Concept Note and Agenda

I-CoDI Regional Workshop: The New ITU Arab Regional Initiatives

19 – 22 November 2024, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Organised by the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority and the International Telecommunications Union

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Context and Background

In line with the strategic partnership between the TDRA and the ITU to accelerate digital innovation through the ICodi Initiative, this workshop is organised as a preparatory step for the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) 2025. The primary aim is to support Member States in identifying the next set of regional priorities that can shape the new Regional Initiatives for the Arab Region, which will guide ITU's work in the region from 2025 to 2028.

This workshop will bring together participants from Member States and ecosystem stakeholder groups — including the public sector, private sector, academia, finance, innovators, and support networks — to co-create the new regional priorities for the Arab region.

Using established methodologies and strategic frameworks, participants will collaborate to assess current and future trends, as well as potential risks and opportunities within the region, to identify regional priorities and develop robust, resilient, and impactful recommendations. This workshop complements Member States' efforts to draft the ITU Arab Regional Initiative ahead of the upcoming WTDC, scheduled to take place from 17 to 28 November 2025 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The gradual transition towards a digital society has been widely recognised as essential for sustainable and inclusive development in the 21st century. In June 2020, the UN Secretary-General launched a Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, acknowledging the importance of a multistakeholder approach to foster a safer and more equitable digital world. This roadmap outlines eight areas of action, focusing on universal connectivity, promoting digital public goods, digital inclusion, strengthening digital capacity-building, protecting human rights in the digital era, supporting global cooperation on AI, fostering trust and security in the digital environment, and building a more effective architecture for digital cooperation. Additionally, at the Summit of the Future, a Global Digital Compact was endorsed to "outline shared principles for an open, free, and secure digital future for all." In this context, innovation and digitalisation have been identified as key "enablers" for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the region.

Workshop Overview

This four-day interactive workshop will bring together diverse stakeholders from key sectors to collaborate in a strategic foresight exercise aimed at shaping the region's ecosystem for a digitally ready future. Through these collaborative sessions, participants will identify priority areas to inform the development of the new regional initiatives. High-level attendees are expected to include representatives from relevant ministries and regulators across Member States, as well as from UN agencies, international and regional organisations, the private sector, academia, finance, innovators, and support networks within the region.

The workshop will be conducted in English, and hosted at the TDRA office in Dubai, UAE.
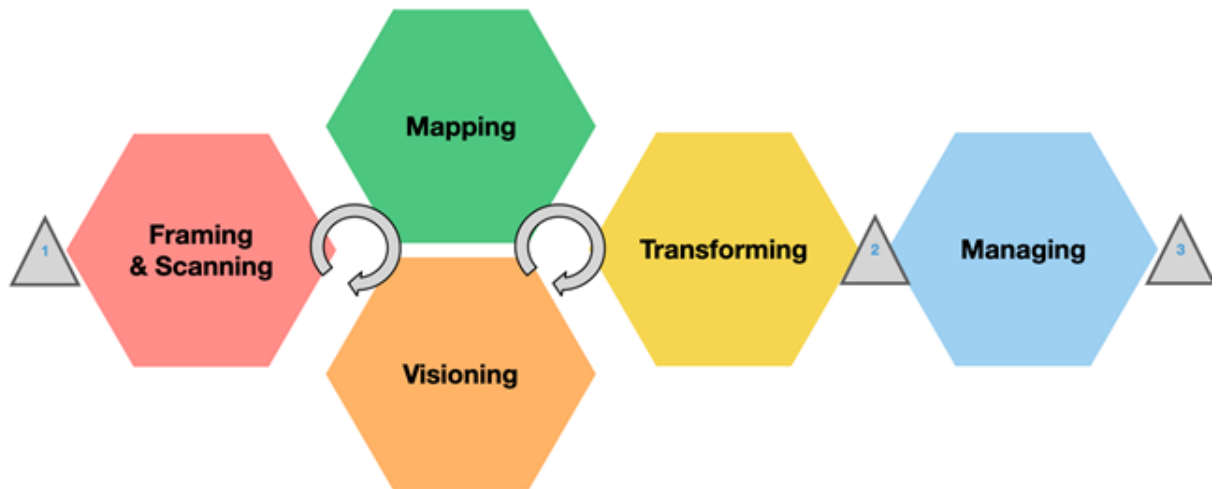
The objectives of the workshop are:

1. Define the priorities that will inform the formulation of the ITU Arab Regional Priorities for 2025-2028, using strategic foresight analysis to shape new regional initiatives for the Arab States. This process will consider the unique needs of both developed and developing countries within the region, along with the resources and key factors necessary to ensure these priorities are relevant, strategic, and impactful for all Member States.

2. Utilise ITU's methodology for strategic foresight to foster a futures-thinking approach and develop skills in strategic foresight. This approach will empower stakeholders to detect environmental signals, map trends, anticipate disruptions, explore multiple possible futures, and create resilient systems that guide stakeholders in building a roadmap toward desired outcomes.

Outputs

The primary outputs of the workshop will be twofold:

1. Strategic Foresight Analysis: A comprehensive analysis that employs a systematic approach to anticipate, prepare for, and navigate future uncertainties. This will enable informed decision-making and proactive adaptation to emerging trends and challenges.

2. Identification of Regional Priorities: Identification of at least five key regional priorities that could shape the ITU Regional Initiatives for 2025-2028. In addition, participants will co-create recommendations to guide the evolution of these priorities, ensuring they remain relevant and impactful for the future.

Co-Creation Approach

Over the four-day workshop, participants will engage in a structured strategic foresight exercise, guided by co-creation tools, designed to identify priorities that will help in the formulation of the ITU Arab Regional Initiatives. The collaborative activities will include:

a. **Framing and Scanning the Environment**: Participants will examine the current landscape to identify critical signals and emerging trends, setting a foundation for understanding the factors shaping the region's digital ecosystem.

b. **Mapping Trends and Drivers**: Through in-depth analysis, participants will assess the impact and uncertainty of key signals, trends, and drivers, helping to evaluate how these elements could influence various future scenarios for the region.

c. **Envisioning Future Scenarios**: Participants will create and explore multiple future scenarios, assessing their implications for the regional ecosystem and prioritising the scenarios that align most closely with the desired digital future for the Arab States.

d. **Transforming the Future Vision into a Strategic Action Plan**: The insights from the scenarios will guide the creation of a shared vision for the future, along with a concrete action plan that outlines the steps needed to achieve this vision.

e. **Managing the Action Plan through the Establishment of Supportive Mechanisms**: Finally, participants will gain an understanding of mechanisms and systems to support and manage the strategic actions, ensuring sustainable implementation of the regional priorities and fostering resilience within the ecosystem.

Facilitators and Participants

The workshop will be facilitated by ITU representatives from the Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, and the Regional Office for the Arab States in Cairo, Egypt.

- Mr. Mohamed Ba
- Mr. Karim Abdelghani
- Ms. Udita Chaturvedi
- Ms. Rasha Tantawy

The workshop will include participation from representatives of various stakeholder groups, including, but not limited to:

- Ministry of Telecommunications representatives from Member States
- Regulatory bodies from Member States
- Telecommunications companies
- Academia
- Youth representatives
- ITU BDT Arab Network for Women representatives
- International and regional organisations
- United Nations organisations
- Private sector representatives

Additional Information and Resources

All participants are requested to carry their laptops or tablets for the co-creation activities. Internet will be provided at the workshop venue by the organisers.

Participants are encouraged to complete the free-of-cost self-paced *Strategic Foresight 101 online course on the ITU Academy* before attending the workshop to familiarise themselves with the fundamentals of futures thinking and strategic foresight. This will help participants easily navigate the co-creation workshop.

Participants can also familiarise themselves with the existing ITU Regional Initiatives 2023-2025 here.

Workshop Agenda

Day 1: Tuesday, 19 November 2024

Time	Activity	Details
09:30 - 10:00	Welcome	
10:00 - 10:10	Opening Remarks by TDRA	
10:10 - 10:15	Opening Remarks by ITU	
10:15 - 10:45	Round of Introductions	
10:45 - 11:00	Group Photo and Coffee Break	
11:00 - 11:30	Orientation	Introduction to the workshop objectives, co-creation approach, expected outputs and outcomes, and a brief presentation on the previous ITU Regional Initiatives 2023-2025.
11:30 - 12:30	Strategic Foresight Basics	Introduction to futures thinking as an approach, the methodology for strategic foresight, the tools used, and the overall approach to be followed.
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 - 14:30	Co-Creation Part I: Framing and Scanning	Participants will engage in group activities to identify priority topics of interest for the four-day strategic foresight workshop.
14:30 - 14:45	Coffee Break	
14:45 - 16:30	Co-Creation Part I: Framing and Scanning (Contd)	Participants will engage in group activities to frame and scan the environment to identify critical signals in the region's ecosystem.
16:30 - 17:00	Networking	

Day 2: Wednesday, 20 November 2024

Time	Activity	Details
10:00 - 11:00	Recap of Day 1	
11:00 - 11:15	Coffee Break	
11:15 - 12:30	Co-Creation Part I: Framing and Scanning (Contd)	Participants will engage in group activities to identify emerging trends shaping the region's ecosystem.
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 - 14:30	Co-Creation Part II: Mapping	Participants will engage in group activities to assess the impact of key signals, trends, and drivers on the region's ecosystem.
14:30 - 14:45	Coffee Break	
14:45 - 16:30	Co-Creation Part II: Mapping (Contd)	Participants will engage in group activities to assess how the uncertainties around the mega drivers could influence future scenarios for the region.
16:30 - 17:00	Networking	

Day 3: Thursday, 21 November 2024

Time	Activity	Details
10:00 - 11:00	Recap of Day 2	
11:00 - 11:15	Coffee Break	
11:15 - 12:30	Co-Creation Part III: Visioning	Participants will engage in group activities to create and explore multiple future scenarios for the region.
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 - 14:30	Co-Creation Part III: Visioning (Contd)	Participants will engage in group activities to assess the implications of the identified future scenarios on the region's ecosystem.
14:30 - 14:45	Coffee Break	
14:45 - 16:30	Co-Creation Part III: Visioning (Contd)	Participants will engage in group activities to prioritise the desired scenario for the regional ecosystem.
16:30 - 17:00	Networking	

Day 4: Friday, 22 November 2024

Time	Activity	Details
10:00 - 11:00	Recap of Day 3	
11:00 - 11:15	Coffee Break	
11:15 - 12:30	Co-Creation Part IV: Transforming	Participants will engage in group activities to use the insights from the multiple scenarios to develop an action plan that outlines the steps required to achieve the vision.
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 - 14:30	Co-Creation Part IV: Transforming (Contd)	Participants will continue to engage in group activities to use the insights from the multiple scenarios to develop an action plan that outlines the steps required to achieve the vision.
14:30 - 14:45	Coffee Break	
14:45 - 16:00	Co-Creation Part IV: Transforming (Contd)	Participants will engage in group activities to reinforce the action plan with essential preparatory steps, ensuring both sustainability and impact.
16:00 - 16:30	Managing the Action Plan and Next Steps	
16:30 - 16:45	Closing Remarks by TDRA and ITU	