



International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Strategic Plan

2028-2031

Strategic Foresight Workshops

Concept Note & Programme

Background

The **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** - the United Nations specialized agency for digital technologies - and the **UN Futures Lab/Global Hub** are partnering to integrate foresight practices and approaches into the development of **ITU Strategic Plan 2028-2031**. This collaboration comes at a time of profound uncertainty for the multilateral system, shaped by rapid technological change, environmental challenges, political shifts, economic volatility, and evolving social dynamics. It also coincides with ITU's 160th anniversary, making a pivotal moment for reflection and forward-looking thinking.

The UN Secretary-General's 2021 report, *Our Common Agenda*, underscored the need for the UN and multilateral system to be better prepared for major global risks while ensuring that policy decisions consider their impact on future generations. To this end, the [UN Futures Lab](#) (per *Our Common Agenda* proposal) was established by the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General in 2023, to build and leverage strategic foresight efforts across the UN system and beyond to use futures thinking and strategic foresight in planning, policymaking, and decision-making.

Strategic foresight is an approach for systematically thinking and acting in a long-term and anticipatory way under conditions of uncertainty¹. The UN Futures Lab/Global Hub supported 7 multiyear UN Strategic Plans in 2024 and more than 5 in 2025, and will draw on lessons learned and insights to design and facilitate the workshops.

This Concept Note and Programme outlines the objectives, workshops overview, and agendas for two foresight workshops² that will inform the development of ITU's next Strategic Plan.

¹ UN Futures Lab, 2023. *UN Strategic Foresight Guide*.

² A potential presentation in October 2025 will be considered based on the results after Workshop #2

Objectives

The foresight workshops aim to:

- Integrate foresight into ITU Strategic Plan development process to inform the development of ITU Strategic Plan 2028-2031
- Establish a shared understanding of ITU's future direction, fostering alignment and coherence
- Support the articulation of ITU's mission and vision to ensure they reflect emerging global trends, and future opportunities and challenges

Strategic Foresight Workshops

Workshops overview

	Workshop #1: ITU Strategic Plan 2028-2031: Strategic Foresight Workshop with ITU Secretariat	Workshop #2: ITU Strategic Plan 2028-2031: Strategic Foresight Workshop with ITU Council Working Group for Strategic and Financial Plans (CWG-SFP)
Date and time	Tuesday, 26 August 2025 (09:30am – 17:30pm CET)	Monday, 8 September 2025 (14:30pm – 17:30pm CET)
Participants	ITU Secretariat (20-30 participants)	Council Working Group for Strategic and Financial Plans (60 participants)
Format and venue	In-person Montbrillant Building, open space, ground floor	In-person (and online for the plenary sessions) Montbrillant Building, open space, ground floor (and online platform for plenary sessions)

Methodology³	Horizon Scanning ⁴ Deep Dive and Futures Triangle ⁵	Desired Futures ⁶ and Adaptive Scenario Development ⁷
Outputs	Workshop #1 report ⁸ identifying emerging issues, categorized by their potential in supporting or hindering ITU's future progress	Workshop #2 report presenting a range of preferred futures shaped by different future environments, noting variations in constraints and opportunities, and outlining elements to scale, adapt, or phase out
Outcomes	Shared understanding of emerging issues divided into those that will help the future of the organization	Strengthen agility in strategic planning through development of adaptable pathways and improved understanding of trade-offs informing ITU's mission and vision
Facilitation	UN Futures Lab/Global Hub	

Workshop #1: ITU Strategic Plan 2028-2031: Strategic Foresight Workshop with ITU Secretariat

Tuesday, 26 August 2025, 09:30am – 17:30pm CET at ITU Montbrillant Building

Time	Item
09:30 – 09:45	Arrival of participants
09:45 – 10:20	Welcome and Introduction to the Workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening remarks by ITU Deputy Secretary-General (10 min)

³ Participants handouts will be provided for each workshop with detailed descriptions and step-by-step instructions for how to engage with the tools and methodology

⁴ Horizon Scanning is a tool to identify emerging changes that could have a big impact on a country or a specific sector. UN Futures Lab (2023). *UN Strategic Foresight Guide* ("Horizon Scanning")

⁵ Futures Triangle is an approach to engage people in conversation about broad forces that may shape the future. UN Futures Lab (2023). *UN Strategic Foresight Guide* ("Futures Triangle")

⁶ Desired Future is a tool that helps us identify characteristics of the future. It helps us to think about a range of outcomes rather than one scenario only. UN Futures Lab (2023). *UN Strategic Foresight Guide* ("Desired Future")

⁷ Scenario Development is an approach to broaden our understanding of how the future may evolve. UN Futures Lab (2023). *UN Strategic Foresight Guide* ("Scenario Development")

⁸ All workshop reports include (i) key insights and analysis; (ii) raw data; (iii) methodology; and (iv) photos and screenshots from the group work

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction to workshop context, objectives and agenda by the UN Futures Lab/Global Hub (25 min)
10:20 – 11:15	Session One: Horizon Scanning Deep Dive Exercise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plenary: Introduction to Horizon Scanning (15 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction to Horizon Scanning methodology ○ Explanation of the exercise ▪ Group work: Horizon Scanning Deep Dive exercise (40 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cross-divisions groups ○ Identify and make sense of emerging Signals, Trends, and Drivers across different domains (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental – PESTLE)
11:15 – 11:35	Break <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participants explore findings from other groups
11:35 – 12:45	Session One (cont.): Horizon Scanning Deep Dive Exercise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group work: Horizon Scanning Deep Dive exercise (40 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cross-divisions groups ▪ Plenary: Quick update from group work (30 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fast debrief of Signals, Trends, and Drivers of Change, interconnections and implications
12:45 – 14:15	Lunch Break
14:15 – 15:45	Session Two: Futures Triangle Exercise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plenary: Introduction to Futures Triangle (10 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction to Futures Triangle methodology ○ Explanation of the exercise ▪ Group work: Futures Triangle exercise (1h20 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cluster emerging issues into three categories: long-term goals (the <i>Pull</i> of the Future); elements holding back progress (the <i>Weight</i> of the Past); or current forces driving change (the <i>Push</i> of the Present)
15:45 – 16:05	Break
16:05 – 17:15	Session Three: Facilitated Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plenary: Groups sharing and reflection (1h10 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One representative per group shares key findings from their group work ○ Open discussion around divergences and convergences

17:15 – 17:30	Conclusion and Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of key insights (10 min) Next steps by ITU Strategy and Planning Division (5 min)
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Workshop #2: ITU Strategic Plan 2028-2031: Strategic Foresight Workshop with ITU Council Working Group for Strategic and Financial Plans (CWG-SFP)

Monday, 8 September 2025, 14:30pm – 17:30pm CET at ITU Montbrillant Building

Time	Item
14:30 – 15:00	Welcome and Agenda Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome remarks by Mr. Mansour AlQurashi, Chair of ITU Council Working Group for Strategic and Financial Plans (7 min) Opening remarks by ITU Deputy Secretary-General (7 min) Summary of Workshop #1 and introduction to Workshop #2 context, objectives and agenda by the UN Futures Lab/Global Hub (16 min)
15:00 – 16:30	Session One: What to Introduce, Scale, and Set Aside <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plenary: Introduction to Adaptive Scenario Development (10 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to Adaptive Scenario Development and Desired Futures methodologies Group work: Adaptive Scenario Development exercise (80 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Envision a Desired Future for ITU under different limitations, constraints and opportunities Identify enablers, processes, or behaviours to introduce or scale Determine legacy practices, processes, assumptions, or priorities to sunset
16:30 – 17:15	Session Two: Key Reflections and Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plenary: Groups sharing and discussion (45 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One representative per group shares key insights Reflections, questions, and answers
17:15 – 17:30	Conclusion and Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of key outcomes by the UN Futures Lab/Global Hub (5 min)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Follow-up actions, including next steps for ITU Strategic Plan by ITU Strategy and Planning Division (10 min)
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Key Considerations

- The workshops are designed to be **inclusive and participatory** to foster open dialogue, creativity, and respectful exchange of ideas
- All exercises will include **participant handouts, templates, and guided plenary introductions** by the UN Futures Lab/Global Hub
- The foresight approach emphasizes **plausibility over prediction**, enabling ITU to consider different futures rather than lock into a single vision to prepare the organization for multiple pathways and decision-making under uncertainty