

CONCEPT PAPER

INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE PARTICIPATION OF ACADEMIA IN CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES OF ITU/BDT

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to propose a concrete strategy and initiatives for engaging the Academia in the capacity building activities of ITU/BDT. This engagement with the Academia is an extension of the capacity building work being carried out under the ITU Academy since its launch in 2012.

2. Background

- I. ITU engagement with the Academia started in earnest with the adoption of Resolution 169 at ITU Plenipotentiary 2010 in Guadalajara. This resolution admitted "...Academia, universities and their associated research establishments to participate in ITU's work". Since then, more than 85 Academia participants from 41 countries have joined one or more of the three ITU sectors.
- II. In 2012, ITU launched the ITU Academy to bring all the training activities under one umbrella. This was designed to ensure that capacity building is delivered in a structured, coordinated and integrated manner, and to guarantee that such training is of the highest level of quality.
- III. As the primary business of Academia is learning, it follows that the ITU Academy and academia find common ground to collaborate in capacity building.
- IV. The first capacity building Forum for the Academia was organized by BDT in Prague, from 28-29 April 2014, under the banner "Fostering Innovation and Partnerships in Human Capacity Building: Enhanced Engagement of Academia in the International Telecommunication Union". During this event, members of the Academia showed a lot of interest in working with ITU Academy, in developing close mutual relationships and in being members of the CoEs network.

3. Strategic Initiatives with Academia

In order to strengthen the role of Academia in the capacity building work of ITU some concrete strategies and initiatives are hereby proposed:

- Development of a Trends in Capacity Building publication;
- Establishing an Online Dialogue Platform for the Academia;
- Convening a meeting of the Academia.

These initiatives are designed to tap into and leverage on the research, innovation and knowledge base of the academia and contribute to capacity building efforts of ITU. Below is a consideration of each of these initiatives.

a) Trends in Capacity Building publication

New technologies are emerging as the world gets more digitally connected. While so much is said and written about these technologies, there is a grey area with respect to the implications and challenges of building human and institutional capacity in this emerging environment. Sometimes the developmental impact of these technologies are affected by this lack of capacity.

BDT plans to launch a newsletter/publication focusing on the capacity building issues in the emerging technologies that have currency and relevance.

Some examples of areas/topics that could be considered for the publication include the impact of Internet of Things (IOT), Big Data, Regulatory Issues, Smart cities/societies, Digital Competencies, Open source learning and intellectual property rights on institutional and human capacity building.

The academia will be invited to make contributions of articles to this publication. This approach was applied in the publication on “Skills Development, Lifelong Learning and Mobile Technology”, where each of the chapters was a contribution by experts largely from the Academia.

In the course of making this publication, and in order to ensure quality of the contributions and value addition to the work, the following steps shall be taken:

- An editorial board will be constituted in consultation with GCBI and other members of the Academia as agreed by the GCBI, to evaluate the submissions and select those that will be published.
- The papers to be written and published will be used as input documents to the Global Human Capacity Building Forum. A special session will be created specifically for academic discussions of the papers. The best of the papers could also win some awards.
- For the first publication, the theme is kept broad to attract a wide spectrum of contributions.
- Participating academia institutions could also feature their own articles and stories in the publication, featuring some innovations, new ideas, or case studies that they may have.
- The publication will also feature work jointly done by both ITU Academy and Academia, such as joint development of training materials, as well as delivery of programs. There are groundbreaking collaborative efforts between ITU Academy and Academia that are not finding the right avenues for publicity, such as the Joint delivery of the Masters in Communications Management (eMCM) program with UKTA, and the soon to be signed collaboration with Czech Technical University (CTU) for the delivery of the Spectrum Management Training Program (SMTP). This publication will also be the mouthpiece for showcasing the capacity building work contributed to by industry in collaboration with Academia.

b) Creating an Online Dialogue Platform for the Academia

One initiative designed to bring Academia to participate in capacity building activities through sharing of knowledge and experiences, is the creation of an online Forum/Community, to bring together Academia to exchange ideas on chosen topics for discussion. This is designed to develop knowledge networks between academics, industry, students and ITU membership in general. An example would be issues relating to the challenges relating to the transition from of Analogue to Digital Broadcasting, where perspectives from different regions could be discussed, and ideas shared across continents. The ITU Academy upgrade has created this new functionality. On this portal, Universities that have Corporation Agreements and/or projects with ITU can show case activities related to their cooperation. While this acts as a marketing platform for the Universities, it also provides ITU membership with up-to-date information on the work of the Universities. This way we also provide these partner institutions with some visibility.

4. Convening a meeting/forum of the Academia

A global meeting of the Academia is to be convened where these initiatives will be discussed and presented. This meeting will be open to all members of the academia. The forum will deliberate further the above strategies as well as efforts made to date to address recommendations of the Prague event.

5. Involving the Group on Capacity Building Initiatives (GCBI)

It would be strategic to involve GCBI in the initiatives related to the engagement of the Academia. The arguments for the involvement of GCBI are contained in an annex to this document. But it is important to recap at this moment that GCBI has just complemented an oversight role for the new Centres of Excellence strategy, and this would be building on that. Further, GCBI is made up of a number of members of the Academia, and they would be a rich resource to tap into in how best to attract the Academia. As GCBI is a product of WTDC and reports to TDAG, this is a good way of having the capacity building with the Academia discussed at a membership level. For this reason, it would also be ideal for GCBI to meet and agree on this as an approach, and adopt these three initiatives. This meeting may be held back to back with the Forum above. However, it is perhaps more useful to have the GCBI meeting in advance of the Academia Forum so that GCBI inputs into the strategies for attracting the Academia, and their assistance can be part of the planning for the forum.

6. Implement Roadmap

An implementation Roadmap has v been created for these initiatives, based on anticipated engagement timelines with GCBI. This Roadmap is based mainly on Outcomes, and does not include the processes and activities taking place leading to those outcomes. The final point is the Global forum, which is expected to take place in September 2016.

7. Conclusion

In embarking on the above initiatives, we hope to strengthen the role of the Academia in the capacity building work of ITU. All these initiatives, will feed into the Global Forum on Human Capacity Development, thus creating synergies with all the other capacity building activities under the ITU Academy, such as the Centres of Excellence, Internet training Centres, and activities under regional initiatives. The Academia will become an integral part of the Global Forum going forward.

Annex 1. Engaging GCBI in the Initiatives with Academia

Annex 2. Implementation Roadmap, based on Outcomes.