ITU Area Office and Innovation Centre consultation meeting with Member States
Wed, July 31
Location: Grand Ball Room, The Grand, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi

Overview

ITU opened an Area Office for South Asia and global Innovation Centre in New Delhi last year. The office was inaugurated at the highest level by the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi and ITU Elected Officials on 22 March 2023. The ITU Area Office and Innovation Centre brings together government, industry, academia and others in an entrepreneurial environment so that digital technology advancements in sectors such as agriculture, health, and education can reach the communities that need them most. The Area Office covers seven countries in the region including India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Iran.

The Innovation Centre brings together the main stakeholders of the digital innovation ecosystem (entrepreneurs, finance, support networks, public sector, academia and private sector) and serves as a global center to reduce technological inequities. It will also allow spotlighting of the Indian innovation ecosystem through South-South and Triangular cooperation, while supporting ITU's mission with new capabilities and accelerating digital development.

2023 was an impactful year for the Area Office where a number of activities were conducted in partnership with the Department of Telecommunication (DoT), inviting participation from countries in the region. Given below is the overview of engagements from 2023 until now:

- Regional Innovation Forum in March
- South Asia Information Session: Green Digital Transformation and a Circular Economy for Electronics in June
- Digital Health Joint Workshop and Symposium with Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences (RMLIMS) Lucknow in August
- Safe and Secure School Connectivity Sensitization Meetings in August
- ITU Senior Executive Capacity Building Workshop on WoG and GovStack in September
- Side event on Innovation & Entrepreneurship for SDG's during IMC in October
- Visit of UNCT to ITU in October
- Stakeholder consultations with the Government of Maharashtra in November
- SMS4DC Training for DoT officials conducted in December
- Bridging the Standardization Group (BSG) workshop at NICF in February
- Workshop on BSG & IPR, SEPs at NTIPRIT in May
- Girls in ICT India Launch in May

The Area Office is gearing up for an even more eventful year in 2024 with deepened engagement with all stakeholders including the countries from the region. After being operational for more than a year, the Area Office would like to take the opportunity to recognize the support extended by the Department of Telecommunications, Government of India, and plan the way forward with member states in the region.

More concretely, the event aims to invite technical level government representatives of member states from South Asia, introduce the Area Office and Innovation Centre to them, review the 2023 activities, plan targeted 2024 activities, and discuss partnerships/membership and concrete plan of actions.

Following the consultations on 31 July, the Area Office is organising a study tour and workshop on the topic Common Alert Protocol (CAP) and Cell Broadcasting for Early Warning from 1-2 August, in partnership with the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT).

Agenda:

09:00-09:30	Registration and arrival of guests
09:30-09:45	**Welcome and opening speech**, Ms. Atsuko Okuda, Regional Director, Asia and Pacific, ITU
09:45-10:15	**Special address:** 1. Mr. Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator in India 2. Mr. Anil Kumar Lahoti, Chairman, TRAI 3. Ms. Madhu Arora, Member (Technology), Department of Telecommunications 4. Dr. Rajkumar Upadhyay, CEO, Centre for Development of Telematics *(Group photo – 5 minutes)*
10:20-10:40	**Presentation on ITU and its activities within the region,** Ms. Atsuko Okuda, Regional Director, Asia and Pacific, ITU
10:40-11:00	**Presentation on ITU Area Office & Innovation Centre's activities so far & a glimpse of plans for future,** Ms. Akanksha Sharma, Programme Officer, ITU
11:00-11:15	**Tea/Coffee break**
11:15-13:30	**Session 1: Presentations from Member States on progress made in the field of ICT, plans for the future & opportunities to collaborate with ITU on innovation** (20 mins. each) Moderator: Ms. Natasha Nayak, GSMA 1. Mr. Md. Nahidul Hasan, Deputy Director, Systems and Services Division, Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission 2. Mr. Thuenzang Choephel, Deputy Executive Engineer, Government Technology Agency, Bhutan 3. Mr. Avinash Agarwal, Deputy Director General (Standards and Convergence & Broadcasting), Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC), Department of Telecommunications, India 4. Mr. Mushthag Firag, Assistant Director, Communications Authority of Maldives 5. Mr. Raj Kumar Maharjan, Under Secretary (Tech.), Ministry of Communication & Information Technology (MoCIT), Nepal
13:30-14:30	Lunch
14:30-15:30	**Session 2: Opportunities to partner with ITU through the Digital Innovation Alliance** Moderator: Mr. Dharmendra Singh, Vice President, Hughes Communication 14:30 – 14:50 DoT's role as the Co-Chair of Digital Innovation Board, Ms. Madhu Arora, Member (Technology), Department of Telecommunications 14:50 – 15:10 Digital Innovation Alliance, Ms Udita Chaturvedi, Digital Innovation Ecosystem Expert, Digital Innovation Ecosystems, ITU

	15:10 – 15:30 Presentation on TDAG, Council, WTSA, Ms. Shaina Hasan, Coordinator, ITU Area Office for South Asia
15:30-15:45	Tea/Coffee break
15:45-17:00	**Session 3: Understanding the needs and requirements of member states & other stakeholders as an Innovation Centre (Moderator: Mr. Gibson Riungu, Chief ICT, UNICEF India & Ms. Akanksha Sharma, Programme Officer, ITU)** Participants: India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, & Maldives, other stakeholders from government, industry, UN, academia and civil society - What are the key emerging technology areas where your country/organization is investing in (from the future perspective), where ITU Innovation Centre could partner with you? - What kind of partnerships would be interesting to explore – skills, capacity development, pilot projects, co-creation models or technology showcases? - Can you list one or two concrete ideas for collaboration?
17:00	**Closing remarks, Ms. Atsuko Okuda, Regional Director for Asia Pacific**