



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2018/058

Audit of the management of the regular programme of technical cooperation

There was a need to enhance complementarity of activities related to the regular programme of technical cooperation and clarify reporting requirements on the programme

14 June 2018
Assignment No. AN2017/540/02

Audit of the management of the regular programme of technical cooperation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the management of the regular programme of technical cooperation (RPTC). The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the management of RPTC. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017 and included a review of the: (i) RPTC mandate; and (ii) management of RPTC programme. The audit also focused on the management of RPTC activities and resources by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and reviewed prior OIOS reports on audits of RPTC activities in other implementing entities.

Measures were needed to ensure the complementarity of RPTC funded activities and to evaluate the RPTC programme to assess whether it was achieving its intended objective. There was also a need to clarify reporting requirements for RPTC. In addition, DESA needed to track and monitor Member States' technical cooperation requests and to expedite the recruitment of vacant inter-regional positions.

OIOS made one recommendation to the Office of Programming Planning, Budget and Accounts (OPPBA) in the Department of Management, and five recommendations to DESA. To address issues identified in the audit,

- (i) OPPBA needed to ensure that all implementing entities highlight, in the overall orientation segment of their strategic frameworks, the responsibility for implementing RPTC activities; and
- (ii) DESA needed to:
 - Consult and collaborate with other RPTC implementing entities on an effective strategy to ensure complementarity of capacity development activities and that Member States' requests for technical cooperation assistance are implemented by the entity that has the highest comparative advantage;
 - Collaborate with RPTC implementing entities to define the reporting requirements on RPTC activities to improve the quality of related progress reports;
 - Collaborate with the other implementing entities to commission an evaluation of RPTC to assess whether it is achieving its objective and to draw lessons from its implementation;
 - Establish procedures for recording, tracking and monitoring Member States' requests for technical cooperation assistance; and
 - Expedite recruitment against vacant interregional adviser positions to ensure capacity is available.

The Department of Management accepted the recommendation and has initiated action to implement it. DESA also accepted the recommendations, implemented one of them and initiated action to implement the others.

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Audit of the management of the regular programme of technical cooperation

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the management of the regular programme of technical cooperation (RPTC).
 2. RPTC was established by the General Assembly under resolution 58(I) in 1946 to provide technical assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition where funding from other parts of the regular budget is not available. RPTC is intended to provide rapid response to government requests for advisory or training assistance. A key distinguishing feature of RPTC is its demand-driven nature i.e., activities undertaken under RPTC respond to expressed needs by member countries for capacity development support.
 3. RPTC is implemented by 11 United Nations entities under: (i) sectoral advisory services comprising: the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); and (ii) regional and sub-regional advisory services consisting of: Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA) and Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). Regional and inter-regional advisors and short-term experts provide advisory services through conducting: (a) technical studies; (b) training, workshops, seminars and individual fellowship programmes to develop human capacity; and (c) field projects to promote capacity development where no other support is available.
 4. The Office of the Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts (OPPBA) is responsible for the overall financial control of RPTC. It authorizes allotments to each implementing entity and receives regular financial reporting for consolidation into the second and final performance reports. DESA coordinates the preparation of substantive progress reports, consolidating information on the implementation, achievements, effectiveness and relevance of RPTC activities with inputs from all implementing entities to facilitate discussions on proposed programme budgets by the intergovernmental bodies.
 5. The RPTC budget is approved by the General Assembly on a biennial basis. It is presented under Section 23 of the regular budget. The proposed budget for the 2016-2017 biennium amounted to \$60.1 million. Table 1 provides a summary of RPTC allotments and expenditures by implementing entity for the period from January 2016 to December 2017. The overall financial implementation rate in the 2016-2017 biennium was 96 per cent.
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Table 1: RPTC allotments and expenditures for the biennium 2016-2017

Entity	Number of subprogrammes	Final Appropriation \$	Expenditure \$	Unspent balance \$	Implementation rate
DESA	9	13,811,200	13,342,039	469,161	97%
UNCTAD	1	2,444,600	2,394,511	50,089	98%
UN-Habitat	1	1,542,000	1,436,084	105,916	93%
UNODC	1	1,473,100	1,347,828	125,272	91%
OHCHR	1	3,759,000	3,581,250	177,750	95%
OCHA	5	1,121,300	1,088,632	32,668	97%
ECA	5	13,428,900	12,460,793	968,107	93%
ESCAP	10	5,718,100	5,634,527	83,573	99%
ECE	8	3,467,400	3,301,518	165,882	95%
ECLAC	11	6,717,200	6,710,723	6,477	100%
ESCWA	8	5,453,200	5,216,534	236,666	96%
Total	57	58,695,700	56,514,439	2,421,561	96%

Source: Umoja report

6. Comments provided by the Department of Management and DESA are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

7. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the management of RPTC.

8. This audit was included in the 2017 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the risk that the RPTC programme may not be achieving its intended purpose.

9. OIOS conducted this audit from November 2017 to February 2018. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risk areas in the RPTC programme, which included a review of the: (i) RPTC mandate; and (ii) management of RPTC programme. The audit also focused on management of RPTC activities and resources by DESA and reviewed prior OIOS reports on audits of RPTC activities in other implementing entities.

10. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews of key personnel, (b) reviews of relevant documentation, and (c) analytical reviews of data.

11. The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. RPTC mandate

RPTC implementing entities needed to highlight, in their strategic frameworks, their responsibility for implementing the programme

12. Regulation 4.2 of the regulations and rules governing programme planning, the programme aspects of the budget, the monitoring of implementation and the methods of evaluation (ST/SGB/2016/6) requires the preparation of a strategic framework to translate legislative mandates into programmes and subprogrammes. Rule 104.5 (d) (i) of ST/SGB/2016/6 requires each programme to show its linkages with other programmes in the introductory narrative of the strategic framework describing the relationship of planned activities to its overall strategy.

13. By its resolution 200 (III) of 4 December 1948, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to organize international teams of experts to advise governments on their economic development programmes, arrange for training of experts and local technicians in underdeveloped countries and assist governments to obtain technical personnel, equipment, supplies and other services to promote economic development under RPTC. Over the years, RPTC activities were broadened to address other developmental needs. Currently, RPTC efforts are geared towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals. Consequently, the RPTC mandate had evolved over time in response to intergovernmental bodies' resolutions, emerging priorities and in accordance with the specific mandate of implementing entities.

14. However, there was no biennial strategic framework for RPTC outlining how the programme would be implemented to respond to the changing mandate, and the RPTC biennial programme budget proposals were not presented in the results-based budgeting logical framework. Instead, the RPTC biennial programme budget proposals listed the 11 implementing entities to which the resources were allocated. These allocations: (a) identified the relevant subprogrammes of the implementing entities; and (b) specified the objective of RPTC activities, the expected accomplishments, indicators of achievement and outputs under the related subprogrammes. However, there were no programme level indicators to measure the aggregated performance of the individual implementing entities in achieving RPTC's overarching objective. In the absence of a strategic framework, there was no evidence that the evolution of the relevant legislative mandates and priorities of Member States with respect to RPTC had been effectively translated into programmes and subprogrammes.

15. OPPBA was of the view that a strategic framework for RPTC would be redundant as the strategic frameworks of the 11 entities already captured RPTC activities. OPPBA further stated that the Member States, through the legislative bodies, had not requested a strategic framework for RPTC. OIOS acknowledged that the RPTC budget fascicle outlined RPTC priorities, activities and performance indicators for allocations made to each implementing entity at the subprogramme level. However, the implementing entities did not clearly articulate the RPTC activities and related performance indicators in their strategic frameworks except for DESA and UNODC, which both made reference to technical cooperation in the overviews of their strategic frameworks. OIOS is of the view that all implementing entities should acknowledge the linkage of RPTC in the overall orientation segment of their respective frameworks. This would reinforce their role in responding to Member States' requests for capacity development activities using the RPTC funds.

(1) OPPBA should take action to ensure that all implementing entities highlight, in the overall orientation segment of their strategic frameworks, the responsibility for implementing activities related to the regular programme of technical cooperation

The Department of Management accepted recommendation 1 and stated that it would include in the overall orientation segment of each implementing entity, the responsibility for implementing RPTC activities. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of examples of strategic frameworks of implementing entities that include their responsibility for implementing RPTC.

B. Management of RPTC programme

Measures were needed to enhance complementarity of RPTC funded activities

16. According to the RPTC programme budget proposal for the 2016-2017 biennium, activities funded by RPTC should complement other capacity development activities, including those funded by the Development Account and extrabudgetary resources, to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the utilization of resources. Additionally, the Secretary-General's report on the repositioning of the United Nations development system (A/72/684) calls for DESA to align its capacity development activities at the regional and country levels with those of regional commissions.

(a) Complementarity of capacity development activities

17. The 11 implementing entities undertook capacity development activities with funds received from the regular budget including RPTC and the Development Account, and from extrabudgetary sources. While some entities such as DESA had established an inter-departmental technical advisory working group to promote coherence and effectiveness in capacity development, others had not developed strategies on how complementarity would be attained. In order to achieve complementarity in use of capacity development funds, it would be beneficial for DESA to share its new capacity development strategy with other implementing entities as part of the collaboration process.

(b) Coordination of lead implementing entity

18. Capacity development activities implemented by the 11 implementing entities were based on: (i) specific requests from Member States; and (ii) the implementing entities' mandates to support Member States in their capacity development needs. They required continuous communication and interaction among the entities and with Member States and non-United Nations stakeholders.

19. However, structures such as the Regional Commissions New York Office (RCNYO) and the Regional Coordination Mechanism were not used to coordinate activities. Although RCNYO participated in promoting coordination and interregional cooperation among the five United Nations regional commissions, consultation between DESA and RCNYO regarding RPTC was limited to consultations on the preparation of the biennial programme budget and on the consolidation of progress reports. Likewise, the Regional Coordination Mechanism, which is responsible for coordination of United Nations development activities at the regional level, had a limited role in facilitating the determination of which implementing entity had comparative advantage to implement a specific capacity development project following requests by Member States.

20. As a result, Member States' requests for capacity development support were delivered without any formal collaboration and coordination between the implementing entities to determine which entity would yield the highest possible impact. For example, DESA received requests from Member States to provide

in-country training and technical cooperation support from Angola, the Dominican Republic and Ecuador in 2016 and from Madagascar, Mongolia, Panama and Tanzania in 2017. Although these countries fell under the purview of regional commissions or other United Nations entities, there was no evidence that a consultative process took place between DESA and the regional commissions to determine the entity that would achieve the highest effectiveness and efficiency in responding to the requests. Absence of a mechanism to effectively coordinate the implementation of technical cooperation requests from national governments could prevent RPTC implementing entities from realizing comparative advantage and cost savings.

(2) DESA should implement measures to consult and collaborate with other entities implementing the regular programme of technical cooperation on an effective strategy to ensure complementarity of capacity development activities and that Member States' requests for technical cooperation assistance are implemented by the entity that has the highest comparative advantage.

DESA accepted recommendation 2 and stated that it was working towards ensuring increased partnerships with other entities of the United Nations system, including the regional commissions, to enhance integrated support and leverage their respective comparative advantages. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of evidence of the consultative and collaborative measures implemented to enhance complementarity and leverage comparative advantage.

There was a need to clarify the reporting requirements of implementing entities

21. The regulations and rules governing programme planning, the programme aspects of the budget, the monitoring of implementation and the methods of evaluation (ST/SGB/2016/6) require programme managers to report periodically on the progress of their programmes against objectives and expected accomplishments.

22. RPTC did not have a designated programme manager. Each implementing entity submitted requests for RPTC funding directly to OPPBA, which consolidated the submissions into a biennial proposed programme budget for RPTC. Likewise, the implementing entities submitted their financial reports on RPTC activities directly to OPPBA, which consolidated them into second and final budget performance reports. Reporting on the progress of RPTC activities was conducted at three levels: (i) internally to the managers of the implementing entities; (ii) by implementing entities to their governing or advisory bodies; and (iii) on a consolidated basis to the General Assembly. The latter report was coordinated by DESA.

23. A comprehensive review of RPTC conducted in 2004 (A/59/397) noted that while the current reporting structure allowed quick response to Member States' requests, there was a need for clearer reporting on the effectiveness and efficiency of programme delivery. In this regard, the review had recommended that progress reporting on RPTC activities be improved to include: information on resources mobilized and results achieved using RPTC funds, conventions signed or reporting obligations met, and new legislation or policies adopted by the countries served. However, specific reporting requirements for the progress reports were not formally defined and the level of detail and content of reports prepared varied from entity to entity. Consequently, progress reports may not contain the level of detail required for informed decision making by the legislative bodies.

24. Without formally defined reporting requirements, there is no clarity on the effectiveness and efficiency in the programme delivery of RPTC.

(3) DESA should in collaboration with entities implementing the regular programme of technical cooperation (RPTC), define the reporting requirements on RPTC activities to improve the quality of related progress reports

DESA accepted recommendation 3 and stated that as lead entity for the preparation of the progress report to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and Fifth Committee, it would, in consultation with the other RPTC entities, review the report to improve the information provided on the work of the entities and be more responsive to the needs of the Member States. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of evidence that mechanisms to define the reporting requirements on RPTC activities to improve the quality of related progress reports have been put in place.

There was a need for RPTC programme evaluation

25. The regulations and rules governing programme planning, the programme aspects of the budget, the monitoring of implementation and the methods of evaluation (ST/SGB/2016/6) states that all programmes shall be evaluated on a regular periodic basis. The evaluation's objectives are to: (a) determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the Organization's activities in relation to their objectives; and (b) enable the Secretariat and Member States to engage in systematic reflection, with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the main programmes of the Organization by altering their content and, if necessary, reviewing their objectives.

26. The RPTC programme had not been evaluated in the last 10 years to assess its relevance and effectiveness in programme delivery. At the RPTC programme level, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement were not established. Consequently, while each implementing entity prepared performance submissions relating to the funds allotted to them, the efficiency and effectiveness of the RPTC activities in relation to the overall objective were not being assessed at the global level. This was because baseline data and indicators of achievement normally utilized in the evaluation process to assess programme impact in terms of the objective were not established at the RPTC programme level. At the operational level, implementing entities were assessing RPTC projects through post-workshop surveys and similar means that could be used to inform future efforts.

27. Without a formal evaluation, it may be difficult to determine whether the relevance and effectiveness of RPTC had been maximized. A formal evaluation of the RPTC programme would also assess the performance of the implementing entities and provide suggested options for improvement.

(4) DESA should, in collaboration with the other implementing entities, commission the evaluation of the regular programme of technical cooperation to assess whether it is achieving its objective and to draw lessons from its implementation.

DESA accepted recommendation 4 and stated that even though it did not have "programme manager" functions for RPTC, it would consult with the other entities to commission an evaluation of RPTC. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of a copy of the evaluation report.

C. Management of RPTC activities and resources in DESA

DESA needed to strengthen its annual work planning process

28. ST/SGB/2016/6 on regulations and rules governing programme planning requires translating programme objectives into annual work plans specifying the responsibilities and tasks for implementing the plans.

29. For the 2016-2017 biennium, DESA implemented RPTC activities through its seven subprogrammes. However, DESA did not develop work plans at the subprogramme level for specific RPTC projects and activities scheduled for the period. DESA explained that it used the budget fascicle as its strategic planning document since the budget fascicle articulated the objectives, strategy, achievement indicators and criteria for implementing RPTC projects broken down by implementing entities and related subprogrammes. Although the subprogramme level expected accomplishments, indicators of achievement, activities/outputs and impact summary were indicated on the RPTC budget fascicle, it did not include specific information normally contained in annual work plans, such as key deliverables, timeframe, and staff assigned.

30. Moreover, capacity development activities were based on requests from Member States and were governed by the implementing entities' substantive mandates and emerging priorities established through General Assembly resolutions and by other intergovernmental-bodies. Such requests could not have been envisaged at the time of preparing the biennium programme budget. For example, the proposed 2016-2017 RPTC programme budget could not have captured the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development as it was adopted after the preparation of this budget under General Assembly resolution 70/1. Therefore, a work plan should have been prepared to incorporate the emerging needs. There were variances between the planned and actual outputs and indicators of achievement when compared at individual subprogramme level for the 2016-2017 biennium programme budget as demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Variances between planned and actual outputs and indicators of achievement

Subprogramme	Outputs						Indicators of Achievement	
	Advisory Services		Seminars/Workshops (No. of participants)		Fellowships		Planned	Actual
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual		
1	36	59	15 (440)	20 (815)	-	-	580	600
2	40	39	15 (600)	13 (778)	-	-	440	855
3	95	73	18 (880)	24 (1,144)	50	59	209	222
6	5	54	5 (250)	20 (300)	-	-	28	23
7	75	22	5 (90)	13 (279)	-	-	26	21
Total	251	247	58 (2,260)	90 (3,316)	50	59	1,283	1,721

31. Annual work plans are intended to allow programme managers flexibility in implementing their programme activities to incorporate necessary changes and emerging issues within the programme mandate. In the absence of up-to-date and formalized annual workplans, relevant changes to RPTC activities may not be implemented effectively to achieve the objective.

32. DESA stated that the move from a biennial to an annual budgeting period starting in 2020 as proposed by the Secretary-General in his report on improving and streamlining the programme planning and budgeting process (A/72/492/Add.1) would address the issues highlighted in the audit. Therefore, OIOS is not making a recommendation as the proposed processes are expected to result in better decision-making and increase the transparency of information.

DESA needed to establish mechanisms to track and monitor technical cooperation requests

33. As part of their activities, DESA is responsible for programming, prioritizing and managing technical cooperation assistance to Member States. This includes tracking and monitoring Member States' requests and overseeing the optimization of resources and results.

34. In March 2017, DESA developed an internal strategy for capacity development which included a service delivery model describing each phase in the process of capacity development activities. The strategy was also established to frame DESA's approach for a more efficient and effective response to Member States' demand for capacity development. However, DESA did not establish detailed mechanisms for recording, assigning responsibility for and monitoring fulfillment of requests by Member States for RPTC assistance. Therefore, it was unclear: (i) who in DESA would receive and acknowledge receipt of assistance requests; (ii) the criteria for determining whether the request would be handled internally or referred to another implementing entity; and (iii) how to record the progress and outcome of activities relating to the requests. Consequently, Member States' requests may not be addressed in a timely, effective and efficient manner.

(5) DESA should establish procedures for recording, tracking and monitoring Member States' requests for technical cooperation assistance.

DESA accepted recommendation 5 and provided evidence that it had implemented a database as a central repository of requests for DESA's capacity development support. Based on the action taken, recommendation 5 has been closed.

DESA needed to fill vacancies of inter-regional advisors

35. DESA is expected to fill vacancies of interregional advisors in a timely manner to effectively implement RPTC activities.

36. RPTC advisory services provide high-level technical expertise for the transfer of knowledge from global and regional entities to governments on policy-related issues and development strategies. The interregional advisers represent the critical interface between the countries and the implementing entities, facilitating country-level access to the required expertise. Advisory missions often lead to the formulation of technical cooperation projects, implemented either by a government or in partnership with United Nations entities.

37. Twenty-three interregional advisers were active in DESA during the 2016-2017 audit period. Their payroll expenses amounted to \$7,063,349. They were supported by 13 staff (3 Professionals and 10 General service) with staff costs of \$1.2 million.

38. As of 31 January 2018, 4 out of 23 interregional adviser positions were unencumbered, of which two were under recruitment and the terms of reference of the other two were being changed to meet the needs of the subprogrammes. Due to two vacancies (one of which has since become encumbered) in the financing for development subprogramme, seven planned indicators of achievement for the 2016-2017 period were not achieved.

(6) DESA should expedite recruitment against vacant interregional adviser positions to ensure capacity is available to implement mandated activities for the regular programme of technical cooperation.

DESA accepted recommendation 6 and stated that as of 23 May 2018, 5 out of 20 inter-regional adviser positions were unencumbered. These positions were under recruitment and three were in the final stages of the process. Recommendation 6 remains open pending receipt of evidence that recruitment against vacant interregional adviser positions has been expedited and finalized.

Other administrative issues

39. OIOS observed the following issues that had been reported in recent audits of DESA.

a. Need to maintain rosters of consultants and individual contractors

40. DESA engaged 134 consultants and individual contractors under special service agreements during the 2016-2017 biennium for \$1,264,086 to implement RPTC activities. While a competitive process was applied to select consultants and individual contractors and requisite documents maintained, two of the five DESA divisions implementing RPTC did not have adequate consultants' rosters. DESA stated that it had not prioritized the development and updating of rosters as it was waiting for the launch of the Inspira recruitment portal for consultancy services, which was under the purview of the Office of Human Resources Management in the Department of Management.

(b) Noncompliance with the requirement to purchase air tickets in advance

41. A review of 2016-2017 travel activities of DESA identified that DESA subprogrammes organized 1,351 trips at a cost of \$4,195,765 from RPTC resources, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: RPTC related travel

Category	Number of trips	Amount \$
Consultants	57	158,737
Staff	341	1,787,876
Non-staff meeting participants	953	2,249,151
Total	1,351	4,195,764

42. Travel requests for approximately 75 per cent of the trips reviewed were not submitted and finalized at least 21 or 16 calendar days in advance of commencement of travel. DESA provided various explanations for about 11 per cent of the noncompliant trips that included: late confirmation of meeting arrangements or attendees; late confirmations/approvals by Member States for the participation of their nationals to DESA organized meetings and prior competing commitments of staff members.

43. While some divisions in DESA prepared quarterly travel plans, these had not yet been institutionalized. DESA explained that the ad hoc nature of RPTC travel made travel forecasting difficult. This was further complicated by the travel of non-staff participants who were often identified late and who sometimes lacked the necessary travel documents.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

44. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of OPPBA and DESA for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

(Signed) Eleanor T. Burns
Director, Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the management of the regular programme of technical cooperation

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
1	OPPBA should take action to ensure that all implementing entities highlight, in the overall orientation segment of their strategic frameworks, the responsibility for implementing activities related to the regular programme of technical cooperation	Important	O	Submission of examples of strategic frameworks of implementing entities that include their responsibility for implementing RPTC.	31 March 2019
2	DESA should implement measures to consult and collaborate with other entities implementing the regular programme of technical cooperation on an effective strategy to ensure complementarity of capacity development activities and that Member States' requests for technical cooperation assistance are implemented by the entity that has the highest comparative advantage	Important	O	Submission of evidence of the consultative and collaborative measures implemented to enhance complementarity and leverage comparative advantage.	30 June 2019
3	DESA should in collaboration with entities implementing the regular programme of technical cooperation (RPTC), define the reporting requirements on RPTC activities to improve the quality of related progress reports	Important	O	Submission of evidence that mechanisms to define the reporting requirements on RPTC activities to improve the quality of related progress reports have been put in place.	30 June 2019
4	DESA should, in collaboration with the other implementing entities, commission the evaluation of the regular programme of technical cooperation to assess whether it is achieving its objective and to draw lessons from its implementation	Important	O	Submission of a copy of the evaluation report.	31 December 2019
5	DESA should establish procedures for recording, tracking and monitoring Member States' requests for technical cooperation assistance	Important	C	Implemented and closed.	8 March 2018

¹ Critical recommendations address critical and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided with regard to the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

² Important recommendations address important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

³ C = closed, O = open

⁴ Date provided by DM and DESA in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the management of the regular programme of technical cooperation

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
6	DESA should expedite recruitment against vacant interregional adviser positions to ensure capacity is available to implement mandated activities for the regular programme of technical cooperation	Important	O	Submission of evidence that recruitment against vacant interregional adviser positions has been expedited and finalized	31 December 2019

APPENDIX I

Management Response

DM/OUSG

Out : 31-May-2018

DM-2017-11134

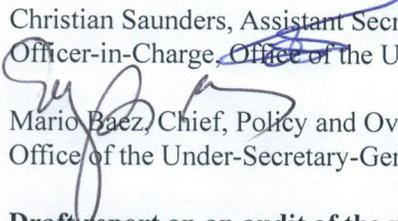


Nations Unies
MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

TO: Ms. Muriette Lawrence-Hume, Chief, New York Audit Service
A: Internal Audit Division, Office of Internal Oversight Services

DATE: 30 May 2018

THROUGH: Christian Saunders, Assistant Secretary-General, OCSS and
S/C DE: ~~Officer-in-Charge, Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management~~

FROM:  Mario Baez, Chief, Policy and Oversight Coordination Service
DE: Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management

SUBJECT: **Draft report on an audit of the management of the regular programme of technical cooperation (Assignment No. AN2017/540/02)**
OBJET:

1. We refer to your memorandum dated 15 May 2018 regarding the above-subject draft report and provide you with comments from the Department of Management (DM) in the attached Appendix I.
2. Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to comment on the draft report.

DM-2018-11134
31-May-2018

Management Response

AUDIT OF THE MANAGEMENT OF THE REGULAR PROGRAMME OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ₂	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	OPPBA should take action to ensure that all implementing entities highlight, in the overall orientation segment of their strategic frameworks, the responsibility for implementing activities related to the regular programme of technical cooperation.	Important	Yes	Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division, OPPBA	31 March 2019	OPPBA will include, in the overall orientation segment of each implementing entity, the responsibility for implementing regular programme of technical cooperation activities.
2	DESA should implement measures to consult and collaborate with other entities implementing the regular programme of technical cooperation on an effective strategy to ensure complementarity of capacity development activities and that Member States' requests for technical cooperation assistance are implemented by the entity that has the highest comparative advantage.	Important				
3	DESA should, in collaboration with entities implementing the regular programme of technical	Important				

¹ Critical recommendations address critical and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided with regard to the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

² Important recommendations address important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

Management Response

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ₂	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	cooperation (RPTC), define the reporting requirements on RPTC activities to improve the quality of related progress reports.					
4	DESA should, in collaboration with the other implementing entities, commission the evaluation of the regular programme of technical cooperation to assess whether it is achieving its objective and to draw lessons from its implementation.	Important				
5	DESA should establish procedures for recording, tracking and monitoring Member States' requests for technical cooperation assistance.	Important				
6	DESA should expedite recruitment against vacant interregional adviser positions to ensure capacity is available to implement mandated activities for the regular programme of technical cooperation.	Important				

Management Response

Audit of the management of the regular programme of technical cooperation

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ₂	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	OPPBA should take action to ensure that all implementing entities highlight, in the overall orientation segment of their strategic frameworks, the responsibility for implementing activities related to the regular programme of technical cooperation.	Important				
2	DESA should implement measures to consult and collaborate with other entities implementing the regular programme of technical cooperation on an effective strategy to ensure complementarity of capacity development activities and that Member States' requests for technical cooperation assistance are implemented by the entity that has the highest comparative advantage.	Important	Yes	Chief, Capacity Development Office, DESA	Second quarter of 2019	In operationalizing its new capacity development strategy, DESA is working towards ensuring increased partnerships with other entities of the UN system, including the regional commissions, to enhance integrated support and leverage each of our own comparative advantages. The framework for this collaboration may also need to take into account any regional mechanism to be established as a result of the UN development system reform which was approved by the General Assembly at the end of May 2018.
3	DESA should, in collaboration with entities implementing the regular programme of technical	Important	Yes	Chief, Capacity Development Office, DESA	Second quarter of 2019	DESA as lead entity for the preparation of the progress report to ACABQ and Fifth Committee will, in consultation with the

¹ Critical recommendations address critical and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided with regard to the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

² Important recommendations address important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

Management Response

Audit of the management of the regular programme of technical cooperation

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ^{1/} Important ₂	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	cooperation (RPTC), define the reporting requirements on RPTC activities to improve the quality of related progress reports.					other RPTC entities, review the report in order to improve the information provided on the work of the entities and be more responsive to the needs of the Member States.
4	DESA should, in collaboration with the other implementing entities, commission the evaluation of the regular programme of technical cooperation to assess whether it is achieving its objective and to draw lessons from its implementation.	Important	Yes	Chief, Capacity Development Office, DESA	Fourth quarter of 2019	Even if DESA does not have “programme manager” functions for RPTC, DESA will consult with the other entities to commission such an evaluation.
5	DESA should establish procedures for recording, tracking and monitoring Member States’ requests for technical cooperation assistance.	Important	Yes	Chief, Capacity Development Office, DESA	Implementation completed	During the time of the audit, DESA implemented a database to act as a central repository of requests for programming DESA’s capacity development support. The memo dated 8 March 2018 on the establishment and management of this repository is attached. This memo took effect in March 2018.
6	DESA should expedite recruitment against vacant interregional adviser positions to ensure capacity is available to implement mandated activities for the regular programme of technical cooperation.	Important	Yes	Chief, Capacity Development Office, DESA	Fourth quarter of 2019	As of 23 May 2018, five out of 20 inter-regional adviser positions were unencumbered. These positions are under recruitment and three are in the final stages of the process.