**Telecommunication
Development Bureau (BDT)**

Ref.:   BDT/IP/INV/DM/269   Geneva, 27 July 2017

- Administrations of ITU Member States
- Regulators and Ministries
- ITU-D Sector Members
- Academia

Subject: **Multi-stakeholder Workshop on Bridging the Digital Innovation Divide: Fostering Digital Entrepreneurship and Start-up Ecosystems, 26-28 September 2017, Busan, Republic of Korea**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am pleased to inform you that the Multi-stakeholder Workshop, on **Bridging the Digital Innovation Divide: Fostering Digital Entrepreneurship and Start-up Ecosystems**, will be held from 26 to 28 September 2017 on the sideline of ITU Telecom World 2017, the leading UN tech event for governments, corporates and SMEs focused this year on "Smart digital transformation".

This workshop is organized by the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), within the mandate from Output 2.3 on Innovation and Partnership adopted by the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2014 (WTDC-14), Dubai.

This Multi-stakeholder Workshop aims at building technical capacities and skills in developing and monitoring digital ecosystems, including workshop development, monitoring framework with tools such as surveys, and integration into national agenda. The Programme of this workshop builds upon the recently launched toolkit on Bridging the digital innovation divide: A toolkit for strengthening ICT centric ecosystems, and will be supported by a series of national and regional experiences that will be shared with the participants.

The Multi-stakeholder workshop will be held in the ITU-D/ITU-R Pavilion located at the Telecom venue in the Busan Exhibition & Conference Center (BEXCO), offering cutting-edge facilities and an ideal location in central Busan. The event will be conducted in English only. Please note that the event will require reservation to attend due to the limited space. Participation to this workshop is ideal for those attending Telecom 2017. The workshop will deliver 8 training modules which will enable participants to understand, diagnose, and develop policies and programs fostering startup ecosystem as well as building strong ICT private sector conducive to sustainable development. The concept note for this workshop is attached in **Annex 1**.

Participants are requested to notify their interest to the ITU contact reference below not later than 10 September 2017.

While there is no participation fee for this workshop, it is to be noted that all expenses concerning travel, accommodation and insurance of participants should be covered by your Administration, Organization or Company. Entry visa for the Republic of Korea should be done by contacting the nearest Korean Embassy or Consulate well in advance (see link Visa Information).

Mr Mohamed Ba, Head of Innovation Service, (telephone: +41 22 730 5338 65, e-mail: Mohamed.Ba@itu.int) is at your full disposal for reservation to participate at this event, but also for any questions you might have concerning this event.

Yours faithfully,

Brahima Sanou
Director

Annex 1

Annex 1 contains the concept note of the Multi-Stakeholder Global Workshop on **Bridging the Digital Innovation Divide: Fostering Digital Entrepreneurship and Start-up Ecosystems**.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GLOBAL WORKSHOP

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL INNOVATION DIVIDE *Fostering Digital Entrepreneurship and Startup Ecosystems*

26-28 September 2017
Busan, Republic of Korea

Venue: Telecom venue in the Busan Exhibition & Conference Center (BEXCO),

Busan, Republic of Korea

More information at itu.int/innovation

CONCEPT NOTE

Context of the Workshop: Innovation plays a major role in the development agenda by enabling public sector transformation, and creating new and improved services for citizens. It also leads to transformation in the private sector and the economy at large, enabling businesses to develop ICT solutions and compete on a regional and global scale, ensuring a strong private sector, economic growth, and the sustainable creation of jobs. Beyond this, innovation in ICTs is an opportunity to harness the power of technology to address some of the great development challenges that are unique to the regions and the countries concerned. It is an essential part of a thriving ICT sector, enabling businesses to develop ICT solutions and compete on a global scale by creating jobs, wealth, and economic growth. This growth in sectors can help close the digital and innovation divides, creating a more equal world where more and more people can enjoy the benefits of ICT innovation.

Leading ICT policies have been changing, from a focus on broadband and infrastructure, to a focus on innovation and entrepreneurship. Much of countries investment in specialized infrastructure on digital access, content, and the policies that helped countries start on the digital journey, have not met expectations nor created sustainability. Traditional approaches to address the demand challenges and close the digital divide has met tepid results.

In response to this challenge, many countries, led by public sector or international/regional organizations have invested in innovation infrastructure like incubators and accelerators, but these specialized infrastructure to create appropriate solutions are struggling to create success stories. Countries with a desire to establish competitive ecosystems are finding that their talents and startup continue to migrate to best-in-class ecosystems such as in Silicon Valley.

Technological changes, such as Internet of Things (IoT), 5G, and Artificial Intelligence (AI), are providing new opportunities to address the digital divide, but the fundamental approach or

job to be done has not been addressed in many struggling ecosystems. Newer technology will bring digital ubiquitously in all industries, impacting all sectors, from agriculture, to energy, health, education, banking, manufacturing, citizen services. They raise a new perspective that the digital divide will grow because they are only a few countries who can leverage these technologies to develop appropriate solutions and unlock markets, jobs. Despite a growing enthusiasm and initiative from stakeholders in creating digital wealth and inclusion, much work remains.

Objective of the Workshop: This Multi-stakeholder workshop, to be held on the sideline of Telecom, aims at building national, regional and global capacities and skills in developing digital ecosystems, including designing policies, implementation programmes and projects. Programme of this workshop builds upon the recently launched ITU toolkit on *Bridging the digital innovation divide: A toolkit for strengthening ICT centric ecosystems*, and will be supported by a series of national and regional best practices and initiatives fostering ICT centric innovation and digital transformation. This workshop is organized by the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), within the mandate from Output 2.3 on Innovation and Partnership adopted by the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2014 (WTDC-14), Dubai.

It contributes to strengthening ITU member states capacity to integrate ICT innovation in their national development agenda, and to accelerating digital transformation.

Who Should Attend: This Multi-stakeholder workshops targets all stakeholders involved in nurturing and building digital innovation environment, favorable to entrepreneurship and creation of start-ups. In particular, its agenda has been customized for the needs of the ICT policy makers, regulators, national innovation agencies, development agencies, entrepreneurs, ecosystem builders, academia as well as institutions willing to undertake a national reviews on the ICT centric innovation ecosystems and develop coherent approaches to move countries towards an innovation driven economy.

Expected Result: Identification of stakeholders, champions and good practice programmes in the region interested in undertraining national ICT centric innovation ecosystem reviews, thereby advancing digital transformation, job creation and inclusive growth. Furthermore empowering participants with methodology, frameworks, tools and context relevant case studies to accelerate digital transformation through promoting innovation and entrepreneurship.

ORGANIZER

International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies – ICTs. ITU is committed to connecting all the world's people – wherever they live and whatever their means. Through our work, we protect and support everyone's fundamental right to communicate. The Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D), being one of three pillars of ITU, fosters international cooperation and solidarity in the delivery of technical assistance and in the creation, development and improvement of telecommunication and ICT equipment and networks in developing countries.