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Programme questions: evaluation

Triennial review of the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee at its sixty-second session on the evaluation of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean: subprogramme 3 – Macroeconomic policies and growth

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The present report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), prepared by the Inspection and Evaluation Division presents the findings of the triennial review to assess the implementation of the three recommendations emanating from the OIOS programme evaluation of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in 2022 ([E/AC.51/2022/7](#)). The evaluation assessed ECLAC subprogramme 3, which was implemented by the Economic Development Division.

Based on the review of information provided by the Division and interviews with select staff members, the triennial review determined that all three recommendations were implemented.

In recommendation 1, OIOS requested the establishment of an improved mechanism to systematically plan, coordinate and monitor the Division's technical cooperation work. In response, the Division developed and operationalized a technical cooperation tracker in 2023. This tool enabled systematic tracking of country-level projects, streamlined reporting and supported organizational learning through the documentation of outcomes, challenges and lessons learned. The tracker facilitated a more strategic approach to technical cooperation and enhanced alignment with United Nations development system priorities. This recommendation was considered implemented.

* [E/AC.51/2025/1](#).



In recommendation 2, OIOS requested a review of the Division's country-level activities coverage to inform management strategies. In response, the Division conducted a comprehensive review of its activities from 2018 to 2023, documenting its engagement through technical assistance, knowledge products, flagship publications and regional events. This review laid the groundwork for a strategic shift towards enhanced outreach to countries with significant development needs, in particular in the Caribbean, strengthened collaboration with partners and subregional offices of the United Nations and expanded statistical and analytical coverage of priority countries through targeted initiatives. This recommendation was considered implemented.

In recommendation 3, OIOS requested the development of internal guiding principles to articulate the role of ECLAC within the reform of the United Nations development system. In response, the Division established a guiding principle supported by five action points aimed at strengthening coordination with entities of the United Nations system, enhancing regional leadership and integrating its activities into processes such as the common country analysis and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. Significant progress was made in implementing these actions, which resulted in tangible outcomes, including enhanced collaboration with partners, leadership in issue-based coalitions and strengthened support for regional networks. This recommendation was considered implemented.

Evidence of positive outcomes associated with implementation of the recommendations included:

- (a) Increased participation of Caribbean countries in the Division's events and regional mechanisms;
- (b) Enhanced collaboration with United Nations country teams and Resident Coordinator Offices;
- (c) Expanded statistical coverage of countries with special development needs;
- (d) Strengthened coordination on financing for development initiatives.

I. Introduction

1. At its sixty-second session, in 2022, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), prepared by the Inspection and Evaluation Division, on the programme evaluation of subprogramme 3 of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on macroeconomic policies and growth ([E/AC.51/2022/7](#)).
2. The Committee expressed appreciation for the report and showed support for the issues raised and the recommendations contained therein. It acknowledged the progress made by the Economic Development Division of ECLAC in beginning to implement the recommendations, highlighting the Division's important role in supporting member States to address macroeconomic challenges and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly endorse the recommendations contained in paragraphs 63 to 65 of the OIOS report.
3. In the present triennial review, OIOS examined the status of implementation of the three evaluation recommendations. All three were assessed to have been implemented.
4. The methodology for the triennial review included:
 - (a) A review of progress reports on the status of recommendations monitored by the OIOS TeamMate+ recommendation tracking database;
 - (b) An analysis of relevant information, documents and reports obtained from ECLAC on various issues related to the recommendations;
 - (c) Virtual interviews with a purposive sample of key ECLAC staff based at its headquarters in Santiago.
5. The final draft was shared with ECLAC for its response, which is provided in the annex. OIOS expresses its appreciation to ECLAC for the cooperation and assistance provided in the conduct of the review.

II. Results

Recommendation 1 Improved planning and coordination

6. Recommendation 1 reads as follows:

Within the context of its regional, subregional and transboundary mandate to support sustainable development, the Economic Development Division should put in place an improved mechanism to plan, coordinate and monitor more systematically its project-based technical cooperation and capacity-building work. This mechanism should:

- (a) Support outreach and visibility goals by enabling the tracking of the Economic Development Division's technical cooperation requests and activities under way, including in a manner that allows United Nations offices, such as Resident Coordinator Offices, United Nations country teams and ECLAC country-based offices, to view a summary of the country-level project-based work of ECLAC and the Economic Development Division;
- (b) Support prioritization among projects within the context of the Economic Development Division's overarching strategic priorities and inform its technical cooperation strategies;

(c) Enable monitoring of outputs and outcomes to which the Economic Development Division contributed for each technical cooperation/capacity-building project the Division is engaged in;

(d) Enable and support organizational learning;

(e) Factor in any relevant capacity-building project-tracking mechanisms being put in place by the Development Coordination Office regional office, Resident Coordinator Offices, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs or other relevant entities.

Indicator of achievement: Economic Development Division strategy related to the identification and prioritization of technical cooperation projects and evidence of a mechanism in support of subparagraphs (a) to (e) above.

7. In response to this recommendation, the Division implemented an improved mechanism to plan, coordinate and monitor its project-based technical cooperation and capacity-building work. In early 2023, it developed and operationalized a Microsoft Excel-based technical cooperation tracker designed to systematically monitor country-level and project-based technical cooperation work. To ensure comprehensive coverage of the Division's technical cooperation activities, and in line with the overarching rationale of the recommendation, the tracker was designed to include projects regardless of their financing source (regular budget or extrabudgetary), entries for technical cooperation requests that had been received but not yet formalized, and confidential requests (with appropriate high-level details only).

8. In line with part (a) of recommendation 1 concerning outreach and visibility goals, the technical cooperation tracker provided input for the Division's outreach towards external audiences, including Resident Coordinators, United Nations country teams and United Nations entities within the region. To do so, the Division reviewed existing mailing lists to ensure that relevant stakeholders were included for disseminating information about publications, studies and activities. In addition, it leveraged existing ECLAC communication channels to share information about its work, including through Public Information Unit press releases and the Division of Documents and Publications. The Economic Development Division also provided inputs to ensure the inclusion of country-level activities and related results in ECLAC documents such as the annual report on activities, the regional system-wide results report prepared in the context of the Regional Collaborative Platform for the Latin America and the Caribbean, and reports presented to the Economic and Social Council.

9. In line with part (b) of the recommendation regarding project prioritization, the technical cooperation tracker, together with the implementation of the country-level activity review (recommendation 2), informed a more strategic approach in the Division's outreach activities. According to Division staff, this combination led to increased engagement with priority countries, in particular in the Caribbean region, as detailed in paragraph 18 below.

10. In line with parts (c) and (d) of the recommendation, the technical cooperation tracker followed a standardized structure that captured key information including project name, reporting period, activities carried out, outcomes achieved, challenges and lessons learned. A review of an excerpt of the tracker entries confirmed that this structured approach enabled both the monitoring of specific project outputs and outcomes – with examples including adoption of national strategies, implementation of policy frameworks – and the development of governance documents, all as a result of, or contributed to by, the Division's technical assistance. The excerpt reviewed also included formal acknowledgments from national authorities regarding the impact of the technical assistance. In addition, the tracker supported organizational learning through the systematic documentation of challenges encountered during implementation

along with lessons learned, including with regard to: managing political transitions; coordinating with United Nations system partners; maintaining project momentum during leadership changes; and addressing communication challenges in multi-country initiatives.

11. With regard to part (e) of the recommendation and to optimize efficiency, the Division aligned the technical cooperation tracker with the existing reporting cycle of the Programme Planning and Operations Division of ECLAC, which requires reporting three times per year on the implementation of the programme of work, including technical cooperation projects and technical assistance. This alignment eliminated initial duplicate reporting requirements while also ensuring that the tracker captured both Programme Planning and Operations Division requirements and additional project-specific details relevant to the work of the Economic Development Division. Regarding alignment with other United Nations system-wide tracking mechanisms, Economic Development Division staff indicated that, while there was no single agreed-upon technology for this kind of tool across the United Nations system, the Division was committed to participating in the expanded United Nations Info tracker once that system becomes available.

12. According to the Division staff interviewed, the implementation of the technical cooperation tracker in response to recommendation 1 has contributed to a shift in the strategic vision of the Division's technical cooperation approach, moving towards more proactive engagement with countries throughout the region and enabling better identification of synergies between projects. Project managers were reportedly more conscious of the Division's relationship with the broader United Nations system, in particular with Resident Coordinator Offices and the United Nations country teams. As evidence of this enhanced collaboration, staff cited a recently completed Development Account project in the Dominican Republic, where the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development had requested technical assistance from ECLAC to design an integrated national financing framework. The Division proactively identified and pursued opportunities for collaboration with the relevant Resident Coordinator Office and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. This resulted in coordinated project implementation, including in-person meetings with the Resident Coordinator Office and a joint event organized by ECLAC held in the Dominican Republic in October 2024.

13. Based on this evidence, OIOS considers this recommendation implemented.

Recommendation 2

Country-level activity review

14. Recommendation 2 reads as follows:

Within its regional, subregional and transboundary mandate, with a focus on promoting outreach and visibility, the Economic Development Division should undertake a review of its country-level activities and coverage to inform management actions and strategies. This should cover the Division's knowledge product and capacity-building activities and should include the following:

(a) Consideration of whether sufficient prioritization is being given to countries with greater economic development needs and a higher risk of not achieving the Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) Consideration of whether additional outreach to the countries with greater needs, including through more effective engagement of the Resident Coordinator Offices and/or more intensive collaborations with ECLAC subregional and national offices, would increase the impact of the Division's activities;

(c) Consideration of whether the Division should reorient a larger percentage of its knowledge product work toward more country-specific products (or publication sections) that directly support policy implementation.

Indicator of achievement: document outlining the results of a review of the Economic Development Division's country-level specific coverage, including a plan for additional actions.

15. In response to this recommendation, the Division conducted a comprehensive review of its country-level activities covering the period from 2018 to 2023. The review, prepared by a team including the Division's Director and project managers, documented the Division's country-level knowledge products and capacity-building activities and outlined additional steps to strengthen existing efforts. While the review document itself was not formally disseminated, the process and subsequent initiatives led to several tangible results that are detailed below.

16. The findings of the review revealed extensive country-level engagement through various mechanisms such as country-level technical assistance, country-level knowledge products, flagship publications, regional events and statistical services. Specifically, between 2018 and 2023, the Division engaged in the following ways:

(a) **Provision of country-level technical assistance.** Through Development Account and extrabudgetary funding, the Division implemented 29 request-based technical assistance projects in 12 countries, including those with small island developing State and least developed country designations such as Cuba (small island developing State), Dominican Republic (small island developing State) and Haiti (least developed country/small island developing State). These projects, requested by various national ministries and agencies, covered a range of areas including labour market policymaking in areas of technical and vocational education as well as policies relating to the emergence of digital platform-based occupations. The Division also provided technical assistance in financing for development policies and fiscal affairs;

(b) **Production of country-level non-recurrent reports.** The Division produced 17 non-recurrent analytical reports focused on country-specific issues, which served a dual purpose of providing detailed analysis for the countries studied and offering relevant policy insights for other countries facing similar challenges. These reports covered key policy areas such as pension systems, financing for development (studies on development banks and financial inclusion) and fiscal policy issues covering public debt sustainability and fiscal rules. The reports addressed both individual country cases and cross-country analyses, with some publications covering up to 16 countries in a single report;

(c) **Production of flagship publications.** Through its flagship publications – the *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean* and the *Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean* – the Division provided biannual country notes with comprehensive coverage of all ECLAC member States. These notes analysed macroeconomic trends and policy developments, including fiscal, monetary, financial and exchange policies, economic output, inflation and employment;

(d) **Conduct of regional events and seminars.** The Division organized various regional forums to facilitate policy dialogue and knowledge exchange. For example, the annual regional fiscal policy seminar served as a key platform, bringing together finance ministers, international organizations, technical staff, academics and civil society to discuss issues such as sustainable development financing and public spending policies. In addition, expert meetings and technical workshops created spaces for South-South cooperation, in particular on topics such as tax expenditure and development banking;

(e) **Provision of statistical services.** The Division also maintained comprehensive macroeconomic statistics through the CEPALSTAT portal of ECLAC, providing harmonized data on fiscal operations, public debt, tax revenues and social spending. In collaboration with partners such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Inter-American Center of Tax Administrations and the Inter-American Development Bank, the Division also produced the annual report entitled *Revenue Statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean* and the Global Revenue Statistics Database. In addition, it published statistical data for key financial, monetary and exchange rate indicators.

17. The review concluded with proposals for key high-level elements of the Division's strategy to strengthen its work at the country level, such as:

(a) Creation of knowledge products that address macroeconomic and financing for development issues of high relevance for countries in the region, focusing on areas where the Division has a comparative advantage and can provide added value for member States;

(b) Presentation of these knowledge products at regional technical exchanges to engage with national authorities, facilitate South-South dialogue and promote collaboration with extraregional partners and international institutions;

(c) Collaboration with countries, in coordination with other United Nations offices, to identify and implement opportunities for technical cooperation that could lead to tangible results at the country level.

18. While the review itself was primarily descriptive, it laid the foundation that enabled consideration and implementation of the recommendation's requirements in practice. According to the Division staff interviewed, this led to tangible outcomes in several areas addressed in the various parts of the recommendation, including:

(a) **Prioritization of countries with greater development needs through enhanced outreach and collaboration (recommendation parts (a) and (b)).** Acknowledging that ECLAC does not have mandates at the national level and can only provide technical assistance upon member States' request, the Division reportedly focused on ways to strengthen outreach and build relationships with countries that could benefit from additional support within this framework. For example, in 2023 and 2024, the Division, in collaboration with the ECLAC subregional office in Port of Spain, successfully increased the participation of Caribbean countries. Some outcomes of this work included:

(i) Finance ministers from the Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago attended the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States meeting and regional fiscal policy seminar in Santiago in May 2023;

(ii) A representative from the Ministry of Finance and Public Service of Jamaica participated in the regional technical workshop on tax expenditure in Mexico City in November 2023 and a subsequent workshop in Santiago in October 2024;

(iii) In the context of its role as the technical secretariat of the Regional Platform for Tax Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, which was inaugurated in 2023, the Division fostered the participation of Caribbean countries, including Haiti, in key tax policy discussions. In addition, according to the agenda of the Regional Platform's meeting on regional priorities for financing for development held on 15 November 2024, the event featured interpretation in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish, ensuring greater linguistic diversity and strengthening engagement with various member States;

(b) **Reorientation towards country-specific knowledge products (recommendation part (c)).** The Division continued its production of detailed country-specific analysis through its flagship publications while taking steps to expand the coverage of priority countries. For example, it expanded its statistical coverage of countries with special development needs through a project in 2024 to include Belize and Saint Lucia in its public social spending database on the CEPALSTAT statistics portal for the first time. The Division also initiated work to address information gaps about women entrepreneurs in the Caribbean, with plans to pilot a survey in Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago in early 2025. According to Division staff, coordination with Resident Coordinator Offices in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean and in Trinidad and Tobago was planned for early 2025 to identify potential synergies with existing work and ensure continuity of efforts to mainstream policy recommendations from the survey results.

19. Based on this evidence, OIOS considers this recommendation implemented.

Recommendation 3 Internal strategic plan

20. Recommendation 3 reads as follows:

Within the context of its regional, subregional and transboundary mandate and the United Nations reform implementation measures under way, the Economic Development Division should develop a detailed internal strategic plan and/or guiding principles to identify and articulate its related role and envisioned responsibilities, including the following:

(a) A mapping of the Division's recent and current country-specific work where some nexus might exist with other United Nations country teams;

(b) Consideration of how the Division's activities can be more consistently factored into the common country analysis and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework development processes across all relevant countries;

(c) Building on the work already undertaken, and in conjunction with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the development of a more formal plan by ECLAC and the Division to support the Economists' Network regionally, including the identification of additional specific activities and associated tangible outputs/outcomes;

(d) Continued leadership role and systematic engagement of ECLAC and the Division at the regional level on related issues-based coalitions.

Indicator of achievement: an internal strategic plan and/or document with guiding principles which incorporates subparagraphs (a) to (d) above, and a document outlining the planned steps.

21. In response to the recommendation, the Division developed a guiding principle during 2023 and 2024 focused on strengthening coordination with the United Nations development system, accompanied by specific planned actions to implement that principle. According to the guiding principle, "the Economic Development Division will actively contribute to strengthening the coordination of its activities with the [United Nations development system] with the aim of supporting sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean through its knowledge products, events, and country-specific technical cooperation work". This was accompanied by five planned actions, which also corresponded with recommendation 3:

- Bolster country outreach to promote technical cooperation services
- Strengthen coordination with the United Nations development system and United Nations country teams to enhance the impact of country-specific technical cooperation
- Ensure that Economic Development Division activities are factored into common country analysis and coordinated with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
- Coordinate with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to support the Economists' Network in the region
- Lead issues-based coalitions to raise the visibility of regional development issues of high relevance for the region

22. While these planned actions were ambitious and, in some cases, depended on factors outside its control, the Division nevertheless reportedly made considerable progress in their implementation. It reported several achievements in implementing its strategy to strengthen coordination with the United Nations system, with concrete outcomes addressing the intent of different parts of the recommendation as follows:

(a) **Enhanced priority country engagement (related to part (a) and recommendation 2).** The Division proactively reached out to countries facing unique development challenges that would benefit from South-South sharing of experiences and best practices in macroeconomic policymaking. As described in paragraph 18 above, this resulted in the increased participation of Caribbean countries in both events organized by the Division and permanent regional mechanisms such as the Regional Platform for Tax Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean;

(b) **Strengthened collaboration with the United Nations system (related to part (a)).** The Division reportedly leveraged multiple mechanisms to enhance collaboration with other entities of the United Nations development system and United Nations country teams. This included joint work with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on integrated national financing frameworks, with country-level projects in Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic. In the latter, the Division brought together the Department, the Resident Coordinator Office, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund to align financing for development efforts and create a road map for future initiatives (as discussed in paragraph 12 above);

(c) **Integrated contributions to common country analysis/United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework processes (related to part (b)).** The Division emphasized its commitment to contributing to common country analysis processes as appropriate, with recent contributions facilitated through the ECLAC subregional headquarters in Mexico and plans to engage in upcoming common country analyses in South America;

(d) **Enhanced support for the Economists' Network (related to part (c)).** The Division engaged with the ECLAC Economists' Network, including as part of its co-chair role in the issue-based coalition on equitable growth and financing for development. In September 2024, the Division participated in a brainstorming session with the Economists' Network to identify ways in which Resident Coordinator Office economists and United Nations country teams could jointly shape international discussions in the lead-up to the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development scheduled for June–July 2025;

(e) **Leadership in issue-based coalitions (related to part (d)).** The issue-based coalition on equitable growth and financing for development, co-chaired by the Division, served as an important mechanism to support the United Nations

development system and disseminate the Division's knowledge products. For example, in June 2024, the Resident Coordinator Office in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean sought issue-based coalition support to advise United Nations country teams on potential synergies within the United Nations development system to support countries in mobilizing financing for development under the United Nations Caribbean offer on facilitating access to development finance, developed by the Caribbean regional steering committee. The Division, as part of the issue-based coalition, also provided substantive comments on the offer, leveraging its regional knowledge products to inform recommendations and strategies.

23. Based on this evidence, OIOS considers this recommendation implemented.

III. Conclusion

24. In the three years since the OIOS evaluation, the Division has demonstrated its commitment to addressing the challenges identified in the report and implementing the evaluation recommendations through concrete steps to enhance its technical cooperation monitoring, country engagement and coordination with United Nations system entities. The Division established new mechanisms and practices that supported its ability to deliver on its regional, subregional and transboundary mandate while strengthening its overall alignment with the reform of the United Nations development system.

25. Among its key achievements, the Division developed and operationalized the technical cooperation tracker, enabling more systematic monitoring and coordination of country-level work and fostering organizational learning. It conducted a comprehensive review of its country-level activities, laying the foundation for improved engagement with priority countries and strengthened collaboration between partners and subregional offices and the United Nations system. In addition, it formulated a guiding principle and action points to articulate its role in the reform of the United Nations development system, advancing its leadership in issue-based coalitions, coordination with common country analysis processes and contributions to the Economists' Network.

26. Early evidence of positive outcomes associated with implementation of the recommendations included:

- (a) Increased participation of Caribbean countries in the Division's events and regional mechanisms;
- (b) Enhanced collaboration with United Nations country teams and Resident Coordinator Offices;
- (c) Expanded statistical coverage of countries with special development needs;
- (d) Strengthened coordination on financing for development initiatives.

Annex***Comments received from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on the draft report**

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) welcomes this comprehensive report, which recognizes all efforts made by the Commission in the implementation of the recommendations issued as a result of the evaluation of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean ([E/AC.51/2022/7](#)).

We are pleased to inform that ECLAC has no additional comments on the above-mentioned report.

ECLAC would like to take this opportunity to thank the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) for the collaborative approach in this triennial review.

* In the present annex, the Office of Internal Oversight Services sets out the full text of comments received from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. The practice has been instituted in line with General Assembly resolution [64/263](#), following the recommendation of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee.