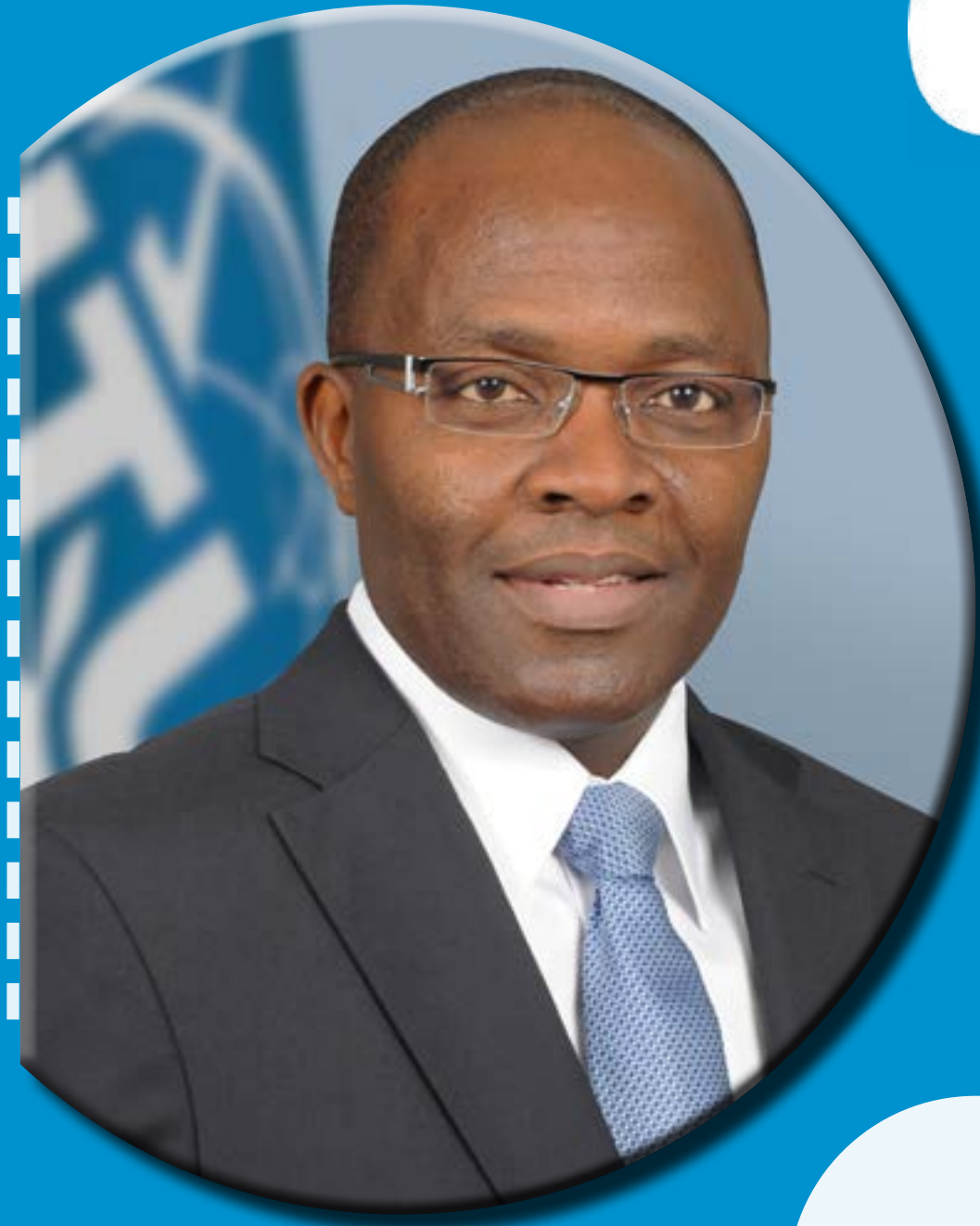


INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP ALLIANCE FOR DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT

*Accelerating Digital Transformation
for Sustainable Development*

Together, We Can Create a More Inclusive and Equitable Digital Future for All



“

Building capacity in digital innovation is critical to closing the digital divide as it empowers individuals, businesses, and communities to harness the full potential of technology. Digital innovation improves access to essential services, creates jobs, and drives economic growth. No single stakeholder can alone drive digital innovation. Our membership called for a concerted effort to unlock opportunities in this area at the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-22) that adopted the Kigali Action Plan.

I invite you to join the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development. This new framework will allow ITU membership and partners to engage in experimentation that supports the growth of local and regional innovation, empower stakeholders to scale their initiatives, and create a digital environment favorable to investment, continuous innovation, and tech-driven entrepreneurship.

In fulfilling its mandate, the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) is committed to providing support to the Membership aimed at closing the digital gap, creating a more inclusive and equitable digital future for all.”

Dr Cosmas Zavazava
Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau
International Telecommunication Union

GOAL

BDT and ITU-D Membership need new, more resilient, and forward-thinking approaches to guarantee they can safely navigate a digital world that is increasingly Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous (VUCA) and achieve outcomes of the Kigali Action Plan.

The new [Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development](#) initiated by the BDT Director will build critical local enablers to lead in the changing digital environment. It will also enable BDT to develop new organizational and human excellence capabilities, deliver new products and services for ITU Membership and strengthen the engagement of the private sector and academia in the critical work of BDT.

OPPORTUNITY

The Alliance offers a new approach to bridging the Digital Innovation Divide and empowering ITU-D membership to overcome challenges on their path through digital transformation - unlock their digital potential, build local capabilities in innovation and entrepreneurship, and accelerate their ecosystems' impact on cross-cutting sectors for an inclusive and sustainable society.

The Alliance will enable transformational projects fostering digital innovation and entrepreneurship for national, regional and global impact.

Kigali Action Plan

WTDC-2022

BACKGROUND



The Alliance is established to respond to significant unmet needs of ITU Membership in the area of innovation, as articulated in the Kigali Action Plan adopted at the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2022 (WTDC-22) and the Outcomes of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2022 (PP-22).

The Alliance will support the achievement of the following outcomes of ITU-D Priority 'Digital Transformation':



Strengthened capacity of the ITU membership to integrate telecommunication/ICT innovation and digitalization in their national development agendas and to develop strategies to promote innovation initiatives, including through public, private and public-private partnerships.



Enhanced human and institutional capacity of the ITU membership in telecommunications/ICTs to foster digital transformation.

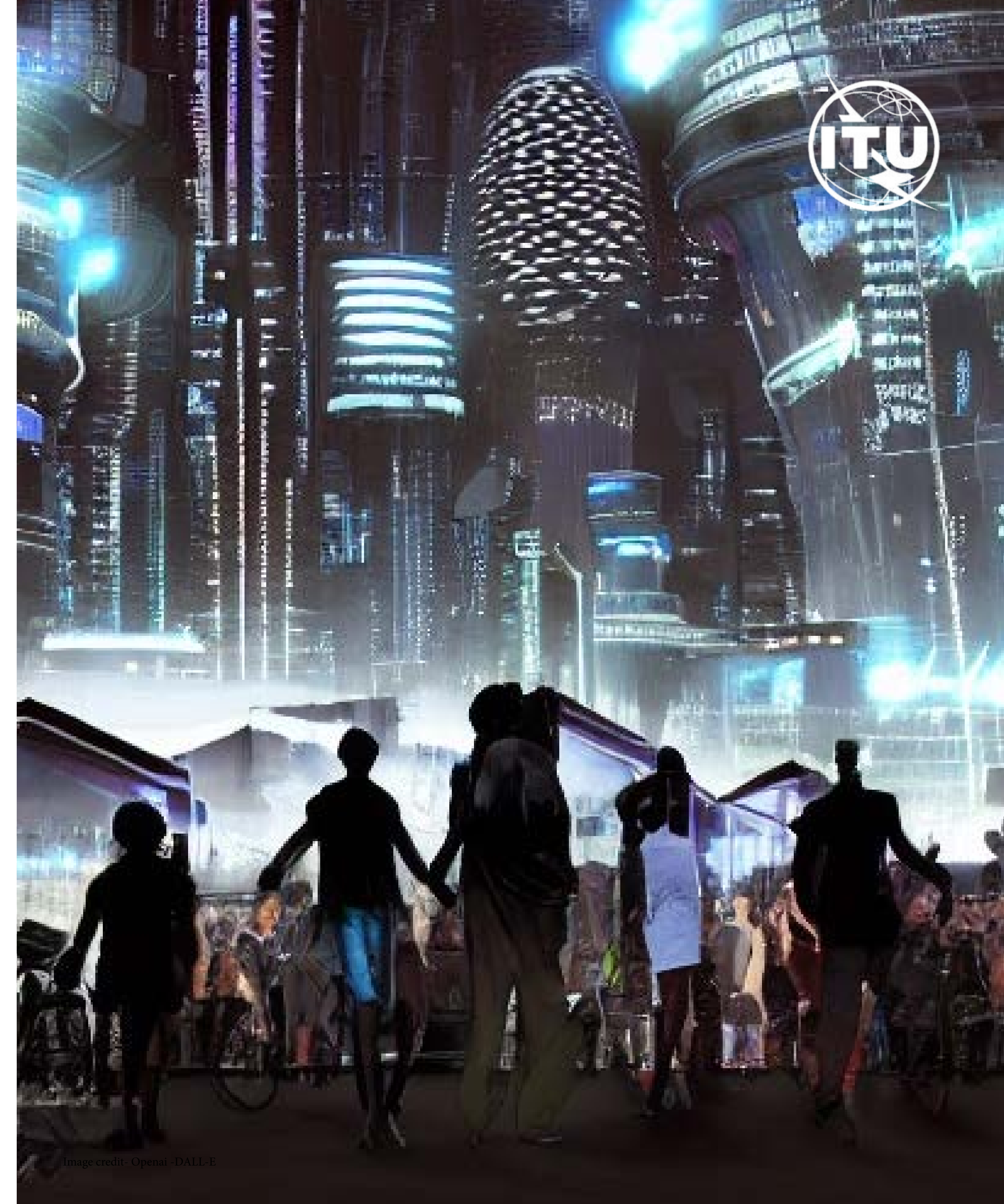
The work of the Alliance is aligned with:

- WTDC Resolutions 90, 89 and 85 (Kigali, 2022) providing clear guidance on the role of innovation in digital transformation of society;
- ITU Regional Initiatives for all regions further calling for greater attention to this area;
- PP Resolution 205 on 'Fostering ICT-centric innovation to support the digital economy and society' reiterated the leading roles of BDT in innovation for digital development;
- ITU Strategic Plan (PP Resolution 71, Rev. Bucharest, 2022).

CHALLENGES

Many developing countries aspire to become innovation-driven digital economies based on world-class exports, high-growth industries and highly skilled talent. Despite massive investments in information and communication technologies (ICTs), entrepreneurship and innovation, many struggle to:

- 1 Adapt to the fast-changing digital environment
- 2 Become an effective adopter of emerging digital technologies
- 3 Become a driver of digital innovation that creates socio-economic impact
- 4 Leverage entrepreneurship-driven digital innovation as a driver of job creation
- 5 Gain access to a network of likeminded changemakers and their best practices
- 6 Develop innovative local, regional or global partnerships to accelerate digital development



BRIDGING THE DIGITAL INNOVATION DIVIDE

BDT has been active in bridging the digital innovation divide since 2015, but the fast-evolving digital environment requires enhancing further national capacities and scaling up the impact of projects to achieve the digital ambition of stakeholders.

Countries can benefit from cutting-edge approaches to digital innovation, which entail developing locally appropriate capabilities through experimentation and flagship initiatives to nurture an enabling digital environment.

The Alliance will fast-track five strategic objectives to accelerate countries' journey towards an innovation-driven digital economy.



FAST TRACKING FIVE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



WHAT



Trends research readiness



Open technology innovation



Entrepreneurship and SMEs growth



Policy experimentation



Ecosystem initiatives acceleration

WHY

Enables countries to be ahead of the curve and make sense of the evolution of technology, policy and innovation dynamics.

Harnesses technological know-how into global goods through open innovation and multistakeholder mechanisms, accelerating access to emerging technology for all.

Accelerates the uptake of digital innovation-driven entrepreneurship and opportunities for talent to achieve socio-economic inclusion in their communities.

Develops agile policies that provide stakeholders with safe space for experimentation, encouraging innovation and attracting investment in the digital ecosystem.

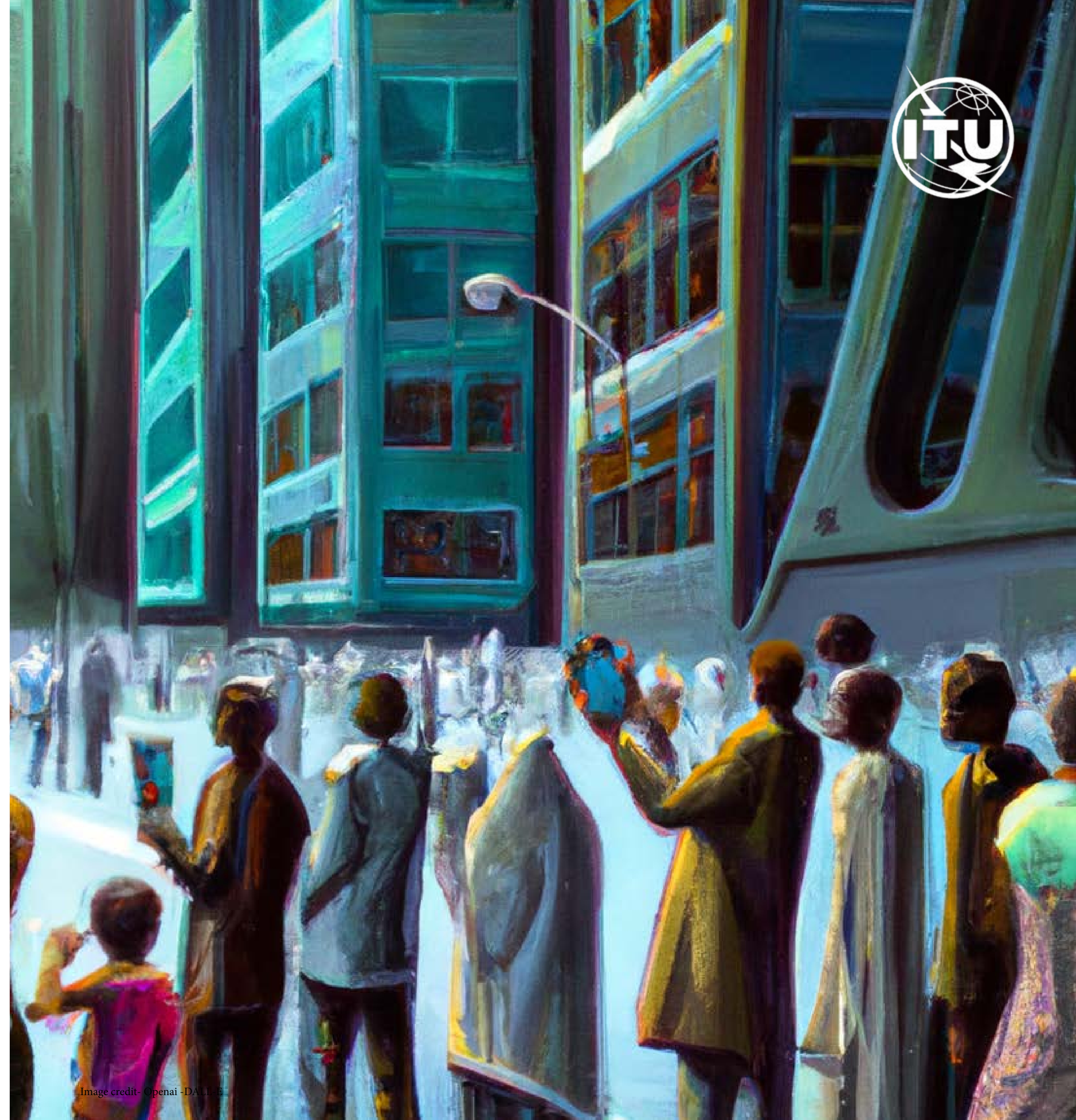
Promotes collaboration and synergies that scale digital innovations and achieve cross-cutting sectoral value for a competitive digital economy.

BUILDING INNOVATION CAPACITY AT THE GLOBAL AND LOCAL LEVELS

The Alliance will help strengthen countries' capabilities to integrate ICT innovation into national development agendas and build human and institutional capabilities at the country level where it is most relevant and sustainable.

The Alliance will operationalize the needed capabilities through three main vehicles:

- 1. A Digital Transformation Lab**
- 2. A Network of Acceleration Centers**
- 3. A Digital Innovation Board**



THE THREE MAIN VEHICLES



Digital Transformation Lab

The Lab will support the design and implementation of the network of centers and provide technical assistance, upon request, to enable countries currently lacking key capabilities in sandboxing and developing initiatives to accelerate digital development. The Lab will be located in Geneva, accessible virtually and offering innovation services to BDT staff and countries. BDT will benefit from improving its products and services to enable the Bureau to be the premier agency supporting developing countries in digital transformation.



Network of Acceleration Centers

The Network will enhance global, regional and national innovation capabilities for technology, policy and flagship initiative development. The various centers will accelerate digital transformation through a unique ecosystem-thinking approach that combines the best of three recognized methodologies: Sense Making, Systems Thinking and Design Thinking. The centers will also amplify local capabilities to accelerate local innovation, entrepreneurship and the digitalization of economies to improve the competitiveness of economic sectors.



Digital Innovation Board

This Board will guide the work of the Alliance and ensure its effectiveness, accountability, and sound decision-making toward accelerating the implementation of the Kigali Action Plan. The Board will facilitate high-level coordination and engage in global advocacy at the UN level and with regional and international organizations. Leveraging its reach, it will help mobilize resources and partnerships, share lessons learned and create a global learning community.



GUIDANCE FOR SELECTION OF AN ACCELERATION CENTER

Type of Center	Ownership	Scope	Strategic Objectives					Resources	Remarks
			Trend Research Readiness	Open Technology Innovation	Entrepreneurship and SMEs Growth	Policy Experimentation	Ecosystem Initiatives Acceleration		
Technology Acceleration Centers	ITU owned and managed	Global or Regional	✓	✓	✓	✓		Host country sponsored, managed by ITU staff	High-cost model, appropriate for countries with vibrant technology ecosystems needing scale up
Research and Entrepreneurship Acceleration Centers	Country owned. When regional, it acts as a focal point for ITU on a topic in a region	Regional or National	✓	✓	✓			Academia Member sponsored in partnership with stakeholders and academia staff	Medium cost model, appropriate for countries needing to catalyze their skilled talent from an academic and research setting
Digital Transformation Acceleration Centers	Country owned. When regional, it acts as a focal point for ITU on the topic in a region	Regional or National			✓	✓	✓	Host country sponsored, managed by host country staff	Medium cost model, appropriate for countries needing to catalyze digital transformation across the board
Initiative Acceleration Centers	Within an existing institution	Regional or National					✓	Leverages existing resources from the hosting organization	Low-cost model, appropriate for organizations with fewer resources but that can dedicate staff and operating budget

HOW CAN AN ITU ACCELERATION CENTER CATALYZE YOUR COUNTRY'S JOURNEY TOWARDS AN INNOVATION-DRIVEN DIGITAL ECONOMY?



Through especially designed initiatives based on the desired strategic objectives, a center can, for example:

- Equip your organization with strategic foresight, knowledge and competencies to nurture digital innovation
- Showcase and scale the potential of a vibrant technological ecosystem and innovative SMEs to regional and global markets
- Turn a technical or research-based academic institution into an entrepreneurial university
- Catalyze talent readiness for high-skilled digital jobs
- Accelerate your digital policy development cycle to create a favorable environment for investment
- Enhance collaboration between academic, government, private sector, financiers, startups and civil society
- Unleash synergies between initiatives, breakdown silos and align stakeholders to a national or regional digital development agenda
- Amplify your digital ecosystem impact at the regional or global level
- Improve the competitiveness of the digital sectors

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- The centers are primarily intended for ITU Membership
- BDT will provide the secretariat for the initiative
- The Digital Transformation Lab, to be based in Geneva, will support the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of centers via cooperation agreements and projects
- Through well-defined BDT-developed frameworks and processes, each center will be designed around the needs and priorities of countries and adapted to the existing stakeholders and the countries' unique context
- Applying organizations should identify preliminary resources to fund their centers, including human and financial resources
- Some technical assistance requests may be available for preliminary assessment and evaluation for the concept design of a center
- Organizations with existing centers can go through a design and evaluation process to become Partner ITU acceleration centers
- The cost of each center depends on the chosen strategic objective, scope, ownership model and number of flagship initiatives
- An admitted center will benefit from a three-year approval, renewable after evaluation and requalification
- A center can be upgraded from one type to another with improved resource availability and experience



SELECTION PROCESS FOR THE REGIONAL CENTERS AND THE DIGITAL INNOVATION BOARD

Qualification for regional centers owned by countries will be based on open, transparent calls, and more information will be available publicly on the ITU-D website.

The multistakeholder Digital Innovation Board led by the BDT Director is open to:

1

Ministers and other high-level officials from ITU Member States, sector members and academia members, upon nomination by countries, institutions, and approval by the BDT Director.

2

Distinguished leaders, recognized experts and representatives of strategic partner organizations, upon nomination by the BDT Director

Additional details and terms of references for the selection process will be available on the website.



TIMELINE OF KEY DATES

2023



JOIN THE ALLIANCE



You can engage through:

- 1** Expression of Interest at BDTDirector@itu.int
- 2** Requesting a preliminary assessment for collaboration in hosting a potential center
- 3** Signing a joint declaration with BDT

First call for the expression of interest: until 15 March 2023.

More information about the Alliance at innovation@itu.int.

Visit us <https://www.itu.int/itu-d/sites/innovation-alliance>



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