

ITUEvents

# Global Innovation Forum

*Building partnerships to mainstream entrepreneurship*

25 - 29 October 2021

Partners:



Organized by:



## Overview

More than a year in, the COVID-19 crisis continues to have a significant impact on society. It has exposed the fragility of the current economic system across the globe, but also provided a powerful lens to examine the underlying conditions that led to this fragility, and illuminated gaps in economic and social values chains, providing the opportunity to improve economic resilience and related issues.

Entrepreneurship-driven digital innovation has the potential to increase communities' resilience, protect jobs in key sectors of the economy and increase economic inclusion. However, the enabling environment for digital innovation is not adequate to create sustainable impact in many countries. ITU research shows that as of 2021, very few countries have start-up acts, policies or programmes supporting digital innovation and entrepreneurship. There is a growing digital innovation divide at the heart of the digital divide among countries, and many national policies and strategies — even in developed countries — often fail to close it.

Recovering from — as well as preventing — crises and bridging the digital divide require new partnerships to close the digital innovation gap. Countries can use this opportunity to transform their communities into thriving and competitive digital economies through accelerating entrepreneurship-driven innovation and focusing on job creation. This forum will empower participants with new insights, skills, tools, frameworks and relevant case studies to understand how to leapfrog the digital innovation divide, prepare and recover from global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and accelerate job creation.

The forum is a five-day, immersive event that will take the participants on global and regional learning journeys to learn the “why”, “what” and “how” of building new partnerships that ensure that communities have the right innovation capabilities to be resilient and competitive with digital technologies.

The following topics will be covered during the forum:

- Day 1: The forum's opening day will highlight the innovation divide and its impact on social conditions in the COVID-19 era, as well as the role of entrepreneurship-driven digital innovation in closing the digital innovation gap.
- Day 2: Participants will engage in discussion about specific mechanisms that can accelerate entrepreneurship-driven innovation.
- Day 3: The forum will bring in a regional dimension, examining the state of countries' readiness and show practical cases of how key sectors of the economy can benefit by nurturing digital innovation.

# 2021 ITU Global Innovation Forum

- Day 4: The forum will continue regional deep dives by sharing good practices, stories of digital change-makers and offer insights for new partnership actions at the regional level.
- Day 5: The forum's closing day will bring the discussion full circle by recognizing the winners of the 2021 Innovation Challenges and a recap of the week through the lenses of winners and of the generation connect community.

The event is targeted at digital change-makers, policy-makers, the private sector, academics, entrepreneurial support organizations, entrepreneurs, financiers, community development managers, international organizations and media.

Youth are the leaders of tomorrow. Thus, the forum will explore the challenges and opportunities in becoming entrepreneurs, policy-makers or ecosystem builders who accelerate economic development in their communities through the lens of young ICT leaders from ITU's Generation Connect cohort and other young ICT leaders.

## Draft agenda - Global event

<b>Monday, 25 October 2021</b>	
<b>13:30 – 14:00</b> GMT+2	<b>Opening keynote</b> <i>Session type: Keynote</i>
<b>14:00 – 15:00</b> GMT+2	<b>Leapfrogging the pandemic and future crisis through digital innovation to accelerate economic inclusion</b> <i>Session type: Ministerial panel</i> <b>Overview</b> More than one year into the pandemic, communities are still recovering, despite government interventions. Digital innovations have shown the potential to create new opportunities and address old challenges, as well as accelerate economic recovery.  Through entrepreneurship, innovators can become market creators and build companies to deliver novel solutions to new and previously existing problems. By doing so, they create enormous return and new industries, and ensure that the economy is creating jobs and economic wealth.  The session will explore the role of entrepreneurship-driven innovation in future proofing communities against current and future pandemic. Panellists will discuss the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● How has the pandemic affected social conditions?</li><li>● How has digital innovation put the spotlight on the digital divide?</li><li>● What is the role of entrepreneurship-driven innovation in future proofing communities against disasters and crises like the COVID-19 pandemic?</li></ul>

<p>15:00 – 16:30 GMT+2</p>	<p><b>Whole-of-ecosystem approach to mainstreaming entrepreneurship-driven innovation</b></p> <p><i>Session type: Co-creation panel</i></p> <p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>Despite massive investment in digital ecosystems, countries are unable to adapt to the fast-changing digital environment and technological revolutions. Many digital ecosystems remain non-competitive and are not achieving impact.</p> <p>While the top-down strategy fosters the systemic enablers for this environment, bottom-up strategies ensure that all the stakeholders — entrepreneurs, academics, governments, the private sector, entrepreneurial support networks and financiers — play their roles.</p> <p>It is through the stakeholder work and interaction that collaborative policies, programmes and strategies can be developed to nurture digital innovation. However, there is often an acute misunderstanding of stakeholders’ roles and responsibilities. As a result, our digital ecosystems are neither sustainable nor competitive. During the session, panellists will discuss the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● What does each group of stakeholders need from the others?</li><li>● What can they offer to their ecosystem?</li><li>● What mechanisms can foster a whole-of-ecosystem approach to entrepreneurship development?</li></ul> <p>This session will also have active co-creation from the audience and the generation connect community on Mural.</p>
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Tuesday, 26 October 2021	
<p><b>13:00 – 14:30</b> GMT+2</p>	<p><b>Mechanisms that build partnership in digital ecosystems to mainstream digital entrepreneurship</b></p> <p><i>Session type: Panel</i></p> <p><b>Overview</b> Entrepreneurs are the “captains” of industries. They seize opportunities, take risks and find resources to unlock them. They create start-ups that become small- and medium-sized companies and high-growth firms; creating enormous returns and new industries, destroying old industries and ensuring that the economy is creating jobs and economic wealth.</p> <p>Having access to financial and non-financial resources, policies, and programs are essential. Often, there are enough resources to fund programs, catalyse or kick-start an ecosystem, but collaboration is not guaranteed between actors such governments, corporate entities, financiers, academics, entrepreneurial support organizations and the innovators. Many traditional organizations responsible for such coordination have a limited mandate, vision, mission and ambitions. Thus, ecosystems continue to operate in silos in the absence of trustworthy mechanisms to ensure ecosystem collaboration.</p> <p>This session will explore challenges and opportunities in ecosystem coordination and explore new ideas that can be used to build trusted collaboration that mainstreams entrepreneurship.</p> <p>The session will discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are some mechanisms for collaboration in the ecosystem?</li> <li>● What are their challenges and opportunities?</li> <li>● How can we create space for systemic collaboration between actors?</li> <li>● What is a good blueprint for an ecosystem coordination mechanism (i.e. governance, mission, activities, resources)?</li> </ul>
<p><b>14:30 – 16:00</b> GMT+2</p>	<p><b>Entrepreneurial universities as accelerators for economic development</b></p> <p><i>Session type: Panel</i> <i>Session partner: ICPT</i></p> <p><b>Overview</b> Entrepreneurial universities can be at the heart of economic development. They go beyond their traditional mission of education and science research to facilitate economic development through entrepreneurial programmes and communities. Without the environment offered by Stanford University, Silicon Valley today would be a different community.</p> <p>In developing countries, many academic institutions have been slow to rethink their mission and ambition. This is a missed opportunity; inhibiting talent from innovating and becoming the captains of new industries in their communities and globally.</p> <p>Renewed efforts are needed to update the mission of institutions of learning — especially those with a scientific nature — to orchestrating the development of entrepreneurial talent through partnerships, new approaches and new programmes with key ecosystem stakeholders.</p>

During this session, panellists will discuss the following question and ideas:

- The “what” and “why” of entrepreneurial universities
- What are the challenges and opportunities for traditional institutions of learning to become entrepreneurial universities?
- How do we create a wave of entrepreneurial universities to power economic development in developing countries?
- What is a good blueprint for an entrepreneurial university (governance, mission, activities, resources)?

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### Wednesday, 27 October 2021

13:00 – 16:00  
GMT+2

#### Live pitching from shortlisted candidates of the Global South COVID-19 Digital Innovation Challenge

*Session type: Project pitch*

##### **Overview**

The Global South COVID-19 Digital Innovation Challenge was launched in June 2021 in collaboration with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) as part of the ITU Innovation Challenges. The challenge sought to identify scalable, innovative, digital solutions that will enable countries, societies, communities, institutions and individuals from the Global South to deal with the cascading effects of the pandemic.

ITU received over 250 challenge applications. An expert selection committee of over 40 members was convened to review the submissions against the evaluation criteria to determine the best innovative solutions that promote a return to normalcy after the COVID-19 crisis. Twenty-five projects were shortlisted and the organizers of these projects will make a live pitch in front of a selection committee during the session.

The selection committee will then choose up to 10 winners, who will be announced during the 29 October session *Bringing it all together*.

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## Draft agenda - Regional events

### Regional Innovation Forum for the Arab States

Wednesday, 27 October 2021	
10:00 – 10:10 GMT+2	<p><b>Welcome remarks</b> <i>Session type: Keynote</i></p>
10:10 – 11:00 GMT+2	<p><b>Tech entrepreneurship and key sector development in a regional context</b> <i>Session type: Ministerial panel</i></p> <p><b>Overview</b> The intertwined roles of entrepreneurship, innovation and technology are fuelling a paradigm that calls for new thinking and insights. ICT-centric innovation ecosystems have a critical role to play in fostering digital transformation, leading to economic inclusion, positive externalities and sustainable growth for communities, cities and countries. This ecosystem of entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial support organizations, academics, public- and private-sector stakeholders, and financiers are some of the ingredients necessary to fuel a positive digital transformation. Some countries in the Arab States region are able to provide a fertile breeding ground for innovative ideas, whereas in others, many brilliant ideas are not realized due to the lack of an enabling environment.</p> <p>This session will bring together high-level speakers to provide insights about key sector development with technology through tech entrepreneurship. Panellists will discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is tech entrepreneurship fuelling competitiveness (or the lack thereof) for key sectors with potential in the Arab States region?</li> <li>• What are the challenges and opportunities for the digital ecosystem in the region?</li> <li>• What new mechanisms or initiatives are needed to accelerate sectoral transformation using a whole-ecosystem approach?</li> </ul>
11:00 – 12:00 GMT+2	<p><b>Mechanisms for partnership to mainstream entrepreneurship</b> <i>Session type: Storytelling</i></p> <p><b>Video:</b> What does the “valley of death” teach entrepreneurs?</p> <p><b>Overview</b> Vibrant ecosystems require a culture in which stakeholders organically leverage existing resources and continuously update their policies and programmes to remain competitive. Building an innovation culture at the country level is a journey. Entrepreneurs who find ideas worth exploring undertake this journey to turn these opportunities into businesses and deliver products and services to the market. A successful journey results in entrepreneurs delivering problem-solving innovations to their communities and regional or global markets. Nevertheless, this success depends on many enabling building blocks — talent, infrastructure, capital, market, culture, policies and an overarching vision and strategy alignment — that provide the key ingredients of robust and vibrant digital innovation ecosystems.</p>

	<p>This session will explore in-depth the needs of an entrepreneur in their journey to contribute to economic development. If the enabling environment for entrepreneurs is not ready, they will falter in the valley of death. Panellists will address the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the mechanisms for fuelling partnership in the ecosystem to mainstream entrepreneurship?</li> <li>• What lessons can be learned from these partnerships?</li> <li>• What recommendations can be made for the region?</li> </ul>
<p><b>12:00 – 13:00 GMT+2</b></p>	<p><b>Development of Arab Regional Entrepreneurship and Innovation Ecosystem</b></p> <p><i>Session type: Panel</i></p> <p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>Entrepreneurs are driving a revolution that is transforming and renewing economies worldwide. They raise capital, create jobs and add value to further economic growth. As the number of SMEs and start-ups grows annually in the Arab States region, so does the number of the supporting incubators and accelerators to create a better environment for their growth.</p> <p>The Arab Innovation and Entrepreneurship Network (AIEN) is an ITU-affiliated NGO that develops and shares expertise between business incubator managers and stakeholders in the Arab States region; unifying ecosystem efforts in science and technology and applying localized good practices. AIEN provides a platform for knowledge sharing, co-creation and engagement; supports business incubation and acceleration; smart networking; internationalization of SMEs; and innovation for sustainable growth and new opportunities for entrepreneurs.</p> <p>The session will take the audience through the renewed strategy, mission and goals of AIEN and its contributions to ecosystem development. The session will further share the experiences of AIEN members. Panellists will discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the challenges and opportunities incubators and accelerators in the Arab region face?</li> <li>• How can we better support and grow digital change-makers focused on digital entrepreneurship in the Arab Region?</li> <li>• How can AEIN assist members and member countries in their path to innovation, entrepreneurship leading to digital transformation?</li> </ul>



## Regional Innovation Forum for Africa

Wednesday, 27 October 2021	
<p><b>10:00 – 11:30 GMT</b></p>	<p><b>Tech entrepreneurship and key sector development in Africa</b></p> <p><i>Session type: Panel</i></p> <p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>Africa is rising. In the digital age, technology use and innovation are ubiquitous. However, countries with limited capabilities struggle and require support to be competitive in the global market. Sectors and entrepreneurs who find opportunities worth exploring must undertake a journey to turn these opportunities into businesses, and deliver products and services to the market. A successful journey results in delivering problem-solving innovations to their communities and regional or global markets. This success depends on enabling building blocks such as talent, infrastructure, capital, market, culture, policies, and an overarching national vision and strategy alignment that provides the key ingredients of robust and vibrant digital innovation ecosystems.</p> <p>This session will bring together high-level speakers from countries to provide insight on technology development through entrepreneurship, focusing specifically on key sectors. Panellists will discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is tech entrepreneurship fuelling competitiveness (or the lack thereof) in the African regional context for key sectors with potential?</li> <li>• What are the challenges and opportunities for the digital ecosystem within this context?</li> <li>• What new mechanisms or initiatives are needed to accelerate sectoral transformation using a whole-ecosystem approach?</li> </ul>
<p><b>11:30 – 13:00 GMT</b></p>	<p><b>Regional good practices and innovation journey stories from the frontlines in the Africa region</b></p> <p><i>Session type: Blueprint sharing and storytelling</i></p> <p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>In the Africa region, there are good practices that can be modified and replicated by champions in their own communities to help mainstream vibrant digital innovation ecosystems that are conducive to the accelerated digital transformation of society. The opportunities inherent in accelerating digital transformation in Africa are crucial, and require an understanding of the critical enablers and linkages needed to foster ICT-centric innovation. Good practices can serve as a basis for strengthening digital innovation ecosystems, as well as promoting regional and international cooperation and partnerships.</p> <p>This session explores in-depth some of the blueprints fuelling digital transformation in the region, and how they affect the key enablers – such as infrastructure, talent, capital, market, culture and vision, and strategy – and the performance of the three engines of growth.</p> <p>During this session, ATU and ITU Innovation Challenge winners will share their stories. This session will also launch the ITU report <i>Regional Good Practices: Accelerating innovation, entrepreneurship and digital transformation in the Africa region</i>. Good practice owners identified in the report as well as other ecosystem experts from the region will likewise share their insights and experiences. Panellists will discuss the following questions:</p>

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the performance of the three engines of growth in the Africa region? What are some key insights for the enablers of digital transformation?</li><li>• What is the blueprint of key practices fuelling the innovation journey and success stories?</li><li>• What does it feel like being an innovator in your ecosystem? What is missing to help innovators achieve their potential? What problems are innovators in your ecosystem trying to solve?</li></ul> |
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## Regional Innovation Forum for the Americas

Wednesday, 27 October 2021	
<p><b>11:00 – 12:00</b> UTC-3</p>	<p><b>Regional good practices and collaboration insight for mainstreaming digital innovation ecosystems</b></p> <p><i>Session type: Ministerial panel</i></p> <p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>The societal impact from the COVID-19 crisis has exposed the fragility of the current economic system across the globe, creating an opportunity to improve economic resilience. Entrepreneurship-driven digital innovation has the potential to increase communities' resilience, protect jobs in key sectors of the economy and increase economic inclusion.</p> <p>Designing and implementing policies that enable entrepreneurship-driven innovation is one of the building blocks defined by ITU for a healthy ICT-centric innovation ecosystem. For example, there are different levels of investments in ICT development among the 35 countries in the Americas region. Despite the fact that the majority of countries are performing below their potential, the region has many good practices and examples of tackling and overcoming challenges, providing a basis for better policies in digital innovation. By replicating and amplifying these practices, countries in the Americas region can strengthen their digital innovation ecosystems and become global leaders.</p> <p>This session builds on insights from high-level public and private sector stakeholders to discuss their practices on nurturing digital transformation, innovation and entrepreneurship, and what actors can learn from one another.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the key challenges regarding the enablers for digital transformation in the region?</li> <li>• Which is the "low-hanging fruit", or the sectors that are closer to digital transformation?</li> <li>• What are the opportunities within sectors more resistant to digital transformation?</li> <li>• What are lessons from good practices that can be amplified or twinned with other countries?</li> <li>• What is the role of entrepreneurship-driven innovation in future-proofing communities in the Americas against the disasters and crises like the COVID-19 pandemic?</li> </ul>
<p><b>12:00 – 13:00</b> UTC-3</p>	<p><b>Regional good practices in innovation, entrepreneurship and digital transformation: building tech entrepreneurship in key sectors during the pandemic</b></p> <p><i>Session type: Blueprint sharing</i></p> <p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>ITU's new report, <i>Regional Good Practices: Accelerating innovation, entrepreneurship and digital innovation — Americas region</i>, shows common experiences in the Americas region, in which all countries — including the most developed ones — face challenges in closing the digital divide to become innovation-driven economies. The intertwined roles of entrepreneurship, innovation and technology are fuelling a paradigm that requires new thinking and strong collaboration. More than ever, we need to recognize that not all digital ecosystem stakeholders have been able to adapt to fast changing technologies, and enable them to do so.</p>

	<p>Building innovation capacity is a crucial component of generating a thriving ICT-centric innovation ecosystem. It requires innovators to be equipped with the resources, tools and skills that they need to succeed. Even for those who are connected, connectivity does not directly translate into inclusion in the digital economy. An innovation-driven economy requires countries to develop sufficient talent by providing training in hard ICT skills and soft skills in management, business planning and entrepreneurship. By replicating and amplifying good practices in the Americas region, countries can strengthen their digital innovation ecosystems and become global leaders. Panellists will discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is tech entrepreneurship fuelling competitiveness (or the lack thereof) in the America region for key sectors with potential?</li> <li>• What are the challenges and opportunities for the digital ecosystem within this context? What are the key insights for the seven enablers of digital transformation (infrastructure, talent, capital, market, culture and vision, and strategy)?</li> <li>• What new mechanisms or initiatives are needed to accelerate sectoral transformation using a whole-ecosystem approach?</li> <li>• What is the blueprint of a good practice?</li> </ul>
<p><b>13:00-14:00</b> <b>UTC-3</b></p>	<p><b>An innovation journey: stories from the frontlines</b></p> <p><i>Session type: Storytelling</i></p> <p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>The innovation journey usually begins out of necessity, but it can also draw from an opportunity-driven environment. There are three major elements that drive innovation: culture, risks and incentives. ITU's new report, Regional Good Practices: Accelerating innovation, entrepreneurship and digital transformation — Americas region, shows that, paradoxically, willingness to take risks is low across the region, but cultural perception of entrepreneurship is relatively high. However, undertaking the entrepreneurial journey requires willingness (not just positive perception) to take risks.</p> <p>This session brings innovators and young leaders from the region, including ITU Innovation Challenge and Generation Connect leaders, to share their innovation journeys and to set the stage for a renewed focus on how to create an enabling digital ecosystem for entrepreneurship-driven digital innovation. Panellists will discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does it feel like being an innovator in your ecosystem?</li> <li>• What is missing to help innovators achieve their potential?</li> <li>• What problems are innovators in your ecosystem trying to solve?</li> </ul>

## Regional Innovation Forum for the Arab States

Thursday, 28 October 2021	
10:00 – 11:00 GMT+2	<p><b>Regional good practices and collaboration insight for mainstreaming digital innovation ecosystems</b></p> <p><i>Session type: Panel and report launch</i></p> <p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>The Arab States region has many good practices that can be used to accelerate digital transformation and serve as a basis for better policies in countries where gaps persist. By replicating and amplifying good practices in the region, countries can strengthen their digital innovation ecosystems and follow in the footsteps of the global leaders.</p> <p>During this session, ITU will launch its report, <i>Regional Good Practices: Accelerating innovation, entrepreneurship and digital transformation in the Arab States region</i>. The session will then build on insights from the report; engaging high-level, public- and private-sector stakeholders in discussion of their practices in guiding innovation dynamics, building innovation capacity and integrating ICT innovation into national development agendas. Experts and good practice holders will discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the regional and national performance of the engines of economic growth in the Arab States region?</li> <li>• What are the key challenges regarding the enablers for digital transformation in the region?</li> <li>• What are lessons from good practices that can be amplified or twinned with other countries?</li> </ul>
11:00 – 12:00 GMT+2	<p><b>Fundamentals on building competitive and innovative ICT-centric ecosystems</b></p> <p><i>Session type: Interactive panel</i></p> <p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>This session will set the stage for renewed focus on capacity development to nurture entrepreneurship-driven innovation in the age of the COVID-19 pandemic. Competitive digital ecosystems are complex; requiring new thinking, new approaches and new stakeholders who can develop the skills and expertise to take action and prepare their communities for potential crises.</p> <p>This session will explore the need for new approaches and partnerships to prepare fertile ground for the talent and ecosystem stakeholders in the Arab States region. The session will end with a call to action to build new partnerships with academia in ecosystem building for the region.</p> <p>The discussion will draw on experiences from students of the ITU Academy courses Innovation Ecosystem 101: Fundamentals on building competitive and innovative ICT-centric ecosystems and Digital Innovation Ecosystem Training (DIET), answering the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the importance of new approaches to capacity building in ecosystem development? Why?</li> <li>• What tools, new approaches and partnerships are needed to embrace the new paradigm in capacity development?</li> </ul>

	How can we accelerate capacity building in ecosystem development in the Arab States region?
12:00 – 13:00 GMT+2	<p><b>An innovation journey: stories from the frontlines</b></p> <p><i>Session type: Panel</i></p> <p>Entrepreneurs and innovators are the heart of the digital innovation ecosystem. The economic and cultural diversity in the Arab States region means that many innovators face different challenges; and have access to different levels of support and resources. During this session, winners of the ITU Innovation Challenges and the AI for Development Challenge from the region will share their stories. The panellists will discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What does it feel like being an innovator in your ecosystem?</li><li>• What is missing to help innovators achieve their potential?</li><li>• What problems are innovators in your ecosystem trying to solve?</li></ul>

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## Regional Innovation Forum for Africa

Thursday, 28 October 2021	
<p><b>10:00 – 11:30 GMT</b></p>	<p><b>Good practices twinning for competitive and integrated regional digital ecosystems</b></p> <p><i>Session type: Ministerial panel</i></p> <p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>ITU's Development (ITU-D) sector's main objectives, defined at the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), are to strengthen its membership's capabilities to integrate ICT innovation into their national development agendas and promote a culture of innovation. This mandate was further developed at WTDC-17, Buenos Aires, with the additional goal of developing "strategies to promote innovation initiatives, including through public, private and public-private partnerships". ITU's subsequent <a href="#">Africa Regional Initiative 1</a> focuses on building digital economies and fostering innovation in Africa.</p> <p>This session facilitates discussion on this mandate, building on insights shared in the previous day's session on the <i>Regional Good Practices: Accelerating innovation, entrepreneurship and digital transformation in the Africa region</i> report. High-level public and private sector stakeholders will discuss ways that stakeholders can accelerate the development of a regional innovation ecosystem that supports countries in integrating ICT innovation into national development agendas. The panellists will discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are some practices fuelling digital innovation countries and region?</li> <li>• What are some key challenges and opportunities in digital ecosystem to achieve national ambitions?</li> <li>• How can we accelerate the development of competitive regional and national digital innovation ecosystems?</li> </ul>
<p><b>11:30 – 13:00 GMT</b></p>	<p><b>Mainstreaming innovation and entrepreneurship capacity in the Africa region</b></p> <p><i>Session type: Panel</i></p> <p><i>Session partners: Smart Africa and AAU</i></p> <p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>Innovation and entrepreneurship require continuous engagement to develop a holistic assessment of digital innovation ecosystems at the community and country level, which is crucial to building and innovating through ICTs. Vibrant ecosystems require a culture where stakeholders organically leverage existing resources and constantly update their policies and programmes to remain competitive. Building an innovation culture at the country level is a journey. On this journey, ecosystems go through stages of development, during which every stakeholder has a role to play, and actions to take.</p> <p>With this in mind, ITU, in collaboration with Smart Africa, developed a curriculum to empower policy-makers, academics, innovators and ecosystem-builders to build thriving entrepreneurial communities that can navigate technological revolutions and create competitive ICT industries. The course, <b>Digital Innovation Ecosystem Training: Building entrepreneurial communities and competitive ICT industries for job creation (DIET)</b>, aims to enhance the building of entrepreneurial communities and job creation in the Africa region.</p>

	<p>The session will answer the following questions using experiences from experts and participants of DIET:</p>
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- What are new approaches to building innovation capacity and how can engage communities to build their own ecosystem?
- What tools, new approaches and partnership are needed to embrace the new paradigm in capacity development?
- How can we accelerate capacity development for key stakeholders in the ICT ecosystems?

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## Global event

<b>Thursday, 28 October 2021</b>	
<b>13:00 – 16:00 GMT+2</b>	<p><b>Live pitching from shortlisted candidates of the Global South Covid-19 Digital Innovation Challenges (continued)</b></p> <p><i>Session type: Project pitch</i></p> <p>The Global South COVID-19 Digital Innovation Challenge was launched in June 2021 in collaboration with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) as part of the ITU Innovation Challenges. The challenge sought to identify scalable, innovative, digital solutions that will enable countries, societies, communities, institutions and individuals from the Global South to deal with the cascading effects of the pandemic.</p> <p>ITU received over 250 challenge applications. An expert selection committee of over 40 members was convened to review the submissions against the evaluation criteria to determine the best innovative solutions that promote a return to normalcy after the COVID-19 crisis. Twenty-five projects were shortlisted and the organizers of these projects will make a live pitch in front of a selection committee during this session.</p> <p>The selection committee will then choose up to 10 winners who will be announced during the 29 October session Bringing it all together.</p>
<b>16:00 – 17:00 GMT+2</b>	<p><b>Networking session</b></p> <p><i>Session type: Networking</i></p> <p>Global Innovation Forum panellists, moderators, officials and attendees are invited to network with one another on the platform.</p>

<b>Friday, 29 October 2021</b>	
<b>13:00 – 14:30</b> <b>GMT+2</b>	<p><b>Partnerships to nurture the next unicorn</b></p> <p><i>Session type: Panel</i></p> <p><b>Overview</b>            In today’s fast-changing environment, nurturing entrepreneurship-driven innovation offers new opportunities for economic development. Yet, limited efforts are undertaken to unlock this potential, which could accelerate the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.</p> <p>With an estimated over 300 million start-ups located in various clusters around the world, only a few ecosystems have the right innovation fabric to help their start-ups develop into the next unicorn, or billion-dollar valuation company.</p> <p>For start-ups to succeed, they need an ecosystem of stakeholders to support their journey. The ecosystem is the enabling environment providing the resources, policies and programmes, and the stakeholders and their relationships within this environment. Countries need holistic ecosystem strategies, which are both top-down and bottom-up to achieve economic development.</p> <p>Throughout the week, discussions focussed on an understanding of the stakeholders, gaps in their collaboration, mechanisms needed to ignite collaboration and opportunities in play for communities.</p> <p>Earlier sessions also established that entrepreneurs are the captains of industries and drive economic development through products and services (with good surplus value), and create jobs, high-growth industries and world-class exports. So, what now? How do we leverage this drive?</p> <p>This session will focus on key initiatives nurturing economic development through digital entrepreneurship and a call for new partnerships and tech-driven innovation to expand benefits for their beneficiaries. During this session, panellists will discuss the following question and ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The potential to accelerate economic development through ecosystem strategies of nurturing entrepreneurship</li> <li>• The “what” and “how” of key ecosystem strategies and initiatives to help scale up start-ups working on key problematics in resource-constrained ecosystems</li> <li>• What call for partnership do we need to mainstream entrepreneurship-driven initiatives in developing countries?</li> </ul>
<b>AWARDS AND CLOSING CEREMONY</b>	
<b>15:00 – 16:00</b> <b>GMT+2</b>	<p><b>Bringing it all together</b></p> <p><i>Session type: Awards ceremony and closing</i></p> <p><b>Overview</b>            Throughout the week, experts have participated in discussions focused on partnerships to mainstream entrepreneurship-driven innovation. Each session</p>

## 2021 ITU Global Innovation Forum

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	<p>featured Generation Connect community members or winners of the Innovation Challenges. In this wrap-up session, these communities will be asked about their key takeaways from the 2021 Global Innovation Forum.</p>
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Through the lenses of selected innovators and youth, the closing session of the forum will recap the global and regional learning that took place throughout the week.

**Group photo of winners**

**Closing remarks**

DRAFT