



ITUPP
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Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-26)
9-27 November 2026 - Doha, Qatar

PLENARY MEETING

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Note by the Secretary-General

CANDIDACY FOR THE POST OF DIRECTOR OF THE TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT BUREAU (BDT)

Further to the information published in Document 3, I have the pleasure in transmitting to the Conference, in annex, the candidacy of:

Dr Nele LEOSK (Estonia (Republic of))

for the post of Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) of the International Telecommunication Union.

Doreen BOGDAN-MARTIN
Secretary-General

Annex: 1

Permanent Mission of Estonia
Geneva

No. 10.1-13/204

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Estonia to the United Nations Office and other international organisations in Geneva presents its compliments to the International Telecommunication Union and has the honour to transmit the enclosed letter of candidature of Dr Nele Leosk from 30 April 2026 of H.E. Mr. Margus Tsahkna, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia, addressed to H.E. Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Secretary-General of ITU.

The Permanent Mission of Estonia avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the International Telecommunication Union the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 5 May 2026



To H.E. Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Secretary-General of ITU

GENEVA



***Minister of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Estonia***

April 30, 2026 No. 10.1-13/2738

Dear Secretary-General,

In response to your Circular Letter CL-25/48 of 10 November 2025 to ITU Member States, in which you request notification of nominations for elected officials to the ITU council, I have the honour to inform you that the Government of Estonia hereby presents the candidature of Dr Nele Leosk for the position of Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau of the ITU, to be elected at the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-26) in Doha, Qatar, from November 9 to November 27, 2026.

I am pleased to express our strong support for Dr Leosk's candidacy, in light of her extensive expertise and internationally recognised leadership in digital transformation. For over twenty-five years, Dr Leosk has devoted her professional career to advancing digital development globally and has consistently demonstrated an exceptional ability to translate policy into tangible results. She is a highly accomplished digital diplomat and has a distinguished track record in mobilising donor support, forging global partnerships, and delivering meaningful and inclusive impact in digital development worldwide. If elected, Dr Leosk will bring a results-oriented, cooperative, and inclusive leadership style, firmly grounded in the principles of transparency, accountability, and fairness. The Government of Estonia is certain that under her leadership, the Telecommunication Development Bureau would further strengthen its efforts to ensure that digital technologies deliver benefits for all ITU Member States.

Please accept, Secretary-General, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Margus Tsahkna

Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin
International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
SWITZERLAND



Nele's Priorities for the ITU-D



Turning digital foundations into economic and societal progress

FROM CONNECTIVITY TO IMPACT: INFRASTRUCTURE FOR DEVELOPMENT, KNOWLEDGE FOR CHANGE

Ensuring affordable meaningful and secure connectivity for all remains a fundamental priority. Every country and community must have access to the digital world.

But connectivity and access alone are not sufficient. These critical enablers must be translated into results. We must now build on connectivity and put digital technologies to work to drive better governance, improved public services, job creation, and economic growth. Digitalisation must reach people and provide them value. To achieve this, we need to work on adoption and building trust.

This means supporting countries in moving from connectivity to inclusive and comprehensive digital transformation. We need to move towards hands-on development, and I am committed to turn this vision into reality.



Building local capacity, industry, and solid foundations for sustainable transformation

LOCAL DIGITAL ECOSYSTEMS: FOUNDATION FOR A RESILIENT FUTURE

Sustainable digital development depends on strong local ecosystems. I will work with partners to invest in local capacity, institutions, and private sector growth, enabling countries to lead and sustain their own transformation. Thriving local industries and digital ecosystems are the foundation of a sustainable digital transformation.

Equally important are the core foundations that underpin digital development. Data must be digitised and made interoperable; digital authentication and identity systems must be in place to support the transformation of all sectors. These building blocks provide a platform for the continuous adoption of new technologies, including emerging trends such as Artificial Intelligence.



Strengthening capability to adopt artificial intelligence and future technologies with confidence

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES FOR ALL: NAVIGATING THROUGH GROWING COMPLEXITY FOR OPPORTUNITIES

Emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, are advancing rapidly, bringing new opportunities, but also greater complexity. The challenge is not merely an access to these technologies, but the ability to plan and execute their use for continuous opportunities.

I will ensure that the ITU BDT will provide targeted support to help countries assess, plan, and deploy new technologies in ways suited to their context and development goals. This means investing in local skills, and piloting applications in priority sectors. Digital foundations and local ecosystems developed under the preceding pillars are what make this adoption sustainable and genuinely transformative.



Working together for one, stronger ITU

COLLABORATION FOR GLOBAL IMPACT: ELEVATING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF THE ITU TO THE WORLD

Delivering impact at scale requires strong partnerships, collaboration and sustained investment. The BDT will cooperate closely with regional offices, to plan and execute digital development together. Under my leadership, BDT will leverage ITU's full strength, working closely across all three bureaus, streamlining its work across ITU, and serving as an 'arm' in taking the ITU's knowledge to the world.

Strengthening ITU's own capacity and skills, particularly in emerging technologies, will be key to ensuring it remains a coherent, effective, and future-ready organisation delivering impact worldwide, while continuously improving its own processes and efficiency in doing so.

Together with other ITU elected officials, I will deepen the BDT's collaboration across the UN system, private sector, academia, and other relevant partners for knowledge sharing, capacity building and resource mobilisation.



CURRICULUM VITAE

Dr Nele Leosk



Candidate of the Republic of Estonia for the position of
Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau of the ITU

PERSONAL INFORMATION



Contact:
[linkedin.com/in/neleleosk](https://www.linkedin.com/in/neleleosk)



Languages:
English (fluent)
Russian (advanced)
Estonian (native)



Nationality:
Estonian (EU)

EDUCATION

Doctorate in Political and Social Sciences,

European University Institute,
Florence, Italy

Thesis: Understanding the
Development of Digital
Governance
2012–2018

Master in Political and Social Sciences,

European University Institute,
Florence, Italy
2012–2013

Master in Public Communication,

Tallinn University
2003–2006

Bachelor in English Philology and Educational Sciences,

Tallinn University
1996–2002

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

With over 25 years of leadership at the intersection of technology and development, Nele has shaped digital transformation globally.

Her career spans economic and societal reforms across all regions of the World, combining high-level policy advice with a proven ability to deliver results.

She has extensive management experience, steering large-scale digital projects with proven skills in mobilising donor support across governments, international organisations and the private sector. Recognised among the Top 100 Women Shaping GovTech and Digital (2024), she brings strong leadership, global credibility, and a results-driven approach to advancing digital development at scale.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Drove digital transformation across Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the Middle-East, building local digital capacity from policy to implementation.

Built and led Estonia's digital diplomacy, increasing its global influence and leading multi-stakeholder negotiations and partnerships.

Co-led the GovStack initiative with the ITU, Germany and DIAL, creating an open and reusable digital public infrastructure model, now adopted in more than 20 countries.

Co-founded the GovStack Women in GovTech Challenge, supporting over 300 women in 50 countries to advance into digital leadership roles.

Supported the establishment and scaling of the e-Governance Academy into a global centre of excellence with current operations in more than 140 countries.

First woman to chair the ITU Global Standards Symposium in 2022.

A globally recognised voice on digital matters, contributing to international discussions through the UN, World Economic Forum, World Bank, European University Institute, Tech Diplomacy Forum and AI Action Summit.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Knowledge Hub Digital for the European Commission

Team Lead
2025—present

- Managed Knowledge Hub Digital (KHD) for the European Commission, advancing digital development in more than 110 countries.

Coordinated digital collaboration across the EU institutions, Member States, global partners, private sector, and international organisations.

Led implementation of digital investment programmes on connectivity, digital governance, digital economy, and AI, including support to the EU Business Tech Offer (e.g. Indonesia, Nigeria, Mozambique).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia

Ambassador for Digital Affairs
2020—2024

- Built and led Estonia's digital diplomacy to increase its global role in digital affairs.

Managed Estonia's international digital partnerships, led multistakeholder negotiations and funding mobilisation.

Strengthened digital capabilities of diplomats and supported missions globally.

Co-led the GovStack Initiative together with Germany, ITU and DIAL, building an open digital public infrastructure model implemented in more than 20 countries across Africa, Europe and Asia.

Co-founded the Women in GovTech Challenge, developing 300+ female digital leaders across 50+ countries.

IGL Ltd

Founder and Managing Director
2019—2021

- Founded and managed a digital transformation advisory firm. Secured contracts in the European Union, Africa, and the Gulf region.

Academic work

2019—present

- Lectured periodically at Tallinn University, Tallinn University of Technology (TalTech), University of Tartu, and the School of Transnational Governance, European University Institute. Developed an MA course on legal aspects of information society at Tallinn University.

The Foresight Centre, The Parliament of Estonia

Expert on governance and technological trends
2017—2018

- Prepared future scenarios for Estonia's public e-governance 2030, combining technological trends, organisational and institutional reforms.

e-Governance Academy

Programme Director
2007-2014
Project Manager
2004—2007

- Supported the establishment and scaling of e-Governance Academy (eGA), now active in more than 140 countries.

Directed ICT in education programme, and developed its research, training, and advisory agenda.

Drove digital reforms in more than 40 countries from policy to implementation. Programme Chair for ICEGOV 2011, convening 70+ countries.

Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications of Estonia

Project Manager
2002—2004

- Directed the harmonisation of EU Low Voltage and Electromagnetic Compatibility Directives for Estonia.

EXAMPLES OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION PROJECTS

- + Designed digital governance organisational model | São Tomé and Príncipe | World Bank | 2025–2026
- + Strengthened institutional capacity for digital governance and economy | Guinea-Bissau | World Bank | 2024–2025
- + Assessed organisational and digital excellence | UAE (Dubai & Abu Dhabi) | 2016–2025
- + Advanced cross-border data exchange and digital public services | European Union | European Commission & TalTech | 2019–2021
- + Led the preparation of the Public Sector Digital Transformation Programme loan | Ukraine | European Investment Bank | 2020
- + Supported the development of national digital governance frameworks | Saudi Arabia | United Nations University | 2018
- + Built e-participation tools and digital services | Kosovo, Montenegro, Moldova | 2011–2013
- + Prepared foundations for digital identity and data interoperability | Tunisia | 2011–2012
- + Supported the development of a digital governance strategy | Iraq | UNDP | 2010
- + Supported e-governance development at municipal level | Kazakhstan, Tajikistan | 2010–2011
- + Co-led education digitalisation programme “Deer Leap” | Georgia | 2005–2009
- + Supported national e-governance development | Haiti | Government of Estonia, Open Society Foundation | 2010–2011
- + Prepared ICT in Education Strategy and Action Plan | Albania | UNDP | 2008
- + Assessed the impact of the UNDP Democratic Governance Programme | Eastern Europe | UNDP | 2008–2009



Networks and memberships

Member, Global Future Councils on GovTech & Digital Public Infrastructure, Technology Policy, and Agile Governance | World Economic Forum | 2021–present

Board Member | Tech Diplomacy Forum | 2025–present

Policy Leader Fellow | School of Transnational Governance, European University Institute | 2025–present

Chair, Digital Cooperation and Diplomacy Network | People Centered Internet, Palo Alto, USA | 2022–2024

Member, Steering Committee | AI Action Summit, Paris | 2025

Co Chair, Working Group on AI in the Public Sector | World Bank | 2024–2025

Chair, Global Standards Symposium (GSS) | International Telecommunication Union (ITU) | 2022



Awards and recognition

Top 100 Women Shaping GovTech and Digital | 2024

Fulbright–Schuman Grant Recipient | 2014–2015



Public speaking

Sought-after global speaker at premier forums, including the UN General Assembly and World Economic Forum (Davos), shaping discussions on digital innovation, development, and technology governance across regions.



Publications

Academic publications on digital governance, digital public infrastructure, and technology policy, including work with the World Economic Forum.