**ANNEX 2**

**Update on the Centres of Excellence (CoE) Programme**

**Background**

1. The CoE programme was launched in 2001, initially in Africa but then expanded to all regions.
2. At WTDC-10, Resolution 73 on the CoE programme was introduced. Among others, Member States requested the BDT Director to carry out an analysis of the programme and develop a plan of action to improve it.
3. A strategic review of the programme was carried out in 2012 and proposed a new approach.[[1]](#footnote-2) The main features of the new approach included the following:
	1. CoEs shall be selected for a defined period of time aligned to the planning cycles of the WTDCs.
	2. CoEs shall be selected on the basis of their excellence in defined priority areas.
	3. There is a need to maintain a manageable number of CoEs to ensure quality of the training and facilitate monitoring.
	4. CoEs need to operate on a self-sustainable basis.
4. The revised strategy was applied starting with the cycle 2015-2018.

**Developments and updates since WTDC-17**

1. At WTDC-17, Resolution 73 was revised and expanded. It instructs the BDT Director:
	1. to provide assistance for the work of the ITU Centres of Excellence according it the necessary priority attention;
	2. to carry out a major strategic review of the ITU Centres of Excellence programme after the termination of the current cycle, starting in 2018, and to make appropriate changes to the document entitled "Operational processes and procedures for a new ITU centres of excellence strategy";
	3. in drawing up ITU-D operational plans, to incorporate therein activities prepared and carried out by the ITU Centres of Excellence under the corresponding ITU-D action plans;
	4. to make the necessary organizational arrangements for the formulation of standards for ITU human capacity-building activities;
	5. to facilitate the work of the ITU Centres of Excellence, providing them with the necessary support;
	6. to make the necessary organizational arrangements for setting up, within the ITU regional/area offices, a database of experts and participants in ITU centres of excellence activities, for exchanges of experts in the field.
2. After the 2015-2018 cycle, a performance evaluation was carried out by the ITU Secretariat[[2]](#footnote-3). As a result, several new features were introduced with the 2019-2022 cycle, including:
	1. A complete review of the operational processes and procedures of the programme
	2. More flexibility on the topics or priority areas of the CoEs
	3. More flexibility on the tuition fees charged (including the option to offer courses for free)
	4. An exit clause for non-performing CoEs
	5. Steering Committees that are more focused on the performance and operations of CoEs
	6. More rigorous monitoring of CoE activities
3. Under the current cycle (2019-2022), there are 28 CoEs operating across the 6 regions.
4. In addition to these changes, BDT took action in a number of other areas which also affect the CoE progamme:
	1. In 2019, the ITU Academy platform and its e-learning functionalities underwent a complete review and redesign. The new platform has been made more user-friendly and includes many new features to enhance the online training delivery. The e-learning platform is at the full disposal of the CoEs and online training has surged during 2020. BDT also enhanced the support provided to the CoEs in their use of the ITU Academy platform, such as delivering online tutorials etc.
	2. The new results-based-management (RBM) approach that was introduced in BDT in 2019/20 facilitated and strengthened the collaboration between the Thematic Priority on Capacity Development and other Thematic Priorities. For example, the performance agreements between the TPs on capacity development activities include the training activities implemented by the CoEs and all TPs are now closely involved in the planning and approval of the CoE courses. One of the two impact pathways of the TP Capacity Development focuses on the training of ICT professionals, including the CoE training courses, and is implemented in close collaboration with other BDT TPs.
	3. In 2020, a new quality assurance process on BDT training content was developed and introduced, in line with the new RBM/Theory of Change and TP approach. It defines in detail the process for the development of BDT training content with the objective to strengthen its quality, including the training content offered under the CoE programme.
	4. In 2020, a feasibility study on the establishment of an ITU Training Institute was carried out, following an instruction by the ITU Council in 2019.[[3]](#footnote-4) The study, which was undertaken by an independent consultancy, included a comprehensive review of ITU’s capacity development and training activities, including the CoE programme. The final report of the study was presented to ITU in March 2021 and submitted as a contribution to Council-21.[[4]](#footnote-5)

**Way forward**

1. Following the instructions by WTDC-17 as contained in Resolution 73, it is proposed to further revise the CoE programme based on a major strategic review and report the results back to TDAG. Appropriate resources will be required in order to engage external experts and to facilitate and ensure robustness of the review.

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1. The strategic review report is available here:

<https://academy.itu.int/sites/default/files/media/file/COE%20STRATEGIC%20REVIEW%20AND%20RECOMMENDATIONS%20FOR%20THE%20FUTURE.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The performance evaluation report is available here: <https://academy.itu.int/sites/default/files/media2/file/CENTRES_EXCELLENCE_PERFORMANCE_EVALUATION_REPORT_Final_web.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. See Council documents [C19/98](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0098/en) and  [[C19/98](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0098/en)](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0115/en)  (Summary record of the fourth plenary meeting). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. See Council document xxx [↑](#footnote-ref-5)