



### **Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation**

#### **1. RPTC**

The Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC) was established by UN General Assembly resolution 58 (I) in 1946 with a view to responding to the urgent requests of developing countries for small scale technical assistance when funding from other parts of the regular budget was not available. Since its establishment, the mandate of the Programme has evolved significantly. It has been increasingly used to support the efforts of developing countries to achieve the international development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Nonetheless, the demand driven nature of RPTC remains its strong and distinctive feature.

The purpose of the present Directive is to ensure 1) the effective management of the RPTC subprogrammes and proper use of RPTC resources; 2) the compliance with the global five-year term of RAs, and 3) accountability to member states.

#### **2. Modalities of RPTC**

Given the nature of the RPTC, modalities used for the delivery of regional advisory services are intended to be flexible, in order to identify the most suitable means for responding to specific urgent demands of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Typical RPTC modalities include advisory missions, capacity building and field projects.

**Advisory missions** are used to provide technical expertise or advice on a national development strategy, plan or programme, sectoral policies or specific policy issues.

**Capacity building** is provided in the form of workshops, seminars and training. Such efforts are aimed at strengthening national capacity, facilitating exchange of experience, documenting best practices, and promoting networks.

Both advisory missions and capacity building can lead to the development of **field projects** (national, sub-regional and regional) upon the request of a country, or a group of countries.

The RPTC budget is approved by the General Assembly on the biennial basis. It is implemented by 11 UN entities, including 6 global entities which provide sectoral services and 5 Regional Commissions which provide regional advisory services under this Programme.

The RPTC of the Economic Commission for Europe includes the following six subprogrammes:

Subprogramme 1. Environment

Subprogramme 2. Transport

- Subprogramme 3. Statistics
- Subprogramme 4. Economic cooperation and integration
- Subprogramme 5. Sustainable energy
- Subprogramme 6. Trade

For the purposes of the RPTC, the subprogramme is defined as “a cluster of projects or outputs which are similar in nature or cover well-defined arrangements and have related objectives, such as projects in the same field of activity.”

Under the ECE Technical Cooperation Strategy,<sup>1</sup> these subprogrammes are carried out by the Regional Advisors (RAs), one per subprogramme. They are funded under the general temporary assistance (GTA) budget line of the RPTC budget. The RAs are senior level (P-5/P-4) experts. They reside in respective Divisions, to ensure a closer link with normative and analytical activities carried out within the core programme of work.

### **3. ECE Regional Advisors**

*Recruitment of ECE Regional Advisors* shall be done on the basis of a generic job description approved by the Executive Secretary (ES) of ECE through INSPIRA, as per the established Staff Selection System at the time of advertisement. All Job Openings (JO) for RAs shall clearly indicate the nature of the contract and the yearly funding of the post. It shall also indicate a ceiling of up to 5 years of total service, subject to the continued need of expertise.

The interview panel for all RA job openings shall consist of the Chief of the respective Division, Chief of Programme Management Unit (PMU), one subject-matter expert, and the Executive Officer (EO) as ex-officio.

All RAs shall be appointed for a fixed term, and are subject to renewal as per conditions outlined below.

*The extension of the initial contract of a RA* may be requested by the Chief of Division (who is normally the First Reporting Officer), on the basis of the continued need for the expertise of the RA. This request shall take the form of a memorandum addressed to the ES with copy to the EO and Chief, PMU. The memorandum will include the:

- i) TOR of the RA for the period of the extension;
- ii) Report of the RA for the work in the previous year;
- iii) E-Performance assessment of the RA for the previous year.

The TOR of the RA shall be reviewed every 24 months. The request for extension of his/her contract will be reviewed by EO and the Chief, PMU, with the final approval of the ES.

The TOR of the RA shall include the following details:

1. Purpose or objective of the advisory service;
2. Proposed duration of the advisory service;
3. Related tasks;

---

<sup>1</sup> E/ECE/144/Add. 2

4. Expected accomplishments and indicators for achievement;
5. Required qualifications.

The total service of RAs shall be capped at a maximum of five years. Thereafter their posts shall be advertised, without exception.

Given the UN policy for the Regional Advisors, Chiefs of Divisions shall ‘regularize’ the posts of the Regional Advisors if their services are required beyond the five-year period. To this end, Chiefs shall either:

1. Establish a regular budget post; or
2. Establish an extra-budgetary post of the RA.

Regardless of the source of funding, RAs shall not perform responsibilities other than regional advisory services under the RPTC. RAs shall not perform any supervisory functions, and cannot act as First Reporting, Second Reporting or Additional Supervisor for other staff members.

#### **4. RPTC Budget**

The proposed biennial Programme Budget for RPTC is prepared every even year, in accordance with the guidelines of the Programme Planning and Budget Division (PPBD). The process of preparation of the RPTC Budget in ECE is coordinated by PMU. The subprogramme logframe typically includes the following elements:

1. Objective
2. Expected accomplishments
3. Indicators of achievements
4. Outputs
5. Output summary
6. Impact summary
7. Budget summary

The RPTC budget is used for the implementation of the planned outputs (advisory services, seminar/workshops and field projects). It includes the following budget lines: general temporary assistance (GTA), consultants, travel of staff, training, other, and field projects.

1. *General temporary assistance (GTA)* budget line is used for payment of ECE’s RAs. It cannot be used for hiring additional GTA staff unless the RA is funded either from another section of the regular budget or extra-budgetary resources. Limited GTA is allowed in the latter case.
2. *Consultants budget line* is used for short-term consultancies. A limited number of short term national consultants are allowed under this budget line.

3. *Travel of staff* budget line is used to cover the travel costs of ECE's RAs. All travel shall be undertaken strictly within the approved subprogramme plan and budget. For travel beyond the approved plan and budget, RAs shall mobilise in-kind or extra-budgetary resources.

4. *Training* (workshops, seminars, training courses, fellowships) budget line is used to fund the participation of experts from countries with economies in transition. Exceptionally, it can be used for funding a limited number of experts from developed countries who serve as resource persons for an organized activity. Given the limited budget, ECE RAs shall mobilize additional (regular budget and extra-budgetary) resources for training.

5. *Contractual services* budget line is used for contracting logistical, technical or administrative services. A limited number of local contractual services are allowed under this budget line.

When an RA cannot implement a planned output for a certain reason (sickness, leave, etc.), the output could be implemented by any other regular budget staff of the subprogramme. In such case, the Chief of Division shall provide a clear and well formulated justification to the PMU, which will verify the output planned by the RA and authorize its implementation by a regular budget staff. Extra-budgetary staff is not allowed to implement outputs under the RPTC funded from the UN regular budget.

#### **4. Planning, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation of RPTC**

Planning, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation of the implementation of the RPTC is coordinated by PMU which maintains the database of the RA's annual plans, mission reports, interim and biennial Progress Performance Reports. Any regular budget staff temporarily replacing the RA or implementing RPTC outputs on his behalf must report on their implementation to PMU.

The e-PAS of all RAs shall be planned, monitored and assessed against the objectives and expected accomplishments of the subprogramme logframes. PMU shall provide information on the RPTC subprogramme implementation, and the EO shall provide information on the RPTC subprogramme budget implementation to the Chief of Division (First Reporting Officer) and Executive Secretary (Second Reporting Officer), to facilitate fair, consistent and result-based e-Performance assessment of the RAs.

This Directive replaces ECE Rule No. 4 of 10 June 2002 with immediate effect.