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**UNECE Technical Cooperation Strategy**

(for approval)

## UNECE Technical Cooperation Strategy

### A. INTRODUCTION

1. Technical cooperation activities form an integral part of UNECE's activities as emphasized by member States in the Work Plan on ECE Reform (E/ECE/1434/Rev.1). UNECE technical cooperation substantively draws from the UNECE normative and analytical work and supports its programme of work agreed by the UNECE member States through the intergovernmental mechanisms. It aims at improving the capacity of countries to implement UNECE international legal instruments, norms and standards.

2. This revised strategy<sup>a</sup> introduces the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Sustainable Development Goals, and other internationally agreed development goals as well as outcomes of the United Nations Development System reform. The revised strategy also takes into consideration recommendation (6) made by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)<sup>b</sup>, in the context of a 2018 audit of the management of trust funds at UNECE, to update policies and procedures relating to management of extrabudgetary resources with the requirement to mainstream SDGs in their activities.

3. In its resolutions on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of the United Nations operational activities for development and repositioning of the United Nations Development System (A/RES/71/243, A/RES/72/279 and A/RES/75/233), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to revamp the United Nations development system at the regional level to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

4. As a result of the reform of the UN development system, interlinkages between, regional and country levels have been strengthened, shaping up collaboration at the country level around the enhanced role of the Resident Coordinator system, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), and a new generation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), with the Regional Collaborative Platform (RCP) generating synergies at the regional level.

5. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the reform of the United Nations development system, UNECE has been undertaking continuous efforts to enhance collaboration with the Resident Coordinator system and UNCTs in the UN programme countries in the UNECE region<sup>c</sup>, to develop integrated solutions to clusters of interrelated SDGs (nexus areas) and to strengthen internal synergies by offering to the UNECE member States comprehensive technical cooperation support in implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

6. The UNECE Technical Cooperation Strategy will guide the delivery of technical cooperation services towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

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<sup>a</sup> The current strategy is contained in the document E/ECE/1447/Add.2 from 13 March 2007

<sup>b</sup> [https://unece.org/DAM/OPEN\\_UNECE/03\\_Evaluation\\_and\\_Audit/Audit/Management\\_response\\_-\\_OIOS\\_Audit\\_of\\_management\\_of\\_Trust\\_Funds\\_in\\_UNECE-24September2018.pdf](https://unece.org/DAM/OPEN_UNECE/03_Evaluation_and_Audit/Audit/Management_response_-_OIOS_Audit_of_management_of_Trust_Funds_in_UNECE-24September2018.pdf)

<sup>c</sup> Understood as countries and territories covered by the UN Resident Coordinator system. In the UNECE region they are: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Kosovo (S/RES/1244)

Development. It is anchored in the core principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development such as universality, leaving no one behind, interconnectedness and indivisibility, inclusiveness and multi-stakeholder partnerships. The goal of the strategy is to facilitate the implementation of coherent, coordinated, agile and synergetic technical cooperation activities in support of member States efforts to achieve sustainable development at the national, subregional and regional levels.

## **B. RATIONALE FOR UNECE TECHNICAL COOPERATION**

7. The rationale for UNECE technical cooperation is based upon a clear set of advantages, which the Commission offers to its member States and partner organizations, in particular:

- Ability to carry out normative, analytical, and technical cooperation functions allows UNECE to ensure a direct link between intergovernmentally agreed norms and standards and technical cooperation aimed at assisting member States in their implementation;

- The UNECE has proved to be effective in establishing and maintaining national and subregional networks of policymakers and technical experts. This is essential for ensuring the long-term impact and sustainability of technical cooperation support to recipient countries, as well as for building partnerships with other key international players in the area of technical assistance in the UNECE region;

- Availability of in-house technical expertise combined with the access to the aforementioned networks of policymakers and experts allows the UNECE to ensure optimal use of the resources allocated for technical cooperation. This technical expertise is also of great value for UNECE policy development and norm setting work;

- The UNECE adds extra value to technical cooperation and policy advisory services offered by other providers, usually operating at a country level, since its technical cooperation is also targeting cross-border and subregional issues. This allows UNECE to cover a wider range of beneficiaries, and involve policymakers from several countries;

- UNECE international legal instruments and standards are increasingly applied by countries outside the UNECE region. The use of UNECE recognized expertise in promoting the implementation of these documents contributes to strengthening the efficiency of international technical cooperation and improving synergies between organizations and institutions operating at an interregional level. Furthermore, upon agreement of the Member States, implementation of UNECE international legal instruments by countries outside the UNECE region helps to ensure greater regulatory compatibility thus promoting more effective economic cooperation at a global level.

## **C. OBJECTIVES OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION**

8. The objectives of UNECE technical cooperation are:

- To strengthen national capacities to implement UNECE international legal instruments, norms, standards and regulations in the areas of environment, transport, statistics, economic cooperation and integration, sustainable energy, trade, forests and forest industry, housing, land management and population.

- To assist with the formation of institutional frameworks in support of

subregional and regional integration in areas relevant to the UNECE programme of work;

- To assist in elaborating and implementing technical cooperation programmes/projects, including those related to strengthening transboundary cooperation, in the areas relevant to the UNECE programme of work;

- To support capacity-building efforts towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Sustainable Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals in the UNECE region.

#### D. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

9. The following interconnected principles serve as a general framework for planning and implementing UNECE technical cooperation activities:

**(a) Technical cooperation is anchored in UNECE normative work.** UNECE technical cooperation activities aim to strengthen the capacity of governments to implement UNECE legal instruments, norms, standards and regulations in support of the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This link also helps to ensure that the activities do not duplicate those of other organizations;

**(b) Technical cooperation is demand driven.** Technical cooperation is based on demands from Governments in the UN programme countries in the UNECE region, either individually or as a group of countries when subregional concerns are addressed.

**(c) Technical cooperation is focused on the UN programme countries in the UNECE region.** UNECE technical cooperation is primarily focused on the UN programme countries in the UNECE region. Furthermore, efforts are made to ensure geographical balance in responding to the requests for support from these countries. As UNECE international legal instruments, norms and standards are increasingly applied by countries outside the UNECE region, provision of technical cooperation services outside the UNECE region is fully funded, including staff costs, by extrabudgetary resources.

**(d) Technical cooperation is prioritized based on the UNECE mandates and recognized expertise.** This is necessary in view of the substantive focus on the implementation of norms and standards where UNECE has in-house expertise, of maximizing the impact on the national capacity of member States and of the need to ensure optimal use of limited resources.

**(e) Technical cooperation is coordinated with the UN system and other organizations.** Technical cooperation is planned and implemented in close collaboration with the UN system, other international organizations including the International Financial Institutions, as well as the private sector and academia.

**(f) Technical cooperation integrates cross-sectoral consideration.** When planning technical cooperation, due consideration should be given to cross-sectorial approaches reflecting the interlinked nature of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDGs.

**(g) Technical cooperation integrates peer learning and contributes to South-South and triangular cooperation.** This is to ensure that good practices are shared within the UNECE subregions and regions, inter alia through South-South and triangular cooperation mechanisms.

**(h) Technical cooperation ensures sustainability and national ownership.** UNECE will continue to incorporate sustainability into its activities to ensure national ownership including after the technical cooperation activity ends. The necessary steps shall be undertaken to support the governments in retaining acquired skills, capacities and knowledge.

**(i) Technical cooperation is fully aligned with transparency and accountability requirements.** UNECE will continue to regularly report its technical cooperation activities to its intergovernmental bodies and donors and will ensure that technical cooperation activities are implemented in line with UN Financial Rules and Regulations.

## **E. COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE UN SYSTEM AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

10. UNECE cooperation with other organizations, both within and external to the United Nations system, helps to maximize synergies, ensure coordination, proper division of labour and minimize potential duplication. Expertise available through issue-based coalitions (IBCs), the Regional Coordination Group on Data and Statistics, and regional knowledge management hubs should be utilized as applicable. The UNECE shall continue to maintain and develop partnerships with other organizations and institutions, including the business and academic communities and non-governmental organizations. Particular attention should be given to strengthening relationships with the private sector and the International Financial Institutions, with a view to broadening funding opportunities, promoting the involvement of external expertise and multiplying effect of technical cooperation. This cooperation would be carried out taking into account the following: (i) to build on the results of the work carried out by other relevant actors operating in the UNECE region; (ii) to minimize potential overlap between activities and ineffective allocation of resources; (iii) whenever appropriate, to promote a more rational division of responsibilities; and (iv) to promote the involvement of those actors who would like to bring their expertise or complementary approach in support of the UNECE's activities in the area of technical assistance.

11. Particular attention shall be given to establishing a strong collaboration with the United Nations Resident Coordinator system as the pivotal partner at the country level. When planning and implementing technical cooperation, UNECE staff should maintain close cooperation and collaboration with the Resident Coordinators and UNCTs to inform about planned projects and identify synergies. Efforts should be made to increase the number of joint demand-driven technical cooperation activities implemented in partnership with governments, UNCTs and Resident Coordinators. As a standard procedure, when travelling to a country on a mission, UNECE staff will inform in advance the Resident Coordinator (and UNCT as appropriate) on the purpose of the mission, share related information in order to coordinate the visit and facilitate institutional interactions. Briefings for the Resident Coordinators and UNCTs should be organized as appropriate.

12. UNECE will continue its active engagement in the UNSDCF, a country level planning mechanism. All technical cooperation activities should be integrated to the UNSDCF and its Joint Work Plans (JWPs) as appropriate. Particular attention should be given to the incorporation of UNECE analysis on transboundary issues in the Common Country Analysis (CCA) and UNSDCF.

## **F. MODALITIES OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION**

13. UNECE employs the following main modalities (catalogue) of technical cooperation services:

*Advisory services* to assist UNECE member States to implement UNECE legal instruments, regulations and norms, by formulating specific technical cooperation projects/programmes and providing technical expertise or advice on national development strategies, plans and programmes, sectorial policies or specific policy issues.

*Capacity development* provided in the form of workshops, seminars, webinars, and trainings. Such efforts aim to strengthen national capacities, facilitate exchange of experiences and peer learning, document good practices and promote networks.

*Technical cooperation* projects including those with multisectoral and/or subregional focus, in areas where the UNECE has a mandate and expertise to further enhance the effectiveness of its technical cooperation.

## **G. FUNDING OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION**

14. The main sources of funding of UNECE technical cooperation are the resources made available from Section 23 “Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation” (RPTC) and Section 35 “United Nations Development Account” (UNDA) of the United Nations Regular Budget, extrabudgetary resources, and contributions in kind from partner organizations. UNECE efforts to raise extrabudgetary resources mainly consist of fund-raising activities, undertaken by its subject-matter Divisions and Regional Advisers who have knowledge of and access to prospective donors interested in supporting technical cooperation as framed by the UNECE Resource Mobilization Strategy<sup>d</sup>. Extrabudgetary resource mobilization plans are prepared on a biennial basis, presented to the Executive Committee for information and assessed annually in the UNECE Technical Cooperation report.

15. Long-term plans, including funding from regular budget (Sections 23, 35) and extrabudgetary resources should also be developed by Divisions to support a comprehensive approach and facilitate delivery of technical cooperation activities, whilst still ensuring flexibility to respond to new demands and emerging priorities. The Executive Secretary has the responsibility to make high-level contacts to solicit additional resources.

## **H. ROLES OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL BODIES AND THE SECRETARIAT**

16. The responsibilities and functions of the different entities for the coordination, planning, reporting and evaluation of technical cooperation activities can be summarized as follows:

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<sup>d</sup>

[https://unece.org/DAM/commission/EXCOM/Agenda/2020/Remote\\_informal\\_mtg\\_20\\_05\\_2020/Item\\_9\\_ECE\\_EX\\_2020\\_27\\_Rev.1\\_Resource\\_mobilization\\_as\\_adopted.pdf](https://unece.org/DAM/commission/EXCOM/Agenda/2020/Remote_informal_mtg_20_05_2020/Item_9_ECE_EX_2020_27_Rev.1_Resource_mobilization_as_adopted.pdf)

At the intergovernmental level

*Sectoral Committees:* Periodic reviews of technical cooperation activities will take place at their plenary sessions.

*Executive Committee:* The overall intergovernmental governance for technical cooperation activities is assured by the UNECE Executive Committee, which reviews the report on Technical Cooperation on an annual basis. In addition, as required by the UNECE reform, technical cooperation extrabudgetary projects not already included in the ECE proposed programme budget are reviewed by the Executive Committee.

*Commission:* The overall strategic issues relating to technical cooperation activities will be taken up by the Commission as appropriate.

At the secretariat level

*Divisions:* Divisions identify country needs for technical cooperation, implement technical cooperation and raise extrabudgetary funds as necessary. Divisions also prepare all necessary documentation in order to facilitate discussion on technical cooperation at sessions of the Sectoral Committees and (Division Directors or project managers) ensure that technical cooperation projects and activities are selected based on the above-mentioned guiding principles.

*Regional Advisers:* Regional Advisers provide a linkage for the UNECE operational activities in the programme countries in the UNECE region with its normative work. The Regional Advisers are placed in respective Divisions to ensure a more direct link with normative and analytical activities carried out within the core programme of work. They also have a cross-sectorial role to represent UNECE activities in their interactions with the Resident Coordinators and to identify potential areas for developing technical cooperation projects and activities in the countries.

*Programme Management and Support Services Division:* The Division has the following functions with respect to technical cooperation:

- Reporting on technical cooperation issues and activities to the Executive Committee and the Commission as appropriate;
- Supporting and coordinating the monitoring and evaluation of the UNECE technical cooperation activities, in line with the UNECE Technical Cooperation Strategy;
- Promoting the undertaking of evaluations of technical cooperation projects and the application of their findings in line with the UNECE Evaluation Policy;
- Coordinating the preparation of proposals for possible funding from UNDA;
- Facilitating the linking of UNECE activities with the work of the relevant UNCTs in the UNECE region including through UNSDCFs and other mechanisms as appropriate;
- Preparation of relevant inputs to the Secretary-General's reports to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies, as may required.
- Identification of opportunities for interdivisional, cross-sectoral cooperation including for submission of technical cooperation projects to multi-partner trust funds (such as SDG MPTF).

- Supporting, monitoring and reporting on the RPTC, UNDA and extrabudgetary technical cooperation activities in line with the UN Financial Rules and Regulations;
  - Ensuring compliance of donor agreements for technical cooperation projects and activities with the UN Financial Rules and Regulations and HR management;
  - Financial monitoring and reporting to member States and donors on extrabudgetary technical cooperation projects.
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