



OUTCOME BRIEF



ITU-D Study Groups
2018-2021

Co-Creation Workshop for Academia Members

Building a value-enhancing partnership ecosystem

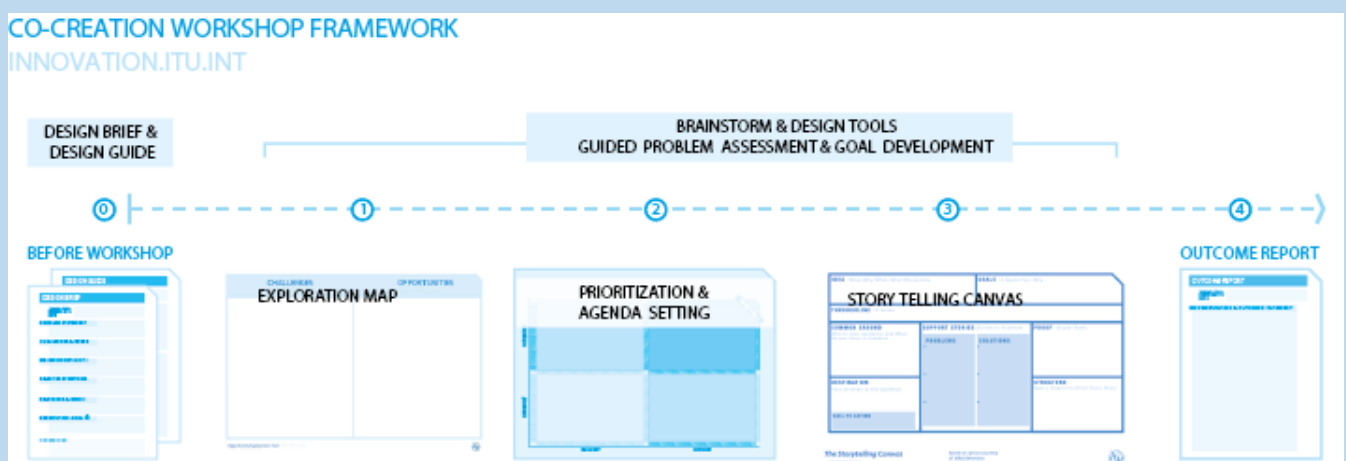
ITU Headquarters, March 21st, 2019

Enhancing Academia's journey in ITU-D

Within the diversity of players in a converged ICT ecosystem from telecommunications, health, finance, education to agriculture, etc., there is growing recognition of the importance of bringing in the Academic wealth of knowledge and scientific expertise through innovative partnerships. Today, ITU has diverse involvement from a network of some 160 ITU Academia members.

Academia members have progressively increased their participation and contribution to the work of ITU and ITU-D in particular, mainly through ITU-D Study Groups. But the journey does not end there.

The **objective** of the workshop was to bring together Academia members, BDT Programs representatives and other stakeholders to better understand the expectations and needs of Academia members, share success stories in bringing about novel ideas and partnerships and discuss how ITU-D Study Groups can provide a platform to foster such linkages within Academia, as well as with BDT and its wider membership.



The purpose of an ITU Innovation co-creation workshop framework is to bring all relevant stakeholders into the design process of products and services. It is a great way to get feedback on our ideas but most importantly, to empower them to create with us. By creating together, we can leverage each other's capabilities and find the solutions that will fit all parties.

Understanding each other and navigating ITU-D



Participants discussed their understandings and expectations of each other's activities. From the outset, they recognized that **while both the BDT and the Academic community are used to working together in ITU-D Study Groups, there are many other potential collaborations to explore.** Academia members shared success stories of the various ways in which they already engage with BDT Programs that others were not aware of.

By facilitating how Academia members engage in the work of ITU-D, starting with such-co-creation workshops, these success stories will be shared better, making it easier to repeat and amplify them.

ITU-D has the potential to **transform its relationships with its Academia members into mutually beneficial partnerships.**

"I joined ITU to work on a specific book project, and, from that experience, I established a more structural relationship, joined events and other projects, and through Study Groups, I developed new research questions"

Creating concrete products together



Participants pointed to the need to better **package and communicate BDT products**, which are currently difficult to engage with. BDT staff and Academia members, for instance, deplored that, although access to policymakers was one of the main benefits of ITU-D membership, ITU-D Study Groups outputs could be better tailored to inform decisions on policy and planning.

"There is a lack of awareness about our work in ITU-D Study Groups, we make our outcomes available but we could do more."

ITU colleagues and Academia members recommended that by designing more products together, they would be able to **make membership more active, multiply their impact and strengthen commitment on partnerships**. One way forward could be to review how Study Groups knowledge is disseminated by, for example, introducing **policy briefs** that can be owned and used by all parties at the international, regional and national level.

CONVERSATION #3

Making incentives work

For partnerships to be sustainable, there need to be strong incentives.

For example, Academia members expressed interest accessing new roles in ITU-D Study Groups such as Editors and increasing the opportunities for students to engage with ITU. They also pointed to the lack of certification of some ITU initiatives, or of a product matching potential partners.

"BDT and Academia have complementary needs and having a product to match interested partners would create synergies to fulfill each other's needs."



Academia members and BDT staff **saw how they could make each other more relevant.** Academics would benefit from being more aware of ICT trends and new technologies and BDT from mainstreaming "hot topics" in its work without being constrained by its four-year cycle.

Academia members expressed that **they can and want to do more: more joint products, more joint projects.** Citing how they were collaborating with other international organizations, they said that they could do research consultancies for BDT but also collaborate on the induction of new members, as well as be more involved in the design and delivery of training, for instance.



The road ahead

This **ITU Innovation co-creation workshop** demonstrated **how much BDT and Academia members have in common** in terms of their work, interests, goals, and desires for collaboration.

This exercise was one of many that BDT is undertaking to pave the way for an enhanced collaboration in which BDT and its membership engage in **mutually beneficial partnerships**, with concrete and relevant projects that meet their respective needs and deliver on our mission to connect the unconnected.

Taking action to close the gaps

- Create a **toolkit for new members** on how to navigate BDT and engage with our various products and services
- Introduce **policy briefs** to disseminate ITU-D Study Group outcomes
- **Better leverage Academia's research and talent capabilities** by enhancing access to professors and students along their respective needs
- Undertake a **mapping of all BDT products and services** to better understand how we work with our partners and how we could improve their experience and our efficiency collectively
- Work to make ITU-D a **matching platform** within which ITU-D's diverse membership can find like-minded organizations and build joint projects

STUDY GROUPS LINKS

SG1 - [Enabling environment for the development of telecommunications/ICTs](#)
SG2 - [ICT services and applications for the promotion of sustainable development](#)

CONTACT

ITU Membership – membership@itu.int
ITU-D Study Groups – devsg@itu.int
Human Capacity Building – hcbmai@itu.int
Partnership and Sponsorship – bdtpartners@itu.int