

MEMORANDUM

To: Ms. Fatoumata Ndiaye, Under-Secretary-General
For Internal Oversight Services

Ref.: 2024/OES/022

Date: 30 January 2024

From: Tatiana Molcean, Executive Secretary,
Economic Commission for Europe



Subject: **Draft Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the Evaluation of the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation (RPTC)**

1. I refer to your memorandum dated 19 January 2024, on the evaluation of the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation (RPTC), expressing ECE appreciation for OIOS continuous support for our efforts in improving operations and assistance provided to member States.

2. As indicated before, the RPTC is a core funding source for ECE to deliver technical cooperation assistance on ECE instruments, in response to the demands from Member States and in close cooperation with UN Country Teams and other Implementing entities. In many instances, the activities initiated with RPTC are leading to larger scale projects, with substantial funding from other sources. I am pleased to note that this aspect and many ECE good practices are reflected in the draft report.

3. Referring specifically to the recommendations, ECE accepts the three addressed to Implementing entities; noting, at the same time, two major concerns, which may delay the full implementation.

4. First, despite the General Assembly approving an additional \$1.5m under RPTC for 2024, due to the worsening liquidity situation, it is not clear whether a full allotment could be expected this year. If such would be the case our programmatic delivery will be severely impacted.

5. Second, I would recall that many Regional Advisers positions funded from RPTC, despite being on General Temporary Assistance (GTA) budget line, have fixed term or continuing contracts. In this regard, ECE would appreciate the support of the Department of Management, Strategy, Policy and Compliance before devising any guidance relating to the discontinuation of existing positions.

6. I take this opportunity to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Report and to commend the professionalism of the OIOS team led by Mr. Juan Carlos Peña.

cc: Ms. Catherine Pollard, USG, DMSPC
(Eddie) Yee Woo Guo, Director, OIOS

ECE Recommendation Action Plan

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the Evaluation of the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC)

IED-23-007
19 January 2024

IED Recommendation	Anticipated Actions	Responsible Entity(ies)	Target date for completion
<p>Recommendation 1 (Results C, E, F)</p> <p>To facilitate the sharing of good practices and lessons learned on RPTC administration, implementation, monitoring, request tracking and outreach, IEs should establish a forum to bring IE focal points together on a regular basis to discuss and exchange information on common RPTC management issues with responsibility for coordination rotating among IEs.</p> <p>Once established, the forum should, as its first action, address the following issues:</p> <p>a) identify and share good practices on request tracking procedures and approaches to administering RPTC (this should inform the</p>	<p><u>ECE accepts this recommendation.</u></p> <p>A Microsoft Teams RPTC Focal Points network, with participation of the 11 entities, was created on 30 November 2023, in anticipation of this recommendation.</p> <p>ECE will contribute to all the issues outlined in the recommendation. Building on the implementation of recommendation 1 from IED-E-AC.51-2023-5, ECE will share its new Technical Cooperation Request Tracking Tool with other entities.</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>31.12.2025</p>

<p>work on common guidelines in recommendation 2) (result F).</p> <p>b) create an informal network for their I/RAs to facilitate coordination on common technical cooperation issues and avoid potential duplication, e.g., thematic, operational; and</p> <p>c) determine via a mapping analysis if there are countries that are potentially underserved by RPTC and options for reaching out to them.</p> <p><i>Indicators of achievement: common platform for sharing information among IEs; regular meeting of focal points, with a rotating lead; terms of reference for focal point forum.</i></p> <p><i>Indicators for first actions once forum is established: a) review of IE request tracking procedures and RPTC guidelines; b) I/RA network created; membership list updated annually by each IE, exchanges between IEs I/RAs; c) Mapping analysis; results discussed internally, and shared with I/RA network, and subprogramme directors; communication with identified potentially underserved countries.</i></p>			
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<p>Recommendation 2 (Results D, G)</p> <p>To address disparate interpretations among IEs on the use of RPTC funds, the IEs should review existing guidelines among IEs, establish or update their own guidelines as needed, and in consultation with DMSPC, ensure that they are aligned with the budget instructions and Secretariat regulations. Each IE should have internal guidelines that address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) uses of RPTC for GTA including creation and extensions of I/RA posts; and b) uses of RPTC for other non-post support <p><i>Indicators of achievement: updated guidelines framework including principles for hiring and retaining I/RAs and with clarity on acceptable uses of RPTC funds; IE adopt or adapt guidelines in areas where they are missing.</i></p>	<p><u>ECE accepts this recommendation.</u></p> <p>Upon guidance from DMSPC on the specific question of discontinuing existing positions, ECE will update its internal directive on the Management of the RPTC, which was last revised on 1 March 2022.</p>	ECE	31.12.2025
<p>Recommendation 3 (Results G)</p>	<p><u>Not applicable (for DMSPC)</u></p>	DMSPC	

<p>To further improve communication between DMSPC and IEs on RPTC, DMSPC should establish a channel of communication to discuss strategic issues related to RPTC use with IEs as they arise, including reallocations of funds within the year, and questions on acceptable uses.</p> <p><i>Indicators of achievement: At least one annual meeting between DMSPC and IEs prior to allocation.</i></p>			
<p>Recommendation 4 (Result A)</p> <p>To increase the level of information on RPTC contribution to outcomes and to facilitate lesson learning on effective modes of technical cooperation, IEs should assess or evaluate the contributions of RPTC via a combination of RPTC specific performance indicators, broader evaluations with attention to RPTC work and/or specific assessments or evaluations of a sample of RPTC support interventions</p> <p>These assessments or evaluations should include contact with beneficiaries several months/years after the support. Building on the common internal RPTC reporting standards, IEs should develop RPTC specific internal performance indicators</p>	<p><u>ECE accepts this recommendation.</u></p> <p>ECE will update its Evaluation policy to ensure it encompasses RPTC contribution to outcomes.</p> <p>Common reporting performance indicators will be integrated in all RPTC funded interventions to facilitate future evaluations.</p> <p>Future programme-level and subprogramme-level evaluations will cover RPTC funded interventions in their terms of reference. Lessons learnt will be reported in RPTC progress reports and ECE Technical cooperation report.</p>	<p>ECE</p>	<p>31.12.2025</p>

<p>and systematically capture indicator data for reporting on RPTC contribution to outcomes.</p> <p><i>Indicators of achievement: evaluation strategies and frameworks that account for RPTC; assessments or evaluations of RPTC; performance indicators for RPTC established and reported on in RPTC progress reports and IEs technical cooperation reports.</i></p>			
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