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Activities of the ESCWA Technology Centre

Summary

The present document reviews the activities undertaken by the Technology Centre of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) since the first session of the Committee on Technology for Development, held in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, on 11 and 12 February 2017. It also contains the meeting outcomes of the Centre's Board of Governors and its Technical Committee. Annex I to the present document sets out the members of the Board of Governors for the period 2018-2021, and annex II contains the Centre's programme of work for 2019.

The Committee on Technology for Development is invited to take note of the present document.

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Introduction

1. The Economic Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) established the ESCWA Technology Centre in 2010 to build member States' capacity in developing and managing science, technology and innovation systems; developing, transferring, adapting and applying appropriate technology; improving the legal and commercial framework for technology transfer; and increasing scientific and technological knowledge in key economic sectors. Jordan hosts the ESCWA Technology Centre at the Royal Scientific Society. The Centre receives support from the Society and from the Higher Council for Science and Technology of Jordan.

2. The present document reviews the activities undertaken by the ESCWA Technology Centre since the first session of the Committee on Technology for Development, held in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, on 11 and 12 February 2017. The Centre's programme of work for 2017 and 2018 set out the following expected accomplishments:

(a) To map, analyse and improve components of national technology development and transfer systems and relevant legislation to obtain more productive systems and more coherent legal frameworks in support of more inclusive economic development;

(b) To strengthen the scientific content of various critical economic sectors with selective contributions related to adequate technologies for food security, green development and sustainable energy and water resources, which reinforce socioeconomic resilience in member States;

(c) To facilitate regional cooperation in research, development and innovation to address challenges in identified regional sustainable development priorities such as water, energy, food security and climate change mitigation.

3. Activities undertaken in the period 2017-2018 to achieve those accomplishments include expert group meetings, workshops, studies, technical reports and projects. Moreover, the present document sets out the advisory services provided by the Board of Governors over the same period pursuant to requests by member States, and the partnerships it forged with national, regional and international institutions and organizations.

4. The present document also sets out the periodic meetings of the Board of Governors for the period 2017-2018 and resulting decisions, and gives an overview of the meetings of the Centre's Technical Committee and key recommendations on developing the Centre's programmes of work. Annex I to the present document set out the members of the Board of Governors for the period 2018-2021, and annex II contains the Centre's programme of work for 2019, which was presented to the Board of Governors at its eighth meeting held in Amman on 15 November 2018. The programme was adopted and included in the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019.

I. ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRE SINCE THE FIRST SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

5. Over the period 2017-2018, the ESCWA Technology Centre undertook several activities in the fields of technology development and transfer; technology for food security, green development and sustainable resource use; and strengthening regional cooperation in research, development and innovation. The following sections summarize key meetings, workshops, training sessions and projects implemented by the Centre, and the main publications it has issued.

A. TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFER

1. Meetings

6. The Centre held the [Regional Forum on National Knowledge and Technology Development and Transfer Systems](#) in Beirut on 27 and 28 November 2017, aimed at examining the necessary legislative and policy reforms to support technology development and transfer systems; encouraging links between universities and research institutions active in the economic and industrial development sector; and strengthening the regional network of experts and institutions concerned with technology transfer through a platform for exchange and collaboration.

7. The Centre co-organized the [Arab International Industrial Conference](#) on the theme “Steps towards sustainable innovative development”, held in Cairo from 6 to 8 May 2018, in collaboration with the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. The Centre also participated in the exhibition organized on the sidelines of the Conference. Moreover, at the Conference, the Centre organized a workshop on [promoting the outcomes of technical studies and research in selected fields \(investment opportunities in manufacturing\)](#), aimed at devising solutions for Arab industrial difficulties in view of scientific research challenges, such as financing problems and a lack of interaction between the private sector and investors, on the one hand, and scientific research outcomes, on the other, to bridge gaps between industry, research and the private sector. The workshop also presented investment opportunities related to scientific research findings in the energy, water and food fields.

2. Workshops and training

8. In 2017, the Centre organized five national workshops under a project funded by the United Nations Development Account on operationalizing national systems for technology transfer in several Arab countries. The workshop was held in [Egypt, Lebanon, Oman, Morocco](#) and [Tunisia](#). Under the same project, the Centre organized four national workshops on technology management and protecting and marketing innovation, held in [Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco](#) and [Tunisia](#).

9. The Centre organized a regional workshop on the [governance of science parks and technological incubators](#), held in Khartoum from 22 to 24 October 2018, in collaboration with other regional organizations working in that field. The workshop highlighted the status of science parks and technological incubators in Arab countries and their role in promoting a knowledge-based economy, strengthening cooperation between academia and the industrial sector, and ensuring an enabling environment for technology transfer.

3. Reports and studies

10. In 2017, the Centre prepared a study on [technology opportunities for sustainable development in Arab countries](#), to examine the possibility of using technology in effectively and efficiently achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the region, especially those related to climate change. The study reviewed the regional context and science, technology and innovation (STI) systems in Arab countries and their ability to advance. It also considered the options provided by STI for achieving sustainable development, and addressed technology development and transfer to achieve the Paris Agreement. The Centre prepared six reports on national systems for technology development and transfer in [Egypt, Lebanon, Oman, Mauritania, Morocco](#) and [Tunisia](#). The reports included surveys covering institutions, systems and laws related to technology development and transfer, and recommendations on improving the work and performance of national systems.

11. In 2018, the Centre prepared a report entitled [“Science and technology parks: global outlook with a focus on the Arab region”](#) to assess the importance of science and technology parks as a key success factor in achieving the SDGs. The report evaluates the role of science and technology parks in local economies and

highlights their objectives. It also compares between various governance and management methods, and identifies success factors, evaluation criteria and best practices in that field. A draft of the report was presented to regional experts at a regional workshop held in Khartoum, prior to publishing the final version on the ESCWA website in Arabic and English.

4. *Projects*

12. Over the period 2017-2018, the Centre, in collaboration with local partners, worked on a project funded by the United Nations Development Account on operationalizing national systems for technology transfer in several Arab countries. Egypt, Lebanon, Oman, Morocco and Tunisia benefited from the project. Mauritania also benefited through funding by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Project achievements include operationalizing national offices and networks for technology development and transfer in those countries; updating STI legislation and related policies to establish interconnected national systems; preparing a road map for a national innovation system in Egypt, Lebanon, Oman, Morocco and Tunisia; and developing policy models on property rights and technology transfer at the institutional level.

B. TECHNOLOGY FOR FOOD SECURITY, GREEN DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE USE

1. *Meetings*

13. The Centre organized an [expert group meeting on advancing green technologies through a science-policy interface](#), held in Beirut on 5 and 6 April 2017, in collaboration with the ESCWA Sustainable Development Policies Division, to highlight the role of policies in supporting green technologies for sustainable development in the Arab region and enhancing links between science and policies.

14. The Centre participated in the [eleventh session of the ESCWA Committee on Energy](#), held in Cairo from 14 to 16 May 2017. The Centre made a presentation on energy technologies and their use in the Arab region to achieve sustainable development.

15. The Centre organized the [Arab Forum on Nanoscience and Technology Applications](#), held in Amman on 3 and 4 October 2017, in collaboration with the Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization, the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization. The Forum reviewed the implementation phases of the Arab initiative on nanoscience and technology applications, which was launched by Arab industry ministers in 2012, and the support mechanism for its implementation. It also considered available resources in that field in Arab countries. The Forum provided a networking opportunity for researchers and investors, and showcased production models for nanotechnology applications in the fields of water desalination and solar power.

16. The Centre participated in the fifth [Arab Roundtable Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production](#), held in Cairo from 18 to 20 December 2017, on the theme “From action plans to implementation”. The Centre’s participation was a result of collaboration between the Centre, the United Nations Environment Programme, the League of Arab States and the Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE). The Meeting stressed the need for green technology development and transfer for sustainable consumption and production in the region, and reviewed progress by Arab countries towards the SDGs, especially SDG 12 on ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns.

17. The Centre held a specialized session on the theme “Technology and innovation for agricultural development”, in collaboration with the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas, at the eighth Scientific Agricultural Conference held in Al-Karak, Jordan, from 15 to 17 October 2017. The session aimed to stimulate discussion between regional and international experts on using green technology to develop a sustainable agricultural sector in the region, reduce hunger and increase prosperity.

2. Reports and studies

18. In 2017, the Centre prepared a study on promising opportunities for nanotechnology projects on water desalination and solar power in Arab countries, in collaboration with the Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization and the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization. The study focuses on the feasibility of manufacturing in projects on water desalination and solar power using nanotechnologies, and reviews several model projects that can be applied in Arab countries.

19. Also in 2017, the Centre prepared a study on classifying green technology applications in Arab countries. It contains a summary of green technologies that contribute to ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources, classified by their suitability, characteristics and areas of application in Arab countries, and by their effectiveness and Arab countries' capacity to bear their costs.

20. In 2018, the Centre prepared a study on public policies supporting green technologies, in collaboration with the ESCWA Sustainable Development Policies Division. It reviewed the necessary economic and financial policies for ensuring the sustainable management of environmental issues and promoting the use of green technologies. The first draft was discussed at an expert group meeting on advancing green technologies through a science-policy interface.

C. STRENGTHENING REGIONAL COOPERATION IN RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION

21. The Centre organized a regional consultation on the ethics of scientific research and technology applications in the Arab region, held in Beirut on 11 and 12 July 2017, in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the National Council for Scientific Research in Lebanon. The meeting explored a regional approach to strengthening the ethics of scientific research and technology applications in the Arab region, and the possibility of developing regional approaches that can be applied in Arab countries. In its closing messages, the meeting focused on the need to enhance scientific research and technological applications in the Arab region, to standardize concepts and terminology related to scientific research ethics, and to achieve integration between natural sciences and humanities. Participants stressed the importance of developing a comprehensive and unified Arab charter on the ethics of scientific research and technology applications.

22. The Centre organized a consultative meeting to examine the overall strategic direction of the ESCWA Technology Centre for the coming years, held in Amman on 5 March 2018, in collaboration with several regional and national institutions and academies. The meeting identified a set of priorities for the transfer and employment of sustainable technology to achieve the SDGs, especially the environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

23. In 2018, the Centre conducted intensive consultations with senior departments of public and private institutions and national and regional academic and research bodies in Jordan to introduce the Centre and facilitate regional cooperation. Those institutions and bodies included the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Supreme Council for Science and Technology, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the National Agricultural Research Centre of Jordan, the Regional Office of the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, the Princess Sumaya University for Technology, the Water, Energy and Environment Centre at the University of Jordan, the Scientific Research Support Fund in Jordan, and the Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization.

II. ADVISORY SERVICES

24. Since the first session of the Committee on Technology for Development, the Centre has provided three advisory services following requests from Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen. In Jordan, the Technology Centre provided support to the National Research and Development Centre of the Supreme Council for Science and Technology in 2017 to develop a [national strategic plan](#) on research and development. In Lebanon, the

Technology Centre provided support to the Ministry of Energy and Water in 2017 to identify key components of a road map for technology transfer in gas-related industries. Regarding Yemen, the Centre held a [training workshop](#) on technology transfer and innovation to support excellence and innovation units in Yemeni academic institutions (Amman, 16-20 December 2018), which was attended by 14 participants from various universities and academic institutions in Yemen. The workshop included meetings to exchange experiences between Jordanian and Yemeni institutions; and working groups to clarify basic concepts and terminology related to innovation and entrepreneurship, to transfer knowledge on various types of intellectual property and their roles, and to present the vital components of a national environment that supports innovation and entrepreneurship and the necessary steps to formulate an institutional or national programme to support innovation and entrepreneurship.

III. PARTNERSHIPS

25. The ESCWA Technology Centre has forged various partnerships with governmental and private institutions, civil society and several regional and international organizations, aimed at increasing the impact of its normative activities, such as reports and studies, and improving the efficiency of services provided to member States. Partnerships can be long or short term, and some have a wider scope than others. The table sets out those institutions and organizations.

Institutions and organizations that partnered with the Centre to implement its activities in the period 2017-2018

Institution/organization	Country/parent institution
Royal Scientific Society	Jordan
Higher Council for Science and Technology	Jordan
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation	Jordan
Ministry of Information and Communication Technology	Jordan
Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization	League of Arab States
Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization	Regional group headquartered in Jordan
Academy of Scientific Research and Technology	Egypt
National Council for Scientific Research	Lebanon
Research Council	Oman
Ministry of Energy and Water	Lebanon
National Centre for Scientific and Technical Research	Morocco
University of Science, Technology and Medicine	Mauritania
National Agency for the Advancement of Scientific Research	Tunisia
Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization	League of Arab States
Africa City of Technology	Sudan
Union of Arab Scientific Research Councils	Sudan (headquarters)
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	Yemen
Mutah University	Jordan
Princess Sumaya University for Technology	Jordan
International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas	Egypt (headquarters)
Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN)	United Nations

IV. MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE ESCWA TECHNOLOGY CENTRE

26. Member States appointed representatives to the Board of Governors of the ESCWA Technology Centre for the period 2018-2021, as set out in annex I to the present document.

27. On 22 May 2017, pursuant to a recommendation made at the [sixth meeting of the Board of Governors](#), the Board's working group held a meeting in Amman to discuss the revised orientation of the Centre's work and the role of science and technology in the water-energy-food-climate change nexus. The working group

stressed the need to continue supporting the Centre, in particular through financing and partnerships, especially in view of its past work and success.

28. The Board of Governors held its seventh annual meeting in Beirut on 28 November 2017, which was attended by representative of 10 Arab countries. The Board reviewed the Centre's activities in 2017, and STI processes in the region and their contribution to achieving the SDGs. It also presented the preparation phases in the region for the Global Sustainable Development Report 2019, and the Centre's proposed programme of work for 2018. The Board stressed the need to communicate with the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils regarding the Global Sustainable Development Report 2019, and invite councils to contribute to it. The Board also underscored the importance of developing Arab plans to follow up on SDG implementation and the exchange of experiences, and establishing a fund to finance the SDGs in Arab countries. The Board endorsed the Centre's proposed programme of work for 2018, and called for greater regional cooperation in rebuilding countries emerging from conflict and in various scientific and technological fields, such as solid waste management. It recommended mobilizing financial resources for that important work. The Board also noted the benefit of technology transfer in devising solutions for urgent and chronic problems in Arab countries, especially those related to water scarcity and sustainable agriculture.

29. The Board of Governors, comprising its new membership, held its [eighth meeting](#) in Amman on 15 November 2018. Princess Sumaya bint El Hassan was elected Chair and Mr. Mouin Hamze was elected Vice-Chair for the period 2018-2019. Participants discussed the Centre's activities for 2018 and key recommendations of its Technical Committee, and presented the outcomes of the thirtieth ESCWA session and the Beirut Consensus on Technology for Development in the Arab Region. The Board adopted the Centre's proposed programme of work for 2019 (annex II to the present document), and recommended supporting preparations for an Arab science forum to be held in 2021 and following up on technical support activities provided to member States, especially national technology transfer offices.

V. MEETINGS OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OF THE ESCWA TECHNOLOGY CENTRE

30. The Centre's Technical Committee held its [fifth meeting](#) in Beirut on 23 and 24 May 2017, which was attended by 31 experts from 14 Arab countries representing regional organizations, scientific institutions and various research and industrial centres. Participants discussed the Centre's programme of work for 2018 and 2019, and stressed the need to focus on policies, governance, culture and awareness-raising, and to develop comprehensive regulatory frameworks to bridge the gap between research and the private sector. They also highlighted the importance of coordination to link science and policies, of advancing local programmes on development and innovation that ensure green energy solutions, and of the water-energy-food nexus.

31. The Centre's Technical Committee held its [sixth meeting](#) in Amman on 2 and 3 October 2018, which was attended by 27 experts from 13 Arab countries representing scientific institutions, research and industrial center, and regional and international organizations. Participants discussed the report of the thirtieth ESCWA session and the Beirut Consensus so as to translate into action the recommendations relevant to the Centre's work. The Technical Committee made several recommendations, notably to encourage the use of suitable and sustainable technologies in priority sectors, especially the agriculture, water, energy, waste management and climate change sectors; to coordinate and cooperate with the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization and the Climate Technology Centre and Network; and to support ESCWA member States in facing climate change challenges and implementing their national contributions. The Technical Committee also recommended developing a plan to establish an interactive platform to support technology and innovation, including a database containing information on implemented and future workshops, successful experiences, and research, innovation and legislation related to green technology.

Annex I***Members of the Board of Governors of the ESCWA Technology Centre
for the period 2018-2021**

State	Name	Job title	Organization
Jordan	HRH Princess Sumaya bint El Hassan	President	Royal Scientific Society
Iraq	Mr. Husain Dawoud	Director General, Sectors' Planning Directorate	Ministry of Planning
Kuwait	Ms. Samira Alsayed Omar	General Manager	Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research
Lebanon	Dr. Mouin Hamze	Secretary General	National Council for Scientific Research
Libya	Mr. Abulgasem Al Mashai	Senior Researcher	Authority of National Science Research and Technology
Mauritania	Mr. Ahmed Salem Etvagha	Director, Social Register General Direction of Development policies and strategies	Minister of Economy and Finance
Morocco	Mr. Mohammed Hajroun	Director of Electricity	Ministry of Energy, Mines and Sustainable Development
Oman	Mr. Obaid Al Saeedi	Director of Programs Department	The Research Council
State of Palestine	Mr. Mohammad Bader	Policy and Strategic Planning Department	Ministry of Telecom and Information Technology
Sudan	Mr. Ahmed Hassan Fahal	President, Scientific Research and Innovation Authority	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Syrian Arab Republic	Ms. Fadia Sulaiman	Director General, National Agency for Network Services	Ministry of Communications and Technology
Tunisia	Mr. Mounir Farikha	Professor of Higher Education	Education, Higher School of Communication of Tunis
Yemen	Dr. Yahya Al Rewi	President	National Information Center

* Issued as submitted.

Annex II

Programme of work of the ESCWA Technology Centre for 2019

The overall orientation of the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019 is to foster sustainable development, social justice and regional integration among member States. Under the sustainable development pillar, it supports the integrated management of natural resources leading to improved food, water and energy security and enhanced resilience to climate change; and promotes mainstreaming of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into regional and national policy processes, including through technology transfer. Three expected accomplishments were identified for the ESCWA Technology Centre in that regard.

On 2 and 3 October 2018, the ESCWA Technology Centre held its sixth Technical Committee meeting in Amman to discuss the priority areas of the Centre's work and its programme for 2019, based on the overall ESCWA programme of work, key regional priorities in the area of technology, as expressed namely in the Beirut Consensus on Technology for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region, which was adopted by member States at the thirtieth ESCWA session (Beirut, June 2018).

To implement its programme of work for 2019, the Centre will draw on the expertise of its human resources, seconded experts from the host institution and experts hired by ESCWA. It will also leverage partnerships with regional and international organizations and academic institutions, in particular through members of its Board of Governors.

Expected accomplishment 1: Enhanced national technology development and transfer systems contributing to sustainable development.

Activities planned under expected accomplishment 1 include the following:

- (a) *Technical material, reports and fact sheets*
 - (i) Technical material on sustainable technology for achieving SDG 12, on ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns, in Arab countries, focusing on technologies that save water and energy in the agriculture sector;
 - (ii) Technical material on the importance of implementing international standards in operating science and technology parks to achieve sustainable development in the Arab region;
 - (iii) Report on sustainable management of conflict waste to support the implementation of SDG 12.
- (b) *Expert group meetings*
 - (i) Regional meeting on technology transfer and adaptation for achieving SDG 12 in Arab countries;
 - (ii) Regional meeting on the role of science and technology parks in achieving sustainable development in the Arab region.
- (c) *Projects*
 - (i) Strengthening the capacity of Arab countries in climate change adaptation through South-South cooperation in the transfer of agricultural technologies (following up on the 2018 proposal and looking for resource mobilization opportunities);
 - (ii) Strengthening the resilience of Arab countries to climate change and food insecurity by re-engaging Youth in agriculture through the adoption and transfer of green agricultural technologies (following up on the 2018 proposal and looking for resource mobilization opportunities).

(d) *Advisory services*

The ESCWA Technology Centre will respond to member States' requests for advisory services. In 2018, Oman requested capacity-building on green jobs and the Centre will be responding to it in 2019. The Centre has also received a request from its Board of Governors to follow up on national technology transfer offices (NTTOs).

Expected accomplishment 2: Improved knowledge in Arab countries on the role of technology as one of the major means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Activities planned under expected accomplishment 2 include the following:

- (a) *Technical material, reports and fact sheets*
 - (i) Fact sheet on innovative technologies for improving the resilience of the agriculture sector to climate change (in support for SDGs 2 and 13);
 - (ii) Report on investments and access to sustainable financing for green technology transfer in the Arab region – focus on technologies for the agriculture sector and sustainable conflict waste management to achieve SDG 12.
- (b) *Expert group meetings*
 - (i) Meeting on green technology investments and access to sustainable financing in the Arab region;
 - (ii) Sixth round table on sustainable consumption patterns: Green technology transfer and adaptation for implementing Goal 12 - A path towards circular economy.
- (c) *Projects*

Project proposal: Interactive platform on sustainable technology for Arab countries to provide data, build capacity and promote best practices.

Expected accomplishment 3: Enhanced regional cooperation in science, technology and innovation to address key development challenges of water scarcity, energy and food security, and adaptation to climate change.

Activities planned under expected accomplishment 3 include the following:

- (a) *Substantive servicing of meetings*
 - (i) Seventh meeting of the Technical Committee of the ESCWA Technology Centre;
 - (ii) Ninth meeting of the Board of Governors of the ESCWA Technology Centre;
 - (iii) Substantive contribution to follow up on the Beirut Consensus, ESCWA Executive Committee meetings and other processes.
- (b) *Substantive input to regional and national processes*

Substantive input to regional and national process, in partnership with the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations such as the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO), Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), and United Nations and other international organizations.
