



ITU Academy
TRAINING CENTRES

ATC Global Annual Meeting

16 September 2024

Manama, Bahrain

- Final Report -

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About the meeting

The ITU Academy Training Centres (ATCs) second annual meeting took place in Manama, Bahrain, on 16 September 2024. Organized by the ITU Capacity and Digital Skills Development Division (CSD), Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), it brought together 18 delegates from the 14 ATCs and ITU staff (the full list of participants is available under Annex 1 of this report). The event was envisioned as a working meeting and most of the sessions were planned to ensure an increased level of interaction between the participants. It took place on site at the Gulf Convention Centre in Manama and preceded the ITU Digital Skills Forum (17-19 September 2024), which focused on the theme “Developing skills for digital transformation” and targeted policy makers, practitioners and experts from around the world.

The meeting aimed to take stock of the past year of the ATC programme, build on lessons learned regarding training course organization and management, share ITU Academy updates, discuss its revised quality assurance checklist, as well as consolidate links between participating institutions to encourage collaboration projects.

The detailed agenda, presentations, related materials, as well as the official photos are [available on the event’s website](#).



Opening

The meeting was opened by Ms Susan Teltscher, Head, Capacity and Digital Skills Development Division (CSD), who welcomed the participants, after which she invited Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), to deliver the opening remarks.

Welcome remarks from the BDT Director

Dr Zavazava extended a warm welcome to all participants and, after conducting a short round of introductions, emphasized that the ITU Academy Training Centres (ATCs) play an essential role in bridging the digital skills divide. He shared with the delegates the UN Secretary General's belief that the way to achieve the SDGs is digital and further highlighted that connectivity needs to be affordable and meaningful, key stakeholders must strive to create an enabling environment and accelerate digital innovation.

He highlighted the unique nature of ITU which, as a UN organization, also includes both private sector and academic institutions among its members helping drive the digital transformation. Dr Zavazava invited the ATCs to prioritize sharing of information and encouraged synergies between the capacity development partners of ITU (notably institutions in the Academy Training Centres programme and the Digital Transformation Centres Initiative). He congratulated the representatives of the ATCs for their achievements and commitment to the programme.

The BDT Director prompted ATC representatives to explore avenues of collaboration as well as to exchange experiences and best practices during the meeting. He encouraged delegates to make the most of the meeting by exchanging experiences, ideas, and perspectives throughout. He expressed his appreciation that the delegates will also be joining the Digital Skills Forum and invited them to also attend the upcoming ITU Global Innovation Forum scheduled for end October in Malta. He concluded his remarks by thanking participants and wishing them a productive meeting.

ATC programme overview

In this session, Ms Susan Teltscher took the floor to frame the meeting's objectives and provide 2024 key updates about the ATC programme. Her presentation focused on the positioning of the ATC programme within the ITU Capacity Development strategy and its core mandate to develop the capacity of ICT professionals worldwide. She provided updates on the evolution of the programme

in 2024 highlighting several implementation achievements. The presentation also included an overview of the timeline for the programme.

The 2024 facts and figures discussed captured an increase in the number of training courses with 55 courses this year compared to 37 courses in 2023. Highlighting the percentage of ATC courses, which account for 43% of the ITU Academy platform's catalogue (compared to 34% in 2023), Ms Teltscher emphasized the important role the ATC partners play in the overall training efforts of the organization. The updates further captured the wide geographic spread of the programme and a prevalence on online instructor-led courses as preferred delivery methodology (with 78% of all the platform's instructor-led training courses being delivered by ATCs). She highlighted that in terms of gender representation among the learners, although there is an increase from last year, the parity needs to be further improved by attracting more female registrations. The presentation also pointed to the increasing demand for delivery in other UN languages, notably for French courses (besides English and Spanish which are currently represented in the ITU Academy catalogue). Ms Teltscher also noted that overall certification remains high compared to industry standards, at 39% of the total number of registrations for training courses.

The questions generated following this part of the presentation inquired about modalities to increase the percentage of participants who earn a certificate and reducing the number of no shows. This prompted several interventions from the participants who shared their approaches for addressing these aspects. Interventions captured how reducing the overall duration of the course allows participants to better commit to the learning and balance it with their work tasks; the NTIPRIT delegate shared their experience and positive results coming from reducing their course from five weeks to one week. The representative from WITS – Link Centre, contributed by emphasizing that while there is a low commitment from participants for courses offered free-of-charge, including a financial commitment helps increase the number of completions. The UNU-Merit delegate highlighted that a hybrid approach whereby participants are required to cover some of the costs (for face-to-face training) also contributes to a lower probability of no-shows. The experience from the AFRALTI and the INICTEL-UNI delegates highlighted that an important success factor resides in the personalized follow-up that participants receive prior to the training (this includes emails, WhatsApp messages via a common group) creating interest in the upcoming course, checking on application progress and addressing any questions they might have. It was emphasized that while resource-

heavy, this approach yields notable positive results in almost eliminating no-shows and ensuring participant engagement for the training courses.

For the 2025 plans, Ms Teltscher highlighted the completion of the first year in the ITU-European Commission (EC) capacity development project implementation and also the upcoming ATC one-on-one meetings to discuss the evaluation results for the 2024 training courses. In addition, the presentation informed the delegates of the intention to potentially onboard two new institutions during the next year.

The presentation session was wrapped up with highlighting the objectives for the meeting: strengthening collaboration between ATCs, sharing best practices and learning from each other, as well as providing a forum for discussion on the future direction of the programme with the goal to ensure a strong and high-quality ITU capacity development programme that meets the expectations and needs of the ITU membership.

Expectations mapping and working commitments

To set the stage for the event, the participants were asked to highlight their expectations vis-a-vis the outcome of the meeting and to capture aspects that would contribute to the event being a success for them. The inputs received revolved around several common themes: the need for networking, collaboration, experience sharing and active participation. The contributions also reflected the openness of the participants to actively contribute, share lessons learned and offer expertise.

ATC experience exchange & network space

This segment of the meeting focused on networking and allowed the participants to interact with each other in a dynamic round of introductions. It laid the basis for a collaborative atmosphere and framed the event as highly participatory. The points emerging in the debrief highlighted the potential for ensuring global marketing for the ATC courses by leveraging the network of contacts in the institutions represented at the meeting. A recurring topic emphasized was the continued need for cooperation as ideas for joint initiatives emerged during the conversations. The session concluded with announcing the launch of a [common LinkedIn group](#) for all ATCs to help cross-promote upcoming courses, pursue common projects and explore partnerships.

Project update: “Capacity Development for Digital Transformation”

Mr Angel Draev, Senior Project Manager, ITU, led this presentation session and shared with the delegates information on the ITU-European Commission (EC) capacity development project’s framework, progress to date as well as lessons learned from implementation so far. He highlighted that the goal of the project is to enhance the capacity of government officials, policy makers and other relevant stakeholders who are engaged in digital transformation efforts worldwide, with an intended impact of training at least 5,000 participants globally through the ITU Academy until 2027. The progress so far for the project, which started its implementation at the beginning of 2024, included positive indicators, with nearly 700 participants trained via both face-to-face and online modalities. Mr Draev noted the successes of the project during the year, with the first ITU summer school taking place in Maastricht in July 2024, and 10 of the ATC institutions being already actively involved in the project, offering training courses on a diverse range of topics.

As far as lessons learned and recommendations made to the participating ATCs, the presentation captured the need for more time to be allotted for logistical arrangements in the case of face-to-face training courses, with ideally three months between selection and course delivery. The need for a dedicated ATC coordinator to handle logistics was also pointed out, as well as efforts to actively engage participants for online courses in order to reduce drop-out rates. Regarding the training course content, the recommendations presented emphasized the need for study materials to be shared with participants at least two weeks before course start, coupled with follow-ups to encourage participants to consult the necessary readings in advance.

To wrap up the session, Mr Draev shared the results of the 2024 ITU-led training needs assessment and the identified priority topics for 2025, which place emphasis on cybersecurity (incident response, strategies and policies), regulatory governance and national digital transformation strategies, artificial intelligence, as well as data and data governance. He prompted the delegates to continue engaging with the EC project and acknowledged the ongoing 2025 ATC course planning exercise which is to be completed at the beginning of Q4 2024 through one-on-one meetings with each ATC to discuss their proposed trainings.

Best practices and lessons learned re: training organization

Mr Emil-Eugen Iuga, Capacity and Skills Development Officer, ITU, facilitated this session and invited participants to break into four groups to capture their most common approaches for online

instructor-led training courses delivered as part of the ATC programme. The purpose of the activity was to encourage exchanges in terms of best practices and solutions to common challenges linked to this training modality (which currently accounts for over 50% of the ATC courses). The participants discussed several key aspects related to managing online, instructor-led courses, capturing several points which were subsequently analysed in the plenary, specifically:

- **Average training length:** this ranged from 4-5 days to two weeks on average. Debrief discussions highlighted the risk in longer courses (4 weeks and above) conflicting with learners' work commitments and resulting in higher drop-out rates.
- **Number of instructors used:** based on the groups' discussions, the average was two instructors per cohort (for synchronous sessions). However, in plenary, the delegates and facilitator highlighted that the number of learners in a cohort strongly influences the resulting learning value. As a best practice, it was highlighted that two instructors for cohorts of 20-30 participants is optimal (see point below for solutions to larger cohorts).
- **Maximum number of participants per cohort:** this number varied from group to group as different practices are applied across institutions. During the debrief, 20 to 30 was indicated as average, going as high as 50 per cohort, with numbers above 100 also mentioned. Ensuing discussions aimed at flagging the risk of a significant decrease in attention to the learner in case cohort numbers rise but are not followed by an equal increase in the number of instructors involved.
- **Selection criteria:** delegates shared the need to include more female participants in the courses, bearing in mind the realities of the industry's workforce which remains predominantly male. It was re-iterated that application forms will be mandatory for all instructor-led training courses as this will allow for additional selection filters to be applied ensuring the most fit audience and contributing to reduced drop-out rates.
- **Promotion approach:** building on previous discussions, social media campaigns and emails (mailing lists, newsletters) were mentioned as most common approaches. The delegate from NIT expanded on how leveraging the network of graduates from previous courses is particularly important as it can produce increased interest and engagement in terms of applications.
- **Activities planned:** during the debrief on this item, the importance of instructor intervention was repeatedly emphasized, preferably through synchronous (live) sessions, potentially complemented by asynchronous presence (e.g. forum discussions). The use of activities,

breakout rooms, group assignments and, overall, avoiding lecture-based approaches was also identified as a best practice for live sessions.

- **Assessment and grading approach:** the conversation focused on the over-reliance on quizzes as a sole method of knowledge assessment. The delegates from WITS and UNU proposed peer grading (i.e. learner inputs to other learners' assignment, followed by instructor checks), practice sessions, group projects. ITU further strengthened the point that quizzes (if used) need to be combined with another form of assessment. The delegate from DBI suggested that the overall weighting of quizzes be decreased in favour of other knowledge assessment activities, whereby quizzes alone do not account for the minimum passing grade required for certification unless paired with another element of knowledge application or check (e.g. active participation, forum contributions, group work, individual project, end course assignment).

The discussions were concluded by signposting the delegates to the revised Training Outline form required for any upcoming course on ITU Academy. Mr Luga flagged that all aspects covered in the conversations reflect the structure of the TO and encouraged ATCs to build on the optimal practices exchanged during the session.

ITU Academy Quality Assurance for instructor-led training courses

Continuing from the previous session, the groups were asked to piece together a list of 14 essential training features which make up the ITU Academy quality assurance checklist for instructor-led training courses. Mr Luga explain that these elements are grouped around eight main dimensions and serve the purpose to foster high-quality, impactful training, enhancing the learning experience and ensuring compliance with industry standards. The ATC delegates analysed and worked together to reconstruct the checklist indicators across its key dimensions which focus on instructional methods, activities design, instructor intervention, relevance, reflection and peer learning, application of skills and knowledge, as well as assessment mechanisms.

The debrief activity further expanded on each of the checklist's items and addressed questions from the delegates, clarifying the relation between the training elements and the resulting quality of the training product in terms of learning value, impact, as well as learner engagement.

Evaluation Level 3 (impact): approach and implementation

During this brief session Mr Iuga presented the Kirkpatrick model of learning evaluation and informed the ATC delegates of the ITU efforts to roll out a learning impact evaluation. The presentation detailed the four levels in the model (Reaction, Learning, Behaviour, Results) to frame the approach that ITU intends to apply. Participants were presented with the overview of the actions which will be incorporated in ITU Academy for all instructor-led courses which include:

- **Application form stage:** includes a pre-training self-assessment for all learners;
- **End-of-training mandatory evaluation form:** a pre-requisite for certification; it will also include information about the next stage of evaluation;
- **Post-training automated survey:** to be deployed 4-6 months after course completion, containing questions which target how graduates have applied the learning;
- **Post-training interview:** following the previous step (survey), with selected respondents, to further analyse success stories and challenges in applying the knowledge.

The information session concluded with indicating that additional details will be shared upon the implementation of the post-training survey and that, similar to previous practice, in Q1 2025 ITU will conduct one-on-one meetings with each ATC to discuss the end training evaluation results and qualitative feedback received from the learners for the 2024 concluded training courses.

ITU Academy updates

Ms Guiomar Levi-Setti, Junior E-learning Officer, delivered a presentation on the ITU Academy new developments, processes and 2025 planning. She provided a snapshot of how the platform's developments and feedback collection take place and highlighted an updated list of features which had been deployed since the last annual ATC meeting. The presentation focused on capturing new functions to accommodate the ATC programme (on payment processing, reminders, partner visibility), features which serve course coordinators (translation, simplified end-of-training report, application questionnaire), and features related to users (product recommendations), as well as automation for emails and data management.

The presentation further explored the revised ITU Academy Guidelines and templates for the ATC training coordinators highlighting the revised Training Outline document, the standardization of the application form, creation of courses in real-time, and communication changes (targeted social

media and email campaigns). Ms Levi-Setti also detailed the process for the planning of 2025 training courses and emphasized that, in establishing the final calendar, factors to be applied are avoiding overlap of courses in terms of dates and topic as well as establishing a balance between ITU-EC project-sponsored and non-project ATC courses. She underlined that once the planning phase is completed, the courses will be created on the platform before end year and dates will be advertised, hence cancellations or subsequent rescheduling should be avoided.

Closing

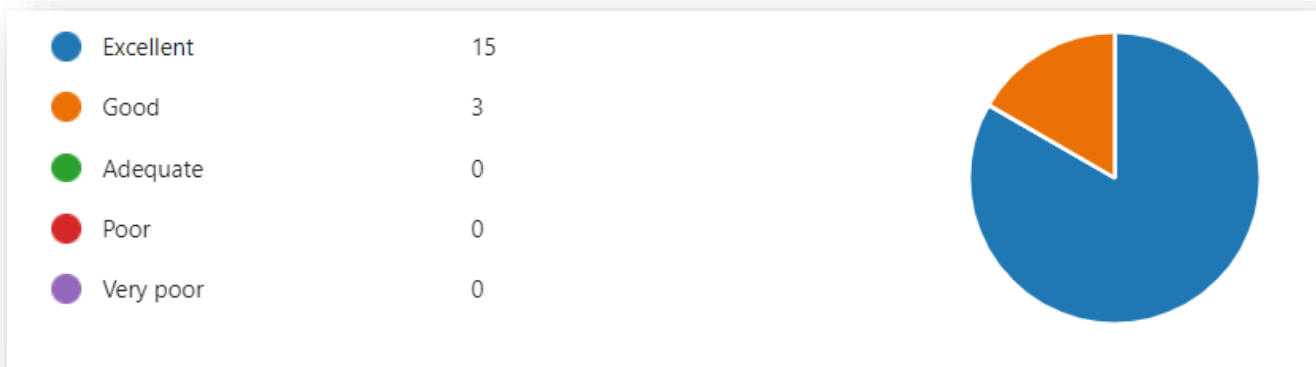
Ms Sofie Maddens, Chief, Digital Knowledge Society Department (DKS), Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) closed the second annual ATC meeting by thanking the participants for their active involvement throughout the event and encouraging them to continue consolidating collaborations within the network and explore available synergies. She also thanked the ITU team and wished all delegates a productive and enjoyable participation for the ITU Digital Skills Forum.

Meeting evaluation

At the end of the event, participants were asked to share their feedback on the meeting by responding to an online survey which consisted of ten questions. The survey was answered by all attendees and responses were overwhelmingly positive both in terms of the value of the content and the organization of the meeting.

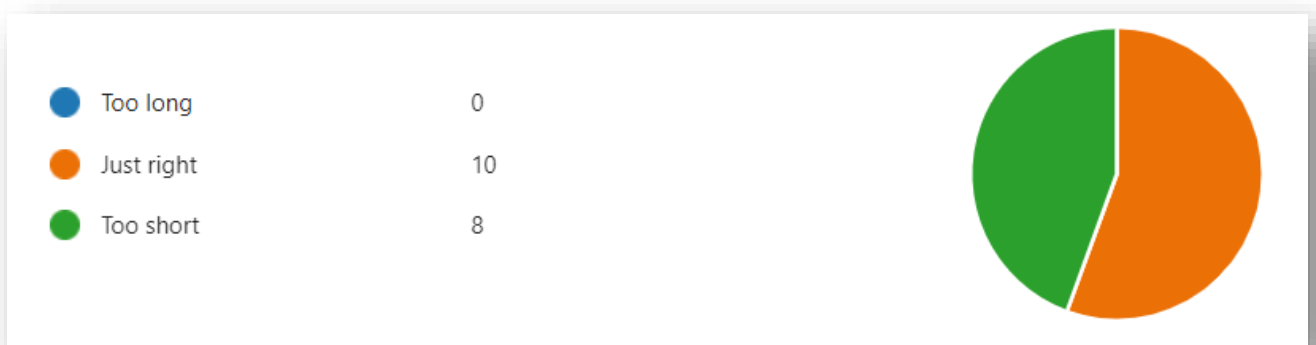
Value of the content: the quality of the meeting and of the presentations was rated as “Excellent” (83%) and “Good” (17%) by the respondents, as illustrated below (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Overall assessment of the workshop & Quality of the presentations received similar evaluations



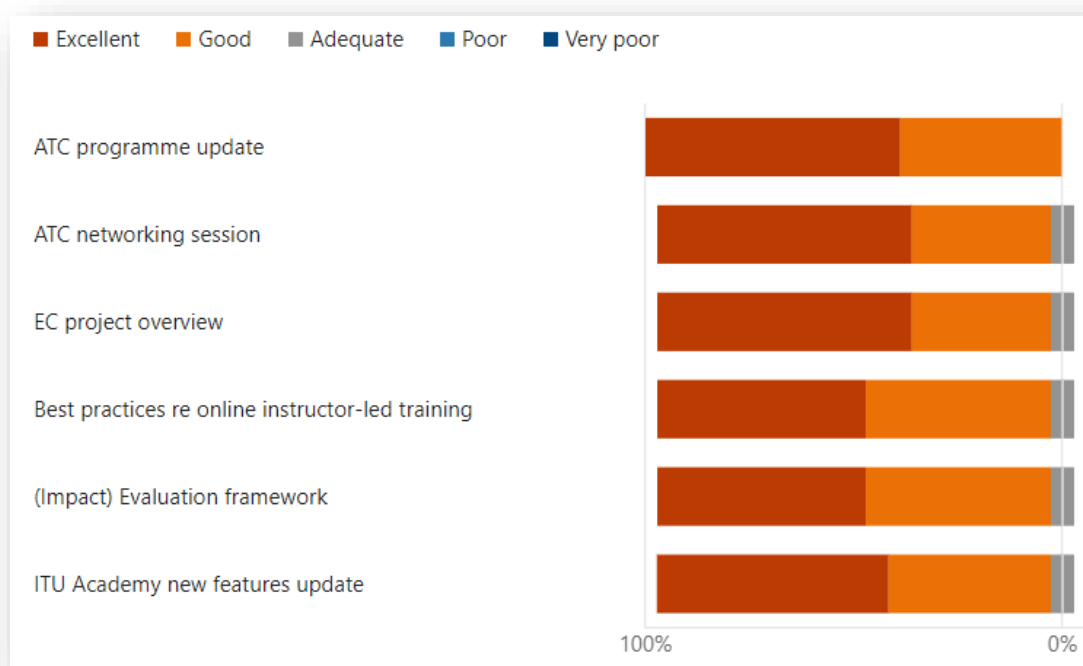
The duration of the event was labelled with an almost even split between “Too short”(44%) and “Just right” (56%) (Figure 2), as participants highlighted the need for more time allotted to discussions and networking (see “Suggestions” section below).

Figure 2: Duration of the event



Participants were also asked to rate both the quality and usefulness of the interactive sessions, for each agenda item separately (Figure 3). The highest ranked were the ATC programme update, networking session and EC project overview (all with a similar assessment of “Excellent”, 61%), followed by the sessions on the ITU Academy new features updates and best practices re: online instructor-led training (all scoring 95% “Excellent” or “Good”).

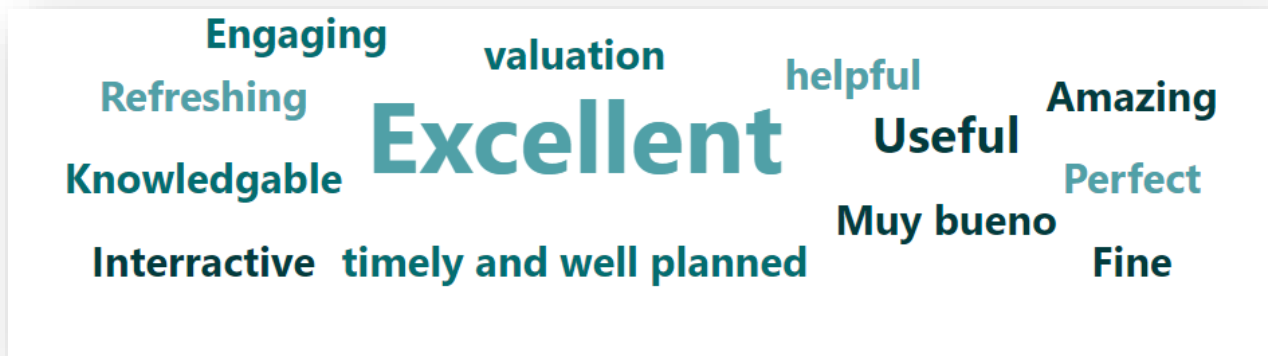
Figure 3: Quality and usefulness of the sessions



Planning and organization: in terms of the meeting setup, 83% of the respondents considered it “Excellent” and 17% labelled it as “Good”. The quality of the event’s facilities/venue was overwhelmingly evaluated as “Excellent” (94%) by the participants. The perception of the communication related to the meeting was also positive with 61% considering it “Excellent” and 33% rating it as “Good”.

Highlighted inputs: the participants also provided qualitative feedback, stressing the interactive nature of the event and its collaborative nature.

Figure 4: The meeting experience in one word according to the participants



Suggestions: the recommendations predominantly mentioned the duration of the event, highlighting the need for the ATC annual meeting to span over several days as the general perception was that a one-day event is not sufficient. It was emphasized that this would also allow for more time allotted to interactions during the sessions, facilitating discussions, as well as networking for exploring collaboration opportunities.

Annex 1: Participants

ATC delegates

	ATC name	Country	Delegate(s)	Title
1	African Advanced Level Telecommunications Institute (AFRALTI)	Kenya	Mr Jonathan MWAKIJELE	Head of Training Department
			Ms Anita NATWATI	Training Coordinator
2	China Academy of Information and Communications Technology (CAICT)	China	Ms Ying WANG	Senior Engineer
			Ms Li FU	
3	Computer Emergency Response Team of Mauritius (CERT-MU)	Mauritius	Mr Manish LOBIN	Information Security Specialist
4	Digital Bridge Institute (DBI)	Nigeria	Mr Paulinus Okey UGWOKÉ	Group Head (Research, Innovation, and Consultancy)
			Ms Viola Askia M. USORO	Group Head Corporate Services
5	Egyptian African Telecom Regulatory Training Center (EG-ATRC)	Egypt	Ms Mona ISMAIL	Manager
6	Instituto Nacional de Investigación y Capacitación de Telecomunicaciones (INICTEL-UNI)	Perú	Ms Iris PRETEL	IT Training Specialist
7	Instituto Nacional de Telecomunicações (INATEL)	Brazil	Mr Daniel ANDRADE NUNES	Professor and Technical Consultant
8	Link Centre/University of the Witwatersrand	South Africa	Ms Ntsibane NTLATLAPA	Associate Professor
9	National Institute of Telecommunications (NIT)	Poland	Mr Sylwester LASKOWSKI	Chief Training Specialist
10	National Telecommunications Institute for Policy Research, Innovation and Training (NTIPRIT)	India	Mr Ashi KAPOOR	Director, Department of Telecommunications
11	NRD Cyber Security	Lithuania	Ms Rūta JAŠINSKIENĖ	Information analysis expert
12	Tallinn University of Technology (TALTECH)	Estonia	Ms Ingrid PAPPEL	Associate Professor, Vice-Dean of Master's Studies
			Ms Anastasiia DUDKO	Study Programme Coordinator

13	The University of the West Indies	Barbados	Mr Louis-Ray HARRIS	Senior Lecturer, Dept of Physics
14	United Nations University-Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology (UNU-MERIT)	The Netherlands	Ms Mindel VAN DE LAAR	Head, Capacity Development Office

ITU staff

	Name	Functional Title
1	Mr Cosmas Luckyson ZAVAZAVA	Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau
2	Ms Sofie MADDENS	Chief, Digital Knowledge Society Department, Telecommunication Development Bureau
3	Ms Susan TELTSCHER	Head, Capacity and Digital Skills Development Division, Telecommunication Development Bureau
4	Mr Angel DRAEV	Senior Project Manager
5	Ms Robyn FYSH	Senior Project Manager
6	Mr Emil-Eugen IUGA	Capacity and Skills Development Officer
7	Ms Guiomar LEVI-SETTI	Junior E-learning Officer

Annex 2: Event agenda

ITU Academy Training Centres (ATC) Global Annual Meeting

16 September 2024, Gulf Conference Centre, Manama, Bahrain

Objectives:

- Inform on ATC programme implementation to date (facts and figures)
- Update on 'Capacity development for digital transformation' project
- Build on lessons learned regarding training course organization and management
- Share revised ITU Academy quality assurance checklist for instructor-led training courses
- Network and consolidate links between participating institutions
- Update on ITU Academy (revised) guidelines and upcoming features

Time	Agenda item
9:00 - 9:30	<i>Welcome coffee</i>
09:30 - 10:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome of attendees • Opening remarks: Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) • Group photo
10:00 - 10:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistics & Expectations • Quick introductions round
10:15 - 10:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATC programme overview and objectives of the meeting
10:45 - 11:15	<i>Coffee break / Networking</i>
11:15 - 11:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATC experience exchange
11:50 - 12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATC network space
12:00 - 12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates on "Capacity Development for Digital Transformation" project, financed by the European Commission
12:30 - 14:00	<i>Lunch / Networking</i>
14:00 - 14:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practices and lessons learned re training organization
14:45 - 15:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ITU Academy Quality Assurance for instructor-led training courses (<i>The Checklist</i>)
15:15 - 15:45	<i>Coffee break / Networking</i>
15:45 - 16:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation Level 3 (impact): approach and implementation
16:20 - 16:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ITU Academy updates
16:45 - 17:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary and closing remarks