Supplement

ITU-T A Suppl. 4 (12/2022)

SERIES A: Organization of the work of ITU-T

Guidelines for remote participation

Supplement 4 to ITU-T A-series Recommendations

Guidelines for remote participation

Summary

Supplement 4 to the A series of ITU-T Recommendations specifies guidelines on the organization and handling of meetings of ITU-T groups with remote participation.

FOREWORD

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the United Nations specialized agency in the field of telecommunications, information and communication technologies (ICTs). The ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) is a permanent organ of ITU. ITU-T is responsible for studying technical, operating and tariff questions and issuing Recommendations on them with a view to standardizing telecommunications on a worldwide basis.

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA), which meets every four years, establishes the topics for study by the ITU-T study groups which, in turn, produce Recommendations on these topics.

The approval of ITU-T Recommendations is covered by the procedure laid down in WTSA Resolution 1.

In some areas of information technology which fall within ITU-T's purview, the necessary standards are prepared on a collaborative basis with ISO and IEC.

NOTE

This is an informative ITU-T publication. Mandatory provisions, such as those found in ITU-T Recommendations, are outside the scope of this publication. This publication should only be referenced bibliographically in ITU-T Recommendations.

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As of the date of approval of this Recommendation, ITU had not received notice of intellectual property, protected by patents/software copyrights, which may be required to implement this Recommendation. However, implementers are cautioned that this may not represent the latest information and are therefore strongly urged to consult the appropriate ITU-T databases available via the ITU-T website at http://www.itu.int/ITU-T/ipr/.

Table of Contents

Supplement 4 to ITU-T A-series Recommendations

Guidelines for remote participation

1 Scope

Well-documented rules and procedures, including the legal aspects, are useful for electronic meetings of ITU-T groups. ITU-T groups include, but are not limited to, Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group (TSAG), study groups, working parties, Questions or Rapporteur groups, focus groups, Joint Coordination Activities (JCAs), correspondence groups, ad hoc groups and regional groups.

NOTE 1 –The rights of remote participants are not covered in this Supplement.

Meetings of ITU-T groups may be conducted in the following formats:

• physical meetings (face-to-face);

• physical meetings with remote observation (i.e., webcast);

• physical meetings with remote participation;

• e-meetings, also called virtual meetings.

NOTE 2 – The first two formats are not covered by this Supplement.

The same format may not apply to all sessions of a given meeting. This Supplement provides guidelines for physical meetings with remote participation and e-meetings. The meeting format (see clause 6.4) to be used for any given meeting or meeting session is beyond the scope of this Supplement.

2 References

[FSTP-AM]	Guidelines for accessible meetings (2015). <https://www.itu.int/pub/T-TUT-FSTP-2015-AM>
[FSTP.ACC-RemPart]	Guidelines for supporting remote participation in meetings for all (2015). <https://www.itu.int/pub/T-TUT-FSTP-2015-ACC>
[PP GR]	Plenipotentiary Conference, General Rules of conferences, assemblies and meetings of the Union (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010). <https://www.itu.int/pub/S-CONF-PLEN-2019>
[PP Res.167]	Plenipotentiary Conference, Resolution 167 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022), Strengthening and developing ITU capabilities for fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation, and the electronic means to advance the work of the Union. <https://www.itu.int/pub/S-CONF-ACTF-2022>
[WTSA Res.32]	World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly, Resolution 32 (Rev. Hammamet, 2016), Strengthening electronic working methods for the work of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector. <https://www.itu.int/pub/T-RES-T.32-2016>

3 Definitions

3.1 Terms defined elsewhere

None.

## 3.2	Terms defined in this Supplement

This Supplement defines the following terms:

**3.2.1	group**: A study group, Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group (TSAG), a working party, a Question, a Rapporteur group, a correspondence group, an ad hoc group, a joint coordination activity (JCA), a focus group, a regional group or any other type of group created in ITU-T.

NOTE – A workshop or a seminar is not considered a group in the context of this Supplement.

**3.2.2	remote participation**: Participation in a meeting from a separate geographical location, using communication technologies.

**3.2.3	remote participation moderator**: A person in charge of monitoring the remote participation tool, ensuring that remote participants know what is taking place in the meeting and allowing remote participants chances to contribute (if the meeting is with remote participation).

NOTE – A remote participation moderator is not systematically available for each meeting with remote participation.

## 4	Abbreviations and acronyms

This Supplement uses the following abbreviations and acronyms:

JCA	Joint Coordination Activity

TSAG	Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group

UTC	Coordinated Universal Time

## 5	Conventions

None.

## 6	Organization of a meeting with remote participation

This clause gives guidelines for the group chairman and secretariat who are organizing a meeting with remote participation.

6.1	When scheduling the time for meetings with remote participation or for e-meetings, consideration should be given to the different time zones of the expected remote participants. Times for the scheduling of meetings are stated in the invitations to such meetings as both Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) and Geneva times. Consideration should also be given to, when practical, scheduling relevant agenda items identified by a remote participant to better accommodate the remote participant's time zone.

6.1.1	In the case of a physical meeting with remote participation, the timings follow the time zone of the location where the physical meeting is being held.

6.1.2	In the case of e-meetings, it is recommended to organize them between 1200 and 1500 hours, Geneva time. If the meeting extends over two weeks, there should be no sessions on Saturdays or Sundays. An e-meeting should normally limit itself to sessions of 1 hour and 15 minutes, interspersed with breaks of a minimum of 10 minutes.

6.1.3	The times of opening and closing of sessions during a meeting should normally be adhered to. Amendments to the timings of meetings and of sessions within meetings are notified to all participants as soon as practically possible after the decision to change the timings has been taken.

6.2	If remote participation is to be arranged for a group meeting, TSB should be informed at least twelve calendar days before the group meeting, to allow for enough time for logistics arrangements.

6.3 If the group chairman is expected to participate remotely, the group should identify an acting chairman to ensure meeting continuity should the communication with the chairman fail. In the case of a physical meeting with remote participation, the acting chairman should be identified among physical participants.

6.4 The collective letter, or calling notice, indicates the format in which the meeting will be conducted:

•   physical (face-to-face);

•   physical with remote observation (i.e., webcast);

•   physical with remote participation (see also clause 7.1): the notification indicates whether, and for which sessions, remote participation can be requested; it also indicates that the decision making is with those physically present in the room;

•   e-meeting, also called virtual meeting (see also clause 7.1): the notification indicates that decision making is by consensus.

NOTE – The first two formats are not covered by this Supplement. The meeting format could be based on a variety of criteria, including, but not limited to, the nature of the meeting, whether the meeting is held inside or outside Geneva and technical capabilities available for the meeting.

6.5 It is recommended that the technologies used for remote participation are those available from the ITU, even for meetings held outside Geneva. Access to remote participation should be available thirty minutes prior to the start of a meeting to allow remote participants to ensure that they can connect.

NOTE – It is not a requirement to have ITU staff present in a support capacity during the meeting.

6.6 For meetings held outside Geneva with remote participation, it is recommended that hosts be supplied with guidelines in order to minimize possible technical issues related to remote participation. These guidelines (e.g., in the form of a checklist) should be accessible for the host well in advance before the event, and should include all the technical and logistics requirements for providing the remote participation facility.

7   Guidelines for the group chairman

This clause gives guidelines for the group chairman to help chairing a meeting with remote participation.

7.1 All remote participants should mute themselves when utilizing a tool to participate remotely. Remote participants only unmute when the chairman recognizes them. To prevent interference of background noise, the chairman reminds remote participants to mute their microphones until when they wish to contribute (see also clause 7.5).

7.2 In the case of physical meetings with remote participation, the group chairman and the remote participation moderator (when available) are encouraged to meet in the room ten minutes before the scheduled start of the meeting to verify that the system is working and that the group chairman can display and share documents.

NOTE – The remote participation moderator informs the meeting that a remote participant wishes to intervene and the chairman includes the remote participant in the queue of meeting participants who want to intervene.

7.3 At the beginning of each meeting with remote participation, the group chairman announces that there is a remote facility and states the rules governing remote participation in physical meetings. The group chairman also states the following: "When taking the floor, participants shall announce their name and affiliation. They shall be brief and clear in their interventions by speaking slowly so

that those for whom English[1] is not their native language can understand. Remote participants shall mute their microphone when they are not speaking."

7.4   The General Rules of conferences, assemblies and meetings of the Union [PP GR] apply to meetings with remote participation, in particular clauses 20.2 (Order of debates), 20.8 (Limitation of speeches) and 20.9 (Closing the list of speakers).

7.5   Where supported by the remote participation tool, the chairman or the remote participation moderator is permitted to mute remote participants with bad connections or whose connections introduce too much noise, or may ask them to leave the meeting if the situation cannot be remedied.

7.6   While a remote participation tool may support video, it is recommended that the group chairman does not use the share video option and turns off the camera to avoid creating bandwidth problems.

8   Technical guidelines for remote participants

This clause gives guidelines for remote participants.

8.1   Remote participants are encouraged to use the remote facility through a landline (when available), or to use a headset (and not the microphone and speaker of their machine). Remote participants should make sure that the loudspeaker on their machine is muted when they call from a landline.

8.2   It is recommended that remote participants connect at least five minutes before the start of the meeting to avoid disturbance. This will also allow for the group chairman and/or the remote participation moderator to verify sound levels.

8.3   Remote participants are encouraged to announce their name and affiliation clearly before making any intervention (see also clause 7.3).

NOTE – This is particularly useful in case of a meeting with interpretation or with participants with disabilities or specific needs (see clause 10).

8.4   Remote participants should speak from a quiet place without background noise. They should speak slowly and clearly to allow the other participants to compensate for any audio problem. They are encouraged to end their remarks with the phrase "This concludes my intervention."

NOTE – Clauses 8.3 and 8.4 are particularly useful in the case of a meeting with interpretation, or with participants with disabilities or specific needs (see clause 10).

8.5   If the connection is poor, and if requested by the chairman, remote participants should be prepared to type their question or comment in the chat window of the remote participation tool. Any other comments entered in a chat window are normally not considered as a part of the discussion.

8.6   During a physical meeting with remote participation, remote participants accept that, in case of technical problems (e.g., lost connection), their participation may be interrupted (see also clause 8.8) while the physical meeting will continue, whereas in case of onsite technical issues (e.g., headphone failure), the chairman may decide to suspend the meeting until the problem is solved.

NOTE – Remote participants recognize that an important part of any meeting are the informal discussions during coffee and lunch breaks where delegates can informally explain, understand, and forge the compromises needed for the consensus processes to work. Remote participants recognize that they will not have this type of interaction with the other participants.

8.7   Remote participants accept that in case of technical problems (e.g., lost connection) during an e-meeting, the chairman will assess whether enough participants are still connected and will decide

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[1]   In case the working language of the meeting is not English, this statement is adapted accordingly.

whether to continue the meeting (see also clause 8.8) or to suspend the meeting until the problem is solved.

8.8 Remote participants may report problems to the remote participation moderator (when available) who should determine where the cause lies and should either take direct remedial action or offer advice as appropriate. A remote participant who experiences problems in joining the meeting should preferably discuss with the remote participation moderator in a private chat window so that the main chat window is reserved for discussions of interest to all participants.

8.9 While a remote participation tool may support video, it is recommended that participants do not use the share video option and turn off their cameras to avoid creating bandwidth problems.

9 Technical guidelines for in-person participants

This clause gives guidelines for participants physically present in a meeting with remote participation.

9.1 In order to increase voice quality, only one microphone should be on (open) at a given time in the meeting room, and physically present participants are asked to speak close to (and in front of) the microphone.

10 Guidelines for persons with disabilities or with specific needs

This clause makes reference to guidelines applying to remote participants with hearing or visual impairments, in particular.

10.1 Guidelines for users with hearing or visual impairments are available from the Joint Coordination Activity on Accessibility and Human Factors (JCA-AHF at https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/jca/ahf).

10.2 Requirements and good practice for supporting remote participation in meetings for all are contained in [FSTP.ACC-RemPart]. Guidelines for accessible meetings are contained in [FSTP-AM].

10.3 Persons with disabilities can mention their specific needs (for example, captioning) on the registration form. Provision of specific facilities is done in accordance with *resolves* 3 of [PP Res.167].

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