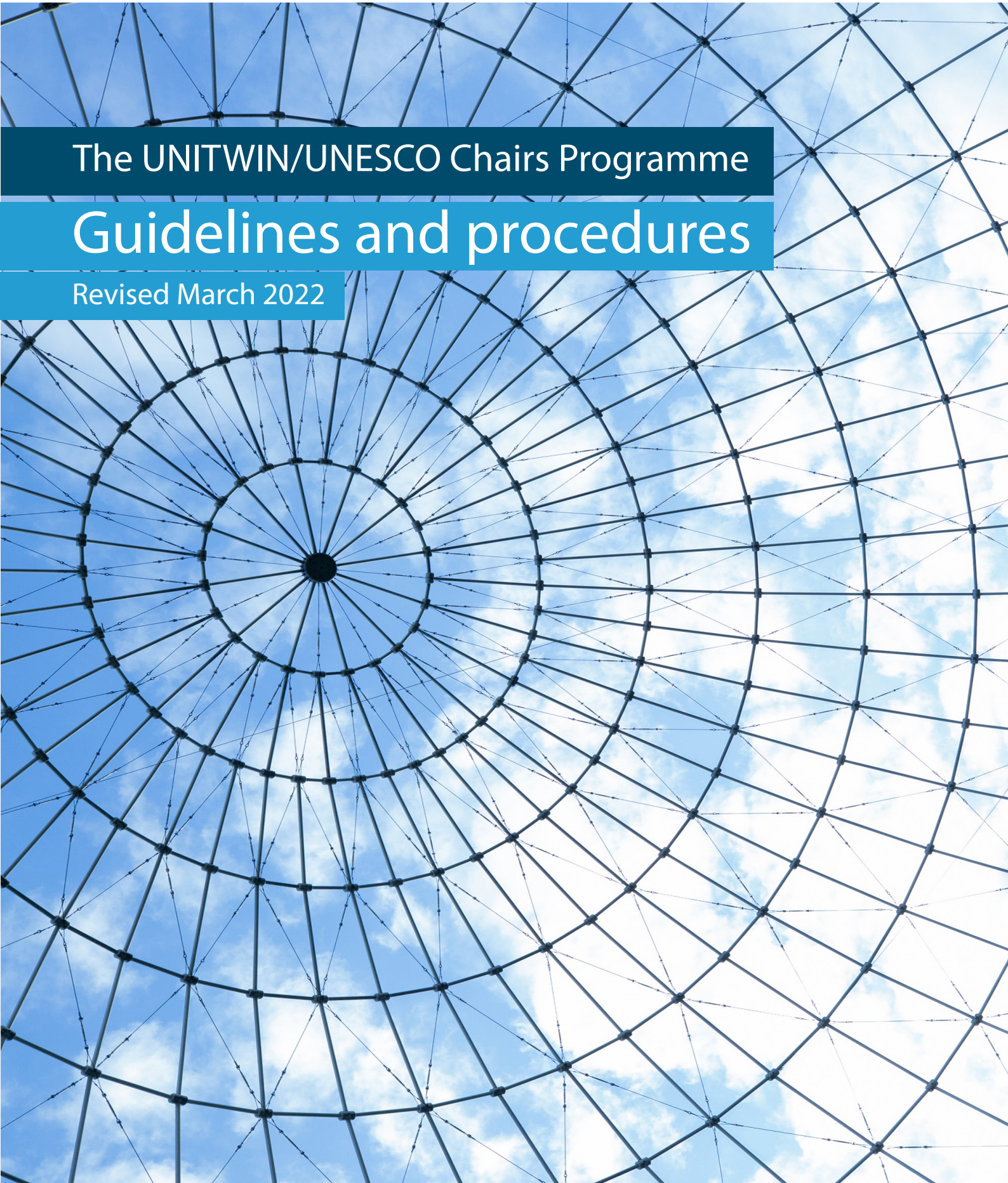
unesco
University Twinning and Networking Programme

The UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme

Guidelines and procedures

Revised March 2022



UNESCO – a global leader in education

Education is UNESCO's top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation for peace and sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations' specialized agency for education, providing global and regional leadership to drive progress, strengthening the resilience and capacity of national systems to serve all learners. UNESCO also leads efforts to respond to contemporary global challenges through transformative learning, with special focus on gender equality and Africa across all actions.

This document supersedes earlier guidelines. It aims to assist all interested parties in taking the steps needed to participate fully in the UNITWIN Programme and to make the most of its benefits.

The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

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Introduction

The UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme (further referred to as "the UNITWIN Programme[1]") mobilizes expertise of higher education and research institutions to address the interdependent challenges of today's increasingly complex world. It was established in 1992 with the vision to advance an integrated system of research, training and activities in diverse fields by building university networks and encouraging inter-university cooperation through the transfer of knowledge and expertise across borders.

The UNITWIN Programme is a unique intellectual and strategic resource of some 900 institutions from over 120 countries aimed at strengthening connections between research and development policy and practice at country, regional and global levels. It has contributed to strengthening higher education systems and fostering collaborative research partnerships and networks. Through its integrated approach that combines research, teaching and training, as well as community engagement, the Programme has proven value in advancing UNESCO's interdisciplinary knowledge generation and the Organization's role as global observatory and as a laboratory of ideas. It has established new teaching programmes, generated novel ideas through research and dialogue, and contributed to the enrichment of existing higher education partnerships and networks. Mostly, it has inspired generations of students and researchers to align their work with UNESCO in support of the ideals of the Organization.

As the world faces a broad set of emerging technological, social, political, and environmental disruptions, the UNITWIN Programme is needed more than ever to advance the mission of UNESCO and its intellectual role within the United Nations, to contribute towards sustainable development. In a spirit of intellectual solidarity and cooperation, higher education and research institutions pool their resources together through the UNESCO Chairs or UNITWIN Networks to advance forward-looking research and contribute to addressing complex and multifaceted development issues. They act as think tanks and bridge-builders between the academic world, civil society, local communities, research and policy-making thereby strengthening UNESCO's research-training-policy-society nexus.

Membership in the UNITWIN Programme offers a distinct opportunity to engage in knowledge-sharing through an interdisciplinary global network of higher education institutions committed to advancing research, training and action towards sustainable development based on social, economic, environmental and epistemic justice. It enhances institutional capacities that impact educational, socio-economic and cultural development at national, regional and international levels.

The activities and projects undertaken by UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks aspire to foster public intellectual debate, ethical reflections, standard setting, research and scientific progress, open knowledge and information, and education in a spirit of international cooperation. As such, applications should include activities that foster South-South or North-South-South cooperation[2]. Moreover, applications that are future-oriented[3] or interdisciplinary[4] in design are especially welcome.

1 UNITWIN stands for University Twinning and Networking.

2 South-South cooperation represents the exchange of knowledge, technology and resources between governments, higher education institutions, NGOs, foundations, agencies, and private or public sector organizations or businesses, and individuals in the Global South. North-South-South cooperation, or triangular cooperation, refers to collaboration between two or more countries in the Global South with one or more institutions in the Global North. UNESCO, as a convenor and knowledge broker, plays an important role in establishing and strengthening such partnerships through collaboration, knowledge sharing and networking activities at the global, inter-regional, regional or national levels.

3 Futures-oriented approach to projects, or those that are situated within and give consideration to the changing global context, are those that encourage creative and innovative ideas on the relationships between anticipated and alternative futures.

4 Interdisciplinary approaches to activities and projects not only involve bringing together expertise from several disciplines and on cross-cutting issues, but also combines the use of data and evidence, application of theoretical frameworks, on the ground research and outcomes of public policy debates. UNESCO welcomes projects and activities aimed at solving complex interconnected development issues that rresonate with and contribute to the Organization's expertise across its sectors.

What are UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks?

UNESCO Chairs

A UNESCO Chair is a team led by a higher education or research institution that partners with UNESCO on a project to advance knowledge and practice in an area of common priority. The partnership is formalized through an agreement between the Director-General of UNESCO and the head of the institution hosting the UNESCO Chair (Rector, President, Vice-Chancellor).

Established within a teaching or research unit/department/faculty of the higher education or research institution, the UNESCO Chair is led by an academic head referred to as the Chairholder. The Chairholder is supported by a team of faculty members, lecturers, researchers and students from the host institution(s) and personnel from other partner organizations (e.g. other institutions, NGOs, public private sector, authorities) in the host country and in other countries who are associated with the activities of the Chair.

UNITWIN Networks

A UNITWIN Network is a partnership between UNESCO and a network of higher education or research institutions of at least three institutions in different countries, at least two of which must be located in the Global South, and which pool their competencies and resources around particular theme(s). The partnership is established through an agreement between the Director-General of UNESCO and the head of every institution proposed as a partner in the network. The network will propose a Coordinator to represent the UNITWIN Network.

Higher education institutions hosting UNESCO Chairs working on the same or closely related themes may come together as a network and/or apply to become a UNITWIN Network. If the application is accepted by UNESCO, the establishment of the UNITWIN Network is formalized by means of an agreement between UNESCO and the Network. Further, higher education institutions that are already linked with others by virtue of bilateral agreements may decide to expand these bilateral agreements into a multilateral one and apply to become a UNITWIN Network.

Who can host a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network?

UNESCO Chairs or UNITWIN Networks may only be established at higher education and research institutions that are recognized, accredited or otherwise sanctioned by the competent national or local authority. UNESCO also welcomes applications from UN Member States, even if they are not UNESCO Member States at the time of application.

However, other types of institutions can partner with a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network. These include NGOs and foundations, other academic associations, inter-university and academic networks that wish to link their activities with the UNITWIN Programme, as well as country, regional and international public or private institutions and agencies that currently cooperate with UNESCO or plan to do so in an area of intellectual cooperation.

Institutions wishing to host a UNESCO Chair or become a member of a UNITWIN Network should have adequate funding secured or concrete plans to mobilize funds to undertake proposed project activities. While UNESCO does not provide any financial support to the UNESCO Chairs or UNITWIN Networks, a proposal for funding a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network may be made via the relevant National Commission for UNESCO to the UNESCO Participation Programme.

Steps to establish a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network

The deadline for submission of applications by higher education institutions, to establish new UNESCO Chairs or UNITWIN Networks is 30 April each year. Prior to submission, the proposal must have been validated by the relevant National Commission for UNESCO. Results of UNESCO's evaluation of these applications are communicated by 30 September each year. If the application is positively evaluated, the agreement to establish the UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network will be finalized between October and December that same year.

This section provides an overview of the timeline and steps involved in applying for and establishing a new UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network. It details the tasks to be undertaken by National Commissions for UNESCO and higher education institutions during each phase of the process. It also provides guidance to the online platform to be used by higher education institutions for the submission of applications and by National Commissions for the validation and endorsement of applications.

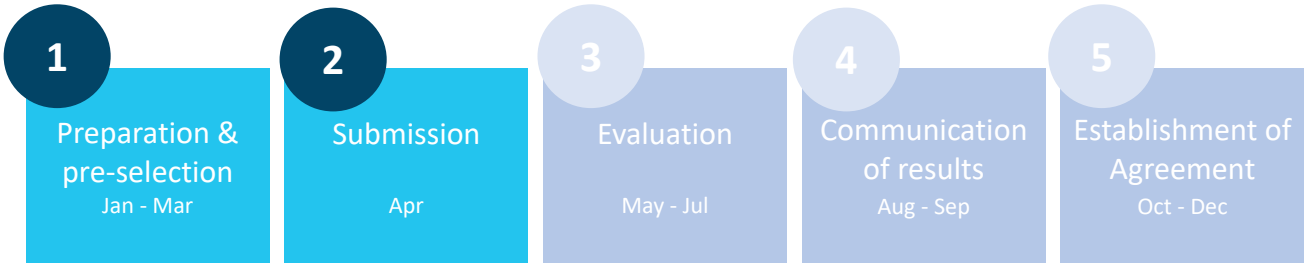
Figure 1. Timeline and steps for applications

STEPS	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE ENTITIES
1	Preparation and pre-selection of applications [January – March]	
	• Higher education institutions consult National Commissions for UNESCO and UNESCO entities (as relevant) to prepare and review applications before submission.	Higher education institutions National Commissions for UNESCO
2	Validation and submission of applications [April]	
	• Higher education institutions submit the applications for final validation and endorsement by their respective National Commission by 30 April.	Higher education institutions National Commissions
3	Evaluation of applications [May-July]	
	• UNESCO undertakes technical evaluation of applications	UNESCO
4	Communication of results [August-September]	
	• UNESCO communicates results of evaluation to higher education institutions and National Commissions. In the case of a positive evaluation, a Draft Agreement is also shared.	UNESCO

5	Establishment of Agreement for new UNESCO Chair/UNITWIN Network [October – December]	
	• Host institutions whose applications have been accepted approve Draft Agreement shared by UNESCO. • Agreement signed by the Director-General of UNESCO and transmitted to the host institution for final signature. • Upon receipt of the co-signed Agreement, the Chair or Network is considered officially established, it is added to the database of Chairs and Networks and announced on the UNITWIN Programme's website. • New UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network is in turn encouraged to promote the partnership with UNESCO on its website and other communication channels.	Host institution National Commission UNESCO

Steps: National Commissions for UNESCO

National Commissions for UNESCO play an important role in the success of the UNITWIN Programme by encouraging interdisciplinary dialogue and cooperation between established UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks at the country level and leveraging their expertise to contribute to UNESCO programmes. National Commissions for UNESCO are engaged in multiple stages of the application and renewal process.



During the phases of Preparation and pre-selection (January – March) and the Submission of applications (April), National Commissions for UNESCO are expected to ensure the following:

- **Announcement**. Develop a timeline and announce the opportunity to submit applications to UNESCO for the establishment of a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network. Note that National Commissions are encouraged to begin the pre-selection process a few months before the deadline.
- **Screening and pre-selection**. Review and pre-select projects that meet the eligibility criteria (see Annex B) and other additional guidance from UNESCO for a particular cycle of proposals (e.g. maximum number of proposals that can be submitted, or special focus on given thematic areas). It is recommended that National Commissions organize independent peer review processes of potential applications to ensure that the objectives of the proposed application align with UNESCO priorities (as per its Approved Programme and Medium-Term Strategy).
- **Technical support**. Inform pre-selected higher education institutions and advise them as appropriate to further refine their project proposals and applications before submission.
- **Registration**. Register the pre-selected higher education institutions by completing the Account Request Form or ensuring that the pre-selected higher education institution has registered via the aforementioned form. Only registered higher education institutions receive the invitation to complete the application online.
- **Letters of support**. Issue letters of support to the proposals of the higher education institutions that have been pre-selected to submit their applications to UNESCO. It is suggested that the letters be prepared and sent to the higher education institutions by 31 March.
- **Validation**. Review completed applications on the online submission platform and endorse/validate the submission. In addition to the letters of support and validation on the online submission platform, National Commissions for UNESCO are requested to send a separate letter or e-mail message to UNESCO (unitwin@unesco.org) listing the names of the

Chairs or Networks proposed for the current cycle of applications. The letter or e-mail shall highlight the added value of the proposed project for UNESCO, for the UNITWIN Programme, as well as for the countries/regions concerned.

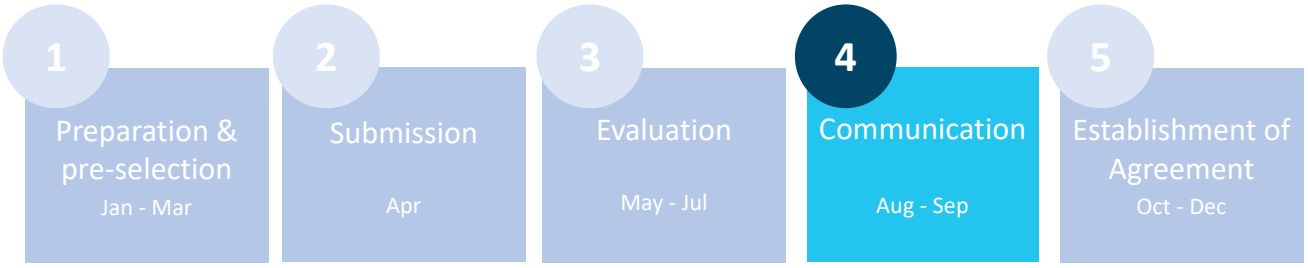
HOW TO ACCESS THE ONLINE SUBMISSION PLATFORM

National Commissions for UNESCO access the online submission platform to review the applications and validate them with their generic UNESCO accounts

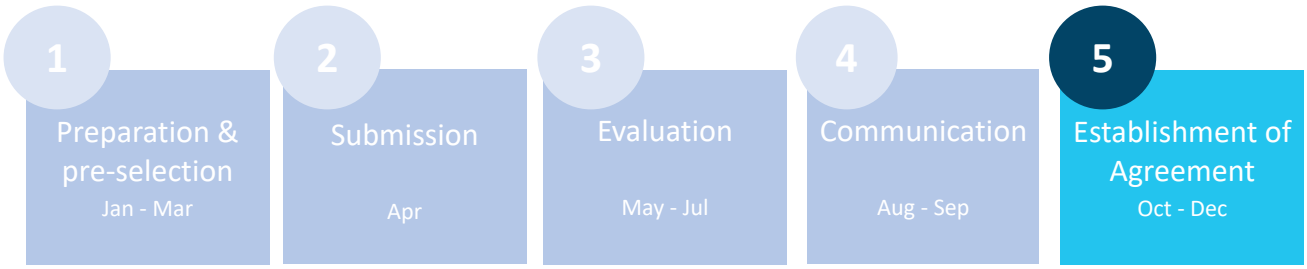
- Access the online submission platform: UNITWIN Management Platform - Home (sharepoint.com)
- On the login page, enter the username (natcom.country@natcom.unesco.org)
- Enter the password associated with the UNESCO account of the National Commission for UNESCO

A notification for validation will be sent to the National Commission for UNESCO when a higher education institution submits its application.

Contact the UNITWIN Programme Coordination Team for any technical issues: unitwin@unesco.org.



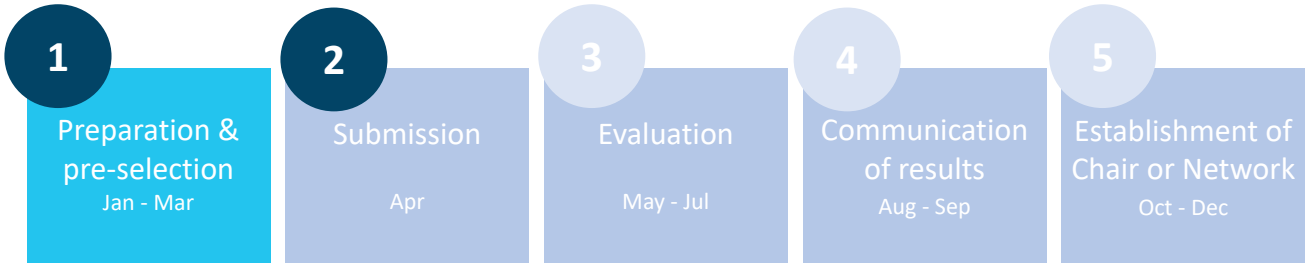
- **Communication of evaluation of results.** Once UNESCO completes its internal evaluation process, the results will be communicated to the higher education institutions by way of e-mail, and National Commissions will be kept informed. In the case of a positive evaluation, the higher education institution will receive the proposed Draft Agreement by email. There may be some further exchange between UNESCO and the higher education institution to refine the contents of the Agreement prior to co-signature.



Following the co-signing of the Agreement, National Commissions will facilitate collaborations between UNESCO, the Chairs and Networks, and other important partners at national level. This includes the following potential activities.

- **Convening and networking**. Launch and promote the new UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network, provide orientation, networking opportunities, share information and good practices, and disseminate results and activities. National Commissions are also encouraged to organize meetings of the network to exchange ideas, support and advise on activities to promote UNESCO's values and priorities and the UNITWIN Programme's objectives.
- **Programme evaluation**. Finally, National Commissions are encouraged to contribute to preliminary evaluations of progress reports, final reports and requests for renewal submitted by existing UNESCO Chairs and/or UNITWIN Networks, prior to their final submissions to UNESCO. The perspectives of National Commissions on the relevance of the activities and prospects for further development are especially welcome when progress reports are due and/or submitted. To this end, National Commissions will be notified when progress reports and renewal requests are due.

Steps: Higher education institutions



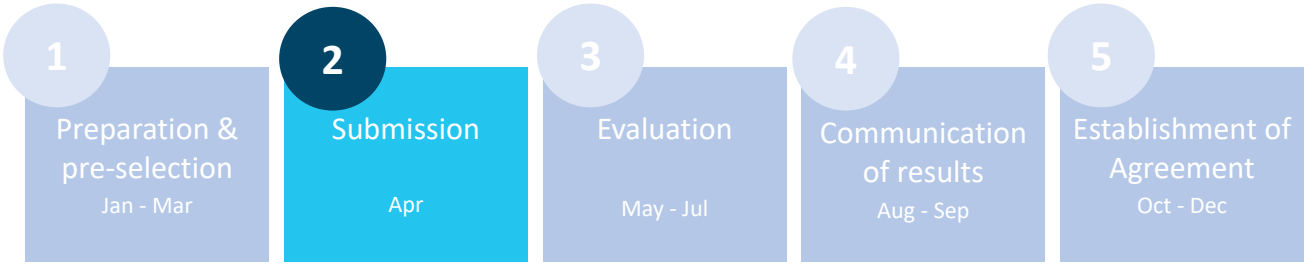
As teams at the higher education or research institutions are developing their proposals, they may consult with UNESCO thematic experts to optimize synergies with UNESCO's mandate, priorities and programmes. The Application Form provided in Annex A of this document should be used to guide the preparation of the proposal.

During the Preparation and pre-selection (January – March) phase, higher education institutions are expected to:

- **Consult with National Commissions**. Since each National Commission has its process and timeline for pre-selecting proposals/applications, higher education institutions interested in submitting an application are invited to first consult with their National Commissions. Note that some National Commissions may begin the process of pre-selection in the previous year.
- **Develop a project proposal**. Develop a project proposal in line with the UNITWIN Programme objectives, articulating the project aims, expected impacts beneficiaries, outputs, activities and concrete deliverables, as well as budget; clearly linking the project activities and deliverables to the strategic objectives in UNESCO's Medium-term Strategy (2022-29) and the outcomes and outputs in the Approved Programme (2022-25) Refer to the Application Form in Annex A to guide the preparation of the proposal sections.
- **Define a clear title of Chair/Network**. The title of the proposed Chair or Network should be clear, brief and easily understood by a non-specialist. Titles should accurately represent the fields of research of the proposed Chair/Network and resonate with UNESCO's mandate. The titles must be proposed in English or French. UNESCO Chairs (or Networks) are not usually named after individuals, except when they are intended to commemorate an outstanding and universally acknowledged contribution made by an individual to a particular field of study (for example, Cousteau Ecotechnie Network, Oliver Tambo Chair in Human Rights). The title should not include acronyms.
- **Ensure contribution to UNESCO's Programmes**. Prepare arguments that clearly demonstrate how the proposed project concretely contributes to UNESCO's mission, mandate and priorities, and its unique contribution and added value to the UNITWIN Programme. Propose opportunities for engaging with UNESCO as well as with other Chairs in the scope of the project. Refer to the matrix of UNESCO priorities in the Application Form, or for more detail in UNESCO's Mediumterm Strategy (2022-29) and Approved Programme (2022-25).
- **Identify a potential Chairholder or Coordinator**. Chairholders and Network Coordinators are academic specialists in the domain(s) to be covered by the UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network. Generally, holder of a PhD (or equivalent degree), proposed Chairholders or Coordinators have an expertise within an existing network in the proposed project areas as well as demonstrated experience in inter-university cooperation at country, regional and/or international levels. international levels.

  In its efforts to promote gender equality, UNESCO encourages the nomination of women Chairholders or Coordinators. Further, to strengthen the international dimension of the Programme, proposals for joint leadership (i.e. co-chairholders or co-coordinators) are encouraged with proposed co-leaders from institutions in different countries. Moreover, Chairholders and Network Coordinators can potentially undertake visiting professorships or teach in other institutions, particularly in a country or region that may benefit from the project's activities; and support students in seeking internships at UNESCO or in undertaking joint research and/or exchange programmes with other Chairs.

- **Establish partnerships**. Establish partnerships with other academic institutions, as well as with existing UNESCO Chairs or UNITWIN Networks, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations, foundations, the private sector and other potential partners. The contributions of partners to the project must be made explicit in the proposal. Letters of support from partner institutions are to be submitted as annexes to the application.
- **Secure funding**. Plan to secure the appropriate financial and human resources support to undertake and sustain the project during its entire term and ensure demonstrable commitment from senior management. In addition to the internal allocations for promoting international cooperation, the host institution may explore opportunities for funding from bilateral donors, multilateral cooperation agencies and private sector organizations and private foundations.
- **Prepare the application.** Prepare the application and all its supporting documents in English or French – the two working languages of the UNITWIN Programme. Given the large number of supporting documents [Establishment Letter, National Commission Support Letter, Partner Support Letters, CV Chairholder/Coordinator] and to facilitate the review and evaluation process, UNESCO encourages applicants to use standard naming conventions, and suggests the following: *Supporting document type_Country_Higher education institution* and to group letters of the same type in one document [e.g. all support letters merged into one document *SupportLetters_Country_Higher education institution (preferred file format)]*



- **Submit application**. Higher education institutions will consolidate the work undertaken during the proposal development phase and enter the application on the online submission platform, available in English and French. The platform is open between 1 – 30 April at 23:59 (CET/Paris time). Any submission received after this date will not be considered. A submitted application is only considered complete if accompanied by the full set of supporting documents and if validated/endorsed by the National Commission.

SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

- ❒ Completed application in English or French
- ❒ Letter from the President/Rector/Vice-Chancellor proposing the establishment of a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network addressed to the Assistant Director-General for Education of UNESCO.
- ❒ Letter of support from the National Commission for UNESCO, or from the official United Nations representative in the case of applications from countries that are not Member States of UNESCO.
- ❒ Letter(s) of support from partner institution(s) indicating their commitment to the project.
- ❒ Curriculum Vitae of the proposed Chairholder(s) or Network Coordinator(s).

Note that applications concerning a UNITWIN Network must be submitted by one institution which takes the lead and acts as the focal point for the application. However, the application must be accompanied by letters of commitment from the executive head of each partner institution. These letters should also nominate the incumbent UNITWIN Network coordinator who will act as the focal point for the project on the behalf of their institution. Similarly, applications proposing co-Chairs must be submitted and followed by one of the two higher education institutions.

HOW TO ACCESS THE ONLINE SUBMISSION PLATFORM

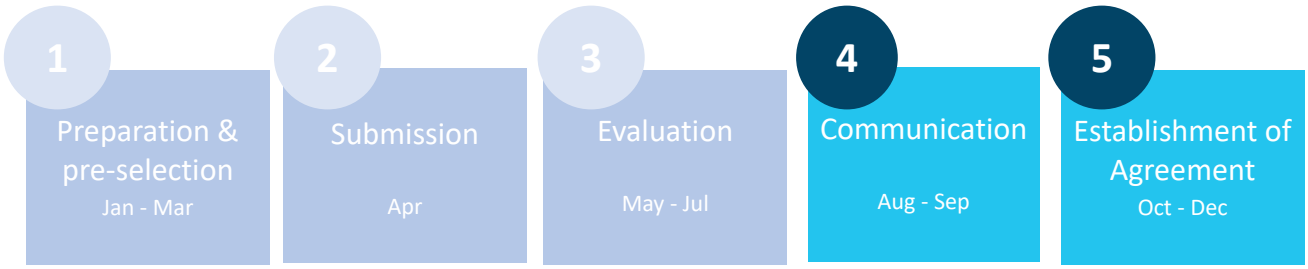
Upon receiving confirmation from respective National Commissions for UNESCO that their proposals have been pre-selected for submission to UNESCO, higher education institutions will be invited to submit their application through the online submission platform.

1. **Register.** To receive an invitation, Higher education institutions must register by completing an Account Request Form. Note that in some cases, National Commissions complete this form on behalf of the higher education institution. As such, it is important to maintain close contact with National Commissions for UNESCO.
   In completing the form, indicate the contact information of the person at the proposed host institution who will prepare and submit the application, as well as act as main focal point with UNESCO and the National Commission during the process of evaluation and potential establishment of the Chair or Network.
2. **Receive access link to online platform.** An e-mail will be sent to the higher education institutions including the link that will enable access to the online submission platform (please also check the "Spam" folder). Once received, click on the link to access the online application form.
3. **Log in.** If the email address provided is already associated with a Microsoft account (i.e. @outlook.com, @ hotmail.com, @live.com), enter the account information and password accordingly. Once authenticated, the user will be directed to the online submission platform.
4. **Complete the application and upload supporting documents.** The application can be filled out in part and saved for later completion (all information does not need to be entered during the one and same session).

Please consult the detailed User Guide in Annex C for accessing and preparing the application. For technical assistance while completing the online application form, please contact the UNITWIN Programme Coordinating team at unitwin@unesco.org.

UNESCO evaluates the applications against a set of criteria related to the quality and relevance of the project for the UNITWIN Programme and its unique contribution to UNESCO, the capacity to undertake and sustain the project, as well as the implementation approaches. In light of the growing number of applications, the selection process is very competitive and only applications that meet all required criteria will be retained. Priority will be given to proposals which demonstrate that they also meet at least one additional desirable criterion.

In view of achieving a more balanced geographical representation of the membership, or in response to particular thematic priorities, the UNITWIN Programme might further refine the criteria, or limit the number of applications to be received by each country. National Commissions for UNESCO will be informed of these potential additional requirements or limitations, and these will be announced during the call for proposals for the pre-screening phase.



Once UNESCO completes its internal evaluation process, the results will be communicated to the higher education institutions by e-mail, and National Commissions will be kept informed In the case of a positive evaluation, the higher education institution will receive the proposed draft Agreement by email. There may be further exchange between UNESCO and the higher education institution to refine the contents of the Agreement prior to co-signature.

- **Inform partners of the result**. Note that only the institution that submitted the application and the National Commission will be informed of the result. Hence, it is the responsibility of the applicant to inform their eventual partners of results of the application.
- **Review and finalize the Agreement**. Upon receipt of the Draft Agreement from UNESCO, the designated representative of the host institution approves the draft Agreement, possibly following exchanges with the UNITWIN Coordinating team to refine the objectives of the project and other terms of the Agreement. Once agreed, the final Agreement is signed by the Director-General of UNESCO and then co-signed by the host institution. The Agreement is not considered finalized until it has been signed by both parties.

The newly established UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network is added to the database of Chairs and Networks and announced on the UNITWIN website. The Chairholder and Network Coordinator are designated one or more thematic focal points at UNESCO. The teams will begin to enjoy the benefits of the Network as a recognized UNESCO partner, including the opportunity to be connected with a number of international experts and other UNESCO Chairs in similar or complementary disciplines around the world, be invited to contribute their expertise and present their work at UNESCO-led events and to peer-review work from other members of the network, as well as to attend dedicated UNESCO Chair seminars.

The UNESCO Chairholder or UNITWIN Network Coordinator leads the team in the implementation of the activities set out in the project proposal. They are also responsible for the organization and promotion of academic activities, networking, dissemination of research results, publications and fundraising to sustain the activities of the project. Chairholders and Network Coordinators are encouraged to maintain regular communication with the UNESCO experts who serve as their main thematic focal point(s) to ensure that UNESCO and the Chair/Network can benefit reciprocally.

Agreement between UNESCO and the hosting institution

Agreements are signed between the Director-General of UNESCO and the head of the institution hosting the UNESCO Chair or Unitwin Network, in English or French. The term of Agreements is initially set for a period of four years. Requests for renewal of these Agreements are subject to the successful implementation of planned Chair or Network activities and the achievement of the objectives set out. This section provides some additional explanations to the standard terms of the Agreement.

Appointment and transfer for Chairholder or Network Coordinator

Potential Chairholders or Network Coordinators are proposed and appointed by the host institution and limited to the period of the Agreement. The appointment does not necessarily entail the creation of a specific post at the host institution, and appointees are subject to the rights and privileges provided by the host institution. In case of departure of Chairholder or Network Coordinator (including retirement), the host institution will propose an alternate Chairholder or Network Coordinator. The proposed candidature by the host institution could be proposed from a partner institution of a Chair or a Network. All appointments of the new (Co) Chairholder or Network Coordinator(s) are subject to approval by UNESCO. Similarly, additional membership to a UNITWIN Network is also subject to approval by UNESCO.

As the UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks are established between UNESCO and the institutions concerned and not with individuals, a Chairholder or Network Coordinator cannot be transferred from the host institution named on the Agreement to another.

Cooperation and communication with UNESCO

UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks are recognized as UNESCO's intellectual partners. They will be encouraged to cooperate with the Organization and its networks, take part in UNESCO-led events, respond to calls for proposals and engage with the Organization's activities in their fields of competence.

Upon signing the agreement each Chair or Network will be connected with the UNESCO experts (thematic focal points) with whom they should engage actively within their field of expertise. The Chairs/Networks are encouraged to maintain ongoing dialogue and work in close collaboration with UNESCO experts. This can include publication projects, events (such as seminars or conferences), and other activities of interest.

A directory of the UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks is made available for public use and includes the title of the Chair/Network, country, thematic area(s) of focus, websites and contact information of the Chairholder/Network Coordinator.

Renewal of Agreements

Institutions wishing to renew their Agreements must submit a request to UNESCO for renewal six months before the expiry date of the active Agreement. The UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network, as well as the National Commission for UNESCO, will be notified before the request for renewal is due and a special link or invitation to complete the request for renewal, including to submit supporting documentation. Requisite documents for processing a renewal request include:

- **Report on the four-year project.** A report on the activities carried out by the Chair or Network over the four-years. The aforementioned link will include a predefined template for completion of the report, with a focus on the outputs achieved such as publications, conferences organized, collaborative research partnerships, international cooperation, student/professor exchanges, etc.

- **Future workplan.** A detailed workplan for the four-year renewal period and confirmation that adequate budget has been secured for its implementation.
- **Letter of support**.Letter from the head of the host institution confirming the intention to continue hosting the UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network, and confirmation of the Chairholder or Network Coordinator.
- **National Commission for UNESCO letters (optional)**. National Commissions for UNESCO are encouraged to provide a letter of support for the renewal of a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network.

Renewals will be assessed against the most recent thematic priorities of UNESCO. As such, institutions wishing to renew their Agreement will be invited to realign their activities to UNESCO's programme and strategic objectives.

Upon evaluation by UNESCO experts, the decision will be communicated to the higher education institutions, and National Commissions for UNESCO will be kept informed.

Termination or non-renewal of Agreement

UNESCO may decide to terminate or not to renew the Agreement of the Chair or Network if the report on the four-year pro does not indicate successful implementation of planned activities and achievement of objectives initially set; or if the proposed activities for the new four-year term do not correspond to UNESCO's strategic priorities. In case of non-renewal or termination, UNESCO Chairs or UNITWIN Networks can no longer present themselves as such, nor use the UNESCO name and logo.

Chairs and Networks whose Agreements have expired and where no request for renewal has been submitted in due time as outline in these guidelines will be removed from the UNITWIN Programme database.

Use of logo

In order to demonstrate their link with UNESCO, members of the UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks are invited to use one of the two linked UNESCO-UNITWIN logos.

unesco
Network Member

unesco
Chair

The logo is available in the six UN languages and in the **blue** colour only. Upon request, the logo can be prepared in other languages.

The logo can only be used once the UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network has been established i.e. once the Agreement has been signed by UNESCO and the host institution; and only during the period of validity of the Agreement and any extension thereafter. It cannot be modified, and no text or graphic elements can be added to it or associated closely with it.

The host institutions can use their own logo at the same time as the UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Network logo. However, the logos should be featured separately, without being built or shown as one logo block. For example, the host institution logo can be featured on the left, while the UNITWIN logo on the right (see example below).

UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Groundwater Management
Institute of Geography & Geoecology
MONGOLIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

unesco
Chair

UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks can use the logo for their own activities but cannot give logo use permission to any third parties. Further, host institutions may not use the UNESCO logo alone without prior confirmation in writing from UNESCO that they can do so.

The full terms of use of the logo are outlined in the Agreement establishing a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network.

The UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks established before 31 December 2021 must replace their old logos by the new one on all their activities including multimedia materials, social media, websites, brochures and other materials and documents, including when materials are re-printed and/or re-produced.

Certificates and diplomas

A diploma or certificate associated with a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network may be issued only by the host institution and must be signed by its head (Rector, President, Vice-Chancellor). It cannot, under any circumstances, be issued by the UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network. Likewise, prizes may not be awarded by the UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network, but only by the higher education institution hosting the Chair.

Annexes

A - Application Form for the establishment of a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network

This form is to be completed in English or French by the higher education institution seeking to establish a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network through an online application portal which will be open between 1 – 30 April. UNESCO encourages applicants to begin elaborating their proposals before this date and to seek support from respective National Commissions for UNESCO, and relevant UNESCO programme specialists (as needed).

A complete application is supported by the following documents, to be uploaded before submission:

- ❒ Letter from the head of the higher education institution (e.g. President, Rector, Vice-Chancellor) proposing the establishment of a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network
- ❒ Letter of support from the National Commission for UNESCO, or from the official United Nations representative in the case of applications from countries that are not Member States of UNESCO
- ❒ Letter of support from partner institution(s) indicating their commitment to the project
- ❒ Curriculum Vitae of the proposed Chairholder(s) or Network Coordinator(s)

Note: Failure to submit these documents will result in an automatic disqualification.

Welcome to the application platform for submitting a proposal to establish a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network

This application is for a….

○ UNESCO Chair	○ UNITWIN Network

A. TITLE AND SUMMARY

Title of chair or network: [14 words max]

[The proposed title of the chair or network which states the topic and main objectives of the proposal. The title should be understandable to a non-specialist].

Summary: [300 words max]

[The summary should, at a glance, provide the reader with a clear understanding of the rationale and objectives of the project and how the objectives will be achieved. Note: If the application is successful, this summary could be made available to the public. It must therefore be succinct and should not contain confidential information.]

Keywords: Select the keywords best associated with your proposal. You can choose up to 5 key words [Dropdown list of thematic areas of focus e.g. Artificial Intelligence, Futures Literacy, Intercultural dialogue, ICTs in Education, Underwater heritage etc…]

Keyword 1	Keyword 2	Keyword 3	Keyword 4	Keyword 5	Other (please specify): …….

B. ABOUT THE HOST INSTITUTION & PROPOSED CHAIRHOLDER/COORDINATOR

Host higher education institution: [Dropdown list, Other please specify]

- Faculty or department:
- Full address:
- Country
- Telephone number(s):
- Website of institution:
- Website of faculty/department/research centre:
- Name of head of the institution:
- Contact email (head of the institution):

Previous engagements between UNESCO and the host institution
Does the institution currently have a UNESCO Chair or is a member of a UNITWIN Network?

❒ Yes ❒ No

If yes, please specify the name of the UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network:

Has the institution hosted a UNESCO Chair or a member of a UNITWIN Network in the past?

❒ Yes ❒ No ❒ Unknown

If yes, provide the name of the Chair/Network, year of establishment and expiration:

Is this the first time the institution submits an application to propose a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network?

❒ Yes ❒ No ❒ Unknown

If no, provide the year of application and theme proposed:

Proposed Co-Chairholder or Co-Coordinator:

- Full name
- Academic title (Professor, Assistant Professor, etc..):
- Gender
- Position held:
- Telephone (w):
- Telephone (m):
- Email:
- Social media profile: (e.g. LinkedIn, Twitter handle)
- Professional website:
- Personal website:
- Highest level of education:

Proposed Co-Chairholder or Co-Coordinator:

- Full name
- Academic title (Professor, Assistant Professor, etc..):
- Gender
- Position held:
- Telephone (w):
- Telephone (m):
- Email:
- Social media profile: (e.g. LinkedIn, Twitter handle)
- Professional website:
- Personal website:
- Highest level of education:

Recent publications

List the most recent publication(s) produced by the proposed Chairholder(s) or Network Coordinator(s) that closely relate to the proposal (up to 3), preferably in English or French, otherwise in Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish.

*publications in languages beyond the 6 UN languages can be listed in the individual CVs of the proposed Chairholder(s) or Network Coordinator(s)

Type [book, article, …]	Title	Link	Summary – 50 words	Language
+++				

C. CONTRIBUTION TO UNESCO PRIORITIES

The following are the strategic objectives and outcomes as outlined in UNESCO's Medium-term Strategy (2022-29). Mark up to three outcomes that your proposal will contribute to.

Strategic Objective 1: Ensure quality equitable and inclusive education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, in order, inter alia, to reduce inequalities and promote learning and creative societies, particularly in the digital era

- ❒ Outcome 1: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- ❒ Outcome 2: Strengthen international coordination for the achievement of SDG 4 and develop the global education agenda based on research, foresight and innovation

Strategic Objective 2: Work towards sustainable societies and protecting the environment through the promotion of science, technology, innovation and the natural heritage

- ❒ Outcome 3: Enhance knowledge for climate action, biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction
- ❒ Outcome 4: Advance international cooperation in science, technology and innovation

Strategic Objective 3: Build inclusive, just and peaceful societies by promoting freedom of expression, cultural diversity, education for global citizenship, and protecting the heritage

- ❒ Outcome 5: Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions
- ❒ Outcome 6: Promote freedom of expression and the right to information
- ❒ Outcome 7: Promote inclusion and combat discrimination, hate speech and stereotypes

Strategic Objective 4: Foster a technological environment in the service of humankind through the development and dissemination of knowledge and skills and the development of ethical standards

- ❒ Outcome 8: Foster knowledge sharing and skills development in the digital age
- ❒ Outcome 9: Develop ethical standards, norms and frameworks for action to meet the challenges of innovative technologies and digital transformation

Has the proposal been developed in collaboration or consultation with UNESCO?

❒ Yes	❒ No		

UNESCO Office/Institute	UNESCO Staff	Notes:
+++		

Explain how the proposed project contributes to UNESCO's mission, mandate and priorities. Highlight the project's unique contribution and added value. [300 words max]

Highlight the project's approach to gender equality, if any (i.e. in composition of team members, research methods and approaches, experts mobilized etc…) [100 words max]

D. WORKPLAN AND BUDGET

In this section, applicants present their workplans and budget for the next four years. It should not exceed five pages.

a. **Background and rationale** [200 words]
[Please provide more detail on the context and the main challenges this project aims to address]

b. **Objectives**
[Please formulate up to four objectives of the project, each composed of one statement. Ideally an objective is specific and measurable, and must meet time, budget, and quality constraints.]
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

c. **Project beneficiaries** [100 words max]
[Describe who will benefit from the project e.g. those participating in project activities and those who will benefit from the impact of the activity/output. If any, provide evidence of beneficiaries' support for the project and their involvement in project design.]

d. **Activities and outputs** [1500 words max]
[This is the longest section in your project proposal. List all the outputs you expect the project to deliver, and the activities or tasks that will be carried out to deliver on these outputs. Make sure to specify the geographical scope of the project and highlight interdisciplinary and/or future-oriented approaches if used. Provide some detail on the communication and outreach activities that are planned. The outputs will then be summarized in Section E.]

e. **Impact** [100 words max]
[Provide a short reflection on the expected impact of your project on educational, socio-economic and cultural development at local, national, regional and global levels.]

f. **Budget**
Total budget in USD: ……
[Provide a breakdown of overall budget (in USD) to reach the goals of the four-year project, including some detail on budget secured, contributions from your institution and plans to raise additional funds. The budget can be prepared by activity or by type of expenditure such as staffing, events, contracted services, external training and events, grants, equipment and maintenance, communications and other expenses.]

E. SUMMARY OF OUTPUTS

This section aims to provide detail on the expected project outputs and their target audience or beneficiaries.

	Quantity	Details on the output (e.g. conference theme or title, date and location; type of knowledge product such as toolkits, books, journal articles)	Target audience	Indicate possible cooperation with UNESCO or how UNESCO can engage with the applicant on the output.
❒ Research and knowledge production				
❒ Publications				
❒ Websites and social media				
❒ Teaching or lecturing				
❒ Training and institutional capacity development workshops				
❒ Student mobility/exchanges				
❒ Visiting professorships/research fellowships/ mobility/exchanges				

❒ Conferences and large events				
❒ Seminars / webinars / workshops				
❒ Community/civil society engagement				
❒ Networking and partnerships				
❒ Inter-university cooperation				
❒ Other (please specify): ……				

F. PARTNERSHIPS

Please select from the below list the category of partners involved in the implementation of the project and indicate their name(s), role(s), and contributions (institutional, intellectual, in kind, financial etc.) (up to 15)

Category: [UNESCO, NGO, foundation, UN partner, private sector, government entity, other]	Name (s):	Links	Role(s)/contribution(s):
++			

G. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Kindly upload the following documents (formats accepted: pdf, doc., jpeg, png with a maximum size of 1 MB per document….)

- ❒ Letter from the head of the higher education institution (e.g. President, Rector, Vice-Chancellor) proposing the establishment of the UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Programme
- ❒ Letter of support from the National Commission for UNESCO, or from the official United Nations representative in the case of applications from countries that are not Member States of UNESCO.
- ❒ Letter of support from partner institution(s) indicating their commitment to the project.
- ❒ Curriculum Vitae of the proposed Chairholder(s) or Network Coordinator(s)
- ❒ Any other documents such as reference letters from potential partners institutions. Kindly ensure all additional documents are consolidated into one before uploading.

H. COMMENTS

Additional space provided for further comments.

B - Criteria for the establishment of a UNESCO Chair and UNITWIN Network

This document defines the criteria – both required and desirable – for the establishment of UNESCO Chairs and/or UNITWIN Networks. It is applicable to all actors: (1) Higher education institutions when elaborating their proposals; (2) National Commissions for UNESCO when selecting proposals; (3) UNESCO when screening and evaluating proposals.

Required

Applications to establish a UNESCO Chair and/or UNITWIN Network must meet all the following criteria:

ELIGIBILITY

- ❒ Higher Education Institution: Proposed by a higher education institution that is recognized, accredited or otherwise sanctioned by the competent national or local authorities.

Note that applications are accepted from higher education institutions in all countries, including those that are not currently UNESCO Member States.

SCOPE/FOCUS

- ❒ Contribution to UNESCO priorities: Contributes to one or more of UNESCO's priorities as outlined in the Medium-Term Strategy (2022-2029) and the Approved Programme (2022-2025).

APPROACH

- ❒ Integrated approach: Proposes an integrated workplan that combines research, teaching/training, and community engagement.
- ❒ Engagement with UNESCO and its networks: Demonstrates established partnerships or plans to establish them with UNESCO teams, other UNESCO Chairs or UNITWIN Networks, UNESCO networks, UNESCO Category II Centres, as well as other partners.
- ❒ South-South and North-South-South cooperation: Demonstrates South-South and North-South-South cooperation through inter-university networking and cooperation.

CAPACITY

- ❒ Requisite expertise: Demonstrated educational and relevant expertise of proposed Chairholder(s) or Coordinator(s) and team members in the thematic area(s) proposed, including their capacity to generate high-quality publications.
- ❒ Capacity for inter-university cooperation and networking: Demonstrated capacity to collaborate with other higher education institutions, offer opportunities for academic mobility and student exchange, as well as to undertake knowledge sharing and dissemination activities.
- ❒ Financial sustainability: Adequate funding secured and/or plans to secure them for the activities foreseen in the 4-year plan.

Desirable

Priority will be given to applications that additionally meet one or more of the following criteria:

Higher education or research institutions:

- ❒ Underrepresented countries/regions: from (1) countries that have no UNESCO Chair or a UNITWIN Network, (2) from Africa; (3) from SIDS.
- ❒ New institutions: which do not yet have an established UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network.
- ❒ Gender equality: which put forward a woman chairperson.

SCOPE/FOCUS

- Geographical scope: Activities undertaken are multi-country, inter-regional or international in scope. Preference to projects focused on and/or benefitting Africa
- Interdisciplinary approaches: Approaches are interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary in design.
- Future-oriented perspective: Approaches are forward-looking and future-oriented.
- New themes: Proposal addresses thematic areas not already covered by another UNESCO chair in the country.

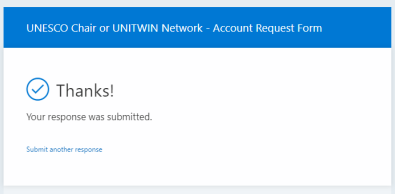
APPROACH

- Gender lens: Proposal includes a gender-sensitive approach with activities aimed at addressing gender equality issues specifically.

C - User Guide for the online submission platform

Step 1: Register

- The higher education institutions that are pre-selected to submit an application for establishing a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network are invited to register to access the online submission platform
- Basic information on the applying higher education institution is submitted through the Account Request Form
  Note: The contact information should be that of the person at the proposed host institution who will prepare and submit the application, and act as main focal point with UNESCO and the National Commission during the process evaluation and potential establishment of the Chair or Network
- The following indicates that the Account Request Form was successfully submitted



Step 2: Access the online submission platform

- A notification will be sent to the email address indicated in the Account Request Form, with a link to access the online submission platform
- Click on the link
- If the email address indicated is already associated with a Microsoft account (i.e. @outlook.com, @hotmail.com, @live.com), please enter the information and password
- Otherwise, create a Microsoft account [See the end of the guide for instructions on how to create a Microsoft account]

Step 3: Fill in the Application Form

- Once logged in, the user will be redirected to the following page

- The 'Join us' button will lead to the Application Form that the user can begin completing

Additional guidance notes

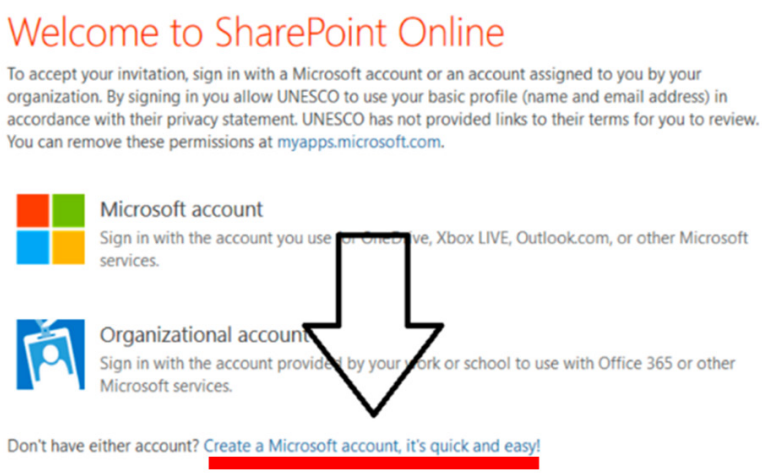
- Read the information button ⓘ (if available) on each question to get more detailed guidance on how to best complete the question.
- After 15 minutes of inactivity, the session will timeout automatically. Hence, it is advisable to complete the form in multiple steps and save regularly.
- Important: If, after having clicked on SAVE button, the user is not redirected to " My Applications" and remains on the form, this means that there has been an error and the application has not been saved!
- If the user is not able to save the Application, check for error messages in red throughout the form (e.g. mandatory field not completed; exceeded limit of words).
- Required fields are marked with an asterisk (*) All such fields must be filled before an application can be saved or submitted.
- To edit the application, click on 'Edit Item' on the top left
- The user is advised to complete the form in a Word document, and then paste the text into the online submission platform. The user must respect the **character limit**, otherwise saving will not be possible.
- At any given time, clicking on **"My Applications"** in the left-hand menu will show the saved application thus far.

Step 4: Submit the application

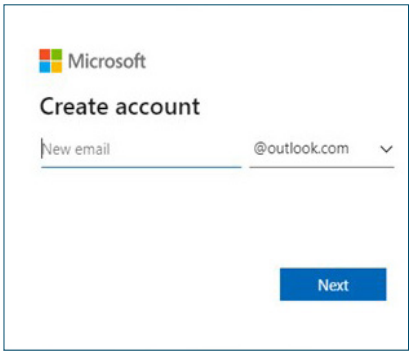
- When the user has completed the Application Form and is ready to submit it, YES should be selected, followed by the Save button. Once saved, the user can press the Apply button.
- An email message will be sent to the user confirming the successful submission of the application.

How to create a Microsoft account?

- Click on "create a Microsoft account"



- Enter an email and create a password



- Insert the requested information, and confirm the creation of the account via the security code sent directly to the email provided
- The Microsoft account is then created. User can log in with username and password.
- Proceed to Step 3 to complete the Application Form.

unesco
University Twinning and Networking Programme

The UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme

Guidelines and procedures

Revised March 2022

This document presents the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme, describes the process for establishing a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network, and the terms of the Agreement signed between UNESCO and the host institution. It includes a complementary set of annexes which comprises all the programme documents including the Application Form, Criteria for establishment of a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network, and the User Guide for the online submission platform.

Stay in touch

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ED-2022/FLI-UNITWIN/1