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**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM
THE IN-DEPTH EVALUATION OF THE EMPRETEC PROGRAMME**

Progress report by the UNCTAD secretariat

Executive summary

The Empretec Programme has continued to give priority to implementing the recommendations of the External Evaluation and considerable progress has been made. Currently, many of the recommendations have been implemented and others are in the process of being implemented. To implement the remaining recommendations, another \$70,000 is needed. The remaining activities are particularly important for determining the best practices and monitoring the performance of Empretec National Centres. For UNCTAD to play a much greater leadership and monitoring role, to expand the programme to other countries and geographical regions and to build on it with a view to UNCTAD XI, substantial extrabudgetary support is needed.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Empretec Programme has continued to give priority to implementing the recommendations of the External Evaluation and considerable progress has been made. Currently, many of the recommendations have been implemented and others are in the process of being implemented. However, there are some recommendations that cannot be fully implemented in a satisfactory manner because of the lack of resources.

I. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

<i>Recommendation H:</i>	<i>“UNCTAD/Empretec should make available to national programmes a unified software solution to Management Information System (MIS) needs that are not yet met”</i>
<i>Status:</i>	<i>System designed and installation ongoing</i>
<i>Recommendation C:</i>	<i>“With the assistance of national programmes, UNCTAD/Empretec should produce an inventory of all existing technical seminars”</i>
<i>Status:</i>	<i>Started and ongoing</i>

2. Verification of the ability of Empretec National Centres (ENCs) to meet the technical specifications for the hardware, software and services for the Management Information System (MIS) was carried out. According to the results of the surveys and field missions, the ENCs are able to meet necessary technical requirements, but many of them will need assistance to use the system efficiently.

3. The Lotus Notes client software was purchased and installed in each national centre. Installation manuals and guidelines for building national databases and subsites were made available. Intensive contacts between UNCTAD and ENCs, and also among ENCs, are already being facilitated by the system.

4. To date, installation, and training and assistance in the implementation and use of the national centre’s database, have been carried out for about half of the Empretec countries, including Argentina, Chile, Ethiopia, Ghana, Jordan, Morocco, Romania, Uganda, Uruguay and Zimbabwe, as well as for the Palestinian Territory. Installation of the system in all Latin and Central American Centres should be completed by the end of 2002 if funding becomes available.

5. The Centres have reacted very positively to the MIS, in terms of its efficiency, user-friendliness and compatibility with other existing systems (i.e. UNDP’s Performance Tracking Indicators System). The Empretec MIS replication process (where data entered by an individual Centre are automatically transferred to update the main system hosted in Geneva) is also working successfully, enabling rapid data exchange between the ENCs and Geneva.

<i>Recommendation I:</i>	<i>“UNCTAD/Empretec should set up and manage a web site open to all the international community”</i>
<i>Status:</i>	<i>Web site established; management of the site ongoing</i>

6. The performance indicators were discussed and agreed with all Empretec Centres. Many of them have already been discussed and endorsed by the Committee of Donor Agencies for SME Development. An initial assessment of and report on the Centres' performance and impact using the Empretec Performance Indicators are scheduled for the end of the year.

7. The Empretec website (www.empretec.net) has undergone a general overhaul to improve its user-friendliness and to expand the range of services provided (restricted areas, layout reorganization, Electronic Business Opportunities (EBOs) etc.). The EBOs section will not only enhance trade exchanges but also focus on the networking possibilities throughout the already existing Empretec network. The launching of the EBOs is scheduled to take place early next year. Each Centre is designing and launching its own mini-website as a fundamental tool to interact with the business community.

II. DIRECTORS' MEETING

<i>Recommendation K:</i>	<i>“Organization by UNCTAD/Empretec of a yearly meeting of Empretec national directors”</i>
<i>Status:</i>	<i>Meeting held/scheduled for 2001 and 2002: Ongoing</i>

8. On the basis of a consensus agreed during the last directors' meeting held in Geneva in November 2001, the next directors' meeting is scheduled to take place in Morocco in October 2002. All Centres have noted the importance of this event in developing and strengthening both national and global Empretec programmes. UNDP and Enterprise Africa have agreed to participate. The meeting will be organized on a cost-sharing basis as far as possible. When the directors are better able to assess the value of this meeting, their willingness to cover most of their own costs will increase and they will be asked to make the necessary allocations to their national budgets. It is expected that an international directors' meeting will be held annually and the location will be determined by the specific financial conditions of the host Centre and the strategic interests of the Programme in general. Funding will be needed for Empretec staff to attend the annual meeting.

III. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

<i>Recommendation A:</i>	<i>“UNCTAD/Empretec should undertake a systematic review of EDP (core seminars)”</i>
<i>Status:</i>	<i>Complete</i>

9. All core activities have been reviewed and updated by the Latin American Technical Expert Committee (TEC – committee of senior advisers and trainers with extensive experience and knowledge of the Empretec methodologies). Translation of the training (trainer and participant) manuals from Spanish into English and French is being carried out. Translation into Arabic and other local languages is also under way. Activities include the Entrepreneurial Training Workshop (ETW), the Intrapreneurship Training Workshop (ITW), the Business Plan Module and Agrotec.

<i>Recommendation B:</i>	<i>“UNCTAD/Empretec should make sure that the experience gained in the EDP in the public sector is transferred to all interested national programmes”</i>
<i>Status:</i>	<i>Complete</i>
<i>Recommendation D:</i>	<i>“UNCTAD/Empretec should develop a standard Business Planning training package”</i>
<i>Status:</i>	<i>Complete and ongoing</i>

10. The Intrapreneurship programme has been diffused to Central America, and sub-Saharan countries and Morocco. Both the Intrapreneurship programme and the Business Plan module are included in the portfolio of services offered to each new country programme and transfer of the methodologies is being facilitated at the request of established country programmes.

IV. TRAINING OF TRAINERS

<i>Recommendation E:</i>	<i>“UNCTAD/Empretec should urgently address the need to train new trainers and retrain older ones”</i>
<i>Status:</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Recommendation J:</i>	<i>“Organization by UNCTAD/Empretec of yearly meeting of trainers”</i>
<i>Status:</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>

11. Empretec considers the retraining of its some 250 trainers a critical recommendation of the External Evaluation in order to diffuse the new updated methodologies. Two Training of Trainers (TOT) seminars are planned for Latin America for 60 selected trainers. Trained trainers will be encouraged to share the new

information with their colleagues. Another seminar for the African region will be organized for early 2003.

Certification of Trainers

<i>Recommendation F:</i>	<i>“UNCTAD/Empretec should devise a compulsory system of certification for all trainers”</i>
<i>Status:</i>	<i>Complete and being implemented by ENCs</i>

12. A methodology for the certification of trainers has been designed and documented, and is being implemented by each Centre on the basis of the knowledge, experience and agreement of all ENCs. This methodology ensures enhanced interaction between the ENCs and UNCTAD/Empretec in terms of feedback and quality control of trainer certification. The global certification process will lead to a roster of elite trainers who can participate in South-South cooperation by providing their services across borders.

Certification of Empretec

<i>Recommendation G:</i>	<i>“UNCTAD/Empretec should introduce a certification process for Empretec”</i>
<i>Status:</i>	<i>Complete and being implemented by ENCs</i>

13. The certification process for Empretec (participants in the Empretec Training Workshop) has been agreed and is being applied by each ENC.

V. PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

14. UNCTAD/Empretec is helping several ENCs to undertake an analysis of their operations in order to improve their management, efficiency and sustainability. This is being done in cooperation with professional service organizations such as BESO and INCOFIN. At the same time, Empretec is developing a portfolio of products and services programmes to strengthen the capacity of ENCs to serve their clients, such as credit windows (based on Empretec Ghana), a linkage programme between TNCs and SMEs, and also a more gender-sensitive programme that addresses women entrepreneurs' specific needs. Some of these services are being developed together with other agencies such as UNIDO and ITC.

VI. CONCLUSION

15. Work on implementing the recommendations of the External Evaluation of the Empretec Programme has been continued since the Working Party meeting in

September 2001. Most of the recommendations have been implemented, this having been achieved by the extra effort and dedication of the Empretec team in Geneva, and the extraordinary support provided by the Empretec National Centres.

16. To implement the remaining recommendations (completing the MIS installation in Latin America, and undertaking the benchmarking exercise) another \$70,000 is needed. Both activities are particularly important for determining best practices and monitoring the performance of ENC's.

17. For UNCTAD to play a much greater leadership and monitoring role (including quality assurance, implementation assistance, international networking and benchmarking), to expand the programme to other countries and geographical regions and to build on it with a view to UNCTAD XI, substantial extrabudgetary support is needed.