



10TH MEETING OF THE GROUP ON CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVES (GCBI)

06 December 2022

Final report

Introduction

1. The Group on Capacity Building Initiatives (GCBI) held its 10th meeting on 20 December 2022. The meeting was held virtually.
2. The meeting was attended by nine members of the GCBI and was chaired by Dr Lidia Stępińska-Ustasiak, Area Leader, International Cooperation & Partnerships, CFI, Poland, and GCBI Chair. Ms Gladys Ogallo and Mr Aziz Bin Awang did not attend the meeting.
3. The meeting began with opening remarks provided by Ms Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Director, BDT, and Secretary-General elect, ITU. She welcomed the members to the meeting indicating that due to the pandemic several major ITU meetings and conferences had to be postponed, including the GCBI meeting hence it being held now. She indicated that, as technology begins to evolve, citizens need to acquire necessary skills and upgrade their skills to be able to operate in the digital economy. The importance of digital literacy has also been highlighted in other forums such as the IGF and the latest ITU Facts and Figures. It has been noted that digital skills are a barrier to many and therefore strengthening capacities is at the core of the ITU mandate. She informed members that the ITU Academy platform now delivers around 150 courses per year and has featured new areas such as courses on digital health and empowerment of women delegates to the ITU PP. Advances to harmonize CD across the ITU have also been made. She thanked the GCBI members for their contributions to the work of the ITU and thanked those members whose term has come to an end.
4. Dr Lidia Stępińska-Ustasiak congratulated Ms Bogdan-Martin on her election as the ITU first woman Secretary-General. On capacity development issues, she stated that the pandemic has taught the world how to deal with the unexpected. She indicated that according to a report by McKinsey, 87% of companies are either experiencing a skills gap or anticipating one soon. She recalled that in the previous meetings the GCBI emphasized the importance of skilling, upskilling, and reskilling, and that the importance of this work will grow. She encouraged the GCBI to continue to provide their much-needed contributions during the meeting and to the ITU in general.
5. Following her introduction, the Chair invited all GCBI members to make short introductory remarks, highlighting key developments that occurred in their respective regions since the last meeting. GCBI members highlighted that the question of digital literacy and skills had been discussed during the WTDC-22 and the PP-22, with many Resolutions referring to the importance of capacity development. One of the challenges was to measure the concrete impact of capacity development activities. A solid needs assessment at the early stage can help to provide targeted and impactful activities.

Closure of the CoE programme and launch of ITU Academy Training Centres (ATCs) programme

6. Under this agenda item, ITU provided an overview of the CoE programme cycle closure and the transitioning to the new ITU Academy Training Centres (ATCs) programme. The group was informed that the ITU Centres of Excellence programme is ending in December 2022. The evaluation of the cycle is underway and should be completed by the end of the year. The report will be shared with the GCBI members. This programme is being closed as per the recommendation of the CoE Strategic Review undertaken in 2021.
7. The CoE review was mandated through WTDC Res. 73 and carried out in 2021. The final review of the report was presented to member states and finalized in 2022. The review formed the basis for the revisions of Res.73 which were adopted at WTDC-22. The resolution mandated the ITU to re-brand the CoE programme, implement the recommendations contained in the CoE Strategic Review report and change the operational processes and procedures document.
8. In line with amendments made to WTDC Resolution 73 at WTDC-2022, the ITU is now establishing a new programme to replace the CoE programme. This programme will be called the ITU Academy Training Centres programme with an acronym ATC.
9. The new ATC programme will be leaner, more focused on the needs of the ITU membership, emphasize quality training delivery in the field of the ITU mandate and be closely integrated with ITU's work.
10. The ATCs will focus on training needs for policy makers and ICT professionals, and their training courses will be at an advanced level. The ATCs will be limited in number with a focus on quality rather than quantity. A maximum of 16 ATCs will be selected. The number of centres will be much less compared to that of the CoEs. This will be done taking into consideration regional representation. However, the primary focus on the selection will be quality of the centres as opposed to where they are based, especially because the centres will be operating globally and will have to address needs across all regions.
11. The focus areas of the ATCs will be policy and regulation, network infrastructure, spectrum management, cybersecurity, digital inclusion, and digital services. The ATCs will deliver a minimum of two courses per year which will be discussed with the relevant BDT thematic priority colleagues. The majority of the courses will be delivered online through the ITU Academy Platform, with a limited number being delivered face-to-face.
12. The ATC programme will follow a flexible business model with options for ATCs to cover their running costs from donor funding, their own operating budgets or collect training fees from participants.
13. While the programme is global it will still be expected to respond to regional needs as well as country needs of member states. A regular needs assessment will also be undertaken with HR focal points in administrations being the contact points for the needs assessments.
14. The application for the ATC programme closed on the 23 November 2022 and the selection process is ongoing, with an announcement of the selected ATCs targeted to be done before the end of the year.
15. GCBI members appreciated the work done by ITU to transition from the CoE to the ATC programme. They agreed that online training is nowadays the best way to reach participants

globally and allows participants to accommodate training in parallel with their duties at work. On the question of regional steering committees, ITU explained that with a small number of ATCs, global annual meetings will be organized to bring all ATCs together and discuss issues that are pertinent to their work. They also mentioned that ITU may have good experts that could be used for training delivered through the ATC programme. Finally, a request was made to share the final report of the last CoE cycle with the GCBI members, once ready.

Digital Transformation Centre Initiative (DTCI)

16. ITU presented an update on the Digital Transformation Centres Initiative (DTCI), which was launched in September 2019 in partnership with Cisco, with the objective of supporting countries to develop digital skills at basic and intermediate levels, particularly in the underserved communities.
17. Phase 1 of the Digital Transformation Centres Initiative (DTCI) ended in 2021 and Phase 2 commenced with a kick-off workshop held in Geneva in March 2022. 13 DTCs have been selected as part of Phase 2.
18. ITU reported that since its inception, the DTCI has trained over 150,000 participants from underserved communities across four regions, of which 58% were female.
19. Under the DTC Initiative, a content mapping exercise was done which identified skills gaps to be addressed through the DTC Initiative. The content mapping exercise revealed a number of areas where content that can be used by the DTCs needs to be developed. This includes courses to address the use of mobile services, social media, security and online etiquette and digital commerce (including mobile financial services).
20. Results of the content mapping exercise were shared with the DTCs in the virtual meeting held in November 2022. ITU is exploring options for adaptation of existing content to fill the identified gaps as well as development of new content. Translation of content into different languages is also under consideration.
21. ITU continues to engage partners to support the work of the DTCs. Other than Cisco content, the DTCs have access to content from HP and Digital Skills Foundation. Collaboration is also ongoing with other UN agencies, such as ILO, who are offering the use of their service tracker for the DTCs to measure training impact, and WFP offering support on the ground through use of their channels to reach remote areas in different countries. Discussions are also on-going for potential partnerships with Microsoft and UNCDF.
22. Furthermore, ITU developed a resource mobilization strategy and started to implement it. 45 potential donors have been approached and discussions are on-going with different partners who have the potential to support the DTCs.
23. Two meetings with potential funding partners were held and engagements are ongoing to organize conversations with more partners. This includes engaging potential partners such as the Nordic countries and international Telcos, which is being done in collaboration with the founding partner of the DTCI, Cisco.
24. In 2022, the ITU provided support to the DTCs through continuous engagement of the DTCs on a bilateral basis and organizing networking opportunities for the DTCs. A face-to-face

meeting was organized for the DTCs in March 2022 and a virtual meeting in November 2022. Plans are underway to bring together representatives from all DTCs in 2023 for a face-to-face meeting.

25. Following the presentation, GCBI members were invited to comment. GCBI members commended ITU for the work done under the DTC Initiative, with many people in underserved communities trained on basic digital skills. New tools and applications will emerge, and it remains crucial to continue training people on how they can use those and be part of the digital transformation. The right level of content for the training is key for adaptation when it comes to different levels of skills. ITU explained that even with basic digital literacy training, there could be different levels according to the Bloom's taxonomy, and that this was being applied through both the DTC and the ATC training courses.

Harmonization of capacity development approaches across the ITU

26. Under this agenda item, ITU briefed the GCBI members on recent progress made towards developing a harmonized approach for capacity development across the ITU.
27. Through an internal I-CoDI "One-ITU" bootcamp in April 2021, agreements were made to develop a harmonized capacity development framework. This was endorsed by the ITU Council (2020-2022 sessions). The need for a harmonised approach in ITU was also emphasized in the Feasibility Study on the Establishment of an ITU Training Institute, which was presented to GCBI members in the last meeting.
28. The identified challenge was that different bureaus run their own capacity development activities using different sets of materials on the same subject, delivering to the same member clients, with different delivery parameters, assessment tools and assessment criteria, running the risk of applying different standards of quality.
29. Earlier this year, ITU established an intersectoral Task Force to work on harmonizing capacity development across ITU. The Task Force is mandated to consolidate all ITU capacity development work under the framework of the ITU Academy.
30. Based on the work that the GCBI had already done to provide guidance on capacity development terminologies, the Task Force has been mandated to progress consultations and conclude the harmonization of terminologies used for training.
31. So far, the Task Force has developed a 3-year implementation plan, completed a scoping exercise, commenced moving courses from other ITU bureaus' platforms to the ITU Academy platform, and has started discussing processes.
32. The Task Force briefs the three ITU Directors every 6 months and is expected to report to the advisory structures of the bureaus, i.e. RAG, TSAG, TDAG.
33. Following the presentation, GCBI members requested some clarifications as to the scope of the work of the Task Force and how it was related to the work of the ATCs and the DTCs. ITU explained that the mandate of the Task Force was to foster harmonization of internal approaches (within ITU) towards capacity development across the 3 bureaux. GCBI members thought this was a good step forward from the recommendations that were made by Member

States in this regard. It was a good approach to use the ITU Academy as the common layer. ITU may want to consider creating a virtual lab environment for online training delivery.

Key outcomes of the meeting

At the end of the meeting, GCBI adopted the following key outcomes of the meeting:

1. The importance of capacity and digital skills development is continuing to grow among ITU Member states as evidenced by discussions during WTDC-22 and PP-22 which referenced capacity development and digital skills development. This increases the need for ITU to scale efforts in supporting member states to address capacity development and digital skills needs in their countries.
2. Members of the GCBI who participated at WTDC-22 contributed to the revision of Resolution 73 and in this meeting emphasized that members are anxious to see the new ATC programme. This is going to increase the focus on this group by the membership who are expecting an increase in digital skills development interventions.
3. The GCBI has an opportunity to have a more prominent role with the ITU Academy now supporting and guiding new players. This requires measuring impact which begins with assessment at the early stages of training course planning.
4. The ATC programme is an excellent continuation of the CoE programme and its focus on online delivery is the appropriate focus as this form of delivery attracts more participants, from diverse backgrounds.
5. The nature of content is evolving, and there is a need to maintain flexibility to embrace changes and to avoid re-inventing the wheel. Assessment is key to all training programmes, and it is important to integrate assessment tools into the platform.
6. ITU should consider virtual labs for the ITU Academy to attract partners.
7. The group noted that the DTIC should continue and considered it as a good initiative that has a potential for long term sustainability. Members emphasized that the right level of content is key for adoption. The Bloom's taxonomy should also be used as a key tool for determining the appropriate levels of courses.
8. The work on harmonizing capacity development across the ITU is a good step in implementing the recommendations of the feasibility study and recommendations from decision making bodies, in particular the ITU Council. This will contribute to the value add that ITU is providing to its members.
9. The outcome of this meeting will be reported by the Chair of GCBI at the next meeting of TDAG.

The next GCBI meeting will tentatively take place in the second quarter of 2023. The exact dates will be confirmed at a later stage.