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DECISION 616

(adopted at the ninth Plenary Meeting)

Regional presence

The Council,

considering

*a)* Resolution 25 of the Plenipotentiary Conference (Rev. Dubai, 2018);

*b)* the reports by the External Auditors, Internal Auditors, and the Independent Management Advisory Committee on the Fraud Case in the Regional Office submitted to the 2019 session;

*c)* [Document C19/25 (Rev.2)](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0025/en) report on the implementation of Resolution 25 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) (Strengthening the regional presence),

reaffirming

*a)* the importance of the regional presence to the accomplishment of ITU’s development mission;

*b)* the need to strengthen the regional presence by enhancing its usefulness and effectiveness of the regional offices to encompass all activities of the ITU,

decides to instruct the Secretary-General

to recruit and hire an independent external management consultancy to perform a comprehensive programmatic, strategic and financial assessment and review of ITU’s Regional Presence program in accordance with the terms of reference set forth in the Annex, taking into consideration contributions from the ITU membership, and submit a report with recommendations to the 2021 session of the Council for action,

further decides

that the provision for payment of the independent external management consultancy shall not exceed CHF 500 000 and the expenses for hiring the consultancy shall be financed from the 2019 budget implementation surpluses,

**Annex:** 1

ANNEX

Terms of reference
for an external consultant to review ITU’s Regional Presence

**1. Purpose:**

ITU intends to conduct a review of the organization’s regional presence, in accordance to the requirements and provisions of Resolution 25 (Rev. Dubai, 2018).

From this perspective it is crucial to assess whether the organization and functioning of field offices is contributing substantively towards bringing ITU institutional activities closer to its membership.

The goal of this review is to develop and implement an action plan that will allow:

a) to be able to measure the performance of a Regional Office (RO) under the new set of rules;

b) to develop an effective Risk Management (ERM) process, including the risk assessment (RA) of the activities carried out at the RO level;

c) to develop instruments that facilitate effective coordination between Headquarters and ROs;

d) to ensure that the ROs comply with the rules and procedures issued by Headquarters relating to financial management, projects and procurement;

e) to ensure the proper implementation of all the recommendations of the Internal Auditor, the External Auditor and the ITU Independent Management Advisory Committee (IMAC), in particular those related to the lack of internal controls identified in the recent fraud case.

The review should take into consideration of the following elements:

a) the extent of fulfilment of the provisions of Resolution 25 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) by the Telecommunication Development Bureau, the General Secretariat, and the other two Bureaux, as appropriate;

b) all the recommendations of the External Auditor, the Internal Auditor and IMAC, providing advice on the need for substantially improved management oversight and internal control in the light of the weaknesses revealed by the recent fraud case in a regional office; and especially the need to establish a culture of transparency and collaboration leading to stronger individual management responsibility and effective accountability;

c) how further decentralization could ensure greater efficiency at lower cost, taking into consideration accountability and transparency;

d) the result of past surveys of the level of satisfaction of Member States, Sector Members, and regional telecommunication/ICT organizations with ITU’s regional presence;

e) assistance for developing countries to participate in ITU activities;

f) the extent of possible duplication between the functions of ITU headquarters and the regional offices;

g) the extent of fulfilment of the provisions of Resolution 17 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference;

h) the degree of autonomy in decision-making currently accorded to regional offices, and whether greater autonomy could enhance their efficiency and effectiveness;

i) the effectiveness of collaboration and coordination between the ITU regional offices, regional telecommunication/ICT organizations and other regional and international development and financial organizations;

j) how regional presence and the organization of activities in the regions can enhance the effective participation of all countries in ITU work;

k) the resources currently made available to the regional offices for reducing the digital divide;

l) the optimal overall structure of the ITU regional presence, including the location and number of regional and area offices.

**2. Functional requirements:**

1. Analyse the purpose and role of ITU’s regional presence in contributing to the implementation of the ITU Strategic Plan 2020-2023;

2. Analyse how “fit for purpose” is ITU’s regional presence to implement WTDCs Plans of Action;

3. Pursuant to Resolution 25 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), analyse how the regional presence will implement the regional activities of the whole of the ITU, including BR, TSB and the General Secretariat;

4. Analyse the role of the Regional Offices/presence within the UN development system and the industry ecosystem, at a national and regional level;

5. Assist the ITU management team to (re)define the role, structure and objectives for ITU’s regional presence;

6. Assist in improving the measurement of performance of the Regional Offices (as per the related recommendation of the External Auditor), by:

a. Defining specific and measurable Objectives for BDT HQ and ROs;

b. Establishing key effective controls and robust KPIs covering the entire range of activities carried out locally, from technical assistance to financial management, duty travel and non-staff recruitment;

7. Identify measures to enhance the level of internal controls in Regional and Area Offices, in order to prevent other cases of fraud similar to the one detected, and ensure prompt implementation to the outstanding recommendations made by the Internal Auditor, the External Auditor and the IMAC;

8. Assist in redesigning the role of Regional Directors as supervisors of the implementation of projects and initiatives and as managers of financial resources at the local level;

9. Assess the engagement of ITU’s regional presence with the different partners in the ICT ecosystem in order to facilitate discussions on regional matters;

10. Assess the role of regional presence in strengthening ITU’s role as an executing agency for implementing projects (in alignment with the Plenipotentiary Conference (PP) Resolution 135 on providing technical assistance and implementing projects);

11. Review the support provided by the Regional Offices in the regional preparatory processes for major ITU conferences, including PP, WTSA, WTDC, WRC, and the support of Regional Offices for the major global ITU events taking place in the respective regions;

12. Review the role of regional offices in supporting Regional Study Groups (following related WTSA and WTDC Resolutions);

13. Review internal administrative procedures pertaining to the work of the regional offices, with a view to their simplification and transparency and enhancing work efficiency (with a focus on procedure for ex ante and ex post regulation), including:

a. Analysing the internal communication of the Regional Offices/presence with Headquarters and in particular BDT, TSB, BR and the General Secretariat;

b. Assessing mechanisms to strengthen the expertise in the regional offices, including whether the mobility policy can be applied in ITU;

c. Examining the financial management and the procurement activities carried out in the Regional and Area Offices;

14. Undertake all necessary activities to conduct the review and consult with all stakeholders, including:

a. Preparing samples questionnaires/interviewing guidelines;

b. Preparing the communication plan and communication initiative in the organization itself;

c. Data collection, interviewing and consultation of representatives of all ITU stakeholders, including representatives of Member States, ITU Sector members and ITU staff;

d. Data processing, analysis and development of reports;

e. Presenting the conclusions of the study and propose appropriate measures to ensure the continued effectiveness and efficiency of the ITU regional presence;

15. Propose a plan of action for the implementation of the proposed measures.

**3. Deliverables**

The project should produce the following deliverables:

1. Profile the current structure of regional offices/presence, including procedures and performance indicators to conduct a gap analysis (which will consider resources, skills, tools);

2. Existing level of organizational efficacy/performance parameters;

3. Profile of desirable structure of the regional offices/presence, including optimal number and location of regional offices, managerial objectives serving the strategic direction of the organization and staff skills required to implement those objectives;

4. Managerial objectives of improving organizational performance (including people/skills, processes technology and tools);

5. Develop / extend the RBM model for regional presence/offices;

6. Action Plan for change, addressing all the related recommendations provided by the External Auditor, the Internal Auditor and IMAC.

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