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**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION****FOLLOW-UP TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS  
ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION AT ITS TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION***Action Plan for Partnership Development and Resource Mobilization***Summary**

This document contains a partnership development and resource mobilization strategy and action plan which identifies an institutional and strategic framework for the expansion and improvement of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) financial, technical and institutional resource base, with a view to delivering more relevant, effective and timely services to ESCWA member countries. It is linked to the ESCWA technical cooperation strategy (E/ESCWA/23/5(Part III)/Add.1) and the Report on mobilizing financial resources and funding: proposed multi-year funding plan (E/ESCWA/24/5(Part IV)) and responds to resolution 275 (XXIV) concerning technical cooperation, partnership development and resource mobilization. This document is an annex to the Report of the Executive Secretary on activities under the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (E/ESCWA/25/5(Part IV)/Add.1) which will be submitted to the twenty-fifth ESCWA session.

The strategy and action plan was prepared by an ESCWA inter-division task force, whose members were appointed by the Executive Secretary. This output is based on extensive deliberation and critical assessment of recent ESCWA experience of resource mobilization, fundraising and the building of strategic partnerships. It also draws upon lessons learned in addressing challenges and resource constraints, and builds upon the strengths and comparative advantages of ESCWA in addressing priority development issues in the region.

The aim of this document is to help strengthen the ability of ESCWA to forge strategic partnerships with key players in the region and improve performance in raising, managing and disbursing funds effectively and efficiently for operational activities under the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation, the United Nations Development Account funding line and extrabudgetary resources. The report also proposes operational measures and practical steps to be undertaken by ESCWA, in cooperation with member countries and partner organizations in the region, with a view to activating the action plan and achieving tangible results. Through this report, the secretariat seeks the support and endorsement of member countries for consolidating cooperation and expanding opportunities for mobilizing funds, resources and partnership in the implementation of development activities.

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## I. BACKGROUND

### A. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

1. Fundraising and resource mobilization are the means by which the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) can translate the normative work of the Commission into operational activities and projects by supplementing the regular budget. The normative and analytical work of ESCWA is mainly delivered through its regular programme of work and regular budget (RB). Operational activities complement the normative support provided to member countries and focus on capacity-building, policy development and field project implementation. However, resource constraints and dwindling donor contributions are limiting the scope and impact of those operational activities. Fundraising and resource mobilization therefore provide avenues through which operational activities can be strengthened and expanded in order to respond to the increasingly complex development challenges facing the region.

2. The proposed strategic framework and plan of action offer a holistic and integrated approach to pursuing partnerships and strengthening resource mobilization with a view to complementing and supplementing the normative work programme of the Commission, and enable it to address emerging issues, as well as improve the performance and effectiveness of ESCWA operational activities and services to member countries and regional stakeholders. To that end, it seeks to reframe and consolidate cooperative relationships with member countries, major groups and donors as partners in regional development. The action plan also addresses ways to improve the accessibility, reliability and flexibility of operational activities through more targeted and efficient approaches to resource mobilization and extrabudgetary (XB) fundraising.

### B. JUSTIFICATION AND RATIONALE

3. This report has been prepared pursuant to ESCWA resolution 275 (XXIV) concerning technical cooperation (TC), partnership development and resource mobilization and resolution 263 (XXIII) concerning promoting partnership and resource mobilization. It also builds on the recommendations of the ESCWA TC strategy (E/ESCWA/23/5(Part III)/Add.1), which calls for: (a) the clarification of its strategic position; (b) the development of a strategic partnership approach; (c) the efficient management of resources; (d) the improvement of communication; and (e) the enhancement of the mode of operation. The strategic framework and plan of action complement continuing efforts at ESCWA aimed at strengthening technical cooperation, which have included establishing and maintaining a database on donors (see list of donors in the annex), strengthening e-TC services, and establishing a network of TC focal points in ESCWA member countries.

4. The Executive Secretary of ESCWA established a task force for resource mobilization with a view to conducting a situational analysis of the status of XB funding at ESCWA and proposing means of improving fundraising and resource mobilization, thereby extending the impact of ESCWA RB activities. This report is based on the consolidated contributions of task force members. While acknowledging that partnership is an end in itself as well as a mode of operation that has far-reaching and multi-purpose objectives, the task force also undertook an examination of partnerships as a means of strengthening the effectiveness of ESCWA operational activities.

5. This report has been prepared in order to enable member country representatives to advise and support ESCWA in adopting an appropriate course of action. As such, it is also intended as a road map to assist ESCWA divisions to more effectively target, prepare, implement and monitor operational activities that respond to the Commission's thematic areas of expertise.

### C. SITUATION ANALYSIS

6. RB resources over the past four bienniums have decreased in real terms when inflation and review costing are taken into consideration. Additionally, the ratio of RB resources to XB funds remains relatively

low, albeit a significant increase in XB resources was registered between 2006 and 2007, largely as a result of funds made available for Iraq.

REGULAR AND EXTRABUDGETARY RESOURCES FOR THE BIENNIUMS 2002-2003 – 2008-2009  
 (United States dollars)

	Regular budget	Extrabudgetary <sup>a/</sup>
2002-2003	50 017 100.00	2 973 792.7
2004-2005	49 829 700.00	4 346 366.0
2006-2007	58 917 800.00	19 446 520.39
2008-2009	58 107 500.00	8 667 518.00 <sup>b/</sup>

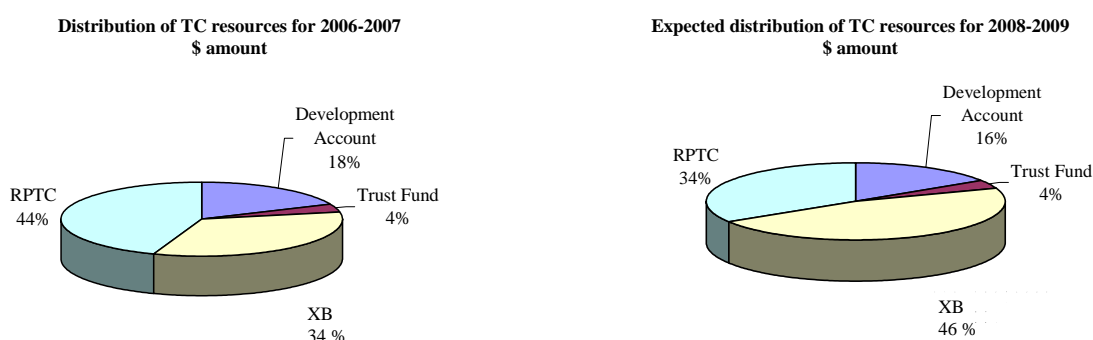
a/ The figures under this column include Development Account and Regular Programme of technical Cooperation funds. They would decrease by between and 50 per cent. Those funds were excluded from the totals.

b/ This figure is based on the balance available in January 2008 under XB and does not reflect the actual amount that will be available for the whole biennium.

7. Operational activities in ESCWA are funded from three main sources, namely, the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC), under RB section 22; the United Nations Development Account (DA) under RB section 34, which is managed by the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA); and XB resources generated from various donors in different forms. With financial contributions, XB resources are allocated either to the ESCWA Trust Fund or to programme-specific projects and activities.

8. RPTC and DA funding lines are allocated by the United Nations and secured prior to the start of each biennium and are thus generally predictable in nature. There is therefore adequate time for divisions to incorporate planned activities into their work plans and allocate the necessary human resources and logistic support for their implementation. Nevertheless, the funds derived from those resources are limited in comparison with the resources that could be secured through XB fundraising efforts. However, the success of fundraising efforts has been limited and is not always predictable. XB resource mobilization has not therefore provided a secure and reliable flow of funding for longer-term interventions and assistance to member countries.

Figure I. TC resources 2006-2007 and 2008-2009



9. The increase in operational activities and XB resources mobilized over recent years indicates that ESCWA has comparative advantages in a number of areas including, in particular, the following:

(a) Access to a large and diverse range of partners and donors, which gives ESCWA a rich institutional experience with different types and modes of resource mobilization; however, that experience must be systematically documented and shared in-house and with key partners;

(b) An in-house knowledge base, through regional advisors and multi-disciplinary teams of experts, which allows critical evaluation and assessment of operational activities implemented with XB resources, building on the synergy and complementarities between RB and XB and between normative/analytical work and operational activities;

(c) A regional scale of operation, which allows harmonization, comparability, standardization and exchange of experience between member countries, thereby reinforcing the normative dimension of ESCWA work.

10. However, a closer look at the funding situation reveals some significant challenges which must be addressed if ESCWA wants to play a leading role in resource mobilization. Those include the following:

(a) XB resources remain limited in comparison to RB resources, as indicated above, and in comparison to the ambitious objectives set out in the TC strategy and increasing requests from member countries for more in-depth, frequent and holistic operational activities;

(b) XB resources are thinly spread over a large range of activities, in small grant amounts: projects over \$ 5 million dollars represent only five per cent of total XB resources, while over 62 per cent of XB resources are allocated to projects valued at under \$ 100,00 (see figure II). Such a situation is not cost-effective in terms of the time and human resources necessary for managing XB project funds and servicing operational activities, and ultimately dilutes the potential impact that ESCWA could have as a significant regional leader in resource mobilization;

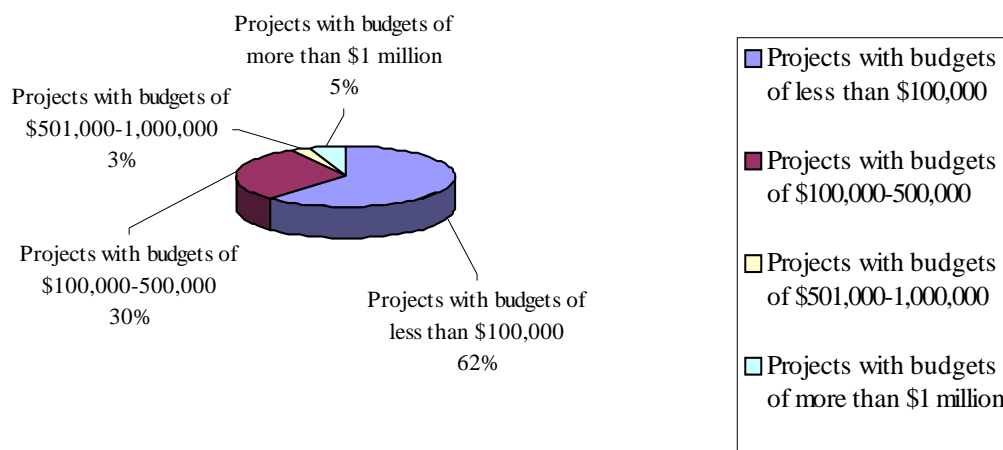
(c) Fund flows are not always secured, meaning that a core team of project personnel cannot be sustained on a long-term basis;

(d) Project documents are prepared on an ad-hoc basis and in some cases without adequate time allowed for preparation; as a result, operational activities are not always well integrated into divisions' programmes of work, and showcase products and deliverables sometimes lack the expected quality assurance, which can undermine the visibility of ESCWA;

(e) Some weaknesses are noted in absorptive capacity and ability to meet donor and partner requirements.

11. The purpose of the resource mobilization strategy is therefore to address those challenges where possible at both the organizational and divisional levels, in order to strengthen ESCWA capacity for resource mobilization and full implementation of operational activities.

**Figure II. Distribution of XB projects by amount of funding**



## **II. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

### **A. MISSION STATEMENT**

12. The strategic framework and associated action plan for partnership development and resource mobilization are guided by the following aim:

To generate more secure and sustainable financial and non-financial resources that will allow ESCWA to expand upon the RB work programme with supplementary activities aimed at tackling emerging issues that are not addressed in the current work programme; and to fulfill its mandate to carry out operational activities focused on research, training, capacity-building and pilot initiatives aimed at addressing the main obstacles and challenges to achieving sustainable economic and social development in the region in line with the Millennium Development Goals. Such challenges include unemployment, water scarcity, political instability, social and economic polarization and gender inequality.

### **B. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

13. In order to complement the normative work of the Commission and supplement the regular budget work programme with additional activities, and respond to emerging issues, the strategy and action plan seek to achieve the following:

- (a) Secure reliable and relatively predictable sources of funding;
- (b) Introduce funding flexibility into the biennium work programme cycles;
- (c) Ensure an enabling institutional framework with clearly-defined roles and responsibilities;
- (d) Forge strategic partnerships with potential donors and partners;
- (e) Respond in a timely manner to requests for assistance from member countries by adopting a demand-driven approach.

### **C. APPROACH**

14. The strategic approach to partnership development and resource mobilization revolves around the following guiding principles for enabling action:

- (a) Regional initiatives should be pursued as a priority, albeit supporting activities can be implemented at the national and local levels;
- (b) Coordination should be facilitated and encouraged through internal and external support mechanisms;
- (c) Communication with potential donors and stakeholders and transparency is central to securing the commitment of partners and beneficiaries and increasing ESCWA visibility;
- (d) Multidisciplinary approaches to project implementation should be maximized through teamwork and partnership.

## **III. PLAN OF ACTION**

15. In order to achieve the objectives laid out in the fundraising and resource mobilization strategic framework, an action plan is proposed for its implementation. The action plan concentrates on four components, namely, (a) identification of funding priorities; (b) the differentiation of funding typologies;

(c) implementation mechanisms; and (d) monitoring and reporting. In developing the action plan, institutional aspects, procedural measures, capacity constraints and budgetary requirements were considered, along with the roles and responsibilities of the actors responsible for fundraising and resource mobilization at ESCWA.

#### A. PRIORITY IDENTIFICATION

16. In order to raise funds, priority themes are needed to focus development efforts and effectively target potential partners and donors. Priority themes for resource mobilization will be largely identified on the basis of the funding priorities identified by substantive divisions and units. Priority areas should be in line with the objectives and expected accomplishments set out in the strategic framework for the current and forthcoming bienniums, while allowing flexibility to address emerging global and regional issues that are likely to affect socio-economic, political and environmental conditions in the region. Priority themes should, to the extent possible, reflect multi-disciplinary thinking and areas of strength and expertise of ESCWA experts.

17. As the lead actors for implementing TC activities, substantive divisions and units should remain the drivers of ideas for new projects, based on their experience and communication with member countries and coordination with the regional advisors who are providing assistance in their substantive areas of work.

18. Programme Planning and Technical Cooperation Division (PPTCD) should play a pivotal role in facilitating coordination between substantive divisions, centres and units at the priority-setting stage and on an on-going basis, in order to ensure thematic and programmatic synergy and coherence at secretariat level.

#### B. DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN TYPES OF FUNDING AND APPROACHES TO RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

19. Once the fundraising priority has been identified, further formulation is necessary by the relevant substantive division(s). The extent of elaboration and coordination required, however, is strongly dependent upon the type of funds being solicited. Five avenues for resource mobilization are primarily available to support ESCWA activities. Those are discussed below in a manner that differentiates between fund types as well as the different roles and responsibilities of the various actors in the process.

##### 1. *Soliciting unspecified donations*

20. The most attractive financial resources sought by ESCWA are those that are not tied to a specific programme or project and which thus allow the institution full flexibility in determining how those resources might be used in view of regional priorities or changing regional circumstances. Such funds are raised through donations to the ESCWA Trust Fund and are intended to support ESCWA substantive work without preconditions.

21. While the Executive Secretary is responsible for soliciting those donations, input from substantive divisions and PPTCD is often requested in order to identify priority areas of interest to potential donors. Traditionally, ESCWA member countries are donors to the ESCWA Trust Fund.

##### 2. *Mobilizing programme-specific resources*

22. Some donors find that contributing to programme-specific activities provides an adequate focus for their financial resources, while providing ESCWA with sufficient flexibility to adjust programme-related activities to changing regional needs. Regular contributions to specific programmes may thus prove an attractive alternative for such partners and donors, while providing a continuous and reliable source of funding for ESCWA programmes across bienniums. Such opportunities could be advertised during ministerial sessions and expert group meetings, and further pursued through networking and targeted

communication with potential donors emphasizing ESCWA expertise and experience in the specific programme area.

### *3. Forging partnerships*

23. When forging partnerships, fundraising is not the primary objective. The aim of mobilizing resources be they human resources, technical resources, corporate image or joint financing, is to achieve a common aim. Such resources are usually raised and developed through personal and institutional commitment, networking, trust-building, the preparation and articulation of joint vision statements, and in-kind contributions that provide the basis for individual, institutional, national and/or regional action. Such partnerships serve to improve understanding of regional issues among public and private partners, foster ownership by relevant stakeholders, and enhance ESCWA visibility as a player active in addressing regional priorities.

24. In order to be successful, partnerships require open lines of communication, continuous engagement with partners and long-term commitment. They should become an integral part of the work programme and secure the commitment of the office of the Executive Secretary and substantive units from the beginning. That commitment should be supported by an operational focal point in the appropriate substantive field that is responsible for ensuring that regular communication and coordination takes place. Partner institutions should be regularly informed about and invited to ESCWA activities related to the partnership topic.

25. As partnerships blossom and become more high-profile, commitments tend to increase and other potential partners become interested. Successful partnerships can form the basis for raising funds for mutually supportive objectives and concepts from the partners themselves or interested institutions that have taken notice of such initiatives. That could lead to the mobilization of programme-specific financial resources, such as those noted above.

26. Partnerships with the private sector, for instance, might seek to promote social responsibility or corporate commitments in support of regional priorities or MDGs. Resources could then be mobilized in support of a jointly-defined platform for action, or the partnership could encourage other donors to contribute additional resources. Partnerships could also be forged with non-governmental organizations or financial institutions. ESCWA may also consider entering into partnerships on the same issue with more than one institution, thus creating an enabling network of interested institutions supportive of a regional objective.

### *4. Securing non-financial contributions and support*

27. ESCWA could also target financial and non-financial resources to support RB and XB programme implementation. Non-financial, in-kind contributions may include physical equipment or staff secondments from member country ministries and public institutions. Staff secondments can alleviate staffing constraints at ESCWA, while also providing timely insights into opportunities and challenges affecting member countries at the national level. They have the dual benefit of enhancing the capacity of seconded staff by increasing their exposure to substantive issues and the functioning of the United Nations. The staff member thus becomes a valuable resource upon return home. Staff secondments are generally considered in-kind contributions because the services provided by the staff member and their salary are financially supported by a bilateral donor or member country.

## C. IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

### *1. Project preparation*

28. Depending on the type of funding being mobilized, the project preparation process generally consists of two stages, the concept paper stage and the project document stage.

29. The preparation of project proposals for funding is led by substantive divisions and units, but facilitated with guidelines and templates provided by the Projects Committee and PPTCD. In order to



streamline the process of preparing and reviewing project documents, a uniform template to support project preparation should be applied, unless another structure is required by a potential partner or donor. It is suggested that the logical framework or logframe approach should be adopted as the ESCWA standard for preparing proposals and project documents for funding. That is the format used to prepare DA concept papers and project documents and was previously the standard applied for proposals submitted to the ESCWA Trust Fund. It also would support the United Nations decision to pursue results-based budgeting during programme planning and implementation.

30. The Projects Committee is responsible for reviewing all concept papers and project documents prior to submission to potential partners and donors. Comments and feedback to the project proponent, namely, the substantive division or unit, should list any other projects being submitted to the targeted donor in order to facilitate internal and external coordination and communication.

31. PPTCD has already established a database of donors that identifies the thematic interests of various institutions. That database should be regularly updated in order to ensure that the information remains current in view of the changing priorities and orientation of some funding lines. An in-house link to lessons learned from working with certain donors could also be included with a view to institutionalizing knowledge and experience gained from working with those partners and donors.

32. PPTCD, in cooperation with the Projects Committee, should also establish and maintain an in-house database of project document samples required by different donors and funding lines, in order to facilitate the project preparation process.

#### *2. Finalizing funding agreements, monitoring and reporting*

33. The project proponent in the substantive division is responsible for finalizing the substantive matters related to a fundraising agreement with the donors.

34. The Chief of the Administrative Services Division (ASD) has the delegated authority to sign agreements involving a financial contribution and commitment by ESCWA. Administrative Services Division will be responsible for ensuring agreements are in line with United Nations financial rules and regulations. It is also responsible for monitoring and reporting to donors on the utilization of funds. It should be responsible for providing advisory services to substantive divisions on aspects of resource mobilization.

### **IV. CONCLUSION**

35. The mobilization of XB resources has the potential to increase the impact of ESCWA RB activities and promote regional and global cooperation. ESCWA knowledge of the region, relationship with stakeholders and strength in normative activities give it the potential to develop XB activities.

36. There is great potential for using XB resources to complement ESCWA normative activities. Leveraging of funds will increase the impact of ESCWA activities. Partnerships with other United Nations entities will help to define ESCWA's role as a regional commission by bringing regional knowledge to global development initiatives, and will facilitate international funding of regional and national initiatives. Furthermore, the process of establishing partnership with other United Nations agencies has intrinsic value, in that it promotes greater cooperation between ESCWA and other United Nations bodies and development actors. It also increases the role played by such other important stakeholders as ESCWA member countries and private sector actors, thus promoting corporate responsibility and regional cooperation.

Annex

**LIST OF DONORS SUPPORTING ESCWA OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

<b>ID code</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Type of donor</b>	<b>Eligibility criteria</b>	<b>Bilateral/ Multilateral</b>
ALJ	Abdul Latif Jameel	Private sector	Capacity-building and training in Saudi Arabia	Bilateral
ROA	Supplementary development activities	United Nations funds	Project linked to Work Programme and Strategic Framework	Recurrent
UNA	United Nations General Fund	United Nations funds	Work Programme-related activities	Recurrent
WVA	Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND)	United Nations funds	Meeting AGFUND documentation and technical study requirements, including the project feasibility study	Multilateral
WVB	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung	Private sector (NGO)	Financing for development-related aspects of the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits	Bilateral
WVC	Minor Technical Cooperation accounts	United Nations funds	Technical cooperation projects	Multilateral
WVD	Executing agency UNDP	United Nations funds	Presence and adequate implementation capacity	Multilateral
WVE	Cooperating Agency UNDP	United Nations funds	Thematic focus in line with UNDP priorities	Multilateral
WVF	Trust Fund France	United Nations funds	Technical cooperation projects	Bilateral
WVG	Executing agency UNFPA	United Nations funds	Thematic focus on population issues	Multilateral
WVH	UNIFEM	United Nations funds	Gender-related projects	Multilateral
WVI	Associate agency UNDP	United Nations funds	Adequate implementation capacity	Multilateral
WVJ	Trust Fund Netherlands	United Nations funds	Technical cooperation projects	Bilateral
WVK	Executing agency UNFPA	United Nations funds	Thematic focus in line with UNDP priorities	Multilateral
WVL	Trust Fund Regional	United Nations funds	Technical cooperation projects	Multilateral
WVM	World Bank	United Nations funds	Thematic focus in line with UNDP priorities	Multilateral
WVN	Safadi Foundation	Private sector (NGO)	Field projects in Lebanon	Bilateral
WVO	Fares Foundation	Private sector (NGO)	Field projects in Lebanon	Bilateral
WVP	AFESD	Private sector (NGO)	Thematic focus in line with UNDP priorities	Bilateral

<b>ID code</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Type of donor</b>	<b>Eligibility criteria</b>	<b>Bilateral/ Multilateral</b>
WVQ	International Development Research Centre	Private sector (NGO)	Thematic focus in line with UNDP priorities	Multilateral
WVR	UN-HABITAT	United Nations funds	Shelter-related projects	Multilateral
WVS	Azm and Saade Association	Private sector	Field projects in Lebanon	Bilateral
WVT	UNDG ITF	United Nations funds	Alignment with Iraqi-identified priorities and impact on employment creation, and the degree of inter-agency cooperation in planning and implementation (reflecting the cluster principle).	Multilateral
WVU	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries	Intergovernmental organization	General socio-economic development (TC training and field projects)	Multilateral
WVV	International Labour Organization	United Nations funds	Proposals must represent joint initiatives, have emerged from an inclusive process and be consistent with the region's development strategy. Identify key outcomes and milestones relating to sustainable development	Multilateral
WVW	United Nations Office for Project Services	United Nations funds	Technical cooperation Projects	Multilateral
	BGR	Government (BMZ) Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development	Non-oil producing country	Bilateral
	GTZ	Government (BMZ) Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development	Non-oil producing country	Bilateral
WVT	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq	United Nations funds	Alignment with Iraqi-identified priorities (according to defined sectors)	Multilateral

ID Codes are assigned by the Budget and Finance Section

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