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| **Telecommunication DevelopmentAdvisory Group (TDAG)****24th Meeting, Geneva, 3-5 April 2019** | C:\Users\comas\AppData\Local\Temp\Rar$DRa0.735\jpg\ITU official logo_blue_RGB.jpg |
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|  | **Document** **TDAG-19/****22-E** |
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| Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau |
| ITU-D Innovation |
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| **Summary:**This report provides an overview on the ITU-D Innovation as one of the outputs and goals adopted at the World Telecommunication Development Conference in 2017 (WTDC-17) and the Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-18), respectively. It highlights objectives and strategies for the Innovation Program, and gives insights into the key actions already undertaken or planned, and a way forward taking into account Result Based Management.**Action required:**TDAG is invited to note this document and provide guidance, as deemed appropriate.**References:**Buenos Aires Declaration of the WTDC-17; WTDC Resolutions 17 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017), 30 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017), 66 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017), 71 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017), 76 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017), 85 (Buenos Aires, 2017); PP Resolution 200 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), 205 (Dubai, 2018), and ITU-wide Goal 4 (Rev. Dubai, 2018). |

1. **Background**

The Innovation program was initially requested by ITU-D membership at WTDC-14 in Dubai, with the aim to “**strengthen membership capacity to integrate ICT innovations in national development agenda**”. The program was further enhanced at WTDC-17 in Buenos Aires with an additional aim to “**develop strategies that promote innovation initiatives, including through public, private and public private partnerships**”. Innovation was also highlighted as an internal goal for BDT, with the aim of helping BDT re-invent its products and services to adapt to the changing ICT/telecommunication environment. Thus, innovation in BDT has synergistic internal and external dimensions.

Innovation is also one of the goals of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, namely Goal 9: “to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”.

Furthermore at PP-18, in Dubai, ITU membership adopted a new resolution[[1]](#footnote-1) on “ITU's role in fostering telecommunication/information and communication technology-centric innovation to support the digital economy and society”, as well as a goal on innovation[[2]](#footnote-2) with specific target that “By 2023, all countries should have policies/strategies fostering telecommunication/ICT-centric innovation”.

1. **Objectives and Strategies**

In accordance with WTDC-17, the main objectives of ITU-D innovation are to provide assistance in the form of products to support ITU membership to actively foster the development of vibrant innovation ecosystems and accelerate digital transformation that fosters sustainable growth of the digital economy.

Output 3.4 of the Buenos Aires Action Plan (BaAP) specifies some expectations on how to deliver on the innovation objective of WTDC-17, namely through:

* **undertaking ecosystem mapping exercises** to coordinate efforts and create new projects;
* **developing updated ICT policies** (with new pillars innovation and entrepreneurship);
* **bridging gaps in the ecosystem** with concrete activities (e.g. linking ecosystems);
* **developing high-impact projects with new approaches**;
* **developing mechanisms to reach, engage, support and nurture** ICT‑centric innovation ecosystems with **diverse stakeholder groups**;
* **disseminating information, conducting studies**, and providing assistance upon request;
* **creating mechanisms to foster new partnerships and initiatives** that support the scale-up;
* providing a **regional platform for strengthening regional cooperation**; and
* supporting Member States in **raising awareness about digital innovation ecosystems** and related emerging technological trends as well as **best practices that influence digital transformation**.
1. **Key Actions and Results**

BDT continues to scale up its external initiatives on nurturing ICT centric innovations via **development of new products** and delivery of services through four strategic building blocks: knowledge sharing, empowering stakeholders through innovation capacity building, conducting both comprehensive and rapid innovation ecosystem assessments, and project co-creations in consultation with membership and concerned key stakeholders. These actions are delivered via technical assistance to membership, projects[[3]](#footnote-3), and support from key strategic partners[[4]](#footnote-4).

* 1. **External Innovation Actions**

In 2018, several key actions have been conducted, through use of products available from the ITU platform, to achieve the objectives of ITU-D Innovation. The table below summarizes actions undertaken by each ITU region, in line with the Regional Initiatives and the ITU-D Study Group Questions.

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| **Regions** | **Knowledge Sharing Products[[5]](#footnote-5)** | **Capacity Building Products[[6]](#footnote-6)** | **Innovation Assessments Products[[7]](#footnote-7)** | **Project Co-creation Products[[8]](#footnote-8)** |
| **Africa**  | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| **Americas** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Arab States** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Asia and Pacific** | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| **CIS** | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| **Europe** | 2 | 1 | 4 | 2 |

* + 1. **Knowledge Sharing**

To facilitate evidence-based knowledge sharing on innovation practices, ITU developed a new product, **Ecosystem Good Practices**, and released the first report titled [*Good practices that accelerate Digital Transformation in Europe*](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Documents/Events/2018/WSIS/Accelerating%20Digital%20Transformation.pdf) during WSIS 2018.

BDT also revised the **Innovation Toolkit** product [*Bridging the Digital Innovation Divide: Strengthening ICT Centric Innovation ecosystem*](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Innovation/Documents/Publications/Policy_Toolkit-Innovation_D012A0000D13301PDFE.pdf)*s* in the six languages of the UN.

Several knowledge sharing sessions, on accelerating digital transformation, were organized to **inform stakeholders about the challenges and opportunities of innovation** in digital ecosystems.

* BDT continued organizing **Innovation Dialogues** by hosting the annual [WSIS innovation track](http://itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Events/2018/WSIS/default.aspx). Five sessions, with the theme “Accelerating Digital transformation, building ICT-centric innovation ecosystems”, explored three key areas: evidence-based innovation practices, innovation ecosystems implementation tools, and funding policy for high impact flagship projects. These dialogues were attended by over 300 participants and 39 expert speakers, including a high level panel, and keynote speakers from industry, bilateral and multilateral development agencies, entrepreneurs, innovation experts, etc.;
* A high level ITU Telecom 2018 Forum Panel, “[Digital innovation ecosystems: the key to Industry 4.0](https://telecomworld.itu.int/2018-daily-highlights-day-3/digital-innovation-ecosystems-the-key-to-industry-4-0/)”, was co-organized with UNIDO[[9]](#footnote-9) and GMIS[[10]](#footnote-10) to inform stakeholders on the opportunities of digital innovation ecosystems in facilitating Industry 4.0 visions;
* An Innovation Power Session on “[Monitoring ICT centric innovation policies and programs](https://www.itu.int/net4/Telecom/webs/TelecomWorld/session/description/C-00005003)” to build technical knowledge and capacity about measuring ICT-centric innovation capabilities, was also delivered during ITU telecom 2018 with participants from policy makers, entrepreneurs, financiers, academia, corporate and SMEs.
	+ 1. **Empowering stakeholders through Innovation Capacity Building**

Based on new tools and processes developed, BDT has delivered a set of training workshops that help national, regional and global experts build their innovation competencies. In 2018, the following workshops trained and certified nearly 100 stakeholders from over 55 countries with skills to strengthen their own innovation ecosystems:

* Ongoing technical assistance to Thailand, co-organized by ONDE, was delivered through a [Multi-stakeholder Workshop on Bridging the Digital Innovation Divide](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Innovation/Pages/Events/2018/BDID_Workshop_Thailand.aspx), 8-9 May, in Bangkok, Thailand. As a result 55 national stakeholders exchanged knowledge on the topic and 13 of them were trained and certified with skills to strengthen ICT centric innovation ecosystems;
* BDT, in collaboration[[11]](#footnote-11) with Busan Metropolitan City, held the annual [**Young ICT leaders Forum**](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Innovation/Pages/Events/2018/YILF2018.aspx)**,** on 4-7 September in Busan, Korea (Rep. of). The Forum promoted active participation of youths in the digital economy and enabled enthusiast as well as experts on innovation ecosystems and policy makers to actively engage and network. The theme of the forum was “Nurturing Digital Innovations for sustainable smart cities”, and 71 youth from 50 countries were trained and certified on how to build smart cities ecosystem;
* In partnership with Oslo Metropolitan University[[12]](#footnote-12), BDT held the [**Regional** Innovation Forum for Europe](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Events/2018/IF/InnovationForum.aspx) in Oslo, Norway, on 21-23 from November. The theme of the forum was “Fostering Digital Entrepreneurship and Startup Ecosystems”, 15 stakeholders from 6 countries in Europe were trained and certified with skills to strengthen ICT centric innovation ecosystems.

ITU innovation capacity building empowers stakeholders to be expert on innovation policies, programs and project design. Through **tools and hands-on workshops**, innovation capacity building gives participants the potential to be innovation champions in order to **accelerate digital transformation of their communities**.

* + 1. **National Innovation Ecosystem Assessments**

To accelerate digital transformation in ITU-D membership, ITU developed **new products**, such as the [**Digital Innovation Profiles**](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Innovation/Pages/Platform/diprofile.aspx) to meet the growing demand of ITU innovation assessment.

Digital Innovation Profiles (DIP) are part of BDT's new series of ICT-focused innovation ecosystem snapshots, which offer a quick assessment of the existing capabilities in digital transformation and an overview of opportunities and challenges facing the countries' ecosystems.

The following assessments were conducted:

* Serbia and Bosnia Herzegovina assessed digital transformation capabilities. As a result, **Digital Innovation Profiles** for [Bosnia and Herzegovina](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Innovation/Documents/Publications/eBAT_Brochure%E2%80%93DIP%20BosniaH_431106_.pdf), and [Serbia](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Innovation/Documents/Publications/eBAT_Brochure%E2%80%93DIP%20Serbia_432746_.pdf) were launched during WSIS 2018;
* Republic of Moldova assessed comprehensive digital transformation capabilities. The ICT-centric **Innovation Ecosystem Country Review** for [Republic of Moldova](http://handle.itu.int/11.1002/pub/810fd87d-en) offers a comprehensive analysis with recommendation on how Moldova can upgrade its ICT policies with innovation and digital entrepreneurship policies and programs;
* Republic of South Africa assessed digital transformation capabilities. The **Digital Innovation Profile** of [Republic South Africa](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Innovation/Documents/Publications/Brochure%E2%80%93DIP%20South%20Africa.pdf) was published at ITU Telecom 2018;
* Montenegro: ongoing assessment of digital transformation capabilities;
* Zimbabwe: ongoing assessment of digital transformation capabilities;
* FYR Macedonia: ongoing assessment of digital transformation capabilities.

The Digital Innovation Profiles coupled with the capacity building approach above are enabling BDT to expand its activities and deliver a scalable and more **sustainable model of engagement** to deliver impact for ITU-D membership.

* + 1. **Innovation Projects and Initiatives Development**

BDT continues to raise additional funds for the innovation program through projects to address the digital innovation gap and develop concrete projects for countries. In 2018, additional funding[[13]](#footnote-13) was secured for training of national stakeholders in six countries.

Additionally, to strengthen regional cooperation, BDT has revised the **Regional Innovation Forum** to allow creation of projects as an outcome, in addition to the capacity building and forum components. One such project is in development with Oslo Metropolitan University.

New approaches and strategies that help solve complex problems are essential in helping countries to address the **exponential problems and opportunities related to ICT innovations**. BDT has developed **a strategy to promote innovation initiatives** through a framework that facilitates the development of bankable innovation projects at the national level, while ensuring that new partnership models with diverse stakeholder groups are nurtured to make co-created projects successful.

The strategy builds on the digital innovation profile assessments (as shown in figure), and develops an innovation center that can act as **testbed for accelerating digital transformation** to meet national visions.

The first pilot of such initiative, in collaboration with the Department of Postal and Telecommunication of the Republic of South Africa, is under development.

Digital Transformation Centers will have a key role in supporting a country to facilitate the diffusion and permeation of ICT innovations by all stakeholders. The Center will act as an orchestrator of key actions and provides a framework through which multi-stakeholder groups of stakeholders (including policy makers, innovators, SMEs, private sector, financiers, academics, and other actors) can partner, collaborate, co-create projects, and engage in digital transformation initiatives.

The Innovation Platform co-creation model for projects is expected to offer ITU-D membership creative ways to “build scalable and bankable projects while nurturing new partnerships”, and will contribute to **accelerate the achievement of the Buenos Aires Action Plan**.

* 1. **Internal Innovation Actions**

BDT continues to support internal innovation as appropriate through the development of new tools or conducting internal innovation activities.

To this aim, the BDT Innovation Service organised and delivered a workshop on resource mobilization during the BDT management retreat, through developing a strategic framework (with five tools) for resource mobilization. As a result, a roadmap was developed with some key priority actions to strengthen BDT resource mobilization. More information on these key priority actions may be found in document [TDAG-19/21](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG24-C-0021) on Partnership and Resource Mobilization.

Additionally, a new tool was also developed to enhance data collection in ITU-D Study Group Question on smart society.

1. **Way Forward**

Innovation is a way of thinking. The BDT Director is coordinating a cross-ITU team to look at an innovation strategy for the Union. BDT will continue to strengthen innovation activities as below, to cite a few:

* Launch new toolkits to accelerate digital transformation, to build an entrepreneurial ecosystem and to nurture innovation communities;
* Continue to scale-up expert-led Digital Innovation Profile assessments;
* Scale-up innovation capacity building at the national, regional and global levels;
* Accelerate innovation project development, such as the South African initiative above;
* Secure additional funding and resources to build capabilities in digital transformation;
* Continue creating synergies between different ITU platforms such as ITU telecom.

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1. PP-18 Resolution 205 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. PP-18 ITU strategic goal 4 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. E.g. Projects funding from R.O. Korea [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. E.g. Hungary, UNIDO, GMIS [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. E.g. WSIS, Telecom, Young ICT leaders Forum, Global Good Practices [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. E.g. Regional Innovation Forum, Young ICT leader Capacity Building [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. E.g. as Digital Innovation Profiles, Country Reviews [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. E.g. Innovation Project Advisory [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. United Nations Industrial Development Organization [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Global Manufacturing and Industrialisation Summit [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. MoU from PP-2014 between the city of Busan and ITU [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Oslo Metropolitan university is an ITU academia member [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Project funded by Korea (Rep. of) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)