

Strategy for Promoting Centers of Excellence (CoE) Activities

1. The Background of the ITU Centers of Excellence (CoEs) Network:

The Centres of Excellence project was established pursuant to resolutions of the Plenipotentiary conferences of Kyoto (1994) and Minneapolis (1998) for ITU to use part of the Telecom Surplus funds for specific telecom development projects, primarily in the least developed countries. The Centres of Excellence project was launched in 1997 as a worldwide initiative, through Council Document C97/59-E 18-27 of June 1997.

Centres of Excellence were conceived as a human and institutional capacity building partnership between ITU, private sector companies in the telecommunications industry, development institutions and training institutions in the recipient regions, who would be the delivery vehicles for the training as well as recipients of institutional support.

During the World Telecommunications Development Conference (WTDC- 2010), in Hyderabad, India, the ITU Membership re-affirmed the need to continue with the Centres of Excellence activities and review the CoE strategy, through Resolution 73. In accordance with this Resolution, the CoE strategy was reviewed resulting in development of a new strategy and selection of 32 Center of Excellence (CoEs). The selected CoEs are currently operating on the basis of a self-sustainable model supported by the revenues they generate from the activities they run.

However, notwithstanding the success and popularity of this project, it has become necessary to develop a promotional strategy for marketing and promoting activities of the selected CoE's in view of the high competition in the ICT's capacity-building environment.

2. Objectives of the ITU Centers of Excellence (CoEs) Network Activities Promotional Strategy:

The overall objective of this promotional strategy focuses on improving the visibility of CoEs' training activities to reach a broader target audience, differentiate the ITU CoEs activities, stabilize existing ITU CoEs activity levels as well as strengthen the link between ITU and the CoEs. This focus is also expected to enhance visibility of the partnership between ITU and the CoE Global Network

3. Promotional Strategy

ITU's collaboration with CoEs is focused on the mutual benefits derived from the CoEs' access to the ITU membership community as a market, and the ITU achieving its objective of promoting knowledge and use of ICT/telecommunication skills among its members, through training offered by the CoEs. To realize these benefits, wider communication and promotion of CoE activities by both parties is essential.

The Centres of Excellence activities are currently promoted by both the CoEs and ITU through the use of the CoEs' selected advertising media and the ITU Academy platform. The existing promotional strategies can be improved as follows:

- **Enhance agility** – strategies used to promote CoE activities should be rigorous, based on current technologies and continuously updated, to reach the market earlier than other providers and in time for the annual training planning of potential clients.
- **Integrate strategies** – multiple promotional strategies should be used together to complement each other, increasing the chances of reaching different society segments and improving the probability of CoE activities being selected by potential participants.
- **Expand the CoEs' market reach** – strategies should use promotion tools that are accessible globally and have a world-wide presence, to expand market reach of CoEs. Since CoEs are spread across the world, using each of their platforms as a gateway for other CoE platforms would be an essential part of this objective.
- **Optimize capabilities** – strategies should leverage capabilities inherent within the CoEs and ITU to gain new customers and deepen relationships with existing ones. The ITU Academy platform offers functionalities that can be readily used for promotional activities. As training providers, the CoEs have a history of achievements and internal capacities required to build a strong value proposition for the training offered.

In light of the above, the overall promotional strategy focuses on improving the visibility of CoEs' training activities and reaching a wider potential target audience, as well as strengthening the link between ITU and the CoEs and raising the visibility of the partnership between ITU and the CoE Global Network . It encompasses activities which include the effective use of the ITU Academy platform and its different features, the development of promotional materials and presentations, the organization of specific sessions during ITU meetings and events, and increased use of social media.

The effective implementation of this promotional strategy requires the efforts of ITU Headquarters, the Regional Offices and the Centres of Excellence themselves. This strategy is to be reviewed on a regular basis to be continually aligned to the CoEs' needs. Below is a detailed list of ongoing and propos

Promotional Activities

A. Promotional Activities to be led by Headquarters:

Activity	Description	Medium	Impact	Status
1. Include a designated webpage for CoEs in the ITU Academy website	A webpage specifically designed for the CoEs providing an overview of the CoE strategy and the role of the CoEs in ITU capacity building work	ITU Academy website	This will increase the visibility of CoEs since the ITU Academy website is visited by a large number of users	Implemented
2. Advertise CoE courses in the ITU Academy platform	All CoE courses are advertised in the ITU Academy platform (the layout of the platform is currently being improved to provide the center stage to the CoE courses)	ITU Academy website	This will increase the visibility of CoE activities and will allow potential participants to easily register to the courses, since the ITU Academy is a user-friendly platform	Implemented
3. Include links to the CoEs' websites in the ITU Academy platform	Visitors of the ITU Academy can directly access the sites of the CoEs by following the links provided	ITU Academy website	This will strengthen the link between the ITU Academy and CoEs, and allow ITU Academy visitors to learn more about the overall work of each CoE	Implemented
4. Provide visibility of CoE logos in the ITU Academy platform	Logos to be displayed in the platform next to the names and website links of the CoEs to provide more visibility	ITU Academy website	This will strengthen the link between the ITU Academy and CoEs as well as foster instant public recognition of the CoEs	Implemented
5. Produce CoE promotional video	Develop a short video that promotes the work of the CoEs and make it visible on the ITU Academy website	Video (various distribution channels)	This will engage more users in the work of the CoEs through the use of an interactive and engaging medium	Proposed
6. Capture interest of participants and send push messages on upcoming courses	Provide option for visitors of the ITU Academy to indicate their interest in receiving information on future courses. An update is sent to them once a month on the upcoming courses in the areas of interest they indicated.	ITU Academy website, emails	This will allow ITU to send targeted messages to potential participants who have indicated their preferences, thus increasing the chances of enrolment	Proposed

7. Develop regional training brochures	Develop annual regional training brochures featuring all CoE activities for the year and distribute the brochure among ITU membership	Online media	Sharing in advance the training offer with the ITU membership will enable them to plan ahead for courses they may wish to participate in	Proposed
8. Create CoE communities in the ITU Academy platform	Create online communities for regional CoE Steering Committees to promote regional networking; create a global online community for CoE Steering Committees from all regions to promote global networking.	ITU Academy website	This will increase communication and linkages between CoEs as well as foster joint promotional activities	Implemented
9. Providing information in other languages	Translation of some materials is the ITU Academy to other official languages	ITU Academy website	This will enhance outreach of the ITU Academy	Proposed

B. Promotional Activities to be led as a joint effort between Headquarters, the Regional Offices and the Centres of Excellence

Activity	Description	Medium	Impact	Status
10. Publish CoE articles in the News and Events blocks of the ITU Academy homepage	Existing News and Events blocks in the ITU Academy website can be used by CoEs to publish articles related to their CoE activities. Invitations need to be sent to CoEs to submit articles.	ITU Academy website	This will increase the visibility of CoE activities, considering that the News and Events blocks are on the ITU Academy homepage	On-going
11. Engage CoEs on how to best promote their activities	Use the communities function in the ITU Academy platform to collect proposals from CoEs on a continuous basis on how to assist them with promotion	ITU Academy website	This will allow us to plan effective promotional strategies aligned to CoE needs	Proposed
12. Use the Steering Committee (SC) platform to plan promotional strategies	As part of the SC agenda, include a session on evaluation of performance and recommendations for new promotional strategies	Face-to-face annual meeting	Assessing the impact of promotional strategies that have been implemented will allow planning more effective strategies for the upcoming year	Proposed
13. Advertise CoEs in other ITU programmes	Share presentations on the CoE model and CoE webpage link at ITU meetings and events	Presentations	This will increase CoEs' visibility during ITU events and strengthen	On-going

			the link between the CoE Global Network and ITU	
14. Promote participation of CoEs in ITU regional and global capacity building events	Provide a space for CoEs to showcase their work at ITU capacity building events, such as the Global Capacity Building Symposium.	Events	This will provide a regional and global marketing platform for CoEs as well as opportunities to network	On-going
15. Use social media to advertise CoE courses	Use twitter, facebook, linkedin, Google+, to post instant regular messages and expand the network of potential participants/alumni of CoE courses. Invite CoEs to submit and share posts.	Social Media	This will increase CoEs' online exposure and will allow us to communicate instantly with our audiences, learn about their preferences and cater better to their needs	Proposed
16. Gather expressions of interest from Administrations on courses planned by CoEs	Compile a list of courses that CoEs have planned to deliver within their focus areas, then send it to HR contact points in the administration or sector member, and seek their input on what they would be interested in.	e-mail or letter	This will help align the CoE courses to the needs of the membership	Proposed

C. Promotional Activities to be led by the Centres of Excellence:

Activity	Description	Medium	Impact	Status
17. CoEs' use of ITU logo for advertising courses	CoEs use the ITU logo in their promotional materials and invitation letters to potential participants	Promotional materials	This will increase CoEs recognition and branding, and strengthen their association to ITU	Implemented
18. Link CoEs' websites to the ITU Academy	Visitors of CoE websites can directly access the ITU Academy	CoE websites	This will strengthen the link of CoEs with ITU; support the promotion of other CoEs by redirecting users from one CoE site to the global network site	On-going

The effective implementation of this promotional strategy requires the efforts of ITU Headquarters, the Regional Offices and the Centres of Excellence themselves. This strategy is to be reviewed on a regular basis to be continually aligned to the CoEs' needs. Below is an implementation timeline with activities organized in order of priority.

4. Priority and Implementation

	2017											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
1. Capture interest of participants and send push messages on upcoming courses												
2. Use social media to advertise CoE courses												
3. Gather expressions of interest from Administrations on courses planned by CoE's												
4. Engage CoEs on how to best promote their activities using the communities function in the ITU Academy platform												
5. Publish CoE articles in the News and Events blocks of the ITU Academy homepage												
6. Advertise CoEs in other ITU programmes												
7. Promote participation of CoEs in ITU regional and global capacity building events												
8. Develop regional training brochures												
9. Use the Steering Committee (SC) platform to plan promotional strategies												
10. Gather expressions of interest from Administrations on courses planned by CoE's												
11. Link CoEs' websites to the ITU Academy (websites to show ITU Academy link)												
12. Produce CoE promotional video												