

Group on Capacity Building Initiatives
Meeting Report
29 November 2023
11:00 – 13:00 CET

The GCBI held its first kick-off meeting of the cycle on the 29 November 2023, virtually. The meeting was attended by 11 out of 12 GCBI members, as listed in the list of attendees, Annex 1 of this report. The meeting started with a round of introductions where GCBI members introduced themselves and reiterated their commitment to the work of the GCBI.

In his remarks, the Director BDT welcomed the new members of the GCBI to the group and appreciated the commitment of the group members who were part of the group in the last cycle. He congratulated Prof. Mustapha Benjillali for being appointed as the GCBI Chair for this cycle and introduced the group's Vice Chair, Ms Tessie Leva.

1. Director BDT shared with the group information on what ITU had achieved in capacity development work, beginning with progress made in harmonizing capacity development work across the ITU. This work, which was addressed by this group in the previous cycle, and endorsed by the ITU Council, commenced in 2022 with the establishment of an ITU inter-sectoral task force and stock taking of ITU capacity development activities. As part of its main outputs, the task force has developed a draft manual which will be used to guide capacity development activities across the organization.
2. In relation to the ITU Academy, the Director indicated that the Academy has grown tremendously in recent years. To date, the Academy has attained over 40,000 users who have access to a comprehensive training catalogue which covers an array of topics needed by the ITU membership such as network infrastructure, digital inclusion, policy and regulation, cyber security, to name a few.
3. Director BDT also mentioned that in 2022 the ITU launched the ITU Academy Training Centres (ATCs) programme, as mandated through WTDC Resolution 73. The ATC programme, just as its predecessor, the CoE programme, delivers high-quality training courses tailored to the needs of the ITU membership and targeting policy makers and ICT professionals. 14 centres have been selected under this programme and have started delivering training this year.
4. The Director highlighted the Digital Transformation Centres Initiative which has also continued to achieve notable results since its establishment in 2019. There are 13 DTCs in 4 ITU regions under this initiative, which have trained 250,000 individuals to date. This initiative focuses on strengthening digital capacities of citizens with basic and intermediate digital skills.
5. He encouraged the GCBI to reflect on the role of the group and how the group can assist the BDT in identifying regional needs and priorities for capacity- and skills-development

activities, evaluate the progress of related BDT activities and harmonize ongoing initiatives.

Proposed work structure

6. The GCBI chair presented a one-page document calling for collective effort guided by the United Nations Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, and the International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) Kigali Action Plan. The document proposed two directions for the work of the group:
 - The first direction to be focused on the effectiveness of the ongoing ITU capacity development initiatives and programs, which can be organized in three steps: 1) identification of heterogeneity within ITU's BDT regions themselves and proposition of new and more efficient sub-regional clusterings, 2) identification and prioritization of regional specificities/obstacles impacting current activities, and 3) suggestion of solutions/alternatives to identified obstacles.
 - The second direction to be oriented towards the mobilization of resources and partnerships to support capacity development initiatives and programs and be organized in three steps: 1) identification or update of the list of regional partners, 2) identification of potential reasons behind limited partnership interest, overlaps, program redundancies, etc, and 3) suggestion of "coopetition" schemes to deliver more impactful outcome.

Group discussions

7. In group discussions members noted that the description of priorities in the proposal presented by the Chair is good and covers pertinent issues, especially in optimizing ongoing initiatives and resource mobilization.
8. The group noted that digital skills gaps between regions are continuing to grow making it necessary to focus on innovation and efficiency.
9. The group observed that the customer perspective is important in this discussion and discussed the need to commence work with activities that will directly impact the beneficiaries. In light of this the group noted the need to identify stakeholders and target audiences to be able to better advise on initiatives which will be relevant.
10. The group noted that there are many capacity development initiatives being rolled out by countries and other international organisations. There is no need to re-invent the wheel. Therefore, the group should put in place measures to crowdsource good solutions which can be scaled up, the group could also collect and tell impact stories from their respective regions.

11. To avoid duplication and increase efficiency, the group noted the need to map capacity development initiatives and programs across regions and promote exchange of knowledge among GCBI members. The importance of developing a strategy on how to mobilize and maintain partnerships as well as to prepare reports with diagnostics of what works and does not work was also noted.
12. Discussions also covered measurability of the identified work streams. The group noted the need to develop OKRs and KPIs to ensure their work is measurable and the outputs can be tracked and monitored over time.
13. The group noted that only a few people know about the GCBI, there is need to share the activities of the GCBI with stakeholders at regional events and the GCBI should be informed of regional initiatives and how they can be involved in the work of regional activities of the ITU.

Summary

14. The group noted that collective effort is necessary to achieve the goals of the ITU Kigali Action Plan related to capacity and skills development. Structures like the GCBI, where representatives from different regions meet, provide a framework under which this collective effort can be actualized.
15. The group noted the mandate of the GCBI which is to advise the BDT Director on issues relating to capacity development.
16. The group agreed that the strategic direction of the GCBI for this cycle should focus on two main directions:
 - Enhancing the effectiveness of existing capacity development initiatives under the BDT through optimizing processes, workflows, and resource utilization within existing programs as well as correct identification of beneficiaries, and relevant measurement of quality of experience, program success, impact and innovation.
 - Scaling successful initiatives and programmes and partnerships through targeting and strengthening cross-sectoral collaborations and partnerships from various sectors, mobilizing new resources, and amplifying the impact of initiatives.
17. The group noted that there is need to keep the beneficiaries in mind when planning interventions and even look into target audiences to ensure that interventions are appropriately targeted.
18. The group observed that there is need to look into whether the proposed objectives of the group are measurable and if the group has the capacity to implement them. The group should also plan how the objectives will be monitored and measured.
19. The group emphasized the importance of crowd sourcing good capacity development solutions and putting in place strategies to scale these.

20. On work modalities, the meeting agreed to operate on the above-mentioned strategic direction together and not in subgroups as proposed. The focus will be on the subjects which are “effectiveness of ongoing initiatives” and “partnerships and resource mobilisation.”
21. The group noted that it is better to work in an interactive manner with short tasks and assignments, every 6 months, and with OKRs and quantified KPIs.
22. The group noted that there is need to share the activities of the GCBI with stakeholders at regional events and the GCBI should be informed of regional initiatives and how they can be involved in the work of regional activities of the ITU.

Next steps

23. Focus work of the group on “effectiveness of ongoing initiatives” and “partnerships and resource mobilization”.
24. Develop an implementation plan detailing specific objectives and tasks for the group with quantifiable KPIs
25. The group to start working on short tasks based on the OKRs aiming for at least 1 task every 6 months.
26. ITU should inform GCBI members of regional initiatives and programmes in which the GCBI could be involved.
27. ITU should share activities of the GCBI with stakeholders and promote the work of the GCBI during global and regional ITU events.
28. The group should discuss strategies to crowdsource capacity development best practices and share these with each other and the ITU.
29. The next meeting of the group will be a face-to-face meeting to be held in the second quarter of 2023

Annex 1

List of attendees

Region	Name	Functional title	Affiliation	Country
AFR	Ms Anne Chantal Ngondji	Head of Research and Cooperation Division	Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Postes, des Télécommunications et des TIC (SUP'PTIC)	Cameroon
	Mr Mohamadou Arabani Saibou	Senior ICT Capacity building, Training, Research and Consulting Expert / Founder and Managing Director	SMA Consulting Group	Senegal
AMS	Ms Elisa Daigele Bizarria	Specialist	ANATEL	Brazil
	Ms Agustina Brizio	Undersecretary of Information Technologies, Secretariat of Public Innovation	Oficina Nacional de Tecnologías de información (ONTI)	Argentina
ARB	Dr Mustapha Benjillali	Full Professor Senior Member	Institut National des Postes et des Télécommunications (INPT) Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)	Morocco
	Mr Majid Mohamed Alsuwaidi	Senior Manager, Digital Capabilities & Awareness	Telecommunications & Digital Government Regulatory Authority	UAE

ASP	Ms Tessie P Leva	Manager, Strategic Partnership	Department of Information Communication and Technology	Papua New Guinea
EUR	Dr Toni Janevski	Full Professor	Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Information Technologies (FEEIT), Ss. Cyril and Methodius University	Republic of North Macedonia
	Dr Lidia Stepinska-Ustasiak	Area Leader, International collaboration and partnerships	Institute of Organisation and Management in Industry "Orgmasz"	Poland
CIS	Ms Kristine Gyonjyan	Director	Union of Operators of Armenia	Republic of Armenia
	Mr Anton Alekseev	Director	JSC "Giprosvjaz"	Republic of Belarus
ITU	Dr Cosmas Zavazava	Director, BDT	International Telecommunication Union	Switzerland
	Dr Susan Teltscher	Head, Capacity and Digital Skills Development	International Telecommunication Union	Switzerland
	Ms Halima Letamo	Senior Capacity and Skills Development Officer	International Telecommunication Union	Switzerland
	Ms Celia Pellet	Capacity and Skills Development Officer	International Telecommunication Union	Switzerland