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| **Keywords:** | Regional Offices; Africa; Americas; Arab states; Asia and the Pacific; Commonwealth of Independent States; Europe; |
| **Abstract:** | This document summarizes contribution of the ITU Regional Offices to the implementation of the ITU-T four-year rolling operational plan as requested by the Resolution 25 (Rev. Dubai 2018) of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference. |

**1 Introduction: ITU Regional Presence**

ITU has offices in the six BDT regions:

* Africa
* [Americas](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Americas/Pages/default.aspx)
* [Arab states](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/ArabStates/Pages/default.aspx)
* [Asia and the Pacific](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/asiapacific/Pages/default.aspx)
* [Commonwealth of Independent States](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/CIS/Pages/default.aspx)
* [Europe](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/default.aspx)

[ITU Regional presence](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Pages/Regional-Presence.aspx) counts as of today an overall of thirteen field offices, which include five regional offices in Addis Ababa (Africa), Bangkok (Asia and the Pacific), Brasilia (Americas), Cairo (Arab States), Moscow (CIS countries), and the ITU office for Europe at ITU headquarters, as well as eight area offices, located in Africa, Americas and Asia and the Pacific.

The revised Resolution 25 on strengthening the regional presence, mentioned in section 1 below, has enhanced the need for a stronger regional presence.

Regional and area offices play a key role in facilitating discussions on regional matters and in the dissemination of information and results of activities of all three Sectors of the Union and the General Secretariat, while avoiding the duplication of such functions with headquarters, and collaborating with the regional telecommunication organizations to make synergies and avoid duplication of activities and efforts.

2 ITU Plenipotentiary Resolution 25 (Rev. Dubai, 2018)

ITU Plenipotentiary Resolution 25 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) “Strengthening the regional presence” introduces new reporting mandates for the Regional and Area offices to the advisory groups of each Sectors:

“resolves

4          that the regional and area offices should contribute, to the extent practicable, *inter* *alia*, to the annual four-year rolling operational plans of the General Secretariat and of the three Sectors, with content specific to each regional and area office, linked to the strategic plan for the Union for 2020‑2023 and the Buenos Aires Action Plan, then set up and continue to publish the annual plan/events on the ITU website for implementation;”

(…)

“further resolves

2        that regional offices shall regularly provide reports to the Sector advisory groups, as appropriate, and to inform the Directors of BR and TSB on regional activities related to their respective Sectors”.

3 TSB mechanisms of coordination with the Regions

At the initiative of the TSB Director, conference calls and face-to-face meetings were organized on a regular basis between the regional and areas offices and the TSB senior management, covering each time overviews, updates, and briefings of activities organized by each TSB department in the various regions.

These coordination activities, as well as the establishment of a TSB Focal Point for the Regions, were conducted keeping in mind the goal of improving coordination and increasing the efficiency of the overall operations, events and activities in the Standardization Sector in each of the Regions.

The use of this coordination mechanism is a tool that has led to a significant improvement in the overall coordination with regional and areas offices in terms of events and activities.

4 Africa – Regional Office for Africa

The ITU Regional Office for Africa and representatives for the Area Offices in Cameroun, Senegal and Zimbabwe have held regular monthly meetings and continued close coordination with TSB on activities carried out in the region.

Through coordination and exchange activities have been implemented by the ITU Office for the Africa in collaboration with TSB:

* ITU DFS Security Clinics, 12-14 October 2021 (virtual)
* Workshop on Data Revolution, Health Status Transformation and the Role of AI for Health and Pandemic Preparedness in the African Context organized by the Regional Office together with WHO, 21-24 June 2021 (virtual)
* ITU-T SG20 RG-AFR Virtual Forum on “Accelerating Digital Transformation in Africa”, 2 June 2021 (virtual)
* Financial Inclusion Global Initiative (FIGI) Symposium, 18 May-24 June 2021 (virtual)

The following WTSA preparatory meetings, led by the African Telecommunications Union (ATU), have been supported by the Regional Office:

* ATU coordination meeting for WTSA-20 preparation, 11-13 February 2020 (Geneva, Switzerland during the 2020 TSAG meeting)
* ATU-3, 28-30 July 2020 (virtual meeting)
* ATU-4, 27 September-1 October 2021 (virtual meeting)

Other areas of collaboration include:

* Exploring synergies with partners like Smart Africa through the working groups on Digital ID, Data protection, e payments, cross borders e-payments, OTT, among others.
* Supporting and encouraging collaboration on work of the ITU-T Focus Group on AI for Health, including related AI challenges.

5 Americas – Regional Office for the Americas

The ITU Regional Office for the Americas and its Area Offices, in Chile (South America), Honduras (Central America) & Barbados (Caribbean), have continued close coordination with TSB on all activities carried out in the Americas region.

Monthly coordination calls with the TSB Director and TSB Management team have been held. They were supplemented by consultations at the operational level, wherever relevant or needed.

The following activities are planned or have already been implemented by the ITU Office for the Americas in collaboration with TSB:

**Coordination meetings with countries from the Americas region**

* Mexico: June 2021; Mr. Carlos Alfonso Morán Miguel, Vice Secretary of Communications and Transport of Mexico to update on upcoming WTSA and to exchange views on the ways to strengthening the relationship between ITU and Mexico.
* Jamaica: July 2021; Mr Ansord Hewitt, Director General, Office of Utilities Regulation to update on upcoming WTSA and to exchange views on the ways to strengthening the relationship between ITU and Jamaica.
* Jamaica: July 2021; Honourable Daryl Vaz, Minister of Science, Energy and Technology to update on upcoming WTSA and to exchange views on the ways to strengthening the relationship between ITU and Jamaica.
* Trinidad and Tobago: July 2021; Ms Cynthia Reddock-Downes, CEO of the Telecommunications Authority to update on upcoming WTSA and to exchange views on the ways to strengthening the relationship between ITU and T&T.
* Trinidad and Tobago: July 2021; Senator the Honourable Hassel Bacchus, Minister of Digital Transformation to update on upcoming WTSA and to exchange views on the ways to strengthening the relationship between ITU and T&T.
* Bahamas: July 2021; Senator the Honourable J. Kwasi Thompson, Minister of State for Finance and Grand Bahama to update on upcoming WTSA and to exchange views on the ways to strengthening the relationship between ITU and the Bahamas.

**Regulation**

* ITU Regional Radiocommunication Seminar 2020 for the Americas (RRS-20-Americas) – Online meeting, 13-24 July 2020.
* Chile Area Office contributed to the promotion of the ITU Workshop on Regulatory Aspects of Telecommunication Service Quality in Latin America that took place from 2 to 4 June 2021.

**Accessibility**

* The regional event “Accessible Americas: ICTs for ALL” takes place every year in November and represents a knowledge sharing platform on the development of ICT accessibility in benefit of countries and institutions and provides good practices in digital inclusion. TSB supported the event by providing expertise to the event particularly in the field of Accessibility standards for products and services”.
* The regional event “Accessible Americas: ICTs for ALL” is planned to be carried out in Varadero, Cuba, from 29 November to 1st December 2021.

**SMART cable systems**

* Information and support were provided to the Administrations of Ecuador and Chile, interested in supporting the draft Resolution on smart cable systems drafted by the TSB and being promoted by the “Joint Task Force (JTF) on SMART cable systems” integrated by ITU, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO/IOC), and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

#### 6 Arab States - Regional Office for the Arab States

The ITU Regional Office for the Arab have continued close coordination with TSB on all activities carried out in the Arab region.

Monthly coordination calls with the TSB Director and TSB Management team have been held. They were supplemented by consultations at the operational level, wherever relevant or needed.

ITU Arab regional office have regular coordination with Arab League of Arab States’s Standardization Team (AST) and TSB for WTSA-20 preparations. In this regard, the following meetings have been coordinated by ITU Arab regional office in collaboration with TSB:

* The 15th of Arab Standardization Team (AST) meeting for Preparation of WTSA-20, 15-16 April 2020
* Arab Standardization Team (AST) working groups meetings, April- Sept 2020
* Arab Standardization Team (AST) participation in the Interregional Meeting for Preparation of WTSA-20, 18 September 2020
* The 16th of Arab Standardization Team (AST) meeting for Preparation of WTSA-20, 2 Sept 2021

ITU Arab regional office is promoting TSB activities in the Arab Region and on regular basis through all the regional communications channels including but not limited to, the official regional twitter account and regional member states what’s-up group. In addition, the following activities are planned or have already been implemented by the ITU Office for the Arab in collaboration with TSB:

* ITU Global Event on Emerging Technology for Connectivity: Accelerating Digital Transformation in LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS webinar from 5-9 July: Regional Sessions on:
* Blockchain and cybersecurity challenges and opportunities for digital finance
* Smart Cities and Communities
* GSR-21 Arab Regional Economic Dialogue (Arab RED21), 3 June 2021
* Training on DFS Security Lab, Oct-Nov 2021

#### 7 Asia and the Pacific - Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

The ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific have continued close coordination with TSB on all activities carried out in the Asia-Pacific region. Monthly coordination calls with the TSB Director and TSB Management team have been held. They were supplemented by consultations at the operational level, wherever relevant or needed. The ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific has also been providing support to the TSB with APT and with regional standardization bodies.

What follows are some of the specific activities that the Regional Office coordinated/assisted TSB with:

**Smart Sustainable Cities**

* Building on the impactful joint presentation of the ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and TSB colleagues on different aspects of the Smart Sustainable Cities hosted by Brunei online back in June 2020 and the discussion in January 2021 as part of the ASEAN Digital Senior Officials' Meeting (ADGSOM), the ITU Regional Office worked with the U4SSC Secretariat in Geneva to present the initiative bilaterally to Brunei Darussalam and Thailand in August 2021. Additionally, the ITU Regional Office presented this initiative bilaterally to Viet Nam in July 2021. Discussions are ongoing surrounding audits based on the KPI’s developed by the U4SSC platform, and the countries are further reviewing internally.
* The ITU Regional Office, with support of the U4SSC Secretariat, presented the ITU and the U4SSC initiative as part of an UN-Habitat presentation in August 2021 to Thailand’s Smart City Ambassadors.

**Coordination meetings with Individual Members**

* Coordination meetings are being scheduled with member countries. So far, a meeting was held with the Director General of Viet Nam Telecommunications Authority (VTNA) in August 2021. VTNA showed keen desire to engage further with ITU-T. The areas of focus for Viet Nam are: Digital Infrastructure, Digital Services, Consumer Protection, and Digital Transformation.  They are also interested in SG3, SG5, SG11, SG12, SG13 and SG20 in the next study period.
* Meetings with other member countries are being scheduled
* The ITU Regional office also coordinated efforts to consolidate a joint review by TSB and BDT of the QoS and QoE regulations to Cambodia. This was much appreciated by the member country.

**Project on Enhancing the Development of Standards and Frameworks for Critical Technologies in Southeast Asia**

* Following consultations with TSB and discussions with the Government of Australia’s Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the ITU team successfully signed a grant agreement on 4 June 2021 with DFAT on this project, under its Cyber and Critical Tech Cooperation Program. Although initially slated for one-year, the Regional Office expects that this project may be extended to four years, subject to funding availability.
* The project will enhance the development and implementation of internationally recommended and industry-led critical technology standards, frameworks, policies, and initiatives at regional and national levels across Southeast Asia, which takes into account diverse stakeholders needs. It will implement this through
  + Policy-oriented research and diagnostics on the current state of critical technology standards.
  + Awareness Raising and Capacity Development among Policy Makers, Regulators and Civil Society Leaders
  + Multi-Stakeholder Consultation on Critical Technologies in Southeast Asia
* The project’s initial focus will be on the Indonesia, Malaysia. The Philippines, and Thailand, and will also look at the regional context in Southeast Asia.

**Workshop on The Future of TV for Asia and the Pacific**

* The future of TV workshop was held on 23 April 2021. It was a virtual workshop with three main sessions, as well as the opening and closing sessions, and lasted for more than 4 hours with some breaks. This workshop was held in close coordination with the ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, TSB, and BDT. Mr. Aamir Riaz from the ASP region also acted as an ITU technical Officer in the Session 2 titled “**The Future of the Television User Experience and Applications.**
* The content of the workshop benefited from the inputs of all three Sectors of the ITU (Radiocommunication: ITU-R; Standardization: ITU-T; and Development: ITU-D). The workshop focused on the policy enablers, including spectrum management, to ensure successful and impactful future television services. Emerging trends, government policies, industry challenges, and opportunities were also discussed. The current and future regional and international standardization roadmaps pursued by ITU dedicated groups were also part of the discussion. Security challenges and the role of TV during lockdowns also remained a hot topic during the workshop. Finally, the role of AI and the potential new broadcasting applications and 5G broadcast were also explored.
* The link to the recording is available at: <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/Workshops-and-Seminars/202004/Pages/programme.aspx>

**Digital Technology Innovations Series Webinar**

* Following discussions that began in 2020, the ITU is co-organizing with the Telecommunications Standards Development Society, India (TSDSI) a series of webinars on Digital Technology Innovations. This series is being hosted with the support from the Department of Telecommunications, select Ministries of Govt of India, and other partners from the Asia-Pacific region.
* The inaugural session of the series was held on 2 September 2021. The team will continue hosting webinar sessions into 2022, on topics including Fintech, Standards Development Case Studies, Terrestrial and Non-terrestrial Technologies for Rural/Remote areas, and Data Privacy and Security.

**Co-ordination regarding ITU-T events and Participation in TSB related meetings**

* The ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific also assisted in dissemination of information related to TSB activities and meetings such as the coordination of TSB’s presentation in the ASEAN Workshop on Number Misuse.
* The ITU regional focal point also participated in various WTSA prep meetings and other meetings as required. This included:
  + Sessions in the 4th Meeting of the APT Preparatory Group for WTSA-20 (APT WTSA20-4), 16-20 November 2020
  + 43rd PASC AGM 18&20 May 2021
  + Sessions in the 33rd APT Standardization Program Forum (ASTAP-33), 7-15 June 2021.

#### 8 Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) - Regional Office for the CIS Region

The ITU Regional Office for the CIS Region have continued close coordination with TSB on all activities carried out in the CIS region. Monthly coordination calls with the TSB Director and TSB Management team have been held.

During the August 2020 – August 2021 timeframe the Regional Office for the CIS Region participated and contributed to the organization of the following regional events of the ITU-T/TSB:

* Meeting of the ITU-T SG20RG-EECAT, 16-18 March 2021, Minsk (Belarus)

Experts from TSB and ITU-T Study Groups participated in the following activities of the ITU Regional Office for the CIS Region:

* ITU Regional Development Forum for CIS Region, 14-15 December 2020, online
* ITU Forum “Smart sustainable cities: organizational and technical aspects”, 16-18 March 2021, Minsk (Belarus)
* ITU Infosession “Technological priorities of the region: networks 2030, quantum communication, cybersecurity. Development, testing and standardisation”, 25-26 August 2021, St. Petersburg (Russia) and online

The ITU Regional Office for the CIS Region is closely working with the TSB and external partner towards a project on smart cities benchmarking.

ITU-T SG11 Chairman Mr. Andrey Kucheryavy and ITU-T SG11 experts participate in the ITU-D project “International Research, Development and Testing Centre for new equipment, technologies, and services (IRDTC)” which is being implemented in St. Petersburg, Russia.

The ITU Regional Office for the CIS Region is facilitating the engagement of countries in the ITU-T AI for Good programme.

#### 9 Europe - ITU Office for Europe

The ITU Office for Europe has continued close coordination with TSB on all activities carried out in the Europe region. Monthly coordination calls with the TSB Director and TSB Management team have been held. They were supplemented by consultations at the operational level, wherever relevant or needed. ITU Office for Europe has been providing support to the ITU-T Project Team of CEPT, facilitating TSB contributions to the work of the Project Team as well as CEPT Com-ITU. The ITU Office for Europe has been also engaging with TSB on a series of concrete activities in the region. The following activities are planned or have already been implemented by the ITU Office for Europe in collaboration with TSB.

**Accessibility**

* The Regional Forum for Europe on “Accessible Europe: ICTs 4 ALL" took place virtually from 23 to 25 March 2021. This regional event for Europe was jointly organised by the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the European Commission (EC). The organisation of this event was supported by the Government of Portugal and conducted as part of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Forum focused on further promoting the development of accessibility in countries and institutions, through the collective effort and cooperation of stakeholders and through sharing of successful outcomes of projects and initiatives implemented, to interchange resources and solutions and make the European region a more inclusive society. TSB supported the event by providing experts in the Forum, particularly on “Session 4: Accessibility standards for products and services” and “Session 6: Building smart and accessible cities”.
* The Regional Competition for Innovative Digital Solutions for Accessible Europe has been held for the third time as an integral part of Accessible Europe 2021. This competition aimed to promote innovative and creative digital solutions to benefit persons with disabilities (PwD), bringing more social inclusion and interaction, comfort, and quality of life to their daily routine through mobile technologies. TSB supported the competition by providing experts as part of the evaluation committee and participated in the evaluation meeting held to shortlist finalists and winners.

**The Future of TV in Europe**

* The upcoming future of TV workshop will take place on 19 November 2021, fully virtual and will focus on Europe. Organization of this workshop is closely coordinated by ITU Office for Europe and TSB, while the content of the workshop benefits from inputs of all three Sectors of the ITU (Radiocommunication: ITU-R; Standardization: ITU-T; and Development: ITU-D). The workshop will focus on the diverse emerging broadband and broadcast technologies, with the aim to assist countries in the region of Europe to assess challenges, dynamics, and opportunities. This event will aim to discuss the future of television in the region with relevant European and international stakeholders, covering regulatory and policy frameworks, emerging and convergent ICT Infrastructures and services, as well as user interfaces and accessibility issues. It also provided an opportunity to discuss TV-related regional and international standardization and to share best practices and case studies on cable TV rollouts and other new TV services.

**5G Techritory forum 2020 and 2021**

* 5G Techritory is being supported within the framework of the ITU Regional Initiative for Europe on broadband infrastructure, broadcasting and spectrum management. With time 5G Techritory has become an important platform for the Europe region and several synergies with the ITU activities have been created in the past. During the 2020 edition, a special TSB session on E2E service delivery was organized to highlight relevant workstreams of ITU-T. TSB will be also featured in the line up for this year’s edition to be held from 22 to 26 November 2021.

**GovStack Initiative**

* Digital government services are vital for developing a digital economy that benefits all citizens by expanding access to critical services such as health, education and social protection. Countries seeking to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the next ten years are increasingly looking to national digital strategies and agendas to transform the way they do business and improve the lives of their citizens.
* A “Whole-of-Government” platform approach to developing government services through the reuse and minimal customization of quick and easy to adopt building blocks is at the heart of the success of digital government services projects. Open-source models for a government platform that is built from modular and reusable components, leveraging a secure and standards-based approach, are an optimal solution to solving these issues in a cost-efficient and scalable manner.
* TSB is part of this effort providing expert contribution to the workstream related to the identification and financial services.

**5G Forum**

* On 22-23 October 2020, ITU Office for Europe organized the ITU Regional Forum for Europe on 5G Strategies, Policies and Implementation. In the opening session, the forum featured TSB Chief of Study Groups Department who provided an opening presentation into the relevant standardization activities of ITU-T with regards to 5G.

**5G paper**

* ITU Office for Europe elaborated 18 5G country profiles focusing on non-EU countries. The country profiles were structured as follows i) ICT background and current status of broadband, ii) broadband and mobile telecommunication sectors data, iii) current progress on 5G: consultations and national strategies, iv) spectrum assignment for 5G & market development, v) electromagnetic field levels and implementation dynamics, vi) 5G commercial launches: announcements, trials, and digital cross-border corridors. The finalization of the report was coordinated with TSB.

**EaPeReg workstream**

* The Eastern Partnership (EaP - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) Electronic Communications Regulators Network, holds expert working groups meetings on a regular basis. Upon the request of EaPeReg, ITU Office facilitated the intervention of TSB Chief of Study Groups Department who delivered a presentation on “5G ITU-T Standardization Update”, at the Spectrum Expert Working Group (SEWG) held on 27 May 2021.

**EMF paper**

* ITU Office for Europe elaborated a report on “Implementing 5G for good: do EMFs matter?” which recaps the state of the art of recent developments in SDOs/IOs with regards to EMF. The report has been coordinated with TSB and received input in particular from ITU-T SG5. The draft final report was submitted as a TD to SG5 meeting held 11-20 May 2021 also accessible [here](https://www.itu.int/md/T17-SG05-210511-TD-GEN-1767/en).

**EMF capacity building**

* ITU Office for Europe conducted a “Regional Assessment for Europe on EMF exposure limits and risk communication challenges” engaging 29 countries in Europe region. ITU Office for Europe submitted the results to ITU-T SG5 through a TD accessible [here](https://www.itu.int/md/T17-SG05-210511-TD-GEN-1767/en).
* ITU Office for Europe, in coordination with the Future Networks and Spectrum Management Division of the BDT, elaborated a plan to scale up the activity of the Regional Assessment with a proposal for an internal project led by BDT on “Building national capacities on EMF policy and communication”. The project was coordinated with TSB and BR and focal points have been established for the way forward.

**Smart Cities**

* The ITU Office for Europe in collaboration with the TSB smart city experts, held discussion with UNOPS and the UN country team to launch the implementation of the U4SSC KPIs on Smart Sustainable Cities in selected cities in the Republic of Serbia. Discussions continue on this pilot project with potential collaboration with UNOPS.

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