Ex-ante Evaluation of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific Framework for Technical Cooperation

Internal Oversight Reports

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ASPAC Bureau	Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific
BI	Business Intelligence
FIT	Funds in Trust
HIPOC	Heads of National IP Offices of Countries
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IOD	Internal Oversight Division
IP	Intellectual Property
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSMEs	Micro Small and Medium Enterprises
PCT	Patent and Cooperation Treaty
RBM	Results-Based Management
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
TA	Travel Authorization
TISCs	Technology Innovation and Support Centers
TOC	Theory of Change
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Internal Oversight Division (IOD) included in its 2020 Oversight Plan the *ex-ante* evaluation of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (ASPAC Bureau) Framework for Technical Cooperation, which the ASPAC Bureau requested through management discussions.

2. The methodology adopted to conduct the *ex-ante* evaluation of the ASPAC Bureau Framework included reviewing each project's Theory of Change (TOC). Moreover, the evaluation applied ten project documents based on five criteria: (i) Statement definition; (ii) Causality; (iii) Coherence; (iv) Simplification; and (v) Use of the smart criteria. The documentary review was supplemented with interviews with managers and information users to complete an evaluability assessment.

3. At the strategic level, the World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) Performance Report provides a partial representation of the ASPAC Bureau's contributions. At times, there was no direct linkage between outputs and the expected results and impacts within projects. The measuring criteria focus excessively on effectiveness and efficiency, leaving other essential measurement criteria such as sustainability, coherence, and relevance.

4. Furthermore, the evaluation found that the ASPAC Bureau existing technical frameworks had some elements in need of improvement, including: (i) the use of Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound (SMART) principles and criteria with results statements and indicators not actionable enough; (ii) disconnected linkages on the causality and cascading between activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact with imprecise theories of change. Moreover, it found a lack of clarity on the differentiation between indicators, targets, and baselines. The roles and functions to be performed at the team level, especially for monitoring progress at WIPO and the country level, were also unclear. Finally, there was ambiguity on how the progress and expected results would be measured and which tools would be used for data gathering and analysis.

5. Based on these findings, the *ex-ante* evaluation recommends the following:

Recommendations

1. Future revisions should avoid, whenever possible, measure fixation[1], and keep the framework as simple as possible, implementing first the key performance indicators (attached in annex 3) and eventually using the balanced scorecards.

2. Automate wherever possible, the data gathering process and analysis for reporting in a Business Intelligence (BI) dashboard in collaboration with the Enterprise Architecture and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Program Management Division.

3. Gather baseline data and fix baselines with inputs from national stakeholders before setting up targets.

[1] As defined by the OECD, measure fixation happens when some measures are emphasized at the expense of others, such as quantitative aspects at the expense of qualitative aspects in performance measurement scheme; and short term targets at the expense of long-term objectives (outcome, impact). Learning from Results-Based Management Evaluations and Reviews, Working Paper OECD, 2019

4. The project management capacity within the ASPAC Bureau should be augmented through practice-oriented monitoring training focusing on the theory of change, stakeholders' analysis, survey design, indicators design, case studies, storytelling, and self-evaluation.

5. Pilot the process of unfolding the ten project frameworks with the buy-in of countries and relevant WIPO departments, systematically engaging in a continuous iterative refinement, simplification, and automation of the framework.