



**ITU-FAO-DOA-TRCSL**  
**Training on**  
**“Innovation & Application Development for E-agriculture”**  
**11-15 December 2017**  
**National Agriculture Information & Communication Centre**  
**Department of Agriculture, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka**  
**Mr. Sameer Sharma, Senior Advisor**  
**ITU Regional Office Asia-Pacific**

Mr. P.R.S.P. Jayathilake, Director General of TRCSL

Dr. Rohan Wijekoon, Director General Department of Agriculture

Dr. D.B.T. Wijeratne, Assistant FAO Representative

Distinguished Delegates

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is a great pleasure and a privilege to be with you here in Peradeniya, Sri Lanka today at ITU-FAO-DOA-TRCSL Training on “Innovation & Application Development for E-agriculture” with support from the Department of Communications and the Arts, Government of Australia. This training has been designed with main objectives of the training course are to:

- Develop greater capability within the Department of Agriculture to innovate using emerging technologies;
- Develop greater ability to design, develop and deliver technology solutions to meet the development goals and challenges of the agriculture sector;
- Learn the processes and skills to design, develop and deliver a prototype application for Android devices
- Learn the processes and skills to design, develop and deliver a prototype web application using Ruby on Rails.

The training will consist of three components.

**Training 1:** This training is for a general audience of Department of Agriculture employees.



**Training 2:** This training is designed for a technical audience who have experience with designing and developing software.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Today, we are very well aware that ICTs cut across each and every sector through e-education, e-health, e-agriculture, e-banking, smart cities and smart countries and we need to embrace emerging technologies such as Big data, open data, cloud computing Internet of Things and artificial intelligence to tap into the huge opportunities offered by ICT for achieving sustainable development. This is an exciting time for the sector and for people around the world, as ICTs have moved center stage in the global digital economy.

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) recognized innovation as one of the main goals at the World Telecommunication Development Conference and the Plenipotentiary Conference held in 2014. Innovation is also highlighted in Goal 9 of the Sustainable Development Goals: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Innovation has three key roles to play for ITU Member States. It allows states to improve public services through innovative ICT solutions and transform their public sectors. It also allows governments, civil society, and the private sector to work together, develop ICT solutions and share them to foster knowledge sharing and collaboration on social innovation. Finally, innovation is an essential part of a thriving ICT sector, and more broadly a thriving economy, enabling businesses to develop ICT solutions and compete on a global scale by creating jobs, wealth, and economic growth. This can help to bridge the digital and innovation divides, creating a more equal world where more and more people can enjoy the benefits of ICTs.

ITU helps Member States to promote innovation in their own ecosystems. Sustainable, durable innovation comes about when governments not only create an enabling environment for innovation to take place, but also take an active role in catalysing partnerships with innovation stakeholders. To enhance national innovation ecosystems, ITU has undertaken a series of country reviews of ICT-centric innovation ecosystems and made recommendations on how to strengthen them.



I am pleased to share with you that ITU has developed first tool kit “Bridging the digital innovation divide: A toolkit for strengthening ICT centric ecosystems” for strengthening ICT centric ecosystems shares the knowledge gained and methods used in the country review process, and is meant to help Member States to directly undertake the review process, exploring the needs of key innovation stakeholders and working with them to develop policies, projects and other actions to foster innovation.

For this event we have distinguished experts Mr Peter Argent from Australia, Mr. Shahryar Khan from Pakistan and I myself is learning to become expert of some kind while learning from everyone who will deliver practical hands on experience sharing and skill development sessions during the four days! I welcome all the experts who have come all the way to Colombo to share their knowledge with us!

This training is an excellent example of collaboration of ITU-FAO-DOA-TRCSL at the country level benefiting trainers from DOA and developing expertise. I sincerely thank Mr. Jagath from TRCSL , Dr. Rohan Wijekoon, Director General Department of Agriculture and Dr. D.B.T. Wijeratne, Assistant FAO Representative for their support , personal presence and fostering this excellent collaboration with ITU.

With that, I conclude my remarks by thanking all of you for sparing your precious time and our host TRCSL and DOA for making excellent arrangements for this training and I am sure with our collective learning, we will have a very successful, interactive and fruitful training.

I thank you.