



# **ITU ACCELERATION CENTRES PROGRAMME**

## Operational Guidelines

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# 1. Background and introduction

The ITU Acceleration Centres programme (the “Programme”) is a leading component of ITU’s strategy for bridging the digital innovation divide. Its implementation falls under the framework of the [Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development \(the “Alliance”\)](#), a new approach to empowering ITU-D membership to leverage digital innovation to power an equitable and inclusive digital transformation.

The present Guidelines provide a framework for the collaboration between ITU and participating ITU Acceleration Centres to facilitate the successful implementation of the Programme.

The guidelines relate to the following areas:

- Definition of Strategic Objectives for the Centres;
- Selection processes of the first cohort of Centres;
- Milestones in the design and implementation of Centres;
- Governance system and human resource management of Centres;
- Business models for Centre activities;
- Planning, marketing and implementation of services;
- Quality assurance and performance assessment; and
- Programme management and coordination.

The operational guidelines cover arrangements for the programme's establishment in the period 2024-2025 and its ongoing management and implementation in subsequent years.

## 1.1. Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development

The Alliance goal is to unlock countries’ digital potential, build local capabilities in innovation and entrepreneurship, and accelerate the impact of their digital innovation ecosystems on cross-cutting sectors for an inclusive and sustainable future.

The establishment of the Alliance was a direct response to the needs of ITU Membership in the area of innovation for digital development, as articulated in the Kigali Action Plan adopted at the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2022 (WTDC-22), and the resolutions of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2022 (PP-22) and WTDC-22. The Alliance aims to support the achievement of the key outcomes outlined in ITU-D Priority ‘Digital Transformation’, including:

- Strengthened capacity of the ITU membership to integrate telecommunication/ICT innovation and digitalization in their national development agendas and to develop strategies to promote innovation initiatives, including through public, private and public-private partnerships.
- Enhanced human and institutional capacity of the ITU membership in telecommunications/ICTs to foster digital transformation.

The work of the Alliance is aligned with various resolutions and initiatives, including:

- WTDC Resolutions 90, 89 and 85 (Kigali, 2022), providing clear guidance on the role of innovation in the digital transformation of society;
- ITU Regional Initiatives for all regions further calling for greater attention to this area;
- PP Resolution 205 on ‘Fostering ICT-centric innovation to support the digital economy and society’ reiterated the leading roles of BDT in innovation for digital development;
- ITU Strategic Plan (PP Resolution 71, Rev. Bucharest, 2022).

The Alliance focuses on building critical local enablers of continuous innovation, which will strengthen digital ecosystems and improve the readiness and agility of economies through digital transformation. Through three primary vehicles, the Alliance will enable transformational projects leveraging frontier technologies, exploring new policy patterns and fostering emerging business models with national, regional, and global impact.

The three vehicles are:

- **Digital Transformation Lab:** Based in Geneva, the Lab supports the design and implementation of the Network of Acceleration Centres and offer technical assistance, upon request, to countries currently lacking key capabilities in sandboxing and developing initiatives for accelerating digital development.
- **Network of Accelerations Centres:** The Network of national, regional and global centres turbocharges innovation capabilities to accelerate local innovation, entrepreneurship and the digitalization of economies ultimately enhancing the competitiveness of economic sectors across the board and enabling regional and global harmonization of business practices and policies in key areas.
- **Digital Innovation Board:** The Board engages in global advocacy, aligns the Alliance strategy with international and regional development goals, facilitates the high-level coordination of efforts deployed across the Network of Acceleration Centres and the Digital Transformation Lab, and ensures impactful delivery of the Alliance strategy, all of which aimed at accelerating the implementation of the Kigali Action Plan.

## 1.2. ITU Acceleration Centres programme overview

The ITU Acceleration Centres Programme aims to enhance the institutional and human innovation and entrepreneurship capacities of ITU membership. Its primary objective is to support countries' transition to innovation-driven digital economies, and thereby, accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Programme provides a platform to support ITU Membership in their innovation journeys, and in particular:

- Adapt to the rapidly changing digital environment,
- Effectively embrace emerging digital technologies
- Drive digital innovation with tangible socio-economic impact,
- Leverage entrepreneurship-driven digital innovation as a driver of job creation,
- Connect with a network of like-minded changemakers and learn from their good practices, and
- Develop innovative partnerships at the local, regional, or global levels to accelerate digital development.

This Programme connects national, regional and global ITU Acceleration Centres (“IAC” or “Centres”) into a living network. Centres may be hosted by government ministries or agencies, research organizations, sector members, universities, or existing innovation centres. To join the Network, candidate organizations need to meet a set of requirements and go through a pre-selection and accession process (see Section 2.1 of this Annex).

The Programme:

- leverages ITU’s strengths, capabilities and exiting partnerships to create a new portfolio of high-quality programmatic activities built on systems thinking approaches to leverage digital innovation and entrepreneurship for an equitable and inclusive transformation of the economy and society, in particular in developing countries,
- builds local digital innovation capacities in each Centre to equip national stakeholders with the understanding, skills and tools to leverage innovation for solving local problems, creating economic opportunities need and achieving development objectives in a sustainable manner, while the Network amplifies the work of the various Centres by providing a framework for collaboration and cross-fertilization of ideas amongst them.

The Digital Transformation Lab serves as a critical coordinating and enabling component for the Programme.

- The Lab develops the core digital innovation curricula across the five strategic objectives of the Alliance to be onboarded in the Centres.
- The Lab supports individual centres at every stage of their development and orchestrate joint initiatives among centres and with external partners. In doing so, the Lab will draw expertise from across the ITU Bureaus, their Study Groups, subject matter experts and Regional Offices, building synergies with programmes and activities under ITU’s broad mandate.
- The Lab engages with critical partners in the Alliance to support the work of the Centres and mobilize additional resources and funding.
- The Lab provides programme management and offer pedagogical, technical and logistical support to ensure the best match between services offered by Centres and the needs of the ITU membership.

A global meeting of the Network of Centres will be held annually to address the Programme’s development, and foster community building and cooperation between participating Centres (see Section 5 of this Annex).

### 1.3. Strategic Objectives of the ITU Acceleration Centres

Each Centre can fast-track up to five strategic objectives (“Strategic Objectives”) to advance a country’s journey toward an innovation-driven digital economy. These five strategic objectives are:

- **Trends research readiness:** enable countries to be ahead of the curve and make sense of the evolution of technology, policy and innovation dynamics through future studies and strategic foresight.
- **Open technology innovation:** harness technological know-how into global goods through open innovation and multistakeholder mechanisms, accelerating access to emerging technology for all.
- **Entrepreneurship and Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) growth:** accelerate the uptake of digital innovation-driven entrepreneurship and opportunities for talent to achieve socio-economic inclusion in their communities through an ecosystem approach to scaling.
- **Policy experimentation:** develop an anticipatory approach that accelerates agile policy development and provides stakeholders with a safe space for experimentation, encouraging innovation and attracting investment in the digital ecosystem.
- **Ecosystem initiatives acceleration:** promote collaboration and synergies, inclusive of all relevant stakeholders, in developing initiatives and projects that scale digital innovations and achieve cross-cutting sectoral value for a competitive digital economy.

However, determining the focus area of each Centre to deliver on these objectives depends on several factors, including its available resources, mandate, existing partnerships, and experiences in providing services related to sectoral goals.

An initial needs assessment is being conducted as part of the application process to become an ITU Acceleration Centre. Before a candidate entity starts operating as an IAC, the ITU will conduct a full design assessment to further validate the specific objectives and provide appropriate guidance, taking into account relevant constraints.

The Centres implement specific activities (“the Activities”) agreed upon between ITU and the Centre Host, as part of the Programme within the framework of the Alliance. The Centres can start implementing specific activities Activities for a limited set of Strategic Objectives and later upgrade their portfolio to deliver more objectives. Upgrading the Scope (global, regional, or national, hereinafter “the Scope”) of Centres during the agreement period will require an amendment to the Cooperation Agreement between the Centre and ITU, and qualification and validation by ITU.

The strategic framework of Centres remains flexible for future adaptation based on continuous learning from the network of Centres.

## 2. Selection of Centres

ITU Acceleration Centres are selected following a general call for expressions of interest. The candidacy of each candidate organization must specify:

- its desired ambition, resources, and existing capabilities;
- geographical reach: national, regional or global; and
- a set of starter strategic objectives (based on these in Section 1.3 of this Annex)

### 2.1. Application and selection process

A selection process is conducted using the following steps to assess candidate organizations willing to join the Network of Acceleration Centres.



Following the deadline for expression of interest, each interested candidate receives two questionnaires:

- a general questionnaire designed to collect information on how the organization can engage in the work of the Alliance, featuring 12 questions.
- a standardized questionnaire tailored for the capacity assessment of candidate organizations to become IACs, used to gather information about the organization’s interest, objectives for the Centre and available resources, featuring 28 questions.

The responses received are evaluated using a 10-parameter method as shown below to ensure that the selection requirements are met:

#	Parameter	Purpose
1	<b>Vision and Strategy</b>	Understand the clarity of the candidate organization’s vision and the effectiveness of the strategies in place to achieve goals.
2	<b>Scope</b>	Gauge the scope and extent of the organization’s current and foreseen activities.
3	<b>Type of Centre, Purpose and Reach</b>	Assess the potential and purpose of the proposed reach.
4	<b>Governance System</b>	Gauge the effectiveness and transparency of the proposed governance system to support the candidate centre in achieving its objectives.
5	<b>Capabilities &amp; Resources Available</b>	Assess the organization’s ability to leverage skills, knowledge, expertise, infrastructure, and other resources to deliver on the desired outcomes.
6	<b>Alignment with Strategic Objectives</b>	Evaluate the coherence and alignment of the candidate centre’s strategy with the strategic objectives of the Alliance.
7	<b>Activities Offered</b>	Assess the range, quality and effectiveness of the services currently provided and proposed by the candidate organization.
8	<b>Scale up – Business model</b>	Assess the candidate organization's ability and readiness to expand and scale its operations, initiatives and impact.
9	<b>Level of commitment of Project Initiator</b>	Evaluate the level of involvement, ownership and willingness of the project initiator(s) to invest time, resources and effort towards the success of the centre.
10	<b>Regional balance</b>	Consider an equitable distribution of resources and opportunities across all regions.

. Each nominee was requested to confirm their acceptance of the nomination and provided with the basic information about the process for designing and implementing each centre. The first step in the process involved the signing of a cooperation agreement.

The cohorts of ITU Acceleration Centres programme bring together agencies and stakeholders from various backgrounds and fields of expertise. Special consideration was given to regional and linguistic diversity. The network features a constellation of national, regional and global acceleration centres.

## 2.2. Cooperation framework

Each selected Centre signs a Cooperation Agreement and an activity document with ITU to join the Network of ITU Acceleration Centres programme.

- The design phase of Centres only starts once the Cooperation Agreement has been duly signed by both parties.

- The implementation of the Activities shall only start once the activity document (**Annex 3**) has been approved in writing by both parties.

The Cooperation Agreement serves as the legal framework between ITU and the Centres, while the activity document establishes the operational plan that supports the implementation of the Centres with clear performance indicators.

Cooperation Agreements are initially signed for a period of three years. They may be renewed contingent upon the parties' mutual consent and the Centre's strong performance and continued relevance to the Alliance priorities. The performance of all Centres is subject to annual reviews by ITU. The membership of Centres falling to meet key performance indicators (see Section 4.2 of this Annex) may be revoked and the Cooperation Agreement with them terminated by ITU, excluding them from the Programme.

If a selected Centre is not in a position to sign a Cooperation Agreement within six months of the presentation of the draft cooperation agreement, ITU reserves the right to revoke the nomination of the organization. In such cases, an alternative Centre may be chosen from former or current applicants to assume the role.



## 3. Design and Operationalization of ITU Acceleration Centres

### 3.1. Design process

Each ITU Acceleration Centre is expected to go through a lifecycle where ITU plays a critical role, including design, implementation and scale-up. Below are the phases and expected outcomes:

- **Design Phase:** This is a critical phase in conceptualizing and customizing the Centre to best fit its context by transforming the selection requirements (see Section 2.1 of this Annex) into 1) a full-fledged set of Centre design specifications codified in a design document, and 2) financial and other resources implications with key deliverables codified in the activity document (**Annex 3**).
- **Implementation Phase:** This phase involves putting the project plan into action and delivering the Activities. The Centre becomes operational, delivers services, and builds competences towards the objectives and within the framework defined in the activity document (**Annex 3**).
- **Scale-Up Phase:** In this phase, the Centre expands, and fine tune its business model driven by planning and continuous monitoring, evaluation and enhancement of its systems, staff and processes for sustainable growth and long-term profitability. The Centre expands its services and consolidates its ecosystem-building roles.

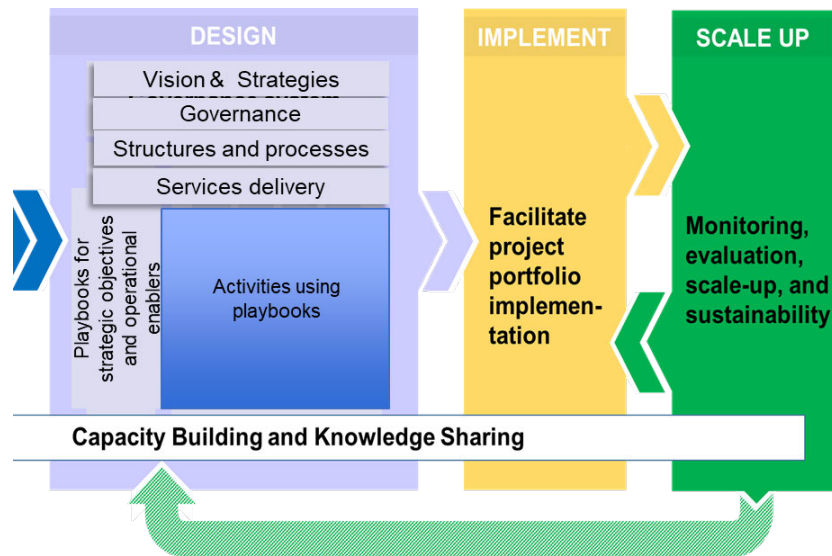


The design process will also determine the human resource and capacity-building requirements to ensure competencies are in line with expected outcomes and resources are adequately scoped, including the cost of holding workshops (e.g., logistics, cost of supplies), conducting activities for each service, ensuring the participation of stakeholders (e.g., fellowships) and external expert support when needed.

ITU will provide guidance to all Centres in the development of agile design and implementation approaches within the framework of the Alliance. Every Centre and the Network as a whole will go through a learning curve in adopting and refining agile digital innovation approaches aimed at achieving their strategic and practical goals. To achieve these goals, supported Centres will benefit from advice, advocacy, and practices sharing through the Alliance mechanisms, including the Digital Innovation Board, the digital innovation community of practices, core innovation capacity development curriculums, and technical assistance.

### 3.2. Design Architecture of Centres

Once the Cooperation Agreement is signed, each Centre is designed using a structured process for scaling and learning from best practices. The figure below depicts a high-level overview of the design architecture. The following sub-sections offer a deep dive into the building blocks.



### 3.2.1 Vision and Strategies

Each Centre is expected to have a clear vision aligned with that of the Alliance, yet specific enough to fit its unique context. Each Centre should also have a mission statement that guides its day-to-day operations while applying an ecosystem thinking approach towards advancing the goals of the Alliance.

ITU will facilitate the design of the vision, mission and strategies of Centres to ensure coherence across the Network and with the Alliance.

Depending on its overall vision and mission, a Centre may develop industry- or sector-specific focus areas.

### 3.2.2 Scope

A Centre can have a national, regional or global scope based on their requested scope during their application process. A centre with a national scope will support the country goals with digital innovation. A centre with a regional scope will support the national and related ITU region with relevant activities. A centre with global scope will support the national and at least three regions to support its global ambition with relevant activities.

The key Performance Indicators for the Centre will be established accordingly based on assigned scope during the design process.

### 3.2.3 Governance System and Human Resources Requirements

Each Centre is expected to establish and/or review a governance system aligned to its goals and follow international standards and best practice in human resources to ensure optimal operation.

An effective governance structure is important to achieve the mission and goals of each Centre by:

- ensuring coordination and collaboration across levels,
- strengthening financial and strategic planning,
- facilitating communication with all stakeholders for an inclusive ecosystem development, and

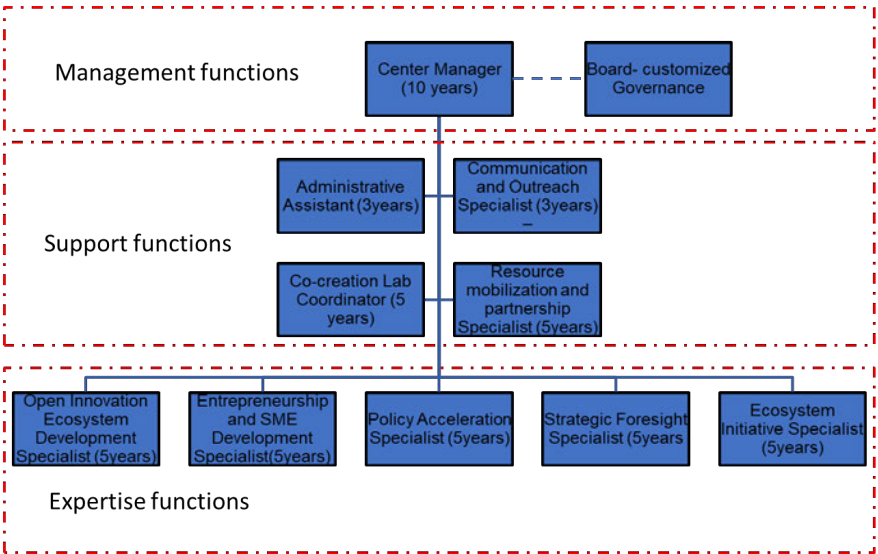
- enhancing the transparency and visibility of the Centre’s activities to partners to build trust and engage in advocacy.

A strong internal governance system provides a clear understanding of stakeholders’ roles, responsibilities and values along with well-defined goals, working methods and reporting requirements. Such a governance framework is put in place to guide the work of the Centre in achieving sound decision-making, accountability and effectiveness.

The governance apparatus can include a board, a secretariat and operational resources. If a board is established as part of the internal governance of a Centre, it will be autonomous in its decision-making and concerned with the operations of the Centre only. In contrast, the Digital Innovation Board of the Alliance is the governance mechanism of the Network of ITU Acceleration Centres and is not involved with the governance system of individual Centres.

Each Centre has a suggested organizational structure to organize, coordinate and manage activities while ensuring proper staffing. As each Centre is unique, the design process will make recommendations to adapt the structure based on the context and expected outcomes.

The organizational chart below is only indicative and needs to be adapted to the host organization’s goals, existing setup, and its partners. If multiple organizations are custodians of a Centre, its governance system may allow for the resources and requirements to be spread across multiple organizations.



\*years shown for each post denote the desired number of years of experience for the job title

The design document will specify full details of the human resource requirements, including job description and competency needed for each position. Existing staffing in hosting organization can be repurposed to fill the staffing requirement for centres. Consideration can also be made to use consultants on a temporary basis to fill some human resource requirements. Staffing requirements can be gradually met as the Centre ramps up operation until full staffing expectation is achieved.

### 3.2.4 Playbooks and Service Delivery

ITU Acceleration Centres will develop local innovation capacities towards the chosen Strategic Objectives (see 1.3). ITU will provide the core curriculums ( “Playbooks), to support the implementation of Activities in the Centres. A Playbook is a step-by-step guide on a strategic objective or operational enabler (see examples below) featuring workflows, tools and strategies to be leveraged by stakeholders.

The following are some examples of strategic objective Playbooks for ITU Acceleration Centres:

- Strategic foresight playbook;
- Policy experimentation playbook;
- Open technology innovation playbook;
- Ecosystem initiative development playbook; and
- Entrepreneurship and SMEs scale up playbook.

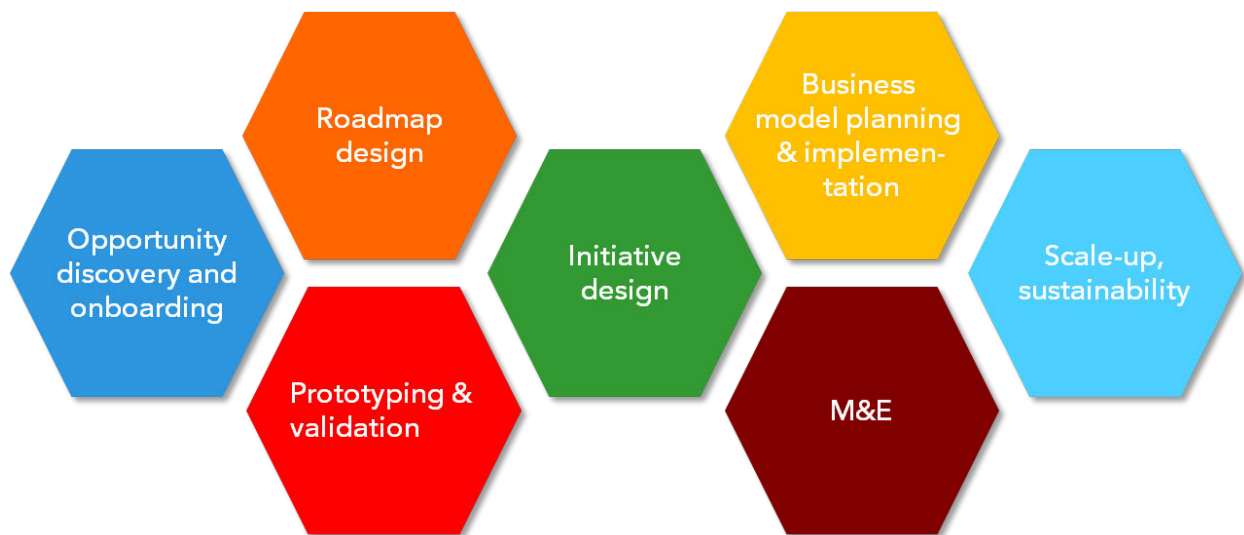
The following are some examples of operational enabler Playbooks for ITU Acceleration Centres :

- Strategic communication playbook;
- Resource mobilization playbook; and
- Joint programme design playbook.

The Playbooks have a common rationale and structure, and are built using ITU’s unique Ecosystem Thinking approach, combining Futures Thinking, Design Thinking and Systems Thinking. Playbooks feature participative, anticipatory, and human-centric approaches to solving systemic problems and enabling virtuous development dynamics through digital innovation.

The Playbooks leverage creativity, expertise, data and evidence to equip stakeholders with digital innovation skills and tools, and a broad understanding on innovation dynamics and problem-solving. The Centres will provide safe space for piloting the Playbooks and safe space for designing experiments in the area of the Alliance strategic objectives.

An example of a playbook structure is shown below (with examples of tools and framework) for the strategic objective Ecosystem Initiative Acceleration. The playbook workflow provides step-by-step plays which lead to the delivery of expected outcomes for this objective.



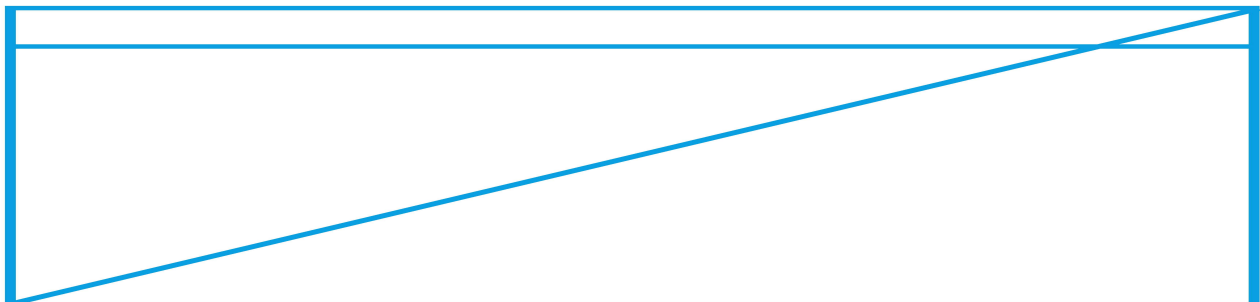
Each play area (in the coloured hexagons in the figure above) encompasses a set of tools, methods, processes, best practices, and step-by-step guidelines which provide a complete standard operating process to deliver a specific service for the strategic objective. An example of play areas and their tools is shown below.

Play area	Potential tools/frameworks (selected examples)
Opportunity discovery and onboarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision and mission canvas</li> <li>• Desktop research</li> <li>• Problem tree canvas</li> <li>• Qualitative interviews</li> <li>• Customer journey map</li> </ul>
Roadmap design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational assessment</li> <li>• Job-to-be-done storymap</li> <li>• Opportunity roadmap</li> </ul>

Each tool is based on frameworks; some tools are new and specific to digital innovation processes while others are well-established and used in different disciplines and contexts to frame co-creation and knowledge production. Below are two examples: completed Governance canvas and Job-to-be-done storymap canvas.

Playbooks will come with a series of related documents and each document will have a classification attesting to the access requirement needed as in para 5.4 of the Cooperation Agreement. Four levels of access requirements are foreseen, but these can change and any changes will be notified to Centres:

- Secret: This information is secret and only the Centre can have access to this information. (e.g. this includes the full playbook document with the standard operating procedures, the step by steps and approach);
- Internal: This content is for the internal use of the Centres only and their approved and intended approved third parties (e.g. facilitators material);
- Restricted: This content is highly restricted for the intended users external to the Centre and shall not be further distributed (e.g. workshop participants);
- Public: There is no restriction for this type of content (e.g. This content is for the benefit of the general public).



The implementation of Activities by the Centres requires a special physical and virtual environment for co-creation. Centres need to dispose of a physical room suitable for co-creation in groups and, alternatively, a room with a plenary setup. Physical co-creation processes use supporting means such as post-it notes, flip charts, pens and stationaries, while virtual co-creation spaces use online tools such as Miro and high video conference systems.

Centres can invite ITU to be part of their co-creation or facilitation processes when implementing Activities if they need guidance or mentoring. ITU participation is subject to the availability of staff and resources

and would require reasonable prior notice. Onsite ITU support to a Centre might require funding for travel, stipends, and mission-related costs for ITU staff.

### 3.2.5 Marketing of services

Activities implemented through the Programme are marketed directly by Centres. ITU may, at its sole discretion promote activities through related web portals, its newsletter, and ITU BDT official social media channels (e.g., LinkedIn, X). Activities are also promoted via the communities of practice on relevant topics. Information about the Programme and Centres may be shared by ITU at ITU global and regional events.

### 3.2.6 Capacity Building and Competency Development Model

Human capacity building plays a pivotal role in enabling Centres to implement quality Activities. Each Centre needs to ensure its staff is equipped with the right skills, knowledge, and expertise to fulfill its mission.

One pillar of the Human Capacity Building to enhance the effectiveness of Centres will be the development of community of practices between experts and staff from the various Centres to allow collaborative spaces where individuals can share knowledge, experiences and best practices (in the use of playbooks, for example, the operation and management of their centres, and their experiences with the Alliance).

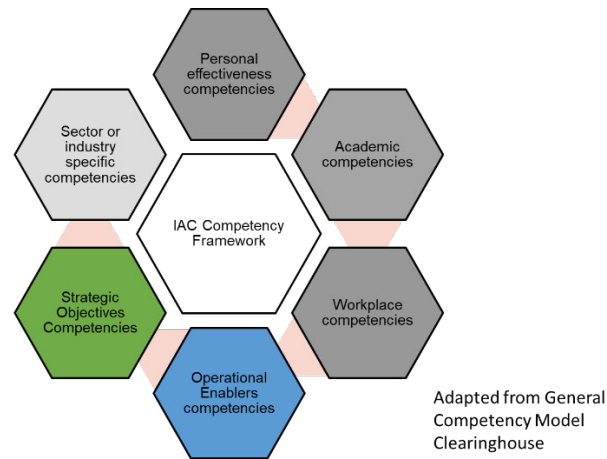
ITU will support Centres to build their human resource capacity through several phases:

- 1) A train-the-trainer for Centre's staff during physical or hybrid meetings on each of the Playbooks defined earlier;
- 2) Supplemental online courses which give the basics of the various knowledge base and topics related to the Centre's operation;
- 3) A peer-2-peer network from a community of practices where various experts can share their experiences and their best practices in delivering services; and
- 4) A competency framework for each objective where staff can be evaluated based on their knowledge, expertise, skills and experience.

ITU has developed online courses for select topics that provide foundational knowledge on ecosystems, strategic foresight and other related topics. Such courses will be scaled up and made available to a wider audience including the Centres.

To assess, the overall capacity building and human resources readiness of Centres, ITU has developed a competency model which builds on the basic competencies such as academic and workplace competencies, by ensuring that each playbook has a competency requirement.

ITU Playbooks offer a pathway toward a competency-based framework for assessing the effectiveness of the Centres. Human resource requirements for Centres can be guided by the competency framework below, which adheres to best practices for continuous learning.



Online courses may initially be in English, but efforts will be made to customize the course’s language in partnership with ITU Acceleration Centres.

### 3.3. Business models

Financial sustainability of core operations is a pre-requisite for launching a Centre. Centres may choose between several business models to enable sustainability and maximize the value of Activities they offer, according to their own characteristics, requirements, and preferences. These models include, but are not limited to financing through:

- free or subsidized Activities through corporate social responsibility programmes or other initiatives of the Centres;
- the payment of Activity fees by participants (whether individuals or organizations);
- fees paid by recipient of services through project design and implementation; and
- contributions, including sponsorships, made to the Centre by governments, international organizations or other third parties.

The Centre design phase must identify the approaches to be used to implement Activities and expected results. A Centre may apply different business models to different Activities within its portfolio.

#### 3.3.1 Activity fees

A Centre is not permitted to start charging Activity fees until it has conducted already a certain number of Activities for free to gain experience and requested an evaluation by the ITU to determine its competencies before charging fees.

Activity fees can be set to enable Centres to recover costs including overheads, and to make a reasonable margin over costs where they so wish. ITU needs to validate Activity fees for different types of Activities and each Centre needs to report on its Activity fee when using one in its annual reporting to ITU.

Centres are encouraged to charge lower fees to participants from Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, to facilitate their participation in the programme. Other discounts may also be offered, subject to ITU agreement.

#### 3.3.2 Fee collection

Where fees are charged for Activities, these will be collected by Centres according to terms and conditions specified for that purpose, in agreement with ITU.



### 3.3.3 Costing of Centres

Each Centre is responsible for securing adequate funding to maintain itself operational. Estimating cost for a Centre should include both fixed and variable costs.

Fixed costs include items such as headcounts, facility cost, and others basic fixed costs needed to maintain the facility such as needed equipment, etc. Variable cost includes costs to deliver services, including fellowships, innovation prizes, travel, cost of holding workshops, etc.

The design phase will determine all information related these costs. Any exchange of funds between the Centre and ITU will be part of a separate agreement.

### 3.3.4 Use of ITU branding

The use of the ITU branding (e.g., logo, attributions) for Activities is not permitted under the terms of the Cooperation Agreement with Centres. ITU will provide branding for the Programme which can be used to represent the association with ITU.

ITU Acceleration Centres can therefore implement Activities using the Programme branding and their own. When more than two partners are involved in the Activities, the logo of the Programme shall appear in the centre.

## 4 Quality assurance and performance assessment

### 4.1. Monitoring and evaluation

Quality assurance and performance assessment are essential to ensure the value and quality of Activities implemented under each Strategic Objective and maintain the reputation of ITU and the participating Acceleration Centres. ITU will apply quality assurance processes at each step of the design and implementation of Activities under the Programme based on best practices and international standards.

Subject matter experts from the Centres will form a community of practice. They will participate in expert group discussions to share local good practices and experiences, thus accelerating learning across the Network.

Through the institutionalization of the competency framework, ITU Acceleration Centres can ensure that their staff are equipped with adequate competencies and skills, and their Activity implementation complies with established standard.

Annual performance reviews will be undertaken by ITU for each Centre to measure progress towards the Programme goals and ensure that Centres are delivering their Activities in accordance with the Cooperation Agreement and its annexes, in particular the activity document (**Annex 3**). Performance assessment will include the scope and scale of Activity implementation during the previous year, as well as the development and presentation of Activity offerings, the actual implementation of Activities, and the overall satisfaction rates achieved by Centres in evaluations by beneficiaries.

### 4.2. Key performance indicators (KPIs)

Centres will be required to fulfill a set of core key performance indicators (KPIs) that ensure their Activity implementation meets the expectations of ITU and the beneficiaries. KPIs' targets can be established



during the assessment reviews or the Centre design phase. The following are examples of suggested KPIs that need to be complemented with appropriate baselines and targets:

#### **Quantitative KPIs**

- Number of Activities delivered within the Programme
- Number of staff certified according to the competency framework
- Number of beneficiaries (by country/region of origin and gender)
- Number of outcomes delivered for Strategic objectives

#### **Qualitative KPIs**

- Assessment of Standard Operating Processes based on ITU's Playbooks
- Assessment of capacity building Activities to participants
- Assessment of Centre physical facilities and online activities capabilities
- Overall level of Activity satisfaction identified through feedback surveys with beneficiaries
- Timely submission of all required documents to ITU in accordance with the Cooperation Agreement and its Annexes

ITU will work with Centres that may exhibit unsatisfactory performance to improve Activity implementation and outcomes to the extent possible.

ITU reserves the right to terminate the Cooperation Agreement with the Centre in case the Centre's performance is not deemed to be satisfactory by ITU and has not improved despite suggestions for improvement by ITU, in accordance with Article 11.3 of the Cooperation Agreement.

## **5 Programme management and coordination**

While the Programme is structured globally, attention will be paid to regional specificities and priorities. Its development and implementation will be managed by the ITU Development Sector Innovation team in conjunction with ITU Regional Offices and Thematic leads.

Synergies between ITU and the Centres and cooperation across the Network are essential aspects of the programme. ITU encourages Centres to share experience and, where appropriate, pool resources to maximise the value of programme activities to participants and beneficiary communities. This may be particularly relevant in enabling the translation of materials for use across different languages.

ITU also encourages engagement with the ITU Acceleration Centres Programme by intergovernmental and international organizations and industry stakeholders. As Programme partners, they may wish to provide financial contributions, including sponsorships or access to resources to enhance the programme's scope and value.

An annual global meeting of the Network of ITU Acceleration Centres will be organised by ITU to facilitate the implementation of the Programme, share experience and foster cooperation amongst Centres. The meeting will provide a platform for dialogue on the Centres' contribution to ITU-D Priorities and regional

priorities as well as on future steps in the development of the programme. Programme partners and the community of practice will join the discussions to bring their perspectives and explore collaboration towards common development goals.

Active participation by all Centres in annual meetings is expected. The meetings may be held virtually or physically and will offer an opportunity for Centres to engage with ITU experts and explore new training and engagement opportunities for key digital ecosystem stakeholders.