OUTCOME REPORT

Report of the 6th Meeting of the ITU Centres of Excellence (CoE) Steering Committee for Europe

5 November 2021 – Online meeting

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

The 6th Steering Committee Meeting of the Centers of Excellence (CoEs) Network for Europe Region was held online on 5 November 2021, from 12:00 to 14:00 CET, organized by the ITU Office for Europe. The CoEs network cycle which started in January 2019, will last until December 2022. The main objective of the Steering Committees is to govern and provide oversight to the CoE network functioning and operations. The meeting was an opportunity for CoEs to present and discuss their activities, exchange experience, learn from each other and strengthen collaboration.

Figure 1 Virtual group photo

The meeting commenced by welcome remarks delivered by **Mr Jaroslaw PONDER**, Head of ITU Office for Europe who expressed his appreciation to all participants for their attendance and special gratitude to those who also engaged in strategic review of programmes which will contribute to next year's World Telecommunication Development Conference. Mr Ponder also reiterated the importance of ITU Academy and the centers of excellence (CoEs) in capacity development in line with UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation. Mr Ponder also shared with the group a series of strategic initiatives in the development sector at the European regional level.

The meeting also confirmed the chairmanship of the Republic of Lithuania represented by **Ms Inga RIMKEVICIENE**, Head of International and Public Relations Division, Strategy Department, Communications Regulatory Authority of the Republic of Lithuania. Ms RIMKEVICIENE thanked the meeting for the confirmation and chaired the 6th Steering Committee Meeting of the CoEs Network for Europe.

The meeting adopted the proposed draft agenda (see Annex 2).

2. MAIN AGENDA

AGENDA ITEM 1: CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE PRESENTATIONS: 2021 IMPLEMENTATION AND TRAINING PLANS FOR 2022

Ms AnaMaria MESHKURTI presented an overview of the status of implementation for all CoEs in the region. In 2021, 21 trainings were planned, and 11 trainings were implemented. 4 upcoming trainings as well as 4 ongoing trainings. 2 trainings planned to be face-to-face were cancelled. 689 in total registered in the trainings, out of which 649 were trained, 616 were certified. All the reports on the trainings implemented have been received.

Presentations by Centres of Excellence of their courses for 2022:

· **National Institute of Telecommunications (NIT), Poland**: The basic plan of trainings is the same as in 2021. ICTP wants to organize face-to-face trainings in 2022 that were cancelled in 2021 due to COVID-19.

· **The Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP), Italy**: The online course "Introduction to TINYML" will cover the use of AI and IoTs for three days in June.

· **Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje (FEEIT) North Macedonia**: The courses continue in the same manner in 2022 as in 2021. There will be one course at the end of May and another at the end of November, but new contents and titles are updated for 2022.

· **NRD Cyber Security, Lithuania**: The training plan of 2022 is almost the same as 2021. There will be one in spring and another in autumn, both will be most likely to be online due to the presence of COVID-19.

· **Institute for Security and Safety (ISS), Germany**: There is no difference in the training plan of 2022 compared to the one of 2021.

· One point was raised with regards to the starting date of the training programs of ISS. Since the internal ITU system needs more time to adjust a new year's plan, it is better to start the trainings from the mid-January at the earliest, not from the 1st of January. This was accepted.

AGENDA ITEM 2: APPROVAL OF THE 2022 TRAINING PLAN

The CoE chair, Ms RIMKEVICIENE, presented the proposed training plan for 2022 and the 2022 training plan was approved by CoEs with no objection.

AGENDA ITEM 3: UPDATE ON CoE STRATEGIC ISSUES

Mr Mike NXELE presented a review of performance and strategic issues and shared some key findings from consultations.

Key points:

o Global performance of the CoEs for the year:

· 141 trainings were planned for 2021 and 61 trainings were implemented.

· The implementation rate in the Europe region is better than in other region, with 15 out of 21 trainings implemented.

· Some CoEs have very low implementation rates, it is either overplanning or under implementing.

- CoEs are expected to deliver the minimum requirements (2 courses per priority area) and to engage actively (including participation in SC meetings).

- CoEs that are continuously non-performing will not be considered for the next cycle.

o CoE strategic review

- The consultant commenced work in September 2021 and will complete the work by the end of November. It is not yet decided whether it will be made available publicly.

- Following work has been done:
Review of CoE network documents; Consultative meeting with ITU (HQ and Regional Offices); Consultations with some CoEs'; Review of information CoEs provided for the feasibility study.

- The strategic review will provide recommendations on the ITU CoE strategy and may propose changes to the operations of the CoE network.

o End of 2019-2022 cycle activities

- Performance evaluation process to be initiated based on the course delivery during the cycle. This will cover implementation of courses over the four years; measures taken to address the mid-cycle concerns raised, where applicable; promotional strategies and efforts made to ensure courses have participants; participation in Steering Committee meetings and other CoE activities organized by ITU.

- Performance scores will be taken into consideration for those CoEs who may wish to apply to be part of the 2023-2026 cycle.

- CoE feedback form will be sent out to all active CoEs to evaluate their experience during the cycle.

o 2022 CoE webinars

- Over 50% stated that they prefer that webinar to be once every 6 months.

- The survey showed a 50/50 tie on whether to have global webinars or regional webinars.

- Over 75% stated that the webinars should cover both subject specific topics and methodology focused topics:

  - For webinar topics on methodology answers were narrowed down to: Social media marketing and promotion including engagement with participants during and post course delivery; Trends and best practices of online training, including e-learning techniques and pedagogical strategies.

  - For subject-based webinar topics the following were prioritized: IoT, 5G, Cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence, and Beyond 5G.

- ITU will plan for two webinars 2022 (one in the first half and another in the second half of the year).

AGENDA ITEM 4: DISCUSSION ON PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY COES AND ITU FOR THE PAST YEAR

Ms Halima LETAMO presented an overview of discussion on promotional activities carried out by ITU and CoEs.

Key points:

- Currently CoE courses are promoted through the use of the CoE's selected advertising media and the ITU Academy platform.

- These Strategies can be enhanced through:

    - using promotion tools that are accessible globally and have a world-wide presence.

    - multiple promotional strategies used together to complement each other, increasing the changes of reaching different society segments.

    - using strategies based on current technologies to reach the market earlier than other providers and in time for the annual training planning of potential clients.

    - intentionally planning and committing to specific promotional activities annually.

- As a response to the recurring request by CoEs for support to promote courses, and the observation by CoEs during the Global meeting that they need to invest in marketing and promotion of courses, ITU proposes the following plan, to be implemented and progress reported in the next SC meeting.

- The following issues were raised during the discussion:

    - An idea was suggested that official ITU social media channel and emails should be the most important tools. Social media channels of other CoEs should be secondary tools.

    - It is mentioned that ITU does not force any CoE to use specific marketing tool only give some suggestions to help promotion.

    - For ICTP, LinkedIn will be used as a promotion tool for the next activities

    - For NRD Cyber Security, Social media channels help approach people, but the better tools are direct calls and emails to specific partner organizations. Preparing promotional contents are under the consideration, such as flyers and videos.

    - For NID, promotion on social media channels would be for the purpose of redirecting potential participants to their own website and course page.

    - Testimonials is a new visual impact that ITU decided to integrate. Positive feature with good appraisal on the courses will be displayed on the website.

    - The CoEs thanked the ITU Office for Europe for providing marketing support for them.

AGENDA ITEM 5: COE OPERATIONAL ISSUES- ITU (HQ) MAKES A PRESENTATION WHICH HIGHLIGHTS THE FOLLOWING OPERATIONAL ISSUES

Ms LETAMO presented an update on operational issues regarding planning and implementation, transition to online modules, and several reminders for CoEs.

Key points:

o Updates on the planning and implementation of courses

- This year the annual planning has begun earlier than in the previous years due to the QA process.

- Some CoEs have submitted their training outlines in time which helped with the planning.

- CoEs should stick their courses to the mandate of ITU.

- CoEs who have not submitted their outlines for evaluation in time will have their courses not approved during the SC. This will result in SC approving incomplete training plans for the year which is a waste of SC time; Delay in compiling the 6 months/annual training catalogue(both regional and global)/ Delay in promotion of courses.

o Updates on the transition from face to face to online courses

CoEs still struggle to go fully online, due to the nature of the courses or depending on the competency of trainers.

ITU works as a focal point to support trainers and to ensure the same quality and effectiveness that trainers would otherwise have achieved in face-to-face courses.

Online courses are cheaper 75 USD to 150 USD and attract higher numbers of participants with the flexible delivery as well as more affordable fee. It was noticed that courses that run at higher prices attract lower participants.

Most CoEs use moodle/zoom plug in/ Teams, and have a view of live interaction happening during the specific course.

o Reminders for CoEs

- Online tutors/trainers must familiarize themselves in advance with the online platform

- ITU Academy administrators do not create accounts for users and do not enroll participants. Participants should do that on their own.

- The trainers must upload materials, set up quizzes and assignments, forums and chats and monitor participants, the ITU Academy administrators do not do this (trainers can reach out to ITU academy administrators if they need help).

- CoE coordinators should monitor training and ensure trainers fully engage participants.

- Enrolments for paid courses should occur only after payments are in effect, not before

- End-of-training report submission, with complete scoring table and financial report, is imperative and should be submitted within a month of the end of the course.

3. CLOSING

The meeting ended with closing remarks from Mr Ponder. Mr Ponder mentioned that the ITU Centres of Excellence (CoE) 2022 programme catalogue will be officially published on the 8th of November on the [website](#). Also, it is mentioned that this 6th Steering Committee Meeting of the Centers of Excellence Network for Europe Region was held taking into account the telecommunication Development Advisory Group(TDAG) meeting, scheduled from the 8th to 12th November.

Ms RIMKEVICIENE expressed sincere thanks again to all the participants and appreciations for the efforts of the ITU Secretariat, in particular teams of the ITU Office for Europe and Capacity and Digital Skills Development Division, in facilitating the smooth running of the meeting. Ms RIMKEVICIENE also invited CoEs to contact ITU colleagues in case they have some ideas on how to improve the programmes for the next cycle. Ms RIMKEVICIENE finally encouraged the ITU colleagues to join another meeting regarding WTDC, planned on November 22, 2021.

ANNEX 1 : LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Centres of Excellence

1. Toni JANEVSKI, FEEIT, North Macedonia

2. Ruta JASINSKIENE, NRD Cyber Security, Lithuania

3. Sylwester LASKOWSKI, NIT, Poland

4. Marco ZENNARO, ICTP, Italy

Member States Hosting the Centres of Excellence

5. Inga RIMKEVICIENE, Head of International and Public Relations Division, Strategy Department, Communications Regulatory Authority of The Republic of Lithuania (Chairperson of Steering Committee)

6. Lidia STEPINSKA-USTASIAK, Office of Electronic Communications, Republic of Poland (Chairperson of GCBI)

7. Johan GROSS, Germany

International Telecommunication Union

8. Jaroslaw PONDER, Head of ITU Office for Europe, ITU

9. Mike NXELE, Capacity and Digital Skills Development Division, ITU

10. Halima LETAMO, Capacity and Digital Skills Development Division, ITU

11. AnaMaria MESHKURTI, Programme Officer, ITU Office for Europe, ITU

12. Elena STANKOVSKA-CASTILLA, Capacity and Digital Skills Development Division, ITU

13. Sylvie RAPOSI, Capacity Development Admin. Coordinator, Capacity and Digital Skills Development Division, ITU

14. Jiae YANG, Junior Policy Analyst, ITU Office for Europe, ITU

ANNEX 2 : AGENDA OF THE 6th MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Time	Items
12:00 – 12:05	**Opening** • Welcome remarks by ITU (Regional office) **Group photo**
12:05 – 12:45	**Agenda Item 1: Centres of Excellence presentations: 2021 implementation and training plans for 2022** ITU will share the status of implementation for each CoE. Each CoE will report on the implementation of their 2021 activities. Each presentation should cover the courses that were implemented throughout the entire year (number of participants, feedback received, certificates issues etc), issues faced, and lessons learnt, including those from COVID-19. Each CoE will also present their proposals for the training courses they are planning to deliver in 2022, including the topics, exact dates, training fees charged, audience targeted etc. The objective of the discussion is to agree on the draft training schedule for 2022. • ITU (Regional office for Europe) o Current status of implementation for All CoEs in the region • CoE presentation of their 2022 courses
12:45 – 12:55	**Agenda Item 2: Approval of the 2022 training plan** The CoE chair presents the proposed training plan for 2022 and invites the CoEs to approve the plan.

12:55 – 13:15	**Agenda Item 3: Update on CoE strategic issues**
	
	ITU updates CoEs on the issues relating to the implementation of the CoE strategy and the process towards the end of the CoE cycle.
	
	• ITU (HQ) updates on
	   o Global performance of the CoEs for the year
	   o CoE strategic review
	   o End of cycle activities
	   o 2022 CoE webinars

13:15 – 13:45	**Agenda Item 4: Discussion on promotional activities carried out by CoEs and ITU for the past year. Open discussion with CoEs to answer the below questions. ITU will also present a brief overview of ITU's promotional strategy** *Discussion with CoEs on the below questions* o From the promotional activities shared during the mid-year SC meeting, which ones did you use to advertise/promote your

	courses? o That are the two main success you had with the promotion and what are the two main challenges? o How do you evaluate the success of your promotion? • Presentation by ITU (HQ)
13:45 – 14:00	**Agenda Item 5: CoE operational Issues- ITU (HQ) makes a presentation which highlights the following operational issues** • Updates on the planning and implementation of courses • Updates on the implementation of the quality assurance process • Updates on the transition from face to face to online courses • Reminders for CoEs Discussion
14:00	**Closing**