

INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION



**COUNCIL WORKING GROUP FOR THE ELABORATION OF THE
DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN AND THE DRAFT FINANCIAL PLAN
2016-2019**

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Report on Staff Survey on the 2016-2019 ITU Strategy

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1 Background

The ITU Council launched in June 2013 the development of the ITU Strategic Plan for 2016-2019, which should be approved at the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in October 2014.

In order to ensure staff engagement in the ITU management and planning processes, an anonymous survey has been undertaken to identify staff views and ideas on what the strategy of the Union beyond 2015 should be. The Staff Survey was held from July 29 to August 16, and August 30 to September 11, 2013.

The survey was answered by 62 ITU staff members (8.4% of staff). This document highlights the main trends of the survey and reflects the ideas, proposals and comments that were made with regards to the ITU 2016-2019 Strategy.

The key findings of the consultation and overall suggestions for the 2016-2019 ITU Strategy are summarized below:

- Need to better define (and disseminate) mission, vision and strategic goals;
- Need to strengthen focus of efforts;
- ITU goals to be aligned with global development / UN wide goals;
- Ensure relevance of ITU in the new environment;
- Work as One ITU;
- Budgetary situation is a main concern.

2 Key findings

2.1 Need to better define (and disseminate) mission, vision, and strategic goals

More than 60% of the respondents stated that they were not entirely familiar with the Mandate, Mission and strategic goals of ITU. Naturally a need to better define and disseminate them was recognized. A better definition of these key concepts in the Strategic Plan is therefore essential.

Furthermore, a clear need for more pro-active and systematic disseminating / raising awareness on these topics was recognized.

2.2 Stronger focus

According to many contributors, ITU needs to strengthen focus of its efforts and better invest its resources, in order to avoid the risk of spreading too thin. One staff member suggested ITU should “be strong in few subjects rather than weak in too many of them”. Similarly, another participant points out that in ITU “there are many initiatives (...), at times it is difficult to stay focused on key ones”. A staff member suggests:

“Given the current difficulties and scenario worldwide, the ITU should first keep investing in those areas where it is strong in order to avoid losing its predominance. ITU should then carefully observe the current developments/research in ICTs, select those which are mostly related to our experience/goals and bring/attract them”.

Another contributor suggests that in practice, this means “identifying a short list of key priorities and having an impact on these rather than addressing all ICT-related issues with limited impact”.

The risk is, according to another staff member:

“To do too many things at the same time. If ITU tries to do a little bit of everything then it will not be recognized as the leader for anything. It is important to set clear priorities, concentrate on those areas where ITU can be a real international leader and focus on those in terms of resources”.

2.3 ITU goals to be aligned with global development / UN wide goals

Contributions agree on the major role that ITU has to play in the development of ICTs and in facilitating their essential function as an enabler of the sustainable development. One respondent says, for example, that ITU should “assist developing countries to develop ICTs with a focus on sustainable development”.

Several respondents insist on the need to “make ICTs part of sustainable development”. For example, one participant clearly points out that one of ITU’s priorities beyond 2015 should be “aligned with the upcoming post-2015 development framework”, and another one says that “the MDGs need to be reviewed by 2015. ITU’s direction should be closely aligned with these revised goals”.

Another staff member adds that ITU “should be in line with the other UN processes by highlighting the role of ICTs as a means to the end”.

The close relationship between sustainable development and innovation is addressed by another participant:

“Innovation in ICTs will be key for sustainable socio-economic development for countries around the world. The cumulative impact of new communications media, including the Internet, is changing the nature of economies and societies in ways that require ITU to rethink the meaning of sustainability”.

Some others point out the need to avoid being isolated. Many participants express the suggestion that ITU should enhance its collaboration with other relevant stakeholders:

“By working with other UN agencies to offer a more comprehensive forum for discussing related topics, ITU will gain more prominence globally. ITU, by positioning itself as a neutral convener, could contribute as a major player”. (...) “Building partnerships with other UN agencies, international organizations, NGOs, etc. is therefore essential”.

Focusing on the sustainable dimension of ITU’s future strategy, another respondent identifies three key areas for improvement for ITU:

“1) Enhancing global cooperation in promoting innovative use of ICTs through research to help promote quality of life and meet development challenges in developing countries; 2) Developing underlying architecture and infrastructure which would support the requirements for the changing world of global communications in the future; and 3) Making ICTs part of sustainable development”.

2.4 Ensuring relevance of ITU in the new environment

According to several contributors, ITU needs to “stay relevant in an increasingly competitive environment”, or “be kept on the map as one of the leading organization of ICTs”. More precisely, “ITU should become a more modern organization by being more reactive and flexible in the way it serves its membership”¹.

¹ « L'UIT a besoin de se moderniser en étant plus réactive et plus flexible dans sa façon de rendre service à ses membres »

Several participants highlight the “risk of losing relevance”, when requested which are the three most important factors that ITU should take into account beyond 2015.

In particular, other contributors suggest that ITU needs “to work closely with innovators and developers to be prepared to shepherd change as it develops in engineering, to be prepared for the way in which telecoms technologies develop” and “to be at the *avant-garde* of future technological revolutions”². Another staff member believes that:

“ITU has to keep abreast of the emerging trends and inject those in the project planning and strategic plan of the Union. ITU should be seen as the pioneer of identifying and implementing emerging trends”.

Another staff member points out that ITU should:

“Keep its relevance/predominance; target relevant developments in ICTs; attract more and more audience; stay in line with the evolution of society; be innovative; and get more feedback on its activities to improve and enhance its reputation and action”.

In other words, as proposed by another participant, ITU needs to:

“Adapt to a fast changing ICT environment and the advent of new players from the private sectors committed and able to ‘Connect the unconnected’. Change its perception of an archaic, bureaucratic and opaque Union to an agile, young, modern and efficient organization”.

2.5 Working as One ITU

A common belief shared by several respondents is that ITU should work as one. One of them identifies for example, that “there are too many silos in the activities of various sectors”³. Another adds that it is essential for ITU to have a strategy that “enhances cooperation / communication between / across the three sectors”.

For example, a contributor believes that the most important challenge for ITU in the future is:

“Identifying duplication of tasks/services within ITU and streamlining of them: work as one - Organizing the World Conferences at the same time and location when possible to save time and costs. The ITU should learn on how to behave as ONE entity only”.

2.6 Budgetary situation as a main concern

The main concern expressed by staff about the future of ITU, is the risk of a possible budget shortage which could result from reduced membership contributions, and the consequences this would have on the activities of the Union. As one contributor says, the three most significant concerns for ITU are “budget, budget and budget”.

ITU’s future strategy needs to take into account the possibility of having an “insufficient budget”. According to a contributor, ITU should “keep its membership involved and contributing to activities and budget”. Another points out that “to have enough budget for its projects” is essential.

Respondents also recognized an important role for the staff in coping with financial challenges. Put in one participant’s words “at a time of budgetary cuts, everyone must understand how she/he can contribute to creating value for the organization”⁴.

² « L'UIT devrait être à l'avant-garde des futures révolutions technologiques »

³ « Il y a beaucoup trop de cloisonnement dans les activités des différents secteurs »

⁴ « A l'heure des restrictions budgétaires, tous doivent comprendre en quoi ils peuvent contribuer à créer de la valeur pour l'organisation »