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Strengthening the effectiveness and impact of the Development Account

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution [79/257](#), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on strengthening the effectiveness and impact of the Development Account at its eightieth session. The report details how the 10 implementing entities of the United Nations Secretariat have implemented Account-funded projects to support the capacity-development efforts of Member States, in particular in relation to selecting projects based on Member State needs; ensuring complementarity with the regular programme of technical cooperation; using a common framework for evaluating projects; conducting outreach to promote awareness of the Development Account and its funded projects; and leveraging additional resources to enhance the support delivered to Member States. It also presents further actions to promote the visibility of the Account and its results achieved and to strengthen coordination with the regular programme of technical cooperation to maximize synergies.

* [A/80/50](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to paragraph 74 of General Assembly resolution [79/257](#), in which the Secretary-General was requested to present a report to the Assembly at its eightieth session on strengthening the effectiveness and impact of the Development Account, recalling paragraph XIII.8 of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions ([A/79/7](#)). The report covers the following aspects:

(a) Transparent selection criteria for Development Account projects that are based on the needs of recipient countries;

(b) Options for strengthening the complementarity and interlinkage between the regular programme of technical cooperation and the Development Account, including such that Member States can build upon short-term advisory services in the regular programme of technical cooperation and continue similar work through longer-term projects funded by the Development Account;

(c) A common evaluation framework to be used for all projects, including meaningful, measurable and quantifiable indicators of achievement across all implementing entities, to ensure full transparency regarding the interventions provided by the Development Account;

(d) An outreach plan, within existing resources, developed by the Secretary-General, to raise awareness of the existence of the Development Account and the guidelines to apply for its different tranches among Member States and in programme countries, including in the context of the Economic and Social Council and the Main Committees of the General Assembly and through the regional commissions and their subregional offices;

(e) Options to increase the number of sources of funding for the Development Account beyond the regular budget, including through fundraising activities to raise extrabudgetary resources and the possibility of establishing partnerships with relevant external stakeholders.

2. The report was prepared by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, as the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs is the programme manager of the Development Account. It is based on extensive consultations with the other nine implementing entities (the five regional commissions, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)), as well as implementing entities of the regular programme of technical cooperation.

II. Development Account support for Member States' capacity-development efforts

3. The Development Account represents an important source of funding available to 10 economic and social entities of the Secretariat to support Member States in capacity development. In the past decade, this has focused in particular on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the attainment of the associated Sustainable Development Goals.

4. Projects funded under the Development Account should generally meet the following criteria: (a) support developing countries in strengthening their capacity to address economic and social challenges in alignment with priority areas of the United

Nations development agenda; (b) be driven by clearly articulated demand from Member States and deliver tangible results at the country level; (c) leverage the capacities and comparative advantages of the implementing entity and be primarily implemented using the entity's existing staff resources; (d) complement the ongoing work of the implementing entity and other relevant development actors; and (e) incorporate a strong South-South cooperation and knowledge-sharing component.

5. The Development Account project cycles, known as tranches, are guided by overarching themes that shape the formulation of project proposals (see annex I for a graphical overview of the Development Account project cycle). While broadly aligned with the 2030 Agenda, these themes are derived from priorities identified by Member States through General Assembly resolutions. The four ongoing tranches focus on recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic (fourteenth and fifteenth tranches); addressing the economic and social consequences of triple crises (sixteenth tranche); and climate change adaptation and mitigation (seventeenth tranche).¹

6. The recommendation in paragraph 74 of General Assembly resolution [79/257](#) builds on the observations of the Advisory Committee regarding the Development Account and the need to ensure that its activities are structured effectively to respond to the priorities and needs of Member States. The sections below provide an overview of the evolution of processes and mechanisms supporting each of the five elements of the Assembly's recommendation.

A. Selection process of Development Account projects: transparent selection criteria

7. As stated earlier, the Development Account is just one in a portfolio of funding options for responding to the needs and demands of Member States. The distinctive features of Development Account projects are that: (a) they are multi-year (normally four-year) projects; (b) they are multi-country projects, designed to extend capacity-building support to several countries with similar needs, or to those whose collaboration is deemed instrumental in addressing their respective needs, thereby promoting South-South learning; and (c) they allow the implementing entities to combine their expertise and experience to provide optimal solutions to address the needs of Member States.

8. Development Account projects are demand driven and respond to the clearly articulated needs of Member States. Once the launch of a new tranche is communicated by the programme manager to the executive heads of the 10 implementing entities, the entities initiate the preparation of project proposals, or concept notes, based on the selected overarching theme. Concepts for projects can emerge in a variety of ways, but in every case, they are rooted in a recognition of the capacity-development needs of Member States and how specific implementing entities may individually or collaboratively be able to meet those needs in line with the mandates given by their

¹ The themes are: "Recovering better from COVID-19: for greener, resilient, inclusive and equal post-pandemic societies that leave no one behind" (fourteenth tranche); "Supporting Member States to address the risk of widening inequality in the post-pandemic recovery through inclusive, resilient and green policy support that leaves no one behind" (fifteenth tranche); "Supporting Member States in developing and implementing policies for accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals for transformational change, resilience and just transitions addressing the economic and social aftermath of ongoing crises and shocks while ensuring that no one is left behind" (sixteenth tranche); and "Supporting Member States in accelerating actions to adapt to and mitigate climate change with a focus on social and economic resilience in pursuit of the 2030 Agenda" (seventeenth tranche).

respective governing bodies and the Member States that constitute them. To illustrate, several recent projects on measuring illicit financial flows have benefited a group of countries that face challenges in tracking and stemming such flows and that solicited support from the United Nations. The ongoing fifteenth tranche project “Measuring and curbing illicit financial flows”, which is led by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and builds on three completed projects under the tenth, eleventh and twelfth tranches supporting countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia and the Pacific, respectively,² has allowed the five regional commissions, along with UNCTAD and UNODC as co-custodians of indicator 16.4.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals,³ to leverage their collective expertise and experience and provide effective support to nine developing countries around the world in strengthening their statistical capacity to measure illicit financial flows, report on the indicator and develop evidence-based policy responses to curb such flows and strengthen domestic resource mobilization. The nine countries assisted under the project all formally requested support from one of the regional commissions and/or UNCTAD in measuring, reporting on and/or curtailing illicit financial flows.

9. The implementing entities, in preparing project concept notes or proposals, are required to demonstrate that they have consulted with and solicited suggestions from Member States. Such consultations can take multiple forms, including written or oral requests for capacity-development support from Member States to the implementing entities; bilateral discussions with government ministries; and engagement with Member States during intergovernmental meetings, for example periodic meetings of regional commissions and their subcommittees, and functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, such as the Statistical Commission. Member States may also request United Nations support, including capacity development, through resolutions, decisions or other official documents adopted by governing bodies of implementing entities or higher-level United Nations bodies.

10. At the country level, implementing entities draw from country-level tools and mechanisms, including United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and consultations with United Nations country teams through resident coordinator offices, to identify specific capacity-development needs of individual developing countries that could be well addressed by the entities’ comparative advantages and are aligned with their respective mandates and available resources. Such comparative advantages may include, but are not limited to, the entities’ technical expertise, existing global, regional or subregional structures and mechanisms, established partnerships and networks, and ongoing or planned work presenting opportunities for synergies. The actual means through which entities work with country teams and resident coordinator offices vary, however, reflecting the individual entities’ specific mandates, geographical coverage, and governance and organizational structures (including regional and country presence), among other factors. Member States often contact implementing entities directly, and there are mechanisms in place for channelling demands, as elaborated in the present section.

11. Implementing entities make efforts to systematize demand assessment, for example by conducting a gap analysis to identify specific capacity-development needs of selected Member States within relevant domains. Some entities maintain online registers of formal development cooperation requests and their implementation status (e.g. UNCTAD,⁴ Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), Department of

² “Developing indicator on illicit financial flows and monitoring them in Latin America”, “Strengthening analytical capacities and supporting national efforts in Africa towards eliminating illicit financial flows” and “Statistics and data for measuring illicit financial flows in the Asia-Pacific region”.

³ Total value of inward and outward illicit financial flows (in current United States dollars).

⁴ See <https://unctad.org/projects/formal-requests-for-technical-cooperation>.

Economic and Social Affairs, and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)).

12. Once Member States' needs and implementing entities' individual or collective capacities to meet them are ascertained, the process of preparing project proposals itself takes place within the entities, using guidelines prepared by the Development Account programme management team and based on consultations. Entities are required to follow clear guidelines and timelines in developing concept notes. The Development Account focal point in each implementing entity coordinates the internal process of preparing concept notes within the entity.⁵

13. Once concept notes are submitted, the programme management team reviews them and, in consultation with the implementing entities, prepares a draft shortlist of proposed projects for review by the Development Account Steering Committee, which recommends the finalized list to the programme manager for approval. Once the shortlist is finalized, high-level information on each of the shortlisted projects is included in the Development Account section of the proposed programme budget to be submitted to the General Assembly. A full list of the criteria used for the selection of project proposals for inclusion in the shortlist is presented in annex II. Among these criteria are the entity's mandate and capacity to implement the projects, as well as demand from Member States. The Account's budget contained in the proposed programme budget does not include post resources. In principle, projects are designed to draw on the entities' existing staff resources, which are augmented with the specific technical and/or regional, subregional or national expertise of consultants and partners engaged under the project.⁶

14. Demand from Member States for capacity-development support has consistently exceeded the amount of resources available to the implementing entities. Under the Development Account, the approved budget has typically covered only half of the project proposals developed by the 10 implementing entities in response to Member State demand for capacity-development support, taking into account their existing capacities to deliver such support.

B. Common evaluation framework

15. The evaluation function of the Development Account has been considerably strengthened over the years, in response to feedback from its oversight bodies, including the Advisory Committee and the Board of Auditors.⁷ The current evaluation system was rolled out at the end of 2019 with the issuance of the Development

⁵ The focal points are normally the chiefs of programme planning and/or chiefs of capacity-development/technical cooperation units, or other relevant senior staff, in the implementing entities and coordinate all activities of their respective entities related to the Development Account (programming, reporting, monitoring and evaluation).

⁶ A small portion of project budgets may be allocated to general temporary assistance used to respond to the entity's short-term, interim staff resource needs in carrying out the project activities, particularly when the entity's in-house expertise is not funded under the regular budget, or in the case of joint projects involving a large number of implementing entities (general temporary assistance is currently capped at 10 per cent of the total project budget).

⁷ The Advisory Committee repeatedly emphasized the need to further improve the monitoring and evaluation of Development Account projects with focus on lessons learned and results to feed into the design of new projects (A/70/7, para. XIII.15, A/68/7, para. XIII.8, A/66/7 and A/66/7/Corr.1, para. XIII.9, and A/58/7/Add.5, para. 34). Furthermore, the Board of Auditors, in its report for 2020, pointed to deficiencies in the evaluation of Development Account projects, while also expressing concern over the absence of programme evaluations (A/76/5 (Vol. I), paras. 498–500).

Account evaluation framework⁸ and project evaluation guidelines⁹ and has been progressively refined since a dedicated P-4 Evaluation Officer position within the project management team was created in 2022.¹⁰ It is aimed at both supporting accountability for results and facilitating learning by generating knowledge to aid in ongoing improvements to Development Account work. The evaluation system is composed of project evaluations, guided by a common framework, and newly introduced programme-level evaluations, as well as supported by enhanced project-level monitoring, as described below.

Project evaluations guided by a common framework

16. Under the current system, half of the projects are evaluated, including all projects with a budget of over \$1 million. Project evaluations are managed by the Evaluation Unit or the designated evaluation function within the implementing entity. They are guided by the Development Account evaluation guidelines, as well as the implementing entities' respective evaluation policies and guidelines, and are conducted by external evaluators (consultants) contracted by the entities, using funds allocated under the Account (4 per cent of the project budget). The evaluation budget ranged from \$18,000 to \$27,000 for most twelfth tranche project evaluations.

17. The Development Account project evaluation guidelines provide a set of criteria against which projects are to be evaluated, which were developed based on the United Nations Evaluation Group criteria, with adaptations reflecting the specific characteristics of the Account. All project evaluations are designed to examine the project's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, while also addressing human rights and gender equality. Project evaluations are conducted immediately after project completion and are therefore suited to assessing the immediate actions taken by target beneficiaries following the project's capacity-building activities. For instance, they can determine whether Governments have initiated processes aimed at policy change – an intended long-term impact of many Development Account projects.

18. These types of actions are considered outcome-level results, which Development Account project evaluations are well positioned to assess and report on. Projects are generally designed to contribute towards enhanced technical and operational capacities of target country Governments and policymakers to develop or enhance policy in specific thematic areas. Policy change is a highly complex process that takes time and is also influenced by a variety of factors. Establishing causal links between particular capacity-development activities and a specific policy change in the target country is difficult not only in terms of methodological approach and resource requirement¹¹ but also because it would involve an analysis of the myriad forces and circumstances that may have played a role in driving policy change in a sovereign State that are beyond the control of the implementing entity. In addition, isolating the impacts of specific Development Account projects from those of the broader work of the entities and their

⁸ Available at [https://da.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/dafiles/2256_1571321768_UN%20DA%20Evaluation%20Framework%20\(Final\).pdf](https://da.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/dafiles/2256_1571321768_UN%20DA%20Evaluation%20Framework%20(Final).pdf).

⁹ Available at [https://da.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/dafiles/2253_1571321382_UN%20DA%20Evaluation%20Guidelines%20\(Final\).pdf](https://da.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/dafiles/2253_1571321382_UN%20DA%20Evaluation%20Guidelines%20(Final).pdf).

¹⁰ First created as a general temporary assistance position under section 35, Development Account, of the programme budget for 2022, the P-4 Evaluation Officer position was converted to an established post under section 9, Economic and social affairs, of the programme budget for 2024.

¹¹ Across the United Nations system, a handful of agencies, funds and programmes with significantly greater resources and country presence (e.g. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Children's Fund and World Food Programme) have attempted to assess the impacts of their interventions, looking at more resource-intensive and longer-term interventions in the countries where they have a long-term presence.

partners is a significant challenge. Accordingly, project evaluations are focused on assessing the extent to which the projects contributed to enhancing the individual capacities of participating policymakers and the organizational capacities of the specific institutions that they represent in the relevant policy areas.

19. In addition to the project evaluation guidelines, the programme management team has also developed a series of guidance notes designed to highlight the key requirements under the guidelines, introduce amendments and updates, or address specific aspects of evaluation where guidance was missing or inadequate. These include the tranche-specific guidance notes on the planning and conduct of and follow-up to project evaluations since the tenth tranche and on the selection of projects to be evaluated since the fourteenth tranche, as well as the guidance note on the terminal evaluation of joint projects.¹² A standard template for project evaluation reports was also developed for pilot use in eleventh tranche project evaluations; it has since been updated for each tranche based on the feedback from implementing entities. The use of the standard Development Account template is strongly recommended for all project evaluations, unless entities have their own standard report templates that are endorsed by their respective governing bodies and/or senior management and are designed to facilitate entity-level meta-analyses and/or meta-evaluations. More detailed information on project evaluations is presented in the fourteenth progress report on the implementation of projects financed from the Development Account (A/80/92) in response to the recommendation of the Advisory Committee in its report (A/79/7, para. XIII.22). All project evaluations starting with the twelfth tranche, and the relevant guidance documents and tools, are published on the dedicated evaluation page of the Development Account website, which was created at the beginning of 2023.

20. Since 2020, the programme management team has convened 13 virtual meetings of the Development Account evaluation focal points network, consisting of the evaluation units of the 10 implementing entities, to discuss issues of relevance to the Development Account evaluation function and exchange lessons learned and good practices with a view to helping to enhance their capacities to conduct project evaluations. The Evaluation Officer in the programme management team has also provided guidance and support to individual project evaluations, in particular evaluations of joint projects involving multiple implementing entities.

21. Lessons learned through project evaluations are systematically reviewed and used by the programme management team to inform ongoing improvements to the processes and mechanisms to support the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects.

Programme-level evaluations

22. Programme-level evaluations were introduced by the 2019 evaluation framework, as a key element of the strengthened Development Account evaluation function. The first programme-level evaluation was completed in September 2022, examining the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the tenth tranche Programme on Statistics and Data.¹³ The Programme responded to the immediate needs of Member States in generating and collecting data to support the 2030 Agenda, and was implemented jointly by all 10 implementing entities with a total budget of \$11.4 million (31 per cent of the tranche budget), and overseen by the Steering Committee. The evaluation was conducted by the programme management team with the participation of the evaluation units of all 10 entities. The final

¹² See the section entitled “Evaluation guidance” on the evaluation page of the Development Account website (<https://da.desa.un.org/evaluation>).

¹³ Available at <https://da.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/dafiles/DAT10-Programme-on-Statistics-and-Data-Final-Eval-Report.pdf>.

evaluation report included four recommendations, all addressed to the team, for improving the processes and procedures to support the effective planning, monitoring and evaluation of projects, with a focus on joint projects with a large budget. The implementation of the recommendations was completed in the second quarter of 2025 and entailed the development of a series of new guidelines, tools and mechanisms to ensure that projects best meet the capacity-development needs of Member States.¹⁴ The preparation for a second programme-level evaluation is under way in consultation with the evaluation units of the implementing entities and other key stakeholders.

Project-level monitoring

23. Development Account evaluation builds on project-level monitoring, which is guided by each project's results framework and is supported by the system of guidelines for annual project progress monitoring and reporting. The project document for each project presents a results framework, which establishes the project's expected outcomes, supported by indicators of achievement, along with planned outputs, and is used for ongoing monitoring and annual reporting.

24. Previously, and as referred to in the 2019 evaluation framework, project monitoring was primarily activity oriented, with more limited data gathered against indicators of the project results framework.¹⁵ To address these issues, the guidance related to the results framework and to project monitoring and reporting included in the project document, annual progress report and final report guidelines has been significantly strengthened. Currently, implementing entities are expected to collect data regularly against indicators of achievement (outcomes) established in the project results framework and to present them, in addition to the status of output delivery, in annual progress reports. In addition, the projects are expected to further elaborate on the indicators used for the monitoring of country-specific output and outcome delivery in the first annual progress report.¹⁶ In recent years, the programme management team has played an enhanced role in supporting project monitoring. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the team has convened monthly virtual meetings of the focal points and has prepared and disseminated monthly project-level financial implementation rates. Since 2024, it has also held annual monitoring calls with the project teams and the focal points of their respective entities to discuss the projects' progress towards achieving their expected results for all joint projects with a budget of over \$1 million. As part of the consultations in the preparation of the present report, the entities indicated that the coordination and oversight function delivered by the programme management team was useful in supporting project-level monitoring.

Other relevant evaluations

25. A few implementing entities have conducted programmatic reviews of priority areas, for example the 2022 review by UNCTAD of its work on e-commerce and the

¹⁴ The actions taken by the programme management team to implement the evaluation recommendations included developing a comprehensive guide for implementing entities, which presents the key Development Account principles, requirements and an overview of project management processes; adding enhanced guidance on designing joint projects to project document guidelines; creating a project document review checklist for enhanced quality assurance; organizing annual virtual workshops for project design teams; and developing a guidance note on the evaluation of joint projects.

¹⁵ Development Account evaluation framework, pp. 7 and 8.

¹⁶ The first annual progress report template contains country-specific action plans, where indicators specific to each target country, developed in consultation with the counterparts in the country, should be presented, as appropriate.

digital economy.¹⁷ Beyond these programmatic or thematic evaluations, the periodic subprogramme evaluations required of all Secretariat entities, including all implementing entities, must in principle cover the entities' Development Account projects in specific thematic areas.

C. Complementarity between the Development Account and the regular programme of technical cooperation

26. In addition to the Development Account, the regular programme of technical cooperation constitutes a key source of funding for United Nations support to Member States' capacity-development efforts. In its resolution 79/257, the General Assembly requested a separate report of the Secretary-General on the programme to be submitted at its eightieth session. The programme is implemented by 11 Secretariat entities: all Development Account implementing entities except for UNEP and including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. While distinct in nature, the Account and the programme are broadly complementary in their objectives and methodologies.

27. The Development Account funds multi-year (typically four-year), multi-country capacity-development projects organized into thematic tranches. Project planning for each tranche begins approximately 18 months in advance of implementation and requires approval by the General Assembly through the programme budget process. In contrast, the regular programme of technical cooperation is designed to be responsive to priority – and often urgent – capacity-development and technical cooperation requests from Member States. It supports short-term, targeted interventions, typically of one year or less and usually focused on a single country.

28. Both funding mechanisms are fully embedded within the programmes of work of the implementing entities. Implementing entities draw on Development Account and regular programme of technical cooperation funding, along with other regular budget and extrabudgetary resources, to respond effectively to the capacity-development priorities of Member States, in accordance with their mandates. Compared with extrabudgetary resources, Account and programme funds are generally considered to be more flexible. For instance, evaluations of twelfth tranche projects highlighted the adaptability of project outputs and the ability to reallocate funds across budget lines, such as staff travel and consultants, within established parameters, which enabled projects to respond swiftly to the evolving needs of countries during the COVID-19 pandemic.

29. Regular programme of technical cooperation funding is often used as a means of initial engagement, enabling rapid responses that may evolve into larger-scale initiatives supported by other funding sources, including the Development Account. Conversely, Account-funded projects may lead to follow-up activities financed through the programme to address urgent or emerging needs in either the same or additional countries. Activities under the regular programme of technical cooperation may also run in parallel with Account projects, providing in-depth technical support at the country level.

30. For example, ESCWA initially used regular programme of technical cooperation funds to support Member States seeking to improve their competitiveness rankings and subsequently developed a Development Account-funded project that later attracted

¹⁷ See https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/osginf2022d5_en.pdf.

additional extrabudgetary resources.¹⁸ Similarly, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs twelfth tranche project “Inclusive development for Indigenous Peoples in Africa”, which ran from 2020 to 2023, built on earlier work in Namibia and Uganda financed through the ninth tranche of the Account and through the programme, and later informed a programme-funded initiative in Mozambique in 2024.

31. Both funding mechanisms also serve as platforms to pilot innovative approaches that, if proved successful, can help to attract extrabudgetary support for scaling up. The Account, in particular, enables the testing of new methodologies that might not initially attract bilateral donor interest but show potential for broader impact.

32. The management structures of the Development Account and the regular programme of technical cooperation differ, reflecting their distinct mandates, scopes and funding arrangements. The Account was established with a centralized programme management structure. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs serves as programme manager of the Account, with day-to-day operations managed by the Account’s programme management team, comprising four Professional staff and the Head of the Capacity Development Programme Management Office of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The team develops project shortlists, provides technical guidance, coordinates with focal points across implementing entities and oversees implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

33. In the case of the programme, funds are allocated directly by the Programme Planning and Budget Division of the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance to implementing entities based on their respective proposals in the section on the regular programme of technical cooperation of the proposed programme budget. The 11 implementing entities coordinate in the preparation of annual progress reports, with coordination support from the Programme Development Section of the Capacity Development Programme Management Office, but there are currently no dedicated posts for centralized management or coordination of programme activities. The report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the effectiveness of the regular programme of technical cooperation (A/80/153), submitted in accordance with paragraph 58 of resolution 79/257, includes proposals to enhance coordination of the programme.

34. Despite structural differences, the Account and the programme are closely coordinated at the entity level. In most entities, a single unit manages capacity-development work across multiple funding sources, maximizing synergies and strategic coherence. For example:

- The Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) oversees the planning and implementation of both Account and programme projects.
- The Capacity Development and Partnerships Section of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) oversees the capacity-development portfolio across Account, programme and extrabudgetary funding. This ensures synergies between the different funding sources.
- The Department of Economic and Social Affairs revised its programme guidelines and reporting templates in 2023 to include a dedicated section on complementarity and synergies with Account- and extrabudgetary-funded projects, encouraging more strategic planning and alignment.
- ESCWA manages all capacity development under a unified framework using an internal portal that tracks Member State requests and project activities. The

¹⁸ ESCWA fifteenth tranche project “Dynamic simulators to address ranking deficiencies of international indices platforms in the Arab region”.

portal enables staff to identify linkages and build Account projects informed by engagements under the programme.

- ECA requires that all regular programme of technical cooperation proposals demonstrate linkages with the regular programme of work, Account projects and extrabudgetary initiatives. Since 2021, its planning and reporting templates have included dedicated sections on complementarity, and all proposals are reviewed centrally by the Corporate Policy and Planning Section to ensure alignment and coherence.
- The ECE Programme Management Unit oversees the planning and implementation of programme, Account and extrabudgetary-funded projects, as well as the integration of activities into the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

35. These institutional mechanisms reflect the efforts of implementing entities to integrate and align resources under the Account and the programme with their broader mandates and operational realities. The Account's programme management team will support efforts to enhance coordination between the Account and the programme, including through the Account's focal points network and updates to Account guidance. This would build on the robust entity-level systems already in place, to ensure more effective and coherent delivery of capacity-development support to Member States.

D. Outreach to raise awareness of the Development Account and broader technical cooperation work

36. Outreach to raise awareness of the Development Account has taken place primarily at the level of the implementing entities, embedded within their broader engagement with Member States on capacity-development support. This approach reflects the practical reality that entities must make the most effective use of limited resources, including Account funding, to meet a growing volume of requests from Member States that far exceeds available funding.

37. As outlined in section A above, implementing entities maintain various channels for engaging with officials from relevant government ministries. These include mechanisms to report on completed capacity-development activities and to consult on national priorities and technical assistance needs. Intergovernmental processes that guide and review the work of implementing entities, both at the institutional level and in specific thematic areas, also serve as key platforms for outreach. For instance, UNCTAD submits an annual report to its Working Party on the Programme Plan and Programme Performance, detailing its technical cooperation activities, including those funded by the Account. That report informs the Working Party's review, the outcomes of which are submitted to the Trade and Development Board. In addition, UNCTAD maintains a dedicated web page providing information on its Account-supported work. ECE also prepares annual reports on technical cooperation activities.

38. Implementing entities also interact regularly with national officials through their normative and analytical work. For example, the ESCAP flagship publication, *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific*, which supports policy dialogue on emerging socioeconomic challenges, draws on extensive consultations with technical ministries across the region. These engagements also serve as important touchpoints to identify and respond to Member States' demand for United Nations technical cooperation, including capacity-development support. Each year, ECLAC produces several flagship publications, including the *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean*, the *Social Panorama of Latin America and the*

Caribbean, the *International Trade Outlook for Latin America and the Caribbean*, the *Fiscal Panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean* and the *Panorama of Productive Development Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean*, that also draw on extensive consultations with sectoral ministers in the Latin American and Caribbean region, providing examples of their emerging needs and demands.

39. At the country level, resident coordinator offices play a growing strategic role in aligning national capacity-development needs with the expertise of predominantly non-resident implementing entities. The 2023 evaluation of the resident coordinator system by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) found that resident coordinators engaged effectively with senior government officials and development partners to facilitate integrated policy support that is responsive to Member State priorities, drawing on United Nations expertise across both resident and non-resident entities. Consequently, resident coordinator offices are well positioned to act as entry points for implementing entities seeking insight on national priorities and opportunities for capacity-building aligned with agreed Sustainable Development Goal acceleration pathways.

40. Several implementing entities have adopted structured outreach strategies to inform Member States of available technical cooperation opportunities. For example, ECE employs a multi-pronged approach that includes:

- Targeted presentations during intergovernmental meetings
- Briefings with permanent missions in Geneva
- Engagement with sectoral ministries during in-country technical cooperation activities
- Consultations with resident coordinators and country teams to identify opportunities for joint programming
- Participation in regional and subregional platforms, such as the European Union-Central Asia Working Group on Environment and Climate Change, the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia, and the United Nations Regional Centre for the Sustainable Development Goals for Central Asia and Afghanistan
- Contributions to the design and implementation of Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, including involvement in thematic results groups

41. At the central level, the Development Account programme management team maintains a dedicated website (<https://da.desa.un.org>), which provides an overview of all ongoing and completed projects. The team also prepares an annual progress report for submission to the General Assembly, beginning in 2025. The report includes implementation updates on projects under completed tranches – for example, the fourteenth progress report, presented to the General Assembly at its eightieth session, covers projects from the twelfth tranche (2020–2023). These reports are reviewed by the Advisory Committee and the Fifth Committee.

42. To enhance visibility and understanding of the Development Account and other capacity-development initiatives managed by implementing entities at Headquarters, periodic briefings will be organized to inform Member State representatives more broadly. These efforts are aimed at promoting transparency, highlighting results and strengthening alignment with Member State priorities across the United Nations development pillar.

E. Options to diversify and increase Development Account funding

43. As noted in section C above, the Account is fully integrated into the implementing entities' programme of work. The entities use Development Account, regular programme of technical cooperation and other regular budget and extrabudgetary resources that are available for their use to maximize the overall impact of the capacity-development support that they deliver in line with the mandates given by their respective governing bodies and the Member States that constitute them. This entails the use of the limited resources available under the Account to raise extrabudgetary funds to supplement them in supporting the project objectives or permit continuation of the activities.

44. The resources available to the implementing entities, including Development Account funds, are not enough to meet all Member State demands for capacity-development support that are addressed to the entities. All implementing entities have employed Account funds strategically. The broad parameters for the use of the funds have been defined largely in response to the directives of the Advisory Committee and the Fifth Committee and with a view to ensuring the efficient and effective use of the funds to contribute to enhanced capacities of Member States. Broadly, the entities are expected to primarily use their existing staff resources to implement the projects, engage national consultants over international consultants and apply cost-saving measures, including limiting staff travel and in-person modalities, to the extent possible without undermining the effectiveness of the support delivered to the target countries. Entities' ability to provide tailored support to meet priority Member State needs is a feature flagged as being of particular importance to beneficiary Member States.

45. As indicated in section I.E, Financial and in-kind support, of the fourteenth progress report (A/80/92), more than three quarters of the projects of the twelfth tranche received financial and/or in-kind support to supplement their funding. In-kind support included the provision of meeting venues and payment of related expenses, the payment of travel of participants and resource persons attending workshops, and the provision of staff and experts. Cash support was used to pay for the travel and daily subsistence allowance of participants and staff in workshops and working groups; an expert consultant; the completion of specific deliverables and activities, such as a policy handbook, fact-finding missions, reports, capacity-building workshops and studies; and services, such as translation, editing and printing.

46. While there is fundraising at the project level, the possibility of undertaking a centralized fundraising initiative for the Development Account was generally viewed by stakeholders consulted for the present report as challenging, due primarily to the wide geographical and thematic diversity of Account-funded projects. Nevertheless, targeted outreach efforts, both at Headquarters and by implementing entities, can play an important role in drawing the interest of potential donors, including beneficiary and donor Governments, multilateral development banks and other institutions. Such outreach could lead to funding for complementary or follow-up activities or allow more countries to benefit from successful Account project interventions.

III. Priorities for further improvement

47. Efforts to drive further improvement in the delivery of capacity-development support under the Development Account will include the following:

- The programme management team and the Steering Committee will organize periodic briefings at Headquarters on the Development Account and its results

achieved, with a view to raising greater awareness of the Account among Member State delegates more broadly.

- The programme management team will support efforts to strengthen complementarity between the Development Account and the regular programme of technical cooperation and maximize the combined impact of the activities implemented through them, including through the Account's focal points network and updates to Account guidance, as well as through collaboration between the Development Coordination Office and the focal points to examine how the Account and the programme can be leveraged to support Member States' requests for integrated policy advice and capacity support in line with agreed Sustainable Development Goal acceleration pathways, as recommended by OIOS.¹⁹

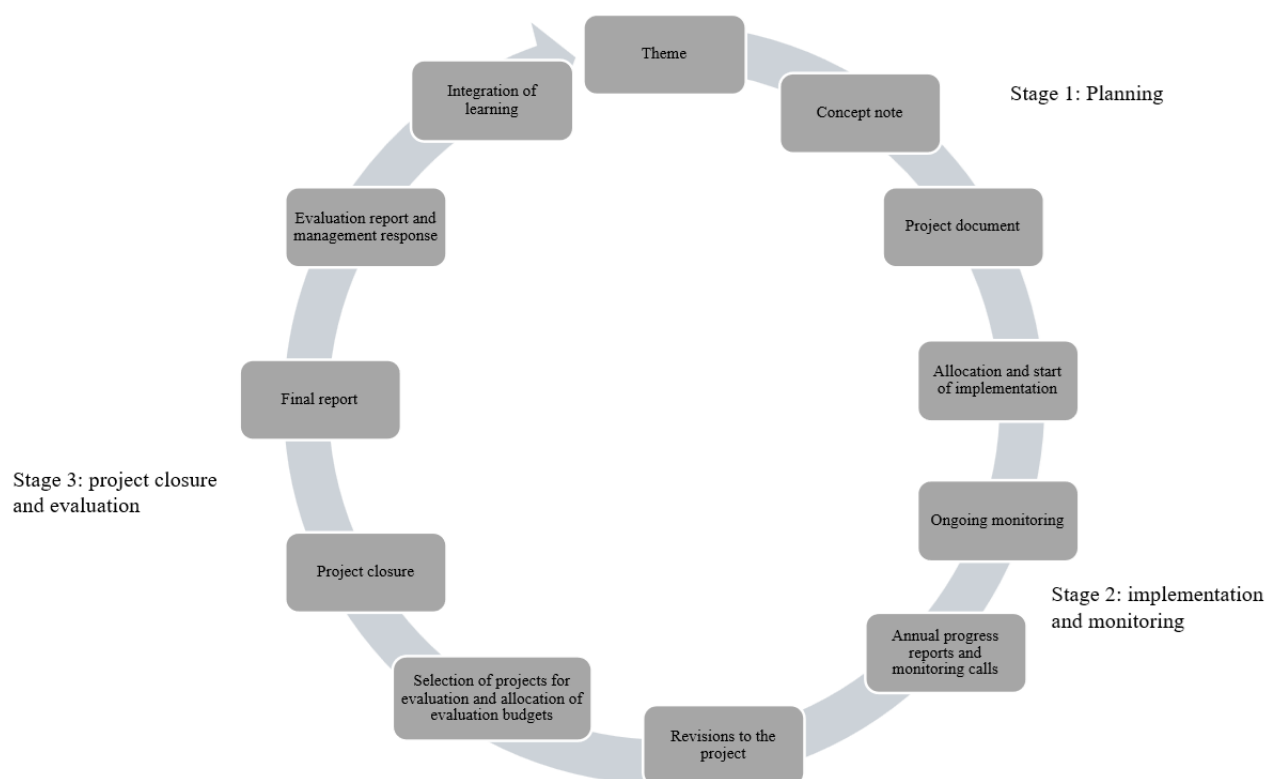
IV. Recommendation

48. **The General Assembly may wish to take note of the present report.**

¹⁹ OIOS, "Evaluation of resident coordinator system support to enabling coherent United Nations policy advice", assignment No. IED-23-019, 4 January 2024, p. 23.

Annex I

Development Account project cycle



Source: “Working with the Development Account: a guide for implementing entities”, 2025. Available at <https://da.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/dafiles/Guidelines/Guide%20to%20the%20Development%20Account%202025.pdf>.

Annex II

Selection criteria for Development Account projects

The selection of projects is guided by a set of criteria aimed at ensuring strategic relevance, feasibility and impact. Key considerations include:

- (a) Strategic prioritization by the implementing entity, based on its programme of work and mandate;
- (b) Alignment with the overarching theme of the tranche under which the project is proposed;
- (c) Demonstrated demand from target countries, reflecting their expressed needs and priorities;
- (d) Clear mandate and institutional capacity of the implementing entity to execute the project effectively;
- (e) A sound results framework, including clearly defined outputs, outcomes and overall objective;
- (f) Potential for measurable capacity-development results, with a focus on monitoring, evaluation and learning.

Source: “Working with the Development Account: a guide for implementing entities”.
