



European Union

EU Statement on

Agenda item 3: Evaluation of technical cooperation activities in 2021

**Technical Assistance and Cooperation Committee
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**

Vienna, 22 November 2021

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the EU and its Member States. The following countries align themselves with this statement: Turkey[§], the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia*, Albania*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Iceland[†], Norway[†], Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and San Marino.

I would like to thank the Director of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), Mr. Paul Manning, the entire staff of the OIOS and the Secretariat for preparing the report on “Evaluation of Technical Cooperation Activities in 2021”, as contained in document GOV/2021/46 and its annexes. I also wish to thank the Director of OIOS for the technical briefing held on 2 November, as well as for his introductory remarks.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU and its Member States reiterate the importance of objective and systematic evaluation and monitoring guided by the internationally recognized criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, results-based delivery and sustainability. The work of the OIOS is an indispensable component of project management, and we call on the Department of Technical Cooperation (TC) to make full use of the evaluation findings and recommendations in its future programme planning and implementation.

[§]Candidate Country

*Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania as well as potential Candidate Country Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

[†]Iceland and Norway are members of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

We take note that OIOS was able to complete all Country-level Evaluation and Audit (CLEAs) exercises this year despite the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions and unexpected staffing constraints. We commend Director Manning and his team for this achievement and look forward to further expanding the country coverage in 2022 and beyond.

This year's report has focused on four country-level exercises in the European region and the evaluation of TC project design. We note with satisfaction the OIOS' conclusion that the Agency's support adds significant value, is well focused and relevant to the national development needs and priorities. We also welcome the recognized importance of having key national priorities linked to the EU acquis in those countries and their complementarity with the Sustainable Development Goals. The outcome of the evaluation of "Agency internal collaboration in the TC Project Design Phase" is equally promising, underlining that the enhanced cooperation and coordination between various departments of the IAEA Secretariat throughout the TC project cycle helps to improve the quality of TC projects.

The report further notes, however, the imbalance between the volume of TC programme procurements and human resources availability. The Agency should therefore consider placing more focus on technical advice and capacity-building activities than on procurement. This is particularly relevant in the context of another reoccurring OIOS finding that the process for managing TC procurement is not as sustainable as it should be, which has resulted, inter alia, in delays in implementation and could even jeopardize the delivery of the TC Programme. We encourage the TC Department to look closely into the nine areas identified by the OIOS to improve the efficiency in TC procurement.

We also invite the IAEA to enhance productive partnerships with other UN organisations at the country level, for example by utilizing existing training and coordination opportunities for Secretariat staff and Member States.

Furthermore, we note the OIOS recommendation that gender mainstreaming remains a challenge to both the Secretariat's staff and TC counterparts. We encourage the Agency to take further practical steps to effectively mainstream gender considerations in its programmes and projects. This is a long-standing EU request. We thus urge the Secretariat to incorporate a gender equality perspective in the TC Department's monitoring approach and to implement the related OIOS recommendations.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU and its Member States appreciate that the Secretariat has accepted all recommendations issued by OIOS in 2021 and we look forward to their timely and full implementation. We reiterate the importance for the TC Department to continue working closely with the OIOS and address all recommendations, including those on the TC's corporate knowledge management and outcome monitoring approach, which will consolidate the overall quality, governance and accountability of the TCP.

The EU and its Member States continue to support the important work of the OIOS and we look forward to engaging with the Office on its future evaluation work plan.

With these comments, we take note of document GOV/2021/46.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.