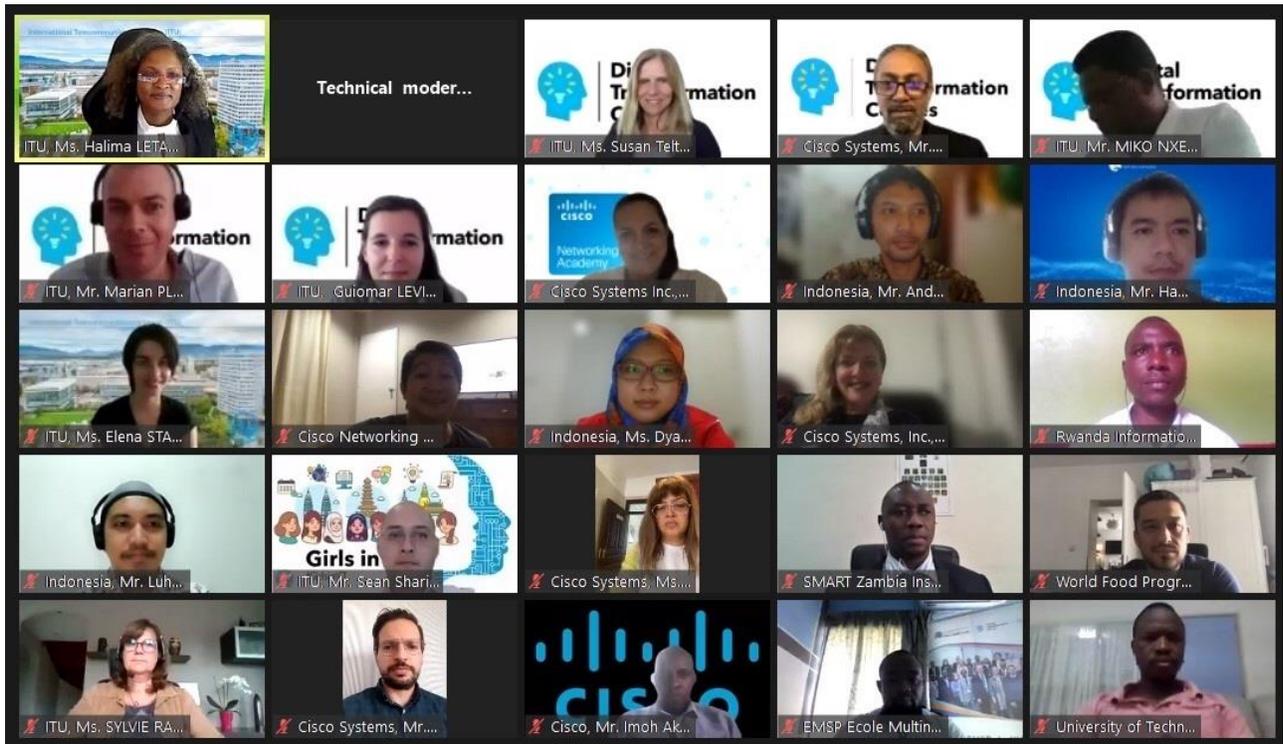




## Digital Transformation Centres Initiative 2<sup>nd</sup> Virtual Global Meeting

30 June 2021

### FINAL REPORT



## INTRODUCTION

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Virtual Global Meeting of the Digital Transformation Centres (DTCs) Initiative took place on 30 June 2021. It was organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in partnership with Cisco.

The meeting was attended by 35 participants representing the DTCs and the DTC Initiative partners including ITU, Cisco, HP, World Food Programme (WFP) and the Norwegian Government. The DTCs were represented by 14 participants from 7 selected DTCs in Africa and in Asia-Pacific. The DTCs from the Dominican Republic and Brazil were unable to participate.

The meeting was the second occasion for DTCs to get together since the onboarding workshop held in Geneva on 11-13 February 2020, and since the 1<sup>st</sup> DTC Global Virtual Meeting held on 23 March 2021. The objective of the meeting was to discuss challenges, opportunities and lessons learnt by DTCs from implementing Phase 1 of the Initiative, which is due to close at the end of August 2021. The outcome of the discussions will be used to prepare Phase 2 of the Initiative.

Further information, including agenda, the presentation slides and photos are available at <https://academy.itu.int/index.php/main-activities/digital-transformation-centres-initiative/dtc-virtual-global-meeting-2021-phase-1-evaluation>

## Opening remarks

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Global Virtual Meeting was officially opened by Ms Susan Teltscher, Head, Capacity and Skills Development Division, ITU. Ms Teltscher took the opportunity to thank the participants from both DTCs and partner organizations for joining the meeting, and she stressed the importance of this meeting as Phase 1 of the Initiative is ending in August and Phase 2 starts. Ms Teltscher emphasized that despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the DTCs have achieved a lot by adjusting to the new normal and making the best out of the challenging situation. The discussions in the meeting were guided by the responses made by the DTCs to an evaluation questionnaire that they had all completed and submitted to ITU a week earlier. During this meeting, every DTC had the opportunity to highlight what worked well in Phase 1, what didn't, what are the lessons learnt and new ideas for changes in the next phase.

## Brief summary of the questionnaire responses from DTCs

During this session, Mr Mike Nxele, Senior Capacity and Skills Development Officer, ITU, gave an overview of the questionnaire responses from DTCs. The main goal of the questionnaire was to gather as much information as possible on the Phase 1 of the Initiative in preparation for Phase 2.

The questions addressed a wide range of topics, starting with how the DTCs felt about their experience in Phase 1, to the most frequent challenges, opportunities, key performance indicators (KPIs) and partnerships. The questionnaire also asked DTCs to propose improvements moving into Phase 2. Mr Nxele emphasized that 100% of DTCs responded to the questionnaire.

According to the responses, it was shown that on a scale from 1 to 5 stars, with 1 being very unsatisfactory and 5 being very satisfactory, 67% of DTCs gave 4 to 5 stars to the overall Initiative, whereas the average rate was 4 stars. More details on the questionnaire responses were addressed in other sessions of the meeting.

## General open discussion on the overall experiences of being a DTC

During this session, each DTC representative had the opportunity to briefly introduce their experience as DTC in Phase 1, and to express the main challenges and opportunities experienced so far.

The Ecole Multinational Supérieure des Postes d'Abidjan (EMSP), DTC in Côte d'Ivoire, emphasized the role of the DTC Initiative in mobilizing and increasing visibility among national political authorities and stakeholders around the need for digital skills training for citizens. It was highlighted that since the launch of the Initiative, the pilot phase of the JEAN project was launched, aimed at training youths with digital skills through a volunteering programme in the community of Azaguié, Côte d'Ivoire, and a collaboration with World Food Programme (WFP) is now under development.

The ICT Training and Development Centre (BPPTIK), DTC in Indonesia, drew attention to the challenges experienced during Phase 1 as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result of the pandemic, most of the trainings shifted from face-to-face arrangements to online, and this change had a crucial impact on the number of citizens trained across the country. Connectivity was cited as one of the major challenges experienced in delivering training given the vast expanse of the country. The lack of basic digital skills and devices, the lack of content in national language, and an overall fatigue to online tools as people work from home were highlighted as main reasons why less participants joined the courses during the past year.

The Papua New Guinea University of Technology (PNGUoT), DTC in Papua New Guinea, stressed that the start of Phase 1 was remarkable, although the institution hadn't been able to join the Onboarding Workshop in February 2020 due to Covid-19 travel restrictions. Following the launch, strong

collaborations have been forged with ITU Cisco Australia who supports the delivery of training in the country, and APCICT, training institute of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), supporting the DTC with training content for women entrepreneurs.

The Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA), DTC in Rwanda, highlighted that the Initiative started relatively late in Rwanda, as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and of the challenges related to delivering training online. The main target group of the Initiative in Rwanda are young people from rural communities, and the challenges faced are mostly related to the lack / affordability of connectivity, intermittent power supply in rural areas, unfamiliarity with online platforms and lack of content in local languages. The next courses planned target women and people with disabilities.

Smart Zambia Institute (SZI), DTC in Zambia, described the experience as a DTC in Phase 1 as exciting, as the collaboration with ITU and Cisco so far has been very productive, based on a common vision. Some of the challenges and constraints faced were financial constraints that inhibited them from rolling out training to the provinces. There was also a low level of sensitization of the political players about the DTC in the country, and stakeholder engagement has not yet been fulfilled and needs to be scaled up. SZI looks forward to a formal launch of the Initiative in the country in order to raise awareness and sensitize the public about it. Connectivity was also an issue, due to the fact that few people can access stable Internet at home. Another issue raised was the lack of access to the Cisco dashboard to monitor student performance. As part of Phase 1 of the Initiative, SZI managed to train public sector employees, including teachers and trainers, and the Initiative will open to new groups and the general public as we move into Phase 2. SZI also focused on training of trainers and has developed internal capacity to roll out the training to the provinces in 2021 and beyond.

The Department of Information and Communication Technology (DICT), DTC in the Philippines, emphasized that the start of the Initiative in the country was slow due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The transition from face-to-face to online training came with some challenges, as most of the trainers and trainees were not yet ready for this adjustment, and few training centres were adequately prepared. For example, they did not even have an LMS. Connectivity was also a challenge, and available free public wifi was only limited to public areas. However, despite the challenges, DICT has been able to deliver training to the workforce, government officials and modules for women and persons with disabilities. The goal is to upgrade the level of the training with a new programme called Digital Education Programme, where cyber security and safety are critical.

The Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communications (GIFEC), DTC in Ghana, expressed that being part of the DTC Initiative has brought great opportunities to extend digital skills training to communities across the country. The training content provided by Cisco is internationally recognized, and it raised vast interest in the country. Some challenges have also occurred, mostly related to the Covid-19 pandemic, but it was highlighted that GIFEC is excited to move into the second phase of the Initiative. GIFEC said that the support they are getting from the project jointly funded by ITU and the Norwegian government will go a long way towards boosting digital skills in the country.

### **Experiences of supporting training during Phase 1 - Trainers perspective**

During this session, Cisco shared its experience as founding partner of the Initiative, including the main challenges and opportunities so far. Cisco started off by introducing all their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Managers from the various regions who were rendering valuable support to the DTCs in their respective regions.

As lessons learnt, firstly, Cisco observed that the Initiative is successful when the training activities are backed by Governments, including financially, and is part of the country digital transformation strategy. Secondly, Cisco noticed a major success when the DTCs keep the same team of focal points throughout the Initiative, as this helps keeping track of the activities and gives additional stability to the implementation. Lastly, the implementation has been more successful in DTCs where instructors and community training facilities were more widely available.

ITU presented the questionnaire findings on major challenges experienced by DTCs in Phase 1 as well as the opportunities. On one hand, it was mentioned that the Covid-19 pandemic has been identified by most of the DTCs as the major challenge in Phase 1, as the pandemic forced DTCs to shift from face-to-face to online training. This was followed by financial and human resources constraints, and by limitations related to Internet connectivity. On the other hand, the training content offered through the Initiative was selected as the most valuable component of the Initiative, followed by being associated with an ITU initiative and the opportunity to partner with new institutions.

### **Main challenges and opportunities experienced during phase 1 - Perspective of DTCs**

During this session, participants had the opportunity to interact with each other while separated into 2 working groups. Group 1 discussed the major challenges faced during Phase 1 of the Initiative, and how can these be overcome in Phase 2. Group 2 discussed what worked well in Phase 1, why it worked well and what are the lessons learnt for Phase 2.

Among the major challenges expressed by group 1, the issue of Internet connectivity was highlighted the most, especially in a pandemic situation when the delivery of the training shifted to online approaches. To this effect, participants mentioned that Governments and partners should support citizens' access to Internet, as well as ensure that access is affordable. The lack of content in local languages was also mentioned as an important inhibiting factor while delivering digital skills training. It was suggested that alternative ways be considered, such as recording audios and videos in local languages that can then be used for training even if there is no Internet connectivity. Finally, it was emphasized that the Initiative could benefit from additional publicity, as by increasing awareness we increase the visibility and ultimately the support from Governments and partners.

Among the major components of the Initiative that worked well in Phase 1, group 2 highlighted the major events, such as the Onboarding Workshop and the follow-up meetings, which gave participants guidance and a sense of purpose. The training materials offered to DTCs through the Initiative were very much appreciated as well, as they are fit for purpose and helpful to meet the needs of communities. In addition, the value of the certificates made available and the requirements to obtain them made participants serious about the courses. Lastly, the Initiative brought valuable partnerships to DTCs in Phase 1, as witnessed in the case of Ghana and the partnership with the Government of Norway providing the DTC with financial support for three years, or in the case of Papua New Guinea benefitting from additional support from the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT).

### **Performance indicators**

This session was dedicated to the discussion of the key performance indicators (KPIs) agreed by DTCs during the Onboarding Workshop in February 2020, the feedback from DTCs through the online questionnaire and the new KPIs proposed by DTCs for Phase 2.

The baseline KPIs agreed by DTCs focused on the number of training activities per year (at least 10), number of citizens trained per year (at least 300), number of train-the-trainer activities delivered per year (at least 2), the percentage of female participants (at least 30%) and the percentage of citizens trained

from communities (at least 60%). According to the online questionnaire, most of the KPIs were judged by DTCs as appropriate or very appropriate, whereas most of the related targets were considered just right.

Among the new KPIs proposed by DTCs, it was recommended to include a share of training for persons with disabilities (at least 10%), and a minimum number of partnerships signed by DTCs in a year, with the exact number to be defined.

### **Content and training materials**

During this session, ITU gave a presentation on the existing training materials from Cisco, HP and APCICT, followed by an open discussion on the relevance and adequacy of these courses.

The participants assessed the training content from Cisco as very good, well structured, intuitive and of interest for their audience. Basic courses such as Get connected and Intro to Cybersecurity were mentioned as the courses most used by DTCs especially while dealing with an audience of beginners. The language has been highlighted as a potential barrier, although some DTCs specified that some local translations have been carried out. Finally, having the opportunity to access Cisco materials even after completion of the training was underlined as valuable for beneficiaries.

Among the new courses and topics requested by DTCs, courses on entrepreneurship were mentioned by some DTCs, as these courses easily reach a young audience and gives them tools to succeed in building businesses. In addition, courses at intermediate level such as Networking and Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) were of strong interest in some countries.

### **Partnership proposals and suggestions**

This session was dedicated to the presentation of the current partners, followed by an open discussion on new proposals moving into Phase 2.

During the presentation, it was highlighted that the current partners of the Initiative are Cisco, as founding partner, HP, offering 32 training courses on entrepreneurship as part of the HP LIFE offering, the World Food Programme (WFP) with whom ITU is developing new opportunities mainly in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, and finally the Government of Norway through Norad, sponsoring the Initiative mainly in Ghana through the project "Boosting Digital Skills through Digital Transformation Centres".

As indicated by DTCs in the online questionnaire, mobilizing additional partners and donors was expressed as top priority, followed by the organization of additional global and regional events, and finally the increase of the opportunities to further interact with other DTCs.

### **Briefing for DTCs on next steps into Phase 2**

During this session, Mr Mike Nxele, ITU, gave an overview of the next steps as we approach the closure of Phase 1 and as the next phase starts. Mr Nxele emphasized that the current DTCs will receive an addendum to the Cooperation Agreements concluded with ITU in order to extend their participation in Phase 1 from September to December 2021. Additionally, those DTCs that qualify for Phase 2 will receive an invitation letter to continue their participation in the DTC Initiative. All DTCs (those who will continue and new ones joining) will be required to sign a new Cooperation Agreement with ITU that will come into effect in January 2022.

Lastly, it was stated that the application time for new DTCs applying to join Phase 2 will open in late July and close in August 2021, and the newly selected DTCs will be announced in September 2021, as Phase 2 officially starts in January 2022.

### **Summary and closing**

Final remarks were delivered by Ms Susan Teltscher, Head, Capacity and Digital Skills Development, ITU. In her remarks, Ms Teltscher thanked all the DTCs and partners for their active participation and contributions. The feedback received during the meeting was well noted and is crucial for the success of Phase 2. She highlighted that the current plan presented is provisional and that some adaptations might occur. Ultimately, she stressed that ITU and partners remain open to any further suggestions in the future.

## Annex 1: List of participants

Name	Title	Institution	Country
<b>DTCs</b>			
Mr Lucas Yao	DTC Project Manager	Ecole Multinationale Supérieure des Postes d'Abidjan	Côte d'Ivoire
Ms Deborah Korkor Bah-Lano	Manager, Programmes	Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communications (GIFEC)	Ghana
Mr Richard Muragijimana	Digital Literacy Officer	Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA)	Rwanda
Mr Brian Nawa	Senior Change Management Officer	SMART Zambia Institute	Zambia
Mr Hamdani Pratama	Head of Programme and Reporting Section	Balai Pelatihan dan Pengembangan Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi (BPPTIK)	Indonesia
Mr Nusirwan	Head of BPPTIK	Balai Pelatihan dan Pengembangan Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi (BPPTIK)	Indonesia
Mr Luhur Pidekso Arif	Researcher, Sub Coordinator of Public Training Organizer	Balai Pelatihan dan Pengembangan Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi (BPPTIK)	Indonesia
Mr Andry Rivan Sumara	Researcher, Lecturer	Balai Pelatihan dan Pengembangan Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi (BPPTIK)	Indonesia
Ms Dyah Puspito Dewi Widowati	Instructor	Balai Pelatihan dan Pengembangan Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi (BPPTIK)	Indonesia
Ms Mary Jane Lima	Planning Officer IV	Department of Information and Communication Technology (DITC)	Philippines
Ms Mina Lyn Peralta	Project Development Officer	Department of Information and Communication Technology (DITC)	Philippines
Mr Alvin Navarro	Director	Department of Information and Communication Technology (DITC)	Philippines
Ms Suzette Sumalinog	Project Development Officer	Department of Information and Communication Technology (DITC)	Philippines
Mr Tindi Nuru Seje	Director, Teaching and Learning	PNG University of Technology	Papua New Guinea
<b>Partners</b>			
Mr Alfie Hamid	Global Partnerships Manager	Cisco	South Africa
Ms Emma Broadbent	Networking Academy Regional Manager ANZ & Papua New Guinea & Pacific islands	Cisco	Australia

Ms Rebecca de la Vega	Cisco Networking Academy Regional Manager	Cisco	Mexico
Ms Hital Muraj	Cisco Networking Academy Regional Manager	Cisco	Kenya
Mr Imoh Akpan	Programme Manager	Cisco	Nigeria
Mr Macky Macaspac	Programme Manager	Cisco	Philippines
Mr Omar Rhouami	CSR Manager	Cisco	Morocco
Mr Helge Brochmann	Senior Advisor	Norad	Norway
Ms Ina Progonati	HP Global Lead	HP	United States
Mr Ryo Koshikawa	Strategic Partnerships Officer	World Food Programme (WFP)	Italy
<b>ITU</b>			
Ms Susan Teltscher	Head, Capacity and Digital Skills Development Division (CSD), BDT	ITU	Switzerland
Mr Mike Nxele	Senior, Capacity and Digital Skills Development Officer (CSD), BDT	ITU	Switzerland
Ms Halima Letamo	Training and Development Officer, CSD, BDT	ITU	Switzerland
Ms Elena Stankovska - Castilla	Associate Capacity and Digital Skills Development Officer	ITU	Switzerland
Ms Guiomar Levi-Setti	Capacity and Digital Skills Development Officer (CSD), BDT	ITU	Switzerland
Ms Sylvie Raposo	Capacity Development Administrative Coordinator	ITU	Switzerland
Mr Marian Pletosu	Digital Skills Officer (CSD), BDT	ITU	Switzerland
Mr Pujiono	Senior Advisor	ITU	Indonesia
Mr Sean Sharidz Doral	Programme Officer	ITU	Thailand
Mr Rodrigo Robles	Programme Officer	ITU	Brazil
Mr Emmanuel Niyikora	Programme Officer	ITU	Senegal