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| **Regional Preparatory Meeting for WTDC-17 for Europe (RPM-EUR)**  | P:\SUP\Logos\Post-150th Anniv\ITU-logo-UNblue.jpg |
| **Vilnius, Lithuania, 27-28 April 2017** |
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| **Albania (Republic of)** |
| REGIONAL INITIATIVE ON ICT-CENTRIC INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS |
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| **Priority area:**Priority setting for Regional Initiatives, related projects and financing mechanisms**Summary:**Innovation was defined as a new priority for the ITU Development Sector (ITU-D) at the World Telecommunication Development Conference in 2014, with the adoption of the Regional Initiatives for Europe on Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Youth. This initiative aims at fostering the creation of an enabling environment and building capacities at the regional level. The objective is to enhance entrepreneurship and increase innovation in the ICT ecosystem, while encouraging empowerment of young men and women and creating new opportunities for them in the ICT sector.Innovation enables businesses in a country to create and apply new ICT solutions. This is a major component in facilitating a country’s efforts towards creating a sustainable knowledge-based economy. All countries have the opportunity to enjoy the economic and social benefits of ICTs. More specifically, countries are able to steer ICTs for development solutions, using innovative ICTs to address social and economic problems faced by the world.A country review of Albania was undertaken through the ITU Regional Initiative on Innovation in Europe and has yielded concrete and practical recommendations which Albania is implementing. Other countries in Europe can avail of this initiative and further engage in innovation at a regional level. In this context it is proposed to continue the Regional Initiative**References:**WTDC Resolution 17 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) |

**Background**

Innovation was defined as a new priority for the ITU Development Sector (ITU-D) at the World Telecommunication Development Conference in 2014, with the adoption of the Regional Initiatives for Europe on Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Youth. This initiative aims at fostering the creation of an enabling environment and building capacities at the regional level. The objective is to enhance entrepreneurship and increase innovation in the ICT ecosystem, while encouraging empowerment of young men and women and creating new opportunities for them in the ICT sector.

Innovation enables businesses in a country to create and apply new ICT solutions. This is a major component in facilitating a country’s efforts towards creating a sustainable knowledge-based economy. All countries have the opportunity to enjoy the economic and social benefits of ICTs. More specifically, countries are able to steer ICTs for development solutions, using innovative ICTs to address social and economic problems faced by the world.

A country review of Albania was undertaken through the ITU Regional Initiative on Innovation in Europe and has yielded concrete and practical recommendations which Albania is implementing. Other countries in Europe can avail of this initiative and further engage in innovation at a regional level. In this context it is proposed to continue the Regional Initiative with a focus on an ICT-centric innovation ecosystem, taking into account emerging technologies.

**Proposal**

To reiterate the need to maintain if not enhance the regional initiative to enhance entrepreneurship and jump start regional and local innovation culture through ICTs.

**Title:** Regional Initiative on ICT-centric innovation ecosystems

**Objectives:** Build on the existing regional initiative in Europe on entrepreneurship, innovation and youth to enhance entrepreneurship and establish a sustainable culture of innovation through concrete strategic actions using ICT as an enabler.

**Expected Results:**

Assistance to the countries in need in the following:

* Country reviews to collected data, analyse the current situation, and propose effective recommendations to use ICT as an innovation enabler.
* Undertaken ecosystem mapping exercises to coordinate efforts to create new projects and activities, both by facilitating cooperation between existing actors and by highlighting gaps in the ecosystem where stakeholders can have a high impact.
* Develop human capacity through identification and provision of practical skills needed in order to support innovative industries.
* Identify and strategise sustainable funding models to support the innovation ecosystems.
* Sharing of country level and regional best practices and case studies on all aspects of ICT as a driver for innovation.
* Provide a regional platform (virtual and physical) for strengthening of regional cooperation between ICT-centric innovation ecosystems, while holding annual Regional Innovation Forums.

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