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| **Agenda item: ADM 1** | **Document C25/75-E** |
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| Contribution by Indonesia (Republic of) | |
| PROPOSAL FOR THE MAINTENANCE OR ENHANCEMENT OF THE ITU FELLOWSHIP BUDGET FOR THE 2026-2027 BIENNIUM | |
| **Purpose**  To request the maintenance or enhancement of the ITU fellowship budget for the 2026-2027 biennium to ensure the continued support for the active participation of developing countries, least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing States (SIDS), and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) in ITU activities.  **Action required by the Council**  The Council invites to **consider** the strategic importance of the fellowship programme in ensuring equitable participation of developing countries, least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing States (SIDS), and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) in ITU activities.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **References**  *Document* [*C25/47*](https://www.itu.int/md/meetingdoc.asp?lang=en&parent=S25-CL-C-0047) | |

# 1 Background and rationale

One of the longstanding objectives of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is to ensure that all Member States —particularly developing countries, LDCs, SIDS, LLDCs— can effectively engage in and benefit from the Union’s activities. The fellowship programme plays a critical role in achieving this objective by supporting participation of those countries in technical meetings, study group activities, workshops, capacity-building programmes, and regional or global development initiatives organized by the Union, primarily under ITU-D and other relevant sectors.

According to the draft budget for the 2026-2027 biennium (Document [C25/47](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CL-C-0047/en)), the allocation for fellowships is proposed to be reduced to **KCHF 1 818**, down from **KCHF 2 361** in the 2024‑2025 biennium. While this decrease reflects broader budgetary adjustments, it may significantly impact the ability of developing countries to participate in key knowledge-sharing platforms and technical capacity-building activities of the Union.

Fellowships are primarily allocated to support participation in recurring technical engagements that contribute directly to building national expertise and aligning domestic frameworks with international best practices. In the current context of accelerated digital transformation and widening disparities in technological readiness, the fellowship support remains an essential tool for bridging capacity gaps and promoting equitable development.

Indonesia respectfully urges that the fellowship budget for the 2026-2027 biennium be maintained at least at the 2024-2025 level, or increased where feasible, to reflect the growing demand for inclusive access to technical and development-oriented activities.

This proposal does not call for an increase in the overall budget ceiling. It advocates for a strategic realignment of existing allocations to safeguard fellowship funding. Potential areas for internal cost optimization include, but not limited to:

– **Official travel**: Non-essential travel can be minimized through greater use of virtual meetings.

– **Procurement**: Prioritization of essential materials and deferment of non-critical items can yield savings.

– **IT investments**: Postponing non-urgent digital infrastructure projects could help preserve resources without disrupting core operations.

# 2 Strategic importance and expected benefits

Maintaining an adequate fellowship budget ensures that:

– **Technical training and knowledge-sharing** reach more countries, particularly those with limited domestic funding for international participation.

– **National and regional ICT priorities** are better represented in ITU’s technical standards and development work.

– **Developing countries are building local capacity**, thus accelerating progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 9 on industry, innovation, and infrastructure.

– **Equity and balance** are preserved in global digital policy development, ensuring that no country is left behind in the digital age.

Furthermore, demand for fellowship support is likely to increase as digital transformation intensifies and the need for harmonized technical engagement grows. Ensuring sustained investment in this area would enhance the overall effectiveness of ITU’s work and reinforce its global mandate.

# 3 Proposal

Indonesia respectfully urges the ITU Council to:

– Acknowledge the strategic importance of fellowship support as a means to foster meaningful participation of developing countries, LDCs, SIDS, LLDCs in ITU’s technical and developmental agenda.

– Maintain or enhance the fellowship budget to a minimum of KCHF 2 361 for the 2026‑2027 biennium, as it is applied in the 2024-2025 biennium budget.

– Adopt internal budget adjustments that safeguard the Union’s commitment to equitable access to capacity-building and technical knowledge exchange.

Such a step would reaffirm ITU’s role in promoting digital inclusion and ensuring that all Member States are equipped to contribute to and benefit from the global ICT ecosystem.

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