



Cooperation Agreement

This Cooperation Agreement is concluded between:

**The International Telecommunication Union,
Bureau de Développement des Télécommunication (ITU/BDT)**

Place des Nations
1211 Geneva
Switzerland

And

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)

Palais des Nations
CH 1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

1. Framework for collaboration

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is a world intergovernmental organization where the public and the private sectors cooperate for telecommunications development and national telecommunication policies harmonization. The ITU mission is to i) promote the development and the efficient running of telecommunication tools as well as the extension of the benefits of new information and telecommunication technologies to the whole world; ii) promote and offer technical assistance to developing countries in the field of information and telecommunication technologies, including the mobilization of human and financial resources needed; iii) promote, at the international level, the adoption of a broader approach to the issue of telecommunications in the global information economy and society.

The Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) is the administrative arm of the Development Sector of the ITU. The BDT assumes, among other things, the following functions:

- raise the level of awareness of decision-makers concerning the important role of telecommunications in the national economical and social development programmes;
- promote the development, expansion and operation of telecommunication networks and services, particularly in developing countries, taking into account the activities of other organs concerned, by reinforcing capabilities for human resources development, planning, management, resource mobilization, and research and development;
- enhance the growth of telecommunications through cooperation with other relevant organizations, both regional and global in encouraging partnership between national telecommunication operators and the world industry of telecommunication equipments and services (catalytic role);

The BDT activities plans and programmes are periodically defined (every four years) by the Member States during the World Telecommunication Development Conferences (WTDC). This was the case in telecommunications and environment field. Indeed, immediately after the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit (June 1992), the first World Telecommunication Development Conference held in Buenos Aires (March 1994) and the Plenipotentiary Conference of Kyoto (October 1994) adopted Resolutions on telecommunications as support for environment protection.

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 1934 (XVIII) of 11 December 1963 and resolution 42/197 of 11 December 1987, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) is established by the Secretary General as an autonomous institution within the United Nations with the purpose of enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations through appropriate training and research.

As part of its functions, UNITAR is carrying out i) a wide range of training programmes in the field of social and economic development with an emphasis in the field of environmental management, ii) result-oriented research, in particular, research on and for training and to develop and distribute pedagogical materials – guidelines, technical training manuals, distance learning packages, software, etc.

UNITAR has developed a sound experience and expertise in helping countries with the elaboration of country profiles, as well as in implementing environmental legal instruments that they have ratified. One area of specific interest is linked to information society related issues, and more specifically applications of Information Technologies for sustainable development such as the SISEI programme.

2. Legal international framework

There is a direct relationship of the current partnership with the objectives of Agenda 21 as the strengthening of the collection and exchange of information is recommended by Agenda 21 (Chapter 40 and by other international legal instruments relating to the environment such as the Framework Convention on Climate Change (Article 5 - Research and Systematic Observation, and Article 12 - Communication of Information related to Implementation), the Convention on Biological Diversity (Article 12 : Research and Training, Article 17 : Exchange of Information, and Article 18: Technical and Scientific Cooperation), and the Convention to Combat Desertification (Article 16: Information Collection, Analysis and Exchange, and Article 19: Capacity building, Education and Public Awareness).

Since 1994, the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) (Buenos Aires - 1994, Valletta – 1998, and Istanbul - 2002), have emphasized the role of telecommunication and information technologies for environmental protection and sustainable development, and recommended:

- 1. to implement a global operational telecommunication-environment project on the development and use of telecommunication and information technologies for the protection of the environment and sustainable development.*
- 2. to organize seminars, regional workshops and training and research programmes in order to study the matter in greater depth and heighten awareness among all those concerned of the value of implementing multilateral and bilateral projects within the framework of international cooperation.*
- 3. to envisage the establishment of a framework for international cooperation which will enable all those concerned to carry out, promote and develop projects to ensure optimum use of the most appropriate telecommunication and information technologies for the protection of the environment and sustainable development.*

The SISEI programme is currently the main activity answering to those recommendations in which ITU is involved as a primary partner.

3. Programme background

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research, together with the Observatory for Sahel and Sahara (OSS), have embarked on a process to establish and make operational the SISEI, a capacity building programme on the applications of information technologies for the establishment of Environment Information Systems on the Internet, an internet-based, distributed, global environmental information services built around the concept of a collaborative community of authoritative environmental information service providers.

Within the Africa region, UNITAR aims to implement a network of SISEI, contributing to the establishment of an African environmental information network (AEIN), which is supported by the African Ministerial Conference of the Environment. The goal of the SISEI initiative is to assist countries and sub regions generating adequate institutional framework, and to build the capacity of countries and regional organizations to implement systems for the validation, circulation and harnessing of relevant environmental information, with a view to strengthening the participative approach at the different decision-making and operational levels and thereby promoting enlightened decision-making.

Key partnerships with international and regional organizations dedicated to the development of telecommunication capacities sustaining environmental information exchange platform and services in Africa will be crucial for the development of SISEI in Africa. In particular, ITU/BDT together with UNITAR and OSS is promoting the operational stage of the SISEI programme in Africa, through an equal partnership basis.

4. Concept and Objectives

SISEI is a decentralised computerized system set-up as a network of harmonized web sites connected by electronic means, which facilitates standard access to data, information and products relating to the environment. The programme has a strong capacity building component and in countries where it has been implemented, through pilot projects, in cooperation with OSS, the following outputs and capacities have been generated.

- enhanced capacity for data and information management (improved the management of existing data bases, data banks and other information sources);
- greater utilisation and repackaging of internet-sourced information to support policy-oriented action at various levels;
- improved development planning processes at national and district levels in the context of poverty alleviation;
- enhanced capacities for integrating environmental data and information into development planning at various levels;
- enhanced collaboration and co-ordination between the key national institutions as well as other stakeholders at various levels.

The implementation of the SISEI programme will be carried out in a phased approach with the initial stage focusing on a selected number of countries. This stage will also involved sub-regional organizations with established formal institutional structures for environmental data and information generation and dissemination within their respective sub-regions.

In view of the foregoing therefore, the collective efforts and network resources of ITU, UNITAR and OSS represent an appropriate framework for developing a unified collaborative approach in the implementation of SISEI in Africa. In this regard and in consideration of the complementarities of ITU, UNITAR and OSS, in the development of institutional capacities to facilitate environmental information access in Africa, it is imperative that the efforts and practical activities are undertaken in a coordinated and harmonized way that allows synergy and common attainment of the individual and common objectives of the three organizations.

In particular, ITU and UNITAR will be responsible for the implementation of the activities outlined in this Cooperation Agreement. The implementation will be undertaken in a well-coordinated approach focusing, in a 1st stage, on 10 countries (Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Kenya, Uganda and Zambia).

The approach to be used in the implementation of this stage will comprise two major components:

- a) a collective effort that will bring together the 10 countries under a common platform focusing on common goals and objectives, portal template design, content formats, methodologies, tools as well as provision of common set of training skills and materials. This approach will also be used in the assessment of individual experiences and lessons learned which will serve as a basis for the formulation of a longer term support programme for replication in other countries of Africa.
- b) the day to day implementation of specific activities at the individual national and sub-regional level focusing on the development of content that is specific to the respective individual countries and sub-regional organizations. Implementation of this component will also entail development of national portals for hosting national level datasets and related information resources to be made accessible through SISEI.

ITU and UNITAR will work jointly to implement the set of common activities as outlined in (a) above. However, for those activities that need to be implemented separately in each individual country, the specific roles of ITU and UNITAR and the countries in which these organizations will work, will be clearly spelled out in annexes later on enclosed to this document.

5. Outputs, activities and workplan

Under this Cooperation Agreement ITU and UNITAR, together with OSS, will work jointly on the SISEI implementation, through a phased approach that will include, among other tasks:

- a) Identify appropriate points of contact at the policy-making level in both the telecommunication field and in a lead national environmental institution in the countries for future communications of a political, technical and strategic nature related to the national network initiative and more specifically, the implementation of SISEI in each of these countries;
- b) Provide technical support services and take a lead role in the facilitation of discussions in the inception (Kick-off) workshop with national and sub regional institutions involved in the project. The inception workshop, which is to be organized and conducted jointly with UNITAR is also intended to discuss and finalize the content for the SISEI implementation plan and set up a realistic action plan for the follow-up activities;
- c) Organize and conduct awareness as well as specialized training workshops in countries to equip national network partners with a range of skills related to the implementation of SISEI in their respective countries;
- d) Provide technical assistance through training to partner institutions in the integration of national and sub regional portals into the SISEI portals and assume a lead role in the development of the national level contents (information & application tools) by counterpart institutions in the 10 countries;
- e) Conduct a continuous assessment process, contribute to the promotion of the programme, and publish jointly training material.

6. Funding arrangements

Substantial efforts have been invested in the elaboration of the SISEI concept and activities since 1998, coming from different sources for an amount of about 580,000 US dollars. In addition, ITU contributed to support three (3) regional workshops in East Africa (IGAD), North Africa (UMA) and West Africa (CILSS), injecting about 50,000 US dollars in the form of fellowship grants.

The provisional budget for this 1st stage of SISEI programme implementation is annexed to this Cooperation Agreement.

Two main financing sources will enable implementing this 1st stage of the SISEI programme. One financial contribution from ITU of 595,000 US dollars, coming from the "Telecom Surplus" fund, and one financial contribution from UNITAR and its network of partners involved in the SISEI programme of 603,000 US dollars. Those two financial contributions, which availability is respectively confirmed by ITU and UNITAR, constitute the provisional budget of the 1st stage of SISEI programme implementation.

Complementary funding will be provided by recipient countries through in-kind contribution, as well as other additional partners, who will be approached jointly by ITU and UNITAR.

Contributions from the "Telecom Surplus" fund will cover both local capacity building as well as technical assistance with a ratio of approximately 70 % dedicated to local assistance and 30 % dedicated to international expertise and coordination.

UNITAR will ensure synchronization of the resources mobilized by its network of partners, under the rules defined with these last. ITU will administer its financial contribution under the rules in force of Telecom Surplus funds. With the aim to improve cost effectiveness and efficiency in managing the overall programme activities, UNITAR will administer contributions for international expertise and coordination.

However, and if deemed needed, UNITAR may be required by partners to administer other specific components of their contribution.

When this happens, UNITAR maintains a separate account for any disbursements and will submit to those partners, including ITU, upon the completion of the work a detailed breakdown of expenditures incurred, duly certified by an authorized official of UNITAR.

ITU and UNITAR will - jointly and severally - conduct the activities linked to this 1st stage of SISEI programme implementation, in coordination with the partners and with the cooperation of all interested parties.

For each activity scheduled under the SISEI programme, ITU, UNITAR in coordination with their partners will develop a technical document presenting the scope of the components, including break down of activities, objectives, expected results, as well as financial arrangements. Each activity budget will specify the parties to be financed by ITU and the ones to be funded through other partners contribution. Those technical documents will serve as project sheet for the corresponding activity implementation.

UNITAR and ITU being UN entities will follow financial and administrative rules and regulations of the United Nations. Any dispute between the Parties arising out of, or in connection with this Cooperation Agreement shall be settled directly and amicably by them through mutual negotiation. In the case of failure of such amicable settlement, the dispute shall be settled in accordance with UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules as at present in force. The Parties shall be bound by any arbitration award rendered as a result of such arbitration as the final adjudication of any such controversy or claim.

This Cooperation Agreement shall be in effect from the day it is signed by both parties, for a duration of 3 years, or until the completion of the projects. This Cooperation Agreement may be terminated by either party before its expiry date by giving written notice thirty days in advance to the other party.

Signed on behalf of ITU/BDT

Signed on behalf of UNITAR

Mr. Hamadoun Touré
Director
ITU/BDT

Mr. Marcel Boisard
Executive Director
UNITAR
UN Assistant Secretary General

Date: _____ 27.11.2002 _____

Date: _____ 27.11.2002 _____