology and Mathematics Education, Goa, India, 2001, where the participating experts expressed a need for such a document to be produced by UNESCO. These guidelines are largely inspired by the recommendations of the Goa conference and were developed by a known expert in science education. They were peer-reviewed by various other participants of the Goa Conference before being finalized and disseminated to UNESCO Member States.

- ***Biotechnology education CD-ROM***

The Science & Technology Institute from India developed this interactive educational resource. The need to attract children to science classes was the rationale for producing this CD-Rom which presents biotechnology in a lively and ludic manner. The contents were reviewed internally as well as by a specialist of the Natural Science Sector at UNESCO. As this medium is very easy to update, no external reviews were carried out initially. Feedback on the CD-ROM will be taken into account for updating it.

5. NATURAL SCIENCES SECTOR

Earth Sciences (SC/GEO)

This Division does not publish a great deal due to resource constraints. They have three main categories of publications:

- ***"Geological Correlation"*** - This is the annual publication of the International Geoscience Programme (IGCP) that lists the ongoing and newly approved projects (about 40 per year) of the programme. Each project leader sends a report of the project to the Division, which is edited by the IGCP Secretariat and reviewed by the Scientific Board at its annual meeting organized by the Division in HQ. The Scientific Board evaluates projects and new proposals of the IGCP and makes decisions on the programme for the coming year (s).
- ***Brochures/awareness-raising materials*** – The Division has produced a number of brochures, including one on space activities in UNESCO and a few on disasters. Inputs and review are provided by programme specialists within UNESCO and coordinated and edited by external consultants, ensuring the translation of scientific and technical terms into lay-man language. These brochures are designed for distribution to the general public (in particular decision-makers) and have less technical material.
- ***Partner publications*** – The Division sometimes provides moral support to publications by partners, typically in the form of the UNESCO logo on the publication. The publication is produced and funded by the partner and reviewed by a programme specialist in the Division. If the standard is considered appropriate, approval is given to use the UNESCO logo on the cover. In some cases the Division shares copyright (after quality control of the publication by a programme specialist) and distributes the publication to developing countries free of charge.

Most other materials produced by the Division are in the format of reports to partners or working groups and are not formally published or released beyond those directly involved in the project/programme.

The Division also produces maps in cooperation with BPI and partners.

Basic and Engineering Sciences (SC/BES)

This Division covers a large number of subjects, and only one programme specialist could be interviewed due to time constraints. The programme specialist for the Engineering Sciences had produced or was producing several training publications and two videos.

- ***Training manuals*** - The training manuals are produced by external consultants. Typically the Programme Specialist looks for the internationally-recognized

authorities in an area, with personal networks the source of information. The expert produces a manuscript, which is then reviewed by the Programme Specialist which, when completed, is forwarded to BPI. BPI undertakes the preparation for publication and publishes the documents.

External review has been limited to posting one report on the Gender Science and Technology website (<http://gstgateway.wigsat.org/ta/data/toolkit.html>) for comment prior to publication. To date external review has not been considered necessary because of the expertise of the authors and the level at which the publications have been pitched. However for one forthcoming publication that has involved multiple authorship external peer-review is being considered.

- **Videos** - Two videos released have been produced by contracted production houses. The first was a collection of already broadcast items (BBC) on technologies for poverty reduction that was edited into three different length videos. The second was produced 'from scratch' describing the development of renewable energy technologies in the South Pacific. This second video was essentially a series of interviews with experts from the region, and no further quality control was required.

The Programme Specialist described the difficulty of finding suitable people to peer review publications. The problem arises because the publications are targeted at gaps in information where there is little work being done, and finding others suitably qualified is difficult. He regards his main quality control mechanism as being the choice of authors, and in this he has been targeting established experts with international reputations.

Water Sciences (SC/HYD)

The director of the Hydrological Processes and Climate section in this division was interviewed. This group organizes its publishing into three main series¹⁶. Written guidelines for authors have been prepared for all three series.

- **Technical documents in hydrology** – this is the lowest standard series, and was changed in 1998 to incorporate stricter guidelines for quality control. The guidelines refer mainly to the format of the text, but in terms of managing content, the following matters are included:
 - ✓ the proposal for the paper has to be approved by the Director of the Water Sciences Division or the Project Officer;
 - ✓ the paper must be proofed by a language-editor prior to submission;
 - ✓ authors are encouraged to submit to peer-review, although this is not compulsory;
 - ✓ the Project Officer reviews the draft.

¹⁶ A fourth miscellaneous series has effectively been discontinued.

The technical series is intended to allow for rapid exchange of information, and many emerge from working groups, field programmes or conference proceedings.

- ***Studies and reports in hydrology*** – this has the same written standards as the Technical reports, but has, in practice, been moribund due to high costs of publishing. There was some confusion over the use of peer reviews in this series. The Director indicated that these reports are peer-reviewed, with the peer-reviews submitted to the Project Officer who exerts editorial control over the final publication.
- ***International hydrology series*** – this series is published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) and is considered the most prestigious of the series from the section. Books published in this series go through the following process.
 - ✓ Approval of proposal – a proposal is put to the Editorial Board, usually including drafts of two chapters. The proposal is put to four external referees, including two nominated by UNESCO and two by CUP. The proposal is judged on the degree to which the book will fill a particular niche in the scientific market, and the quality of the proposal and chapters.
 - ✓ Chapter refereeing – each chapter of the book is refereed externally, with the responses coordinated by the editors.
 - ✓ There is in house editing by CUP.
 - ✓ Reviewing – once published, the books are sent to international journals for reviews. Although this represents an *ex post* quality control, it is thought to introduce a discipline on the authors whose reputation is at stake.

The organization of publication into clearly-defined series with different quality control standards is an interesting feature of this Division, and one that may provide a useful model of other parts of the Organization.

6. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SECTOR

The CI Sector has no written guidelines for review. The programme specialists or commissioning party maintain responsibility for ensuring quality of materials produced. The normal procedure in the CI Sector consists of going through all manuscripts from contractors commissioned to write articles, chapters or reports. This is in order to check whether the draft meets the terms of reference. Once the draft report is received it is circulated inside the Sector for internal review. After synthesising all comments, they are sent back to the authors indicating where things should be adjusted. When necessary, manuscripts from authors are rejected when the Editor considers that standards have not been met.

In some instances, other peer-review mechanisms are used. These may include use of NGOs and other peers. These referees are rarely paid.

In a limited number of cases the production of books or other documents has been able to be integrated with a major conference theme. In these situations the authors are requested to present their reports to the participants in a special seminar organized within the conference for experts in the field. The seminar participants receive the report ahead of time and can ask questions during the presentation. All comments from participants are gathered by the responsible CI division, synthesised and sent back to the authors. Since the necessary resources for organizing these kinds of conferences are not always available, this ‘seminar review’ is only done on an ad hoc basis as the opportunities arise.

The Working Group on Information Services (WGIS), constituted of directors and representatives of the three CI divisions and the CI Executive Officer, ensures that all informative material – such as brochures, CD Roms, etc. – is of good quality. All proposals are submitted to the WGIS in the planning stage and in some cases, the draft also goes to them for comments.

CI often commissions authors, and considerable attention is given to the selection of contributors. The general objective of the CI sector is to develop competences in different regions, but this can sometimes conflict with the need to maintain high quality.

7. CULTURE SECTOR

- **Sales publications:** The Culture Sector prepares books for publication by (a) UNESCO Publishing or (b) UNESCO Publishing in collaboration with outside publishers (e.g. Berghahn Books, Heinemann). The texts of these are written either by: (a) a single author, or (b) participants at meetings and conferences in the form of working papers or reports of proceedings. These are generally translated into French or English and appear in both languages. English and French editors edit or write up these texts in book form. A general editor also reviews them and advises on content before they are forwarded to UNESCO Publishing. (e.g. *From chains to bonds* and *The Silk Roads*).

In the case of the series of the *General Histories*, a general editor and a scientific committee - consisting of outside experts - order the texts and also review them. The Programme Specialist of the Division in charge of the particular History coordinates and follows the preparation of the articles from start to finish of the process. Guidelines on the different stages of preparation of manuscripts are provided to the Divisions by CLT/PID.

- **Brochures and other materials for free distribution** are prepared by Programme Specialists in the Divisions, aided by outside consultants. Only those which cover the Sector’s whole programme are prepared under the direct supervision of Chief CLT/PID (e.g. *Culture(s): Diversity and Alliance*).
- **Website:** Chief CLT/PID is editor-in-chief of the CLT Website. Updating, editing and translation in three languages are carried out under her direction and supervision. Since translations are no longer done by CLD, this work is done

entirely by Chief CLT/PID as regards the French, and by the English editor for the English. The Unit also revises a constant flow of texts for the Office of ADG. Only Spanish translation work is outsourced. It should be added that CLT/PID is also responsible for relations with the media.

CLT programme officers only rarely write texts.

8. SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES SECTOR

The Sector produces a large number of documents that range from books (for sale and free distribution), proceedings and statutory reports, policy papers, journals (in particular the *International Social Science Journal*, see below), and a quarterly newsletter, to material published on the Web. Programme specialists and directors are requested to submit a list of planned documents and publications for the forthcoming year. Although this is done, modifications often occur during the year – cuts or delays due to lack of funds or staff or added publications/documents necessitated by an unforeseen event.

Following internal guidelines, all manuscripts should transit through the Sector's Publication Unit (except for the ISSJ) before being sent to CLD (free documents) or to BPI/PUB (publications for sale). This is generally the case. The type of input by the Sector's editor varies greatly depending on type of manuscript, moment at which the editor is involved (at the drafting stage or at the end of the line, with final manuscript) and availability of the editor.

There currently appear to be two main processes of quality control:

External review – a small number of publications have been produced with external review, primarily with an outside reader (identified by the Sector) or by co-publishers undertaking the review. These rarely involve *independent* external peer review.

Internal review – most publications are produced through a process of contracting external authors with internal review by the Programme Specialist and/or his/her supervisor. Occasionally several persons within a division review the texts.

In both cases, the manuscripts transit via the Sector's Editor who, time permitting, edits, proposes modifications in the organization of the manuscript, and revises the texts. However, when done, this type of quality control focuses purely on the structure of the publication and on the writing, not on the actual content (for which the programme specialist is responsible).

The group notes the difficulties that arise in quality control when it is not strong and is independent of the authors. Since manuscripts are often the result of a long-term project, quality control does not occur until late in the process. To stop the project at such a late stage, where publication is a significant requirement of the work plan, is very difficult.

Aside from the Sector's Publications Unit, there is no formal programme for quality control and/or peer-review. However, the Sector is in the process of preparing a publications strategy in which both will be an important element.

International Social Science Journal

The ISSJ is published quarterly in six languages through five different external publishers. The ISSJ is organized thematically and contains both commissioned and unsolicited articles. Quality control practices vary according to the source of the article:

1. **Articles commissioned by the Editorial Office:** this requires a contractual relationship with the different authors. By commissioning articles from prominent, high-profile authors and SH scientists, the visibility and reputation of the ISSJ increases. Particular attention can also be given to the diversity of age, discipline and geographical presence. For the selection of authors, the Editor relies strongly on recommendations from inside and outside peers who need to indicate the reasons why they recommend. The Editor accords more importance to the knowledge of the contributors than to the personal contacts peers have through networks. In the case of solicited articles, ISSJ works with one or several external editorial advisers. A UNESCO editor assists in the evaluation of the commissioned articles. When there is a significant difference in opinion among editors, two (even three) additional blind reviews are done if the timeline allows so.
2. **Unsolicited articles:** the ISSJ also receives many articles on different themes that are not commissioned. Because many of these papers are of an unpublishable standard, these papers are first screened by the Editor and sent for double blind refereeing afterwards only if, *prima facie*, publishable.
3. **A selection of responses to an open call for papers:** when ISSJ does an open call for articles on a given theme, unpublishable material is first weeded out by the editor, and potential material is then assessed by the editorial advisers and / or external blind referees if required.

ISSJ referees are not paid, which means that while external refereeing is essential for credibility, and also to attract high-quality submissions, it is also very difficult to apply in practice.

In all situations, the Editor has the final responsibility for the journal, and makes the final decision on what is published. In principle, the Editor could even decide to overrule unfavourable blind assessments, but this could only be considered in exceptional cases (e.g. to promote geographical diversity).

Translation: The translation quality control is internal for English, Spanish (Web only) and French. For Arabic, Russian and Chinese translation and quality control are the responsibility of the external publishers, and are checked where possible by the Editor. The journal is considering independent evaluations of a sample of articles from the externally published versions of the journal.

Distribution, promotion, marketing are incorporated in the contracts with the external publishers. For the English and French versions, the (commercial) publishers produce an annual report on the distribution, which is a useful monitoring tool. Traditionally, no comparable material has been available on the distribution of the externally published versions. As of 2004, the Chinese, Russian and Arabic publishers have been required by contract to report annually on the same basis as the French and English publishers.

9. INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMISSION

This subprogramme operates under functional autonomy within UNESCO and the Natural Sciences Sector. IOC has five types of publications:

- **Statutory reports** – these documents are the reports of the governing bodies (Assembly, Executive Council), and undergo stringent checks, with the governing bodies approving them paragraph-by-paragraph. They are checked by a contracted editor in English, but the responsibility for the final document rests with the Secretariat of the IOC.
- **Ocean Forum series**¹⁷ - this series is produced for the general public and is a commercial publication. The aim is the communication of science concepts regarding the ocean environment, and for this reason considerable emphasis is placed on ensuring that the most up-to-date and accurate science is included. The series is peer-reviewed by two external peer-reviewers, chosen in conjunction with the section head or the ADG. While the reviews could be undertaken internally, the group considers it difficult for staff members to maintain themselves at the forefront of science across a broad range of areas, and external reviewers are considered more appropriate.
- **Scientific monographs**¹⁸ – These commercial publications are co-produced with BPI, and some of them have been bestsellers with up to 2,000 copies produced. These monographs are produced to the highest standards, with teams of scientists working on the book, co-authoring of most chapters, and formal peer-reviews by chapter. The cost of their production is high in comparison with other publication types.
- **Working group reports**¹⁹ – these are produced by specialists in the group, with the associated working group acting as the peer-reviewers. The content is edited by the group's Documentalist, but responsibility for content rests with the Specialist. No formal peer review is undertaken for these reports. Our interviewee

¹⁷ Example: El Niño. Fact and fiction: http://publishing.unesco.org/details.aspx?Code_Livre=3651

¹⁸ Example: Manual on Harmful Marine Microalgae:
http://publishing.unesco.org/details.aspx?Code_Livre=4040

¹⁹ e.g. Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Workshop report No. 165:
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001211/121166e.pdf>

considered that the robustness of the review process is potentially constrained by the consensus-oriented work in the report production.

- ***Training material*** – training material is produced at the programme specialist level. Quality criteria procedures vary considerably. In some cases their production may be similar to the working group reports, with a technical group recommending the material be produced and having involvement in its production. In other cases Programme Specialist produce the material themselves, and there is no oversight – in some cases even internal review is not undertaken.

The group has some highly sophisticated quality control procedures in place for the high profile material that is being produced. It would appear that for the vast majority of material, there are strong quality criteria procedures in place, but in some circumstances the quality is reliant on the programme specialists working on their own.

10. EFA GLOBAL MONITORING REPORT

The EFA Monitoring Report Team produces an annual report on the state of progress toward the Dakar EFA objectives. The reports are thematic, with an initial general report followed by ones on gender issues, quality education, literacy and early childhood education (planned). The Monitoring Report Team is within the International Coordination and Monitoring for Education For All Division.

The Report is funded largely externally, with UNESCO contributing staff and services to the group, together with some funding. It has an editorial board comprised of:

- funding partners;
- multilateral partners;
- NGOs;
- Academia;
- representatives from developing countries.

The editorial group meets once or twice a year, and considers matters such as the themes for the Reports, outline of the Report, and progress, as necessary. The development of the report follows steps set out below:

- For each Report a special advisor is appointed and an advisory group is established. This approach is intended to provide expertise on the particular theme for that year's report. Think pieces are commissioned from researchers specialized in the special topic of the Report. These are discussed and this discussion provides an input to the development of the Report.
- Statistical annex tables are requested from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and research is commissioned from throughout the world. In the past up to 100 papers have been commissioned, but currently this is being managed to around 30 to 40 papers. The papers provide in-depth analysis and a complement

to the data from UIS. The team also has an internal statistician/demographer who reviews data from all external sources.

- The external papers are reviewed and clarified before being posted on the Web. These papers are not formally peer-reviewed.
- The Report is prepared in chapters, with a team managing each chapter. The Report Director, who also authors some of the chapters, is responsible for the content in the Report. Internal review of content is the primary quality control mechanism.
- The report receives English editing from an external editor, and further proofing of the final report. The Editorial Board does not see the report until it has been finalized.

The time frame for production of the report is extremely tight, and this appears to have a bearing on the quality control mechanisms adopted. The team is considering opening up the process to some limited external consultation on the outline, and possibly some chapters, for the forthcoming report. There is an evaluation of the production of the report proposed by DFID (UK Department for International Development) a funding agency which would be internal to that organization but made available to other donors and the group.

ANNEX II: BENCHMARKING EXERCISE, ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. International Trade Centre
2. World Health Organization
3. International Labour Organization
4. Food and Agriculture Organization



International Trade Centre
UNCTAD / WTO

ITC PUBLICATIONS

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

ITC PUBLICATIONS BOARD 29 January 2003

ITC Publications Policies and Guidelines

TABLE OF CONTENT

1. Overview of ITC Publications
2. Production Criteria
3. Quality Control
4. ITC Joint Publications
5. ITC Nationally Adapted Joint Publications
6. ITC Miscellaneous Materials
7. Distribution and Sales

Appendices

- I. Table: Publications Categories
- II. Quality Control Sheet
- III. Policy on ITC joint publications
- IV. Nationally/Regionally Adapted Joint Publications

1. OVERVIEW OF ITC PUBLICATIONS

Publications may appear in printed format, electronic format, or both. The ITC publications programme includes:

- Books
- Technical papers
- Bulletins
- International Trade Forum, ITC's magazine.

Some books and technical papers may be joint publications. Bulletins are not. Nationally adapted versions of ITC generic documents are always books, undertaken as joint publications.

SELECTION CRITERIA

All ITC publications proposals are approved for inclusion in the yearly Publications Programme by the Publications Board. Approval is based on the following criteria:

- Subject matter which falls within ITC's terms of reference;
- Preparation by ITC staff, or supervision by ITC staff and preparation by ITC consultants;
- Interest for a substantial part of ITC's target audience;
- High-quality contents, which reflect credit on ITC;
- Attractive presentation;
- Relevance for several years, and;
- Non-duplication with other publications within or outside the UN system.

PUBLICATIONS CATEGORIES

Books consist of trade promotion handbooks, market surveys, or commodity handbooks. They are formally edited and appear in English, French and Spanish (ITC's official languages). A quality control process is proposed, reviewed and approved before each book gets underway. Books are available for sale, and automatically distributed free of charge to a core ITC mailing list (for detailed information on sales, see section 7. below). Books are issued with a standard, recognizable cover, and are abstracted with key words for use by libraries or search engines.

Books may be undertaken as joint publications, and then they have different guidelines, formats and procedures. Joint publications are of two types. The classic joint publication is based on a manuscript produced jointly with one or more non-profit organizations. A second type of joint publication, the nationally adapted joint publication, is based on a formally edited generic document, which is then customized with national institutions for national or regional needs. The nationally adapted joint publications are designed to have more targeted information and outreach, without greater costs. An ITC officer manages the co-publication process, using a system for quality assurance. They are sold and distributed by the national co-publisher, and ITC receives complimentary copies.

Technical papers are issued in at least one of ITC's official languages. They include directories, bibliographies and glossaries, as well as trade promotion or market research topics. While they are not formally edited, a quality control process is proposed, reviewed and agreed upon. Technical papers are issued with a standard, recognizable cover, and are abstracted. They are available for sale, and are distributed selectively depending on the subject and target audience, determined by the originating unit.

Technical papers are usually produced and distributed in printed format, and electronic versions may subsequently be adapted from the print version. Occasionally technical papers are prepared first in electronic format (usually CD-ROM), particularly when the data is lengthy.

Bulletins include technical information reports, trends, events, publication abstracts and similar information that is periodic and part of a series. Bulletins address a specific technical area (such as quality control, packaging or purchasing and supply management). They are prepared in at least one official language, and often in additional languages. Quality control processes are defined. They have a standard cover, and are issued free of charge. Distribution is determined by the originating unit, as they are targeted to specific market sectors or business specializations.

ITC's **magazine**, the **International Trade Forum**, is issued in English, French and Spanish. It has the largest print run of all ITC publications, and is considered ITC's flagship publication. The magazine regularly lists available books and technical papers, which are also available with prices on the worldpay ITC Internet site. The magazine also features new book announcements and information on other ITC information products.

Note: Miscellaneous materials

Materials, which do not fill **all** of the criteria for inclusion in the Publications Programme, are considered miscellaneous materials. Examples are single-client or restricted audience reports; presentation and promotional materials, preliminary research findings; software or training materials for a restricted audience. Miscellaneous materials may be in printed format, CD-ROM or diskette.

These materials may be publicized in **Forum** magazine (as the basis for articles, or through announcements in the sections AITC News@ or ANew Information Products@). They may also be similarly publicized on ITC's Internet site.

2. PRODUCTION CRITERIA

Production criteria for each publication category exist regarding editing, translation, type of cover, ISBN codes, quality control, print runs, distribution and inventory. Results are summarized in a table. (*See Annex I: Publications Categories.*)

It should be noted that electronic media (CD-ROM, diskette, Internet, video) are not a category in themselves. Materials, which are produced first in this format, rather than in printed format, are subject to the same selection criteria as printed publications, in order to determine whether they are part of the ITC Publications Programme.

Production criteria are also available for nationally adapted joint publications, due to the special publications requirements for this type of joint publication (such as ITC's role in translation and editing of generic versions, supervision of customized national versions and national distribution). These criteria are also included in the summary table.

3. QUALITY CONTROL

Quality control measures are incorporated throughout the publications process at ITC.

The Summary Sheet for review by the Publications Board has several new features to encourage improved quality control from the earliest stages. Publication coordinators/authors must document the relation to ITC's programme of work, point out specific objectives and rationale, and note quality control measures. They must also provide a budget overview for all production stages. The sheet also incorporates additional views from the Board to ensure quality. ([Publication Summary Sheet.](#))

An accompanying Quality Control Sheet provides a new tool for monitoring the quality control process described in the Summary Sheet. (*See Annex II: Quality Control Sheet.*)

To improve writing quality and speed in the production process, ITC is preparing a manual to provide guidance to authors and editors. Guidelines for external editors will be issued and attached to contracts.

In order to improve translation quality, translations will be checked by the responsible ITC officer and/or industry experts, wherever possible. (In the case of nationally approved joint publications in non-ITC languages, an ITC-appointed reviewer will monitor the process.)

4. ITC JOINT PUBLICATIONS

ITC joint publications are authorized with non-profit organizations. They must make a positive overall contribution to ITC's programme. Co-publishing organizations must make a significant substantive contribution, and must not be contractors or consultants of ITC for the publication in question. They remain joint publishers for all the language versions, and no additional organizations are added as co-publishers for translated versions. Contributions from other organizations (besides the co-publishers) are acknowledged inside the publication. All proposals for joint publications are submitted to the Board through the Secretary in the initial planning stages, before commitments are made with the proposed joint publisher. (*See Annex III: Policy on ITC Joint Publications.*)

5. ITC NATIONALLY ADAPTED JOINT PUBLICATIONS

ITC has developed a second type of joint publication, based on a generic version developed by ITC and customized nationally or regionally by ITC partner institutions. The customized version is published jointly by ITC and the partner institution. The partner institutions sign a [Joint Publication Agreement](#) that ensures a commitment for national production, marketing, distribution, work plans, budgets and time frames. (*See Annex IV: Policy on Nationally/Regionally Adapted Joint Publications.*)

This is a recent addition to ITC's publications policy, reflecting the ITC technical cooperation strategy, the Aproduct-network approach. The product-network approach is based on technical assistance products that are customized with national partner institutions. Among these products are publications.

Nationally adapted joint publications are publicly available only from partner institutions in countries that publish national or regional versions. Where a national or

regional version does not exist, and there is interest in creating one, interested parties may contact ITC. (*See Annex V: Product-Network Approach.*)

6. ITC MISCELLANEOUS MATERIALS

Many information materials, in printed or electronic format, are produced by ITC as part of its technical cooperation activities. These miscellaneous materials, while not part of the ITC Publications Programme, are subject to normal ITC management clearances. A standard cover is available for printed materials. Distribution is selective. They are, however, publicized in ITC's magazine and on its web site. Procedures exist for inventory of these materials.

7. DISTRIBUTION AND SALES

ITC automatically distributes one complimentary copy of each publication to a core mailing list consisting of import promotion offices, UNDP Resident Representatives, UN Information Centres, permanent missions in Geneva, donor agencies, national trade promotion organizations in developing countries, national chambers of commerce in developing countries, key libraries in UN family organizations, FAO field offices, and UNIDO investment promotion and field offices.

ITC sells its books, technical papers and its magazine to trade-related institutions and firms in developed countries. They may, however, receive relevant bulletins free upon request. The list of prices, where applicable, is available on ITC's Internet site (Worldpay).

Customers in developing countries and transition economies receive a discount of 60% on the publication price.

Nationally adapted joint publications are distributed on a sales basis only. Each national version is available only from the national co-publishing partner institution. These books are not available from ITC. (ITC produces the generic version and provides technical assistance in the national customization process. The generic version is not for distribution.)

In 2000 ITC entered into an agreement with the United Nations for the sale of its publications. Consequently, they can be ordered and purchased in Europe through the UN Publications Sales Section, Palais des Nations, Geneva and in the rest of the world through UN Publications, UN New York.

Appendix I

ITC Publications Categories
(In addition to the *International Trade Forum*)

	Full Publications	Nationally Adapted joint Publications	Technical Papers	Bulletins
Summary sheets for PB	Yes	Yes (one summary sheet for the entire series)	Yes	Yes
Formal editing	Yes	Yes, generic version	No, quality control to be described in summary sheet.	No, quality control to be described in summary sheet.
Languages	In general, three official languages, coordinated by ITC editor.	Generic: 3 official languages Customized: also in addl. natl. languages Translations are quality checked, not formally edited.	At least one of ITC=s official languages.	Open, coordinated by originating unit.
Type of cover	Publication cover	Uniform format; final Submitted to PB for approval.	Technical paper cover	Standard cover
ISBN code	Yes	Optional at national level	No	No
Abstracted	Yes	No	Yes	No
Press run	High demand: E - 4,000 F - 1,500 S - 1,500 Med. demand: E - 3,000 F - 1,000 S - 1,000	Set by the originating unit according to anticipated demand.	The following numbers in addition to any special distribution: E - 500 F - 250 S - 250	Set by the originating unit according to anticipated demand.
Available for sale	Yes	Yes, through network partner.	Yes	No
Distributed automatically to ITC=s core list	Yes	ITC receives complementary copies, as per Joint Public. Agreement. Local distribution through network partner.	Upon request of originating unit, in which case press run can be increased.	No
Included in the ITC publications databases	Yes Maintained by GSPS	Yes Maintained by Division Secretary	Yes Maintained by GSPS	Yes Maintained by Division Secretary

Notes:

1. Full publications, technical papers and bulletins can also be joint publications.
2. Publications may appear in printed format, various electronic formats, or both.
3. Miscellaneous materials (reports, promotion materials, presentation materials, software for specific clients, etc.) are not official publications and are listed and promoted separately.

Appendix II

Quality Control Sheet for ITC Publications

✘ Project number:

✘ This publication has been drafted by (in the case of external authors, please indicate name, address and function):

Name:

Function:

Address:

✘ The following persons have read the attached draft and confirm that it meets ITC=s quality standards: (in the case of external reviewers, please indicate name, address and function):

*Reviewer
Name:*

*Reviewer
Name:*

Function:

Function:

Address:

Address:

✘ We confirm that the technical content of the attached draft is accurate and meets the purpose for which the publication was prepared (according to the Summary Sheet approved by the Publications Board).

Confirmed by Technical Officer, Mr./Ms.

Date

(signature)

⋮

Confirmed by Chief of Section, Mr./Ms.

Date

Cleared by Director of Division, Mr./Ms.
(signature)

Date

(signature)

⋮

Policy on ITC joint publications

Applicability:

ITC issues publications jointly with other nonprofit organizations when such arrangements are considered by ITC to be beneficial for its overall publications programme. ITC joint publications covered by these guidelines concern both those initiated by ITC and those initiated by the other organization in the proposed joint arrangement. The guidelines also cover publications issued under ITC field projects (national, regional or interregional) when it is considered that the publication is of interest for wide dissemination as an ITC publication.

In view of the multiplicity of possible arrangements, proposals for ITC joint publications are considered on a case-by-case basis, in line with the guidelines below.

Principal criteria:

1. The joint publication must make a positive contribution to ITC's overall publications programme.
2. The second organization must make a significant substantive contribution to the joint publication.
3. The second organization must not be a contractor or a consultant of ITC for the publication in question (e.g. it must not receive payment for any aspect of production of the publication) to be a joint publisher with ITC.

General conditions:

1. The two organizations issuing the publication jointly (ITC and the second organization) remain the joint publishers for all of the language versions of the given title. No additional organizations may be added as joint publishers for translated versions. The covers of translated versions are thus identical with the cover of the original language version (except for the translated wording), even if additional financial contributions have been received for the translated versions. The joint publishers may include a joint preface or introduction in the publication, which is published in an identical manner in all language versions of the title.
2. Contributions, in kind or in money, from other organizations in addition to the two joint publishers (for example for translations) are acknowledged on the inside pages of the publication. The exact form and location of the acknowledgment are determined by the level of the contribution. Possible locations for the acknowledgment are: the bottom of the inside title page, in the preface or in the foreword. Such acknowledgments, which must be brief, state the name of the contributing organization and the type of contribution made; they do not carry the name or signature of any official of the contributing organization.
3. ITC joint publications may not be copyright by either publisher, except by written agreement of the Chairman of ITC's Publications Board.
4. Proposals for reprinting or revising ITC joint publications must be reviewed by ITC in the same manner as the review for arrangements for the original editions.

Procedures:

1. All proposals for ITC joint publications must be submitted to the Publications Board through the Secretary, in the initial planning stages of the publication, before any commitments are made with the proposed joint publisher. Such proposals must include a description of the suggested arrangement describing the contributions of the two organizations and any conditions placed on the proposed arrangement by the second organization.
2. The Publications Board's Working Group on Joint Publications, along with a representative of the Financial Management Section, reviews each proposal. The review takes into account the criteria above, as well as any other factors that may be considered relevant for the case at hand. In addition to the general merits and advisability of the proposed arrangement, the Working Group looks at such aspects as the proposed physical presentation of the publication, distribution and publicity. In determining if the second organization's contribution is of a significant level, the Working Group reviews the following cost elements of the publication in its three language versions: basic documentation required; research and writing of the text; substantive review of the text; editing; translation; printing and paper; distribution; and publicity.
3. The Working Group makes a written recommendation to the Chairman of the Publications Board, who in turn takes a decision on the proposal. The Chairman reports on the decision at the next meeting of the Publications Board.
4. The Working Group may be reconvened during the production of the publication to review any aspects of the agreement that may need to be considered. It also reviews the final proofs of the cover and of the introductory pages of the publication to ensure conformity with the arrangement agreed upon.

Nationally/Regionally Adapted Joint Publications

1. Joint publications are based on a generic document.
2. The *generic-based joint publication* has two purposes: to customize, publish and disseminate a national version, based on an ITC generic version, as well as the capacity building element involved in the development process.
3. A generic version of a joint publication is to be understood as a document (electronic or hard copy), which has been written by ITC. In this context, it is known as a generic document. A **generic document** is a technical cooperation device which only becomes a **joint publication** after having been customized to a national/regional context. Therefore, from one generic document more than one joint publication may be produced.
4. The generic-based joint publications are published in collaboration with national/ regional Network Partner Organizations, known as the network partner. The network partner will develop a customized version, which is adapted to its national/regional context, based on the ITC generic document. The network partner will sign a Joint Publication Agreement, which delineates the responsibilities of both ITC and the network partner. Network partner organizations are chosen carefully by ITC, taking into account the following selection criteria:
 - § Background of organization:
 - < Government, public or private, not-for-profit, or commercially-oriented organization; national standing.
 - < Nature of activities and services provided.
 - < Most recent annual report.
 - § Production arrangements:
 - < Other national agencies likely to be consulted or involved in the process.
 - < Names and qualifications of the designated coordinator and likely composition of the resource team.
 - § Work plan and time frame:
 - < Date of planned commencement of the process.
 - < Dates foreseen for completion of the survey, assembling of questions, drafting of answers, compilation of the resources section, first draft, second draft, third draft, final editing, final layout and printing.
 - § Marketing and distribution:
 - < Proposed arrangements for launching the book and channels for distribution.
 - § Budget and financing:
 - < Budget for research, printing, marketing materials, publishing, etc.
 - < Source of financing for above.
 - § Special observations, if any

5. The generic document is formally edited by ITC. The final joint publication is not formally edited by ITC as the publication is produced under an adaptation process guided by ITC technical staff. The adaptation process involves a series of quality checks by ITC, including a substantive review, thereby guaranteeing the quality of the joint publication. Editing at a national level is undertaken by the network partner.
6. As the joint publication is not formally edited, a disclaimer must be included in the Abstract and Copyright page of the publication. The disclaimer states that:

A[Name of publication] is a joint publication published by ITC and [name of Network Partner] based on a generic document edited by ITC. Facts and figures set forth in this publication are the responsibility of the network partner, and should not necessarily be considered as reflecting the views or carrying the endorsement of ITC, UNCTAD or WTO. The factual details and in-country resources in the publication have been researched and compiled by the [name of network partner]. This joint publication has been edited by [name of network partner].
7. For non-ITC languages, ITC will arrange for the manuscript to be reviewed. In addition, it will have an appropriate disclaimer.



How to include a publication* in the ITC publications programme:

1. **Complete** the attached summary sheet (see note below). The purpose of this is to allow the ITC Publications Board to have an overview of the relevance of the proposed publication, time required for its preparation, editing, printing and translation and the overall costs involved.
2. Once approved by the Divisional Director, **send** the summary sheet to the Secretary of the Publications Board, Elaine Bisson.
3. After review by the Board, a copy of the summary sheet will be returned to the Director of the Division with a “**publication identification number**” which must be used throughout the manuscript development process (i.e. until the final publication is printed).

Note: Please complete all sections of the summary sheet. This is most important for the review undertaken by the Publications Board as well as for the information of all persons involved in the publications process (Editing Unit, FMS, Procurement, Library, Distribution and Sales, ITSS for Worldpay). Please also attach the table of contents of the proposed publication.

* The term “publication” covers books, technical papers, bulletins etc. For more information, please see ITC Publication Policy and Guidelines available on intranet under “*Document Management/Publication/Guidelines/ITC Publication Policies*”.



ITC Publications Programme Summary sheet

Year: _____

1. **Title:** _____

2. **Submitted by Division:** _____ **Today's date:** _____
Unit/section: _____

3. **Author(s):** _____

4. **Nature of publication**

- Full publication/Book
- Publication draft to become the full publication
- Publication draft to remain a draft
- Bulletin/BL
- Technical paper

Type of publication

- Recurrent
- Non-recurrent
- Generic

Support

- CD-Rom
- Printout
- Other

5. **Series**

- Business & the trading system
- E-trade
- Enterprise competitiveness
- Export packaging notes
- Market News Service
- Pack data Fact sheets
- Trade Laws
- Other, please specify _____
- Product and Market Development
- Public Sector Procurement
- Purchasing and Supply Chain Mgmt
- Standard & Quality Management
- Trade Finance
- Trade Infrastructure

6. **Planning:**

- Manuscript preparation start date: _____
- Date of submission of manuscript to Editorial Unit: _____
- Date for publishing: _____
- Availability in other languages: _____ at the publication date of: _____

7. **Please specify the ITC programme and organizational goal to which this activity is related:**

- Programme:**
- 1:** Strategic and Operational Market Research
 - 2:** Business Advisory Services
 - 3:** Trade Information Management
 - 4:** Export Training Capacity Development
 - 5:** Sector-Specific Product and Market Development
 - 6:** Trade in Services
 - 7:** International Purchasing and Supply Chain Management

Goal:

- A:** Establishment of national core expertise in world trading system issues based on a good understanding of product and market reality and potential
- B:** Formulation of trade development strategies that take into account supply capacities, international demand and best practices
- C:** Reinforcement of trade support institutions (TSIs) providing business development and competitiveness enhancement services to the business community with consideration given to gender access to services
- D:** Improvement of trade performance in selected product and services sectors
- E:** Increase in international entrepreneurship and competitiveness at enterprise level

8. Relevance, expressed needs and specific objective of the publication:

.....

9. Specify plans for peer review (external review, internal review):

.....

Keywords:

**10. Estimated number of pages in original in A4 _____
 in A5 _____**

11. In which language will the original manuscript be submitted and when?

E (date) _____ F (date) _____ S (date) _____

In which other language(s) will it be published? E / F / S
 Other , please specify _____

12. Target audience: SMEs Trade Support Institutions Government Circles
 Other, please specify _____

13. Anticipated demand (underline as appropriate or specify number of copies):

E: High demand (4000 or TP¹) Medium demand (3000 or TP²⁰) Other _____
 F: High demand (1500) Medium demand (1000) Other _____
 S: High demand (1500) Medium demand (1000) Other _____

14. Please indicate number of funds available (project or GTF) and funds required from the Regular Budget:

Production stage	Budget	Funds available	Funds required	Source of Funding/ Project Number
Development				
Editing				
Translation/Revision				
Printing/Reproduction				
Totals				

Planned Workmonths needed	P staff	L staff	Consultants

15. Specific marketing and distribution activities planned:

²⁰ TP = technical papers

.....
.....

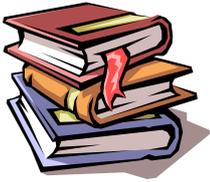
16. Signature of the:

<u>Publication coordinator /</u> Responsible officer	Chief of Section:	Clearance:
		(Director of Division)

To be reviewed by the publications board? yes no

Reviewed by Publications Board on: _____ (date)

Publication identification number: _____
(Given by the Secretary of the Publications Board after the latter's review)



PEER REVIEW GUIDELINES²¹

To ensure the quality of the material produced by ITC, all ITC documents, including technical and miscellaneous papers, intended for publication or broad circulation (e.g. more than 50 copies produced, or use on more than one training course) should be peer reviewed. In general, the larger the intended audience, the more thorough the peer review should be – for a document with an intended circulation of 60 copies a single reviewer may be appropriate, but for a document with an intended print run of 1000 copies opinions should be sought from two or three reviewers.

Reviewers may be:

- ITC staff members working in the same field as that covered by the document, or a related field;
- ITC staff members with particular knowledge of the target audience for the document;
- External experts in the subject.

If the document is to be reviewed by more than one reviewer, at least one of the reviewers should be an external expert.

There are two main sorts of review: **technical review** and **comprehensive review**:

1. A *technical review* is appropriate for documents that will be formally edited after review. In a technical review, the reviewer is asked to concentrate on the information presented in the document.
2. Documents that will not be formally edited should undergo a *comprehensive review*. As well as commenting on the technical aspects of the document, a comprehensive review should address the writing style and language used in the document.

A *technical reviewer* should be asked to write a brief report covering the following points:

- ↗ Technical quality: what are the main strengths and weaknesses of the document?
- ↗ Is it suitable for publication? If not, why?
- ↗ Is the document important and relevant to the target audience?
- ↗ Comprehensiveness and coherence: does the document tell a cohesive story?
- ↗ Originality: are there previously published documents covering the same material?
- ↗ Length: do any parts of the document need to be expanded? Condensed? Deleted?
- ↗ Approach: are there any errors in technique, fact, calculation, or interpretation?
- ↗ Are all tables and figures clearly labelled? Well planned? Necessary?
- ↗ Clarity: in general, is the writing concise, easy to follow and interesting?

In addition to these points, a *comprehensive review* should also address specific passages in the text which may need rewriting or correcting. Reviewers are not expected to proofread or correct each sentence in the document, but should say in their report if they think that detailed copy-editing is necessary.

A copy of the report is to be given to the Secretary of the Publications Board before the document is printed. If the reviewer has made suggestions for improvement, a description of any remedial action undertaken should also be provided. In general, if a reviewer has suggested that the

²¹ Guidelines approved by Publications Board on 12 December 2002

document is not of sufficient quality for publication, or duplicates material already available, the document should not be published.

2. World Health Organization (WHO)

Within WHO, the issue of quality assurance of published material is addressed through the development and implementation of publishing policies. These policies are established as a framework of guiding principles to help fulfil the core functions of the Organization and more specifically:

- to promote the production of relevant, authoritative and technically validated information and its dissemination in appropriate forms and languages to defined WHO audiences;
- to ensure that WHO information is clearly recognizable as WHO information (with implications of quality, authority, impartiality); and
- to safeguard WHO's intellectual property to avoid any use contrary to the Organization's principles.

All WHO-published health information should:

- be consistent with WHO's policies and corporate strategy, and address the needs of Member States and their populations;
- contribute to the objectives of WHO's areas of work, in accordance with the budget (expected results) and departmental workplans;
- have a clearly defined audience and be justifiable in terms of relevance and aims;
- aim to address issues where WHO can offer a unique perspective and has a comparative advantage;
- avoid unnecessary duplication of the work of departments at WHO headquarters, of regional offices and other agencies;
- be technically accurate, up to date and appropriately validated;
- be in an accessible format and medium for the target audience;
- be in language(s) appropriate for the target audience;
- present a consistent corporate image.

Documents should also comply with WHO house style, including conventions for spelling, reference lists and bibliographies, as specified in the WHO style guide. Web content should additionally follow the recommendations in the Web style guide.

Treatment guidelines and reports of expert groups should also comply with specific processes and guidelines, while statements and claims about incidence, prevalence, deaths and burden of diseases and risk factors and their associated economic costs should be cleared by the *Evidence and Information for Policy cluster*.

Several years ago the management of WHO decided to abandon all central review of material before publication. Responsibility for publication quality was decentralized to the individual clusters and delegated to the heads of the nine WHO clusters. One of the reasons for this decision was that clusters were issuing an increasing amount of information in the form of documents, as a way of bypassing the central review and editing by the former Office of Publications and thus making their information available to their target audiences more quickly. The distinction between documents and publications was therefore abolished and minimum criteria were drawn up for all information products, regardless of their mode of dissemination. Steps are now being taken, however, to define the elements of quality more clearly and to hold the various clusters accountable. As part of this process, WHO is setting up a *Publishing Policy*

Review Group, which will address, among other issues, quality assurance mechanisms and the need for a formal policy on peer-review.

WHO headquarters primarily publishes material prepared or commissioned by its own programmes. It does not publish unsolicited material from non-WHO sources, except in its public health journal, *the Bulletin*, for which articles are accepted for publication only after screening for originality, relevance to an international public health audience, scientific rigor and a subsequent peer review. The assistant directors-general are responsible for all aspects of the final quality (including technical, linguistic and production quality) of their clusters' publications. The issue of peer-review is addressed in the minimum criteria for WHO information products. Technical validation of publications is the responsibility of the individual assistant directors-general, and should encompass review by relevant technical departments within WHO, as well as by independent experts.

In addition to these guidelines, all content published under the www.who.int domain should follow the web team's guidelines on user interfaces, images, download times and file types.

3. International Labour Organization (ILO)

The ILO is going through a complete restructuring of dissemination policies - including publications - and new procedures are being put in place. This section describes the current practice.

ILO publications are produced in various parts of the house. There are:

- unpriced books, working papers and other documents in technical author units;
- conference and meeting reports and documents in the conference services department;
- and priced monographs in PUBLICATIONS.

Many other publications are produced in Field Offices, and these are generally the responsibility of the office concerned. ILO provided UNESCO/IOS with a typology of publications.

PUBLICATIONS in fact edits and produces only a small number of ILO publications, although it markets and sells all those that are priced and put on sale. PUBLICATIONS is only responsible for a small number of priced monographs and training manuals, which they try to produce to high standards through:

- asking for a book proposal form to be completed (see documents);
- discussing the content and form of publication with the authors in advance;
- identifying internal and external reviewers;
- making our own substantive comments on manuscripts; and
- carrying out substantive editing and copy-editing (sometimes done by the same person in house, or having copy-editing done by external collaborators with supervision from us).

The content is discussed in advance to ensure that the style is appropriate to the target audience (researchers, ILO constituents - including in developing countries - policy-makers, NGOs etc).

The technical unit is responsible for the content, research data etc. but also checks these things during editing and often finds errors in statistical matter, conflicting data in different parts of the text, etc. However, a new circular will place responsibility on the chief of section/department to ensure that research methodology and data are sound. For some years now, the Editorial Unit has had no French or Spanish editors as the posts have been cut. In order to publish in those languages ILO has to hire revisers, which the Organization cannot afford. Therefore ILO does very little in French and Spanish (a number of Spanish ILO publications are produced by the Latin American offices). The number of English editors has declined over the past few years from five to two (and one of these is currently having also to do the job of the Rights Manager, who is on secondment).

ILO also publishes a flagship journal, the International Labour Review, in English, French and Spanish. The Review has its own team in the three languages.

Official documents (conference and meeting reports) are dealt with by yet another department (RELCONF), which ensures editing, translation and revision in all the languages required. RECONF has teams of editors/translators in each official

language. Recently the department has become much stricter about the prescribed length of documents, and their arrival on schedule. Some of these documents are priced (e.g. major substantive reports on subjects relevant to the ILO and of interest to a wide audience) and other are given away free.

For all priced publications, discounts are offered to developing countries. Publications and brochures aimed at a general audience are produced by the Department of Communications, and are presumably written in a more informal and journalistic style. These are generally given away free.

ILO sent UNESCO /IOS a complete set of policy papers on various aspects of publishing, prepared by the Publications Bureau for the Publications Advisory Committee between 2000 and 2002. These recommendations deal with manuscript selection and approval, publication in the three working languages, electronic publishing, the publications revolving fund and policy in pricing and free distribution. Unfortunately the Committee is no longer active and the proposals in the papers were never really implemented. However, ILO still regards them as a complete and useful set of recommendations on publishing in the Organization.

ILO provides professional publishing expertise and services on its intranet website. By posting materials like guidelines for author units and editors, lists of problem words, a list official ILO country names, all official titles of Conventions, a book proposal form etc, all different participants are well guided through the publication process. When necessary, ILO officials can call ILO/PUBLICATION for help or ask for specific advice.

Upstream, a major circular is being prepared on standards for ILO research and statistical material, but this is not yet available either. There will also be a new circular on production aspects: ILO cover design, placing of logo, typographic styles, etc.

4. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

The FAO only provided UNESCO/IOS with information on the quality control of translated publications, documents, etc.

Flagship publications: An English Editor edits the texts submitted by the Technical Divisions. The publications are then translated by the Translation Units, or outsourced, revised internally and sent to a French, Spanish, Arabic or Chinese Editor for finalization of the text. The chief of the French translation unit skips the graphic work.

Meeting documents: The quality of original texts varies. As they are often prepared in a hurry - by staff members whose main language of education is not English, and who were recruited more for their technical know-how than for their writing skills in English - the result is often poor. An aggravating circumstance for FAO is that there is no pre-editing for this type of documents, unlike what is done in other Organizations.

In view of the volume of these documents, FAO has to outsource a good part of them and then revise internally the translations. Mother-tongue typists insert the manual corrections of the revisers and the final text is thoroughly proofread before going to printing.