

Evaluation of the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC)

12 February 2024

Assignment No: IED-23-007



INSPECTION AND EVALUATION DIVISION

Function *“The Office shall evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes and legislative mandates of the Organization. It shall conduct programme evaluations with the purpose of establishing analytical and critical evaluations of the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates, examining whether changes therein require review of the methods of delivery, the continued relevance of administrative procedures and whether the activities correspond to the mandates as they may be reflected in the approved budgets and the medium-term plan of the Organization;”* ([General Assembly Resolution 48/218 B](#)).

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Summary

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) evaluated the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC) support to enhancing Member State capacity to formulate and implement national development policies, national plans, strategies and laws.

The technical cooperation support delivered by the 11 UN implementing entities (IEs) using RPTC contributed substantially to Member State capacity development and policymaking. The good quality technical support and expertise enhanced capacity of beneficiaries with new skills, innovative approaches, tools, models, and peer learning between countries. This also contributed to the formulation, revision and implementation of policies, national plans, strategies and laws. Despite these contributions, most IEs had no systematic means in place to evaluate and report on the outcomes of their work beyond the output level.

IEs were highly responsive to Member State needs, using RPTC to provide technical expertise in a timely manner. IEs promoted their advisory services to beneficiaries so that they were able to request support from relevant IEs. However, pressure on IEs to deliver in short timeframes meant that some countries may be better positioned to work with them than others. Some countries received high volumes of RPTC support across all IEs, while others received comparatively little support.

The main value of RPTC was its unique flexibility, enabling IEs to deploy their normative tools and advice in response to Member State technical cooperation requests, often in a catalytic manner. This included generating follow-on funding, demonstrating concepts and tools, galvanizing partners to carry on work, creating networks of good actors, and multi-year support.

The IEs effectively managed RPTC overall, employing tailored decision-making models for administering RPTC within their organizations. However, IEs also struggled with similar RPTC management challenges, with no forum for exchanging practices and lessons learned. There were also data gaps on capturing demand and corresponding missed opportunities to improve strategic use.

RPTC interventions were mostly coherent with IE and UN country team priorities, although coordination with other UN entities, including through the Resident Coordinator (RC) system, needed strengthening. While IEs had mechanisms for informing RCs about their RPTC work, they were not always engaged with RCs or other UN partners meaningfully.

Readily available for responding to requests, and accounting for between one and five per cent of overall IE budgets, RPTC was a cost-effective mechanism for delivering IE expertise to beneficiaries. However, efficiency was hindered by a lack of strategic budget allocation criteria, where increases in budget were distributed based on historical allocations. There were also opportunities to optimize spending on staff and consultant costs, and to improve strategic allocations between IEs.

OIOS makes four important recommendations to:

- a) Create a forum for sharing good practices and lessons learned on RPTC administration, implementation, monitoring, request tracking and outreach;
- b) Review or develop RPTC guidelines pertaining to post and non-post uses;
- c) Establish communication with DMSPC on strategic issues of RPTC use; and
- d) Better assess or evaluate outcomes of RPTC support.

I. Introduction and Objective

1. The overall objective of this Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), Inspection and Evaluation Division (IED) evaluation was to determine, as systematically and objectively as possible, the relevance, effectiveness, coherence and efficiency¹ of RPTC support to Member States, with a focus on how that support enhances their capacity to formulate and implement national development policies, national plans, strategies and laws. The evaluation topic emerged from a programme-level risk assessment described in the evaluation inception paper.² The evaluation responds to a 2022 General Assembly endorsed request from the ACABQ³ that the Secretary-General conduct “a comprehensive independent review, within existing resources, of the RPTC and present the findings in a separate report during the consideration of the next programme budget.” This is the first evaluation of RPTC undertaken by OIOS-IED.
2. The evaluation conforms with the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards. The management responses from the 11 Implementing Entities (IE) and DMSPC are provided in the annex.

Mandate, roles and stakeholders

3. RPTC was established by the General Assembly in resolution 58 (I) in 1946 to provide technical support to developing countries, least developed countries, countries with economies in transition and countries emerging from conflict. The objective of the programme is to “support and advance processes aimed at developing the capacity of governments, institutions and individuals to formulate and implement policies for sustainable economic and social development”.⁴ RPTC resources are intended to facilitate “quick responses and initial support by implementing entities and is complementary to other development funds, including the United Nations Development Account (DA) and extrabudgetary (XB) resources”.⁵
4. The programme has 11 Secretariat implementing entities (IEs), with specialized development expertise and knowledge grouped under **sectoral advisory services** implemented by global entities, and **regional advisory services** implemented by the regional commissions, illustrated in table 1.

¹ Efficiency analysis provided by OIOS Internal Audit Division (OIOS-IAD)

² OIOS-IAD recommended in 2018/058, an evaluation of RPTC.

³ ACABQ recommendation V.112 in A/77/7; endorsed in A/RES/77/262.

⁴ A/77/6 Section 23.

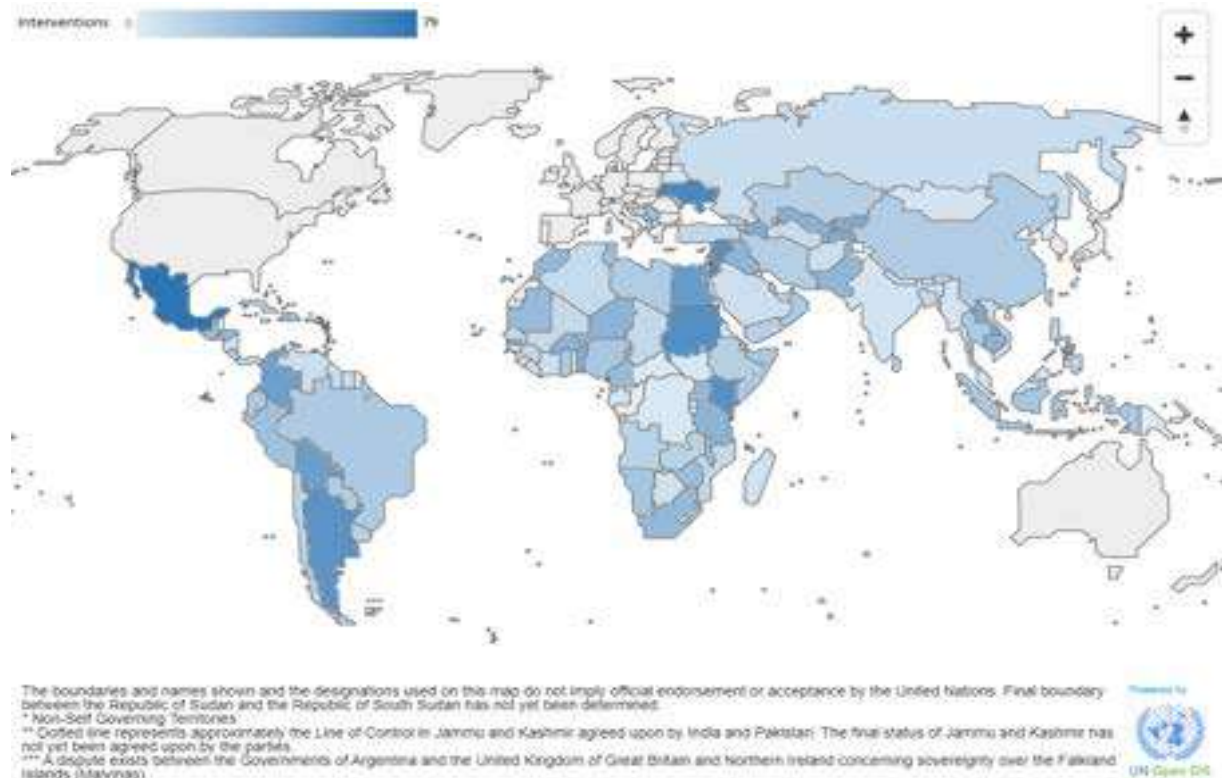
⁵ Ibid.

Table 1: RPTC IE by component

Sectoral advisory services	Regional advisory services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) • United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) • United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat) • United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) • United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) • United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) • Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) • Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) • Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) • Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

5. Technical cooperation interventions under RPTC are mainly short-term advisory services, training and field projects, relying heavily on IE normative and analytical work. They are intended to promote sharing and exchange of valuable knowledge and good practices across geographic regions. The immediate beneficiaries of RPTC are government officials and civil society actors. RPTC interventions are implemented at the national, subregional, regional and/or global levels. National level interventions are shown in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Distribution of IE-reported national level RPTC activities during 2021 and 2022



Source: OIOS secondary analysis of IE self-reported data from 7th and 8th RPTC progress reports.

6. The RPTC proposed budget programme (A/77/6; Section 23) requires that interventions meet the following four criteria:
 - a. Respond to requests of developing countries within one calendar year;
 - b. Fall within priority areas for which an IE has a mandate or demonstrated leadership;
 - c. Build capacity in developing countries and enrich analytical functions of IEs for the benefit of all Member States; and
 - d. Aid in the preparation of specialized components of a country's development strategy or requests for larger-scale funding from other sources.

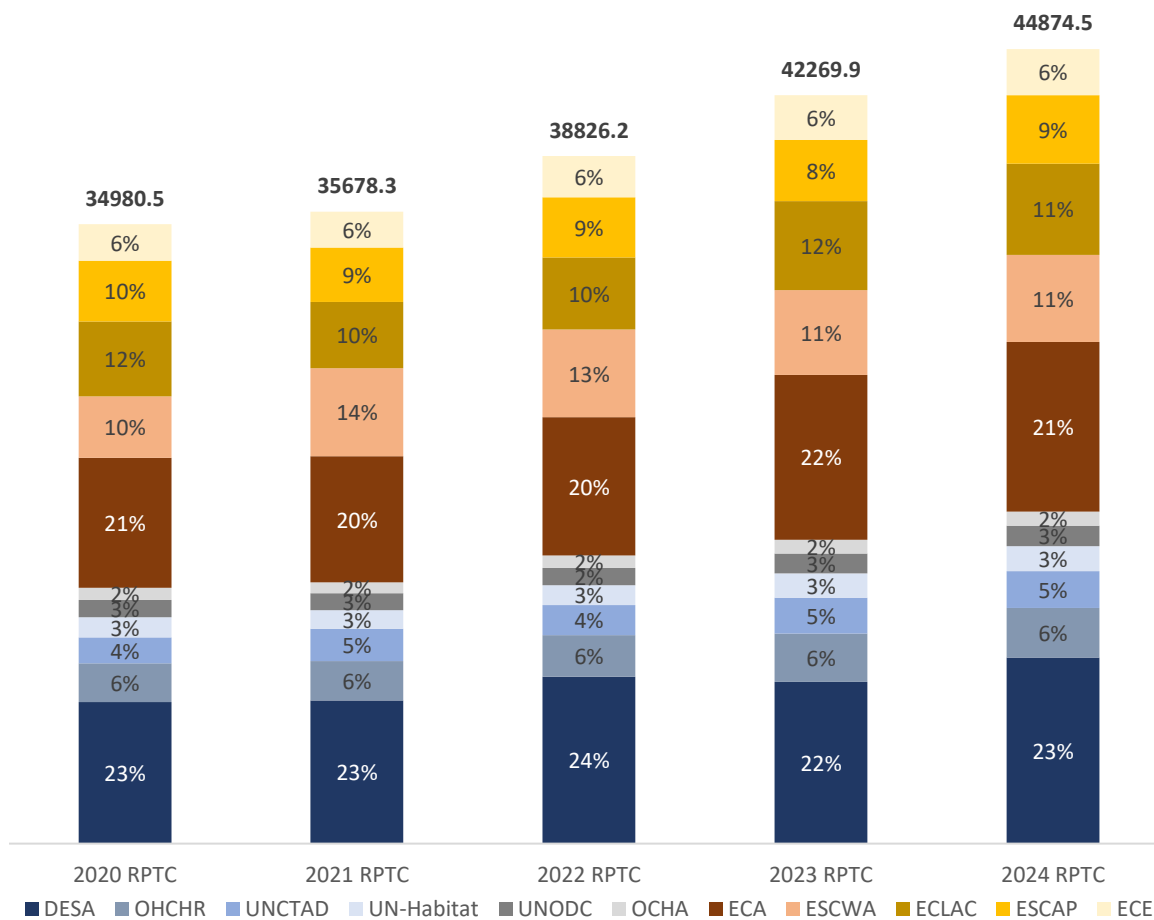
Leadership structure

7. While RPTC does not have any formal lead entity with a supervision or coordination role, the Under-Secretary-General of DESA represents the programme in intergovernmental processes and, until 2023 coordinated the formulation of progress reports. The Programme Planning and Budget Division (PPBD) within DMSPC, under the guidance of the Controller, proposes the distribution of RPTC resources based on past distributions and utilization rates to the GA for their final decision.
8. IEs have autonomy over internal distribution and management of the resources allocated to them, managing their own RPTC work plans, activities, data and evaluations.

Resources

9. RPTC proposed budget programme (Section 23) is approved by the General Assembly on an annual basis and funded through the Regular Budget. The overall resources proposed for 2024 were USD 45 million before recosting and reflected a gradual increase over the last five years (figure 2).

Figure 2: RPTC resources and IE proportion, 2020-2024 (thousand USD, percentage of total)



Note: Figures for 2023 and 2024 denote appropriation and estimate (before recosting) values, respectively.
 Source: OIOS analysis of proposed budget programme documents 2020-2024. [A/74/6 – A/78/6]

10. IEs employed 49 interregional advisors and 25+ regional advisors (I/RAs) using RPTC funds in 2021. In addition to the advisors funded with RPTC, a total of 406 regular staff implemented RPTC funds.⁶ The eleven IEs contain a total of 85 subprogrammes, out of which 66 implemented RPTC activities.

II. Scope and Methodology

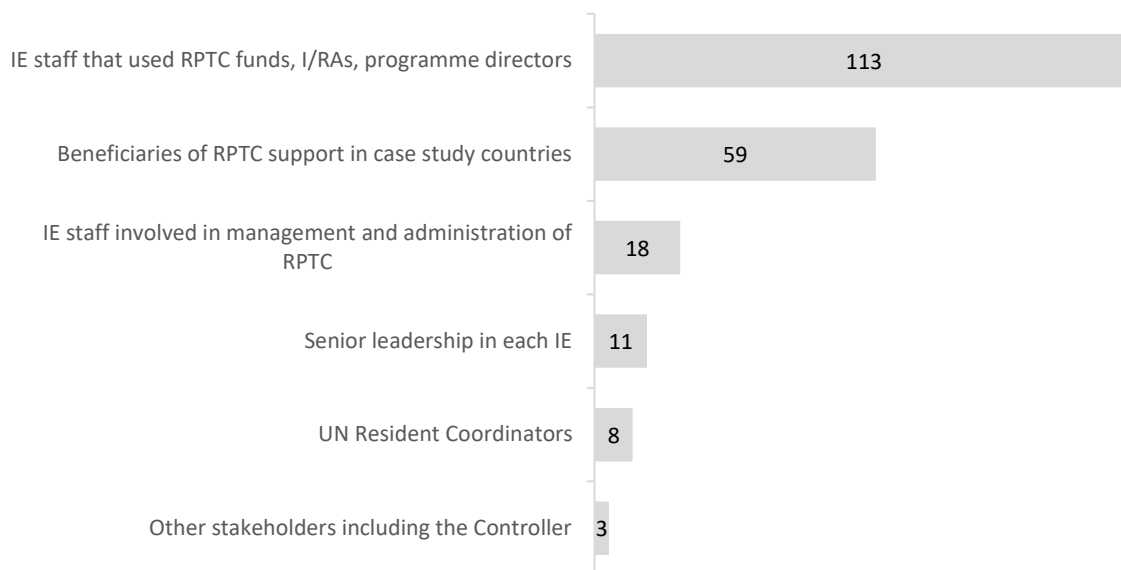
11. The evaluation covered RPTC work at global, regional, sub-regional and national levels, focused on country level outcomes in a sample of countries, during 2019 to 2023. This timeframe was selected to balance beneficiaries’ ability to recall support received, COVID-19 period, and adequate time to assess outcomes. The evaluation did not conduct an inventory of RPTC support.

12. The methodology included the following qualitative and quantitative methods:

- a. **Interviews** with 212 stakeholders across all eleven IEs as shown in Figure 3:

⁶ 7th RPTC Progress Report.

Figure 3: A wide range of stakeholders were interviewed

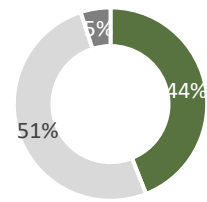


b. **Surveys** of the following populations as shown in table 2:

Table 2: Response rates from surveyed populations were generally high

Population	Survey population size	Completed surveys	Response rate	Gender of respondent (Women/Men/Other)
Beneficiaries identified from success stories in 2021 and 2022 RPTC progress reports	645	255	40%	
IE staff users of RPTC, I/RAs, and programme directors	499	391	78%	

Resident Coordinators 127 96 76%



IEs, with responses submitted by RPTC focal points to gather common data on RPTC management practices 11 11 100% N/A

- c. **Case studies of six countries** selected in consultation with IEs, for more in-depth assessment of the outcomes of technical cooperation provided through RPTC. The countries selected, criteria and total number of interviewed beneficiaries disaggregated by IE are presented in Figure 4 below:

Figure 4: Case study countries were selected to include all regions, highest number of IEs and inclusion of Member States with LDC/LLDC/SIDS status



- d. **Document review** of IE RPTC policies, reports on technical cooperation, request tracking systems, consultant contracts and I/RA workplans.
- e. **Secondary data analysis** of IE self-reported data from 2021 and 2022 RPTC progress reports and UMOJA data.

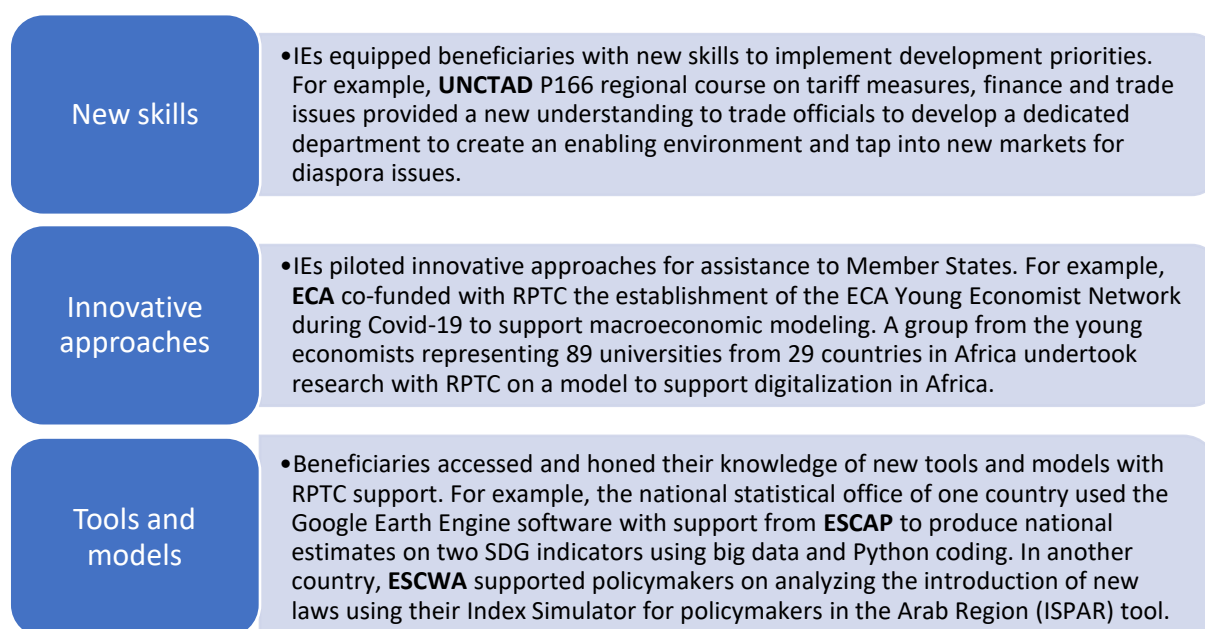
III. Evaluation Results

- A. IE technical cooperation support contributed substantially to Member State capacity development and policymaking, although most IEs did not systematically evaluate RPTC outcome contributions themselves.

RPTC support has enhanced capacity of beneficiaries with the use of new skills, innovative approaches, tools and models and facilitated peer learning between countries

13. Almost all surveyed beneficiaries (96 per cent) and most interviewed officials in the six case study countries (83 per cent) confirmed that technical cooperation support contributed to their capacity development. Around half of interviewed officials shared examples of their enhanced capacities to use new skills and innovative approaches, tools and models, illustrated in figure 5. Some beneficiaries in each case study country volunteered that they were able to sustainably use the capacities gained without further reliance on IEs.

Figure 5: Beneficiaries in the six case study countries provided numerous examples of technical support that enhanced their capacities



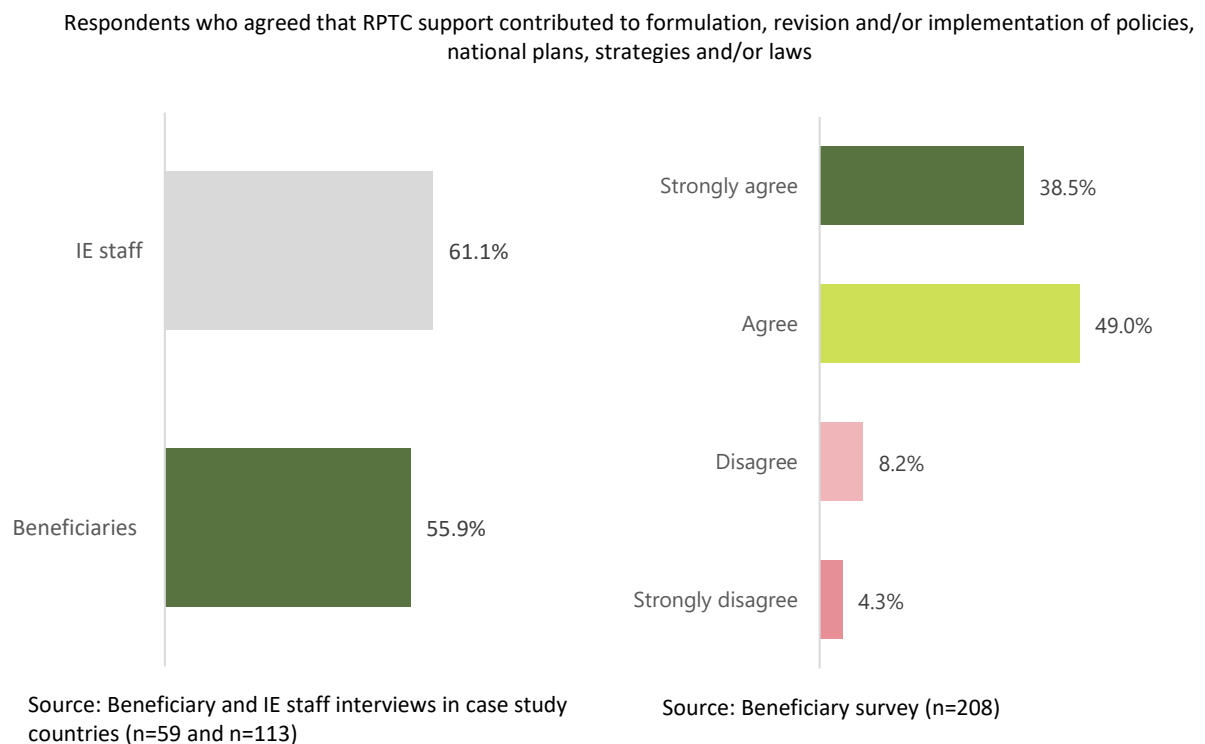
14. RPTC support also frequently enhanced capacities of Member States by facilitating South-South cooperation. Majorities of case study country officials interviewed (54 per cent) and beneficiaries surveyed (54 per cent) reported examples of learning from peer exchanges among at least 80 countries. Moreover, surveyed IE staff (47 per cent), including I/RAs (67 per cent), stated peer exchange was a strength of the RPTC mechanism. South-South cooperation took place via:

- Study visits;
- Fellowships
- Officials brought as resource persons to other countries;
- IE staff showcasing practices from other countries;
- Online learning platforms;
- Knowledge networks; and
- Observatories to monitor and advise governments on various issues.

RPTC support contributed to the formulation, revision and/or implementation of policies, national plans, strategies and/or laws

15. RPTC support contributed to intermediate outcomes for beneficiaries in all six case study countries. Most officials and IE staff interviewed confirmed that IE advice contributed to policy and strategy formulation and implementation in these countries as shown in figure 6. The highly positive assessment remained consistent among surveyed beneficiaries in countries with SIDS/LDC/LLDC status and with support from 10 of 11 IEs. The only exception was a 15-percentage point lower perception of contribution to intermediate outcomes by ECA, where two-thirds of surveyed staff, at a higher proportion than in other IEs, also reported an unreasonable timeframe available to them to implement RPTC activities.

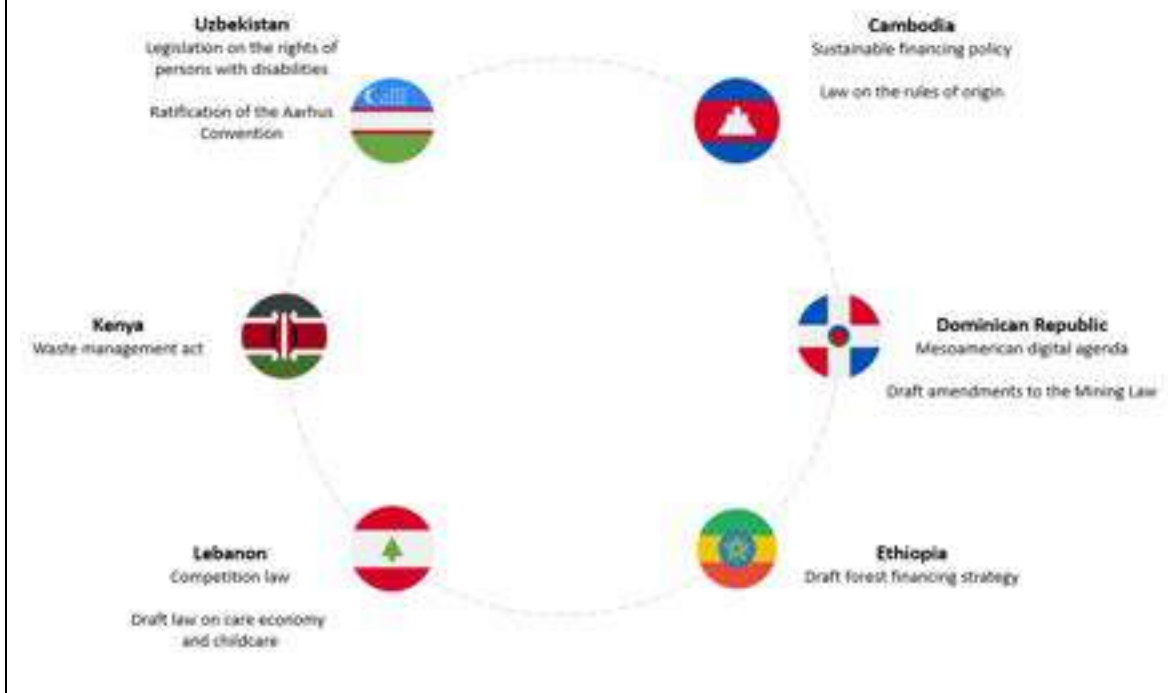
Figure 6: RPTC support positively influenced policies and strategies in countries



16. Interviewed beneficiaries identified IE contributions to policy formulation, national plans, strategies and/or laws; these included, for example, environmental issues, COVID-19 recovery, human rights, trade, population, digitization, energy, labour laws and tax laws. Box 1 summarizes examples of policy influence in all case study countries.

Box 1

RPTC support contributed to influencing policy formulation, revision and/or implementation in all case study countries.



17. Box 2 provides three illustrative examples of the life cycle of RPTC support towards the achievement of some of those outcomes.

Box 2

Illustrative examples of RPTC support contributions

1: RPTC support contributed in multiple stages to the formulation of draft law on care economy and childcare in Lebanon



2: RPTC support contributed in multiple stages to the formulation of draft forest financing strategy in Ethiopia



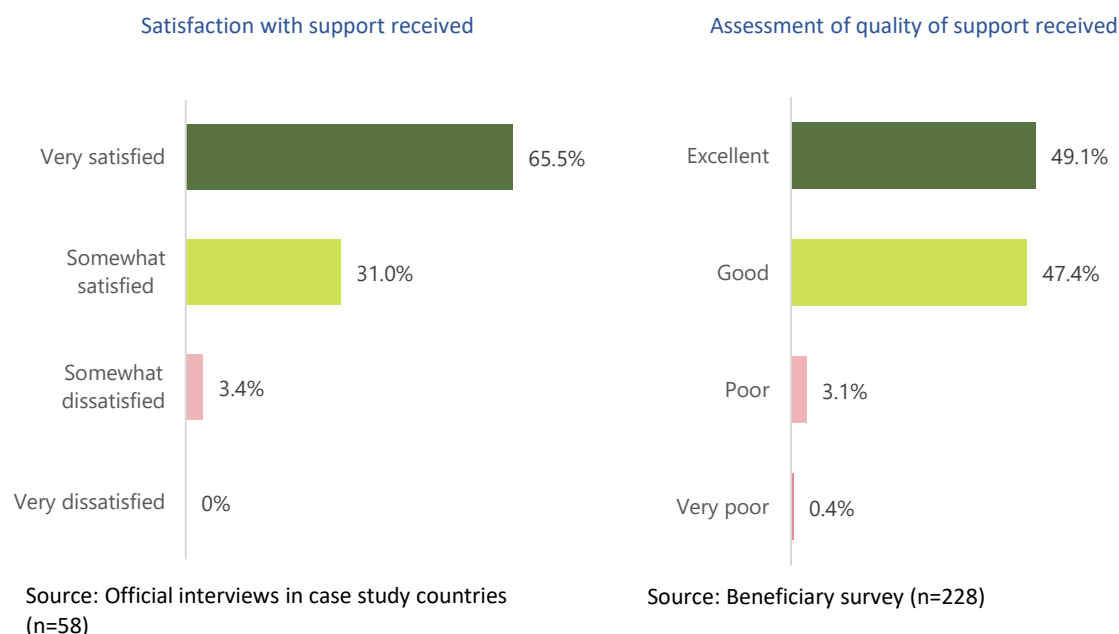
3: RPTC support contributed in multiple stages to the modification of the mining law in the Dominican Republic



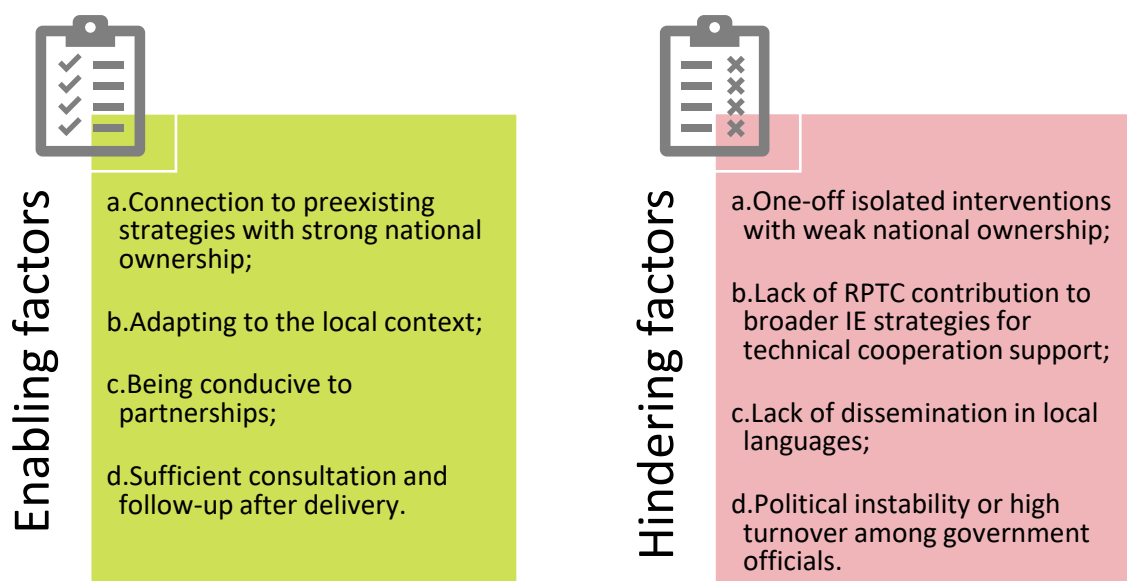
The good quality technical cooperation support and expertise provided was essential to ensuring RPTC utility for capacity development and policy making

- Beneficiaries considered the strongest feature of RPTC support to be its good quality. Almost all interviewed officials in six case study countries (97 per cent) and surveyed beneficiaries (97 per cent) reported excellent or good quality support received, as shown in figure 7. Interviewed officials volunteered, by a large margin, good-quality expertise as the top strength of technical cooperation support in five case study countries and across 10 of the 11 IEs. Expertise was praised for being highly technical, understanding of needs, hands on and extensive in its analysis and sharing of examples from multiple countries.

Figure 7: Nearly all beneficiaries were satisfied with the quality of RPTC support



19. Interviewed officials in case study countries and IE staff outlined the following enabling and hindering factors for effective support and contribution towards outcomes:



20. Some types of interventions were more strongly associated with contribution to outcomes than others. Analysis of IE self-reported national level data for 2021 and 2022 showed that capacity building events, grants and field projects contributed the most to ratification of conventions and/or the introduction of new policies, laws, national plans or strategies. No statistically significant differences were observed in achievement of intermediate outcomes between RPTC support delivered by global versus regional IEs or to countries with versus without SIDS/LDC/LLDC status.⁷

⁷ Regression analysis of IE self-reported data on 2000+ national-level RPTC interventions in 2021 and 2022.

Despite these contributions, most IEs had no systematic means in place to evaluate and report on the outcomes of their work

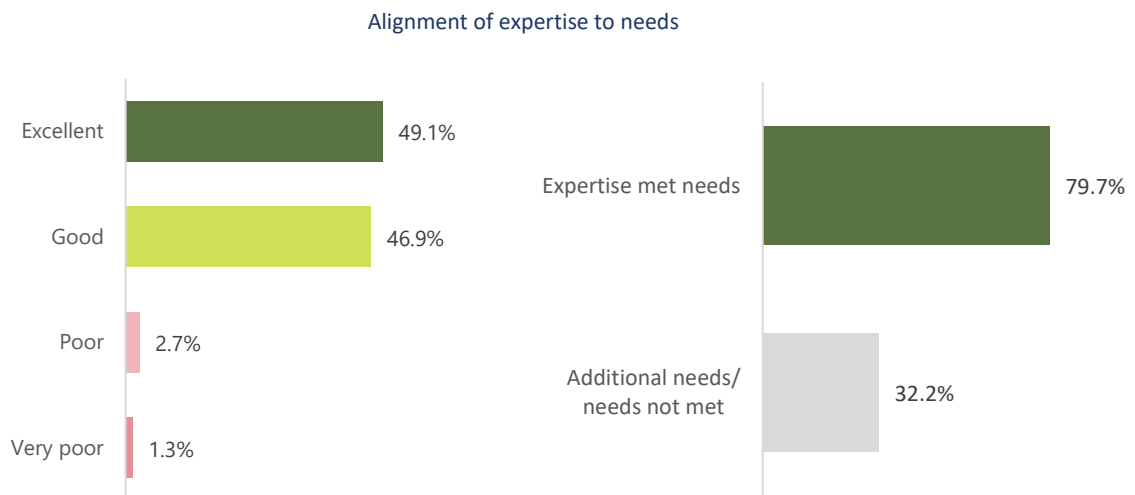
21. RPTC management in nine IEs reported mechanisms for capturing feedback from participants of RPTC-funded activities through post-event surveys, evaluation forms, mission reports, intergovernmental meeting minutes, letters of acknowledgment and/or evaluations by external consultants. All IEs also contributed data to the RPTC progress reports. However, most of these mechanisms lacked specific performance indicators to assess the outcomes of RPTC interventions after enough time to observe outcomes. Review of technical cooperation reports periodically produced by IEs indicated these were more output- than outcome-oriented, and there were no systematic mechanisms or budget set aside to follow up with beneficiaries, a few years after implementation, to periodically evaluate and report on RPTC contribution to outcomes. The practice of cross-referencing RPTC performance in IE regular budget sections did not adequately identify RPTC supported outcomes for the General Assembly. Good practices included DESA, OHCHR, UNCTAD and ECE evaluations of programme components co-funded by RPTC. Moreover, coordinated by DESA, IEs agreed in 2023 on common reporting standards with definitions and metadata for monitoring and reporting indicators in the progress report.
 22. Interviewed RPTC management and staff cited numerous challenges with assessing the attribution of RPTC interventions to longer-term outcomes. These included the: a) small budget, short-duration RPTC interventions, especially when co-funded with other sources; b) disconnect between annual timelines for implementation, reporting and longer time horizon for measuring impact, and c) already heavy reporting obligations. Without systematic performance information on RPTC contribution to results, IEs were not able to systematically report contributions to results in their mandated reports to the General Assembly.
- B. IEs were highly responsive to Member State needs, using RPTC to provide technical expertise in a timely manner and integrating cross-cutting issues, particularly gender.**

IEs were highly responsive to Member States in both alignment and timeliness of the technical support provided

23. IEs had the right technical expertise to respond to Member State requests. Nearly all surveyed beneficiaries (96 per cent) rated the alignment of technical expertise provided in response to their requests as either good or excellent, with beneficiaries of DESA, ECLAC and ECA more likely to rate it as excellent than good (figure 8). Similarly, most interviewed beneficiaries across all case study countries described the expertise provided by technical staff, consultants, and I/RAs as meeting their needs. I/RAs were also considered assets by their peers; interviewed staff in most IEs considered their organization's I/RAs to be significant assets due to their accumulation of knowledge, ability to advise on emerging and complex topics and position to facilitate global and regional coherence. As one senior IE official noted, "I/RAs are very effective in integrating the [IE] normative and operational work and cross-fertilizing understanding in SDG implementation between regions." Among surveyed staff who worked with I/RAs, most staff (87 per cent) and directors (86 per cent) said having an I/RA was important for their division to deliver technical cooperation support.⁸

⁸ In ESCAP and ECE, where divisions managed selection of regional advisors in the hiring process, this figure increased to 100 per cent among directors.

Figure 8: Most beneficiaries said IE technical expertise was aligned to their needs



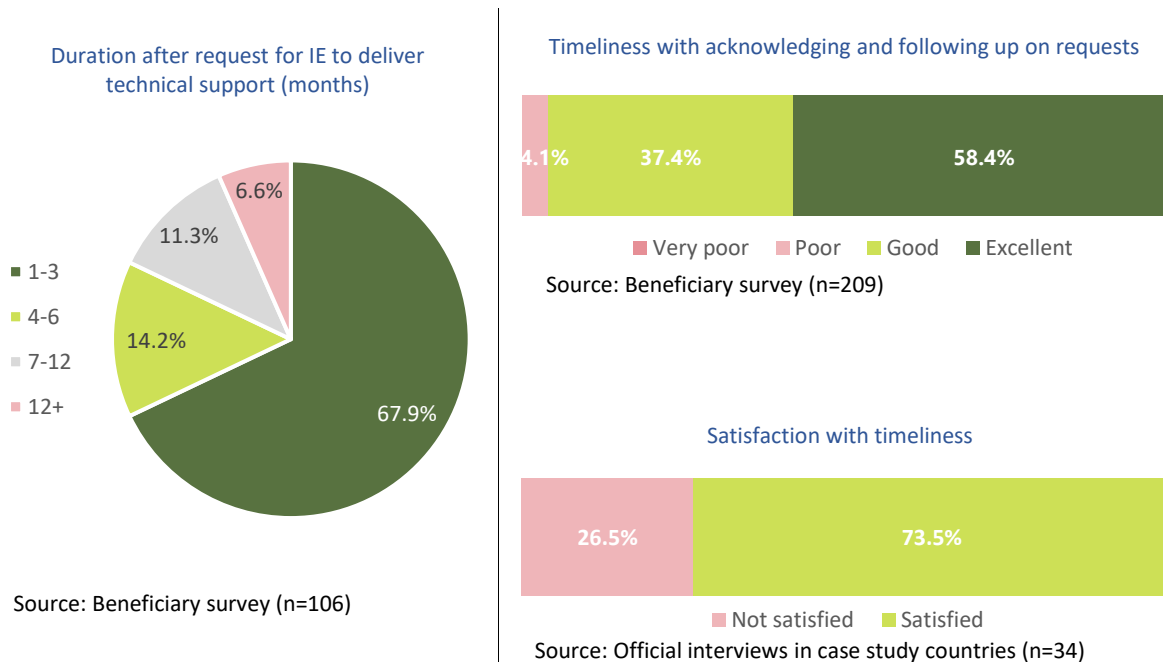
Source: Beneficiary survey (n=224)

Source: Beneficiary interviews in case study countries (n=59)

24. However, close to one third of beneficiaries interviewed indicated that while their initial needs were met, they had needs beyond the expertise provided. This primarily included requests for further assistance on next steps after the initial support provided, and occasional criticisms of consultants hired (e.g., more local knowledge or better mastery of subject needed).

25. Nearly all surveyed beneficiaries (96 per cent) and most interviewed case study beneficiaries reported that IEs consistently delivered technical cooperation support in a timely manner, often within one to two months as shown in figure 9. The few interviewed officials that noted slow response attributed it to delays with UN bureaucracy, arranging travel and hiring consultants.

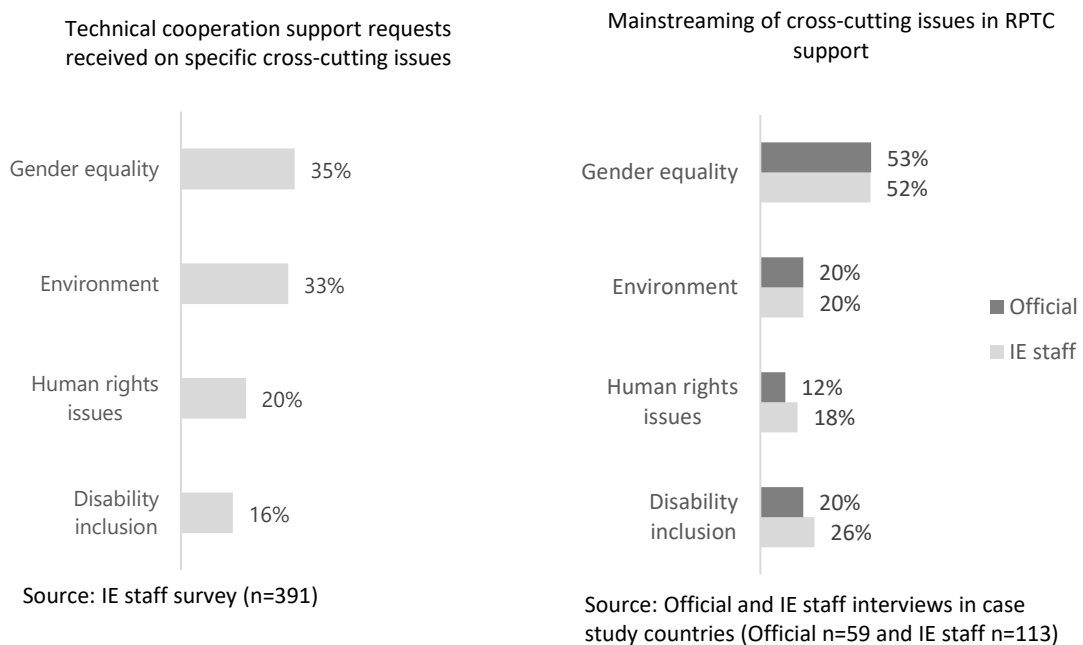
Figure 9: Most beneficiaries were satisfied with timeliness of IE technical cooperation



IEs effectively mainstreamed gender dimensions into their work, but made less progress on mainstreaming other cross-cutting issues

26. Interviewed RPTC management in some IEs reported practices in mainstreaming gender, human rights (a central lever for accelerating the 2030 agenda), disability inclusion and environmental issues at various cycles of RPTC implementation. Review of documents revealed gender and/or environment were included as criteria in RPTC proposal reviews in ECA, ESCAP and DESA; I/RA posts were created to address specific cross-cutting issues in DESA, OHCHR, ESCWA, ESCAP and ECE; monitoring data was disaggregated by sex in the common reporting standards for all IEs; and integration of women and persons with disabilities were referenced in RPTC guidance in OHCHR. Surveyed IE staff reported receiving technical cooperation support requests more on gender and environment issues (Figure 10); however, feedback from interviewed beneficiaries in six case study countries indicated the gender dimension was mainstreamed sufficiently and significantly more often than the other three dimensions. Surveyed beneficiaries were relatively positive across all cross-cutting dimensions. In two case study countries, IEs provided support on disability inclusion. For example, in one country ESCWA delivered a situation analysis, consultation with stakeholders and strategy with the Ministry of Social Affairs, while in another an OHCHR official spoke on request at a civil society forum. In both cases the support was well received, though interviewed beneficiaries asked for further follow up from the IEs.

Figure 10: IE staff reported receiving more technical cooperation support requests on gender and environment issues, but the gender dimension was mainstreamed significantly more

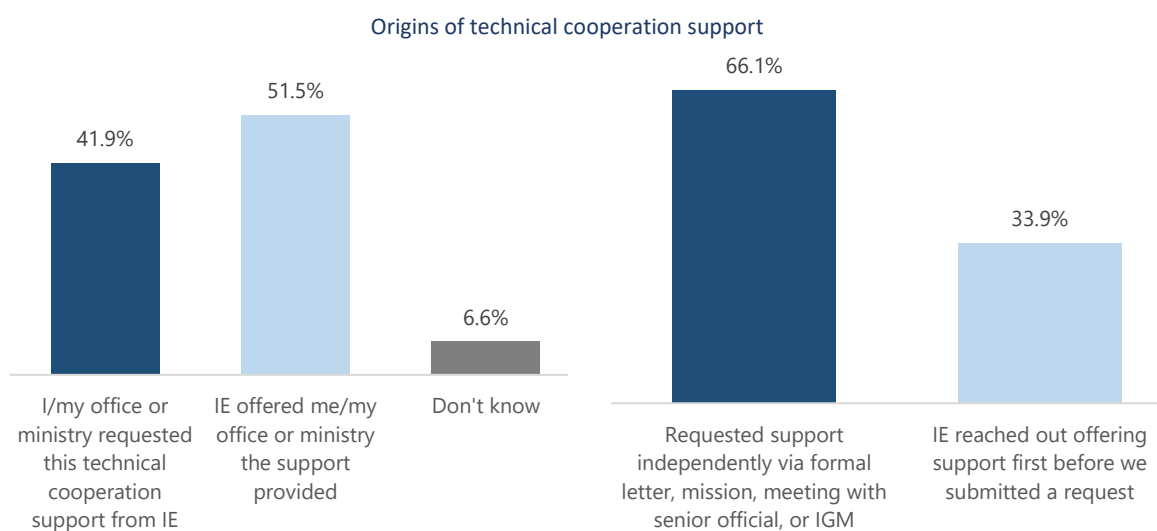


- C. IEs promoted their advisory services to beneficiaries so that they were able to request support; however, pressure to deliver in short timeframe meant that some countries may be better positioned to work with the IEs than others

Requests for technical cooperation were often made in response to proactive outreach from IEs, though countries less able to respond to outreach may be missing out

27. Beneficiaries requested technical support services from IEs based on their understanding of the process and knowledge of the IE expertise available, often built on outreach from IEs. Data from the survey of IEs, document review, and interviews with IE staff identified the ways that outreach was conducted including introducing tools and services at intergovernmental meetings and through relevant ministerial contacts and invitations to participate in programmes and pilot interventions. As seen in figure 11, much of the RTPC support provided was independently requested by beneficiaries who had some understanding of what areas they could request support on from IEs.

Figure 11: Four of ten success story RTPC support and two thirds of country case study support was independently requested

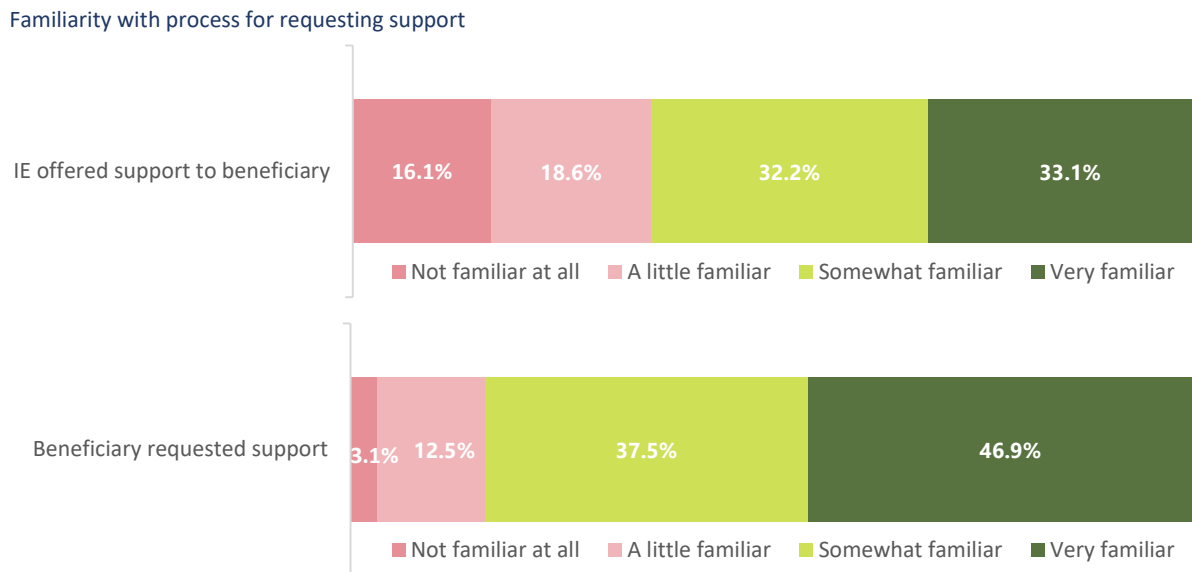


Source: Beneficiary survey (n=220)

Source: Beneficiary interviews in case study countries (n=59)

28. Having to implement RTPC within the calendar year, in the context of an annual budget implementation timeframe, meant that countries that are more difficult to reach or have less institutional capacities are at a higher risk of not receiving support. Familiarity with how to request technical cooperation from IEs was much higher among independent requestors than among those to whom support was offered directly, as shown in figure 12. Half of IE staff interviewed reported already facing constraints on implementing RTPC funds within the calendar year. The time needed to engage with countries that are less familiar or able to uptake support posed significant risks to ensuring assistance is provided to countries that might be in greater need of support or less aware of IE offer. Several IEs had innovative approaches to managing this risk. For example, ESCWA established a network of member State technical cooperation focal points familiar with the process for channeling requests; ECE I/RAs acted as focal points for three member States each in the region, and informed RCOs/UNCTs of service offerings; and ESCAP positioned a regional advisor in Oceania to have greater access to the countries of the subregion.

Figure 12: Requesting governments were more familiar with technical cooperation entry points than were others

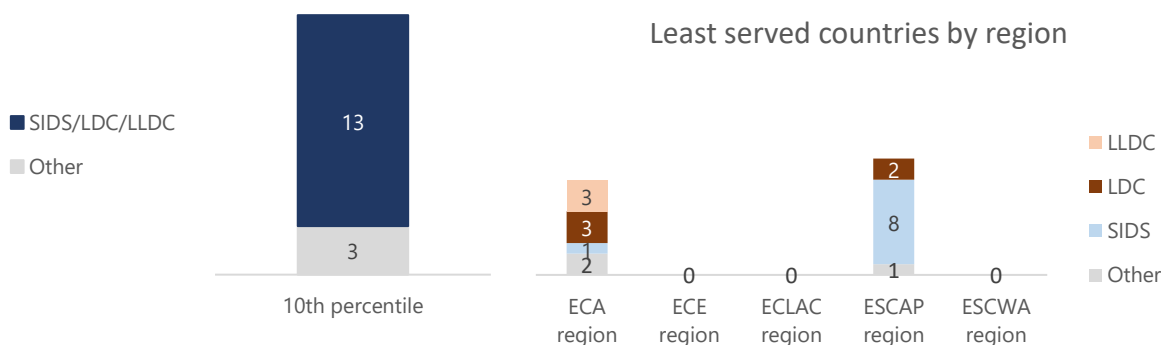


Source: Beneficiary survey (n=220)

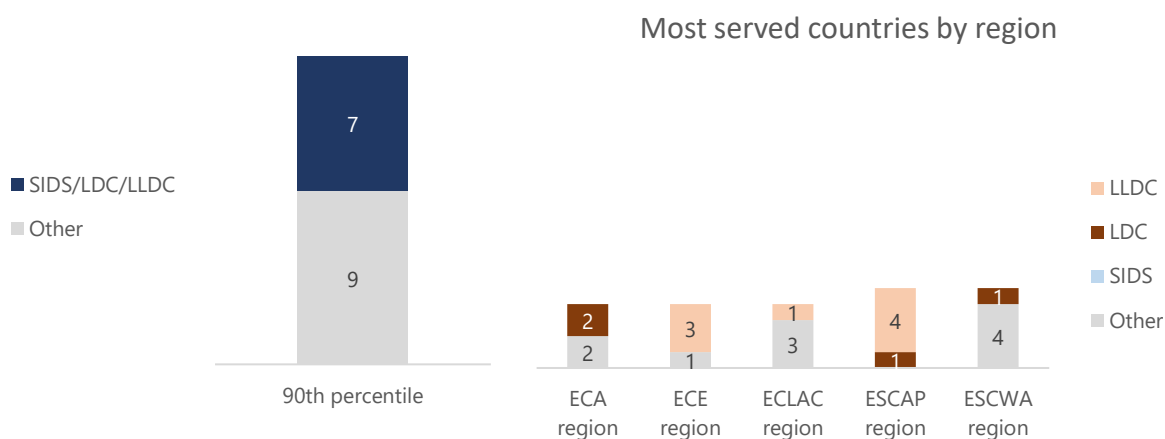
29. Almost one in five interviewed IE staff suggested more outreach to Member States to improve use and coverage of RPTC. Figure 13 summarizes the secondary analysis of data provided by all 11 IEs on countries to whom RPTC services were delivered during 2021 and 2022, showing that some countries appeared potentially more heavily served, while others were potentially underserved by RPTC. While all IEs reached out to Member States with SIDS, LDC, and LLDC status, as relevant, the potentially underserved countries were concentrated in this group. Note that it is possible the underserved countries receive technical support through other means.

Figure 13: Some countries received high volumes of RPTC support across all IEs, while others received comparatively little support during 2021 and 2022

Potentially underserved countries – bottom 10th percentile (0-3 interventions)



Potentially overserved countries – top 90th percentile (40+ interventions)



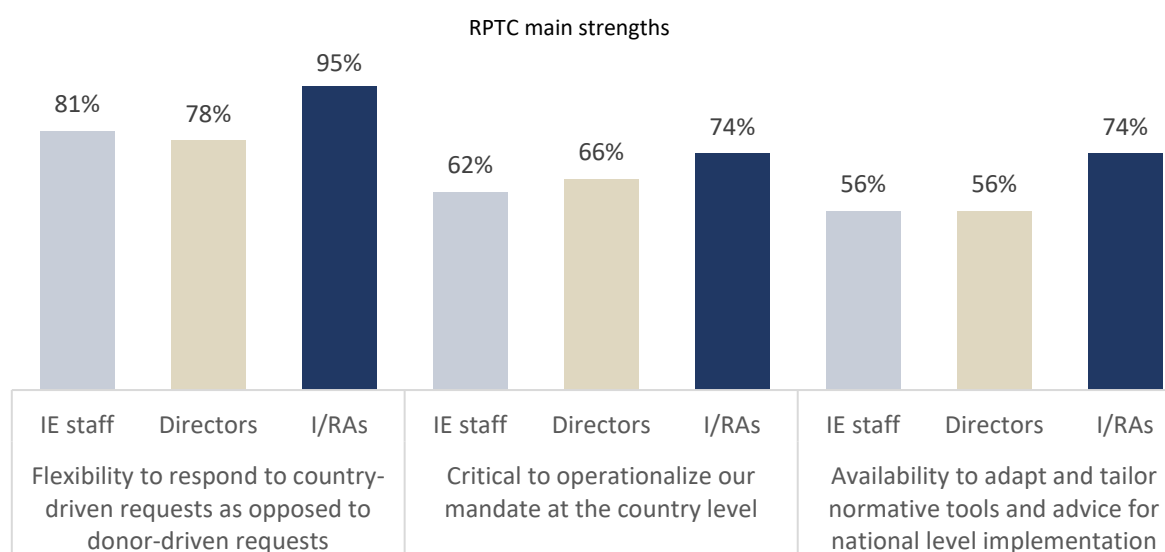
Source: OIOS secondary analysis of interventions reported by all 11 IEs at the national level, 2021-2022

D. The main value of RPTC was its flexibility, and capacity to deploy normative tools and advice in response to Member State technical cooperation requests, often in a catalytic manner.

IEs primarily valued the flexibility of RPTC to respond to country needs

30. IEs highly valued the flexibility of RPTC, enabling them to provide support in response to country needs. Figure 14 shows that this flexibility to respond to country-driven requests rather than donor priorities was the main feature of RPTC appreciated by IE staff, in addition to enabling them to operationalize their mandates and adapt normative tools and advice at national levels. Similarly, the top mentioned RPTC strengths among staff interviewed were the flexibility, demand-driven focus, and speed to deploy in comparison to DA and XB processes, which take over a year. Senior IE officials all saw the agility of RPTC as its most important feature; as one IE staff explained *“RPTC support is direct technical support, and there is a lot of flexibility in the subjects and the way we do it.”*

Figure 14: Majorities of IE staff surveyed perceived flexibility, operationalizing their mandate, and adapting normative tools for countries to be the main RPTC strengths.



Source: IE staff survey (n=391)

IEs demonstrated catalytic RPTC results

31. All IEs used RPTC for catalytic or multiplier results. About one-third of interviewed staff and a structured review of IE submissions provided examples of catalytic uses of RPTC funds, shown in figure 15.

Figure 15: Multiple illustrative examples of catalytic effects of RPTC were identified

Generating follow on funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions led to new extra-budgetary, Development Account, and/or bilateral funds. For example, DESA support on social protection that translated to USD 1.2 million project in the Peace and Development Fund, or UN-Habitat receiving USD 5 million from donors to set up new country office, or UNODC training and assessment on criminal justice that led to a USD 3 million donor funded programme.
Demonstrating concepts and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New tools were piloted and their use multiplied or strategies that were developed and governments followed a path as a result. For example, ECE support through their Infrastructure Evaluation and Rating System (PIERS) tool offered governments a unique tool for assessing infrastructure projects against the SDGs, or UNCTAD support to eTrade readiness resulting in national strategies developed.
Galvanizing partners to carry on the work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing workshops where government offices began working together, and initiating work that others would continue. For example, ESCAP support to developing a science technology and investment roadmap, which later generated an Asian Development Bank project in the country, or ESCWA support on national accounts that led to a World Bank project.
Networks of good actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds used to develop networks of actors that support IE mandates at country level after intervention concluded. For example, OHCHR fellowships to strengthen national human rights institutions, and OCHA support to countries to join the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) membership and training.
Multi-year support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller components of a longer term effort that are approved on an annual basis. For example, ECA support to implementing a tri country trade corridor, UNCTAD support to updating widely used customs tool, and ECLAC support to updating widely used population statistical tool.

E. While IEs effectively managed RPTC overall, there were data gaps on capturing demand and a corresponding missed opportunity to improve strategic use.

While most IEs had systematic processes for managing RPTC, there was room for improvement, including on exchanging good practices

32. IEs developed systematic processes for managing RPTC, each with their strengths and weaknesses according to implementing I/RA and staff. The processes used are described in table 3.

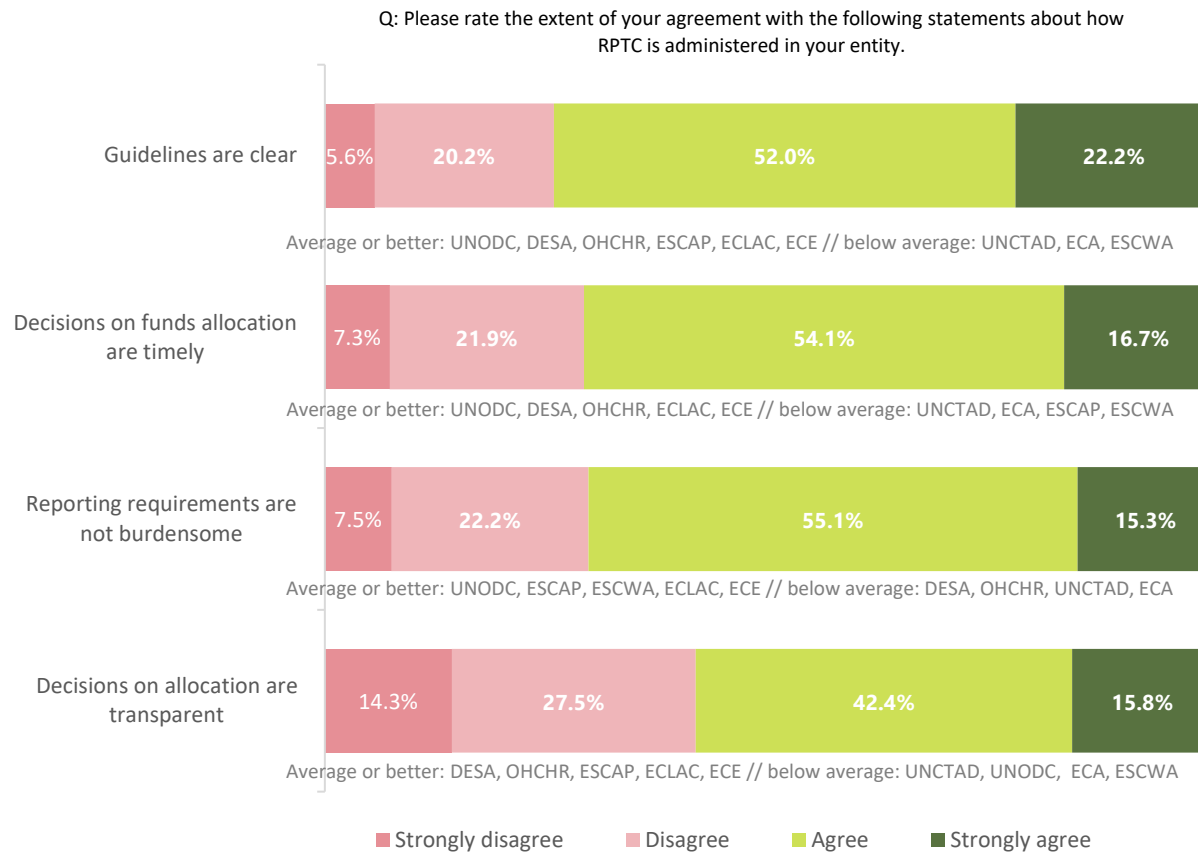
Table 3: Features of RPTC decision-making by IEs

<i>IE</i>	<i>Competitive proposals (Scored)</i>	<i>Applications to use funds</i>	<i>Fixed funding amounts per division</i>	<i>Coordination unit to oversee</i>	<i>Directors decide on RPTC use</i>	<i>I/RAs integrated in decisions</i>	<i>Senior Leadership sign off</i>	<i>Timing of decisions</i>
DESA			✓	✓	✓			Strategic planning
UNCTAD		✓		✓			✓	Strategic planning
UN-Habitat		✓		✓		✓	✓	Strategic planning
UNODC	✓			✓	✓	✓		2-3x /year
OHCHR				✓	✓			Strategic planning
OCHA				✓	✓			Strategic planning
ECA	✓	✓		✓			✓	3-4x/year
ESCAP	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	2x/year
ECE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Strategic planning
ECLAC		✓		✓			✓	Rolling
ESCWA		✓		✓		✓	✓	Rolling

33. As shown in figure 16, IE staff were overall satisfied with the RPTC processes in place, though each IE had areas where, relative to other IEs, their staff were less satisfied. In some IEs, staff gave less favorable assessments of the issues of transparency, timely decisions and sufficient guidance.

Figure 16: Majorities of surveyed IE staff were satisfied with the RPTC management in their entities, though were least satisfied with transparency of decisions

IE staff assessments of approach to administering RPTC



Note: Review of secondary data sources showed that ECA uses a RPTC proposal process with written guidelines, proposal template, and timeline communicated with each call beginning in January, and a committee mechanism for recommending RPTC proposals to the Executive Secretary. The decisions on RPTC funding are communicated to programme managers directly and in the regular meetings on the Financial Situation of the Commission.

Note: OCHA and UN-Habitat data not disaggregated due to small n (5 or less)
Source: IE staff survey (n=391)

34. Similarly, a mix of positive and negative features of the RPTC management arrangements within each entity were identified through interviews with IE staff and document review, as listed below:

Positive features

- **Simplified (proposal) processes:** proposal or application formats that were open to all, short and direct to complete, and could be completed and decided on quickly.
- **Clear guidelines:** on process to follow, and what activities would be accepted.
- **Integrated management:** Decisions on I/RA workplans and RPTC funds were made in the same unit in several IEs.

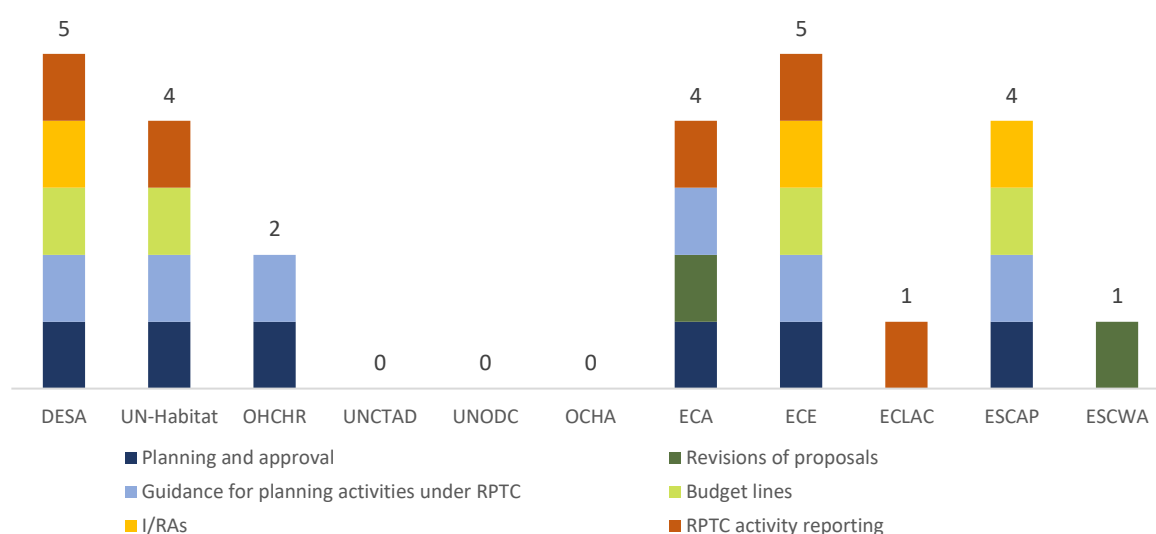
Negative features

- **Lack of timeliness:** not enough time to properly implement, or slow IE funding decisions
- **Administrative limitations:** limitations of budget lines, size of activities, timing, and interpretations of the rules.
- **Heavy administrative burden compared to size of funds:** For most IEs, RPTC represents less than one per cent of overall budget, leading to a mismatch between administrative requirements and size of funds.

35. IEs struggled with similar RPTC management challenges, without a forum to exchange practices and lessons between them. Evidence from RPTC management teams, and interviewed staff suggested a strong need for a forum to exchange approaches, improve RPTC management, troubleshoot common problems, and discuss their respective technical cooperation strategies. Some common areas identified in interviews where practice exchange could be helpful included:

- a) **Refining guidelines on RPTC:** Most IEs (8) managed RPTC with customized written internal guidelines to inform decisions on when to use RPTC funds, while five did not have any specific written guidelines interpreting RPTC, thus presenting an opportunity for sharing and improving guidelines. Figure 17 summarizes areas covered by the internal RPTC guidelines.

Figure 17: Many IEs have customized written guidelines on RPTC



Note: Zero value denotes no internal guidelines on RPTC.
Source: OIOS secondary analysis of existing guidelines.

- b) **Interpreting appropriate uses of RPTC:** There were disparate interpretations of the uses of RPTC. More than one-third of interviewed staff expressed concerns over unclear guidelines on the appropriate use of RPTC funds. Furthermore, 43 per cent of surveyed IE staff identified inflexibility/restrictions on RPTC budget lines as a common challenge.
- c) **Establishing systems for tracking requests:** Some IEs had online systems in place for tracking requests (UNCTAD, ESCWA, DESA), while others were interested in developing them to streamline their management of RPTC. Not all entities had procedures for accepting and tracking requests, creating a learning opportunity from those who did.

Information gaps on beneficiary demand hindered IEs' ability to make strategic decisions on where to provide support and what expertise was needed

- 36. Most surveyed and interviewed RPTC staff considered the volume of requests compared to available RPTC funding to be the main challenge: the small amount of funds (71 per cent) and increasing Member State demand (43 per cent) were the most frequently identified challenges for effective RPTC management. Moreover, interviewed beneficiaries asked for more technical cooperation support than they were receiving and favored multi-year support. At the same time, figure 2 (introduction) shows that RPTC funds have grown by 28 per cent from 2020 to 2024.
- 37. Interviews with RPTC managing staff and the survey of RPTC focal points showed that IEs did not have a complete picture of all unmet demands, although there are some good practices such as ESCWA, UNCTAD and DESA tracking requests over time in online databases. Furthermore, IEs had inconsistent practices for capturing Member State requests for technical cooperation with three IEs (ESCWA, ECLAC and ECE) capturing all requests in a single database and none sharing this information across IEs. More than half of IE staff surveyed (56 per cent) disagreed that they had access to information on technical cooperation requests within their entity; and 41 per cent were concerned that funding decisions were not always commensurate with needs.
- 38. Inconsistencies in tracking and recording responses to requests meant that IEs also do not have a good understanding of the technical cooperation support being provided by their colleague IEs at country level. IEs reported that they did not have access to each other's RPTC requests, nor did they have information on each other's RPTC funded expertise, though nearly all indicated this would be helpful. This weakened IE ability to coordinate delivery of operational activities at country level, discussed further in Result F.
- F. RPTC interventions were mostly coherent with IE and UN country team priorities, although coordination with other UN entities, including through the RC system, needed strengthening.

RPTC interventions were coherent with overall IE strategic plans and work programmes, although there was limited information on RPTC implementation available to IE staff

- 39. Interviews with IE staff members indicated that each entity's approach to responding to ad hoc requests using RPTC was grounded in their internal work planning processes, often aligning responses to the unplanned work areas with ongoing activities or reprioritizing existing projects to accommodate unexpected requests within each division. Box 3 describes how IEs ensure internal coherence.

Box 3

Programming mechanisms used to ensure internal IE coherence

RPTC-funded staff workplans

Advisor workplans

I/RA workplans in eight of the nine IEs with I/RA posts were generally well linked to the broader workplan of the substantive division in which they served. ECE went furthest by preparing an entity-level technical cooperation work plan that included RPTC. The plans articulated the type and purpose of activities, related sustainable development goals, targets, dates and locations. They also tracked: progress, status of work, travel costs, names of travelers; number and country of participants, operational costs, other funding sources and beneficiary countries.

Coordination Units

In each IE, coordination units governed the use of funds through either formal calls for proposals or administrative oversight, to ensure that they were in line with the guiding principles of RPTC and IE priority areas and programmatic mandates. These units were either dedicated to strategic management, including RPTC, handling overall strategy and programme management, or located in technical cooperation divisions that assume similar coordination responsibilities (*See below*)

Dedicated strategic management division	Technical cooperation divisions
DESA, UNCTAD, OCHA, ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA, UNODC	OHCHR, UN-Habitat

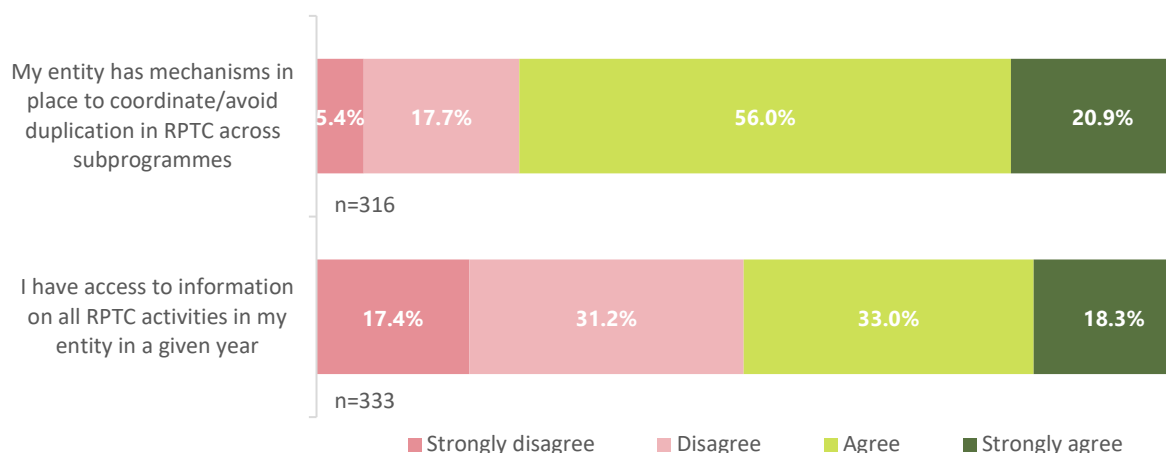
Senior Leadership Decisions

Seven of eleven IEs relied on senior leadership decisions for internal coherence, where their coordination units made recommendations to senior officials for the final decision on member state RPTC requests.

ECA had a unique technical committee layer that looked closer at the programmatic details of the proposals, where they considered if proposals should be revised to ensure funds were used in line with RPTC objectives and ECA commitments. No decisions were made in the committee, but a recommendation was made to the Executive Secretary.

40. As shown in Figure 18, most IE staff surveyed (77 per cent) stated that intra-programme coordination mechanisms existed, however interviews with staff showed these processes were more often informal instead of systematic and structured. Furthermore, almost half of IE staff surveyed (49 per cent) reported that they did not have information on RPTC activities of their entity outside of their respective subprogrammes. In ECLAC, perceptions for access to information were weaker by 18 percentage points, whereas ESCAP and OHCHR had more positive perceptions by 16 and 10 percentage points, respectively.

Figure 18: The majority of IE staff surveyed agreed that mechanisms for internal coherence exist, though nearly half did not have information on other RPTC activities in their entity



Source: IE staff survey

41. Interviewed staff elaborated that the lack of information on what other divisions were doing made it difficult to explore possible synergies within their respective entities. This would allow them to optimize the small size of RPTC funds available through more integrated approaches to programming such as developing joint proposals/missions, avoiding overlaps, and exchanging RPTC-funded expertise. For example, ECE convened an internal Working Group on Technical Cooperation (WGTC), including leadership and I/RAs several times a year to coordinate technical cooperation.

Most beneficiaries perceived UN in-country efforts as being coherent, but there were opportunities to improve coherence of country level technical cooperation

42. Most government officials and beneficiaries surveyed (86 per cent) perceived RPTC interventions as being coordinated with other UN entities working in-country; interviewed IE staff in each entity noted their own internal policies to work with the RC offices. While some IEs required RPTC users to identify if other UN entities were working on similar issues, they also noted *ad hoc* and informal points of contact, such as through technical networks they belonged to.

43. Fully coordinated implementation of RPTC, however, has not yet been achieved. Interviewed government officials from three of the six case study countries reported examples of lack of coherence in technical cooperation, overlaps, and/or lack of communication between IEs. As one government official explained, “the [UN] agencies need to [...] coordinate globally to ensure maximum alignment between their priorities and ours [...] so that they approach us with assistance that we need.” Box 4 identifies specific examples provided by government officials.

Box 4

Examples of overlapping in-country technical cooperation were observed in three of six case-study countries

Case Study Country 1

Similar projects and work done on investment strategies and mapping conducted by one IE with UNDP and UNIDO. There was a lack of communication between agencies leading to outputs that were very similar.

Case Study Country 2

Overlap in one IE on use of big data on official statistics for Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Women’s Affairs, where government officials were not informed of these similar projects with different objectives but similar scope. These survey instruments for data collection could have been integrated into one survey to avoid duplicating data sources.

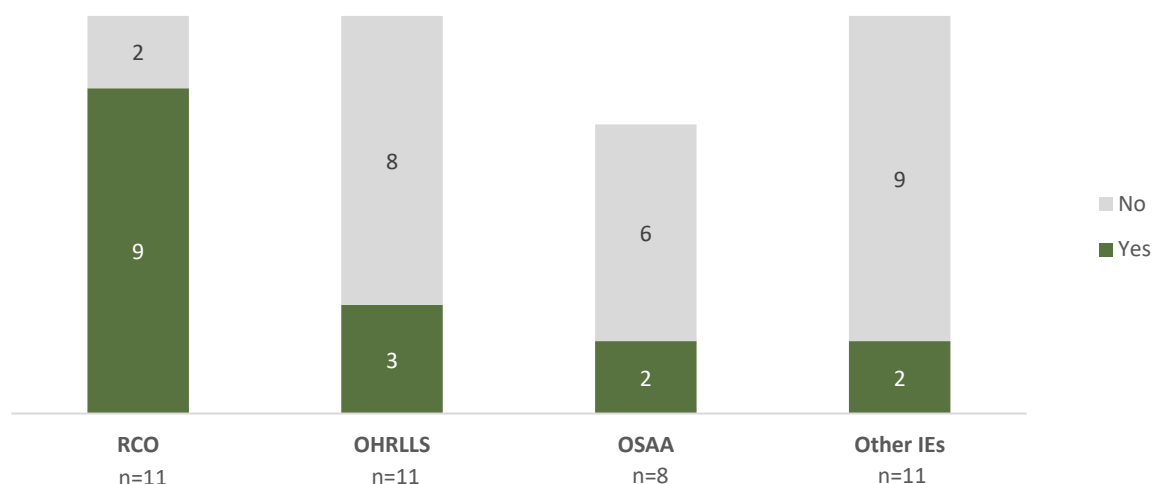
Case Study Country 3

Overlapping work on childcare strategies developed by World Bank with UNICEF and then with the IE. Two different strategies were produced, making it challenging for government officials to reconcile the overlapping strategies.

While IEs had mechanisms for informing RCs about their RPTC work, they were not always engaged with RCs or other UN partners meaningfully

44. RPTC focal points also recognized significant gaps in cross-entity information sharing and integration, as shown in figure 19. They further indicated that few informed other IEs of their RPTC-funded expertise. These non-systematic mechanisms for cross-entity coordination hindered the ability of UN partners to identify synergies from coordinated in-country efforts and integrated policy advice.

Figure 19: Nearly all IE reported mechanisms for informing RCs after receiving technical cooperation support requests, but few also informed other UN partners, including other IEs



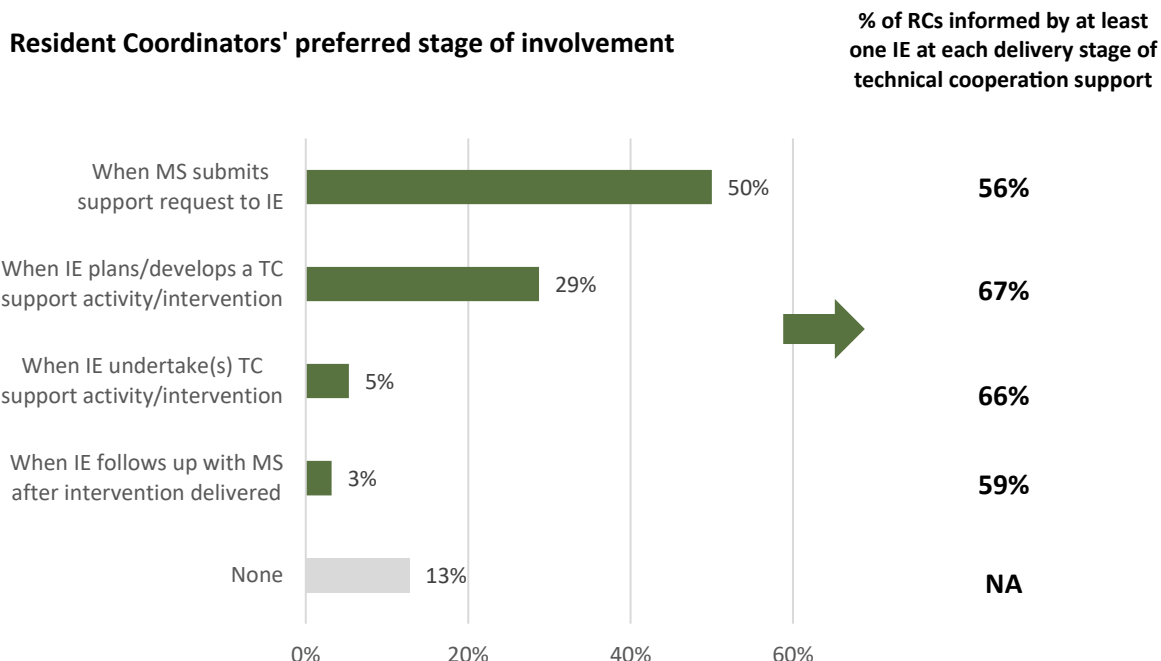
Source : IE Focal Point Survey

45. All IEs routinely reached out to RCOs and UN country teams. For example, ECE is signatory to 17 UN SDCF and its I/RAs have portfolio countries where they liaise with the RC. However, RCs did not always find the timing of IE engagements optimal. Figure 20 shows RC preferences for when they want to be involved compared to when they actually are involved. Interviewed RCs explained that being involved prior to implementation would help ensure alignment of RPTC interventions with longer-term development plans such as the UNSDCFs, and find synergies with interventions implemented by other UN agencies in country, as illustrated in box 5.

Box 5: "It's not about money or control, but in cases Implementing Entities can undermine their own work by not involving us...We want to make sure to avoid competition, ensure synergies and manage a coherent view with the government."

Resident Coordinator

Figure 20: Seventy-nine per cent of RCs surveyed indicated that their preferred stages of involvement were prior to implementation, but many were not informed at these stages



46. Most RCs surveyed (80 per cent) were unaware of RPTC or that it was used by the IEs to respond to short-term, critical, and emerging technical cooperation requests from governments. Nevertheless, interviewed RCs considered this a very useful mechanism, and would like to know what services and advisory expertise are offered by the IEs, so that they can reach out to these entities when approached by governments for technical cooperation support.

G. Although RPTC was a cost-effective mechanism for delivering IE expertise, efficiency was hindered by a lack of strategic budget allocation criteria and optimized spending.

Small and predictable RPTC funds have contributed cost-effectively to outcomes

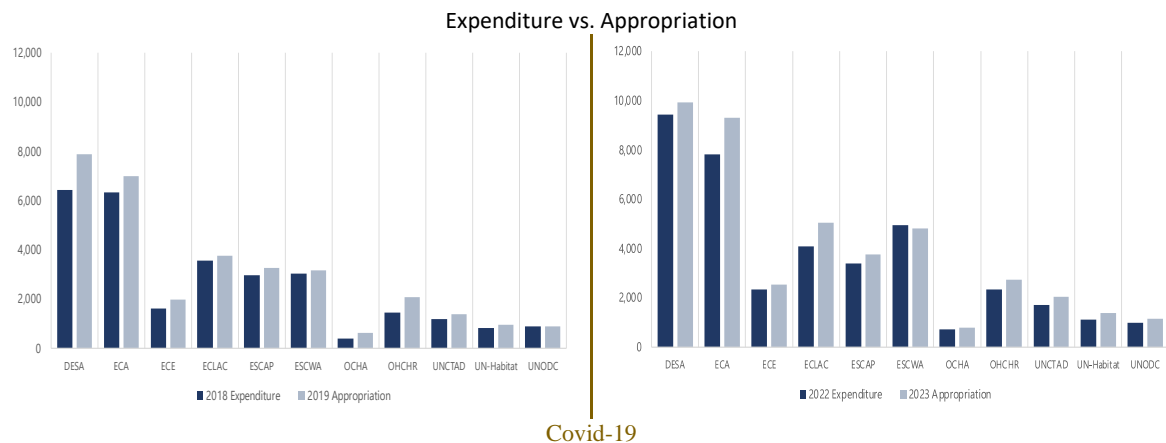
47. RPTC contributed cost-effectively to the outcomes discussed above in result A, as the small amounts of RPTC funds were found to contribute to outcomes in all six case study countries, and across all 11 IEs. RPTC funds accounted for a small proportion of the overall IE budgets, ranging

from less than one per cent to almost five per cent in 2023 across IEs. Staff, managers, and senior officials interviewed considered the use of RPTC funds to be highly effective given their small size. The other feature contributing to RPTC cost-effectiveness was the predictability of the funds, which allowed IEs to rapidly respond to requests without having to fundraise.

Nevertheless, RPTC allocations to IEs were not based on assessments of need or strategic considerations, and there was no clear process for IEs to request additional funds

48. Despite its general cost-effectiveness, IE management teams and senior officials reported that they were unsure as to how decisions on allocations of RPTC funds were made or about how to influence those decisions. Analysis of appropriations and expenditures indicated that budget allocations were most often based on a flat increase across IEs based on historical distributions and not on strategic priorities for technical cooperation. Figure 21 shows that year-to-year appropriations before and after the pandemic varied from expenditures at different rates for the IEs, and no discernable pattern was evident, thus indicating that the implementation rate was not the only deciding factor in subsequent years' appropriations.

Figure 21: Proportions of budget allocation and prior year expenditure before and after the pandemic did not vary based on IE implementation rate for prior year



Source: OIOS-IAD secondary budget analysis

49. The Programme Planning and Budget Division (PPBD) of DMSPC made allocation decisions based on GA approved historical allocations and current utilization rates. However, they lacked strategic information to inform subsequent allocations. Over expenditures were noted for multiple IEs, including seven in 2019; three in 2020; five in 2021 and two in 2022, with no documented evidence to support requests for additional funds. Interviews with IE managers, and the Controller confirmed that no analyses were requested from IEs to adjust budget allocations. Seven out of the 11 IE management teams suggested changes to the approach for distribution of RPTC funds. Suggestions focused mainly on having strategic considerations for additions to RPTC regional or sectoral needs and priorities.

Spending on RPTC funds was mostly concentrated on staff and consultants, with opportunities to better optimize staff costs

50. In aggregate, the largest share of RPTC funds were used for I/RAs and consultants, and for fellowships and grants, as shown in table 4.

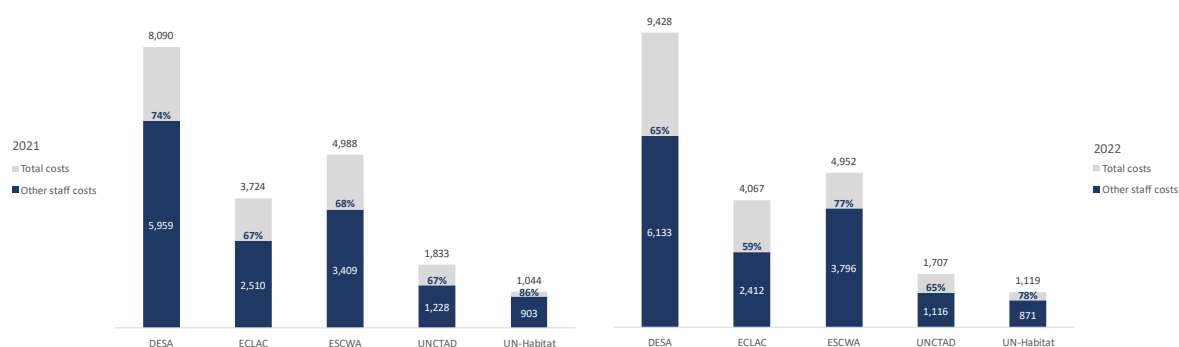
Table 4: Overall, 70 per cent of RPTC funds were used for I/RAs and consultants in 2021 and 2022
(USD thousand)

Object class	2021		2022	
	Expenditure	Percentage	Expenditure	Percentage
Other staff costs	19,369.20	54%	20,768.8	53%
Consultants	8609.20	24%	6,442.90	17%
Experts	397.30	1%	753.90	2%
Travel of representatives	-	0%	17.10	0%
Travel of staff	973	3%	2,978.20	8%
Contractual services	2057.40	6%	1,461.40	4%
General operating expenses	896.90	3%	990.10	3%
Supplies and materials	24.30	0%	23.50	0%
Furniture and equipment	389.40	1%	174.10	0%
Construction and maintenance	-	0%	8.60	0%
Fellowships, grants and contributions	2,961	8%	5,207.30	13%
	35,677.70	100%	38,825.90	100%

Source: Actuals from budget fascicles

51. Five IEs expended 59 per cent to 78 per cent of their RPTC funds on salaries of IRAs during 2021 and 2022, as shown in figure 22. The high staff costs were due to the number of I/RAs, often placed in headquarters locations. Considering the success of RPTC funded interventions (results A and B), the small size of funds available, and rising needs for RPTC funded support (result C), there may be opportunities to optimize staff costs by determining when best to use RPTC for I/RAs, and/or where feasible, among other factors, positions might be located to be most cost-effective. For example, ECLAC spread their RPTC posts across different locations, and had a lower proportion of RPTC funds committed to staff costs.

Figure 22: Five IEs expended more than half of RPTC funds on staff costs (GTA)
(USD thousand)



Source: Actuals from budget fascicles

Only three IEs had systematic mechanisms for making decisions to create I/RA posts and subsequently reviewing their post incumbency

52. Only DESA, ESCAP and ECE established mechanisms, including guidelines, departmental panels and working groups, to assess need for I/RAs and to oversee their recruitment and extension of tenures. Ten IEs reported having reviewed their I/RA capacity within the last two years, while one last reviewed it in 2014. In addition, 47 of 102 encumbered GTA posts were occupied by staff

...serving the UN for over five years and up to 29 years. This included 25 staff on continuing/permanent posts in 10 IEs.

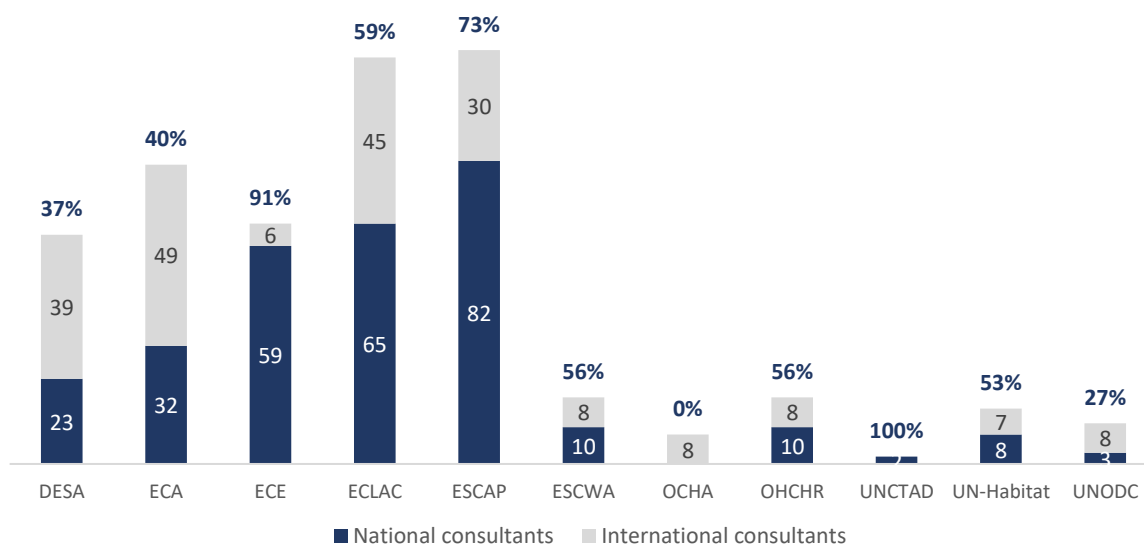
53. IE RPTC management teams interviewed explained the reasons for the relatively long incumbencies, due to the following two factors:

- a. Human resources regulations: IEs cannot reduce their staff complements based on fluctuations of work in the short term, due to continuing/permanent contract status of many I/RAs. They are guided by Secretariat policies, including ST/SGB/2011/9 on continuing appointments and ST/AI/2012/3 on administration of continuing appointments, which require that for staff contracted on a continuing basis, the organization must identify an alternative post. While several IEs have RPTC guidelines that refer to a 5-year period for the I/RA, this may be inconsistent with applicable Secretariat regulations.
- b. Programmatic considerations: I/RAs take time to develop and leverage knowledge and credibility, and to build partnerships, thus resulting in the long tenures noted. I/RAs from eight implementing entities also reported non-advisory administrative and management responsibilities, including managing teams, and sub-regional leadership roles in addition to their advisory roles.

IE use of national or international consultants was appropriately based on required knowledge and skills, and adequately balanced by region

54. The IEs incurred USD 6.4 million in consultant costs, comprising USD 4.8 million (75 per cent) for international and USD 1.6 million (25 per cent) for national consultants. National consultants accounted for between 27 per cent and 100 per cent, including more than 50 per cent in seven implementing entities as shown in figure 23. Use of national consultants where feasible builds national capacities and addresses country-specific issues in the most cost-efficient manner.

Figure 23: Seven entities had more than 50 per cent national consultants



Notes: Percentage values refer to the national/total consultant ratios; National and international as defined in ST/AI/2013/4, paras 5.10, and 5.11
Source: UMOJA data

55. Review of UMOJA data showed that international consultants were mainly resident within regions served and thus also knowledgeable about local contexts. In addition, most were resident within countries served, and hence did not incur travel costs. However, the dominance of national consultants did not always fulfil the need to build national capacities. Most IEs stated that international consultants were often used due to a lack of required knowledge and skills among national consultants. Further, the principle of wide and representative geographical distribution for consultants engaged by the UN Secretariat, as stipulated in ST/AI/2013/4, was observed in the 502 consultants engaged in 2022, comprising 39 per cent from Asia and Eastern Europe, 25 per cent from South America, 20 per cent from Africa, and 16 per cent from North America and Western Europe.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

56. As the world approaches 2030, it is imperative that the IEs remain credible and responsive partners for Member States in pursuing their priorities for achieving the SDGs. Despite its small size, thanks to its flexibility and rapid response, which is unique in the UN system, RPTC has been used by IEs to deliver concrete and targeted technical cooperation solutions to Member States in response to their real time needs. At the same time, IEs must ensure that this limited, catalytic, and high value resource is available to all Member States, especially those with the highest need. Given the short-term nature of the support, they must also ensure that RPTC support is delivered where it will add the most strategic value, in concert with other UN entities working at country level including through the Resident Coordinator system, and leveraging the partnerships needed to sustain momentum. The IEs and DMSPC may also wish to discuss how decisions on RPTC funding allocations between IEs can be made more strategic instead of relying on historical allocation rates.

57. OIOS also identified opportunities for the 11 IEs and DMSPC to improve the management, and therefore the efficiency and effectiveness of RPTC, and makes the following four important recommendations, all of which have been accepted.

Recommendation 1: Sharing good practices (result C, E, F)

58. 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.

Once established, the forum should, as its first action, address the following issues:

- a) identify and share good practices on request tracking procedures and approaches to administering RPTC (this should inform the work on common guidelines in recommendation 2) (result F).
- 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
- c) determine via a mapping analysis if there are countries that are potentially underserved by RPTC and options for reaching out to them.

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.

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.

Recommendation 2: Developing guidelines (results D and G)

59. 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:

- a) uses of RPTC for GTA including creation and extensions of I/RA posts; and
- b) uses of RPTC for other non-post support

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.

Recommendation 3: Communication between IEs and DMSPC on allocations (results G)

60. 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.

Indicators of achievement: At least one annual meeting between DMSPC and IEs prior to allocation.

Recommendation 4: Evaluating RPTC contributions to outcomes (result A)

61. 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.

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 and systematically capture indicator data for reporting on RPTC contribution to outcomes.

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.

V. Annex 1: Comments received from evaluands

United Nations  Nations Unies
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

TO: Ms. Fatoumata Ndiaye, Under-Secretary-General
A: for Internal Oversight Services

DATE: 2 February 2024

REFERENCE: DESA-24/00218

FROM: LI Junhua, Under-Secretary-General
DE: for Economic and Social Affairs

SUBJECT: DESA management response concerning the draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC)
OBJET: Services on the evaluation of the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC)

1. Reference is made to OIOS memorandum dated 19 January 2024 (IED-2024-00129), concerning the draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the evaluation of the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC). Upon reviewing the report findings and recommendations, DESA concurs with the recommendations outlined in the report and has developed a management response plan that explains how it will address respective recommendations in line with DESA's mandate.
2. DESA will work closely with the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC) and other RPTC Implementing Entities (IEs) to strengthen coordination and sharing of good practices. In this regard, the Capacity Development Programme Management Office (CDPMO) of DESA have set up a Microsoft Teams and SharePoint space entitled "RPTC Focal point network", to enable seamless communication and resource sharing between IEs.
3. I am pleased that the report highlighted the importance and impact of the RPTC in helping Member States build capacities in areas relevant to the 2030 Agenda.
4. I take this opportunity to thank OIOS for the engaging, efficient, and transparent approach throughout the evaluation process and drafting of the final report.
5. Thank you for your continued cooperation and support.

cc: Mr. Yee Woo Guo, IED/OIOS

United Nations  Nations Unies

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

TO: Mr. (Eddie) Yee Woo Guo, Director
A: Inspection and Evaluation Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

DATE: 5 February 2024

THROUGH: 
SIC DE: Christophe Stouzet
Director, Business Transformation and Accountability Division
Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance

FROM: 
DE: Mario Baez
Chief, Accountability Service
Business Transformation and Accountability Division
Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance

SUBJECT: Draft Report (Assignment No. IED-23-007) of the Office of Internal Oversight
SERVICES on the Evaluation of the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation
(RPTC)

1. With reference to your memorandum dated 19 January 2024, please find below the comments provided by the Programme Planning and Budget Division (PPBD) of the Department of Management Strategy, Policy, and Compliance (DMSPC) regarding the pertinent OIOS recommendations from the above-mentioned draft report:

On Recommendation 3 of the report, PPBD comments:

This recommendation is accepted by DMSPC. DMSPC will hold meetings with management level representatives of the implementing entities at least once per year to review the budgetary/financial aspects of the RPTC programme, including allocation of funds, use of funds, and the impact of liquidity, the resulting capture of lessons learned, best practices, along with any decision on the allocation methodology and the resulting distribution, will be documented and sent formally to the implementing entities.

Responsible entity: PPBD/OPPFB/ DMSPC
Responsible officer: Director PPBD

Target date for implementation: 1 February 2025

On Recommendation 2 of the report, PPBD comments:

This recommendation as it relates to DMSPC is accepted by DMSPC. DMSPC will request implementing entities to submit their RPTC guidelines and DMSPC will review the guidelines to ensure alignment with the financial regulations and rules, budgetary guidelines and staff regulations and rules, and make suggestions for improvements as appropriate.

Responsible entity: PPBD/OPPFB/DMSPC
Responsible officer: Director PPBD


Target date for implementation: 1 April 2025

2. Thank you for giving the Administration an opportunity to provide comments on the draft report.

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. Yee Woo Guo
Director, Inspection and Evaluation Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)

Date: 1 February 2024
Ref: SPORD/ADM01-01-30-09-8

From: Claver Gatete, Executive Secretary

Economic Commission for Africa

Subject: Management response to the OIOS draft report on the evaluation of the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (Assignment No. IED-23-007)

1. With reference to your interoffice memorandum IED-2024-00129, dated 19 January 2024, I am pleased to submit ECA's management response to the draft evaluation report mentioned in subject.
2. ECA welcomes the comprehensive report and its findings. ECA accepts all recommendations subject to consideration of comments provided in the matrix included in Annex 1 to this memorandum.
3. ECA would have additional comments to the draft report as shown in Annex 2 to this memorandum.
4. I wish to take the opportunity to thank your office and members of the evaluation team for the collaboration and teamwork, with which they applied to the evaluation process.
5. My team remains at your disposal for any further clarification and explanation.
6. Thank you.

Cc: Mr. Juan Carlos Pena, Chief of Section

Enc: Final draft OIOS Evaluation of RPTC for Management Response
Annexes 1 and 2 to management response

Annexes Referred to in ECA Management Response Memo to OIOS

ANNEX 1- Recommendation Action Plan

Notes ECA acceptance of recommendations and poses considerations that will inform ECA actions to implement them.

Annex 2 – Additional Comments on Draft Report

Para. 15

ECA questions the statement “where two-thirds of surveyed staff...also reported an unreasonable timeframe available to them to implement RPTC activities”, regretting that it does not conform to reality given that RPTC yearly allocations are done on a progressional basis (several subsequent calls for proposals made based on requests received from member States). Staff seem to have a misconception about RPTC, considering it as another regular source of funding rather than for demand-driven technical advisory services, despite presentations delivered at the Commission’s Accountability and Programme Performance Review meetings.

Figure 16

Although ECA appreciates the inclusion of an additional explanatory note, ECA regrets that all four items received a ‘below average’ assessment from staff interviewed by the OIOS team. As explained in the note, ECA has endeavored in ensuring a fair, transparent, and open process throughout the cycle from launch of calls up to final disbursement of funds. Some staff’s subjective responses tied with the fact that some of their proposals may have been rejected due to non-adherence to RPTC guidelines and eligibility criteria may have provided distorted and unfounded views, hence the need to provide a more clear and nuanced perspective of the issue. ECA thinks it is important to keep in mind that this situation may have been emanating from perhaps insufficient internal communication despite several instances where information on RPTC is widely shared (such as monthly meetings on utilization rates of resources from RPTC and other sources of funding). As a result, ECA will endeavor in strengthening its internal communication and information dissemination efforts.



UNECE
Executive Secretary
Under-Secretary-General

MEMORANDUM

To: Ms. Fatounata 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

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
Telephone: +41 (0)22 917 8072/1824
Email: executive.secretary@un.org

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: (Eddie) Yee Woo Gao
Director
Inspection and Evaluation Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)

From: José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs 
Executive Secretary, ECLAC

Subject: ECLAC comments on the formal draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the Evaluation of the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC)

Date: Santiago, January 31st, 2024

I am pleased to send you ECLAC's comments on the above-mentioned evaluation report.

ECLAC welcomes this comprehensive report, which provides evidence supporting the relevance, effectiveness and coherence of the work undertaken under the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation (RPTC).

We accept the recommendations directed to the implementing entities, reflecting our commitment to continuously improving our work and the support that is provided to member States under RPTC. Notwithstanding, regarding recommendation #2, ECLAC is of the view that this recommendation should be handled at headquarters level, specifically through DMSPC, to ensure consistent practices among IEs with a focus on creating and extending positions for regional advisors and thematic experts.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for this report and welcome the recommendations it contains, and to thank OIOS for the collaborative approach in this evaluation.

Best regards,

United Nations  **Nations Unies**
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

TO: Mr. (Eddie) Yee Woo Guo
Director
Inspection and Evaluation Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

DATE: 30 January 2024

REFERENCE: ES/SPMD/WP/16

THROUGH: Ms. Fatoumata Ndaye, Under-Secretary-General
Office of Internal Oversight Services

FROM: Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana 
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations
and Executive Secretary of ESCAP

CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

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

1. With reference to your memo dated 19 January 2024, ESCAP expresses its appreciation to OIOS for undertaking a comprehensive, consultative and participatory evaluation process and for addressing our comments on the draft report.
2. ESCAP welcomes the findings of the evaluation and appreciates its coverage of some effective measures instituted by ESCAP to improve the management and, therefore, the efficiency and effectiveness of RPTC, including having mechanisms and guidelines to assess the need for Regional Advisers and to oversee their recruitment and extension tenures, and having concrete examples to demonstrate the use of RPTC for catalytic or multiplier results.
3. ESCAP accepts the three recommendations directed towards the implementing entities and commits to formulating a comprehensive action plan. This plan will outline specific measures to effectively address the recommendations, accompanied by a clearly defined timeframe for implementation. Regarding recommendation 2, which aims to resolve varied interpretations among implementing entities regarding the utilization of RPTC funds, ESCAP is of the view that this recommendation should be handled at the headquarters level, specifically through DMSPC, and aimed at establishing a unified framework of guidelines with focus on creating and extending international/regional advisor positions and the appropriate use of RPTC for non-support posts. This approach aims to foster consistency and coherence in the interpretation and application of guidelines across the board.
4. Thank you.



Interoffice Memorandum

31 January 2024

To: (Eddie) Yee Woo Guo, Director, Office of Internal Oversight Services
Through: Fatoumata Ndiaye, Under-Secretary-General, Office of Internal Oversight Services
From: Roia Dashti
Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCWA
Subject: Draft Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the Evaluation of the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC)

1. I am pleased to acknowledge receipt of the draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the Evaluation of the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC).
2. I welcome the findings of the report, which confirm that the good quality technical support and expertise extended to member States in the framework of RPTC enhance their capacity with new skills, innovative approaches, tools, models, and peer learning, in turn leading to formulation, revision and implementation of sustainable development policies, plans, strategies and laws. I am happy to see that high responsiveness to member States' needs, flexibility, effective management, coherence with national priorities, and cost-effectiveness were also among the features of RPTC recognized by beneficiaries and evaluators alike.
3. After careful review of the challenges underlined by the evaluation, I am pleased to note that the proposed recommendations to respond to them will actively contribute to a more effective use of resources and enhance the impact of RPTC.
4. We, at ESCWA, are in agreement with the four proposed recommendations, namely:
 - (a) Create a forum for sharing good practices and lessons learned on RPTC administration, implementation, monitoring, request tracking and outreach;
 - (b) Review or develop RPTC guidelines pertaining to post and non-post uses;
 - (c) Establish communication with DMSPC on strategic issues of RPTC use; and
 - (d) Take steps to better assess or evaluate outcomes of RPTC support.
5. Prior to devising our response action plan, we would like to highlight that recommendation (b) may merit coordination at the global level rather than the level of implementing entities, as is currently envisaged in the detailed recommendation text laid out in the recommendation action plan. We suggest that common guidelines be developed through the leadership of DMSPC and OHRM, as it is of utmost importance that such guidelines align with the overall rules and regulations of the organization in a uniform manner across implementing entities.

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6. Moreover, recommendation (d) as outlined in the recommendation action plan may require additional financial resources. Otherwise, specific RPTC evaluation exercises would need to be absorbed within existing RPTC resources, which are already stretched thin.
7. I thank you and your office for undertaking this evaluation through a consultative process and using a collaborative approach. This is another positive contribution to our work, and I am convinced that the report will help us in further strengthening our efforts to support Member States.

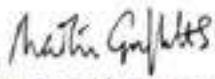
CC : Mr. Juan Carlos Peña, Chief of Section, Office of Internal Oversight Services

to: Ms. Yee Wod Guo,
A: Director, Inspection and Evaluation
Division, Office of Internal Oversight
Services

DATE: 30 January 2024

THROUGH:
S/C DE:

REFERENCE:

FROM: Mr. Martin Griffiths, 
DE: Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian
Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

SUBJECT: OCHA Management Response Letter on the OIOS report on the
OCHA: Evaluation of the Regular Programme of Technical
Cooperation (RPTC)

1. In response to your memo on the OIOS draft report on the Evaluation of RPTC projects, OCHA acknowledges reviewing the report findings and recommendations.
2. OCHA concurs with the recommendations outlined in the report and has developed a management response plan that explains how the Office will address the recommendations in line with our mandate. OCHA will work closely with DMSP and other entities that implement RPTC projects to strengthen communications and share good practices as well as lessons learned from implementing RPTC projects.
3. I take this opportunity to thank OIOS for the consultative and transparent approach throughout the evaluation process and compilation of the report. I am convinced that the report findings will greatly contribute to efficiency and effectiveness in the use of RPTC funds to build capacity of Member States to effectively coordinate emergency response

Cc: Menada Wind-Andersen, Julie Belanger, Ali Buzurkov,
Elias Mabaso



MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR • INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

À: Ms. Fatoumata Ndiaye, Under-Secretary-General
TO: Office of Internal Oversight Services

DATE: 31 January 2024

DE: Volker Türk
FROM: High Commissioner for Human Rights

REFERENCE: OIOS-2023-00117

OBJET: **Management response to the Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services**
SUBJECT: **(OIOS) on the evaluation of the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC)**

1. In response to your memorandum of 19 January 2024, I am pleased to acknowledge receipt of the Evaluation report of the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC).
2. I would like to express OHCHR's appreciation to you and your staff for the spirit of consultation throughout the process, including the data collection phase and the consideration of input provided to the draft report.
3. We particularly appreciate the attention paid to our comments made on the importance of preserving the strengths of the RPTC programme, namely its flexibility and complementarity with other sources of funding, to continue allowing OHCHR to swiftly respond to the needs of beneficiary countries through technical cooperation. We were also pleased to see reflected in the report the call for a greater focus on impacts achieved through the delivery of RPTC-funded technical cooperation activities.
4. The report is welcomed and provides valuable insights for the continued strengthening of our work supporting Member States in their capacity development efforts, as well as in protecting and promoting human rights.
5. The Office agrees and is committed to the implementation of the four recommendations made in the report. We also stand ready to discuss with DMSPC how decisions on RPTC funding allocations between Implementing Entities can be made more strategic instead of relying on historical allocation rates. My Office is currently working on an action plan that will be shared with you shortly.

31 January 2024

Ref: GSD_01_2024

To: Yee Woo Guo
Director of Inspection and Evaluation Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)

From: Raf Tuts 
Director of Global Solutions Division
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Subject: UN-Habitat Management Letter for responding to the OIOS Draft Report on the Evaluation of the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC)

1. UN-Habitat has reviewed the draft Report on the Evaluation of the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC) and recommendations shared by OIOS on 20 January 2024. UN-Habitat appreciates the comprehensive effort of the OIOS evaluation team and commends its professionalism.
2. The Draft Report is comprehensive and accurately captures the discussions between UN-Habitat and the OIOS evaluation team, and reflects the issues raised and recommendations provided by UN-Habitat throughout this evaluation process.
3. UN-Habitat concurs with the evaluation findings and endorses the recommended course of action, as it will contribute to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of UN-Habitat in fulfilling the RPTC mandate.
4. UN-Habitat wishes to note that the translation of the recommendations into concrete actions for each implementing entity requires a contextualization to the set-up of each entity and the nature and scope of related RPTC activities. This process shall be carried out through additional consultations, guided by the DMSPC.
5. In line with the above, UN-Habitat is in the process of formulating its action plan to implement the recommendations, and this draft plan will also be shared with OIOS for informational purposes. It is expected that UN-Habitat will share the Action Plan with OIOS by latest 29 February 2024.
6. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff, in particular the focal points, for the excellent cooperation.

Page 1 of 2

cc:

Filiep Decorte, Chief at Programme Development Branch/ Global Solutions Division

Katja Schaefer, Inter-Regional Advisor at Programme Development Branch/ Global Solutions Division

Dyfed Aubrey, Inter-Regional Advisor at Programme Development Branch/ Global Solutions Division

Rong Yang, Inter-Regional Advisor at Regional Programme Division

Erfan Ali, Director (a.l.) at Regional Programme Division

Justin Bonongwe, Financial Management Officer/ Chief, Finance and Budget (a.i.) at Management Advisory and Compliance Service



MEMORANDUM

9 February 2024

TO: Mr. (Eddie) Yee Woo Guo, Director
Inspection and Evaluation Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

Mr. Juan Carlos Peña, Chief of Section
Inspection and Evaluation Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

FROM: Pedro Manuel Moreno, Deputy Secretary-General 
UNCTAD

SUBJECT: Draft Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the Evaluation of the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation (RPTC) (Reference IED-2024-00129)

1. I refer to your memorandum addressed to the Secretary-General of the UNCTAD on the above-mentioned subject, dated 19 January 2024.
2. I would like to begin by expressing our sincere appreciation for the work of the evaluation team. The outcomes of this evaluation, the first one of RPTC undertaken by OIOS-IED, provide useful lessons upon which we can reflect, and a solid basis upon which we can further improve in delivering our demand-driven technical cooperation work to our Member States.
3. Indeed, RPTC funds have been instrumental over the years, due to its flexibility allowing our organization to be agile and responsive to the requests of our Member States, tackling important issues such as e-commerce, climate finance, vulnerability profiles, rules of origin, trade preferences and market access, trade and business facilitation, and linkages between trade, finance, investment, technology, logistics from the development perspective.
4. In this context, we found it reassuring that the evaluation confirmed that RPTC contributed substantially to Member State capacity development and policymaking and that the good quality technical support and expertise enhanced capacity of beneficiaries with new skills, innovative approaches, tools, models, and peer learning between countries.
5. Regardless of the modest amount that UNCTAD receives every year from RPTC fund, the initiatives and programmes which we complement through this funding source are very important to Member States and deliver excellent results.
6. In this sense, taking this opportunity, we take positive note of the suggestion in the report that allocation of RPTC funds should be based on assessments of emerging needs of Member States, suggesting a more enhanced and substantive approach to the allocation process.

7. Finally, as we place great importance in ensuring that our work contributes to the organizational objectives and fulfillment of our mandates, we share the views of the evaluation that increasing the level of information on RPTC contribution to outcomes and lesson learned would only further enhance the effectiveness of technical cooperation efforts. However, given the limited resources available for evaluations, we suggest for RPTC adapting a similar approach used for Development Account interventions, where funds are provided for this type of assessments and evaluations, alternatively, to allow for the possibility to increase the regular budget allotment for evaluation purposes.
8. Thank you for your attention and we look forward to the continued cooperation of UNCTAD and OIOS.



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Ghada Waly
Executive Director

9 February 2023

**UNODC Management Response on the OIOS Evaluation of the
Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC)**

Dear Mr. Guo,

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) would like to extend its gratitude to the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) for the opportunity to provide comments on the above-mentioned report. UNODC fully acknowledges the importance of this evaluation and values the consultative and transparent approach throughout the evaluation process.

UNODC appreciates the findings regarding the relevance of RPTC in technical cooperation support contributed substantially to Member State capacity development and policymaking, including being highly responsive to Member State needs, using RPTC to provide technical expertise in a timely manner and integrating cross-cutting issues, particularly gender. Note is taken with gratitude on the evaluation highlighting the high relevance of RPTC in all its implementing entities, including UNODC and its role in technical cooperation. UNODC, as the recipient of the smallest allocation among the 11 Implementing Entities recognizes that OIOS identified the heavy administrative burden compared to size of funds where RPTC represents less than one per cent of overall budget, leading to a mismatch between administrative requirements and size of funds.

UNODC has carefully studied the report and confirms that the findings and recommendations will further support UNODC's institutional development work. It is also noted with satisfaction that according to the survey, UNODC featured on average or above in terms of clarity of guidelines; the timely decision on funds allocation; and manageable reporting requirements.

Mr. Eddie Yee Woo Guo
Director
Inspection and Evaluation Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services
United Nations
New York

Making the world safer from drugs, crime and terrorism.

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In addition, a UNODC example was highlighted as an illustrative example of catalytic effects of RTPC in relation to training and assessment on criminal justice leading to a larger donor funded programme. In terms of transparency of decision, UNODC commits to make the process more visible to all colleagues and field offices applying for RTPC funds. In particular, with regard to recommendations:

Recommendation 1: UNODC accepts this recommendation. In January 2024, UNODC attended the first meeting of the informal group, which was established by UNDESA in early 2024. The group discussed the rotating lead, the upcoming reporting, and the functioning of the forum which UNODC is committed to actively engage with.

Recommendation 2: UNODC accepts this recommendation. Through the forum gathering all IEs, UNODC is keen to review available existing guidelines in order to assess the possibility of integrating selected elements into its own internal guidance.

Recommendation 3: UNODC accepts this recommendation. UNODC acknowledges and echoes that efficient communication on all levels between UNODC and DMSPC is imperative for the smooth functioning of the RTPC. UNODC stands ready to engage with the established channel of communication to discuss strategic issues related to RTPC.

Recommendation 4: UNODC accepts this recommendation. UNODC has developed specific submission templates and reporting formats in addition to establishing a mechanism to assess proposals against a series of objective criteria. UNODC established an effective monitoring mechanism and continues to keep systemic documentation of the reports. Notwithstanding, with a view to improve its annual RTPC use reporting, UNODC will ensure that key performance indicators are defined at the outset of each initiative funded through RTPC resources to systematically capture data for reporting on RTPC contribution to outcomes. In addition, UNODC will continue to commit to understanding the longer-term results of RTPC and contribution to outcomes in coordination with the inter-IEs forum.

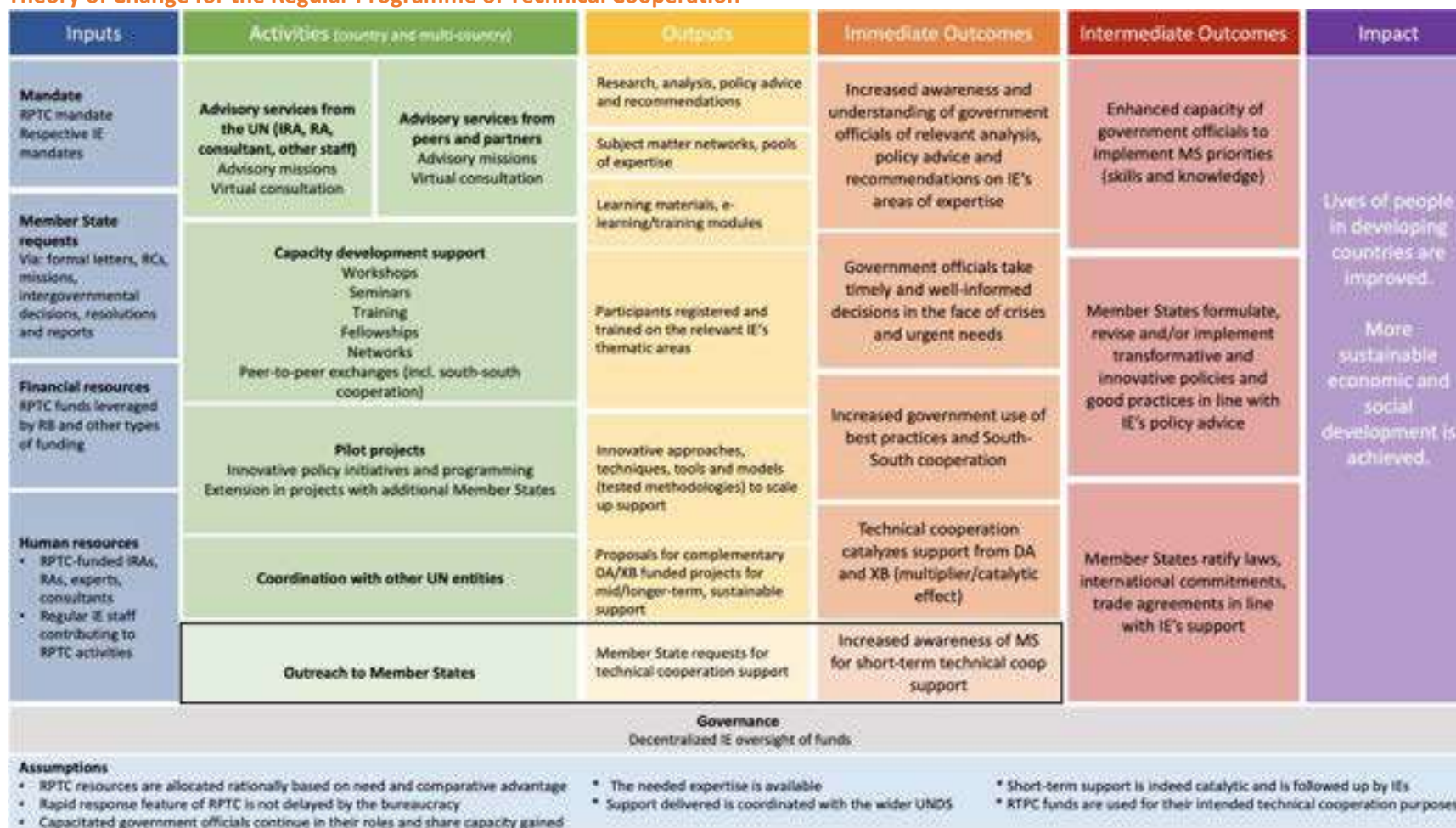
Yours sincerely,



Ghada Waly
Executive Director
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

VI. Annex 2: Theory of Change

Theory of Change for the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation



Note: The diagram should not be read as a linear but rather as a multi-directional logic model