

ITU Regional Development Forum for Europe (RDF-EUR)

Information and Communication Technologies for Attaining Sustainable Development Goals

Tuesday 26 May 2020 | 11:00 – 15:30 | Remote Meeting

<https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Events/2020/RDF/Remote.aspx>

CONTRIBUTION BY ESSL FOUNDATION – Zero Project/AUSTRIA

TITLE: Developing the cooperation between the ITU/ITU members with the Zero Project in developing a network of thematic leaders in ICT accessibility and digital inclusion

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Europe Regional Initiative: [Tick the relevant boxes or delete the irrelevant items]

- EUR1: Broadband infrastructure, broadcasting and spectrum management
- EUR2: A citizen-centric approach to building services for national administrations
- EUR3: Accessibility, affordability and skills development for all to ensure digital inclusion and sustainable development
- EUR4: Enhancing trust and confidence in the use of information and communication technologies
- X EUR5: ICT-centric innovation ecosystems

Year(s) of implementation: [Tick the relevant boxes or delete the irrelevant items]

- X 2019
- X 2020
- X 2021

Background [max 300 words]

The Zero Project was initiated by the Essl Foundation. It is a platform where the most innovative and effective solutions to problems that persons with disabilities face, are jointly identified, explored, selected and shared. Its mission is to support the implementation of the UN CRPD: “For a world without barriers”.

The Zero Project is a scientific project with the clear goal to enhance social-innovation-processes. Together with a continuously growing network of over 5,000 experts, with and without disabilities, in over 150 countries, the Zero Project seek to identify the most innovative and effective Policies and Practices that improve the lives of persons with disabilities. Those Innovative Practices and Policies are presented on a research database on www.zeroproject.org, in the annual Zero Project Report and, most importantly, at the Zero Project Conference which is organized every February in the premises of the UN in Vienna.

The Zero Project covers 4 topics: education, employment, accessibility and independent living in a 4-years-cycle. In 2019/20 the topic is education (which also includes accessible and inclusive ICT).





The work of the Zero Project is based on informal partnerships, with partners contributing their expertise in nominating, evaluating, voting, and at the same time using the Zero Project Conference – and more generally the research and network – for their own work. The Zero Project has ECOSOC status and cooperates regularly with several UN bodies, including ITU.

Currently, the cooperation with ITU is based on mutual conference participation throughout 2018 to 2020 and support (e.g. by the Zero Project joining the Jury of the Accessible Europe Award and the ITU organizing the ITU Forum at the Zero Project Conference and presenting the Awardees, or a joint Side Event at the COSP in New York 2019), and a joint announcement during the Malta Conference on Accessible Europe to deepen the cooperation.

Proposal [max 400 words]

The Zero Project’s theme of research and communication in 2020/21 is “inclusive employment and ICT”. The Call for Nomination of the Zero Project has already started on May 20, and will be open until June 14 (most probably extended until the end of June). Starting from this year, the Zero Project will search for accessible and inclusive ICT every year, next to changing main topics, enabling us to permanently cover ICT in our research and better develop ecosystems of thematic leaders in this field

The ITU distributes this Call for Nomination within its networks and suggests all former ITU-Awardees to nominate themselves, and other stakeholders to nominate or further share the call.

After closing the Call and the Shortlisting (to be finished by end of July), the Zero Project and ITU come together (online, most probably) and discuss, how to form an ecosystem of some 30 to 40 innovators (from this Call, but also former Awardees of ITU or the Zero Project) and how to jointly promote them (e.g. by encouraging them to nominate for the next ITU-Award, or organizing joint-webinars, etc.). Based on that, we co-develop an activity programme for 2020/2021.

