Operating guidelines for the Digital Transformation Centres

2024

INTRODUCTION

The Digital Transformation Centre (DTC) Initiative was launched by ITU in partnership with Cisco in 2019, with the objective of supporting countries to strengthen digital capacities of citizens, particularly in the underserved communities. All DTCs who are part of the Initiative are required to sign a formal cooperation agreement with ITU. The cooperation agreement lays out in broad terms the purpose of the agreement between ITU and the DTC, the expected roles and responsibilities of the parties and the legal obligations associated with the agreement. The cooperation agreement is accompanied by operating guidelines which serve to operationalise some aspects of the cooperation agreement, amplify some of the roles and responsibilities of the parties, and specify how the DTC is expected to perform in executing its activities. Specifically, the operating guidelines lay out the baseline performance indicators and targets that DTCs need to achieve. The operating guidelines presented in this document are therefore an integral part of the cooperation agreement.

1. OPERATIONS OF THE DTCS

1.1. How DTCs will work

The core responsibility of the DTCs consists of delivering training activities to a national customer base, with a specific focus on basic and intermediate digital skills. Given the scale of training needed, DTCs are expected to operate through networks of institutions at local/community level to reach underserved or remote areas and deliver the training. These institutions could be community centres, Internet training centres, postal services networks and schools, among others.

DTCs are expected to deliver training using face-to-face, online, or blended learning, depending on what is suitable for the national/local market and needs of the participants.

DTCs can explore partnerships with other digital skills training providers from within or outside the country to support delivery of digital skills training as an option to scale and train more people. However, the DTC will be responsible for any contractual arrangements between the DTC and any such training provider, including the responsibility to monitor the quality of the training delivery provided by the contracted training provider.

DTCs are expected to mobilize multi-sector national stakeholder buy-in and support for their digital skills development efforts. In this regard, DTCs shall organise national stakeholder engagement events to raise awareness on the importance of collaboration in building/strengthening national digital skills.

Upon signature of the cooperation agreement, DTCs are requested to appoint a Focal Point who will deal with all aspects relating to the implementation of DTC activities. The Focal Point shall be the contact person with ITU and DTC partners and shall be responsible for submitting all required documents such as the implementation plan, implementation reports, and ensuring participation in all DTC meetings that may be organized at the global, regional and national level. The appointed Focal Point shall be allocated adequate time and provided with necessary resources to ensure DTC activities receive the required attention. The DTC is advised to appoint a secondary Focal Point, who will assist the primary Focal Point in the management and operations of DTC-related activities.

1.2. Developing an implementation plan for the DTC

DTCs are required to develop an annual implementation plan for each calendar year. The implementation plan will consist of all the activities to be undertaken during that year that are pursuant to its role and functions as a DTC. The implementation plan provides a scheduling of both training and non-training

activities and provides a high-level indication of what will be done and when. Non-training activities may include stakeholder engagement activities, communication activities, outreach, marketing, and promotion activities, among others. The implementation plan provides ITU and partners as well as stakeholders at national level with an overview of what the DTC plans to do and how they can get involved.

1.3. Developing a training plan for the DTC

Each DTC has the responsibility to prepare its annual training plan for each calendar year. Where a DTC joins the network in the middle of the calendar year, the training plan will be for the remaining period of the year of joining. The training plan shall be presented to ITU for approval within two months of joining the network. In developing its annual training plan or parts thereof, and in particular in determining the number of training activities and the number of people to be trained, the DTC shall take into account the population size in the country, the geographical spread of the DTC and the number of training centres at its disposal. The training to be undertaken under the umbrella of the DTC shall be complementary or additional to the regular training activities that the DTC is engaging in.

The DTCs shall develop their annual training plans based on the identified training needs and priorities for the country. The training plan should cover training at basic and intermediate levels for all citizens, including training for small entrepreneurs as well as training of trainers/teachers. ITU, Cisco and any founding partners may assist DTCs in identifying priority areas in their countries based on available global and regional research.

Each training plan shall include a minimum ratio of female trainees, and a minimum ratio of trainees from rural/remote and/or underserved areas (see section 3 on key performance indicators).

DTCs shall implement training activities using the training materials developed by ITU, Cisco and other recognised training providers who are partners of the ITU DTC Initiative. DTCs shall be provided with a list of training topics for which training materials already exist from ITU, Cisco, HP and other partners of the DTC Initiative. However, DTCs can indicate a need for additional training areas for which training material might not be available yet. Any gaps shall be considered by ITU and its partners who will try to cover the gaps through other means, such as developing the training materials.

1.4. Delivery of training by the DTC

The following guidelines shall be applied with respect to delivery of training.

DTCs shall deliver digital skills training at basic and intermediate level in the countries where they operate. The main objective of the training activities is to enhance the level of digital competence among the populations that are most excluded from the digital economy.

In addition, DTCs are expected to run train-the-trainer programmes to ensure that training in local centres and communities can take place without the direct participation of the DTC, and in order to increase the number of citizens to be trained. This is one way of decentralizing the training, and a strategy for scaling.

Training delivery can be face-to-face (for basic digital skills training), online or through blended learning.

DTCs shall prepare supporting documents to be used to market their training activities.

Online training provided by DTC partners may be run on their own platforms or on the ITU Academy platform. DTCs shall provide timely and accurate information to the training provider with respect to people who need to be enrolled for an online training.

ITU and Cisco shall make available free-of-charge their respective online platforms for DTCs to deliver courses online. DTCs can also use platforms of other partners of the DTC Initiative and offer training programs that are run on their platforms.

DTCs shall only use training materials provided by ITU, Cisco, HP, or other partners of the DTC Initiative in the context of delivering training under the DTCI brand.

Training courses delivered by the DTCs that are based on training materials other than the ones provided through the Initiative may not be delivered under the DTCI branding and shall not count as part of the DTC implemented activities.

In exceptional cases, and upon prior written request by the respective DTC, ITU may approve the use of the DTC's own training content and materials under the framework of the DTC Initiative, provided that those training materials are:

a) Accredited by nationally or internationally recognised accreditation bodies; and
b) Aligned with the mandate of the Initiative in terms of target audience, level of courses and training topics covered; and
c) Shared with ITU for verification and quality assurance.

1.5. Evaluation of the training activity

All participants will have to complete evaluation forms at the end of each training course.

For online courses the evaluation form shall be completed by the participants online.

For face-to-face courses, every DTC shall ensure that the form is completed by each participant.

Participant feedback on each training shall be shared with ITU in order to obtain feedback and identify areas of improvement on the training.

2. AWARDING OF CERTIFICATES

Certificates of achievement for successful completion of DTC training shall be granted by the DTC partner organization who owns the content of the respective training course and who has provided the corresponding training materials to the DTC. The award of the certificates will be based on the results of the course assessments, using the assessment guidelines of the DTC partner that owns the training content. For example, trainees following courses based on Cisco materials are assessed through an evaluation test prepared by Cisco. The certificate is granted when the trainees successfully pass the evaluation.

Certificates of achievement can also be countersigned by ITU and other partners participating in that training. Where this is the case the templates for such certificates shall be approved by ITU.

Where training is based on ITU training materials, ITU will provide the assessment tools for each training delivered under the Initiative and will issue the certificates.

3. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

3.1. Performance targets and key performance indicators (KPIs)

DTCs shall be evaluated at the end of each year against the performance targets and indicators in both the DTC implementation plan and the training plan submitted to ITU, as well as the performance indicators specified in these guidelines.

The table below indicates the agreed performance indicators for every DTC. The targets stated refer to the baseline below which no DTC should perform. However, the actual targets for a DTC shall be mutually agreed between ITU and the DTC as per the agreed training plan. Each DTC shall be expected to implement the following activities:

KPI	Baseline Target (annual)
Number of training courses delivered as a DTC	At least 10 training courses delivered
Number of train-the-trainer courses delivered as a DTC	At least two train-the-trainer courses delivered
Number of trainers, instructors and/or teachers trained	At least 10 trainers, instructors and/or teachers trained or re-trained
Percentage of female trainers, instructors and/or teachers trained	At least 30 per cent
Share of training courses implemented by the DTC against the planned training courses	At least 80 per cent of the planned training courses implemented
Number of participants trained at both basic and intermediate levels across all the different target groups specified in the training plan.	At least 500 participants trained
Percentage of female participants enrolled (all courses)	At least 30 per cent
Percentage of enrolled participants from rural or underserved communities (all courses)	At least 60 per cent

3.2. Monitoring and evaluation process

ITU, with the support of Cisco, shall be responsible for undertaking the monitoring of the activities and functioning of the Centres on a regular basis.

As part of the monitoring, ITU shall hold regular (at least once every quarter) online calls with the DTCs to monitor progress with the training implementation and discuss any challenges the DTC may have. These notes are shared with the DTC.

At the end of each semester (or quarter, if requested by ITU), each DTC shall submit a training report to ITU on the training activities that have taken place during the semester (or quarter, if requested by ITU). The report shall be submitted based on a template to be provided by ITU. The template shall include the number of people trained at basic and intermediate levels, the number (or ratio) of female course participants, the number (or ratio) of participants from rural/underserved/communities.

At the end of each year, ITU and Cisco, shall prepare a comprehensive evaluation report on the progress of the DTCs based on the above performance indicators. The report will also cover other non-training activities included in the DTC implementation plan, as well as assess the DTC levels of engagement with ITU and partners in the course of the year. The report will assess both performance of the DTC as well as the commitment of the DTC to its obligations as a DTC. The report will be shared with the DTCs and other founding partners of the DTC Initiative.

In case of performance below the set baseline or consistently below agreed targets, the Director of the BDT, in consultation with Cisco, will bring the matter to the attention of the respective DTC and request the DTC to provide explanations.

Where efforts to support a DTC to improve on its performance fail, ITU shall take measures to terminate the agreement with the DTC.

4. LOGOS

Subject to section 12 of the Cooperation Agreement, DTCs may use the DTC logo to be provided by ITU for their DTC activities. The logo can be used for promotion and marketing purposes of the DTC training activities, such as, among others, online advertising, banners, pamphlets etc.

Subject to the prior written approval by each partner of the DTC Initiative and in accordance with such partner's terms of use, DTCs may use the logo of such partner in the context of the implementation of the training activities.

5. DTCI COMMUNITY ANNUAL ENGAGEMENTS

DTCs are expected to actively participate in and provide input to all DTCI community engagement activities held throughout the year. These may include face-to-face workshops, virtual meetings, and/or information sharing sessions organised by ITU, Cisco, and/or partners of the Initiative. In line with their efforts to build the DTC network, strengthen the DTCI community and encourage the sharing of experiences among DTCs, ITU and Cisco have committed to conduct one (1) in-person global workshop and one (1) virtual meeting as part of the planned annual activities of the Initiative. The Global DTC Workshops are co-organised by ITU and Cisco and aim to bring together all DTC focal points and representatives of DTCI partners in an in-person setting to discuss the implementation of the Initiative, exchange best practices and lessons learned, and explore new ideas to support the work of the DTCs. The Global DTC Workshops are designed in an interactive manner to provide members of the DTCI community with networking opportunities, and may include group discussions, small collaborative tasks or assignments, as well as consultation sessions between the DTCs and ITU, Cisco and DTCI partners. The DTC Virtual Global meetings are held towards the last quarter of the year and serve as a platform for ITU and Cisco to provide updates on the implementation

of the DTCI main activities, and for the DTCs to share highlights and information on their achievements and work undertaken throughout the year.

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