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| African Telecommunications Union (ATU) | | | |
| African Common Proposal for African Regional Initiatives | | | |
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| Agenda item:  Item 8  Summary:  This document contains the African Common Proposal for African Regional Initiatives, to be submitted to WTDC-21.  Expected results:  RPM-AFR is invited to examine this document and approve the proposals therein.  References:  N/A | | | |

**Introduction**

The revised Africa regional initiatives for the next period are more focused on the new ICT challenges of the continent mainly the digital transformation needs and key issues. Comparing to the previous period the number of these initiatives was reduced to 4 initiatives only with the objective to address and include the capacity building challenge as appropriate under each key initiative.

# AFR1: Supporting digital transformation to usher a rapid transition to digital economy while accelerating innovation in Africa

**Objective**: To assist Member States in the Africa region to reap the full benefits of digital transformation by addressing the existing policy and regulatory challenges, and formulating strategies to encourage the development and the use of digital technologies in various sectors of the economy and foster innovation.

Taking into consideration the enormous potential of digital technologies to contribute to the acceleration of the socio-economic development of countries and its vital role to assist in realizing the 2030 sustainable development agenda and the 17 global SDGs, ITU is called upon to support Member States in the Africa region to build, develop and sustain digitally based economies.

**Expected results**

1. Assistance in the development of national digital transformation strategies focusing on enabling policies and regulations to enhance the use of digital technologies in the economy.
2. Assistance in developing action plans with digital key performance indicators (KPIs) encompassing the adoption of e-applications geared to sustainable development in various aspects of African economies and e-government services.
3. Assistance in conducting research on the current digitization state of industries in Africa, trends and needs, at the regional level.
4. Building partnership among ITU Membership to encourage the exchange of best practices and knowledge sharing in the implementation of digital transformation projects.
5. Assistance in the adoption and implementation of relevant standards that are targeted at addressing challenges of interoperability stemming from the disruptive and transformative spread of digital innovation.
6. Help in designing models and facilitate the finance of digital transformation of economies in Africa, and identification of partnership opportunities to establish sustainable innovation frameworks.
7. Support for the designing and implementation of a comprehensive and inclusive human and institutional capacity building long term plan as a fundamental pillar to transform the economy to be digitally oriented and to guarantee its effective functioning that takes into consideration upskilling and reskilling of citizens on aspects related to emerging technologies
8. Support the establishment of centres of excellence and incubation entities to help in the nourishing and development of innovative ideas and start-ups in Africa.
9. developing Member States' capability to promote accessibility in order to ensure improved specialized skills development to meet the ICT needs of persons with disabilities and thus enhance their use of digital applications.

# AFR2: Implementation and expansion of broadband infrastructures, connectivity and emerging technologies

**Objective**:To promote the deployment of broadband infrastructure to assist Member States in Africa to ensure that no one if left behind to leverage the full benefits of high-speed and high – quality connectivity and the ramifications of emerging technologies.

**Expected results**

1. Assistance in the development of national and regional strategic plans, focusing on enabling policies and regulations addressing high-speed, high-quality broadband networks in the region.
2. Provide support and share best practices on national broadband strategies and strengthen capacity development, implement and monitor national broadband plans to use universal service funds effectively and develop financial and operational sustainable business models in order to provide affordable broadband access to unserved and underserved areas.
3. Benefiting from development programmes in expanding connectivity to SMEs and businesses to support jobs, business growth and economic development
4. Benefiting from development programmes in expanding connectivity to education and health related entities; SMEs and businesses; and homes and communities to enable access to relevant digital content
5. Providing support that will enable the sharing of best practices on financing models as well as the identification of partnership opportunities to enhance high-speed, high-quality broadband.
6. Assistance in promoting the harmonization of subregional broadband plans so as to ensure equitable access to high-speed, high-quality broadband for all.
7. Assistance with human capacity development resources, through training programmes, workshops and such like, to exchange expertise and to provide persons with disabilities with the platform to participate in and benefit from the emergence of new broadband technologies.
8. Assistance in extending the regional and continental backbone initiatives to ensure the resilience of submarine cables.
9. Improved awareness of policy and regulatory frameworks relating to spectrum-management issues in line with ITU decisions, including radio-frequency planning, trading, re-farming, and sharing along with spectrum licensing frameworks for competition, obligations and pricing.
10. Development, implementation and review of policies, legal and regulatory frameworks, including for network infrastructure protection, construction codes, regulations and technical standards for FTTH infrastructure, collaborative construction in civil works, next-generation universal service obligation (USO), infrastructure sharing, and facilitation of right-of-way and site acquisition.
11. Undergoing the necessary feasibility studies and setting roadmaps at national and regional levels for deployment of emerging technologies with high speed connectivity such as 5G/IMT2020; capacity building and ecosystem development to support 5G use.
12. Designing and executing awareness raising and measurement campaigns on EMF exposure and safety as well as on benefits of 5G backed by science and medical recommendations.

**AFR3: Building trust, safety and security in the use of telecommunications/information and communication technology and protection of personal data**

**Objective**: To assist Member States in developing and implementing policies, strategies, standards and mechanisms as well as human capacity building to enhance the security of information systems and networks, protection of data and people including vulnerable groups such as children and guarantee digital trust. To protect information and communication technology (ICT) and its applications.

**Expected results**

1. Assistance to Member States in improving their cybersecurity readiness status in respect to the ITU Global Cybersecurity Index pillars and the goal of the Connect 2030 Agenda
2. support member states in assessing adopting developing and the implementation of a regulatory and legislative framework, at national and regional level, related to cybersecurity
3. Development of a global framework for collaboration and awareness at regional and sub-regional levels for nurturing a global culture of cybersecurity and to help consumers better understand and protect against risks.
4. Assistance in developing content for educating consumers on their rights and responsibilities related to data protection while performing electronic and physical transactions as well as execution of campaigns to raise the awareness of cyberthreats, cybersecurity measures and quality of service in the use of ICTs.
5. Encourage the sharing of best practices and exchange of knowledge between Member States on the mechanisms to combat cybercrimes and cyber threats.
6. Support member states in the establishment and the development of national computer emergency/incident response teams (CERT/CIRTs), and strengthening cooperation mechanisms between them, at regional and sub-regional levels.

**AFR4: Fostering Emerging Technologies and Innovation Ecosystems**

**Objective**

To foster an enabling digital innovation ecosystem that can navigate technological revolutions and establishment of a sustainable conducive environment for the utilization of emerging technologies and development of SMEEs and start-ups.

**Expected results**

1. Assistance in undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the human and institutional capacity and regulatory environment related to digital innovation, emerging technologies, and SMMEs at national and regional levels.
2. Support Member States in developing the necessary legislative and regulatory framework to encourage digital industries and innovation development and the establishment of SMMEs.
3. Assistance in the designing and adoption of national strategies and infrastructures such as innovation and Research Labs to usher the utilization of emerging technologies in the different sectors of the economy.
4. Support in scaling up digital entrepreneurship and SMMES through global partnerships focused on achieving national development priorities and elaborating financing models to ensure the necessary investments for the continuous development and deployment of emerging technologies.
5. Designing a comprehensive human capacity-building framework to upskill and reskill the human factor on emerging technologies and digital innovation related material.
6. Raising awareness on the importance of the protection of Intellectual Property (IP) and developing relevant regulatory frameworks.

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