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| ITU-D INNOVATION | | |

**Summary:**

This report provides an update on the outcomes of ITU-D Innovation as one of the outputs and goals adopted at the World Telecommunication Development Conference in 2014 (WTDC-14) and PP-14 respectively.

The report also provides information on the actions already undertaken or planned to implement these initiatives, taking into account results based management.

**Action required:**TDAG is invited to note this report and provide guidance as deemed necessary.

**References:**

Dubai Declaration of the WTDC-14; WTDC-14 Resolution 17 (Rev. Dubai, 2014);

PP-14 Resolution 200 (Busan, 2014), and PP-14 ITU-wide Goal 4.

# Background

Innovation has been recognized as one of the main goals of ITU membership in 2014 at both the World Telecommunication Development Conference and the Plenipotentiary Conference. Innovation is also one of the goals of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely Goal 9: “to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”.

In making innovation one of the outputs and goals adopted at WTDC-14, membership acknowledged that BDT should find new means to strengthen member’s capacity to integrate telecommunication/ICT innovation in their development agendas, and find new innovative mechanisms to deliver on this goal. These have included promoting innovation methodologies; fostering an enabling environment to build capacities aimed at strengthening entrepreneurship, startups, and the expansion of existing firms; measuring and benchmarking ICT-centric innovation capabilities of countries; and promoting best practices, guidelines and recommendations.

BDT has been proactive with delivering concrete objectives, strategies, and actions in the converged ICT eco-system.

1. **Objectives and Strategies**

In accordance with the WTDC-14, the main objectives of ITU-D for innovation are to:

* Strengthen ITU-D membership’s capabilities to integrate ICT-centric innovation into national domestic agenda;
* Develop initiatives and projects to support entrepreneurship, start-up or expansion of new ICT firms in the converged ICT eco-system; and
* Continue improving BDT products, services, and processes.

To achieve these objectives, BDT has conducted several key actions, such as delivering innovation dialogues, country reviews, and building an innovation platform with specific products, services and tools, in consultation with membership and concerned key stakeholders. This document provides status of the key actions of ITU-D innovation.

1. **Key Actions**

## Innovation Dialogues

Innovation dialogues are aimed at facilitating knowledge sharing, creating shared-learning via innovation methodologies, or creating key actions around policies or specific topics to help unlock opportunities related to BDT products and services and strengthening countries’ ICT-centric innovation ecosystem.

New innovation dialogues have been organized to facilitate ITU-D innovation on selected topics such as the “smart society challenge” in the ITU-D Study Groups on the Question 1/2 - Creating the smart society: Social and economic development through ICT applications, the second WSIS innovation track held in May 2016 in Geneva, and other events such as specific sessions at OECD ministerial in June 2016 in Cancun, Mexico, the Young Policy Forum in September 2016 in Busan, Republic of Korea, and the 3rd APAC Regional Smart Cities Conference in August 2016 in Phuket, Thailand.

The outcomes of the OECD–ITU innovation dialogues in Cancun and the WSIS innovation track in Geneva have enabled the validation of the ICT-centric Innovation Country Review framework through multi-stakeholder contributions from key experts.

Innovation dialogues provide a knowledge sharing platform to ITU’s membership on the key topics related to ICT-centric innovation, and help transform BDT products and services via innovation challenges.

## Innovation Platforms and Tools

To enable comprehensive knowledge-sharing platforms, share lessons and experiences, and engage stakeholders in innovation outputs, the ITU-D innovation platforms and related tools are being revised and strengthened. From an initial framework based on online platform access such as the main ITU-D [portal](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Innovation/Pages/default.aspx) and the experimental sharing tool ([Innovation.itu.int](http://innovation.itu.int/)), the innovation platforms now include physical sharing building blocks. New physical sharing platforms have been developed or are planned:

* **Country Innovation Workshops:** As an essential element of country reviews, national workshops are held throughout the process of the country review. These workshops bring together multiple stakeholders in various sectors with the specific aim to explore challenges and opportunities in their innovation ecosystems, develop digital innovation frameworks, and co-create guidelines, recommendations, and initiatives. To date, up to 8 country workshops have been held in five countries: Albania, Kenya, Rwanda, Thailand, and Moldova.
* **Regional Innovation Forums:** These forums will offer a platform for knowledge sharing and stakeholder engagement at the regional or sub-regional levels. The first regional innovation forum will be held on March 28-29 in Chisinau, Moldova as a joint initiative between EUR and CIS regions. The expected outcome is to share challenges and opportunities, discuss good practices, and offer a platform for twinning, networking and learning centred on country level initiatives.
* **Regional Innovation Workshops:** These workshops will help empower stakeholders, expose them to good practices in innovation, help them understand the challenges and opportunities regarding ICT-centric innovation ecosystems, train them on how to conduct country reviews, and initiate assessments of ICT-centric innovation ecosystems. With the upcoming policy toolkit’s launch expected in June 2017, the first two regional innovation workshop are expected to take place, shortly followed by other regional workshops in other ITU regions.
* **Global Innovation Dialogues:** Currently the main global dialogues have been through the WSIS innovation track. However, BDT expects to start conducting a global innovation symposia with the aim to bring together all experts and stakeholders in the converged ICT innovation ecosystem for high level dialogues, expert dialogues, and empowerment in developing their initiatives.

Additionally, the existing online portals will be updated to inform stakeholders about the various initiatives, tools, toolkits and opportunities to engage with ITU-D Innovation.

The ITU-D Innovation Platforms and Tools will strengthen interactions and ICT-centric innovation capabilities among all stakeholders in consultation with the Bureaus, the General Secretariat, Regional and Area Offices as well as ITU-D membership.

## Key Products and Services

Key products and services of ITU-D innovation include: country reviews, regional reviews, ecosystem reviews, innovation toolkits, and innovation advisory (i.e., technical assistance). These will address the objectives of ITU-D for innovation, based on the ITU-D membership’s requirement. BDT will continue a multi-stakeholder approach to scale-up, enhance and execute actions related to key products and services.

### Innovation Policy

* **Country Reviews** have been conducted and will continue for several countries including Albania, Rwanda, Thailand, Kenya, Argentina, and Moldova. Country reviews are a multi-stakeholders’ and multi-sectoral approach to develop ICT-centric innovation policies and programs at the national levels. They provide a digital innovation framework where all the stakeholders understand their roles in digital transformation and can come together to strengthen their capabilities to integrate ICT-centric innovation in their national development agenda. ITU, in close collaboration with UNIDO and UNCTAD, have developed the initial framework, and ITU is now scaling-up with the various countries, while leveraging the ITU-D innovation platform building blocks.
* **Regional Reviews** are to offer a comparative measurement of ICT-centric innovation capabilities as expressed by the mandate, and to identify and inform specific regional activities in accordance with the Regional Initiatives. One key element will be a trend report, building on the country assessments to help membership understand trends and challenges on regional or sub-regional levels regarding the ICT-centric innovation framework. The first pilot version will be initiated in 2017 at regional or sub-regional levels.
* **Ecosystem Reviews** are planned to tackle the challenge of the expansion of start-ups and firms in the converged ICT ecosystem, and enable more substantial improvement of country-level ICT ecosystems. Initial seed funding has been secured as phase 2 of the ICT-centric innovation toolkit project supported by the Republic of Korea. BDT will conduct some pilot studies for 2 countries in 2017 and 2018, and leverage a similar consortium approach (e.g. with UNIDO) in developing the ICT ecosystem reviews.

### Innovation Toolkits

* **Policy Toolkits** aim to help spark innovation in the ICT ecosystem, including public services, startup creation, and expansion of firms. Concerned stakeholders including policy-makers, regulators, private sector actors and academia can use these toolkits to engage in innovation activities strengthening their ICT ecosystems and promoting cultures of innovation. The first “**do-it-yourself (DIY)” country review toolkit** has been produced and will be piloted via the regional innovation workshops articulated above. These toolkits present the processes and mechanisms needed to conduct a full country review, and enables scaling-up of country reviews.
* **More toolkits** are being explored for development along with progresses from the ICT ecosystem reviews planned, the RPMs and WTDC-17, of which results will be updated in existing toolkits or new ones for membership.

### Innovation Advisory

As an innovation advisory (i.e., technical assistance) has been requested during engagements at the country reviews, BDT is helping scope and develop specific programs and projects as a concrete outcome of a country review. This role was demonstrated in the recent Country Review for Rwanda, where several flagship projects have been scoped and the stakeholders are engaging in moving them forward. This creates new synergies and high impact projects as well as help elaborate a concrete roadmap for the digital transformation at the national level, which can in return contribute to achieving SDGs, Goal 9 in particular.

# Ways forward

BDT will continue to strengthen innovation activities through the steps below among others along with the progresses and outcomes of RPMs and WTDC-17:

* Further develop the ICT-centric innovation platform activities by conducting country workshops, regional workshops, and global dialogues, as well as update the online portals.
* Develop an ICT ecosystem review frameworks and conduct the first pilot ICT ecosystem reviews.
* Conduct new BDT innovation, in-line with previous innovation challenges for BDT innovation,
* Launch the innovation policy toolkit,
* Develop and implement innovation projects and initiatives for BDT and ITU membership.

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