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ESCWA Technical Cooperation Network**Proposed terms of reference****Summary**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development presents member States with new challenges to achieve more equitable and sustainable development. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) will need to implement flexible, results-driven programmes to meet their needs.

The responsiveness of the technical cooperation programme should help member States to achieve the results that they and their peoples expect. Its Technical Cooperation Network (TCN) will help to ensure that the programme reflects as closely as possible the region's needs and priorities.

In this documents, the ESCWA secretariat presents its proposed terms of reference for the Technical Cooperation Network and ways to improve its effectiveness and the assessment of its activities.

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Introduction

1. The Technical Cooperation Network was established as a tool for sharing information and knowledge under ESCWA resolution 258 (XXIII), of 12 May 2005, to help to tighten technical cooperation between ESCWA and member States and thereby contribute to the achievement of their development goals. It provides a platform for coordinating and exchanging views on advisory services; implementing training and field projects; ascertaining the priority objectives of member States; and establishing guidelines to help countries to benefit fully from ESCWA technical cooperation programmes funded by the technical cooperation account, extra-budgetary resources and the development account. The network also helps to foster national, regional and international partnerships.
2. The technical cooperation programme is able to respond at short notice to requests from ESCWA member States with small-scale initiatives.
3. ESCWA has a comparative advantage in facilitating technical cooperation in the area of capacity development in the Arab region, with a focus on: (a) effective regional negotiations in multilateral forums; (b) implementation of obligations arising from global and regional conferences; (c) implementation of policies, legislation and regulatory frameworks; (d) building and managing partnerships with civil society and the private sector; and (e) monitoring progress on achievement of major objectives set by the United Nations, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION NETWORK

A. OBJECTIVES OF THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION NETWORK

4. The objectives of the network include:
 - (a) To strengthen communication and follow-up between member States and ESCWA on matters pertaining to the technical cooperation programme;
 - (b) To enable member States to support technical cooperation planning at ESCWA;
 - (c) To create a mechanism for exchanging views, data and expertise, flagging the technical cooperation goals and priorities of member States, and promoting South-South cooperation;
 - (d) To share knowledge and successful experiences as input for national SDG strategies aimed at building an information society supported by a knowledge-based economy;
 - (e) To focus on activities that will improve the performance of the technical cooperation programme; To strengthen coordination with national focal points;
 - (f) To foster regional integration and coordination between member States, and cooperation between United Nations agencies in the region.

B. FUNCTIONS OF THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION NETWORK

5. The functions of the network include:
 - (a) To facilitate regional cooperation and bolster the capacity of ESCWA to provide targeted technical cooperation services;

(b) To meet regularly to discuss the performance of the technical cooperation programme and advise ESCWA;

(c) To allow member States to implement the network plan of action;

(d) To submit network meeting reports to the focal points of the relevant ministries in each member State;

(e) To have ESCWA undertake the function of network secretariat in order to disseminate information and network reports on the technical cooperation programme website;

(f) To review the network website, with the aim of intensifying coordination between focal points in member States and the technical cooperation programme;

(g) To harmonize the activities of the network and technical cooperation programme agreed upon with ESCWA;

(h) To review the performance of the programme and missions, and recommend improvements.

C. EVALUATION OF ACTIVITIES

6. Network activities subject to evaluation include missions, regional and sub-regional workshops, development account and extra-budgetary projects, and meetings.

D. MEMBERSHIP

7. Each member State will nominate two representatives to the network, one of whom preferably will also be on the Executive Committee. Members of the network will also serve as technical cooperation focal points for their countries.

E. MEETINGS

8. Network meetings will be held annually at least, preferably around the same time as meetings of the Executive Committee. Members may also meet more frequently via video teleconference.
