

Trade and Development Board**Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget**

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

**Management response to the in-depth evaluation
of UNCTAD's programme on science and
technology for development**

1. The UNCTAD secretariat welcomes the in-depth evaluation of UNCTAD's programme on science and technology for development (TD/B/WP/234) and wishes to thank the evaluation team for its work.
2. The secretariat is encouraged by the positive tone of the evaluation. We have noted the main findings and recommendations of the evaluation, and will give full attention to any recommendations that member States wish to endorse.
3. In particular, the secretariat concurs with the findings regarding the need for adequate funding for UNCTAD's programme on science and technology for development, among others in the areas of ensuring better visibility and impact of recurrent reports, being able to undertake new Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (STIP) reviews (UNCTAD received seven demands which are currently pending the availability of funding) and the revitalization of the Network of Centres of Excellence (NOCE) project. As noted by the independent evaluators, UNCTAD as a whole is a minor provider of technical assistance at the country level and STI/ICT represents only 2 per cent of its technical cooperation budget.
4. In considering the report of the independent evaluators, the secretariat wishes to present to member States additional information with regards to policy reviews and technical cooperation.
5. With regards to the observations made in paragraph 34, the secretariat fully agrees with the need to avoid consultant-driven technical cooperation. In the case of STIP reviews, the regular staff of the Branch is fully in control of the substantive aspects of the process. In particular, UNCTAD's staff defines the analytical framework, elaborates the Review's findings, drafts the policy conclusions and recommendations, and delivers all policy advice involved. The recourse to consultants becomes an important tool to maximize the reach of UNCTAD's technical cooperation in a context of limited human resources. The secretariat also agrees with the importance of ensuring the delivery of follow-up activities for the STIP reviews (paragraph 34). The ability to deliver such follow-up work is highly dependent on the requirements of the donors that provide support to the implementation of the STIP reviews, as these are extrabudgetary activities. For instance, most of the recent STIP Reviews have been financed from the Development Account (DA). Activities funded by the development account must be completed in a relatively short time and as a general rule

once an activity is completed the DA does not fund further related activities in the same beneficiary country and substantive field.

6. The secretariat welcomes the conclusions presented in paragraph 53 and agrees with the need to define a long-term follow-up mechanism for STIP reviews, particularly as the impact of change in science, technology and innovation (STI) processes is often measurable only in the medium- and long-term. This is in line with the work that the Division began in 2010 to reflect on its STIP review approach and methodology, including the organization of an Ad-hoc Expert Meeting on STIP Review, and the preparation of a Framework for STIP reviews of which a set of structured guideline is a key element. The conclusions and recommendations included in the evaluation (paragraphs 53, 67, 70 and 71) will be an important element of the above-mentioned STIP review guidelines that the secretariat is currently finalizing.

7. With regards to the conclusions in paragraph 55, the secretariat notes that all the policy advice in the context of STIP reviews is delivered by regular staff members of the Policy Review Section, whose interaction with consultants is exclusively of a substantive nature. A change in the profile of staff may not necessarily be beneficial in this regard, as the emphasis of the work of the Branch is not on the technical or engineering aspects of technology, but on the economic development implications of policies in the area of science, technology and innovation.

8. The secretariat also concurs with the findings that UNCTAD must have closer engagement of UNCTAD staff at the country level and that increased participation of local experts in project activities would enable more transfer of skills and knowledge from UNCTAD staff and experts to national personnel. Efforts are already undertaken in this regard; for instance, in the most recent round of STIP reviews implemented in Latin America (2009–2011), several national experts were included systematically in all the STIP review teams and extensive interaction with national counterparts is built into the STIP review process. The involvement of local experts is also central to the ICT and Law Reform capacity-building programme. Additionally, the secretariat appreciates the recommendation in paragraph 66 that UNCTAD should make an additional effort to revitalize the Network of Centres of Excellence project and extend its network. In that respect, the secretariat has already undertaken steps to raise the funds required.

9. Furthermore, concerning the recommendation in paragraph 63, where feasible, cooperation takes place with other organizations. An example is the joint undertaking with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) of the STIP Review of Angola, the World Bank in the case of the STIP Reviews of Mauritania and of Ghana, UNESCO for Mauritania, and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean for El Salvador, the Dominican Republic and Peru. Also, in response to the recommendation in paragraph 66, since we have successful outcomes on the cooperation with the Paragraph 166 Programme, which includes a module on issues of science, technology and innovation in its courses on key issues on the international development agenda, the TrainForTrade Programme and the Virtual Institute, this type of collaboration will be strengthened.

10. With regards to the recommendation in paragraph 68, the secretariat agrees with the importance of considering the added value of undertaking ICT Policy Reviews. The first review has been well received by the Government of Egypt, and its recommendations will constitute a valuable and timely input into the next national ICT strategy. In pondering the future of the ICT Policy Reviews, it is important to take into account the demand from member States as well as synergies that can be achieved with the STIP reviews. For instance, in addition to the natural link between STI and ICT whereby in STIP reviews one

section is often devoted to ICT, and in ICT Policy reviews whereby promoting innovation can be a key priority in the national strategy, similar processes and methodologies are applied to the reviews.

11. With regards to the Science and Technology Section's support of the CSTD, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) is a commission of the Economic and Social Council. As noted by the independent evaluators, the topics of the UNCTAD Current Studies series on STI, like the other work of this Section, are predominantly related to the priority themes considered by the CSTD. The Science, Technology, and ICT Branch does not determine these priority themes; rather, they are determined by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the CSTD. The secretariat will make efforts to better integrate the activities of the Science and Technology Section and respond to the concerns highlighted regarding the balance between the Section's mandate as the CSTD technical secretariat and its other Science and Technology for Development activities.

12. The secretariat considers the independent evaluators' report an important contribution towards strengthening UNCTAD's work on Science, Technology and Innovation for development. Important issues were brought forward to which full consideration will be given. The secretariat looks forward to implementing the recommendations contained in the report, in light of the guidance from UNCTAD member States and the outcomes of the Working Party.
