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| **Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG)**  **25th Meeting, Geneva, 2-5 June, 2020** | C:\Users\comas\AppData\Local\Temp\Rar$DRa0.735\jpg\ITU official logo_blue_RGB.jpg |
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| Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau | |
| ITU-D PROJECTS | |
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| **Summary:**  The International Telecommunication Union, per its Constitution has a dual responsibility as a United Nations specialized agency and as an executing agency. The Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) in fulfilling the Union's dual responsibility, has the key function of implementing projects under the United Nations development system or other funding arrangements so as to facilitate and enhance telecommunication development by offering, organizing and coordinating technical cooperation and assistance activities.  This document presents an overview of the work undertaken by the Telecommunication Development Bureau in project development and implementation in the six ITU-D regions: Africa, Americas, Arab States, Asia-Pacific, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Europe, as well as globally.  **Action required:**  TDAG is invited to note this document and provide guidance as deemed appropriate.  **Reference:**  Resolutions 17 and 52 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) and Resolution 157 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference. | |

## Introduction

In accordance with Resolutions 17 and 52 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) and Resolution 157 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, BDT continued its efforts in strengthening the project execution function of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector and in implementing regionally approved initiatives at the national, regional, interregional and global levels. BDT projects have remained demand-driven, people-centred and focused on sustainable development.

Investment in BDT tools, methodologies, guidelines, templates, standards, database development, project-related training and project management remained a priority. In line with results-based management and the principles of transparency, the ITU projects website ([www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Projects/](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Projects/)) has been enhanced to display the overall status of BDT projects dynamically at any given time. In addition, project case studies, post-implementation assessment reports and videos have been produced to help increase sharing experiences and lessons learned.

## Overall project implementation

Since 2007, BDT has implemented a total of 256 small, medium and large-scale projects at national, regional, interregional and global levels benefiting around 150 developing and least developed countries.

## Project portfolio

## As of 31 December 2019, the ITU project portfolio had 69 ongoing projects, valued at CHF 76 504 000[[1]](#footnote-2); with 20 new projects valued around CHF 11 million having been developed and signed in 2019.

1. **Ongoing projects by region**

The 69 ongoing projects at year-end 2019 were distributed as follows: Africa (14), Americas (10), Arab States (14), Asia-Pacific (8), CIS (2) and Europe (1). In addition to the regional projects, there were 20 global projects.

## Ongoing projects by areas of action

The following is the distribution of the 69 ongoing projects by thematic priorities clearly showing that most of the projects fall under the Networks and Digital Infrastructure, Digital Services and Applications, and Capacity Development thematic priorities. [[2]](#footnote-3)

## Projects under development yet to be signed

Several projects have been under development and are expected to be signed by the second quarter of 2020, such as:

1. Updating of the regulatory framework in the field of telecommunications in the Republic of Panama.
2. Specialized advice for the valuation of the 700 MHz and 2.5 GHz bands for the advanced mobile service in the process of their assignment or renewal of qualifying titles in Ecuador.
3. Advice and support to administrations in the use of frequencies of the digital dividend and spectrum management.
4. Deployment of broadband infrastructure, especially in rural and neglected areas, and strengthening of broadband access to services and applications.
5. ICT benchmarking in the Central African sub-region.
6. Boosting decent jobs and enhancing skills for youth in Africa’s digital economy.
7. Automatic detection of diabetic retinopathy in Senegal.
8. Supporting Asia-Pacific regional initiatives.
9. International Research, Development and Testing Centre (IRDTC) for new equipment, technologies and services, Phase 2 – CIS region.
10. Creation of “AI and Robotics Lab” in Uzbekistan.
11. Mapping systems in broadband for South Eastern Europe.
12. Child Online Protection in Asia-Pacific.
13. Enhancing the digital ecosystem and digital skills for the economic empowerment of women in LDCs.

## Funding sources for projects

ITU projects are funded mostly through extra-budgetary resources. Projects have four types of funding sources: Funds in Trust (FIT), ICT Development Fund (ICTDF), voluntary contributions, and the ITU regular budget.

Based on the ongoing budget for the implementation of projects as of 30 September 2019, 87 per cent corresponds to Funds in Trust, 9 per cent to the ICTDF and 4 per cent to the BDT operational plan.

In principle, funds from ICTDF are granted as seed money, normally up to 25 per cent of the total cost of a development project. This seed funding is intended to attract extra-budgetary cash contributions for development projects through resource mobilization. Among the criteria used for selection and eligibility, ICTDF gives some priority to projects, where beneficiaries include one or more least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing States (SIDS), landlocked developing countries, countries with economies in transition and countries in special need.

For funding projects which implement the WTDC-17 regional initiatives, ITU Council-18 allocated CHF 2 million for the period 2018-2019 from the 2017 operational plan and included CHF 3 million for 2020-2021 in the Financial Plan 2020-2023. These funds were allocated as seed money to attract funds from potential partners to support implementation of the regional initiatives.

1. **Efforts being made, aimed at strengthening the project execution function**

There are a number of initiatives that were launched to strengthen the BDT project execution role that go beyond developing and refining the necessary tools, methodologies, guidelines, templates, standards, databases related to projects and project management. These include:

* **Project post-implementation assessments:** BDT has conducted post-implementation assessments for several ITU projects. These assessments aim to review the key performance indicators set to assess the achievement of results, efficiency and effectiveness related to project implementation, as well as the impact of achieved results, centred on results-based management principles. The outcome of each review is based on an objective analysis of the results achieved, as well as the drawing of lessons learned that may help improve the design and implementation of future ITU projects. The results are captured in assessment reports, some of which are published on [BDT Projects website](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Projects/Pages/Implementation-Reviews.aspx).
* **Project videos:** Project videos are instrumental in the promotion of ITU projects. Relevant footage and interviews with the different stakeholders compiled during the post-implementation assessement missions, are used to produce short videos which showcase the project relevance, results and achievements. Such videos are also used to share experiences among the ITU membership. Some of the project videos are available on [BDT Projects website](file:///C:/Users/zavazava/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/Temporary%20Internet%20Files/Content.Outlook/PF7LKOSK/itu.int/en/ITU-D/Projects/Pages/Video-Gallery.aspx).
* **Project case studies:** BDT has developed a series of case studies based on implemented ITU projects. The case studies are short summary documents that provide essential information in an easy-to-read format. Each case study aims at sharing information related to different ITU projects, implemented activities, achieved results, lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations. ITU project case studies are a resource for stakeholders and ITU members to share experiences, and give an opportunity for them to replicate good practices. Some of these are published on the [BDT Projects website](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Projects/Pages/Case-Studies.aspx).
* **Capacity building for staff**: It is evident that internal capacity building is needed on a continuous basis as project management practices are evolving all the time. For this reason, training courses were conducted for BDT staff as a way of upgrading skills. This included staff at headquarters and those in the regional and area offices. BDT held a training on project management from 18 to 22 November 2019 and 39 staff passed the examination and are now certified as Project Management for Development Professionals – Level One (PMD Pro 1). It is planned that more ITU staff will be trained and certified in project management in 2020.
* **BDT Project Management Guidelines**: An update is well under way mainly to improve the guidelines, templates and tools and include elements of PMD Pro. A kick-off workshop took place from 27 to 29 January 2020, where a team of PMD Pro certified ITU staff reviewed the BDT Project Management Guidelines.

**Conclusions**

1. BDT has many years of proven experience in project execution for the benefit of developing countries. However, as the ICT sector evolves, so too is BDT, which is committed to adapting its processes, exploiting new opportunities, and effectively addressing challenges in project development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
2. The implementation of projects has proven to be an efficient way of responding to the specific needs of ITU Member States, and serves as an excellent mechanism to deliver with impact.
3. BDT projects are also an effective tool for implementing the regional initiatives, which were defined by Member States as priority areas for BDT to focus on generally for the benefit of more than one country in a region.
4. BDT is continuously innovating in order to respond to opportunities as well as challenges related to projects, by improving its project execution function, processes and reporting, in order to uphold accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of projects.
5. The execution of post-implementation assessments of projects continues to be an important effort, especially for purposes of increasing the sharing of information, experiences, and lessons learned among the Member States.
6. Given the overall number of ongoing projects and limited resources, BDT will continue to carry out project reviews on a selective basis, where priority will be given to projects that are complex and with high impact.
7. Externalities such as political and civil strife, as well as economic difficulties in some of the beneficiary countries, as well as the disruption of project implementation resulting from natural disasters, continue to be a cause for delays in timely project implementation.

For more information on projects implemented by ITU, visit:   
[http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Projects/](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Projects/Pages/default.aspx)

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1. For reporting purposes, all financial figures are converted into CHF using ITU’s accounting exchange rate of December 2019. Also, this figure might slightly change when the accounts are closed. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Please note that some projects fall under more than one area of action. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)