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| **Council 2020 Geneva, 9-19 June 2020** |  |
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| **Agenda item: ADM 22** | **Document C20/43-E** |
| **21 April 2020** |
| **Original: English** |
| Report by the Secretary-General | |
| ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY FRAMEWORK  INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION | |

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| **Summary**  Pursuant to the JIU review of ITU management undertaken in 2015 ([JIU/REP/2016/1](https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2016_1_English.pdf)), the Secretary-General presented to the 2017 Council session a stand-alone ITU Accountability Framework that consolidates the core elements of accountability around three main pillars and related benchmarks.  This report provides an update on the progress achieved towards the implementation of the JIU benchmarks for the Accountability Framework.  The annex serves as a checklist for accountability. A revised framework will be prepared to take into account other ongoing parallel initiatives which all contribute to better accountability.  **Action required**  The Council is invited to **take note** of the report.  **References**  [C17/64](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-C-0064/en), [JIU/REP/2011/5](https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2011_5_English.pdf), [JIU/REP/2016/1](https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2016_1_English.pdf), and UN General Assembly [Resolution 64/259](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/64/259) |

**Annex: 1**

1 The purpose of this document is to provide an update of the progress achieved towards the implementation of the JIU benchmarks for the Accountability Framework (AF).

2 As noted in the Annex, ITU’s current accountability framework builds upon the three main pillars based on a structure presented in the JIU report as shown below.

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| **PILLAR 1**  **Covenant with Member States, Sector Members, Associates, Academia, and users of ITU’s Services** | **PILLAR 2**  **Internal Controls and Risk Management** | **PILLAR 3**  **Complaints and Response Mechanism** |
| * ITU’s Basic Instruments, relevant agreements and treaties * ITU’s Results Framework | * Control Environment * Control activities * Risk assessment * Monitoring * Procurement | * ITU’s staff * Membership & other users of ITU services |

3 A complete review of the ITU’s Accountability Framework is in progress and will be aligned with other ongoing parallel initiatives (RBM, development of delegation of authority framework, risk management) which all contribute to better accountability. It will be updated to reflect new requirements or improvements arising from new initiatives or lessons learned. ITU will ensure that the Accountability Framework remains relevant to the mandate and objectives of the Union. ITU will also continue to ensure that the Union’s Accountability Framework responds to evolving circumstances and takes into account the best practices in the UN system.

4 The table reflected in the Annex provides an update of the progress achieved towards the implementation of the JIU benchmarks for the Accountability Framework (AF) for the three main pillars described above.

ANNEX

**Progress achieved towards the implementation of the JIU benchmarks for the Accountability Framework (AF)**

**Pillar 1**

| **Benchmark** | **Tools** | **Status** | **Comment** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. A clear framework for accountability is in place, including a definition thereof and clarity of responsibility for the overall implementation of the framework, linking all components together. | Framework policy document | ✓ | A framework has been put in place. Nonetheless, to further enhance this framework, a complete policy document will be developed, to present more information on the processes in place for each and every aspect of the Accountability Framework. Identification of possible further gaps or weaknesses may be revealed and hopefully tackled as a result of that exercise. |
| Definition of accountability | ✓ |
| Roles and responsibilities of senior management, line department and staff | ✓ |
| Policy document available on the website and for staff | ✓ |
| Framework contains key components of accountability | In progress |
| 2. RBM is operational and coherent with organizational mandates and objectives, and cascades down into unit and personal work plans. | Strategic plans | ✓ | RBM was introduced more than 20 years ago. ITU currently undertakes efforts to strengthen the impact of the framework through overall review, training and workshops, and by focusing on the implementation of the RBM concepts. |
| Unit work plans | ✓ |
| Personal work objectives | ✓ |
| 3. Organizations conduct credible, utilization-focused evaluations and communicate the findings, conclusions and recommendations to stakeholders. | Evaluation function | In progress | An ITU evaluation feasibility study has been conducted: Evaluation policy, guidelines and work plans have been developed and a pilot project is to be undertaken. |
| 4. Organizations have an effectively implemented established information disclosure policy whereby the results of the organization’s activities are communicated regularly to legislative organs, Member States and other stakeholders, including donors, beneficiaries and the general public. | Information disclosure policy | ✓ | As a step forward towards more transparency and accountability, the ITU Council adopted at its 2016 session the ITU’s information/document access policy which “… ensures access by the public to information kept, managed or generated by ITU”; this policy entered into force on 1 January 2017 on a provisional basis. |
| Evaluation and audit results | In progress |
| Consolidated annual financial reports | ✓ | Consolidated annual reports are presented to the Council. Quarterly progress reports are provided to membership. |
| Programme results | ✓ |

**Pillar 2**

| **Benchmark** | **Tools** | **Status** | **Comment** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 5. Ethical conduct, standards of integrity, anti-corruption and anti-fraud policies are in place and enforced. | Staff regulations/code of conduct for staff members, including harassment | ✓ | ITU Policy on harassment and abuse of authority. Service Order No. 19/08 covers sexual harassment also. Policy was introduced 2 May 2019.  New Ethics Officer was recruited in 2019. |
| Ethics function | ✓ |
| Gifts, favours, and hospitality policy | ✓ | Covered in ITU Staff Regulations and Staff Rules, Code of Ethics for ITU Personnel and Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service; new policy on gifts and hospitality under development in 2020. |
| Protection against retaliation for reporting wrongdoing (whistle-blower policy) | ✓ | These topics are also being reviewed in light of the currently ongoing reviews by the Joint Inspection Unit regarding Conflicts of Interests and whistle-blower protections.  Many instruments have been developed such as a new procurement manual and policy. A Service Order on the ITU Investigation Guidelines containing procedures to be followed in the conduct of an investigation, including steps to prevent leaking of confidential information and ensure a prompt response to cases of fraud was issued in 2019. Furthermore, the Council, through Decision 613 has decided to undertake a forensic audit of ITU financial and management activities for the 10 past years. |
| Outside activities policy (conflict of interest) | ✓ |
| Anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy | ✓ |
| Training | Ongoing |
| 6. Failure to comply with enforced policies/regulations results in clear consequences. Sanctions shall be clear and proportional and implemented at all levels. In addition, outstanding performance should be acknowledged by recognition/awards/rewards. | Policy documents on sanctions and disciplinary action | ✓ | Chapter X of the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules are in force and contain disciplinary and sanction policy. |
| Publication in annual reports of sanctions imposed by the Executive Head | Not applied |  |
| Awards/rewards programmes decided by committees/panels based on clear criteria | ✓ |  |
| Publication of the names of staff members receiving awards and rewards | ✓ |
| 7. All staff can be held accountable for their work on the basis of up-to-date written job descriptions accurately reflecting their actual work. | Job description for all staff | ✓ | The ITU new Electronic Performance Management and Development System (e-PMDS) has been implemented. |
| Coherence between job description and day-to-day work | Ongoing |
| 8. Concretization of policies on selection, recruitment and post-employment. | Recruitment policy restricting hiring of family members and relatives | ✓ | Rule 4.7.1 of the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules. |
| Post-employment restrictions for staff who retire/resign from the organization | ✓ | Policy already in place for retirees (ITU applies the UN limitations) and for staff members leaving the organization within an early separation programme. |
| 9. Organization has a formal policy on ERM to be implemented with a coherent methodology. | Risk analysis conducted for each unit/project/process and an organizational risk plan exists | Ongoing | The Risk Management Policy and Appetite Statement have been endorsed at the 2017 Session of Council and has been implemented in ITU since then.  Risk analysis is conducted and risk indicators are maintained and reported through the Operational Plans of the Sectors and the General Secretariat.  An action plan to strengthen the ITU risk management framework by reviewing the risk management policy and its implementation, based on the Risk maturity model adopted by the UN HLCM, was presented to the CWG-FHR in February 2020 and will be implemented, presenting its intermediate results to the 2020 session of Council.  ITU has implemented an Organizational Resilience Management System (ORMS) with all the key elements for Crisis Management. |
| 10. The chain of command and delegation of authority are aligned, clear, coherent and integrated into existing enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems. | Clear definition of delegation of authority | ✓ | See benchmark 1 |
| Coherence between management line and delegation of authority and clear reporting lines | In progress | See benchmark 1 |
| Delegation of authority built into existing ERP systems | In progress | Access to ERP system based on segregation of duties. |
| 11. Financial Regulations and Financial Rules (FRR) in the United Nations system organizations should embody anti-fraud and financial misconduct policies and are implemented practically. | FRR | ✓ | <https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/Financial-Regulations/S-GEN-REG_RGTFIN-2018-PDF-E.pdf> |
| Conflict of interest statements | ✓ | ITU maintains a yearly declaration of potential conflicts of interest related to finance or procurement issues according to ethical standards. |
| Financial disclosure statements | ✓ |
| Anti-fraud policies | ✓ | <https://www.itu.int/en/ethics/Documents/SO-2019-009-en.pdf> |
| 12. Managers attest to compliance with internal controls within the framework of their delegation of authority. | Letter/form of representation/assurance/attestation submitted annually to the executive heads | Ongoing | Each Elected official, Each Deputy of Bureau; Heads of Department and Heads of Unit of GS are required to submit an Internal Letter of Representation, which constitutes a written confirmation that they have duly exercised delegated financial authorities and responsibilities. Possible further improvements will be considered in this process; assessing whether this has been proven to be a helpful tool, and how the Internal Control processes can be further enhanced. |
| 13. Staff at all levels have access to relevant, reliable information that supports decision-making in line with their delegated authorities and the organization has an internal and external communication system. | ERP system or similar in place to capture, and document relevant information | Ongoing | ITU manages information and knowledge through standardized information management, i.e. ERP, SharePoint, File repositories, BI tools, which provides staff access to information based on role and function. The issue of relevant and reliable information to support decision making will be reviewed, along with improvements required in that area. |
| Internal communication channels are fully exploited | Ongoing |
| Information disclosure policy in place | Ongoing |
| 14. Executive heads, senior managers and staff members’ performances are monitored and corrective action taken, as necessary. | Performance assessments for all staff levels including 360-degree feedback | Not applied | The new appraisal system does not include a 360-degree feedback. The introduction of a pilot project to explore the benefits of such mechanism will be considered and analysed. |
| Senior compacts or scorecard-type tools | Ongoing | Dashboard in preparation |
| Corrective measures for non-performing assets | ✓ | Staff members are invited to take action through the establishment of training plans for redressing the situation in collaboration with their supervisors. |
| 15. Recommendations of oversight bodies/internal audits and evaluations are tracked, implemented, and if not, clear justification should be provided. | Information disclosure policy | ✓ | ITU’s information/document access policy entered into force on 1 January 2017. |
| Reporting on external and internal oversight recommendations | ✓ | The SG and IMAC receive regular updates on the implementation of internal and external audit recommendations. |
| Tracking recommendations of internal and external audit, oversight bodies and internal, independent and self-evaluations | ✓ | CWG-FHR is following and overseeing all the recommendations from Ext. Auditors and IMAC. Recommendations of IMAC are being tracked and implemented, and results are reported in detail to CWG-FHR and the Council. |

**Pillar 3**

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| **Benchmark** | **Tools** | **Status** | **Comment** |
| 16. Staff members have recourse to non-formal complaints mechanisms. | Procedures for non-formal grievances/rebuttals are outlined in a policy document and/or handbook | Not applied | Each procedure is included in the relevant Service Order. |
| A mediator or ombudsperson function is in place | ✓ |  |
| 17. Staff members, consultants, non-staff, and stakeholders/beneficiaries have recourse to formal complaints mechanisms and organizations have mechanisms to respond to such complaints. | Investigation function, hotlines, complaints forms, etc. for staff and externals | ✓ | Consultants and non-staff do not have access to the ILOAT and UNAT. SSA contracts contain a provision for informal resolution of conflicts and recourse to arbitration. |
| Grievance mechanisms: United Nations Dispute or ILO Administrative Tribunals | ✓ | Available for regular staff members and staff members on short term contracts, and arbitration for consultants and non-staff. |
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