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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. Bucharest, 2022) of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference. |

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**1 Introduction: ITU Regional Presence**

ITU has offices in the six BDT regions:

* [Africa](https://www.itu.int/itu-d/sites/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 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) on strengthening the ITU 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. Bucharest, 2022)

ITU Plenipotentiary Resolution 25 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) “Strengthening the ITU regional presence” confirms the reporting mandates for the Regional and Area offices to the advisory groups of each Sectors:

“further resolves

*3 that regional and area offices shall regularly provide reports to the Sector advisory groups, as appropriate, and to inform the Directors of BR, TSB and BDT 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 whenever possible, 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 (reference to the instructs the Directors of the Radiocommunication Bureau and the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau), were conducted keeping in mind the One ITU concept and implementation, with 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

To implement World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA) [Resolution 100 (Geneva, 2022)](https://www.itu.int/pub/T-RES-T.100-2022), “A common emergency number for Africa”, TSB and the Regional Office for Africa has consulted Member States on the opportunity to use a single primary emergency number or to use the common emergency number as a secondary alternative emergency number. Further to the compilation of a background study, and in preparation for the 2024 ITU-T Study Group 2 regional rapporteur group meeting, Member States have been asked to update information on emergency numbers in use in Africa in the ITU-T maintained database of emergency numbers.

The Regional Office is collaborating with the Standardization Bureau on the DFS Security Lab actively engaging with regulators in 14 African countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gambia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. This collaboration primarily focuses on enhancing digital financial services (DFS) security, with the ITU's DFS security guidelines being adopted by regional entities like EACO and CRASA. EACO integrated these guidelines during their 25th Congress in Burundi, and CRASA formalized their adoption at their 12th AGM in the Democratic Republic of Congo, signifying a move towards localizing the recommendations in respective countries. 8 security clinics have been in Africa and 2 labs for Uganda and Tanzania setup. The Regional Office continues to support the lab by engaging regulators in other countries to benefit from the lab.

The Regional Office in coordination with the Standardization Bureau organized follow up discussions in October 2023 with UNCDF Ethiopia Country Office to explore possible areas of collaboration to advance digital financial inclusion in Ethiopia. As a next step, it has been proposed that a DFS Security Clinic and webinar will be delivered to DFS stakeholders in Ethiopia tentatively in the first quarter of 2024 to share knowledge on the recommendations and best practices for regulators and providers to foster a resilient DFS ecosystem and enhanced consumer protection.

Furthermore, the Regional Office has actively supported the TSB’s meetings and events in the region (increased participation numbered 384 participants from about 20 countries as a whole) as well as coordination with partners like the African Telecommunication Union (ATU); the African ICT Consumers Network (AICN), the African Organization for Standardization (ARSO) and some of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

* Joint Coordination Activity on Internet of Things and Smart Cities and Communities (JCA-IoT and SC&C) 12 September 2023, Arusha, Tanzania
* ITU-T Focus Group on metaverse (FG-MV) Special session on FG-MV, 12 September 2023, Arusha, Tanzania
* 3rd ITU Forum on “Cities and the metaverse: shaping a Citiverse for all” 13 September 2023, Arusha, Tanzania
* ITU-T SG11 Regional Group for Africa (SG11RG-AFR) 13 - 15 September 2023 (virtual)
* ITU-T SG20: Internet of things (IoT) and smart cities and communities (SC&C) 13 - 22 September 2023, Arusha, Tanzania
* Ninth SG13 Regional Workshop for Africa on “Standardization of Future Networks and Emerging Network Technologies: African perspectives” 19 - 20 September 2023, Abidjan, Cote D’Ivoire
* ITU-T SG2 Regional Group for Africa - ITU-T SG2RG-AFR workshop and meeting, 20 - 22 September 2023, Abidjan, Cote D’Ivoire
* ITU-T SG2 Regional Group for Africa - Regional workshop for Africa on "IoT/M2M numbering", 20 September 2023, Abidjan, Cote D’Ivoire
* ITU-T SG13 Regional Group for Africa (SG13 RG-AFR) 21 - 22 September 2023, Abidjan, Cote D’Ivoire
* Regional Cybersecurity Summit for Africa - 20 - 23 November 2023, Kampala, Uganda
* ITU-T SG17 Regional Group for Africa (SG17RG-AFR) - 23 November 2023 (Held as part of the Regional Cybersecurity Summit for Africa)

5 Americas – Regional Office for the Americas

The ITU Regional Office for the Americas has continued close coordination with TSB on activities carried out in the region by supporting Member States by implementing various initiatives and projects across the region aimed at deploying ICT infrastructure, enhancing digital inclusion, innovation and digital transformation.

* ITU Regional Office for Americas also continued to facilitate coordination between TSB and regional organizations (CITEL) for the preparatory process for WTSA and provides any assistance necessary to ensure regional engagement. As well as on the Bridging the Standardization Gap (BSG), the AMS RO is supporting TSB at the highest level of relevant events or platforms in the Regions through the revamped products and services of Bridging the Standardization Gap (cf., Resolution 123 of PP-22 & 44 of WTSA-20). Overall, the Regional Office is facilitating the organization of bilateral meetings in the region as per TSB request.
* The Standardization Bureau participated in the Open Networks Seminar, held by Anatel on 9 August 2023 and the Japanese Embassy in Brazil. The Director participated in the session “Open Networks: Disaggregation and network virtualization” and spoke about Open Networks: Perspectives from ITU and Mobile Operator Experience. Several bilateral meetings were carried out.
* Active participation of TSB in the 10th edition of Accessible Americas: ICT for ALL, held in November 2023 in Varadero, Cuba, by sharing knowledge and expertise in the field of Artificial Intelligence, Metaverse and Accessibility.

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

#### The ITU Regional Office for Arab States coordinates closely with TSB on activities carried out in the Arab region. Consultations are held at the operational level, wherever relevant or needed. The ITU Regional Office for Arab States has also been providing support to the TSB with League of Arab States (LAS) and with regional telecommunications organizations.

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

**Preparations for WTSA-24**

ITU Regional Office is actively participating in LAS preparatory meetings and is currently coordinating TSB participation in the upcoming LAS-Arab Standardization Team (AST) preparatory meetings.

**Smart Sustainable Cities and Communities**

ITU Arab Regional office is closely coordinating and collaborating on Project on Promoting the Development of Smart Sustainable Cities & Communities Telecom Infrastructure in Egypt. The primary objective of this project is to develop a comprehensive evaluation framework that supports the establishment and operation of SSC&C in Egypt. The framework aims to:

* Facilitate the integration of ICTs and emerging technologies into urban development in alignment with Egypt Vision 2030.
* Ensure the sustainable readiness, and efficient operation of smart city infrastructure and services.
* Promote innovation, investment, and economic growth within the SSC&C ecosystem.
* Establish a verification certification process and standards to ensure that SSC&C and smart services/solutions are planned/designed, constructed and will continue to be developed in adherence to standardized codes and requirements.

**ITU Regional Workshop on EMF Harmony: Balancing Connectivity, Safety and Tower Location Selection in the Arab Region**

The ITU Arab Regional Office provided organizational and coordination support for an EMF workshop held from May 13 to 16. This event, is kindly supported and hosted by the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA) of Oman, aimed to raise awareness about human exposure to electromagnetic fields and to discuss the legal and regulatory requirements for establishing telecommunications towers.

**ITU SG5 Regional Group-ARB**

The ITU Arab Regional Office provided organizational and coordination support for ITU-T SG5 Arab Regional Group (RG) meeting kindly hosted by the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA) of Oman from 13 to 16 of May. The meeting addressed the topics in the context of the region’s specific needs and challenges such as environmental sustainability, EMF, climate change adaptation, and ICT safety. The Regional Office has also contributed to the meeting's agenda items and shared the outcomes of the project on regional E-waste monitor in Arab States.

**Bridging the Standardization Gap (BSG)**

ITU Arab Regional Office provided organisational and coordination support for BSG sessions organized by TSB in Oman on 16 May 2024 in partnership with Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA) of Oman.

**Co-ordination and promotion of ITU-T Activities in Arab Region**

* 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.
* ITU Regional Office is facilitating responses from Arab African countries regarding the status of the implementation of WTSA Resolution 100 (Geneva, 2022) and to establish a common emergency number for Africa.

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

#### The ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific coordinates closely with TSB on activities carried out in the Asia-Pacific region. Consultations are held 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:

**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. This project was successfully extended in 2022 for the full four-year duration and is now slated to end in June 2024.
* The project focuses on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the potential gender and social biases linked with them. The project will enhance the development and implementation of AI standards, frameworks, policies, and initiatives at regional and national levels across Southeast Asia, which considers diverse stakeholders needs. 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.
* The Project is built on four outputs:
  + **Indicative Output 1**: Research outputs on the state of critical technology standards, frameworks, policies, and initiatives, including the capacity gaps among stakeholders, in Southeast Asia.
  + **Indicative Output 2:** Training/Workshops and knowledge sharing activities on Critical Technologies for policymakers in primary beneficiary countries in Southeast Asia.
  + **Indicative Output 3:** Multi-stakeholder Network of Female Policy Makers created at the subregional, regional and global levels.
  + **Indicative Output 4:** Country-specific support provided to assist the policymakers and regulators in the development and implementation of standards, frameworks, policies, and initiatives.

**Preparations for WTSA-24**

* ITU Regional Office continues to assist the TSB team on the organisation of WTSA-24 and various side events in India, scheduled from 14 to 25 October 2024.
* ITU Regional Office organised a coordination meeting between the TSB and UN Country team in India on 10 May 2024, led by the Resident Coordinator, to invite and strengthen participation from UN agencies for various side events.

**Bridging the Standardization Gap (BSG)**

* ITU Regional Office organised BSG workshops in India from 26-27 February 2024 in partnership with National Institute of Communication Finance (NICF), as well as a separate BSG session from 15 – 17 May 2024 at National Telecommunications Institute (NTIPRIT), with support from the Department of Telecommunications. ITU Regional Office provided organisational and coordination support to the TSB team for both the workshops in Delhi.

**Digital Financial Services (DFS) Security Clinic**

* ITU Regional Office participated in the Regional DFS Security Clinic for Asia Pacific region organised in Seoul, Republic of Korea from 24-25 April 2024. ITU Regional Office facilitated the participation of speakers from the Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority (BICMA) and from the Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM). ITU Regional office also presented the regional initiatives and served as a moderator for two sessions on Blockchain Secure Authentication & deployment for passwordless authentication for DFS, as well as Fintech Security & Digital Financial Inclusion in Asia Pacific Region.

**Co-ordination and Participation in External Events to Highlight ITU-T**

* ITU Regional Office joined the 10th meeting of Expert Working Group on Universal Access to Modern Energy Services, Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Cleaner Use of Fossil Fuels (EWG-SDG 7), established under the ESCAP Committee on Energy, on 20 March 2024 in Bangkok, Thailand. ITU Regional Office presented on AI for Good-The role of AI in the sustainable development agenda, and highlighted ITU-T AI recommendations linked to energy.
* ITU Regional Office presented at UNCT Thailand meeting on 8 April 2024 in Bangkok. During this session, ITU Regional Office presented ITU-T AI recommendations and highlighted the AI for Good platform.
* ITU Regional Office joined the "Promoting the Digital Economy in Asia: Making Sense of AI in Asia: A Public Private Dialog on AI Policy and International Development" on 12-13 June 2024 in Bangkok. During this event, ITU presented a lightning talk on AI: Role of Standardization and Governance, including highlighting ITU-T AI recommendations and AI for Good.
* ITU Regional Office facilitated the inputs from TSB on the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) Training Workshop on Preparing for the WTSA on 24 June 2024 in Adelaide, Australia.

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

The ITU Regional Office for CIS Region continues close coordination with TSB on preparations towards WTSA-24. These also includes coordination with the regional telecommunications organization the RCC, with the aim to support Member-States in their preparatory process.

On the specific thematic areas of work, the Regional Office engaged with the TSB team on the following activities:

* Regional Development Forum for CIS Region held on the 26-28 of March 2024 in Astana, Kazakhstan dedicated one of the sessions to the Regional Initiative 5 on Smart Cities in Communities. Representative of TSB contributed to the session by presenting on the overall activities and new developments on this topic within ITU-T and the U4SSC initiative;
* Presentation on AI – representative of TSB participated online in the dedicated roundtable on AI, organized on the 17th of April 2024 as part of the International Forum "TechnoWomen Central Asia: AI Future". The conference was organized with the support of the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovations and Space Industry of Kazakhstan and the ITU Regional Office for CIS within the framework of celebration of the International Girls in ICT Day.

#### 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 and preparations towards WTSA-24. The ITU Office for Europe has been also engaging with TSB on a series of concrete activities in the region. The following presents a sample of activities that have been implemented by the ITU Office for Europe in collaboration with TSB since the last TSAG.

* **Accessible Europe**: The ITU Offices for Europe and European Commission co-organized the Regional Forum that brought together over 400 stakeholders and was held in Spain from 13 to 14 December 2023. This event aimed at strengthening knowledge on the digital accessibility as a fundamental requirement to build an inclusive digital society, economy, and environment. TSB supported curation of the programme and led the organization of the session on AI and Emerging Technologies in Improving Digital Accessibility.
* **CyberDrill**: The organization of the 2023 Interregional CyberDrill for Europe and Asia-Pacific was closely coordinated with TSB and provided an opportunity for drawing attention of over 200 participants to the technical standards related to cybersecurity and digital transformation.
* **5G Techritory**: ITU Office for Europe closely coordinated with TSB, the ITU’s input to the programme and facilitated the participation of the TSB Director in a series of activities during the 5G Techritory Forum 2023, held on 18 October 2023 in Riga, Latvia.
* **Metaverse**: Europe Office facilitated the organization of the 2nd Special Session of the FG-MV, that took place during the 5G Techritory, and provided an open platform for the Europe region to discuss technical standards related considerations related to metaverse, ensuring that the metaverse is developed for the benefit of all. It was followed by a Co-creation workshop on metaverse vision for Europe.
* **Executive training** **on 5G Implementation for Ukraine**: ITU has been delivering tailored capacity-building activities for Ukrainian officials focusing on the 5G implementation. The executive training programme has been co-created by all Sectors of the Union, including TSB, that provided executive training on 5G Standards.
* **Smart Cities:** The ITU Office for Europe in collaboration with the TSB smart city experts, advanced coordination with UNOPS aiming at development of the regional initiative focusing on smart cities and building upon the U4SSC KPIs on Smart Sustainable Cities. This cooperation led towards the elaboration of a concept note for a prospective ITU-UNOPS project on Smart Sustainable Cities.
* **Special events in the lead up to WTSA-24**: In the lead-up to the WTSA-24, a special event was jointly organized by the Europe Office and TSB on 7 May 2024 (back-to-back with ComITU of CEPT). The first session focused on the **Effective Engagement of European Industry in ITU-T**, andaimed to explore how stakeholders from Europe, including industry, can actively and efficiently engage in ITU-T activities and implement ITU-T standards. The session also addressed approaches to bridge the standardization gap (BSG). The second part of the event focused at the **Network of Women in ITU-T**, andprovidedan opportunity for discussing the mechanisms aiming at strengthening participation of women in the works of ITU-T.

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