



# Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries

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### Discussion and adoption of the report to the General Assembly on the work of the Technology Bank in 2019

## Report on the work of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries in 2019

1. In the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020, the Heads of State and Government and representatives of the States participating in the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries called for the establishment of a technology bank dedicated to the least developed countries, a long-standing priority of the least developed countries that was confirmed in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development of 2015 and in Sustainable Development Goal 17.
2. The General Assembly established the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries and adopted the Charter of the Technology Bank (see [A/71/363](#)) on 23 December 2016, in its resolution [71/251](#). In that resolution, the Assembly reaffirmed the importance of improving the least developed countries' scientific research and innovation base, promoting networking among researchers and research institutions and helping the least developed countries to access and utilize critical and appropriate technologies. The Bank is financed by voluntary contributions from Member States and other stakeholders, including the private sector and foundations.
3. In 2019, the Technology Bank was led by the newly appointed Managing Director, supported by two Programme Officers, who took up their duties in December 2018 and January 2019, respectively. Four administrative support staff members also joined the Bank in the first quarter of the year. Given the novelty of operations and activities, 2019 remained a transitional year for the Bank.
4. The Bank hosted a visit of the Secretary-General to its premises in October 2019. During his visit, the Secretary-General was briefed on the programmes of the Technology Bank in 20 least developed countries. He expressed his gratitude to the staff of the Bank for the work done so far and appealed to the international community to support the Bank with resources so that it could fulfil its mandate.
5. As provided for in the budget and programme of work of the Technology Bank adopted by its Council for 2019 (TBLDC/2019/2), operational activities continued in

\* TBLDC/2020/1.



2019. The Bank focused on preparing technology needs assessments, promoting digital access to research and scientific information, strengthening national academies of science in the least developed countries in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and supporting capacity development in geospatial technologies.

6. The aim of the technology needs assessment programme is to undertake diagnostic work in order to validate the technology needs of each least developed country. In 2019, activities were launched in Bhutan, the Gambia, Guinea, Timor-Leste and Uganda. In 2020, an additional 10 countries (Bangladesh, Haiti, Lesotho, Kiribati, Mozambique, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tonga and Zambia) will be added to the programme.

7. The digital access to research and scientific information programme is aimed at facilitating and increasing online access to published scientific and technical information, including top-quality scientific journals, books and databases, to support the capacity of least developed countries to improve the training of researchers and the quality of research produced. That access is offered through the Research4Life platform and presents no direct charge to least developed country beneficiaries.

8. In 2019, awareness-raising and capacity-development workshops continued across 15 countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Comoros, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia). More than 1,000 researchers, academics and librarians from universities, research institutes, professional associations and national and local government agencies were trained on how to access and utilize the resources on the Research4Life portal. In 2020, the Technology Bank will partner with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to deliver dedicated training to least developed countries through the massive open online course newly developed by Research4Life. The course is expected to be much more cost-effective and efficient and provide greater outreach to all 47 least developed countries.

9. In 2019, the Technology Bank initiated a programme to strengthen existing national academies of science and support the creation of academies in least developed countries, to improve scientific input to national discourse and policymaking. Four subregional consultations of least developed countries were organized in Africa, to bring together representatives of Governments and the scientific community to discuss the role of academies in supporting the global and regional development agendas. Consultations were held in Guinea, for Western Africa, in Madagascar, for Southern Africa, in Mauritania, for Northern Africa, and in Uganda, for Eastern Africa. The consultations were organized in partnership with the Economic Commission for Africa and the Network of African Science Academies.

10. In 2020, consultations of least developed countries in the Asia-Pacific region will be organized jointly with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Association of Academies and Societies of Sciences in Asia and held in Bangkok. Work with the Network and the Association will continue in 2020, with a view to building a strong capacity-development programme for existing academies, on the basis of the support requests received during the consultations, and to establishing new academies, both in Africa and in the Asia-Pacific region, for least developed countries that expressed an interest.

11. The Technology Bank signed an agreement with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research Operational Satellite Applications Programme to build a capacity-development programme for least developed countries to enhance access to and the use of geospatial data and information technologies in support of decision-making for climate change adaptation, disaster risk management and natural resources management. Activities commenced in December 2019 in three pilot countries

(Gambia, Mozambique and Uganda) and will run until August 2020. Additional countries will be targeted in 2020.

12. Resource mobilization remained a key priority for the Technology Bank in 2019. In accordance with the budget and programme of work for 2019, an expert was engaged to draft a resource mobilization strategy for the Bank, with the specific objective of identifying resource mobilization opportunities among private sector companies, philanthropic foundations and other non-State actors. In 2019, the Bank received additional financial contributions of \$1,000,000 from the Government of Turkey and \$50,000 from the Government of Guinea.

13. The Technology Bank increased its communication activities in 2019, through the preparation of a communication and social media strategy and the finalization of its website. Implementation of the strategy will begin fully in 2020.

14. With a view to establishing partnerships to support the delivery of its work programme, the Technology Bank signed a memorandum of understanding with the University of Oxford to develop a methodology for technology needs assessments, based on a digital economy toolkit that has already been prepared. The Bank also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Office of Information and Communications Technology to design a technology transfer platform and establish four technology innovation labs under the United Nations Technology Innovation Labs programme.

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