ITU | **Connect2Recover**

Connect2Recover
Building back better with broadband

Connect2Recover Research Competition

Connect2Recover

An Introduction

Impact of COVID-19

- **Education:** 2.2 billion children and young people unconnected and as COVID-19 has spread across the globe, most countries announced temporary closure of schools, impacting 91% students worldwide – around 1.6 billion children and young people.

- **Jobs:** Unprecedented global employment losses in 2020 of 114 million jobs, higher for women (5%) than for men, and for young workers (8.7%).

- **Healthcare:** Confirmed COVID-19 cases worldwide surpassed 193 million, with over 4.1 million deaths. Focus on continued availability of health services during movement restrictions, other social and public health measures to contain the spread of COVID-19.

- **Fixed Broadband:** The econometric models published in the 2020 study made by ITU has proven that fixed broadband had a higher economic impact for developed countries (countries with GDP per capita higher than USD 22000 and countries with GDP per capita between USD 12000 and USD 22000).

- **Mobile Broadband:** The 2020 study has proven that in countries with low fixed broadband penetration, mobile broadband technology has taken over in becoming the pre-eminent technology driving economic growth.

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Connect2Recover Initiative

Objective

To reinforce and strengthen the **digital infrastructure and digital ecosystems** of beneficiary countries as they adjust in the wake of COVID-19 and remain resilient in times of disasters

Key Outputs

Country internet resilience assessment including identifying the gaps and bottlenecks in the effective use of digital networks and technologies

National ICT strategy, policy, and regulatory recommendations to support recovery efforts and the "new normal"

Projects to implement specific solutions in line with Connect2Recover recommendations

Regions

Africa
Arab States
Americas
Asia-Pacific
CIS
Europe

** Priority to **Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, Small Island Developing States***

Founding Partners

مركز الملك سلمان للإغاثة والأعمال الإنسانية
KING SALMAN HUMANITARIAN AID & RELIEF CENTRE

MIC Japan
Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

Connect2Recover 5 Phase Approach

Phase One

Phase Two

Phase Three

Phase Four

Phase Five

- **Global Methodology**: A methodology to assess gaps and bottlenecks at a country level for the utilization of networks and digital technologies and identify policies to respond to and mitigate the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic and preparedness for any future disasters including those linked to natural hazards.

- **Country Landscape Assessments**: Conduct country-level Digital and Internet resilience assessment.

- **National ICT Strategies**: Based on the Internet resilience assessments, develop and implement comprehensive ICT strategies to ensure that digital infrastructure and ecosystems adequately support recovery efforts as well as the 'new normal', in line with global best practices.

- **Pilot Activities**: Partner with other programs and organizations to implement pilot activities that test specific technological solutions in line with national country strategies and policies, with a particular focus on disaster management, education, health, and job creation. These pilots can also be used to test early warning systems and inform policy making.

- **Deep-Dive Studies**: Undertake deep-dive studies in specific areas of digital policy as prioritized by the countries selected (e.g., in areas such as e-education, e-health and job creation) including to alert and for early warning purposes.
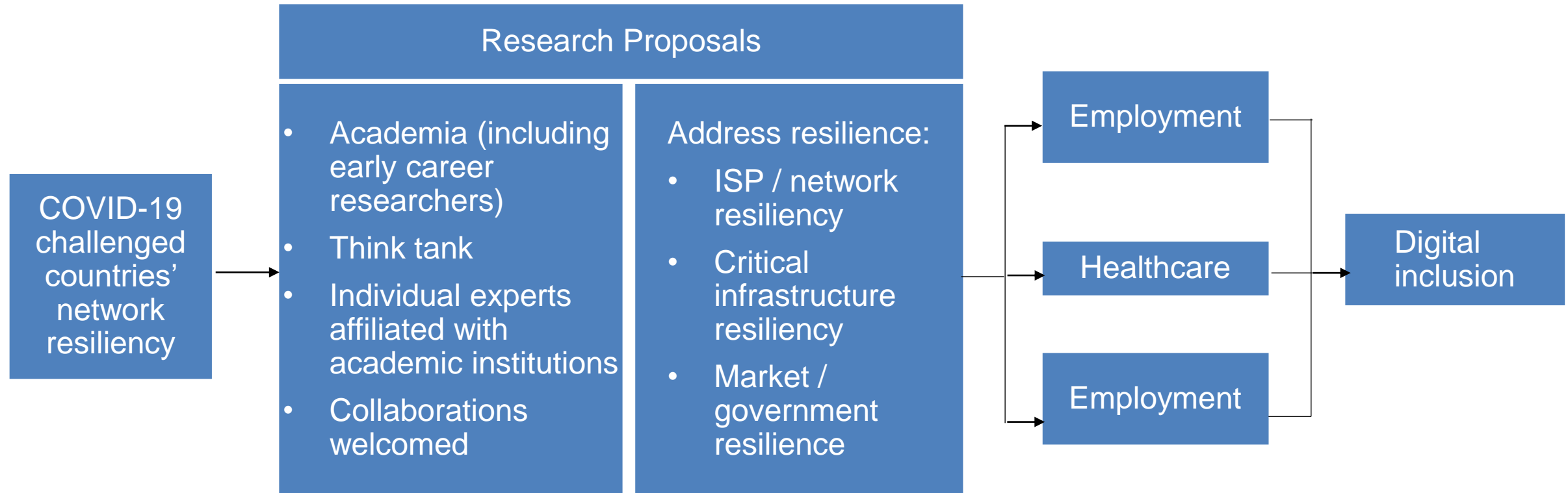
Connect2Recover Research Competition

BACKGROUND

AIM OF COMPETITION

OUTCOME

Research Proposals

• Academia (including early career researchers) • Think tank • Individual experts affiliated with academic institutions • Collaborations welcomed	Address resilience: • ISP / network resiliency • Critical infrastructure resiliency • Market / government resilience

COVID-19 challenged countries' network resiliency

Employment

Healthcare

Employment

Digital inclusion

Objectives

The competition aims to:

- Improve research focus on digital resiliency and digital inclusion to build back better with broadband for pandemic recovery;
- Build a global research community of think tanks and academic institutions around digital inclusion; and
- Promote knowledge sharing that informs targeted practices to build back better with broadband

- The deadline to submit the research proposals has been extended to 17 September 2021 not later than 5 PM CET.
- The winners will be announced one month later.
- The winners will have six months to submit the research papers.

Eligibility

This competition is open to Academia, including early career researchers and think tanks. Individual experts who are affiliated with academic institutions may also apply. Submissions must clearly elaborate and demonstrate at least one of the following:

- How to carry out studies that can assess the resiliency for digital infrastructure taking into account relevant data sources and formulate forward-looking, actionable policy measures leading to positive outcomes in education, healthcare, or job creation by fostering digital inclusion as the country enters the COVID-19 recovery period?
- How to build back better with broadband along with digital inclusion during the COVID-19 recovery efforts resulting in meaningful connectivity?
- Develop key recommendations on aspects of resilient digital infrastructure supporting education, health, or job creation in the targeted context.

Evaluation Criteria

A jury appointed by ITU will review proposals received based on the following criteria in addition to the competition scope to select the winning submissions:

- **Collaboration**: Participants are encouraged to apply in teams featuring institutions from both developed and developing countries. Effort will be made to balance the winners between regions.
- **Relevance**: The research must provide essential insights to foster digital inclusion. Research pertaining to the broad area of connecting the unconnected will receive a special focus. The submission should also offer recommendations on how good practices and (the proposed) additional research could improve the current situation and enable stakeholders to achieve their desired future state.
- **Impact**: The proposal should demonstrate a new, innovative recommendation and outline its potential and impact on vulnerable (currently digitally excluded) groups.
- **Viability**: The recommendations should demonstrate the research adaptability and replicability.
- **Sustainability**: The submission should be financially sustainable and consistent to the COVID-19 crisis for short- and mid-term impact while engaging with local partners.
- **Novelty**: The proposal should be original research and should be related to new knowledge discovery in the field of digital inclusion.
- **Implementation Plan**: Submit concrete, actionable recommendations along with an implementation plan for a Pilot Project in a beneficiary country.

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The Prizes

- Fifteen (15) research grants worth USD 42,000 each will be awarded to winning research teams.

- Winners will receive initial support from ITU to engage with governments and regulators to gather information and data for their research.

- The Connect2Recover Initiative will enable this knowledge exchange through joint (online) events with the selected research teams and policymakers.

- Winning teams will benefit from great visibility during these events and will have opportunities to present and discuss their research directly with decision makers.

Registration and Submission

- Participants must register and complete the submission form by clicking the '**Apply Online**' button below (Opens in a new window).
- Submissions of **original work** are invited and submissions must be in **English**.
- Please note that each team is only allowed one submission.
- No individual team member can participate in two teams. This will result in **exclusion of both teams**.
- To prepare the application, please download the information about the format and content required in the application form **here**:
- It is recommended to prepare the content accordingly and then copy and paste it into the online application form.

Copy the following address into your browser in order to register: **https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RG3M2NC**

Terms and Reference

- By entering the Connect2Recover Research Competition, you hereby warrant that all information submitted by you is true, current, complete and accurate, and that the research proposal is an original work. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) reserves the right to verify the eligibility of all applicants.
- By entering the Connect2Recover Research Competition, you agree to comply with the rules of the competition (Terms and References, Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria).
- By entering the Connect2Recover Research Competition, you agree that the results of the subsequent research projects shall be presented at future ITU events and packaged as research briefs (max. 10,000 words) in a ITU publication series, Build Back Better with Broadband: Research stories from the frontline.
- By entering the Connect2Recover Research Competition, you agree that the publication shall feature ITU logo while due acknowledgements would be accorded to the contributions made by successful winners as per ITU rules and procedures.
- By entering the Connect2Recover Research Competition, you agree that the ITU will reserve the right for publication of the research and will have the necessary copyright to publish the research in the publication series mentioned in the above. Otherwise, the copyright of the research output will remain with the winning teams and they are encouraged to publish their research outcomes through their means or in academic as well as industry outlets giving due notice to the funding received from ITU.