



ITU-D

Questions 4/1 and 5/1

Joint deliverable

“Challenges and Opportunities of the Use of USF for Bridging the Digital Divide”

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Economic and Policy Issues
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РОССИЙСКИЙ НАУЧНО-ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬСКИЙ ИНСТИТУТ РАДИО

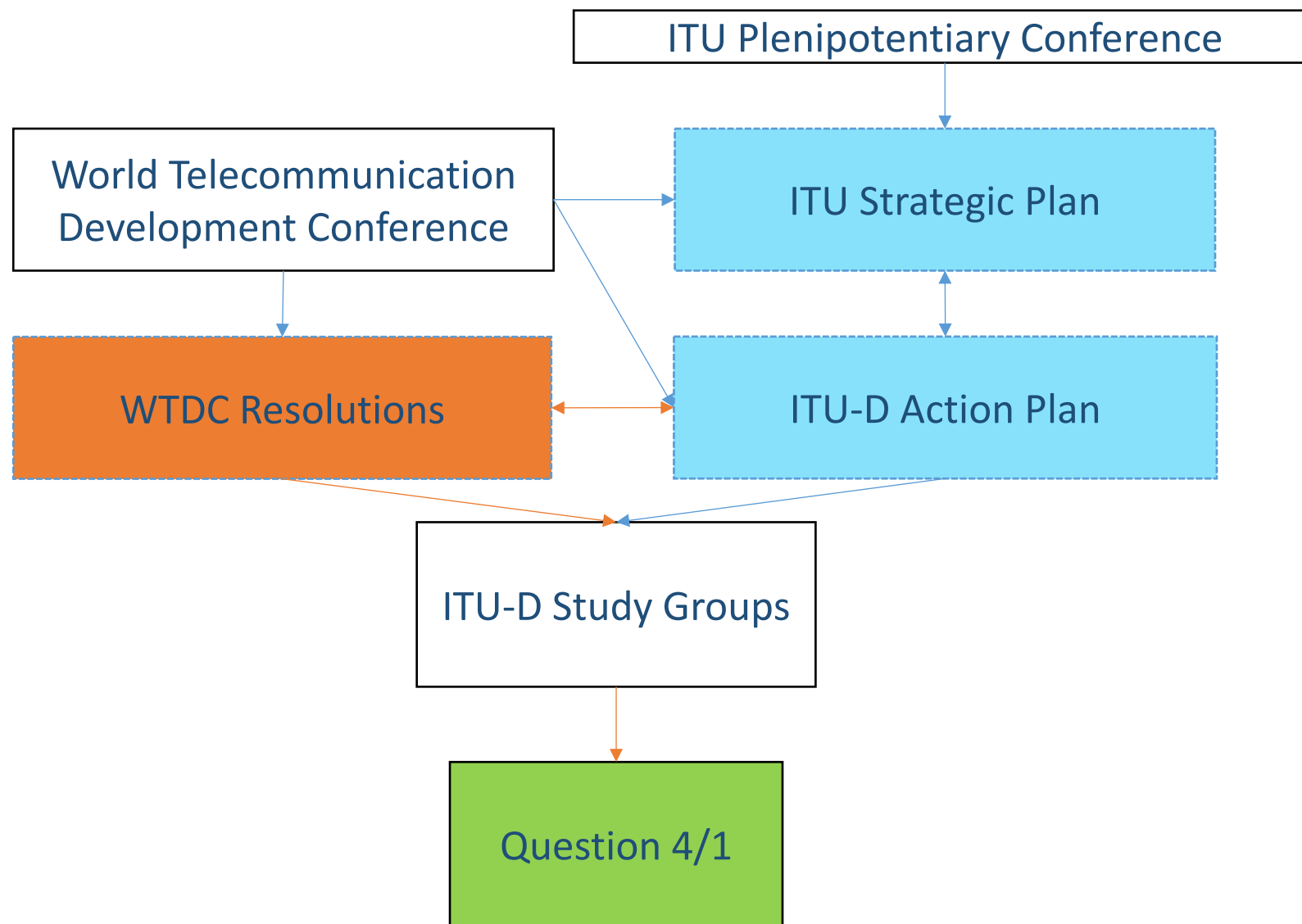


Overview





ITU-D Structure of the work



Task

Execution



○ Connection with other ITU documentation

ITU-D Questions	PP Strategic Plan	PP Resolutions	WTDC Resolutions	ITU-D Recommendations
ITU-D Question 4/1	Thematic Priority “Enabling environment”	Resolution 71 “ITU strategic plan for 2024-2027”	Resolution 10 “Financial support for national spectrum-management programmes”	Recommendation D.15 (2002) “Models and methods to determine the cost of national telecommunication services”
	Target 1.2 “Broadband services to be affordable for all”	ITU-D Question 4/1	Resolution 23 “Internet access and availability for developing countries and charging principles for international Internet connection”	Recommendation D.16 (2002) “Tariff rebalancing and cost-oriented tariffs”



ITU-D Study period 2022-2025





○ Question 4/1 Topics (2022-2025) (1/3)

In response to the outcomes of WTDC-22, Question 4/1 in 2022-2025 study period is continuing to study and update the following items from the 2018-2021 study period:

	Description	Relationship
T1	New charging methods (or models, if applicable) for services provided over NGN networks, including Methods for determining the costs of wholesale services	In response to ITU-D Thematic Priority 1, WTDC Resolution 9
T2	The impact of infrastructure-sharing (local loop unbundling, tower companies, etc.) on investment cost, provision of telecommunication/ICT services, competition and prices to consumers: case studies with quantitative analysis	In response to ITU-D Objective 1, WTDC Resolution 20, WTDC Resolution 23, WTDC Resolution 37
T3	Consumer price evolution and impact on ICT service usage, innovation, investment and operator revenues	In response to ITU-D Objective 1, WTDC Resolution 23
T4	Trends in the development of virtual mobile operators and their regulatory framework	In response to ITU-D Objectives 1 and 3, WTDC Resolution 23, WTDC Resolution 37



○ Question 4/1 Topics (2022-2025) (2/3)

In response to the outcomes of WTDC-22, Question 4/1 is to study the following new items in 2022-2025 study period:

	Description	Relationship
T5	Impact of new converging ICTs on cost-modelling strategies traditionally carried out by stakeholders constituting the ICT networked value chain (e.g. telecom operators, over-the-top, digital service providers, etc.)	In response to ITU-D Objectives 1 and 2, WTDC Resolution 37
T6	The role and impact on achieving the SDGs of new types and modes of investment in telecommunications/ICTs, e.g. blended investment and crowdfunding	In response to ITU-D Objective 1 and 3 WTDC Resolution 37
T7	Analysis of case studies on the economic contribution of digital telecommunication/ICT technologies and services to the national economy	In response to ITU-D Objectives 1 and 2, WTDC Resolution 37
T8	Framework for establishing the contribution of telecommunications/ICTs to a country's GDP	In response to ITU-D Objective 1, WTDC Resolution 37
T9	Economic incentives and mechanisms for bridging the digital divide	In response to ITU-D Objective 1, WTDC Resolution 37
T10	Analysis of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on telecommunication/ICT markets	In response to ITU-D Objective 1, WTDC Resolution 34, WTDC Resolution 37
T11	Analysis of the contribution of telecommunications/ICTs on the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic	In response to ITU-D Objective 1, WTDC Resolution 34, WTDC Resolution 37
T12	Economic aspects/implications of digital transformation	In response to ITU-D Objectives 1 and 2, WTDC Resolution 37
T13	Impact on innovation and productivity and other national economic aspects of digital financial inclusion	In response to ITU-D Objectives 1 and 2, WTDC Resolution 37



○ Question 4/1 Topics (2022-2025) (3/3)

In response to the outcomes of WTDC-22, Question 4/1 is to study the following new items in 2022-2025 study period in collaboration with other ITU-D Questions:

	Description	Relationship
T14	National experiences on the contribution to the national economy in bridging the digital divide to provide accessible and affordable connectivity (in possible collaboration with ITU-D Questions 1/1, 5/1 and 7/1)	in response to ITU-D Objectives 1 and 5, WTDC Resolution 37, WTDC Resolution 58
T15	Different models of infrastructure sharing, including on commercially negotiated terms (in possible collaboration with ITU-D Question 1/1)	in response to ITU-D Objective 1, WTDC Resolution 20, WTDC Resolution 23, WTDC Resolution 37
T16	The economic value of usage of personal data (in possible collaboration with ITU-D Questions 6/1 and 3/2)	in response to ITU-D Objective 1 and 5, WTDC Resolution 45



○ Expected outputs for Question 4/1 (2022-2025)

- a. Annual reports and deliverables to be presented for ITU-D Study Group 1 for information:
 - 2023: Annual Report on progress towards the Report on Question 4/1;
 - 2024: Annual Report on progress towards the Report on Question 4/1;
- b. Guidelines on the topics of Question 4/1 to be presented for ITU-D Study Group 1 for approval:
 - Revised Q 4/1 Guidelines on Cost Modelling;
 - New Guidelines on the topics of Question 4/1, if any;
- c. Final Reports on the topics of Question 4/1 to be presented for the last meeting of ITU-D Study Group 1 in 2022-2025 study period for approval:
 - Revised Report on 2018-2021 study period;
 - New Report/s on the topics of Question 4/1 on 2022-2025 study period;
- d. ITU-D Recommendations D series on the topics of Question 4/1 to be presented to WTDC-25 for approval:
 - Revised ITU-D Recommendations D.15 and D.16, as appropriate;
 - New ITU-D Recommendations D series, if any;
- **e. Joint deliverables with other ITU-D Study Questions, if any, to be presented for ITU-D Study Group 1 for approval;**
- f. Reports on participation in ITU events relevant to Q 4/1, particularly Regional Economic Dialogues (RED), if any, for information.





○ Joint deliverable

“Challenges and Opportunities of the Use of USF for Bridging the Digital Divide”

To explore the extent to which USFs can assist in bridging the urban-rural digital divide and the models that are suitable to make USFs more effective, ITU-D Study Group 1 Rapporteur Groups for Question 4/1 on Economic aspects of national telecommunications/ICTs and Question 5/1 on Telecommunications/ICTs for Rural and Remote Areas held a joint workshop on the “Challenges and Opportunities of the Use of USF for Bridging the Digital Divide”, on 15 May 2023.

The **objectives** of the workshop were as follows:

- To discuss strategies for expanding rural and remote infrastructure using USF mechanisms
- To explore how USF can be used to promote digital inclusion and bridge the digital divide
- To share national experiences and best practices
- Sustainable and cost-effective solutions for enhancing broadband and digital infrastructure in rural and remote areas





○ Joint deliverable addresses the following aspects

- National **Economic Strategies** on expanding rural and remote infrastructure to bridge the digital divide using USF mechanisms
- The source of **funding** of USF and the focus of USF
- **Governance** models and Implementations
- **Disbursement** models for USF
- Universal service programmes to **bridge the digital divide**
- Considerations when selecting USF **business models** and case studies on economic strategies
- **Cost Modelling** for USF
- **Resources** provided by the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) of ITU on USF





○ Joint deliverable Online mini survey

At the workshop, an **online mini survey** was conducted. 16 responses were received, and can be **summarized** as follows:

- USF are used by many countries **worldwide** and some countries use the concept of USO in addition to USF
- Most respondents noted the complimentary nature of USFs and USOs, noting that **USOs** provide a more **flexible approach** to expanding connectivity than USFs
- Survey respondents noted a wide spectrum of **challenges** related to the implementation of USFs, including, ineffective governance, from unclear project concepts and goals, ineffective governance and funding challenges, and political and regulatory issues
- USFs are **administered** by a variety of different authorities, including governmental bodies, telecommunication regulators, and not-for-profit organizations
- Countries administer a USF through various mechanisms— such as **open tender** or **reimbursement** programs for operators, dedicated access/service programs for underserved groups, and digital skills programs
- Most respondents noted that **digital literacy** and **school connectivity** are addressed through different public mechanisms. However, using USFs to enhance digital skills is very common in countries of Africa



○ Joint deliverable Conclusions (1/2)

Some **concluding considerations** when devising and implementing USF include:

- To have a **consistent collaboration** and knowledge-sharing to address the digital divide
- To move from Universal ICT access only policies to **Universal access and use policies**
- To develop **innovative financing mechanisms** for digital infrastructure development and digital services
- To ensure **transparency, accountability, and efficiency** in USF programs
- To ensure the presence of a **robust and reliable broadband infrastructure** to support digital development





○ Joint deliverable Conclusions (2/2)

- To focus on **Digital Inclusion** for achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals
- To have an integrated **ICT access and ICT use policy framework** with insights into USF and affordability of service
- To undertake **digital skilling** through USF
- To identify new universal service **funding mechanisms**
- To use USF **effectively**





○ Useful Links

- Final Acts of the Plenipotentiary Conference 2022
https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-d/opb/tdc/D-TDC-WTDC-2022-PDF-e.pdf
- Final Report of the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2022
https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-d/opb/tdc/D-TDC-WTDC-2022-PDF-e.pdf
- ITU-D Study Groups website
<https://www.itu.int/net4/ITU-D/CDS/sg/index.asp?lg=6&sp=2022&stg=>
- ITU-D Study Groups 2018-2021 Publications
<https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Study-Groups/2018-2021/Pages/Publications.aspx>
- ITU Workshop on International Telecommunication/ICT Economic and Policy Issues
<https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/Workshops-and-Seminars/2025/0217/Pages/default.aspx>
- Question 4/1 Mailing list
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Many thanks for your attention!!

