Introduction:

In 2020, ITU Arab regional office deeply embarked on a comprehensive overhaul of the BDT initiative in use of Results-Based Management (RBM) to equip the office for the challenges of a rapidly changing development landscape and make it Fit4Purpose. This reform includes the use of the RBM and its main elements, the Theory of Change (ToC) and Impact Pathways and their use are relevant for the implementation of the regional priority areas (Regional Initiatives (RIs)) adopted during the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017 (WTDC-17) and provide the evidence to demonstrate BDT's impact. These approaches serve as the platform to engage with internal and external partners, and to replicate and scale up successful projects and work programme initiatives.

Building on earlier efforts to use RBM as a planning methodology, a number of workshops and sessions were organized with active participation of the regional staff from the Arab Regional Office (ARB). The objective is to ensure that the RBM framework is not limited to planning, but that it also focuses strongly on work programme coordination and implementation to collect the evidence of the achievements towards impact.

Thus, the ITU ARB Office is extremely involved the BDT RBM initiative and its following building blocks:

− **Theory of Change (ToC),** regional staff had worked closely with HQ thematic priority coordinators and developed a ToC for each thematic priority.
− **Impact Pathways (IP)**, which follow thematic activity workstreams to identify the delivered outputs, the target recipients reached, the changes in capacity of the recipient population, and their resulting behaviour changes, translating into wider impact;
− Articulation of the underlying **assumptions and operational risks**, which allow to monitor where progress is stalling or blocked, and based on this feedback to quickly learn and readjust the initial planning assumptions of the work programme to bring it back on track;
− Articulation of the linkages between each thematic cluster (i.e., the WTDC programmes) and the relevant ITU-D study groups and the other ITU Sectors (ITU-T and ITU-R),
− SMART **key performance indicators** (KPIs), which provide the qualitative or quantitative tools to continuously measure and record our achievements towards the articulated medium- and longer-term thematic goals.

Development of Operational Plan 2020:

In line of the RBM approach and using the Theory of Change tool adopted by BDT, ITU Arab regional office has developed an RBM framework (theory of change) to reflect its thematic priorities and regional specificities in full alignment with the Buenos Aires Action Plan priorities. In doing so, the following guiding principles were spelled out:

− Working through and in coordination with thematic priorities coordinators in HQ.
− Using a holistic approach, which encompasses all available resources (human, financial) by bringing together the 2020 operational plan workplan, the projects, regional initiatives and any other activities.
− Making partnering and resource mobilization a primary focus for each staff, and the default mode of operation.
− Using the results chain and impact statements as the foundation for BDT communication.
− Delegating authority to cluster facilitators and regional directors (within predefined approval boundaries).

To further strengthen the RBM approach in the region, regional staffs were trained on Project Management, Change Management, Communication for Development, and Procurement.

This comprehensive approach will also require the setting up of new systems to track implementation progress, report on KPIs and expenditures incurred by deliverable, in addition to tracking the activities. This

will enable direct linkages from our budget and expenditures to our work programme priorities, pending the completion of the IT systems renewal.

Implementation of Operational Plan (OP) 2020:

Using RBM as a managerial decision tool for the implementation of the BDT work programme lays the foundation for an effective, efficient, and a Fit4Purpose BDT. The following key RBM related new and enhanced management processes are implemented:

− Quarterly review meetings between the thematic clusters and the regional offices to review and allow adjustments on a holistic basis, taking into consideration the progress of all work programme elements. The 3rd Quarterly review meeting took place the second week of Nov.

− Operational risk assessments are being recorded in a unit-based risk register and at the thematic priority level, and then aggregated to the BDT level; this will allow to quickly spot all (red-marked) problem areas in order to escalate decision-making and resolve the pending programme issues.

− Working assumptions are being reviewed on a regular basis to ensure agility in the adjustment of the work programmes, and to learn quickly from those changes.

− Key performance indicators are being finalized for each thematic priority and progress will be updated continuously on a BDT dashboard, and reported regularly.

− Performance Agreements are being implemented to establish transparent linkages between the thematic priorities, the thematic priorities and the Regions, the relevant ITU-D study groups, and the other ITU Sectors (ITU-T and ITU-R).

− A modernization of BDT systems has been initiated to align the reporting capabilities with the delegation of authority to budget holders and maintain accountability.

− Successful projects and programmes, including regional initiatives are being replicated and scaled up with the help of our partners and based on the interest of our membership.

The above measures resulted in palpable impact, the first signs of which represented by implementing a more impacted activities, signed projects and initiated some regional initiatives.

The ten BDT thematic priorities are presented on Annex B and detailed progress of the implementation of Operational Plan 2020 including the direct assistances provided to countries (LDCs[1] and countries have specific resolution) are available on Annex A (implemented events in 2020) as well as the upcoming events which are available in Annex C.

Key Achievements of OP2020:

In 2020, more than 20 events were conducted as of 23rd of Nov covering the ten thematic priorities of the BDT and direct support to 6 countries covering more than 10 requested priority areas. This resulted in raising awareness and built capacities of around 1200 participants. In addition, 3 cooperation agreements with members (2 with Saudi and 1 with Sudan) were signed and 3 projects which started their implementation.

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[1] *Note: LDCs (Comoros, Djibouti, Mauritania, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, and Palestine (Res 18 of WTDC17 and Res 99 of PP-18)) are integrated into each of the thematic priorities*

Annex A – LIST OF BDT THEMATIC PRIORITIES

BDT Thematic Priority	WTDC Programmes	Arab Regional Initiatives	Study Group Questions
Capacity Development	Capacity building and human skills development	Cuts across all RIs	Cuts across all Questions
Cybersecurity	Cybersecurity	ARB2	Q3/2
Digital Inclusion	Digital inclusion for empowering woman & girls, people with disabilities and other people with specific needs	ARB3	Q7/1
Digital Innovation Ecosystem	Innovation	ARB5	Q1/2
Digital Services	Telecommunications/ICTs services and applications	ARB3&4	Q1/2; Q2/2
Emergency Telecommunications	Disaster risk reduction and management and emergency telecommunications	ARB1	Q5/2
Environment	Climate change adaptation and mitigation	ARB1	Q6/2
Networks and Digital Infrastructure	Telecommunications/ICTs network infrastructure and services	ARB4	Q7/2; Q1/1; Q2/1; Q6/1
Policy and Regulation	Policy and regulatory environment	ARB3	Q1/1; Q3/1; Q4/1; Q6/1
Statistics	ICT data and statistics	Cuts across all RIs	Cuts across all Questions

Annex B – LIST OF IMPLEMENTED EVENTS in 2020

Activity Title	Modality	Dates	BDT Thematic Priority	Arab Regional Initiatives (RIs)
Regional Workshop on Smart Water Management	Face to face [Cairo – Egypt]	01 March 2020	Environment	RI 1: Environment, climate change and emergency telecommunications
Learning with ITU workshop	Face to face [Dubai – UAE]	03 March	Capacity Development	Cuts across all RIs
Capacity building workshop on modern spectrum management + ITU Spectrum management Software (SMS4DC)	Face to face [Zanzibar-Tanzania]	2-6 March 2020	Network and digital infrastructure (Policy and Regulation initiative for digital Africa project[2])	Not applicable

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[2] Policy and regulation initiative for digital Africa (PRIDA) is a joint initiative between the African Union, the European Union and the International Telecommunications Union that aims to foster universally accessible and affordable wireless broadband across the African continent. The ITU is implementing the part of the project on harmonised spectrum utilisation and regulations. The PRIDA events listed in Annex B had been attended by 99 participants from 10 Arab countries.

Capacity building workshop on modern spectrum management + ITU Spectrum management Software (SMS4DC)	Online	**English version:** 20 April -1 May 2020 **French version:** 11-22 May 2020	Network and digital infrastructure (Policy and Regulation initiative for digital Africa project)	Not applicable
ITU ARB CoE training on "Agile Project Management for ICT Applications & Services"	Online	13 - 23 June 2020	Capacity Development	Cuts across all RIs
Arab Regional Informal WTDC-21 Preparatory Web Dialogue	Online	23 June 2020, 13:00-15:00 Cairo time	Cuts across all Thematic Priority and RIs	Cuts across all RIs
ITU ARB CoE training on "Cyber security awareness & forensics"	Online	13 - 19 July 2020	Capacity Development	RI 2: Confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/information and communication technologies
ITU ARB CoE training on "Software Defined Network (SDN)"	Online	09 - 16 Aug. 2020	Capacity Development	Cuts across all RIs
GSR 2020 Regional Regulatory Roundtable Discussion: Competition Policy and Analysis in a Digital Apps environment for Africa and Arab Regions	Online	20 Aug. 2020, 14:00-17:00 CEST	Policy and Regulation	Cuts across all RIs
Capacity building workshop on Internet of Things (IoT) and digital services	Online	**English version:** 7-11 September 2020 **French version:** 24-28 August 2020	Network and digital infrastructure (Policy and Regulation initiative for digital Africa project)	Not applicable
ITU ARB CoE training on "Applications of Geographic Information System (GIS) in Environmental Management and Resources Protection -Level 1"	Tunis – Tunisia	07 - 10 September 2020	Capacity Development	RI 1: Environment, climate change and emergency telecommunications
ITU ARB CoE training on "5G Mobile Networks and Systems"	Online	14 - 20 September 2020	Capacity Development	Cuts across all RIs
ITU ARB CoE training on "Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC)"	Online	21 - 27 September 2020	Capacity Development	RI 2: Confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/information and communication technologies

ITU ARB CoE training on "Big Data"	Khartoum - Sudan	22 - 24 September 2020	Capacity Development	RI 4: Internet of Things, smart cities and big data
Global CyberDrill 2020: Regional Dialogue for Arab Region on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic	Online	22 September 2020, 14:00 – 16:00 (Cairo Time)	Cybersecurity	RI 2: Confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/information and communication technologies
ITU ARB CoE training on "Fiber To The Home (FTTH)"	Khartoum - Sudan	06 - 08 October 2020	Capacity Development	Cuts across all RIs
ITU-ITSO Online Course on Satellite Communications and Radio Regulations Procedures for Arab and Africa regions	Online	01 October – 15 November 2020	Capacity Development	Cuts across all RIs
ITU-UNESCO Digital Inclusion Week	Online	25 - 30 Oct. 2020 (Cairo Time)	Digital Inclusion	RI 3: Digital financial inclusion
Digital Inclusion for Persons With Disability in Times of Crisis, organized by ITU and Mada	Online	26 October 11:00-12:30 (Cairo Time)	Digital Inclusion	RI 3: Digital financial inclusion
Digital Skills for Girls in Iraq Workshop, organized by ITU and CMC Iraq	Online	28 October 10:00-12:20 (Cairo Time)	Digital Inclusion	RI 3: Digital financial inclusion
ITU ARB CoE training on "Internet Governance"	Online	27 - 29 October 2020, Khartoum – Sudan, ITU Academy	Capacity Development	RI 2: Confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/information and communication technologies
ITU Online Workshop on ICT Tabletop Exercises, Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) and Tampere Convention for Disaster Management in the Arab region	Online	28 - 29 Oct. 2020, 14:00-17:00 pm (Cairo Time)	Emergency Telecommunications	RI 1: Environment, climate change and emergency telecommunications
ITU Regional Forum for the Arab Region: Mainstreaming competitive digital innovation ecosystems in the age of COVID-19	Online	29 Oct. 2020, 11:00-15:00 (Cairo Time)	Digital Innovation Ecosystem	RI 5: Innovation and entrepreneurship
ITU ARB CoE training on "Optical Access Networks and Fiber to the X (FTTX) Technologies"	Online	02 - 08 November 2020, Online, ITU Academy (Postponed)	Capacity Development	Cuts across all RIs
ITU Online Regional Training Workshop on	Online	9 - 12 Nov. 2020, 10:00-13:30 (Cairo Time)	Networks and Digital Infrastructure	Cuts across all RIs

Spectrum Monitoring for the Arab Region				
FIGI Security Clinic for Egypt	Online	18 - 20 November 2020, 13:00-14:00 (Cairo Time)	Cybersecurity	RI 2: Confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/information and communication technologies & RI 3: Digital financial inclusion
Regional Dialogue on the 2020 ITU COP Guidelines and Opportunities for Implementation in the Arab Region	Online	23 Nov. 2020, 11:00-13:00 (Cairo Time)	Cybersecurity	RI 2: Confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/information and communication technologies

Direct Assistances to Countries

Country	Assistance
Comoros	Developed Cost model
Libya	- Developing new ICTs Law - Developing ICTs Policy and Strategy
Mauritania	Developed guidelines on ICTs competition and dispute resolution
Palestine	Developed Cost model and price regulation framework
Somalia	Developing National Emergency Telecom Plan (NETP)
Sudan	- Reviewing National Emergency Telecom Plan (NETP) - Review and analysis of ICTs Market - Developing Digital Transformation Strategy and Smart Village concept

Annex C-UPCOMING VIRTUAL EVENTS IN 2020

Activity	Dates and Times	Platform
ITU Arab Regional Development Forum (RDF)	25 - 26 Nov. 2020, 12:00-15:00 (Cairo Time)	Zoom
ITU ARB CoE training on "Optical Transport Networks: Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexing (DWDM) Technologies"	25 November to 02 December 2020 (Postponed)	ITU Academy
ITU-UNEP-UNU Joint Online Workshop on WEEE: Towards regional harmonization of national WEEE policies, regulations and standards in the Arab States	02 - 03 Dec. 2020, 14:00-17:00 pm (Cairo Time)	Zoom
ITU ARB CoE training on "Ultra-Microwave Broadband Internet Access"	7 - 10 December 2020	ITU Academy
ITU ARB CoE training on "AM5.2: How to assess your product's carbon footprint"	7 - 11 December 2020	ITU Academy
4th Steering Committee for ITU Arab CoEs Network	10 December 2020, 10:00 am - 13:00 pm	Zoom
Emerging Technologies Week for the Arab And African Regions	13-18 December 2020	Zoom
ITU ARB CoE training on "Environmental Impact Assessment"	14 - 18 December 2020	ITU Academy
ITU-GMSA 5G Capacity building Course for Arab and Africa regions	15 - 17 Dec. 2020, 12:00 - 15:00 pm CET	ITU Academy
ITU ARB CoE training on "Cloud Computing"	29 - 31 December 2020	ITU Academy