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| **Council 2018 Geneva, 17-27 April 2018** |  |
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| **Agenda item: ADM 7** | **Document C18/34-E** |
| **8 March 2018** |
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| Report by the Secretary-General | |
| INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES DEVELOPMENT FUND  (ICT-DF) | |

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| Summary  This document reports on the status of the Information and Communication Technologies Development Fund (ICT-DF) regarding its utilization for the implementation of development projects.  Action required  The Council is invited to **take note** of the report and advise, as deemed appropriate.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  References  PP [*Resolution 11 (Rev. Busan, 2014);*](http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/opb/conf/S-CONF-ACTF-2014-PDF-E.pdf) *Council Resolutions* [*1111*](http://www.itu.int/council/index97/1997/131/131.html) *and* [*1338*](http://www.itu.int/md/S11-CL-C-0106/en)*.* |

**1 Introduction**

1.1 One of the functions of ITU, and the Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) in particular, is to undertake the Union’s dual responsibilities as a United Nations specialized agency and as an executing agency for implementing projects in accordance with the ITU Constitution.

1.2 The Information and Communication Technologies Development Fund ([ICT-DF](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Partners/Pages/ICT-DF/default.aspx)) is a special initiative launched in 1997 aiming to support the implementation of development projects leading to sustainable development based on multistakeholder partnerships from the Member States, Sector Members, public and private sector, and multilateral organizations, from financing institutions to development agencies.

**2 Main Rules and Procedures of ICT-DF**

2.1 The ICT-DF is in principle used for seed funding, normally up to 25% of the total cost of the project, to cover the needs of funding proposed development projects. The seed funding aims to facilitate as a nucleus for mobilizing substantial additional contributions in-cash and in-kind and provide the framework for concerted actions at national, regional, and international levels.

2.2 As for its procedure, development project proposals including such substantial additional contributions in-cash and in-kind can be submitted to the ICT-DF at [bdtictdf@itu.int](mailto:bdtictdf@itu.int) in order to administrate the support from ICT-DF.

2.3 The proposed development projects are administrated in compliance with the following selection and eligibility criteria, among others:

* The project beneficiary shall include one or more least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing states (SIDS), landlocked developing countries, countries with economies in transition and/or countries in special need.
* The project shall fall into one of the following categories/themes:
* Capacity Building
* Climate Change
* Cybersecurity
* Digital Inclusion
* Emergency Telecommunications
* ICT Applications
* Innovation
* Regulatory and Market Environment
* Statistics and Indicators
* Spectrum Management and Broadcasting
* Assistance to countries in special need
* Or, any others deemed important by the ICT-DF Steering Committee (ICT-DF SC).[[1]](#footnote-1)

2.4 Analysis and assessment of the project proposals by ensuring their compliance with the selection/eligibility criteria are being conducted and submitted to the ICT-DF SC on a regular basis.

2.5 The ICT-DF SC: a) reviews and approves the projects submitted for funding from the ICT-DF; b) approves the amount of funding from the ICT-DF to be allocated to the approved projects; and c) monitors the implementation and budgetary performance of the projects supported by the ICT-DF.

2.6 An annual report on the status of the ICT-DF and its funded projects approved by the ICT‑DF SC is presented to ITU Council for advice and/or approval, as deemed appropriate.

**3 Main Activities and Progress of ICT-DF**

The 52nd ICT-DF SC meeting on 12 December 2017 reviewed the status of three projects approved by the 51st ICT-DF SC and the assessment of 14 ongoing projects funded by the ICT-DF.

3.1 *Support for Development of a Bahamas Smart Island -* *Smart Bahamas*: This project aims to support the Bahamas, as a case for other small islands developing states (SIDS), to build one of the first “Smart Islands” in the Americas region through developing and making use of ICTs to improve the quality of life of citizens, encourage more efficient and competitive enterprises in the country and provide more and better public services in a sustainable manner. It has a potential to replicate its success, if so, to other Island States in the Caribbean and beyond.

* *ITU Area Office of Barbados is following up the project document and Cooperation Agreement with the Administration of Bahamas. The documents have been prepared. The final endorsement of the Bahamas cabinet is still pending.*

3.2 *Monitoring of the Radio Spectrum in Cuba:* This project aims to modernize the spectrum monitoring system currently in place at the monitoring station in Havana, Cuba, and increase the capacity and capability to monitor and measure the technical parameters of radio stations, radio direction-finding and the detection of sources of interference and unauthorized radio stations with training the related professionals of the Cuban Government for their knowledge and skills related to radioelectric spectrum management.

* *The project document and Cooperation Agreement have been drafted and finalized and were ready for signature before WTDC-17. However, upon the request from Cuba, the signature has been delayed. ITU Regional Office of the Americas is following up with Cuba to agree on a date for the signature and start its implementation.*

3.3 *Accessing the Digital Dividend in Africa*: This project, as a multistakeholders’ partnership led by ITU, EC, and AUC, aims to foster universally accessible, affordable and effective wireless broadband across the African continent through improved and harmonized spectrum utilization. It is expected to address the issues of spectrum at national, regional and Pan-African levels to generate significant social and economic benefits for the end beneficiaries and provide opportunities for the private sector through public–private partnerships (PPPs) to contribute to the development of services and generate sustainable growth.

* *Internal approval for this project from Member States within EC has been obtained. It is targeted to sign the project document by both ITU and EC in order to start its implementation from early 2018 for 42 months.*

3.4 *Status of ICT-DF Projects*

As of December 2017, ICT-DF projects was composed of 17 projects; e.g. three projects approved by the 51st ICT-DF SC meeting and [14 ongoing projects](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Projects/Pages/Portfolio.aspx?Status=Ongoing&Theme=&Region=&Country=&ICTDF=1&Keyword=). These projects are distributed as follows per region (Fig 1) and being implemented in such areas in need (Fig 2), which include the development of *Broadband Wireless Network* in Africa (Burundi, Mali, Burkina Faso, Rwanda, Lesotho, Swaziland, Madagascar, and Djibouti), *Connect Schools* in Palestine, *Rural Telecommunications Development* in Least Developed Countries, *ICT Applications against Ebola disease*, *Telemedicine* in Zimbabwe, *Regional Center of ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities*, *Development of Satellite Communications Capacity and Emergency Communications Solutions* for the Pacific Islands.

The 52nd ICT-DF SC advised to close the project(s), when appropriate, taking into account the status and duration of project implementation, and requested BDT to continue monitoring progress for the speedy implementation of these projects. The Steering Committee will continue to review project proposals and support selected projects in the various areas of action with special attention to regional initiatives approved by WTDC-17, taking into account the rules and criteria set by the ICT-DF rules and procedures within the limit of the ICT-DF Capital Account.

**4 Evolution of the ICT-DF Capital Accounts**

4.1 Total interest income of ICT-DF Capital Account in 2017 was USD 52,710, which was composed of interest on ICT-DF Capital (USD 33,882) and interests on projects (USD 18,828).

4.2 As of 31 December 2017, ICT-DF Capital Account remained with an amount of USD 4,557,828.53 upon the approval by the Council 2017, while the Exhibition Working Capital Fund amounted to approximately CHF 8,378,703.66.

**5 Ways forward**

5.1 Progress of implementation for the ICT-DF funded projects will be regularly analysed and updated at <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Partners/Pages/ICT-DF/default.aspx>.

5.2 Taking into account the ICT-DF as demand-driven and seed funding in nature and principle, ICT-DF SC will continue to consider project proposals based on the rules and criteria within the limit of the ICT-DF Capital Account in order to support the development of telecommunications/ICTs in ITU Membership and contribute to the sustainable development goals.

5.3 The Council is invited to **take note** of the report.

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1. ICT-DF SC is composed of the ITU Secretary-General (Chairman), the ITU Deputy Secretary-General, and the Director of the BDT. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)