Workshop for the Caribbean Region to Promote the Development and Implementation of
Conformance & Interoperability (C&I) Programmes, December 2-4, 2014,
The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago
Platinum Sponsor: Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago

Session 7: Interactive Discussion Way Forward

The workshop recommends that Caribbean countries undertake the following tasks, which can be performed in parallel. These tasks should be co-ordinated by a regional working group chaired by the CTU.

ITU-T/R recommendations (see ITU C&I Portal - http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/C-I/Pages/default.aspx) and other internationally-accepted standards, should be considered for adoption as national or regional standards for conformance and interoperability, where appropriate.

Administrations are also encouraged to participate in the ITU-D Study Group 2 Question 4 (ITU-D SG2 Q4 - http://www.itu.int/net4/ITU-D/CDS/sg/rgqlist.asp?lg=1&sp=2014&rgq=D14-SG02-RGQ04.2&stg=2), and ITU-T Study Group 11 (ITU-T SG11 - http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/studygroups/2013-2016/11/Pages/default.aspx).

It is recommended that the ITU AMS region inform the prime minister responsible for ICT within CARICOM, with the intention of securing support at the regional level.

Task A

Perform risk assessment and demand study to determine the need for national or regional testing facilities to support C&I regimes in the Caribbean. Specifically the following steps should be executed:

1. Conduct a demand study on the scope and need for conformity assessment capability for ICT equipment in the Caribbean region, and feasibility study on the viability of establishing and implementing C&I conformity assessment facilities in the Caribbean region.
2. Conduct a risk assessment to take account of the likely and potential consequences of not implementing an active C&I regime in the Caribbean region.
3. Depending on the outcomes of the studies, consider and/or develop a plan for the development of Caribbean in-country testing laboratories. This plan should include the criteria to determine the locations and the testing scopes of these in-country testing laboratories.
4. Depending on the outcomes of the studies, consider and/or develop a plan for the development of regional testing laboratories. This plan should include the criteria to determine the numbers, the locations and the testing scopes of these regional testing laboratories.

It is recommended that ITU AMS region be the lead of Task A.

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Task B

Develop a general framework for conformity assessment regimes, as well as a specific framework for ICT C&I for the Caribbean region. These regimes will facilitate the trade and deployment of ICT products and services in the Caribbean region.

It is recommended that CROSQ takes the lead to develop the general framework for conformity assessment regimes, and that they work closely with CTU who will take the lead on the development of the specific ICT C&I framework.

Initiatives should take into account existing conformity assessment procedures as it relates to ICT work in member states, and in existing sub-regional groupings (e.g. ECTEL), as well as international best practices, for example ITU guidelines.

Task C

Following further sensitization and engagement with key stakeholders in the Caribbean region, implement the Inter-American MRA with selected member states of the Organization of American States to gain access to the conformity assessment bodies in those member states.

It is recommended that CTU take the lead to coordinate the efforts of individual Administrations to foster a harmonised approach to conformity assessment for ICT, and consistent and compatible implementation of the Inter-American MRA within the Caribbean region. CTU should consult with (sub-) regional and international bodies as appropriate.

Task D

The representatives at this meeting recognise that existing legislative frameworks of Caribbean jurisdictions do not generally address issues associated with local/regional accreditation and conformance testing.

It is recommended that the working group, chaired by CTU, engage in the production of model legislation, and/or model processes, with respect to C&I for adaptation/adoption by member states.

Task E

The representatives at this meeting recognise that the region needs to develop the necessary technical capacity, which includes the ability to specify tests to be performed, to contract or perform tests, and to critically interpret test results, among others.

It is recommended that ITU AMS region partner with CPqD to specify and facilitate training of technical personnel in order to develop the technical capacity at both national, and by extension regional, levels.