# Description of Relevant Aspects Related to the Memorandum of Understanding between the IOM and the PPT of the RCM to Strengthen the Execution and Monitoring of the RCM Technical Secretariat’s (TS) Budget

In the framework of the XXII Vice-Ministerial Meeting of the RCM, held in San Salvador, El Salvador, 29-30 November 2017, the Vice-Ministers approved the “Memorandum of Understanding between the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Presidency Pro-Témpore (PPT) of the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) to Strengthen the Execution and Monitoring of the RCM Technical Secretariat’s (TS) Budget” and decided to ask El Salvador to sign it in its capacity as PPT, which was done in the framework of that same meeting.

As a result of the signature of that instrument, the RCM and the IOM formalized the relationship held since the creation of the RCM in 1996, as well as it is guaranteed that the RCM and the IOM have a framework that defines the responsibilities of each part with regards to administrative aspects for managing the Technical Secretariat, particularly the monitoring of its budget execution. In order to explain more in detail some of the agreements reached, aspects that derive from this commitment are described below.

1. Budget planning:

Member Countries will approve a yearly budget for the TS during each Vice-Ministerial Meeting. Such Budget must specify the budget lines needed for the correct functioning of the TS as well as the specific amounts required for each budget line, including IOM’s 5% overhead costs. The TS will inform IOM the approved budget so it is duly settled on OIM systems according to the understanding that the TS works as a project within the work structure of the IOM. In this way, constant monitoring of budget execution will be maintained and it will be possible to ensure the monitoring requested by the Member Countries.

As per IOM’s regulations, the project of the TS can only receive direct funding for its yearly budget from RCM Member Countries. This means that any other contributions from Member Countries or other donors to support specific activities, like workshops, seminars, attendance to certain meetings, etc. are subject to IOM’s procedures for receiving funding, which means getting a series of approvals from several IOM sectors, like regional thematic specialists, regional office of resources management, legal department, accounting division, project information unit, revenue, among others. Because of this, the steps required to ensure the entry and use of funds must be started six months in advance.

1. Budget execution:

According to the Memorandum, *“the Technical Secretariat functions as an autonomous unit within the IOM, but remains subject to all budgetary, personnel, and administrative directives observed by the IOM.”* This implies that the programming of the work of the TS is carried out based on the decisions of the Member Countries, hence the TS is an autonomous unit within the IOM. However, the TS is subject IOM’s internal regulations regarding budget planning processes (see point 1), expenditure execution, purchases, hiring of services, regulations for hiring personnel and preparation of financial reports.

Currently, the TS already follows all the processes established by IOM for the execution of the budget, particularly those regarding the contracting of services, analysis of quotations, purchase orders, payment requests, etc. Many of these procedures are carried out in coordination with the IOM National Offices, depending on the country in which the expenditure is made.

Regarding the hiring of personnel, the positions of the TS are subject to the classification assigned by IOM according to their terms of reference and their contracts are made for periods of nine renewable months. Because the position of Coordinator is considered an international position, it is subject to the corresponding conditions and the contract is issued by IOM’s Manila Administrative Center. Support staff positions are subject to the aforementioned classification; the duties and rights stipulated by IOM regulations apply, including annual salary increases.

1. Monitoring of budget execution:

Prior to the distribution of the quarterly financial reports for the continuous monitoring of the budget execution, IOM regulations instruct that the TS must request the IOM Administrative Center in Panama to endorse the report before it can be sent to the Member Countries. For this reason, the reported periods may not concur with the dates of the RCM meetings.

Additionally, Member Countries have instructed the IOM to periodically verify that the expenses of the TS adhere to the amounts and items budgeted and to report to the PPT any inconsistency or lack of probity detected in the execution.

1. General considerations:

The memorandum entered into force on the day of its signature, on November 30, 2017. It establishes that it can be modified or discontinued by consensus among the participants, as well as how to resolve any dispute between the parties, describing the process to follow in each case.

Finally, the IOM is requested to inform the TS and the Member Countries of the RCM about its administrative rules and procedures, so that the TS complies with the established regulations. Ideally, this information should be disclosed periodically in case there are changes in the current processes; in particular, IOM should train the TS staff about such standards and procedures as appropriate.