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|  | **Document C25/INF/12-E** |
| **25 April 2025** |
| **English only** |
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| Contribution by India (Republic of) |
| ITU-INDIA LOI ON PhD FELLOWSHIP TO DRIVE GLOBAL INNOVATION IN TELECOM TECHNOLOGIES |
| **Purpose**This document serves as an announcement of ITU-India collaboration on PhD fellowship to empower researchers and institutions to drive global innovation in emerging telecom technologies.**Action required by the Council**This report is transmitted to the Council for **information**.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**References***LOI signed between DoT (India) and ITU* |

# 1 Introduction

India is seeking to promote collaboration between the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communications, Govt. of India & the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), through establishing a PhD scheme that brings together India’s academia represented by PhD scholars at premier Indian Universities, ITU represented by their domain experts and DoT as the facilitator of the Scheme through funding and coordination.

# 2 India’s global research vision

This potential collaboration offers significant advantages to all involved. For the DoT, India it supports research aligned with national telecom goals, facilitating universal connectivity and ensuring India's perspective is considered in global standard-setting. The ITU would benefit from closer engagement with Indian academia, accessing a rich pool of research talent and valuable insights. Indian research scholars would gain invaluable experience through interactions with ITU experts, access to resources, and opportunities for international collaboration. In the future, this model can be adopted by other Member States, especially developing countries, to drive global innovation.

# 3 India-ITU LoI on PhD fellowships to drive global innovation in telecom technologies

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communications, Government of India, and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) have signed Letter of Intent (LoI) to initiate potential joint collaboration for a PhD fellowships in the field of merging ICTs/telecommunications to empower researchers and institutions to drive global Digital innovation.

## 3.1 Purpose

ITU and DoT-India will collaborate on a project titled “Next-Gen Scholars,” aimed at enhancing PhD research through academic dialogues with experts, with the objective of increasing academic and youth engagement in ITU’s work. These dialogues will deepen students’ understanding, align their research with global challenges, and foster meaningful discussions on emerging research and its implications. DoT will coordinate with ITU, support participating universities, fund fellowships, and facilitate scholar interactions with ITU. Research will be guided by a government-nominated advisor from the scholars' institutions. The objectives include

a) Promote research in the areas which can drive meaningful and universal connectivity in India, and provide a perspective on research questions that are relevant to developing countries.

b) Increase Academia engagement by Indian universities in ITU.

c) Promote and increase participation of the next generation of experts in ITU’s work.

## 3.2 Key highlights of the collaboration

– **International exposure:** Research scholars will have opportunities to engage with ITU experts, participate in **ITU Study Group meetings**, and present research at international forums.

– **Institutional collaboration:** Participating Indian institutions will receive Government of India sponsored **ITU-academia membership**, providing access to ITU’s extensive research resources, databases, and global academic networks.

– **Guided research:** Scholars will work under the co-supervision of **ITU-appointed experts** and a DoT-nominated member in their Research Advisory Committee (RAC) to align their work with global research priorities.

## 3.3 Outcomes

A scheme is proposed jointly under the aegis of the Department of Telecommunications and ITU to grant fellowships to PhD scholars with the following outcomes :

– Encourage PhD students to carry out research in strategic areas which are of interest to ITU and DoT.

– Exposure of PhD students to ITU’s activities to foster collaboration / engagement with the ITU community.

## 3.4 Conclusion

This potential collaboration offers significant advantages to all the stakeholders involved.

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