|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Council 2022Geneva, 21 – 31 March 2022** |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  | **Document C22/INF/5-E** |
| **10 January 2022** |
| **English only** |
| Report by the Secretary-General |
| STRENGTHENING THE REGIONAL PRESENCE |

|  |
| --- |
| SummaryThis information document contains the nine annexes to Document C22/25.Action requiredThis document is submitted to the Council **for information**.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_References[*Document C22/25*](http://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0025/en) |

1. The purpose of this document is to provide additional information on the strengthening of the regional presence. It contains the following annexes:[[1]](#footnote-2)

[**Annex 1**](#Annex1): Key achievements by region for 2021

[**Annex 2**](#Annex2):Contribution to other Sectors and the General Secretariat

[**Annex 3**](#Annex3):Support activities towards empowering Regional and Area Offices

[**Annex 4**](#Annex4)**:** Summary of the 2021 Regional and Area Offices expenditure

[**Annex 5**](#Annex5)**:** 2021 operational plan and project implementation level by region

[**Annex 6**](#Annex6)**:** Breakdown of the 2021 Regional and Area Offices expenditure by category

[**Annex 7**](#Annex7)**:** 2021 Fellowships awarded and recruited experts

[**Annex 8**](#Annex8)**:** Summary of staffing level by Regional and Area Offices

[**Annex 9**](#Annex9)**:** Breakdown of staffing level by Regional and Area Offices

ANNEX 1

Key achievements by region for 2021

1. **Africa region**

In 2021, BDT implemented project activities under 14 technical cooperation projects and 26 actions.

The ITU and African Union PRIDA (Policy and Regulation Initiative for Digital Africa) project, which is supported by the European Union, facilitated in 2021 the agreement in sub-Saharan African countries of the assessment of HCM4A, the Harmonised Calculation Method for Africa, and the creation of guidelines on HCM4A and assessment of current cross border frequency coordination agreements. A dedicated software will be developed to support its implementation. PRIDA further organized virtual capacity building workshops on spectrum auctions with participants from 44 countries, and a workshop on National Frequency Allocation Tables. Two reports on “Spectrum management guidelines for the introduction of IMT in Africa” and on “Assessment of the current cross-border coordination agreement in Africa” have been prepared for release.

Under ITU’s Conformance and Interoperability (C&I) programme, skills in specific absorption rate, radio frequency, electromagnetic frequency, and digital terrestrial television were enhanced through C&I training for English-speaking and French-speaking participants from African countries.

Building on the ITU, Estonia, GIZ (Germany), and Digital Impact Alliance collaboration to accelerate national digital transformation and the digitalization of government services for the achievement of SDGs by 2030, in Africa, EU (DG INTPA) and the Digital for Development (D4D) Hub teamed up with the Horn of Africa initiative to develop a digital government strategy and an integrated digital government services platform with the concerned countries.

In 2021, [Giga](https://gigaconnect.org/), the joint ITU-UNICEF initiative to connect every school to the Internet and every young person to information, opportunity, and choice has expanded to additional countries on the region. The 1st Giga Africa Ministerial Roundtable took place on 25 March 2021. Moderated by Rwandan Minister of ICT and Innovation, the roundtable convened ministers from the five Giga Accelerate countries (Rwanda, Kenya, Niger, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe) and four countries that are exploring Giga (Namibia, Benin, Togo, Ethiopia). The meeting shared experiences on implementation of activities around Giga pillars ‘Map’, ‘Connect’, ‘Finance’ and ‘Empower’, identifying promising practices as well as exploring practical next steps for Giga in Africa. The 2nd Giga Africa Ministerial Roundtable was held on 2 December 2021.

Following the launch of the “ITU Training on Business Planning for ICT Infrastructure development” an [online training](https://academy.itu.int/training-courses/full-catalogue/business-planning-ict-infrastructure-development-africa) for African countries was organized between May and July 2021.

The [Regional Regulatory Roundtable for Europe and Africa](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/GSR/2021/Pages/EUR-AFR.aspx) was held virtually on 14 April 2021 in the lead-up to the 21st Global Symposium for Regulators under the theme “Regulation4digitaltransformation: Accelerating inclusive connectivity, access and use”.

A toolkit for developing countries and emerging markets – with a focus on the Africa region – covering the building blocks required for the establishment of a fair and equitable, well-communicated and sustainably financed system of extended producer responsibility (EPR) for the management of WEEE with the title [Policy Practices for E-waste Management](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Environment/Documents/Publications/2021/Toolkit_Africa_final.pdf?csf=1&e=OHEtlM), was launched in April 2021 and an information session followed the launch in early June 2021. Throughout the ITU has also provided technical assistance in the development of a national e-waste management policy in Burundi.

Substantive regional efforts were undertaken to address child online safety issues. In the Africa region, discussions took place with Chad, Kenya, Malawi, and Rwanda among others on the implementation of national strategy frameworks. Child online protection has also been included as one of the key elements accompanying the implementation of the ITU-UNICEF joint [Giga](https://gigaconnect.org/) initiative across the continent.

When it comes to assessing their national cybersecurity preparedness and incident response capabilities, in 2021 Computer Incident Response Center (CIRT) implementation continued in Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Burundi, and Gambia. The [2021 Global CyberDrill](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Cybersecurity/Pages/Cyberdrills-2021.aspx) took place between September and November 2021, this also included a [Europe-Africa interregional cyberdrill meeting](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Cybersecurity/Pages/CyberDrill-2021/IM-AFR-EUR.aspx) on the theme “Cyber Resilience and Protecting Critical Information Infrastructure” on 16 September in addition to training sessions and scenario-based exercises. Moreover, a [regional ECOWAS cyberdrill](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Africa/Pages/ITU-2021-Regional-ECOWAS-CyberDrill.aspx) took place in November 2021. To support women in Africa who wish to pursue a career within the cybersecurity sector, the virtual Women in Cyber Mentorship Programme was launched with significant participation from African countries.

The [ITU Regional Innovation Forum for Africa](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Africa/Pages/Regional-Innovation-Forum-for-AFR--2021.aspx) on the topic of Building partnerships to mainstream entrepreneurship took place in October 2021. It brought together participants on a regional learning journey to explore the “why”, “what” and “how” of building new partnerships that ensure that communities have the right innovation capabilities to be resilient and competitive with digital technologies. In 2021, ITU partnered with Smart Africa to expand the curriculum on how to strengthen the digital innovation environment with new contents and with training to target specific stakeholders at the regional and national levels. In addition, regional good practices on “accelerating innovation, entrepreneurship and digital transformation” were prepared. The Africa report showcases how digital transformation can be accelerated by innovative practices nurturing entrepreneurship-driven innovation that creates economic development.

In 2021, three ITU Innovation Challenges were conducted: the Global South Covid-19 digital innovation challenge with UNOSSC (United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation), the generation connect video pitch challenge with Generation Connect and the Youth Africa innovation in partnership with the African Telecommunications Union (ATU). African youth and entrepreneurs were well represented in all challenges.

In April 2021 five ICT accessibility workshops were organized in the Africa region, in English and French, to build capacity of Member States and Disability Person Organizations on how to conduct a self-assessment at the national level. The workshops and the self-assessments as completed by the countries contributed to a report of the status of ICT accessibility implementation in Africa.

In June 2021, ITU and WHO with the support of USAID organized a virtual workshop on Data Revolution, Health Status Transformation and the Role of AI for Health and Pandemic Preparedness in the African context.

Through the [Digital Transformation Centres (DTC) Initiative](https://academy.itu.int/index.php/main-activities/digital-transformation-centres-initiative) dedicated to empowering communities, closing digital skills gaps and accelerating uptake of digital technologies among citizens, the four DTCs in Africa hosted by networks in Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Rwanda and Zambia expanded their activities to reach more people in rural areas with their training interventions.

In early 2020 ITU and ILO, with support from the African Union, launched a [continental programme](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Africa/Pages/projects/2020/jobs-skills.aspx) for boosting decent jobs and enhancing digital skills for youth in Africa’s digital economy. Six African countries (Côte d’Ivoire, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa) where amongst the initial countries, while others, like Ethiopia, are also exploring the programme and building linkages to other initiatives. The programme implementation in countries have in 2021 included activities to lay the foundation for scaling-up interventions, developing and deploying analytical tools to generate evidence on youth employment opportunities in the digital economy. The new 2021 joint ITU-ILO digital skills assessment framework is an integral part of this work.

The project Enhancing the Digital Ecosystem and Digital Skills for the Economic Empowerment of Women in Ethiopia funded by the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) and the ITU ICT Development Fund (ICT-DF) held capacity building workshops to support the government’s efforts to mainstream gender in ICT and expanded its work through dedicated support to women entrepreneurs in the textiles and apparel sector value chain. The project’s work in Burundi saw the release of the country report on Gender Mainstreaming in the Digital Economy and the launch the National Consortium of Women in Tech in Burundi in November 2021.

2021 saw the putting in place of the ITU-Uganda digital transformation project “Technical Assistance and Training to Uganda on National ICT Development Strategy”, supported by the People’s Republic of China’s South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund. The project’s approach consisting of policy recommendation development and supporting capacity development was reinforced by ITU ICT-DF for the implementation of associated pilots and use cases.

In 2021 ITU and UNHCR further strengthened the global partnership around meaningful connectivity for refugees in pursuit of enhanced digital cooperation in support of forcibly displaced, stateless people and their hosting communities, with impactful projects and initiatives in mind. Exploratory work in Africa continued, including inclusion of refugee schools in national programmatic work when schools were connected as part of Giga implementation and that digital skills efforts and opportunities in the digital economy for displaced people were integral to the ITU-ILO programme on the continent.

Building on the success of the African Girls Can Code Initiative, an initiative by ITU, the African Union and UN Women, in 2020 the initiative scaled and went hybrid and held an event with UNECA in Ethiopia with 125 girls participating in person and over 2 000 girls from across the continent participating remotely. In 2021, the second phase of the initiative brought the regional initiative to the national level through the development of customized national programs with partners.

In September 2021, as part of Girls in ICTs 2021, Airtel Networks Zambia Plc partnered with the Smart Zambia Institute to provide digital skills training to schoolgirls in the country and to encourage them to pursue careers in STEM. Under the program, hosted by Smart Zambia Institute, 150 girls selected from three provinces in Zambia will undergo digital skills training that will run throughout 2021. The partnership is part of the Digital Transformation Centres (DTC) initiative.

In September 2021, the [Africa Network of Women for WTDC (Africa NoW4WTDC)](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/WTDC/WTDC21/NoW/Pages/Africa/default.aspx), with support from the ITU Regional Office for Africa, invited members to a [webinar](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/WTDC/WTDC21/NoW/Pages/Events/Regional/Africa/2021_09.aspx) on “[An introduction and overview of the ITU Development Sector](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/WTDC/WTDC21/NoW/Pages/Events/Regional/Africa/2021_09.aspx)“. The webinar was the first in a series of topical regional webinars through which the network in Africa is planning to engage women in the work of the Development Sector in preparation for WTDC.

1. **Americas region**

Key achievements

* **Implementation of the National CIRT for The Bahamas:** The implementation of a National CIRT for The Bahamas is part of a holistic project that the government of The Bahamas is undertaking with ITU’s assistance. The Project includes regulations on cybersecurity, improvement of capacity building, educational programmes, implementation of national policies, maturity model assessment, national cybersecurity strategy, among others.
* **Final step for the implementation of the cybersecurity tools for the National CIRT of Barbados:** Barbados is implementing tools to reinforce the work of the National cybersecurity team with the support of ITU.
* **Implementation of the Interregional Dialogue about cybersecurity with the African Region and delivery a series of specialized cybersecurity trainings for the Region:** For the first time, ITU implemented a very productive and dynamic interregional dialogue that allowed representatives of governments of both regions to exchange different perspectives related to the protection of National Critical Infrastructure.
* **Global event about emerging technologies:** The AMS Region participated in the global event about emerging technologies with the topic deployment of 5G. The event allowed representatives from governments from all regions to exchange information, perspectives, needs facing the challenges that the adoption of new technologies, particularly 5G, offer.
* **National Emergency Telecommunications**
	1. ITU have assisted three (3) countries with Plans (NETP) - St. Lucia, Dominica, Grenada.
	2. National Stakeholder Consultations were held
	3. The Consultant, with input from national stakeholders, developed the NETPs for the respective countries
	4. St. Lucia’s NETP was completed and presented to the country. ITU may assist in implementation in 2021.
	5. Dominica & Grenada Drafts completed - final review in progress
* **Community connectivity – in Barbados** based on a cooperation agreement between ITU and UNICEF, two rural community centres are being equipped with ICT facilities including internet and devices to serve at least 1000 persons including students, families and teachers.
* The **ITU Caribbean office** together with other members of the Generation Connect Americas Youth Group to host a Youth ICT and Innovation event in the Caribbean in December 2021. It is anticipated that more than 60 youth innovators would participate in the event from more than 10 countries int eh region
* **Girls in ICT Day**: ITU Americas teamed up with the International Girls in ICT Day campaign to reduce the digital gender divide in the region. In 2021, more than 100 events were organized in Americas to celebrate the initiative and over 40,000 girls participated in the celebrations.
* **Capacity Development/Gender:** 178 participants from 17 countries from Latin America attended the online training course on Female Leadership in the Telecommunication and ICT sector organized in the framework of EQUALS and in collaboration with CITEL (testimonials below if needed).
* **Capacity Development/Indigenous:** 69 participants from 11 countries form Latin America were selected for the second edition of the Training Program for Technical Promoters in Telecommunications and Broadcasting in Indigenous Communities. Five courses and a virtual camp were delivered with great success.
* **Persons with Disabilities:** In order to support countries from the AMS region in the field of policies, regulations and technology trends, 2 online self-paced online training courses were launched in ITU Academy on “ICT Accessibility: The key to inclusive communication” and Web Accessibility: The cornerstone of an Inclusive Society”.
* **ITU** **approached different UNCTs** from the Americas region. ITU introduced itself to team leaders of RCO in the region as the UN reform represents an opportunity to fast forward SDGs through meaningful connectivity. ITU promoted digital transformation in the new UNSCDF (2022-2026) for El Salvador and Honduras signed in August and September respectively.
* **ITU** **in cooperation with UNICEF** through GIGA has made advances in some countries in the Americas, particularly in Brazil (FCDO country), El Salvador and Honduras. In Brazil, the collection of mapping resources is going well while in Honduras the collection of school locations has been completed. Boston Consulting Group as a GIGA Knowledge partner produced a methodology and an in-depth analysis of Meaningful school connectivity and sustainable business models for Brazil and Honduras. Accelerate GIGA is about to test connectivity models in Honduras and El Salvador.

New programmes, initiatives or activities launched in 2021

* **Launch of the NCS for the AMS Region starting in 2021 to be continued in 2022:** The AMS Region is part of the global programme to deliver the NCS Guidelines to support the governments to implement, update or enhance the National Cybersecurity Strategy.
* **Starting activities about COP to implement a COP portal for the AMS region:** In 2022 the AMS Region will start in 2022 a programme to create awareness and offer specialized training about the key challenges and problems on Child Online Protection.
* **PAHO and ITU** officially begun a campaign on correcting misinformation on Covid 19 for some members of the OECS.
* **Research on Caribbean** ICT Policies for the following: GIGA, Youth Innovation and Girls can code
	1. An intern was recruited (Honiska Neptune). From her desktop research, concept notes were finally developed for e-Education Strategy and COP for the OECS countries by an international expert.
	2. Recruitment of an international expert is progress for the COP component under Giga
* **Partnership/Gender/RI#4:** A new key partnership was established between ITU and Facebook for supporting countries in the field of digital inclusion policies and strategies and provide digital skills activities for girls and young women from beneficiary countries in Americas.
* **Youth:** The Generation Connect Americas Youth Group (GC-AMS), composed of 15 members from 9 different countries, was established in March 2021 and has since been actively engaged in over 10 global/regional multilateral events. Based on a self-reporting survey, GC-AMS members have highly scored their motivation for engagement to take part in ITU youth related activities and reported that the initiative met their expectations in over 90 per cent.
* **ITU** **is developing proposals of e-Agriculture** in collaboration with FAO for Honduras and Costa Rica. The positive impact of the proposals will be the result of our joint efforts to advance in 2022 and beyond.
* **ITU** **approached UNCT Paraguay** and it is participating actively in developing a holistic connectivity strategy for the Paraguayan “El Chaco” region. ITU will extend this initiative to the other countries of “El Gran Chaco” region belongs (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay).
* **ITU** **delivered for the first time the module** “Start-ups readiness for IoT deployment training: Pre-compliance testing” through the ITU Academy. It is expected this pilot will certify 20 professionals around the world.
1. **Arab States region**

In 2021, BDT implemented project activities under 7 technical cooperation projects and 24 actions.

Partnerships continued for the implementation of projects in the fields of innovation and entrepreneurship, environment and digital inclusion.

1. **Asia and the Pacific region**

In 2021, BDT implemented project activities under 14 technical cooperation projects and 21 actions in the Asia and the Pacific region, in collaboration with Member States and partners. The projects were funded by Department of Communications and the Arts (Australia), National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (Thailand), Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning (Republic of Korea), Estonia, and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (ITSO).

Progress was made in the development of digital government services in Papua New Guinea, Pakistan and Vanuatu and digital agriculture services in Mongolia. Together with UNICEF and UNESCO ITU conducted a study to map the digital divide in Thailand. In the areas of network, spectrum management and infrastructure, ITU supported Afghanistan, Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Mongolia, Vanuatu and Samoa. USO 2.0 approach framework, developed in cooperation with ITU, was endorsed by ASEAN Ministers and is expected to accelerate the development of the digital economy particularly for LDCs within this region through better connectivity and access.

More than 1,100 participants developed digital skills through trainings and workshops. Three digital transformation centres in the region started their mission to build digital skills and literacy at national level and have trained more than 36,000 participants. National cybersecurity strategy frameworks were strengthened in Bhutan, Kiribati, and Solomon Islands, and CIRT frameworks through specialized country assistance in Tonga, Samoa, Papua New Guinea, and Vanuatu. Samoa, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands were assisted in developing National Emergency Telecommunication Plans through a project supported by DITRDC.

Several Pacific Islands were helped to develop their satellite communications capacity and emergency communications solutions. Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, PNG, Vanuatu, Tonga, and Tuvalu started connecting through Ku band Satellite connectivity equipment and the associated training through a project supported by ITU, ITSO, Intelsat, and Kacific.

1. **CIS region**

**Implementation of Operational plan and Regional Initiatives**

In 2021, BDT implemented project activities under 4 technical cooperation projects and 26 actions, in the CIS region.

* ITU is implementing a project for the creation of digital skills centre for women and youth in Uzbekistan (in partnership with ZTE and IT Park of Uzbekistan);
* In Kazakhstan, ITU is working to create a smart educational ecosystem within the joint project with *Kostanay Engineering and Economics University named after M. Dulatov*. Some other activities in the Kostanay region included a hackathon for SMEs and a school training on cyber hygiene with over 200 attendants;
* In Kyrgyzstan, ITU has trained 144 informatics teachers including 129 women, in rural and remote areas, on programming and algorithmizing;
* In Uzbekistan, ITU jointly with the IT Part trained over 400 girls and young women in Ugrench and Khorezm regions on programming, graphic design and other subjects;
* All the above-mentioned activities are part of a comprehensive digital skills development approach for the Central Asia region aimed at empowering underserved cities and communities and bridging the digital divide. These activities have also been designed to contribute to the ITU-UNICEF Giga initiative;
* **“Policy and regulatory frameworks for telecommunication/ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities in CIS countries”** was finalized in the second quarter of 2021. It is a guideline document aiming at providing to ITU members and stakeholders of CIS Region with an overall information in the topic, share regional related good practices and strategies. The guideline document target to support ITU Member States in their efforts to implement ITU Strategic Goal Nr. 2 Inclusiveness and its target 2.9 that calls on members to ensure that enabling environments for persons with disabilities are implemented in all countries by 2023. Finally, this document provides information to support CIS region in the implementation of ICT/digital accessibility as a key element to reach the overarching goal of Digital Inclusion of everyone, regardless of gender, age, ability or location.
* Two online courses on **“Web Accessibility - The cornerstone of digital society”** and **“ICT Accessibility - The key to inclusive communication”** were localized in Russian language and are available for free on ITU Academy.
* On September 20-25, 2021, in the Kyrgyz Republic Specialized Training Center for persons with disabilities in Bishkek (created with the support of ITU) held the Intensive refresher courses for secondary schools teachers of informatics in Bishkek on methodology for teaching people with disabilities and skills in using ICT. The courses provided an overview of teaching methods and opportunities for organizing inclusive education in secondary schools of the Bishkek. In addition, the course formed an understanding of what skills a teacher should have if a child with disabilities enters school and studies with other children on an equal basis, helped the teacher to carry out social adaptation of children with disabilities.
* On November 15-16, 2021, in the Republic of Belarus “Experience of teaching people with deafness in ICT” workshop was held in the educational institution “Belarusian State Academy of Communications” with a support of ITU, Ministry of communications and informatization of Belarus on the basis of the Resource Center for training people with deafness (created with the support of ITU). The workshop was aimed to announce and highlight this important issue and also to train teachers in methods of teaching people with hearing and speech impairments in ICT.
* ITU provided direct assistance in creating an ICT training center for young people with deafness and hearing loss in Uzbekistan in partnership with the Ministry for Development of Information Technologies and Communications of the Republic of Uzbekistan and IT Park of Uzbekistan. The Center is aimed to provide education to young people with deafness and hearing loss, create an enabling environment for learning computer programming, increase student’s interest in this area and provide basic knowledge in the field of IT and general interest to ICT sector.

First set of training courses were delivered to the first three groups of children of 13-19 years old. In total 24 children with deafness and hearing loss were trained in “Graphic Design” and “Computer literacy, fundamentals of WEB technologies”, developed both in Russian and Uzbek languages. Moreover, in the course of creating the program and teaching methods for children, sign language translation of the video courses “One Million Uzbek Coders” (OMUC) in the direction of “Fullstack” was also implemented.

* In the framework of this activity Recommendations on web-accessibility for government portals were developed and piloted for two Uzbek portals – “epark.uz” and “uzbekcoders.uz”. These Recommendations can be used to improve the accessibility of web-presence of government authorities, business, social services, universities and other organizations aimed at creating inclusiveness of web content for a wide range of users not only in Uzbekistan, but also in other countries.
* ITU has signed a CIRT establishment project with the Government of Kyrgyzstan, the project will be equally co-funded by the ITU and the World Bank;
* Another major partnership emerged around cybersecurity in Kyrgyzstan with ITU and OSCE co-organizing the First National Cyberdrill in April 2021;
* The GCI was an important priority for most countries of the region, with ITU providing advice to Kazakhstan;
* ITU’s Global 2021 Cyberdrill kicked-off on 15th September with an Interregional Meeting on Cybersecurity: Asia Pacific and CIS regions;
* As part of the Startup Central Eurasia Platform in 2021 ITU organized a series of 10 various country trainings for startups, with more than 100 startups participated, followed by a regional training held in October, with another 40 startups attending. These trainings brought together startups from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.
* Startup Central Eurasia featured two more major regional events: a Venture Day in June 2021 where startups could present their solutions and raise funding, and a Workshop in November 2021 where ITU officially launched its online Startup Central Eurasia Platform ([www.startupcentraleurasia.com](http://www.startupcentraleurasia.com)). Representatives of communication administrations, regulators, IT parks and other participants re-confirmed their support to developing such platform as a tool to exchange best practice, provide practical support and mentoring and overall contribute to the innovative startup ecosystem in the region.
* Smart sustainable cities continued to be on top of the agenda for many ITU Member-States in the region, with Belarus hosting an annual flagship ITU event on this subject. ITU is also elaborating a project with the Municipality of Moscow to develop a regional benchmark of smart sustainable cities.
* GSR-21 Regional Regulatory Roundtable (RRR) and Regional Economic Dialog (RED) held on 15-16 June 2021 gathered representatives of regulatory bodies, ministries of ICTs, telecom industry, academia to learn about the five Generations of ICT regulation and the ICT Regulatory tracker, Digital Regulation Handbook and Platform, exchange national regulatory approach, identify areas of further development to contribute to the fast-evolving digital economies. In RED ITU presented outcomes of a comprehensive analysis of ITU documentation in the field of telecommunication/ICT focusing on BDT publications on ICT economics and finance, including the material developed in ITU-R, ITU-T, ITU-D. The analysis identified the areas of interest of the CIS with the extant studies and research conducted by BDT.
* Report on Economic contribution of broadband, digitization and ICT regulation: Econometric Modelling for the ITU Commonwealth of Independent States Region was published. This Report provides substantial evidence regarding the impact of broadband and digital transformation on the economy as well as the impact of institutional and regulatory variables on the growth of the digital ecosystem of the CIS region.
* ITU developed a specialized multimedia training course in Russian on e-health for doctors and ICT staff working with medical equipment; in addition, it provided a series of country training sessions in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, andUzbekistan;
* ITU developed technical recommendations on the application of modern technological solutions in the design of e-health systems, including telemedicine networks;
* In 2021, ITU together with Kyrgyzstan finalized the development of spatial data infrastructure system for analyzing and monitoring state of glaciers in Central Asia;
* ITU created an International Research, Development and Testing Centre for new equipment, technologies, and services in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation (Phase 1 of the joint project with Rostelecom) and works towards connecting other countries in the region and building a distributed virtual C&I lab (Phase 2 of the project);
* IRDTC experts have developed technical reports (in Russian) on Network 2030, C&I labs, network performance, AR/VR testing, AI and QoS. These reports are open and available at the ITU website;
* ITU has organized a series of dedicated regional training and events following high demand from membership (on spectrum management, VoLTE, 5G, Future Networks). ITU-D joined forces with ITU-T and ITU-R to deliver these activities;
* Trainings on the ITU LMC toolkit (interactive last-mile connectivity diagnostic and decision-making tools) have been completed in Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. The LMC toolkit supports policy makers, regulators and communication operators to take a more holistic approach to planning, design and implementation of last-mile connectivity solutions, including in the underserved areas.

**Global initiatives and projects**

* **Giga** (supporting TP 01 Networks and Digital Infrastructure, CIS RI 2 Capacity Development, Digital Inclusion, CIS RI 5 Networks, as well as SDGs 4, 9, 10 and 17)
* Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan became the first Giga beneficiaries in the CIS region. As part of the Giga Accelerate activities, the first set of unconnected schools in remote and rural areas of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan will be connected to broadband; connected schools in Uzbekistan will serve as Internet hubs to connect up to 1,000 new users from the surrounding community to broadband; innovative business models will be tested to ensure sustainable and meaningful Internet connection of schools.
* **Connect2Recover** (supporting TP 01 Networks and Digital Infrastructure, 04 Policy and Regulation, RI 5 Networks, as well as SDGs 3-5, 8-10 and 17)
* Armenia became the first country in the world where an assessment based on the Connect2Recover methodology was carried out. Assessment includes:
* analysis of Armenia’s ICT data collection practices – whether collected data is informative enough for informed policymaking,
* ICT infrastructure, ISPs’ & market resilience analysis – whether infrastructure is adequate to universal penetration of broadband Internet and meaningful connectivity is affordable, how networks performed during lockdown in 2020,
* as well as policy & regulatory landscape assessment – to identify gaps and bottlenecks that hinder the ICT market development and broadband Internet penetration.
* Similar assessments to be conducted in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.
* **Child Online Protection program** aims at proposing a holistic approach to the challenge of child online safety through two different workstreams: [1] Cyber Skills Development on the Child Online Protection (COP) as well as [2] Child Online Protection Policy Support. COP program will be implemented withing the timeframe of 1 August 2021 - 31 December 2024.
* Together with UNESCO IITE started **developing a new online training course for mainstream school teachers on Information Security in Educational Cyberspace** (to be finalized in Q2 2022). Active rollout of the program is planned in 2022 and aimed at creating and sustaining safe and empowering online experience for education and communication, at training viable skills on digital literacy and secure ICT utilization for learning or other purposes, at ensuring overall awareness оf cyber risks along with creating and developing the shared culture of cyber hygiene and digital ecology.
* On February 7, 2021, during World Internet Safety Day, with support of ITU, Child online protection online multimedia course (Onlinesafety course) has been launched in Armenian language. Continuing the cooperation with Armenia, it is planned to translate the 2020 Child Online Protection Guidelines for parents and educators, industry and policy-makers; awareness campaign on Child Online Protection; and continuation of the Online.safety course implementation.
* Consultations with other countries are initiated.
* **Generation Connect - CIS Youth Group (GC-CIS)** was launched in the context of the ITU Youth Strategy, in particular, within the framework of the “Generation Connect” global initiative and also contributes to bridging the digital divide in the region. The group includes 17 young people - representatives from the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Uzbekistan, and Ukraine. GC-CIS held a series of thematic sessions to learn about ITU activities and presented the interim results of the GC-CIS work at the Regional Preparatory Meeting for WTDC for CIS region (April 21-22, 2021) as the document RPM-CIS21/32-R.
* The youth group participants expressed high interest in the following topics: Capacity development; environment; technologies of distributed ledgers, artificial intelligence systems and emerging technologies; development of computer literacy and online security. Members of the group are committed to engage and support where relevant in practical activities of Generation Connect Intiative.
* GC-CIS representatives actively took part in regional but also in global events and meetings on the preparation for the Global Youth Summit 2022: participate in Generation Connect Co-Design Team workshops, global roundtables, TDAG side events.

 **UN Engagement**

* In the CIS Region, ITU is part of the Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan UN Country Teams (UNCT). Regular contact is maintained with other UNCTs in the countries of the region to raise awareness about ITU’s global and regional activities and explore potential areas of partnership. In Belarus, ITU engaged in the development of the CCA and UNSDCF for 2021-2025, and participated in the UNCT Retreat. ITU joined the UNSDCF 2021-2025 of Kazakhstan and of Uzbekistan, took part in the CCA Update in Uzbekistan and invited to participate in the UNCTs Retreats. In Russia, ITU cooperates with the UN Information Center and contributes to the UN Bulletin. In 2021, collaboration continued with the UNESCO Institute for Information Technology in Education and UNICEF COs in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan on Giga Initiative. The Regional Office for CIS is part of the UN Digital Transformation Group for Europe and Central Asia, co-lead by ITU and UNECE.
1. **Europe region**

Activities on 38 actions were implemented in the region.

In line with the objectives of the ITU Regional Initiatives for Europe set up of two projects (Green GovStack and e-Waste in Western Balkans) of a joint value of 4 Mio. CHF was facilitated

Direct assistance to countries included

* the development of the National Frequency Plan in Albania,
* establishment of a IPv6 laboratory in Montenegro,
* national mapping system in Bosnia and Herzegovina,
* case studies on collaborative regulation, including strategic advise to Romania and Moldova,
* Digital Innovation Profile in Georgia and Serbia,
* strategic review of Child Online Protection in Moldova,
* assessment of the national approach toward Child Online Protection in North Macedonia,
* National Assessment of Digital Accessibility in Serbia,
* Digital Skills Assessments have been carried out in Albania, North Macedonia, Ukraine.

Roll out of the ITU Child Online Protection Guidelines at the national level was facilitated in over ten countriesin Europe region. The latest launches of COP guidelines took place in Ukraine and Albania. Preparations for new launches are ongoing in Malta and Romania. Special project on strengthening national capacities in field of child online protection and roll out of COP Guidelines was launched in Albania Special Actions

Moreover, several agreements with the regulatory authorities have been signed, with the aim of strengthening the process of collection of data for the ITU Terrestrial Transmission Maps. In the follow up, based on the European experience and with the support of several European Regulatory Authorities, the Guidelines on Establishment of Mapping Systems were elaborated. In addition the gap analysis on the status of Mapping Systems across the world was carried out, facilitating establishment of a new layer in the ITU Broadband Map.

Regional assessments on 5G Implementation in non-EU countries has been carried out providing an overview of dynamics in implementation, innovation, national strategies and policies including spectrum related issues was carried out. As a result, EMF regional assessment on EMF and communication challenges was accomplished engaging European administrations.

Moreover, a regional assessment on ICT accessibility in the Europe region was launched at the Accessible Europe as an immediate response to the Member States commitment to establish enabling environments ensuring accessible telecommunications/ICTs for persons with disabilities by 2023 (see ITU Target 2.9). As an immediate follow up Serbia was assisted in the development of a strategy for strengthening digital accessibility. Similar work is planned to be carried out in other countries.

The partnership between ITU, Estonia (MFA Estonia), Germany (BMZ) and DIAL was further advanced with the aim of accelerating digital transformation and digitalization of government services, particularly in low-resource settings. The partnership will establish a framework for digital cooperation among governments to assist countries in implementing scalable digital services and applications in a cost efficient, accelerated and integrated manner. Implementation of a project between ITU and Estonia of 400,000 EUR kicked off at the beginning of the year while a new project on Green Govstack between ITU and GIZ of the value 3.6 Mio. EUR was signed on 6 of December 2021.

Strategic partnerships were strengthened, including with the European Commission, resulting in scaling up the Accessible Europe platform, strengthening of the mHealth Hub for Europe, an ITU-WHO-EC project, establishing strengthened coordination between ITU and EC aiming at generation of new digital for development projects derived from ITU supported programming exercise of European Commission DG INTPA. Reinforced collaboration with BEREC (Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications), EaPeReg (Eastern Partnership Electronic Communications Regulators Network) and RCC (Regional Cooperation Council for Western Balkans) was continued. In addition, ITU Office for Europe joined UN Brussels and co-leads Task Force on Digitalization for Sustainable Development with the aim of strengthening cooperation with the relevant EU institutions.

Special efforts were dedicated to engagement of ITU Office for Europe in the UN Sustainable Development System. This resulted in engagement with UN Country Teams in nine countries as well as establishing and operationalization of the UN Digital Transformation Group for Europe and Central Asia, being the mechanism for coordination at the regional level and support to the UN Country Teams. Several actions were implemented in 2021, including the development of the Digital Development Country Profiles for four countries, two regional studies jointly developed by ITU with UNICEF (Connectivity for Education) and UN Women (Digital Gender Divide), training on data protection for UN country teams, among many others. Through a joint ITU-FAO programme countries have been receiving assistance on digital agriculture, guidelines for accession countries was elaborated, ecosystem of innovators driving digitalization was established engaging over 500 stakeholders from Europe and Central Asia. An interagency project (ITU-UNEP-UNITAR) on e-Waste in Western Balkans of value 150 CHF was signed in November 2021.

In 2021 ITU Office for Europe provided a series of opportunities for building capacities through workshops and forums (over 30 meetings attended by over 5000 stakeholders) and trainings provided through ITU directly or ITU Centres of Excellence (14 trainings, with over 1000 stakeholders trained). In addition several publications and reports have been launched building solid foundations for evidence based assistance to the countries in the field of digital transformation.

ANNEX 2

Contribution to other Sectors and the General Secretariat

Regional and area offices contributed to the implementation of ITU strategic plan and ITU-R, ITU-T, and the General Secretariat operational plans as follows:

1. **ITU-R**

Conference calls and face-to-face meetings were organized between the regional and area offices and the BR senior management, covering each time overviews, updates, and briefings of activities run in the various regions, for example RO-ASP has identified dedicated human resource for coordination with BR and vice versa.

BR works closely with the BDT on issues of mutual interest to ITU-R and ITU-D. The BR has participated in relevant meetings of ITU-D Study Groups, Rapporteur Groups, and TDAG, where liaison activities have involved topics such as spectrum management, digital broadcasting and migration from analogue systems, the transition towards and implementation of IMT, and broadband wireless access technologies. These topics are in addition to the collaboration undertaken through ITU-D Question 9-3/2, which calls for the identification of study topics in ITU-R (and ITU-T) that are of particular interest to developing countries and WTDC RESOLUTION 9 (REV. BUENOS AIRES, 2017) regarding participation of countries, particularly developing countries, in spectrum management.

With the objective of informing and assisting the ITU membership on radiocommunication-related matters, in particular developing countries, BDT and BR continued to organize spectrum-related workshops, seminars, meetings, and capacity-building activities including courses under regional Centers of Excellence on relevant areas [e.g. [partnership with SRMC-MIIT China](https://www.itu.int/en/myitu/News/2021/01/04/10/43/Spectrum-management-capacity-building-Asia-Pacific-Region) (Peoples Republic of)], with the support of the regional offices and in cooperation with the relevant international organizations and national authorities.

During 2020 and 2021, BDT regional officed provided support to BR in the following areas:

## World and Regional Radiocommunication Seminars

During 2020 a new WRS/RRS intra WRCs cycle has started: WRS/RRS 2020-2023. Those Seminars aim at disseminating worldwide the updates contained in the Radio Regulations Ed. 2020 (with the decisions taken by WRC-19) along with its associated Rules of Procedure (RoP). Based on the prior WRS/RRS experiences, this WRS/RRS 2020-2023 cycle plans to conduct two biennial World Radiocommunication Seminars (WRS), complemented by eleven Regional Radiocommunication Seminars (RRS) (each one aimed to a different subregion). The planning is duly coordinated/and adjusted with ITU Regional Offices (ROs) as well as pertinent regional groups, considering the challenges arisen by the current outbreak and the subsequent changes of format (online events), and its implications on the involved ITU Staff (BR, ROs).

**World Radiocommunication Seminar (WRS)**

As a part of the WRS/RRS 2020-2023 cycle, the WRS-20 was conducted in December 2020. It was initially planned for the 1st week of December in Geneva, but due to the travel restrictions related to the pandemic, WRS changed to a virtual format, with the following changes:

1. WRS-20 was presented over 2 weeks, i.e., from 30 November to 11 December, with 3-hour sessions daily,
2. to accommodate participants in different time zones worldwide, WRS-20 sessions were presented twice each day:
	* Morning sessions (Geneva time) were presented for participants in the Asia-Pacific, and East and Southern Africa Regions,
	* Afternoon sessions (Geneva time) were presented for participants in the Americas, Europe, CIS, Arab States, and West Africa Regions.
3. Recordings of the seminar sessions were also made available on the event website.

Additionally, noting that more and more people are using and deploying radiocommunication systems and considering the BR role to inform all individuals and organizations worldwide about the Radio Regulations and how to implement them, for the first time, the WRS plenary sessions were opened to everyone, no matter whether they are members of ITU or not.

The WRS-20 attracted 2,183 participants from 159 countries, which shows the big success of this event, with many times more participants than the average WRS physical editions.

Regional offices supported BR in outreach about WRS to the ITU membership.

**Regional Radiocommunication Seminars (RRS)**

As a complement to the biennial WRS, the BR maintained its strategy for regional outreach through the organization of Regional Radiocommunication Seminars (RRS) aimed to visit every developing region worldwide, fostering human capacity building on the use of the radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbits, in particular, the application of the provisions of the ITU Radio Regulations.

RRSs are jointly organized with the spectrum management authorities of host countries, in close cooperation with relevant regional organizations and the ITU regional/areas offices. Their agendas include two days of theoretical sessions and one or two days of workshops on terrestrial and space services. They are complemented with a one or two-day forum, dedicated to spectrum-related topics of particular interest to the region.

During 2020-2021, RRS were conducted as follows:

* [ITU Regional Radiocommunication Seminar 2020 for the Americas (RRS-20-Americas) – Online meeting, 13-24 July 2020](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-R/seminars/rrs/2020-Americas);
* [ITU Regional Radiocommunication Seminar 2020 for Asia and the Pacific (RRS-20-Asia&Pacific) – Online meeting, 19-30 October 2020](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-R/seminars/rrs/2020-Asia-Pacific);
* [ITU Regional Radiocommunication Seminar 2021 for Americas (RRS-21-Americas) – Online meeting, 26 April - 7 May 2021](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-R/seminars/rrs/2021-Americas/Pages/default.aspx);
* [ITU Regional Radiocommunication Seminar 2021 for Africa (RRS-21-Africa) – Online meeting, 5-16 July 2021](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-R/seminars/rrs/2021-Africa/Pages/default.aspx);
* [ITU Regional Radiocommunication Seminar 2021 for Asia-Pacific (RRS-21-Asia Pacific) – Online meeting, 11-22 October 2021](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-R/seminars/rrs/2021-Asia-Pacific/Pages/default.aspx).

### 1.2. Regional forums and workshops

Among others, in 2021 BR in close cooperation with the BDT and the ITU regional and area offices, and other relevant international organizations and national authorities organized and participated in the following (online) events:

* 7th Annual Asia Pacific spectrum conference, 24, 25 and 27 May 2021;
* ITU Regional Workshop “Implementation of the RA-19 and WRC-19 decisions” for CIS Region, 25-25 September 2021;
* CoE training course on [Human Exposure to 5G RF Electromagnetic fields](https://academy.itu.int/training-courses/full-catalogue/human-exposure-fifth-generation-5g-electromagnetic-fields-guidelines-measurements-case-studies), with Technical University of Malaysia,4-17th October 2021.

## 1.3. Assistance to the Member States, in particular in developing countries and LDCs

The Bureau continued assisting Administrations of developing countries in areas such as:

1. Supporting national spectrum management activities in the rapidly changing regulatory environment (see Resolution **7 (Rev.WRC-19)**) and providing technical assistance in the field of space radiocommunication (Resolution **15 (Rev.WRC-03)**) either in ITU headquarters or in the field.
2. Participation in the meetings of the regional coordination groups, as requested by Article 12 of the Radio Regulations.
3. Provision of assistance in long-term spectrum roadmap for mobile broadband and assignment for mobile broadband (IMT)
4. Provision of guidelines and technical support for the transition to Digital Television and the allocation of the digital dividend.

During 2020 direct technical assistances in progress were concluded. No new direct requests were received.

RO-ASP conducted following activities related to spectrum management in 2020:

* **Regional:** Study on SM capacity building in the region: A bespoke framework
* **Fiji:** NTFA update
* **Tonga:** NTFA update with WRC-19 outcomes
* Online SMS4DC training modules provided to **Mongolia** and **Afghanistan**

The following requests are being taken up in 2021:

* **Regional:** Study on IMT2020 (5G) assignments in Asia and the Pacific
* **Regional:** Study on SM capacity building in the region: A bespoke framework
* **Sri-lanka:** Spectrum Master-plan
* **Cambodia:** NTFA update and development of spectrum pricing regime
* **Timor-leste:** NTFA update

### Assistance to Regional Groups

The BR continued its participation in the meetings of the regional coordination groups (e.g. HFCC), as requested by Article 12 of the Radio Regulations, providing the necessary assistance and collaboration.

**GE84 Plan optimization project for Africa:** The Bureau in collaboration with ATU held in total 5 online workshops (in English and French) in September 2020-October 2020 and January 2021. The 1st Frequency Coordination Meeting on Optimization of the GE84 Plan for Africa took place virtually from 15-19 February 2021.

**PRIDA**: The Policy and Regulatory Initiative for Digital Africa (PRIDA) project, is an initiative by the African Union, European Union and ITU. It also includes Regional Economic Communities, ATU, Regional Regulatory Associations, National Regulators, and other stakeholders. The BR, jointly with BDT are actively participating on the Action “*Increasing wireless broadband penetration through improved and harmonized spectrum utilization and regulations*”. In that sense, during 2020 five meetings were conducted:

* Workshop on Modern Spectrum Management and SMS4DC –E: Zanzibar, Tanzania 2 - 4 March 2020;
* Workshop on Modern Spectrum Management and SMS4DC - E: online 20 April - 1 May 2020;
* Workshop on Modern Spectrum Management and SMS4DC - F: online 11-22 May 2020;
* Workshop. IoT and Digital Services. - F: online 24 - 28 August 2020;
* Workshop. IoT and Digital Services. - E: online 7 - 11 September 2020.

The Arab Regional Office is coordinating a matter related to the Arab Spectrum Management Group (ASMG) as well as PRIDA related matters with the BR as and where necessary.

In the CIS Region, the Regional Office together with BR participates in meetings related to radiocommunications and spectrum management of Regional Commonwealth in the field of Communications.

1. **ITU-T**

At the initiative of the TSB Director, conference calls and face-to-face meetings were organized on a regular basis between the regional and areas offices and the TSB senior management, covering each time overviews, updates, and briefings of activities organized by each TSB department in the various regions. These coordination activities, as well as the establishment of a TSB Focal Point for the Regions, were conducted keeping in mind the goal of improving coordination and increasing the efficiency of the overall operations, events and activities in the Standardization Sector in each of the Regions. The use of this coordination mechanism is a tool that has led to a significant improvement in the overall coordination with regional and areas offices in terms of events and activities, as well as enhancing the knowledge of the ITU-T standardization activities in each region.

A short overview of the activities run by the Regional Offices is presented below for each Region.

#### Africa

Through coordination and exchange activities have been implemented by the ITU Office for the Africa in collaboration with TSB:

* ITU DFS Security Clinics, 12-14 October 2021 (virtual)
* Workshop on Data Revolution, Health Status Transformation and the Role of AI for Health and Pandemic Preparedness in the African Context organized by the Regional Office together with WHO, 21-24 June 2021 (virtual)
* ITU-T SG20 RG-AFR Virtual Forum on “Accelerating Digital Transformation in Africa”, 2 June 2021 (virtual)
* Financial Inclusion Global Initiative (FIGI) Symposium, 18 May-24 June 2021 (virtual)

The following WTSA preparatory meetings, led by the African Telecommunications Union (ATU), have been supported by the Regional Office:

* ATU coordination meeting for WTSA-20 preparation, 11-13 February 2020 (Geneva, Switzerland during the 2020 TSAG meeting)
* ATU-3, 28-30 July 2020 (virtual meeting)
* ATU-4, 27 September-1 October 2021 (virtual meeting)

Other areas of collaboration include:

* Exploring synergies with partners like Smart Africa through the working groups on Digital ID, Data protection, e payments, cross borders e-payments, OTT, among others.

Supporting and encouraging collaboration on work of the ITU-T Focus Group on AI for Health, including related AI challenges.

#### Americas

The following activities are planned or have already been implemented by the ITU Office for the Americas in collaboration with TSB:

**Coordination meetings with countries from the Americas region**

* Mexico: June 2021; Mr. Carlos Alfonso Morán Miguel, Vice Secretary of Communications and Transport of Mexico to update on upcoming WTSA and to exchange views on the ways to strengthening the relationship between ITU and Mexico.
* Jamaica: July 2021; Mr Ansord Hewitt, Director General, Office of Utilities Regulation to update on upcoming WTSA and to exchange views on the ways to strengthening the relationship between ITU and Jamaica.
* Jamaica: July 2021; Honourable Daryl Vaz, Minister of Science, Energy and Technology to update on upcoming WTSA and to exchange views on the ways to strengthening the relationship between ITU and Jamaica.
* Trinidad and Tobago: July 2021; Ms Cynthia Reddock-Downes, CEO of the Telecommunications Authority to update on upcoming WTSA and to exchange views on the ways to strengthening the relationship between ITU and T&T.
* Trinidad and Tobago: July 2021; Senator the Honourable Hassel Bacchus, Minister of Digital Transformation to update on upcoming WTSA and to exchange views on the ways to strengthening the relationship between ITU and T&T.
* Bahamas: July 2021; Senator the Honourable J. Kwasi Thompson, Minister of State for Finance and Grand Bahama to update on upcoming WTSA and to exchange views on the ways to strengthening the relationship between ITU and the Bahamas.

**Regulation**

* ITU Regional Radiocommunication Seminar 2020 for the Americas (RRS-20-Americas) – Online meeting, 13-24 July 2020.
* Chile Area Office contributed to the promotion of the ITU Workshop on Regulatory Aspects of Telecommunication Service Quality in Latin America that took place from 2 to 4 June 2021.

**Accessibility**

* The regional event “Accessible Americas: ICTs for ALL” takes place every year in November and represents a knowledge sharing platform on the development of ICT accessibility in benefit of countries and institutions and provides good practices in digital inclusion. TSB supported the event by providing expertise to the event particularly in the field of Accessibility standards for products and services”.
* The regional event “Accessible Americas: ICTs for ALL” is planned to be carried out in Varadero, Cuba, from 29 November to 1st December 2021.

**SMART cable systems**

* Information and support were provided to the Administrations of Ecuador and Chile, interested in supporting the draft Resolution on smart cable systems drafted by the TSB and being promoted by the “Joint Task Force (JTF) on SMART cable systems” integrated by ITU, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO/IOC), and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

#### Arab States

ITU Arab regional office have regular coordination with Arab League of Arab States’s Standardization Team (AST) and TSB for WTSA-20 preparations. In this regard, the following meetings have been coordinated by ITU Arab regional office in collaboration with TSB:

* The 15th of Arab Standardization Team (AST) meeting for Preparation of WTSA-20, 15-16 April 2020
* Arab Standardization Team (AST) working groups meetings, April- Sept 2020
* Arab Standardization Team (AST) participation in the Interregional Meeting for Preparation of WTSA-20, 18 September 2020
* The 16th of Arab Standardization Team (AST) meeting for Preparation of WTSA-20, 2 Sept 2021

ITU Arab regional office is promoting TSB activities in the Arab Region and on regular basis through all the regional communications channels including but not limited to, the official regional twitter account and regional member states what’s-up group. In addition, the following activities are planned or have already been implemented by the ITU Office for the Arab in collaboration with TSB:

* ITU Global Event on Emerging Technology for Connectivity: Accelerating Digital Transformation in LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS webinar from 5-9 July: Regional Sessions on:
	+ Blockchain and cybersecurity challenges and opportunities for digital finance
	+ Smart Cities and Communities
* GSR-21 Arab Regional Economic Dialogue (Arab RED21), 3 June 2021
* Training on DFS Security Lab, Oct-Nov 2021

#### Asia and the Pacific

What follows are some of the specific activities that the Regional Office coordinated/assisted TSB with:

**Smart Sustainable Cities**

* Building on the impactful joint presentation of the ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and TSB colleagues on different aspects of the Smart Sustainable Cities hosted by Brunei online back in June 2020 and the discussion in January 2021 as part of the ASEAN Digital Senior Officials’ Meeting (ADGSOM), the ITU Regional Office worked with the U4SSC Secretariat in Geneva to present the initiative bilaterally to Brunei Darussalam and Thailand in August 2021. Additionally, the ITU Regional Office presented this initiative bilaterally to Viet Nam in July 2021. Discussions are ongoing surrounding audits based on the KPI’s developed by the U4SSC platform, and the countries are further reviewing internally.
* The ITU Regional Office, with support of the U4SSC Secretariat, presented the ITU and the U4SSC initiative as part of an UN-Habitat presentation in August 2021 to Thailand’s Smart City Ambassadors.

**Coordination meetings with Individual Members**

* Coordination meetings are being scheduled with member countries. So far, a meeting was held with the Director General of Viet Nam Telecommunications Authority (VTNA) in August 2021. VTNA showed keen desire to engage further with ITU-T. The areas of focus for Viet Nam are: Digital Infrastructure, Digital Services, Consumer Protection, and Digital Transformation. They are also interested in SG3, SG5, SG11, SG12, SG13 and SG20 in the next study period.
* Meetings with other member countries are being scheduled
* The ITU Regional office also coordinated efforts to consolidate a joint review by TSB and BDT of the QoS and QoE regulations to Cambodia. This was much appreciated by the member country.

**Project on Enhancing the Development of Standards and Frameworks for Critical Technologies in Southeast Asia**

* Following consultations with TSB and discussions with the Government of Australia’s Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the ITU team successfully signed a grant agreement on 4 June 2021 with DFAT on this project, under its Cyber and Critical Tech Cooperation Program. Although initially slated for one-year, the Regional Office expects that this project may be extended to four years, subject to funding availability.
* The project will enhance the development and implementation of internationally recommended and industry-led critical technology standards, frameworks, policies, and initiatives at regional and national levels across Southeast Asia, which takes into account diverse stakeholders needs. It will implement this through
	+ Policy-oriented research and diagnostics on the current state of critical technology standards.
	+ Awareness Raising and Capacity Development among Policy Makers, Regulators and Civil Society Leaders
	+ Multi-Stakeholder Consultation on Critical Technologies in Southeast Asia
* The project’s initial focus will be on the Indonesia, Malaysia. The Philippines, and Thailand, and will also look at the regional context in Southeast Asia.

**Workshop on The Future of TV for Asia and the Pacific**

* The future of TV workshop was held on 23 April 2021. It was a virtual workshop with three main sessions, as well as the opening and closing sessions, and lasted for more than 4 hours with some breaks. This workshop was held in close coordination with the ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, TSB, and BDT. Mr. Aamir Riaz from the ASP region also acted as an ITU technical Officer in the Session 2 titled “**The Future of the Television User Experience and Applications.**
* The content of the workshop benefited from the inputs of all three Sectors of the ITU (Radiocommunication: ITU-R; Standardization: ITU-T; and Development: ITU-D). The workshop focused on the policy enablers, including spectrum management, to ensure successful and impactful future television services. Emerging trends, government policies, industry challenges, and opportunities were also discussed. The current and future regional and international standardization roadmaps pursued by ITU dedicated groups were also part of the discussion. Security challenges and the role of TV during lockdowns also remained a hot topic during the workshop. Finally, the role of AI and the potential new broadcasting applications and 5G broadcast were also explored.
* The link to the recording is available at: <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/Workshops-and-Seminars/202004/Pages/programme.aspx>

**Digital Technology Innovations Series Webinar**

* Following discussions that began in 2020, the ITU is co-organizing with the Telecommunications Standards Development Society, India (TSDSI) a series of webinars on Digital Technology Innovations. This series is being hosted with the support from the Department of Telecommunications, select Ministries of Govt of India, and other partners from the Asia-Pacific region.
* The inaugural session of the series was held on 2 September 2021. The team will continue hosting webinar sessions into 2022, on topics including Fintech, Standards Development Case Studies, Terrestrial and Non-terrestrial Technologies for Rural/Remote areas, and Data Privacy and Security.

**Co-ordination regarding ITU-T events and Participation in TSB related meetings**

* The ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific also assisted in dissemination of information related to TSB activities and meetings such as the coordination of TSB’s presentation in the ASEAN Workshop on Number Misuse.
* The ITU regional focal point also participated in various WTSA prep meetings and other meetings as required. This included:
	+ Sessions in the 4th Meeting of the APT Preparatory Group for WTSA-20 (APT WTSA20-4), 16-20 November 2020
	+ 43rd PASC AGM 18&20 May 2021
	+ Sessions in the 33rd APT Standardization Program Forum (ASTAP-33), 7-15 June 2021.

#### Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

During the August 2020 – August 2021 timeframe the Regional Office for the CIS Region participated and contributed to the organization of the following regional events of the ITU-T/TSB:

* Meeting of the ITU-T SG20RG-EECAT, 16-18 March 2021, Minsk (Belarus)

Experts from TSB and ITU-T Study Groups participated in the following activities of the ITU Regional Office for the CIS Region:

* ITU Regional Development Forum for CIS Region, 14-15 December 2020, online
* ITU Forum “Smart sustainable cities: organizational and technical aspects”, 16-18 March 2021, Minsk (Belarus)
* ITU Infosession “Technological priorities of the region: networks 2030, quantum communication, cybersecurity. Development, testing and standardisation”, 25-26 August 2021, St. Petersburg (Russia) and online

The ITU Regional Office for the CIS Region is closely working with the TSB and external partner towards a project on smart cities benchmarking.

ITU-T SG11 Chairman Mr. Andrey Kucheryavy and ITU-T SG11 experts participate in the ITU-D project “International Research, Development and Testing Centre for new equipment, technologies, and services (IRDTC)” which is being implemented in St. Petersburg, Russia.

The ITU Regional Office for the CIS Region is facilitating the engagement of countries in the ITU-T AI for Good programme.

#### Europe

The following activities are planned or have already been implemented by the ITU Office for Europe in collaboration with TSB.

**Accessibility**

* The Regional Forum for Europe on “Accessible Europe: ICTs 4 ALL” took place virtually from 23 to 25 March 2021. This regional event for Europe was jointly organised by the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the European Commission (EC). The organisation of this event was supported by the Government of Portugal and conducted as part of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Forum focused on further promoting the development of accessibility in countries and institutions, through the collective effort and cooperation of stakeholders and through sharing of successful outcomes of projects and initiatives implemented, to interchange resources and solutions and make the European region a more inclusive society. TSB supported the event by providing experts in the Forum, particularly on “Session 4: Accessibility standards for products and services” and “Session 6: Building smart and accessible cities”.
* The Regional Competition for Innovative Digital Solutions for Accessible Europe has been held for the third time as an integral part of Accessible Europe 2021. This competition aimed to promote innovative and creative digital solutions to benefit persons with disabilities (PwD), bringing more social inclusion and interaction, comfort, and quality of life to their daily routine through mobile technologies. TSB supported the competition by providing experts as part of the evaluation committee and participated in the evaluation meeting held to shortlist finalists and winners.

**The Future of TV in Europe**

* The upcoming future of TV workshop will take place on 19 November 2021, fully virtual and will focus on Europe. Organization of this workshop is closely coordinated by ITU Office for Europe and TSB, while the content of the workshop benefits from inputs of all three Sectors of the ITU (Radiocommunication: ITU-R; Standardization: ITU-T; and Development: ITU-D). The workshop will focus on the diverse emerging broadband and broadcast technologies, with the aim to assist countries in the region of Europe to assess challenges, dynamics, and opportunities. This event will aim to discuss the future of television in the region with relevant European and international stakeholders, covering regulatory and policy frameworks, emerging and convergent ICT Infrastructures and services, as well as user interfaces and accessibility issues. It also provided an opportunity to discuss TV-related regional and international standardization and to share best practices and case studies on cable TV rollouts and other new TV services.

**5G Techritory forum 2020 and 2021**

* 5G Techritory is being supported within the framework of the ITU Regional Initiative for Europe on broadband infrastructure, broadcasting and spectrum management. With time 5G Techritory has become an important platform for the Europe region and several synergies with the ITU activities have been created in the past. During the 2020 edition, a special TSB session on E2E service delivery was organized to highlight relevant workstreams of ITU-T. TSB will be also featured in the line up for this year’s edition to be held from 22 to 26 November 2021.

**GovStack Initiative**

* Digital government services are vital for developing a digital economy that benefits all citizens by expanding access to critical services such as health, education and social protection. Countries seeking to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the next ten years are increasingly looking to national digital strategies and agendas to transform the way they do business and improve the lives of their citizens.
* A “Whole-of-Government” platform approach to developing government services through the reuse and minimal customization of quick and easy to adopt building blocks is at the heart of the success of digital government services projects. Open-source models for a government platform that is built from modular and reusable components, leveraging a secure and standards-based approach, are an optimal solution to solving these issues in a cost-efficient and scalable manner.
* TSB is part of this effort providing expert contribution to the workstream related to the identification and financial services.

**5G Forum**

* On 22-23 October 2020, ITU Office for Europe organized the ITU Regional Forum for Europe on 5G Strategies, Policies and Implementation. In the opening session, the forum featured TSB Chief of Study Groups Department who provided an opening presentation into the relevant standardization activities of ITU-T with regards to 5G.

**5G paper**

* ITU Office for Europe elaborated 18 5G country profiles focusing on non-EU countries. The country profiles were structured as follows i) ICT background and current status of broadband, ii) broadband and mobile telecommunication sectors data, iii) current progress on 5G: consultations and national strategies, iv) spectrum assignment for 5G & market development, v) electromagnetic field levels and implementation dynamics, vi) 5G commercial launches: announcements, trials, and digital cross-border corridors. The finalization of the report was coordinated with TSB.

**EaPeReg workstream**

* The Eastern Partnership (EaP - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) Electronic Communications Regulators Network, holds expert working groups meetings on a regular basis. Upon the request of EaPeReg, ITU Office facilitated the intervention of TSB Chief of Study Groups Department who delivered a presentation on “5G ITU-T Standardization Update”, at the Spectrum Expert Working Group (SEWG) held on 27 May 2021.

**EMF paper**

* ITU Office for Europe elaborated a report on “Implementing 5G for good: do EMFs matter?” which recaps the state of the art of recent developments in SDOs/IOs with regards to EMF. The report has been coordinated with TSB and received input in particular from ITU-T SG5. The draft final report was submitted as a TD to SG5 meeting held 11-20 May 2021 also accessible [here](https://www.itu.int/md/T17-SG05-210511-TD-GEN-1767/en).

**EMF capacity building**

* ITU Office for Europe conducted a “Regional Assessment for Europe on EMF exposure limits and risk communication challenges” engaging 29 countries in Europe region. ITU Office for Europe submitted the results to ITU-T SG5 through a TD accessible [here](https://www.itu.int/md/T17-SG05-210511-TD-GEN-1767/en).
* ITU Office for Europe, in coordination with the Future Networks and Spectrum Management Division of the BDT, elaborated a plan to scale up the activity of the Regional Assessment with a proposal for an internal project led by BDT on “Building national capacities on EMF policy and communication”. The project was coordinated with TSB and BR and focal points have been established for the way forward.

**Smart Cities**

* The ITU Office for Europe in collaboration with the TSB smart city experts, held discussion with UNOPS and the UN country team to launch the implementation of the U4SSC KPIs on Smart Sustainable Cities in selected cities in the Republic of Serbia. Discussions continue on this pilot project with potential collaboration with UNOPS.
1. **General Secretariat**

With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which acknowledges the important role of ICTs as a critical enabler for advancing the globally agreed sustainable development goals (SDGs), cooperation between ITU regional and area offices with relevant regional and other international organizations dealing with socio-economic development and financing for development matters has continued to grow.

Levering ITU membership in the UN development system, and as a financial contributor to the UN Resident Coordinator system, the ITU, through its Regional and Area offices, strengthened its efforts in engaging in the national and regional UN System. ITU is an active partner in the enhanced collaboration with the UN Regional Coordinators (RCs), UN Country Teams (UNCTs) and UN RC system in general. ITU offered to engage in phases, starting with 22 pilot countries, aligned with ITU’s Regional Presence. The interaction with the RCs and UNCTs helps ensure ITU, through its regional and area offices, remains fully responsive to requests from those countries, as generated through the cooperation framework.

ITU also participates also in the process of implementation of the UNSG Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, as a co-champion on the Global Connectivity and Capacity Building Working Groups. ITU is also involved as a participant in the Digital Inclusion Working Group.  The ITU teams from regional offices, HQ and ITU Liaison office are involved in the work of the UNSG Roadmap Response Team (Digital Cooperation RRT) led by the UN Development Coordination Office. This cooperation aims to support of 2021 Cooperation Framework implementation countries.

Regular coordination calls between ITU Liaison Office in New York and the ITU Regional and Area Offices have been held and facilitated exchange of information as well as coherence of actions undertaken at the regional and national level. Regional Offices have been contributing to the process of ongoing UN Development System reform, drawing attention to the opportunities and challenges the non-resident specialized agencies may face under the new framework.

Continued efforts have been dedicated to draw attention to the importance of the ITUs work at the national and regional levels, including the work on the ITU Regional Initiatives. Moreover, Regional and Area Offices have been continuing advocacy for strengthening of ICT component in the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

Council-16 resolved to use the WSIS framework as the foundation through which ITU helps to achieve the 2030 Agenda, within ITU’s mandate and within the allocated resources in the financial plan and biennial budget, noting the WSIS-SDG Matrix developed by UN Agencies.

With the aim of strengthening the implementation of the WSIS Outcomes at the regional level, ITU regional and area offices have continued to coordinate and collaborate at the regional level with the UN regional economic commissions and UN Regional Development Group, as well as all UN agencies (in particular those acting as facilitator for WSIS Action Lines) and other relevant regional organizations, especially in the field of telecommunication/ICT, with the aim of aligning WSIS and SDG processes and their implementation as requested by UNGA Resolution 70/125, developing partnerships for implementation of inter-agency and multistakeholder projects, advancing implementation of WSIS Action Lines and advancing achievement of SDGs and strengthening regional input to the WSIS Forum, WSIS Prizes and WSIS Stocktaking. Following TDAG advice, WSIS and SDG have been incorporated in the agendas of the ITU Regional Development Forums that serve as the mechanism for coordination on the implementation of the ITU Regional Initiatives and priorities.

ANNEX 3

Support activities towards empowering regional and area offices

In 2021 BDT continued to scale up activities to further support and empower the regional and area offices, and strengthen the regional presence. Regular town hall meetings are held with the regional staff as well as HQ to ensure all staff are briefed and information is widely shared.

Weekly activity reports have been replaced with interactive dashboards to gather inputs of field office activities, including country interactions, UN engagement, and progress of activities and projects.

A senior management retreat was held in 4th quarter of 2021 prior to TDAG 2021/2 for all staff in BDT, focusing on working sessions with Regional Directors, members of the Development Management Group (DMG) and including sessions with Thematic Priority Coordinators. These sessions helped to highlight and improve working relationships between teams, strategy planning for BDT, and are expected to enhance and improve collaboration between HQ and regions and thereby improve programmatic delivery throughout all regions.

52 BDT staff members, half of whom are Regional Office staff members, graduated from an intensive UN Staff College training in change management in the recent 2 years. The course required each participant to lead a change project for a significant new or improved approach to their work workplan delivery.

Examples of notable change initiatives that regional ‘change champions’ are leading on include: piloting RBM tools and templates to strengthen RO workplan implementation and reporting; integrated project solutions through strengthened BDT RO and TP team collaboration; testing and roll-out of streamlined processes for accelerated project delivery; strengthened Membership engagement responding to revised national priorities in an evolving COVID context; pivoting to new BDT offers of help to Governments facing critical connection and technology needs to better manage COVID impacts; increased UN System collaboration to leverage ITU expertise for greater impact in joint programming with other UN agencies in health and education; and scaling up locally-led programmes in digital transformation and capacity building.

BDT’s enhanced implementation of results-based management (RBM) in its work continued during 2021. Enhancements to the BDT annual planning processes were implemented to enhance collaboration between HQ and Regions. Regional teams also engaged in increased information gathering regarding country needs in their regions, to better inform the planning process. The quarterly management review process was enhanced to better report on impact delivered by BDT activities and projects.

Electronic tools continue to be improved for planning, monitoring, and sharing of information and activities. BDT launched a series of dashboards to visualize data from multiple systems, increasing real-time monitoring capacity of actionable information.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  | **Annex 4** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | **Summary of the 2021 Regional and Area offices expenditure** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |













**ANNEX 5**



**Table 2. Disbursements of projects in 2021**

*(amounts in thousands of US Dollars (USD)*


Implementation level = Actual expenditure figures after accounting closure

**ANNEX 6**



**ANNEX 7**

**2021 Fellowships awarded**

In line with the relevant provisions of Resolution 213 (Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on measures to improve, promote and strengthen ITU fellowships, a number of fellowships were awarded by ITU-T and ITU-D per region, per country and per gender.

Ordinarily, approximately 600 fellowships are awarded each year averaging USD 900,000 and implemented using ITU regular budget which enables eligible Member States to participate in ITU activities.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, since mid-March 2020 international travel and the activities of ITU have been severely impacted. All ITU meetings, conferences and events have gone virtual and as a result the awarding of fellowships halted in mid-March 2020. Work is being done to consider and propose innovative ways to repurpose fellowships to assist participants from eligible countries to attend and participate in virtual meetings.

From 1 January to mid-March 2020**,** 53 fellowships had been awarded for seven activities, four of which were held at ITU headquarters and two in the Africa region, as shown in Table 1.

Following China’s contribution on “Proposed further improvements on remote participation in ITU meetings” (Document VC/10, 1 June 2020), the concept of an e-fellowship was introduced as “an interim solution” for the 29th meeting of the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG) which took place from 8-12 November 2021. Only one fellowship request which came from the Democratic Republic of Congo was received by the deadline.

In view of the continued prevalence of the COVID-19 pandemic, e-fellowships will be offered until further notice to ensure the participation of the Member States who may encounter logistical difficulties like travel, vaccinations requirements and other issues.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **ANNEX 8** |  |  |
| Summary of staffing level by Regional and Area Offices  |



|  |
| --- |
| **ANNEX 9** |
| Breakdown of staffing level by Regional and Area offices |
|  |



\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Expenditure figures in annexes have been updated in line with the 2021 accounting closure. Staffing figures are as of end 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)