



**ITU Regional Development Forum for CIS Region
26-27 March 2024
Astana, Kazakhstan**

**Organized by the Telecommunication Development Bureau
of the International Telecommunication Union**

**Hosted by the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovation
and Aerospace Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan**

MEETING REPORT

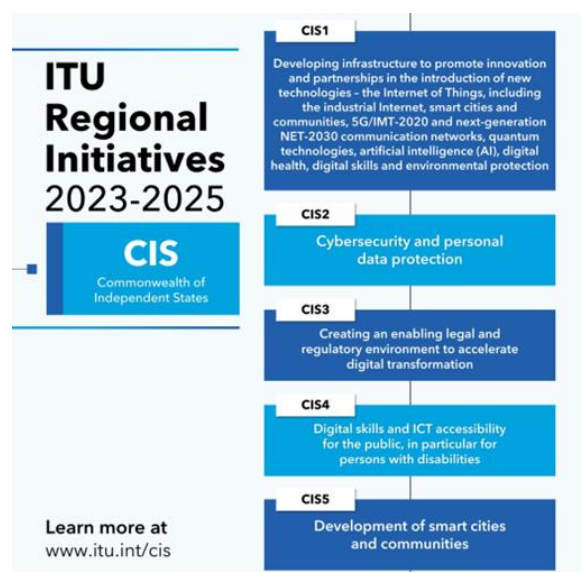
1. Introduction

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Regional Development Forum for the Commonwealth of Independent States Region (RDF-CIS) was organized by the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) of the ITU on 26-27 March 2024, at the Hilton Hotel in Astana, Kazakhstan. The forum was hosted by the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

RDF-CIS reported on the outcomes of the major ITU conferences held since 2022, including the Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-22) and the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-22). It also reported on the implementation status of the outcomes of WTDC-22 in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region, with emphasis on the five Regional Initiatives (RIs) for CIS (Figure 1) approved by WTDC-22.

RDF-CIS 2024 served as a platform for strategic discussions, information exchange, matchmaking, and partnership development, as well as the announcement of financial and in-kind commitments and pledges. In addition to CIS RI implementation, it also highlighted key initiatives and activities such as matchmaking of partners' commitments with the needs of beneficiary Member States.

Figure 1_ WTDC-22 Regional Initiatives for CIS





The Partner2Connect Digital Coalition (P2C), which at the time of the forum had attracted over 891 pledges valued at over USD 46.07 billion globally, was a key focus of RDF-CIS. Some 89 pledges with an estimated value of over USD 7.17 billion have so far been received from 52 entities on the P2C Platform targeting the CIS Region.

2. Partner2Connect Contributions and Documentation

ITU Regional Office for CIS launched a regional consultation that presented an opportunity for ITU Member States, Sector Members, International and Regional organizations, and other stakeholders to contribute to ITU's activities at the regional level considering the strategic needs of the region and partner offerings/commitments during the period 2023 -2025. ITU received a total of 19 contributions for the RDF-CIS. To operationalize the pledges, RDF-CIS focused on facilitating the matchmaking between the needs of CIS Member States and the pledges from partners.

List of Contributions

| No | Title | Language | Organisation | Country | Relevant Regional Initiative |
|----|---|----------|--|------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | Smart education ecosystem in Kostanay 2.0 | Russian | Kostanai Engineering and Economic University named after M. Dulatov. | Kazakhstan | 4 |
| 2 | Enhancing the digital skills of the population through the Sanarip Insan (Digital Citizen) project | Russian | Kyrgyz Branch of the Internet Society | Kyrgyzstan | 4 |
| 3 | Methodological bases for teaching digital skills to persons with disabilities | Russian | Educational Institution "Belarusian State Academy of Communications" | Belarus | 4 |
| 4 | Localisation of online safety course for teacher professional development in Uzbek language, preparation of training methodology, conducting trainings for teachers | Russian | «IT-Academy» | Uzbekistan | 4 |





| | | | | | |
|----|--|---------|---|------------|------|
| 5 | Digital literacy of civil servants as a driver for the development of smart cities | Russian | Educational Institution "Belarusian State Academy of Communications" | Belarus | 4, 5 |
| 6 | Implementation of the GovStack programme in Kazakhstan | Russian | «National Information technologies» JSC NITEC | Kazakhstan | 3 |
| 7 | Development of advanced radio technologies in the Republic of Azerbaijan | Russian | Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan | Azerbaijan | 1, 5 |
| 8 | Masterclasses for parents: Practical advice on safe use of the Internet and digital products by children | Russian | Kaspersky Lab KZ LLP | Kazakhstan | 2 |
| 9 | Digital upskilling | English | Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of Azerbaijan | Azerbaijan | 3, 4 |
| 10 | GIS "Electronic management system of public telecommunications network" | English | Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of Azerbaijan | Azerbaijan | 1, 3 |
| 11 | Data protection capacity building program | English | Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of Azerbaijan | Azerbaijan | 2, 3 |
| 12 | Building a test laboratory of radio equipment | English | Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of Azerbaijan | Azerbaijan | 1 |
| 13 | Huawei pledges to support 90 young visionaries in their digital inclusion projects | English | Huawei Technologies Co., LTD | China | 4 |





| | | | | | |
|----|---|---------|---|------------|---|
| 14 | Huawei pledges to bring connectivity to about 120 million people in remote areas globally by 2025 | English | Huawei Technologies Co., LTD | China | 1 |
| 15 | Shaping the Scientific and Educational Landscape of the Digital Economy of the CIS Region (Dictionary of Digital Terms) | Russian | L. N. Gumilev Eurasian National University | Kazakhstan | 4 |
| 16 | Development and harmonisation of sign language for the countries of the CIS Region using artificial intelligence technology (Dictionary of Sign Language Terms) | Russian | L.N.Gumilev Eurasian National University | Kazakhstan | 4 |
| 17 | ChatGPT for people with visual impairments | English | Institute of Smart Systems and Artificial Intelligence, Nazarbayev University | Kazakhstan | 1 |
| 18 | Rural Connectivity Pilot Project | English | Union of Operators of Armenia | Armenia | 1 |
| 19 | Promoting Barrier-free ICT Accessibility, and Helping Bridge the Digital Divide for the Elderly and the Disabled | English | China Academy of Information and Communications Technology | China | 4 |

All RDF-CIS documentation is available on [the RDF-CIS website](#) along with the presentations, video materials, and photographs.





3. Participation

A total of 117¹ participants (both face-to-face and online) from Member States, Sector Members, United Nations (UN) agencies, international organizations, and other invitees joined the forum. The final list of participants is available on the [CIS-RDF portal](#).

4. Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony of RDF-CIS 2024 was moderated by **Ms Natalia Mochu, Regional Director, ITU Regional Office for CIS (ITU RO-CIS)**, who welcomed participants, provided an overview of the programme and invited high level speakers to deliver their opening remarks.



Figure 1: Group photo of RDF-CIS 2024

The opening session was addressed by the following high-level speakers:

- H.E. Mr Bagdat Mussin, Minister of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry of the **Republic of Kazakhstan**
- Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), ITU
- Ms Michaela Friberg-Storey, United Nations Resident Coordinator for **Kazakhstan**
- Mr Alexey Borodin, Director General of the Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications (**RCC**)

¹ The Final List of Participants at the end of the CIS-RDF





During the opening ceremony of RDF-CIS, Mr Bagdat Mussin, Minister of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan, articulated the imperative not only to track global trends but also to actively shape national and regional digital development strategies. Emphasizing the importance of concerted efforts, he underscored the need to focus on joint initiatives in artificial intelligence, big data, and cybersecurity. Such initiatives, he noted, would not only enhance the economy but also elevate the quality of life for citizens. Furthermore, the Minister outlined Kazakhstan's commitment to becoming a regional digital hub. Highlighting infrastructure developments, he mentioned the laying of 340 kilometres of fibre-optic cable lines beneath the Caspian Sea and the construction of a national East-West Highway. These initiatives aim to establish an Internet access route for Kazakhstan and Central Asia, serving as a crucial transit point for international traffic.

The Minister expressed confidence that RDF-CIS would serve as a productive platform for fostering success cases, advancing digital diplomacy, sharing experiences, and formulating joint strategies for digital economic development. He reiterated Kazakhstan's readiness to support practical proposals that enhance living conditions within CIS countries, stressing the importance of cooperation to successfully digitize the region's states. Finally, he extended gratitude to the ITU for organizing the event and commended all participants for their active engagement and spirit of cooperation.

Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, BDT Director, ITU, in his address, highlighted the RDF-CIS as a platform for like-minded individuals and organizations with shared goals of providing Internet access to the remaining 11 per cent of the CIS population. He stressed the importance of regional initiatives on digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, digital skills, accessibility, regulation, and smart cities to achieve Sustainable Development Goals and address challenges like poverty, isolation, climate change, and digital inequality. Dr. Zavazava also underscored the need for participants to fulfil existing P2C commitments while making new ones, focusing on projects that have a significant impact to improve lives. He encouraged partners to announce their commitments and shared the ITU's accomplishments in the CIS region, including training public sector representatives in 5G, launching disaster warning initiatives, teaching university students about start-up ecosystems, contributing to digital regulation harmonization, enhancing cybersecurity capabilities, and establishing flagship acceleration centers. Dr. Zavazava concluded by inviting everyone to participate in upcoming ITU events and conferences, highlighting the region's potential and expressing optimism about shaping a digitally enabled future.

Ms. Michaela Friberg-Storey, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Kazakhstan, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to discuss a critical aspect of the Sustainable Development Goals and acknowledged Kazakhstan's significant progress in digitalization, emphasizing its positive impact on citizens' lives. With 2030 approaching, she highlighted the importance of evaluating the ambitious goals set by countries and underscored Kazakhstan's strides in digital transformation. She stressed the need for digitalization to enhance people's lives, citing projects such as the "Digital Family Map" and e-health initiatives, while applauding Kazakhstan's successes in agriculture and water management. Ms. Friberg-Storey advocated for digitalizing schools, providing quality STEM education, and addressing risks affecting vulnerable groups. She echoed the importance of digitalization in civilization, urging for political will, resource mobilization, and knowledge creation. She affirmed the UN's support for all stakeholders in digital initiatives, extending support beyond the Government of Kazakhstan to all committed to advancing digitalization efforts.





Mr. Alexey Borodin, Director General of the Regional Commonwealth in the field of Communications (RCC), emphasized the collective responsibility of attendees in contributing to the advancement of both governments and citizens across CIS countries. Echoing previous speakers, he highlighted RCC's focus on common approaches to digital platform operation and regulation, underscoring the importance of developing artificial intelligence within the cultural contexts of CIS nations. Mr. Borodin addressed concerns regarding low-earth orbit satellites and monopolies associated with them, stressing the need for regulatory frameworks to ensure compliance with antitrust laws and national regulations. He affirmed RCC's availability as a platform for developing common approaches and presenting them as unified proposals at ITU conferences. Additionally, he underscored RCC's commitment to implementing national projects under regional initiatives adopted at WTDC-22, highlighting the significance of the Framework Cooperation Agreement between ITU and RCC.

4.1 Appointment of Chair of ITU RDF-CIS 2024

The **Regional Director of ITU RO-CIS** announced the appointment of **Mr Askhat Orazbek**, Vice-Minister of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as the chair of RDF-CIS 2024.

In his acceptance, the Chair of RDF-CIS expressed gratitude for the opportunity to lead the forum, highlighting its significance in assessing joint efforts between ITU and CIS countries in areas like 5G cellular communications and digital development. He also highlighted the importance of the event in shaping the region's digital future and stressed the ambitious task ahead in defining strategic directions, which requires collaborative efforts. He expressed hope that RDF-CIS would serve as a robust platform for productive dialogue and cooperation among regional countries.

5. Executive panel: Digital development in the CIS region: trends, opportunities and challenges

Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, BDT Director, ITU moderated the Executive panel. He highlighted the five priorities agreed by Member States at WTDC-22 and stressed the importance of ensuring inclusivity in the digital transformation process. Dr. Zavazava then invited high-level participants to share their insights on the progress of digital transformation initiatives in their respective countries.

The panel comprised the following:

- **H.E. Mr Konstantin Shulgan**, Minister of Communications and Informatization of the **Republic of Belarus**
- **H.E. Mr Askhat Orazbek**, Vice-Minister of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry of the **Republic of Kazakhstan**
- **H.E. Ms Bella Cherkesova**, Deputy Minister of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media of the **Russian Federation**
- **Mr Alexey Borodin**, Director General of the Executive Committee, Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications (**RCC**)





Figure 2: Executive panel

Mr. Konstantin Shulgan, Minister of Communications and Informatization of the Republic of Belarus emphasized the significant role of RDF-CIS in uniting efforts among CIS countries to tackle the challenges of digital transformation in the region. He highlighted the need for joint development to foster economic growth and enhance living conditions for populations. Mr. Shulgan noted the lack of a funding mechanism for projects in the CIS region but acknowledged substantial support from ITU, particularly in promoting technologies like smart cities.

Sharing the digital development journey of Belarus, he showcased achievements in ICT infrastructure, e-government frameworks, and digital literacy initiatives. He emphasized the implementation of a new digital development management system and stressed the importance of transitioning towards a unified digital space to bridge the digital divide among CIS countries. Mr. Shulgan addressed the concept of digital sovereignty, highlighting strengthened integration projects and the creation of a digital solutions ecosystem. He outlined efforts to enhance IT competencies and digital literacy through cooperation among CIS member states and expressed interest in forging partnerships with competence centers across the region. Additionally, he highlighted ongoing efforts in inter-state standardization on key digital technologies and concluded by reaffirming Belarus's commitment to being a reliable partner in advancing strategic cooperation on advanced technologies.





Mr. Askhat Orazbek, Vice-Minister of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan, highlighted Kazakhstan's strides in building a human-centric digital ecosystem aimed at benefiting its citizens. Kazakhstan's achievements in e-government infrastructure were notable, ranking 28th globally and first among CIS countries. The country's robust digitalization efforts were evident across government and sectors of the economy, particularly in the widespread adoption of cashless payments, which reached 80 percent penetration. Notably, Kazakhstan spearheaded GovTech advancements, witnessing a nine-fold increase in monthly service users and implementing innovative features such as biometric registration and digital signatures. He further outlined the benefits of the Qaz-Tech cloud platform, emphasizing its role in standardizing state information systems and streamlining business regulations. Kazakhstan's leadership in e-government extended beyond borders, with GovTech solutions provided to Tajikistan, illustrating the nation's commitment to regional collaboration. Additionally, Kazakhstan demonstrated substantial growth in IT services exports and nurtured innovation infrastructure, exemplified by Astana Hub, attracting significant investments and fostering a vibrant start-up ecosystem. Efforts to bridge the digital gender gap, enhance IT professional training, and leverage data analytics for citizen-centric services were also highlighted. Looking ahead, Mr. Orazbek proposed establishing a regional data center and advancing Kazakhstan's space program to harness space technologies for economic sectors and environmental monitoring. These initiatives reflect Kazakhstan's commitment to technological advancement and sustainable development.

Ms. Bella Cherkesova, Deputy Minister of Digital Development, Communications, and Mass Media of the Russian Federation, showcased the nation's significant strides in digital transformation. Notable milestones included the establishment of a robust information and telecommunication infrastructure, with widespread Internet connectivity reaching all public facilities and remote areas, and significant progress in digitalizing public services, evidenced by the substantial increase in users accessing the public services portal. She underscored the pivotal role of IT solutions in driving digital development, citing government initiatives such as soft loans and tax breaks to support enterprises and start-ups. Ms. Cherkesova highlighted Russia's leadership in AI technology, facilitated by advanced scientific research and a flexible legal regime for AI testing, culminating in the development of an AI Code of Ethics and plans for a national project on data economy. She reiterated Russia's commitment to digital cooperation, emphasizing its role in enhancing global competitiveness and national security, with anticipated benefits including improved living standards, heightened productivity, and the creation of skilled jobs, underpinned by a comprehensive system of technological development across key sectors.

Mr. Alexey Borodin, Director General of RCC, highlighted the significant progress made by CIS countries since the last RDF-CIS, emphasizing RCC's role as a collaborative platform to advance common goals. He addressed various pertinent issues such as program financing, digital sovereignty, e-government implementation, and AI, stressing the need for strategic discussions. To tackle these challenges, Mr Borodin proposed the establishment of a new RCC working body focused on digital platforms and IT solutions. He advocated for enhanced regional cooperation through the exchange of best practices, citing the adoption of an AI Code of Ethics in the Russian Federation as a model. He proposed the creation of a scientific and technical council to foster collaboration among leading educational





institutions and promote engineering education programs within the region, while also stressing the importance of unified approaches to ICT statistics and data collection. Furthermore, Mr. Borodin emphasized the necessity of a unified term base for the CIS region to streamline legislation creation and cooperation with the Interstate Council for Anti-monopoly Policies regarding digital market principles. He concluded by inviting participants to the upcoming RCC Commission on the Regulation of the Usage of the Radio Frequency Spectrum and Satellite Orbits in September in Brest, Republic of Belarus, encouraging active engagement in discussions and collaborative initiatives.

In concluding the discussion of the high-level panel, Dr. Zavazava, proposed a comprehensive approach whereby governments collaborate with businesses, academia, and all stakeholders to address the objectives outlined by the distinguished participants.

6. Multistakeholder cooperation for digital development

Mr Farid Nakhli, Programme Coordinator, ITU Regional Office for CIS, moderated the session on multistakeholder cooperation for digital development. He highlighted that the session aimed to present the results of ITU's work on the five CIS regional initiatives. He also provided a summary of the mechanisms and budgeting for various ITU activities and projects, country participation processes in global ITU projects, as well as the ITU's principles and approaches for developing partnerships and cooperating with various stakeholders.

Ms Natalia Mochu, ITU Regional Director for the CIS region, gave a two-part [presentation](#) on the implementation of the WTDC-22 Kigali Action Plan in the CIS region. The first part provided detailed information on the digital development of CIS countries based on the *ITU Facts and Figures 2023*. The second part of the presentation covered the results of the Kigali Action Plan and the implementation status of the five CIS regional initiatives (RIs).

RI 1: Developing infrastructure to promote innovation and partnerships in the introduction of new technologies – the Internet of Things, including the industrial Internet, smart cities and communities, 5G/IMT-2020 and next-generation NET-2030 communication networks, quantum technologies, artificial intelligence, digital health, digital skills and environmental protection.

RI 2: Cybersecurity and personal data protection.

RI 3: Creating an enabling legal and regulatory environment to accelerate digital transformation.

RI 4: Digital skills and information and communication technology accessibility for the public, particularly for persons with disabilities.

RI 5: Development of smart cities and communities.

The roundtables on the second day were dedicated to each of the five regional initiatives, with the focus on programmes and projects implemented, and possible future initiatives.





7. Partner2Connect Roundtables: Scene Setting

This session established the context by introducing the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition, underlying its accomplishments and its significance as a premier UN-led multi-stakeholder alliance for global digital development. The roundtable provided a platform for participants, including notable P2C Champions, to discuss the most effective strategies for translating commitments into substantial digital impact for sustainable development in the CIS region.

The session titled: “Transforming Partner2Connect pledges into commitments for impact”, was moderated by **Mr Sameer Sharma, Senior Advisor, Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU**.

The session focused on identifying effective mechanisms to transform pledges into actionable commitments, aiming for scalable impact in the CIS region through the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition. Partners were invited to share the progress of their pledges made under the P2C platform and stressed the importance of public-private collaboration in accelerating digital development. This session introduced the Partner2Connect initiative and its expected impact in achieving universal meaningful connectivity and sustainable digital transformation within the broader Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It called for partners to share progress on the pledges made under the P2C platform.

The following panelists participated in the session:

- **Ms Ekaterina Smyshlyayeva**, Member of Parliament of the **Republic of Kazakhstan**
- **Mr Tair Ismailov**, Strategic Engagement Director, **GSMA**
- **Mr Ahmed Riad**, Senior Director, Strategy and Industry Development, **Huawei**
- **Mr Rostislav Konyashkin**, CEO, NITEC, **Kazakhstan**
- **Ms Tatiana Aderkhina**, Head of Programs on Education and Skills in Kazakhstan, **UNICEF**
- **Mr Arken Arystanov**, Chairman of the Board, Kazakhstan International Development Agency (KazAID), **Kazakhstan**

Partners provided updates on the progress made in implementing their pledges; identifying opportunities and partnerships required to advance their commitments. Additional pledges were invited to leverage the P2C platform for resource mobilization. Emphasis was placed on the need for public-private collaboration to accelerate digital development among others.

Ms Ekaterina Smyshlyayeva, Member of Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, highlighted the critical gap between the rapid advancement of digital technologies and the lagging regulatory approaches. With new innovations emerging, there was a pressing need for active engagement. She emphasized that access to ICT should be considered as a fundamental human right, akin to essential utilities like water supply, electricity, etc. Regulatory frameworks must recognize connectivity as an integral component and ensure equal access to resources such as radio frequencies and waste management facilities for all operators. The importance of public-private partnerships (PPP) in building infrastructure, both on small and large scales, was underscored. Kazakhstan, as a vast country, faced challenges in achieving universal Internet access, requiring legal instruments and subsidies. Support





structures, including tax incentives and obligations for operators were crucial. Cybersecurity emerged as a significant concern, demanding a conducive investment environment and local legislative amendments to address evolving threats and technological changes.

Mr Tair Ismailov, Strategic Engagement Director, GSMA, spoke about the mobile industry's recent commitment, citing the Partner2Connect Initiative's pledge of over USD 9 billion for global connectivity at MWC-24. He referenced GSMA's 2016 commitment to support the UN SDGs, highlighting the industry's significant contribution, exceeding 5 per cent of GDP in some regions and reaching 78 per cent of the global population through mobile communications. Despite the substantial economic impact of the sector, challenges persisted in sustaining its growth. GSMA's pledge of USD 9 billion aims at bolstering global connectivity. Capacity-building initiatives, such as 5G training sessions, further fortified that commitment with the next training session scheduled in May for Baku. As part of the initiative, eight distinct projects were under way, including the Emergency Warnings for All (EW4ALL) initiative, recently discussed at a roundtable in Tajikistan. Leveraging mobile technology, EW4ALL aimed to notify up to 80 per cent of mobile users in emergencies, showing the critical role of effective legislation in its implementation. Moreover, Kazakhstan was implementing the "250+" programme to stimulate investment in the development of the industry; the aim of the programme was to provide Internet to settlements with a population of 250 or more people. The Ministry of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry had adopted an initiative under which operators could count on discounts on monthly spectrum fees when building networks in remote locations. Operators could offset about 90 per cent of their expenses to make up for the investments they spent on building networks thereby reducing spectrum fees.

Mr. Ahmed Riad, Senior Director, Strategy and Industry Development, Huawei, called for urgent attention to affordability and ensuring inclusive connectivity. Huawei's commitment under Partner2Connect to bridge the digital divide by connecting over 120 million people across 80 countries by the end of 2025 exemplified that imperative. Innovations such as the Rural Star initiative, which leveraged solar power for rural connectivity, were highlighted as promising solutions. He stressed the importance of innovative partnership and financing models to create conducive regulatory environments and identified collaboration between the private sector and academia as crucial for driving progress. The concept of matchmaking proved to be a powerful tool for translating pledges into tangible projects, while rural digital finance mechanisms were emerging as an effective means to reach communities. In conclusion, he mentioned capacity-building efforts, exemplified by CAICT, China achievements, and the exploration of various financial models as a holistic approach to addressing the challenges of digital connectivity.

Mr. Rostislav Konyashkin, CEO, NITEC, Kazakhstan, shared insights and innovative solutions aimed at enhancing the delivery of services to citizens. He highlighted the importance of sharing knowledge in digital transformation, focusing on key areas such as government stack and software, and promoting public services through online platforms. The impressive uptake of services, with 4 million active users, underscored the growing demand for digital government services. The QazTech platform was commendable for its ability to bring products swiftly to the market, leveraging six delivery platforms and outsourced open-source solutions. Specifically, the integration portal significantly reduced the time it took to integrate business and State information systems, from six months to just one month,





thus facilitating rapid uptake. Focusing on accessibility, the platform was designed to be easily accessible from smartphones, catering to a wide user base. In conclusion, he highlighted the significance of collaborative efforts in developing platforms to effectively deliver state services and promote digital transformation.

Ms. Tatiana Aderikhina, Head of Programs on Education and Skills in Kazakhstan, UNICEF, shed light on the organization's pivotal role as ITU's partner under Giga - a visionary initiative aimed at connecting 2.8 million schools and 500 million students globally by 2030. Giga strove to map and provide Internet connectivity to every school worldwide. With over 1 million schools already mapped in 50 countries and over 5 300 schools connected, Giga had made significant strides, granting first-time access to 2 million students and educators. Yet, the journey to universal school connectivity remained a formidable one. She mentioned examples of improving the quality of access and service of schools in Kazakhstan from 10 Mbps to 20 Mbps and reducing the cost of connectivity and how real-time monitoring had resulted in improved quality of access for students. UNICEF's dedication extended further through its Venture Fund pledge to support digital public goods (DPGs), particularly in the realm of cryptocurrency and other digital currencies. That commitment underscored UNICEF's unwavering resolve to find innovative solutions and financing mechanisms to realize the monumental task of connecting millions of schools and children worldwide. Through the Venture Fund, UNICEF aimed to propel the adoption of DPGs to new heights, fostering enhanced learning and understanding on a global scale.

Mr Dao Tian, Senior Director, Industry Relations and Standard, ZTE, acknowledged ZTE's significant contributions and pledges, including the commitment to provide 50 000 hours of ICT lectures and the construction of USD 400 million worth of ICT network infrastructure annually by 2025. ZTE's dedication to developing countries in the global digital economy was underscored, with 60 per cent of employees locally employed in the CIS region. The company's substantial investments in Kazakhstan since 2000, amounting to approximately USD 1 billion, highlighted its long-term commitment to the region's digital development. Furthermore, ZTE's active contributions, such as digital classrooms, women's training centres, and offline training courses in countries like Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, exemplified its multifaceted approach towards capacity building and empowerment. With ZTE's unwavering commitment to enhancing digital infrastructure and expertise, he concluded his statement by saying that he was looking forward to the prospect of new pledges during the forum.

8. Partner2Connect Matchmaking Roundtables

8.1. P2C matchmaking Roundtable One – RI CIS1

The session focused on RI CIS1: Developing infrastructure to promote innovation and partnerships in the introduction of new technologies – the Internet of Things, including the industrial Internet, smart cities and communities, 5G/IMT-2020 and next-generation NET-2030 communication networks, quantum technologies, artificial intelligence, digital health, digital skills and environmental protection. The session was moderated by **Mr Farid Nakhli**, Programme Coordinator, Regional Office for CIS, ITU.





- The following panelists participated in the session: **Mr Dmitry Korzun**, Head of the Telecommunications and Radio Frequency Spectrum Regulation Department, Ministry of Communications and Informatization of the **Republic of Belarus**
- **Mr Askhat Rakhmatullin**, Director of the State Radio Frequency Service, Ministry of Digital Development, Innovations and Aerospace Industry of the **Republic of Kazakhstan**
- **Ms Kristine Gyonjyan**, Director, Union of Operators, **Armenia**
- **Mr Wei Wei**, General Manager in Kazakhstan, **ZTE**
- **Mr Konstantin Savin**, Business Partner, IXP Consulting, **Russia**
- **Mr Vahan Hovsepyan**, Senior Community and Public Policy Officer, **RIPE NCC**
- **Mr Yerbol Absalyamov**, Deputy Director for Operations, Institute of Smart systems and Artificial Intelligence (ISSAI), **Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan**

Key points of the session:

- **Mr Dmitry Korzun** shared insights on the achievements in infrastructure development in the Republic of Belarus: 200 000 km of fibre-optic cable lines, 3.2 million people on fixed broadband subscriptions and 98.4 per cent of the population covered by 4G. Acknowledging the significant efforts in terms of the ICT Development Index methodology, he presented Belarus's position according to the key indicators that the country had achieved. Planning for 2026-2030 includes providing broadband access and high-quality communication services in rural areas, developing 4G and launch of 5G; and to explore the possibility of applying advanced digitalization solutions based on satellite systems and networks.
- **Mr Askhat Rakhmatullin** provided an update on 5G development in Kazakhstan, highlighting the country's focus on global insights from the ITU. He noted ITU's training in 2022 on launching 5G networks and the upcoming Regional Radiocommunication Seminar. Kazakhstan aims to host ITU-R Study Group 7 meetings and a Spectrum Management Workshop in 2024. Emphasizing the need for spectrum allocation, he pointed out the significance of 700 MHz and 3-6 GHz bands for 5G. He mentioned the recent auction for 3,600-3,800 MHz frequencies and operators' commitment to deploying over 3,000 5G base stations in cities within five years. By 2027, 5G coverage targets include 75% of national cities and 60% of regional cities.
- **Ms Kristine Gyonjyan** emphasized that one of the priorities of the Union of Operators of Armenia was to provide universal access to high-quality Internet services throughout the territory of Armenia. In order to achieve that goal, a community networks pilot project was launched in low-income rural areas. The experience of the Shaghap community had clearly demonstrated the huge impact that high-speed Internet access could have on society, as it significantly improved the lives of young and elderly residents alike. Furthermore, at a local school, a classroom was used as a robotics laboratory, which was equipped with the necessary resources, and training was provided to the teachers. The success of the pilot project was attributed to a multistakeholder partnership involving regulators (such as the Public Services Regulatory Commission of the Republic of Armenia), government agencies (including the Ministry of High-Tech Industry of the Republic of Armenia), local authorities, telecommunication providers, and international partners (such as the Internet Society and ITU). Following the Shaghap pilot project's success, the model was replicated in six other communities to establish a reliable infrastructure system connecting over 600 households.





- **Mr Wei Wei** presented detailed information on the progress of the digital transformation of various sectors of the economies of CIS countries. Examples of programmes and steps governments had taken to digitally transform their countries were elucidated. The focus had been on human resources, digital entrepreneurship, building core communication networks, the digital economy, e-government, and the construction of data centres acknowledging the growth of wireless network coverage and that ICT companies were active and providing significant job opportunities.
- **Mr Konstantin Savin** elaborated on regional training courses on 5G targeted for eight CIS countries from 2021 to 2023 and had contributed to Regional Initiative 1 on network infrastructure. The training courses had contributed to developing the expertise of specialists in the region on the introduction of new technologies, benefitting over 1 000 participants across the region. A new project was proposed to assess the needs for expertise across a broad range of issues relating to technologies for connecting communication services. The outcomes of the assessment were expected to include an analytical report on the current situation and needs of the region regarding the development of communication networks.
- **Mr Vahan Hovsepyan** presented the Réseaux IP Européens Network Coordination Centre programmes for the CIS region, which were being implemented with partners such as ITU, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, the Internet Society, and the IPv6 Council. He noted that the Network Coordination Centre would be conducting an Internet measurement day event with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). The event focused on network and Internet measurement, and on highlighting the products and measurement tools used by regulators, technical communities and academic organizations. The event was planned for May 2024 in Uzbekistan. In addition, the Central Asia Peering and Interconnection Forum, which provided opportunities to build connectivity inside the region and beyond, would be held from 24-25 September 2024 in Kyrgyzstan. He also mentioned that the Network Coordination Centre had launched a specialist certification programme to improve its capacity building and training component with the aim of expanding expertise in various fields.
- **Mr Yerbol Absalyamov** presented an assistive mobile application with an intuitive user interface that allowed persons who were visually impaired to interact with ChatGPT for conversation. In addition to the creation of national speech technologies, he described the process and experience of building language models in Uzbekistan, the Russian Federation (for the Tatar language) and Kyrgyzstan. Institute of Smart Systems and Artificial Intelligence made contribution to the ITU-D Study Group 2 in December 2022 on automatic speech recognition software for the Kazakh language to further develop speech technologies for Kazakh as well as for other interested countries.
- A dynamic discussion on radiophobia took place during the session and successful cases of cooperation with the health ministry to overcome the problem were described.

The following proposals were presented:

- The Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan proposed building four radio technology equipment testing laboratories that would have the technical capabilities to assess compliance of imported radio equipment with technical regulations.





The regulations were being prepared in the Republic of Azerbaijan based on directives from the European Union 2014/53/EU, 2014/30/EU and 2014/35/EU.

- Huawei Technologies was committed to bridging the digital divide in remote communities by ensuring that through its ICT solutions (including RuralStar) about 120 million people in the remote areas of more than 80 countries would be connected by the end of 2025.

8.2. P2C Matchmaking Roundtable Two – RI CIS2

The session focused on RI CIS 2: Cybersecurity and personal data protection. The session was moderated by **Mr Farid Nakhli**, Programme Coordinator, Regional Office for CIS, ITU

The following panelists participated in the session:

- **Mr Ruslan Abdikalikov**, Chairman, Information Security Committee, Ministry of Digital Development, Innovations and Aerospace Industry of the **Republic of Kazakhstan**
- **Mr Timur Derbishaliev**, Cybersecurity Technical Consultant, the Ministry of Digital Development of the **Kyrgyz Republic**
- **Mr Kairzhan Abdrakhmanov**, Government Relations Manager, **Kaspersky Lab** – Kazakhstan, Central Asia & Mongolia
- **Ms Aislu Bekmussa**, Head of Programs on Social Policy and Protection of Children's Rights, UNICEF
- **Mr Dauren Salipov**, CEO, MSSP.GLOBAL, **Kazakhstan**

Key points of the session:

- **Mr Ruslan Abdikalikov** presented the work being undertaken by Kazakhstan with respect to in technical, organizational, and regulatory measures to ensure information protection, as established by the Information Security Committee. He outlined the work planned for creating a platform to educate and raise awareness among the public; increasing penalties for violating information security and personal data protection legislation; developing a service for controlling access to personal data; making cyber insurance mandatory for operators maintaining more than 1 million personal data records; monitoring super administrators' activities; consolidating the basic list of services obtained from information security operation centres for State-owned facilities and critical communication and information infrastructure facilities; providing funding for information security issues equal to 10-15 % of the ICT budget; refusing to issue and use an electronic digital signatures on file-based storage media; and consolidating qualification requirements for information security specialists working in State-owned facilities and critical communication and information infrastructure facilities.
- **Mr Timur Derbishaliev** shared information on the capabilities and objectives of the honeypot-based monitoring system, in particular: the implementation of the system at the strategic level; the protection of critical information assets; the implementation of the system into the national cybersecurity infrastructure and telecommunication networks; and the achievement of strategic national security goals. He reflected on ways to achieve the above mentioned goals through: threat detection and analysis; research and information gathering; strengthening critical infrastructure protection; and interdepartmental and international cooperation. He also highlighted the role of honeypots in facilitating the exchange of information on cyberthreats between government bodies, States, and international agencies and organizations.
- **Mr Kairzhan Abdrakhmanov** described the plans for providing parents in Kazakhstan with master classes that would give practical tips on the safe use of the Internet and digital products by children.





Free master classes were currently being organized with the support of the Information Security Committee of the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Committee for Children's Rights Protection of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kaspersky Lab and UNICEF Kazakhstan. Experts engaged with parents daily, discussing the potential dangers children faced online and sharing methods for improving children's online safety. Moreover, parents were informed about the relationship between children's mental health and Internet use, trusting relationships between parents and children, and how to increase children's online safety.

- **Ms Aislu Bekmussa** presented the findings of the Kazakhstan Kids Online study which had been carried out in 2023 in partnership with the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The study involved 1,201 children (aged 9-17), 1,200 parents/ guardians, and 300 teachers. The findings highlighted that child primarily used the Internet for entertainment and communication, with many having their own accounts on social media or game sites (even children under 13), and that using the Internet was also important for education and training purposes. He highlighted risks relating to inappropriate online content. He also shared cyberbullying statistics in the country and outlined the main recommendations out of the study.
- **Mr Dauren Salipov** discussed MSSP.GLOBAL's operations, detailing their information security products and services. He identified key challenges and suggested solutions, such as bolstering support for local vendors, streamlining procurement processes, implementing secure development practices, and increasing penalties for cybercrime. In terms of international collaboration, he recommended organizing country booths for companies at events. Addressing human resource gaps, he proposed mandatory annual refresher courses on basic digital security skills for government employees and critical infrastructure staff. Additionally, he outlined the company's upcoming product launches and training initiatives.

The following proposals were presented:

- The Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan proposed holding capacity-building events on the topical issue of personal data protection and the drafting of a new law on the matter in line with international best practices.

8.3. P2C Matchmaking Roundtable Three – RI CIS3

The session focused on RI CIS3: Creating an enabling legal and regulatory environment to accelerate digital transformation and was moderated by **Ms. Natalia Mochu**, Regional Director, Regional Office for CIS, ITU.

The following panelists participated in the session:

- **Mr Jeyhun Huseynzade**, Head of Strategy, Innovation and Digitalization at the Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of the **Republic of Azerbaijan**
- **Ms Irina Baikulova**, Deputy Director, Public Foundation "Civil Initiative Internet Policy", **Kyrgyzstan**
- **Ms Nancy Sundberg**, Senior Programme Officer, Regulatory and Market Environment Division, Telecommunication Development Bureau, **ITU**
- **Ms Bayan Khassenova**, Acting Head of International Cooperation Office, NITEC, **Kazakhstan**
- **Mr Dauren Rahimzhanov**, Managing Director, Digital Initiatives Directorate, **EDB**





- **Mr Saleem Zoughbi**, Senior Research Consultant, **UN University**

Key points of the session:

- **Mr Jeyhun Huseynzade** acknowledged the support of the ITU for study carried out in 2023 for assessing digital skills at the national level with almost 35 000 respondents was launched with the goal of identifying the current level of digital literacy in Azerbaijan and persisting digital skill gaps. Six digital transformation pillars for Azerbaijan - digital infrastructure; digital government platforms; digital financial services; digital business; digital skills; and a trust ecosystem - were highlighted. The main objective of Azerbaijan's Digital Vision is to create a society of digital opportunities, foster innovation, drive economic growth and improve the well-being of all citizens.
- **Ms Irina Baikulova** outlined the objectives and principles behind the Digital Code of Kyrgyzstan, designed to expedite digital transformation. Kyrgyzstan aims to position itself as a hub for digital innovation and accelerate technological advancement. The document was conceived as a tool for ushering in new approaches to the digital landscape and was likened to the country's digital constitution, encompassing global digital agenda aspects and adhering to international best practices. Notably, it aligned with the latest European Union standards on AI regulation while catering to domestic interests. Transitioning from algorithmic to probabilistic data analysis posed a significant challenge during its development. The Digital Code aimed to balance government, business, and consumer interests, fostering transparent and equitable interactions. Additionally, it promised substantial reforms in the telecommunications industry, reducing administrative burdens and modernizing licensing procedures.
- **Ms Nancy Sundberg** described the capabilities of the Digital Regulation Platform developed by ITU and the World Bank which offers practical guidance and best practices for policymakers and regulators. Capabilities of the G5 Accelerator platform sought to inform and educate the worldwide regulatory community about digital transformation issues and helped to improve regulatory regimes by providing precise and practical steps to achieve progress. Using the example of Uzbekistan's success in improving its national regulatory regime for the industry and mentioned ITU tools such as the ICT Regulatory Tracker and G5 Benchmark. Another example demonstrated Universal Service Financing Efficiency Toolkit designed to help policymakers and regulators navigate common questions and challenges faced using public funds to design, implement and finance programmes and projects that facilitated access to digital technologies and communication infrastructure. She encouraged participation in the ITU Global Symposium for Regulators (1-4 July 2024 in Kampala, Uganda).
- **Ms Bayan Khassenova** shared insights on how Kazakhstan's National Information Technologies Joint-Stock Company was creating and ensuring the smooth operation of government agency information systems, highlighting the company's role in providing high-quality public services for businesses and citizens. She noted that one of the company's priorities was sharing lessons learned through international partnerships. It was currently carrying out its first export of e-government components to the Republic of Tajikistan. She also shared information on the goals and objectives of the GovTech project for creating and increasing the level of e-government digitalization in the CIS region. Under the GovTech initiative, projects were gathered, technical specifications were drafted, and detailed implementation guidelines were prepared for countries. Webinars facilitated knowledge exchange, while recommendations for legal





enhancements were formulated. Encouraging participation, she invited all to join the ITU Regional Forum on Digital Government scheduled for March 28-29, 2024, in Astana. This forum promised invaluable insights into pioneering e-government strategies.

- **Mr Dauren Rahimzhanov** shared information about the activities of the Fund for Digital Initiatives of the Eurasian Development Bank, which aimed to assist the member States of the Bank in undertaking digital transformation and digitalization by providing financial resources, grants, investments, loans, etc. The initiators included national governments, government bodies, representatives of the business community, and various associations. The Fund was not only open to cooperation and applications from stakeholders, but was also able to create its own integration projects, such as the Work in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) platform designed to provide services to migrant workers.
- **Mr Saleem Zoughbi** outlined the importance of regional cooperation as a key criterion for equal digital transformation outlining what he considered key components of a legal framework for the CIS region: harmonization should meet the requirements of content, and applications and services to meet a set level of quality; network capacity should be sufficient to provide the services in addition to any Internet access services provided; and that it should not affect the availability of an overall quality of Internet access services to end users. He highlighted the following recommendations: cybersecurity exercises for CIS countries; the development of national cybersecurity strategies; cooperation and capacity building in regard to Computer Incident Response Teams; data protection research; the implementation of secure cloud systems; and the development of technologies to improve lives and trust services.

The following proposals were made:

- National Information Technologies was invited to initiate regional cooperation under the GovStack project to strengthen regional development and knowledge-sharing on digital government. As part of the cooperation, Kazakhstan would provide its solutions and expertise to the global registry of digital public goods and would help selected countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus overcome the obstacles to digitalization by drawing on the expertise of Kazakhstan and other partners. In addition, it was proposed that thematic meetings, skills development seminars, and knowledge-sharing events be held, and that recommended standards and specifications be promoted.
- The Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan proposed the establishment of an electronic management system for the public telecommunication network (GIS). The system was expected to become a unified electronic platform for regulating both access to the public telecommunication network and the connection of construction facilities to the public telecommunication network. The system would also serve as a platform for addressing issues relating to the use requirements of the public telecommunication network and for organizing the implementation of telecommunication services via a connection to the public telecommunication network.





8.4. P2C Matchmaking Roundtable four – RI CIS4

The session focused on RI CIS4: Digital skills and information and communication technology accessibility for the public, particularly for persons with disability. It session was moderated by **Ms Daria Kursa**, Regional Coordinator on Digital Accessibility, Regional Office for CIS, **ITU**

The following panelists participated in the session:

- **Mr Madiyar Yunussov**, President, Kostanay Engineering and Economics University named after M.Dulatov (KEEU), **Kazakhstan**
- **Mr Vladimir Ivashko**, Head of Scientific Technical Department, Belarusian State Academy of Communication, **Belarus**
- **Mr Shakhmaran Seilov**, Dean of the Faculty of Information Technology, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, **Kazakhstan**
- **Ms Wang Li**, Deputy Director of Digital Management Research Department, Industry and Planning Research Institute, China Academy of Information and Communications Technology (CAICT), **China**
- **Mr Talant Sultanov**, Chairman and Co-Founder, Internet Society Kyrgyz Chapter, **Kyrgyzstan**
- **Mr Shakhzod Narzullaev**, Project Manager, IT Academy of **Uzbekistan**

Key points of the session:

- **Mr Madiyar Yunussov** presented the results of the project for the creation of a smart education ecosystem in Kostanay, rolled out in Kazakhstan from August 2020 to December 2022. The university's basic telecommunication network had been modernized and a smart education ecosystem in Kostanay with 6 connected facilities and 702 users had been created. He also presented the results of the LAN knowledge hub project, implemented last year. A study on the actual use of school connectivity and the quality of connectivity was as well as an assessment of local network infrastructure resilience in connected schools in Kazakhstan were carried out, and a template was prepared on building and improving local school infrastructure so that it was safe, reliable, sustainable and fit-for-purpose.
- **Mr Vladimir Ivashko** elucidated about the work of training centres for persons with hearing impairments in Minsk and in Vitebsk. In addition, he briefly presented the results of a study on the methodological bases for teaching digital skills to persons with disabilities conducted in 2023. Its purpose was to obtain relevant information on the accessibility of digital skills for persons with disabilities in the CIS region, to develop methodological bases and recommendations on digital skills training for persons with disabilities, and to identify the benefits of digital skills for the careers of persons with disabilities.
- **Ms Wang Li** described the experience of the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology in promoting barrier-free ICT accessibility and helping bridge the digital divide for the older persons and persons with disabilities. The result was the creation of special programmes that improved the usability and accessibility of mobile applications and provided smart devices and services for older persons in China. She explained how websites and applications were updated to be more convenient and accessible for older persons thereby helping to bridge the digital divide and make use of the benefits of ICTs on an equal basis.





- **Mr Talant Sultanov** presented the results of the Sanarip Insan (Digital Citizen) project in Kyrgyzstan, rolled out last year with the objective to improve equal economic opportunity and sustainability among young people and women in rural areas of Kyrgyzstan. Its goal was to improve economic well-being through training in the use of digital platforms and digital literacy. The project resulted in an increase of youth safety indicators, which contributed to the Sustainable Development Goals and the protection of human rights. The Sanarip Insan project provided an opportunity for people in the regions to equip themselves with digital knowledge that enhanced their economic well-being and contributed to sustainable development, with a focus on three key areas: e-commerce, digital tourism and digital agriculture.
- **Mr Shakhzod Narzullaev** presented the results of work carried out in 2023 in Uzbekistan under ITU's global programme on child online protection, specifically a free online video course in Uzbek with sign language interpretation that had a run time of more than two hours. The course was based on materials developed by ITU together with the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education on information security in the digital educational space. He stressed the importance of the face-to-face training sessions held in 14 regions of Uzbekistan based on an information security course that had been localized into Uzbek. The 305 teachers who had completed the course and received certificates, had learned the material in an interactive format together with an instructor and been given the opportunity to plan the adaptation of course content into their own educational programmes.

The following proposals were presented:

- The Kostanay Engineering and Economics University named after M. Dulatov (Republic of Kazakhstan) proposed the implementation of the second phase of the project for the creation of a smart education ecosystem in Kostanay namely the creation of a network technologies competence centre. The goals of the project were: to create a network technologies laboratory, to emulate the work of industrial facilities, and to train the employees of enterprises and educational organizations. The benefits of the project included practical training, visual demonstrations of network technologies, and the opportunity to test and debug network solutions in an educational and industrial environment.
- The Belarusian State Academy of Communication proposed conducting a study on the specifics of digital skills training in the form of inclusive and collaborative training for different categories of persons with disabilities. It also proposed organizing a regional training course on methodologies for digital skills training for persons with disabilities at the Belarusian State Academy of Communications, where representatives of CIS countries would be able to share their experiences of educating people with special needs.
- The L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University (Republic of Kazakhstan) proposed creating a dictionary of digital terms in order to shape the scientific and educational landscape of national digital economies. It also proposed creating a dictionary of sign language terms by using AI technology to develop and harmonize sign language.
- Under the Generation Connect Young Leadership Programme (GCYLP), Huawei Technologies, in partnership with ITU, pledged to support 90 young people in their projects to introduce digital technologies by providing funding and carrying out specific development activities, thereby





facilitating the full participation of young people from diverse backgrounds in the creation of a more inclusive digital society.

8.5. P2C Matchmaking Roundtable Five – RI CIS5

The session focused on RI CIS5: Development of smart cities and communities, this session was moderated by **Mr Farid Nakhli**, Programme Coordinator, Regional Office for CIS, ITU.

The following panelists participated in the session:

- **Ms Cristina Bueti**, Counsellor, ITU-T Study Group 20, Telecommunication Standardization Bureau, **ITU**
- **Mr Mars Sydykov**, Director, Center of Digital Technologies, Bishkek Municipality, **Kyrgyzstan**
- **Mr Gulam Abdullayev**, Head of Department, Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of the **Republic of Azerbaijan**
- **Mr Vladimir Ivashko**, Head of Scientific Technical Department, Belarusian State Academy of Communication, **Belarus**
- **Ms Tea Aulavuo**, Environmental Affairs Officer, **UNECE**

Key points of the session:

- **Ms Cristina Bueti** provided an overview of ITU's activities to promote the digital transformation of smart cities and ensure their digital sustainability. She noted the growing urbanization of CIS countries, which had brought about numerous challenges in terms of infrastructure, resources, traffic, security, and the availability and level of connectivity. Ms Bueti cited various successful country cases where new technologies were addressing the problems of urbanization of CIS countries. She especially highlighted both ITU's tools to support digital transformation and several achievements related to the relevant Sustainable Development Goals, including the standards and recommendations developed by ITU-T Study Group 20 on the Internet of Things, smart cities and communities. She also described useful smart city resources, tools and initiatives that had been developed and launched by ITU, some in partnership with the global community of experts.
- **Mr Mars Sydykov** shared the experience of digital transformation in Bishkek sharing the details of potential technological solutions deployed by the Center of digital technologies, a municipal enterprise for the digitalization of the city with challenges and opportunities. The Smart Sustainable City Bishkek concept encompassed sectors such as transport, health care, education, ecology, security, housing and utilities up to 2033. He shared information about the introduction of the mobile application “My city”, which facilitated productive interactions between the municipality and citizens, the project “Smart stop”, the information system “Control room”, the pilot introduction of an automated traffic control system that used adaptive technologies, and the information system “Sanitation for the territories”. He also announced that work had begun on the project “Safe City” which aimed to improve road safety.
- **Mr Gulam Abdullayev** shared the introduction of smart city technology in a number of cities of Azerbaijan. He spoke about the training course to launch networks of mobile communication of the next generation (IMT-2020/5G), which had been held in Baku with the support of ITU and had enabled discussions on technological trends. Information on the implementation of broadcasting digitalization measures were shared and at that time, DAB+ digital broadcasting was available to listeners in Baku and surrounding areas in parallel with analogue FM broadcasting, but by 2027 digital radio was planned to cover 99.7 per cent of the country's territory and a phased analogue broadcasting switch-off would be





carried out from 2028. Difficulty in coordinating frequency assignments in border areas for the application of T-DAB technology were key challenges, including the need for multilateral harmonization of the territorial frequency plans of CIS countries to avoid interference between neighbouring countries and a reduction in the quality of digital radio broadcasting services.

- **Mr Vladimir Ivashko** presented the results of five seminars on the Digital development of territorial units in the Republic of Belarus that had taken place during 2022-2024. The objective was to promote the sustainable digital development of the territorial units of the Republic of Belarus by improving the professional competencies of public officials in city and regional executive committees. Representatives from 95 city and regional executive committees from the Brest, Viciebsk, Hrodna, Minsk and Mahilioŭ provinces of Belarus, benefiting over 750 representatives of State structures and businesses.
- **Ms Tea Aulavuo** presented the outcomes of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities global UN initiative coordinated by ITU, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, with the support of a number of agencies and departments. As a global platform for information exchange and partnership building, it promoted digitalization, innovation, the use of ICTs and progress towards reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2015, UNECE contributed to the development of ITU's key performance indicators, the UN standard for smart and sustainable cities, which were available for free and were being used by more than 150 cities around the world. She also presented guidelines for innovative funding tools to support the implementation of recommendations. She presented the sustainable smart city profile of Astana and the policy recommendations developed by the UN initiative. She also invited everyone to the Cities Summit of the Future (30 September-1 October 2024, Geneva), which was the fourth annual Forum of Mayors meeting, and would be held after UN Summit of the Future (22-23 September 2024, New York).

The following proposals were presented:

- The Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan proposed organizing international and regional seminars, as well as training courses to leverage the experience of countries that have completed the transition to digital broadcasting. It further proposed providing CIS countries with expert support to create development plans (considering the creation of hybrid digital broadcasting networks in conjunction with next-generation mobile networks and their integration into smart city and village concepts) and territorial frequency plans. The Ministry also proposed conducting necessary studies required for the implementation of digital broadcasting.
- The Belarusian State Academy of Communication proposed developing the content required for a smart city scientific and educational centre. The centre would further the professional development of both the management and engineering staff of the territorial units of the Republic of Belarus. The State Academy was ready to share best practices with partners from other CIS countries by organizing and holding a forum on the digital development of territorial units in 2025.

9. Signing Ceremonies and Announcements

9.1 Signing Ceremony for the framework cooperation agreement between ITU and RCC

The signing ceremony between the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications (RCC) marked the establishment of a framework cooperation agreement. This agreement aims at implementing projects aligned with the objectives of the WTDC-22 regional





initiatives. Recognizing the significance of collaboration between ITU and regional telecommunication entities such as RCC, the agreement underscores joint efforts to advance digital development. Focused on addressing the digital gap, particularly in CIS countries, the agreement pledges to bolster shared capacities, thus facilitating the resolution of specific challenges voiced by Member States.



Figure 3: Signing ceremony- ITU and RCC

9.2 Signing Ceremony – Declaration of Intent between ITU and KEEU

- **Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava**, Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, **ITU**
- **Mr Madiyar Yunussov**, President, Kostanay Engineering and Economics University named after M.Dulatov (KEEU), **Kazakhstan**

The Declaration of Intent between ITU and the Kostanay Engineering and Economics University named after M. Dulatov made at a signing ceremony during the Forum, aims to create a network technologies competence centre. The declaration was a continuation of the cooperation between ITU and the University on the project to create a smart education ecosystem in Kostanay. The objective is to create a network technologies laboratory, emulate the work of industrial facilities, and to train the employees of enterprises and educational organizations. The benefits of establishing a network technologies competence centre included practical training opportunities, visual demonstrations of network technologies, and the opportunity to test and debug network solutions in an educational and industrial environment.





Figure 4: Signing Ceremony – ITU and KEEU

9.3 Announcement of Cooperation between ITU, EDB and NITEC

- Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU
- Mr Dauren Rahimzhanov, Managing Director, Digital Initiatives Directorate, Eurasian Development Bank
- Mr Rostislav Konyashkin, CEO, NITEC, Kazakhstan





Figure 5: Announcement ceremony of cooperation between ITU, EDB and NITEC

A signing ceremony was conducted to announce the cooperation between ITU, the Eurasian Development Bank, and the National Information Technologies Joint-Stock Company (Kazakhstan) on the implementation of the GovStack regional project for countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus. The project aims to provide governments and government agencies of countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus with access to the best knowledge, resources, and tools necessary for achieving digital transformation and improving the coverage, quality and accessibility of social services, thereby accelerating progress towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals.

10. Closing Ceremony

In his closing remarks, Mr. Askhat Orazbek, Chair of RDF-CIS, expressed gratitude for the active engagement during the ITU Regional Development Forum. He highlighted rich discussions, exchange of knowledge, and innovative ideas aimed at propelling countries forward and enhancing regional competitiveness. Mr. Orazbek emphasized pivotal aspects crucial for digital development, stressing universal broadband access across the CIS region, citing projects like the Transcaspian fibre-optic cable. He also stressed fostering digital literacy among all segments of the population and advocated for cultivating innovation and nurturing the digital ecosystem. He referenced cybersecurity and emphasized protecting data and information systems, safeguarding children online, and promoting internet safety. Lastly, he underscored the significance of collaboration between government, private sector, and public organizations for successful digital transformation. In closing, he extended appreciation for attendees' participation, expressing optimism for collective endeavours to pave the way for prosperity across CIS countries.

Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, BDT Director, ITU, expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Government of the





Republic of Kazakhstan, the Chair of RDF-CIS, the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as the moderators and participants for their invaluable contributions to the success of the event. In a gesture of appreciation, he presented a certificate of recognition to the Chair of RDF-CIS. Dr. Zavazava assured that the ITU Regional Office for CIS would collaborate closely with partners to implement the proposed initiatives and fulfil commitments outlined in Annex 1, thereby offering tangible and effective support to Member States. Emphasizing the importance of tackling challenges and addressing issues encountered by countries, he extended gratitude to top-level officials, governments, regulators, UN agencies, academia, industry representatives, and the private sector for their involvement. Concluding the session, the ITU BDT Director officially closed the proceedings of RDF-CIS.





Annex 1 – P2C Matchmaking Table

The matchmaking table below lists the P2C pledges and commitments made at the CIS-RDF, against the ITU Regional Initiatives for the CIS region.

| N: | Regional Initiatives | Name of the Pledge/Commitment | Submitting Organization | Value of Total Pledge/Commitment in USD (US dollars) | Beneficiary Countries of the Pledge/Commitment in CIS Region |
|-----------|-----------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | RI1.2 | Huawei committed to bring connectivity to about 120 million people in remote areas globally by 2025 | Huawei | N/A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All countries in the region, where applicable |
| 2 | RI1.3 | NITEC committed to implement GovStack Program | NITEC (National Information technologies JSC) | N/A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Armenia Azerbaijan Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Tajikistan Turkmenistan Uzbekistan |
| 3 | RI4.7 | Huawei committed to support 90 young visionaries in their digital inclusion projects globally | Huawei | N/A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All countries in the region, where applicable |
| 4 | RI1.2 | ZTE committed to build \$400 million annually worth of ICT infrastructure globally by 2025 | ZTE | 1,400,000,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All countries in the region, where applicable |
| 5 | RI1.1 | RIPE NCC committed to achieve connectivity and ensure internet sustainability in Europe, Middle East and Central Asia | Réseaux IP Européens Network Coordination Centre (RIPE NCC) | N/A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Armenia Azerbaijan Belarus Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Russian Federation Tajikistan Turkmenistan Uzbekistan |
| 6 | RI2.2 | Kaspersky Lab KZ committed to organize free masterclasses for parents to enhance their capacity on safe use of the Internet and digital products for children | Kaspersky Lab KZ | N/A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kazakhstan |
| 7 | Ri4.3 | BSAC committed to implement its work on methodological bases for teaching digital skills to | Belarusian State Academy of Communication (BSAC) | N/A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Armenia Azerbaijan Belarus Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan |





| | | | | | |
|----|-------|--|--|-----|--|
| | | persons with disabilities in all CIS countries | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russian Federation • Tajikistan • Turkmenistan • Uzbekistan |
| 8 | RI3.5 | BSAC committed to improve digital literacy of civil servants as a driver for the development of smart cities in all CIS countries | Belarusian State Academy of Communication (BSAC) | N/A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armenia • Azerbaijan • Belarus • Kazakhstan • Kyrgyzstan • Russian Federation • Tajikistan • Turkmenistan • Uzbekistan |
| 9 | RI3.4 | Eurasian National University committed to the formation of scientific and educational landscape of digital economy of the countries of the Organization of Turkic States and Eurasian Economic Union | Eurasian National University L N. Gumilev | N/A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the Organization of Turkic States and Eurasian Economic Union |
| 10 | RI4.7 | Eurasian National University committed to the development and harmonization of sign language of the countries of the Organization of Turkic States and Eurasian Economic Union | Eurasian National University L N. Gumilev | N/A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the Organization of Turkic States and Eurasian Economic Union |
| 11 | RI1.4 | CAICT committed to promoting barrier-free ICT Accessibility and helping bridge the digital divide for the elderly and the disabled in CIS Region | China Academy of Information and Communications Technology (CAICT) | N/A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant CIS Countries |

