



INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

**TELECOMMUNICATION  
DEVELOPMENT BUREAU**  
**ITU-D STUDY GROUPS**

**Document 2/087-E**  
**7 June 1999**  
**Original: English only**

SECOND MEETING OF STUDY GROUP 1: GENEVA, 30 AUGUST - 3 SEPTEMBER 1999  
SECOND MEETING OF STUDY GROUP 2: GENEVA, 6 - 10 SEPTEMBER 1999

---

*FOR ACTION*

Questions : All

### **STUDY GROUP 2**

SOURCE: CABLE & WIRELESS (UNITED KINGDOM)

TITLE: TRANSFER OF EXPERTISE BETWEEN CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE (21 - 23  
JUNE 1999)

---

#### **Action required:**

Study Group 2 is asked to note the experience of the pilot study carried out by Cable & Wireless at the request of TDAG and to take the points raised into account when organizing similar events.

#### **Abstract:**

Cable & Wireless and BDT organized a seminar at ESMT in Senegal for participants from Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Congo, ESMT (Senegal), Guinea, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. The seminar was delivered in the French language and all supporting material was in French. This report outlines the experiences of a Centre of Excellence which currently delivers all its lectures in English, sharing knowledge with a French speaking institution.

---

Contact point: Mr. David Mellor, Cable & Wireless, Coventry, United Kingdom  
Tel.: +44 1203 868670 / Fax: +44 1203 868657  
e-mail: david.mellor@college.cwplc.com

As proposed to TDAG in document TDAG-1/8-E on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1999, Cable & Wireless agreed to attempt to instigate a pilot to demonstrate how knowledge could be transferred between Centres of Excellence.

The event did take place in Dakar, Senegal on the above dates but with considerable difficulties. The language used by Cable & Wireless on all programmes is English whereas ESMT deliver their programmes in French.

Although ESMT were advised immediately TDAG had authorised the pilot to take place almost a month was needed before the ITU staff could commence with offering the scholarships.

Participants from Burkina Faso, Central Africa Republic, Congo, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania and Niger did actively participate in the Seminar.

A wash-up session was held with the participants and the ITU Regional Staff at the end of the Seminar and covered:

- **Objectives** Although the participants had been asked to define their own objectives for the seminar none were forthcoming other than the draft proposal by Dr Kingston and therefore these were used.
- **Structure** Because of the small number of participants, majority of the programme took the form of subject matter lectures followed by question and answer sessions. The lectures were all delivered in French and supporting materials were all in the French language.
- **Content** The materials used by Dr Kingston were original and supported by ITU Statistical Information. Substantial amounts of data were supplied.
- **Logistics and Facilities** The ESMT facility is reasonable. The reliability of electricity was very mixed and relied heavily on standby power generation, which did not cover air-conditioning. The teaching staff at ESMT are excellent.
- **Comments** included: duration too short, not enough time to debate, more emphasis on finance, lectures in mornings only, need to improve administration, dual language would be difficult to follow a constructive debate.

The ITU Regional Office claimed they were only aware of the event the day before it started. No one from Senegal attended although 5 names had been put forward to Geneva. Neither of the two candidates from Cameroon arrived. Cote d'Ivoire apologised for not attending after the event started.

The delegates were extremely appreciative regarding the extensive amount of information provided by Dr. Kingston and many commented on the English style for coping with change as being very different to anything they had experienced before.

Several delegates invited C&W to host similar events in their countries and were very positive in their comments regarding this pilot. However we have concluded that the effort and cost involved for both the ITU and C&W in organising a French speaking event in Africa is cost prohibitive unless the recipient demonstrates a clear wish to receive such information.

## **Conclusion**

To organise an event in French speaking Africa requires at least a years planning time if this is being co-ordinated by an English speaking organisation. Although this particular pilot was successful, without the dedication of Mr Diallo (ESMT) and Barbara Wilson (ITU) this event would have been a total failure.

C&W would be more than willing to allow ESMT staff to attend our programmes which will be delivered in English but to attempt knowledge transfer is both culturally and language barrier prohibitive.

Change has clearly occurred more quickly in the English speaking world than the French speaking and therefore sharing of experiences between managers in similar positions would be of benefit. However it is very difficult to share management experiences through interpreters and such issues are best debated in a single language. Unfortunately C&W have access to a very small number of French speaking professionals.

Budgeting, for the development of Spanish, French and English speaking expertise, is proposed to be covered by the ITU Centres of Excellence project manager.

---