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|  | **Document CWG-FHR-20/2** |
| **17 January 2025** |
| **English only** |
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| Report by the Chair, Council Working Group on financial and human resources | |
| REPORT OF THE ONLINE CORRESPONDENCE GROUP TO DEVELOP TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ITU TO COMPLETE A REVIEW OF REGIONAL PRESENCE UNDER PP RESOLUTION 25 | |
| **Purpose**  This report presents the work conducted by the Online Correspondence Group which was entrusted with developing the Terms of Reference for the ITU to undertake a comprehensive review of regional presence, as mandated by Resolution 25 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022). The Terms of Reference provide a strategic framework to guide the review process ensuring it is thorough, impactful, and aligned with the organization's long-term goals.  **Action required**  The Council Working Group on financial and human resources is invited to **consider** and **adopt** the report.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **References**  [*Resolution 25 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-025-E.pdf) | |

1. The 19th meeting of the Council Working Group on financial and human resources (CWG-FHR), took a decision to establish an online Correspondence Group to develop Terms of Reference for the ITU secretariat to complete a review of regional presence under [*Resolution 25*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-025-E.pdf) *(Rev. Bucharest, 2022)*.
2. The Correspondence Group was tasked to review the Terms of Reference submitted at the 19th meeting of the CWG-FHR and to submit its report to the 20th meeting.
3. Ms Noha Gafaar of Egypt was appointed as Chair of the Correspondence Group and provided capable leadership throughout the process.
4. Between 22 November 2024 and 15 January 2025, the Correspondence Group undertook its work, leveraging online tools to facilitate collaboration among members. Three virtual meetings were convened, enabling in-depth discussions and the exchange of diverse perspectives.
5. Through rigorous analysis of Resolution 25, the Correspondence Group developed a revised set of Terms of Reference. The revisions aim to both strengthen and sharpen the ITU’s review of its regional presence, with a view to enhancing operational efficiency, and fostering greater engagement with regional and area offices.
6. The proposed Terms of Reference are submitted for consideration and adoption to the 20th meeting of the CWG-FHR.

**Terms of Reference for the Review of ITU Regional Presence**

**Purpose**

This Terms of Reference (ToR) outlines the framework for the comprehensive review of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) regional presence, as mandated by **Resolution 25 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)**. The review aims to achieve the following key objectives:

1. **Evaluate** the effectiveness and efficiency of the regional presence in delivering value to the membership and reflecting the concept of ‘One ITU’.
2. **Assess** the implementation of relevant recommendations of the Internal Auditor, the External Auditor and the ITU Independent Management Advisory Committee (IMAC).
3. **Identify** opportunities for improvement and recommend actionable measures to optimize the ITU’s regional operations.
4. **Align** regional presence with ITU’s strategic vision and operational goals, ensuring sustainable and impactful service delivery.

The Review shall:

1. Provide tools to establish, assess and improve the performance of its Regional and Area Offices, ensuring they deliver measurable and impactful results.
2. Enable the refinement of the role, structure, and objectives of its regional presence to maximize alignment with organizational goals.
3. Ensure that ITU’s regional presence plays a pivotal role in executing the ITU Strategic Plan and applicable Plans of Action effectively and efficiently.
4. Guarantee that ITU’s Regional and Area Offices are deeply integrated into the UN development system and the broader industry ecosystem at both national and regional levels, driving meaningful partnerships and synergies.
5. Identify measures to bolster internal controls within Regional and Area Offices, promoting sound management practices.

**Methodology**

To ensure a thorough and objective review, the following methodologies will be employed:

1. **Document Analysis**: Conduct a desk review of foundational documents, including **Resolution 25**, ITU’s strategic plans, and operational, performance and audit reports.
2. **Data Analysis:** Analyse key data points including staffing structures, budget allocations, and project outcomes to uncover trends, gaps, and opportunities for enhancement.
3. **Stakeholder Consultations**: Engage with key stakeholders and consult advisory groups to gain insights and strategic guidance on shaping the future direction of ITU’s regional presence.
4. **Stakeholder Surveys**: Administer and collect feedback on satisfaction levels from membership and Regional Telecommunication Organizations (RTOs) to gauge the impact of regional presence.

**Scope of Work**

The scope of the review is designed to address the following dimensions of ITU’s operations:

1. Assess whether appropriate and sufficient financial, human and material resources are being allocated to Regional and Area Offices, considering each regions characteristics, to effectively meet their activities, planned objectives, to represent ITU as a whole and have impact.
2. Review and assess the effectiveness of the resource mobilization function, as well as processes of consultants, special service agreement engagements and recruitments at regional offices and area offices taking into consideration the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) detailed in Annex 1.
3. Review the effectiveness of the multiple funding mechanisms, including extrabudgetary funding (FIT, etc.), resource mobilization function and reporting and evaluation functions for projects execution in the regional presence.
4. Assess the adequacy and effectiveness of internal approval processes.
5. Assess the implementation of delegation of authority and the related internal service orders and policy documents in addition to assessing whether clear roles and responsibilities including of process owners and second-line type functions are in place.
6. Analyse how regional presence is integrated into the Human Resources strategic plan, with a focus on training and career development including identifying and addressing gaps in organizational culture and skills, as well as specifying the number and types of staff training conducted at each regional or area office.
7. Compare all the regional and area offices' capacity-building and development activities against the framework of ITU Academy training centres.
8. Identify barriers, challenges faced by staff to participate at events, including associated costs, or expected outcomes as a way to improve participation in ITU events as appropriate, and additionally provide recommendations on how to improve Regional and Area Office participation.
9. Assess whether the reporting to the ITU Council and Bureaux on regional presence provides adequate information regarding its activities to meet ITU's strategic plan, Kigali Action Plan, regional initiatives, annual four-year rolling operational plans of the General Secretariat and the three Sectors, and addressing Member States' requests for assistance considering the KPIs detailed in Annex 1.
10. Evaluate the mechanisms, using set objectives, including communication mechanisms, and impact of coordination, planning, and implementation between the Regional Offices and Area Offices and General Secretariat, the three Bureaux, and regional organisations for ITU regional events, meetings, and conferences and identify improvements and actions that would enhance synergies in the coordination and communication of activities, projects and initiatives between regional offices/area offices and ITU headquarters.
11. Assess membership engagement mechanisms and their effectiveness as well as engagement with other international, regional and sub-regional organisations and UN organisations.
12. Propose approaches for the Regional and Area Offices to strengthen the coordination of the work of countries who do not belong to a specific Regional Telecommunication Organisation (RTO), and the respective RTO in the regional preparatory processes for world assemblies and conferences of the Union.

**Deliverables**

The review will produce the following deliverables:

* An inception report outlining the detailed work plan, methodology and financial implications if any.
* An interim report with preliminary findings and recommendations.
* A final report with comprehensive analysis, conclusions, and actionable recommendations.
* The presentation of a final report and key findings to the ITU Council.

**Timeline**

* Inception Report: June 2025, Council
* Interim Reports: September/October 2025 and Jan/Feb 2026, CWG-FHR meetings
* Final Report: Presentation to the ITU Council, April 2026

Annex 1

Key Performance Indicators and Evaluation Criteria to be considered in undertaking the Review of the ITU’s Regional Presence

To ensure a comprehensive and impactful evaluation of the ITU’s Regional Presence, the review will be guided by the following KPIs and evaluation criteria:

The percentage of strategic and action plan objectives being met.

The percentage of staff work/performance plans explicitly aligned with the strategic plan and Kigali Action Plan.

The average time taken for Regional and Area Office staff to address/complete Member State requests for assistance.

Feedback scores from Regional and Area Offices and Member States regarding resource adequacy.

The number of regional initiatives successfully implemented with allocated resources.

Recommendations on how to address any challenges in collecting data or demonstrating progress on KPIs with the reporting.

Evaluate if the information/KPIs to report the actions and effectiveness by the Regional and Area Offices to align their work, activities, and outcomes with the ITU Strategic Plan 2023-2026 and Kigali Action Plan, including its thematic priorities and outcomes, outputs and regional initiatives, in line with the Strategic Plan, is effective.

1. Assess staff engagement and specific steps taken in the development of the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG) KPIs.
2. Document challenges staff faced to participate at events, such as logistical, barriers to engagement or associated costs for Regional and Area Office staff participation
3. Provide recommendations from Regional and Area Office staff on how to best maximise engagements with regional stakeholders during global events.

Based on recommendations, assess whether an action plan to enhance Regional and Area Office staff participation in events would increase the value-add of their participation.

1. The amount of human and financial resources at the Regional and Area offices including:
   1. Number of staff at each Regional and Area Office;
   2. Number of countries served by each Regional and Area Office;
   3. Number of projects/initiatives engaged, events organized (regional and ITU-wide) (per year in review).
   4. Resources allocated by the financial plan for each Regional and Area Office (per year in review detailing resources allocated for staff, operations of the Office, and implementation of projects/initiatives/events).
   5. Technological platforms used by Regional and Area Offices (for fully virtual/hybrid meetings, for electronic working methods, various existing electronic tools to disseminate relevant information to their respective Member States).
   6. Use of the ITU’s financial management tools by Regional and Area Offices.
   7. The efforts/actions undertaken to increase human and financial resources in Regional and Area Offices for the implementation of regional initiatives.
2. The recruitment strategy including:
   1. Number and type of vacant positions per Regional and Area Office (per year in review).
   2. Average time of recruitment of new staff in Regional and Area Office (from identification of vacant/needed position to the contract signature).
   3. Implementation of improvements to recruitment processes and tools in Regional and Area Office to enable the identification and recruitment of talent with relevant project management expertise.
   4. Implementation of staff mobility policy (per Regional and Area Office, per year in review).
3. Specific activities (projects, regional initiatives, events/meetings/conferences, regional preparatory meetings, sectoral activities, etc.).
4. Participation of members in regional activities, global ITU-D/ITU-T/ITU-R events and the working activities of the three Sectors (e.g. study groups, expert groups, sector advisory groups, etc.).
5. Outcomes of activities demonstrating linkages between outputs/outcomes and the achievement of strategic goals, objectives and progress on KPI targets by region/sub-regional area.
6. An evaluation of progress on relevant KPIs.
7. An indication of internal and external issues and challenges associated with implementation that impact the ability/feasibility of the regional presence achieving strategic objectives and KPI targets.
8. If relevant, recommendations on new KPIs that should be used to measure progress with achieving strategic goals and objectives.
9. Based on the special case of LDCs, recommendations on whether per-country assessments and action plans in terms of telecommunication/ICT development would strengthen the ability of regional offices to provide member support, and the budget requirements for such assessments.
10. Details on fellowships awarded that demonstrate the extent to which fellowships are awarded in a fair and transparent manner (equitable geographical distribution, gender balance and the inclusion of delegates with disabilities).
11. Analysis of the fellowship application process, based on feedback by Member States, that recommends possible process and format improvements to address gaps.
12. Representation of all three Sectors in Regional and Area Offices when implementing the One-ITU approach:
    1. Availability/Number of Focal Points for T and R Sectors in all ROs/AOs.
    2. Means of provision with technical staff with knowledge and experience of the three Sectors of the Union to the Ros/AOs, particularly dedicated staff from the Standardization and Radiocommunication Sectors, in order to strengthen and assist Member States.
    3. Participation of Regional and Area Offices in the activities of all three Sectors (T and R in particular).
13. Assess whether the regional presence provides adequate information in respect of the following, in annual/periodic reporting regarding the regional presence (each of the regional/area offices) to the Directors of the three Bureaus, Advisory Bodies and Council, as appropriate:
    1. Staffing of regional and area offices, including number of staff members, their category of employment and other factors in accordance with Resolution 48 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022).
    2. Financial information, including budget allocated to the regional and area offices and expenses per thematic priority and planned output.
    3. The implementation of activities (including those related to the three Sectors and the General Secretariat).
14. Assess whether the regional presence, in its reports to the Directors of the three Bureaus, Advisory Bodies and Council, provides adequate information on:
    1. Any challenges faced in collecting the above data/ data requested.
    2. Any recommendations on how regular reporting may help strengthen the activities of the regional presence.
    3. Any recommendations on how oversight by Advisory Bodies and Council may help strengthen the activities of the regional presence.
15. Indicate the extent to which:
    1. The relevant internal audit, external audit, Independent Management Advisory Committee and Joint Inspection Unit recommendations have been implemented related to the regional presence.
    2. The components of the ITU Accountability Framework have been implemented in the regional offices and area offices. This should include an indication of how RBM, results-based budgeting and the human resources strategic plan are implemented. It should also include an identification of any implementation gaps and progress on activities to address those gaps.
    3. Accountability measures have been undertaken when providing regional/area offices greater autonomy in decision-making on the various activities, initiatives and projects they carry out.
    4. The efficiency and effectiveness of the ethics, complaints and response mechanisms.

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