ITU CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE PROGRAMME

Report on the 2019-2022 Cycle

1. Overview of the 2019-2022 cycle

The operations of the CoE programme during this cycle were to a large extent impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which hit the world in early 2020. While the first year of the cycle was characterized by onboarding the CoEs, given that several Centres were new t

In an effort to continue to facilitate collaboration and networking of CoEs across regions, ITU organised a webinar in 2022. This webinar, which focused on "Online Learning Best Practices" was part of the support provided by ITU to help the CoEs in developing and improving online training delivery. The webinar provided the CoEs with practical examples and additional tools in online learning design and delivery, to address some of the challenges which the centres had been facing. The webinar was delivered by ITU in collaboration with UNITAR and ITC-ILO.

In addition to networking and collaboration activities facilitated
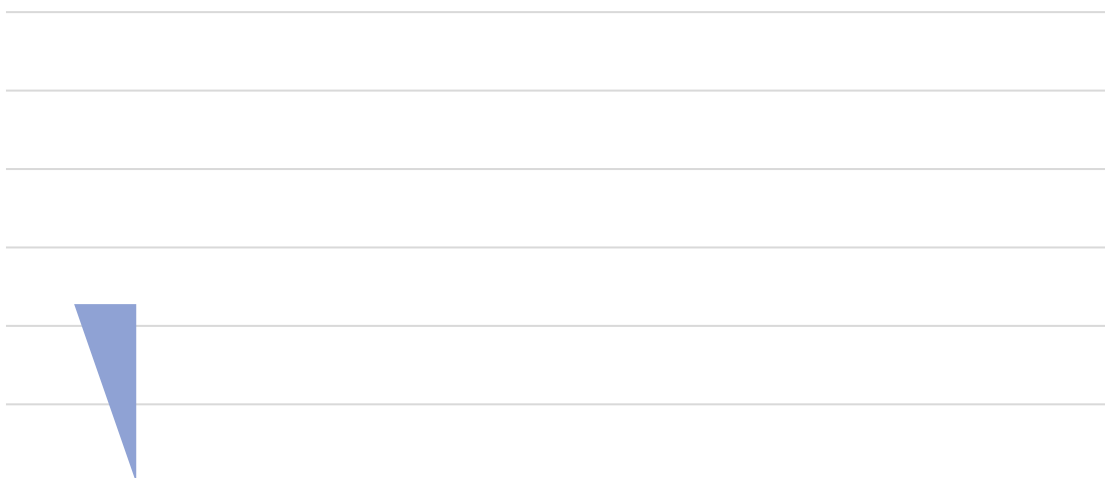
A breakdown of the percentage and the ratio between registered and certified participants[1] is available in Table 2.

Table 2: Certified vs. registered course participants during the cycle

Certified (vs. registered)	2019	2020	2021	2022
Percentage	73%	54%	44%	45%
Ratio	2.74	1.19	0.77	0.86

Of significant mention in analysing this aspect is the increase in the number of courses offered by the CoEs in 2021 and 2022. The observed tendency is that participants more often enrol into a free course without necessarily successfully completing it and earning a certificate.

The goal of the Centres of Excellence programme was to offer capacity development activities to the ITU membership worldwide. It is therefore important to examine the global outreach of the programme prompted by the geographical spread of the audiences trained by the CoEs during this cycle. Chart 3 shows that the network managed very well to target an international audience with a stable rate of around 70-75% of course participants whose nationality was different from the country where the CoE was located (Chart 3).

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[1] A distinction is made between participants who have attended the training (trained) and those who have also received a certificate at the end (certified), depending on their performance. Training participants who successfully completed a course (score at least 60% of the course) earn a certificate or digital badge.
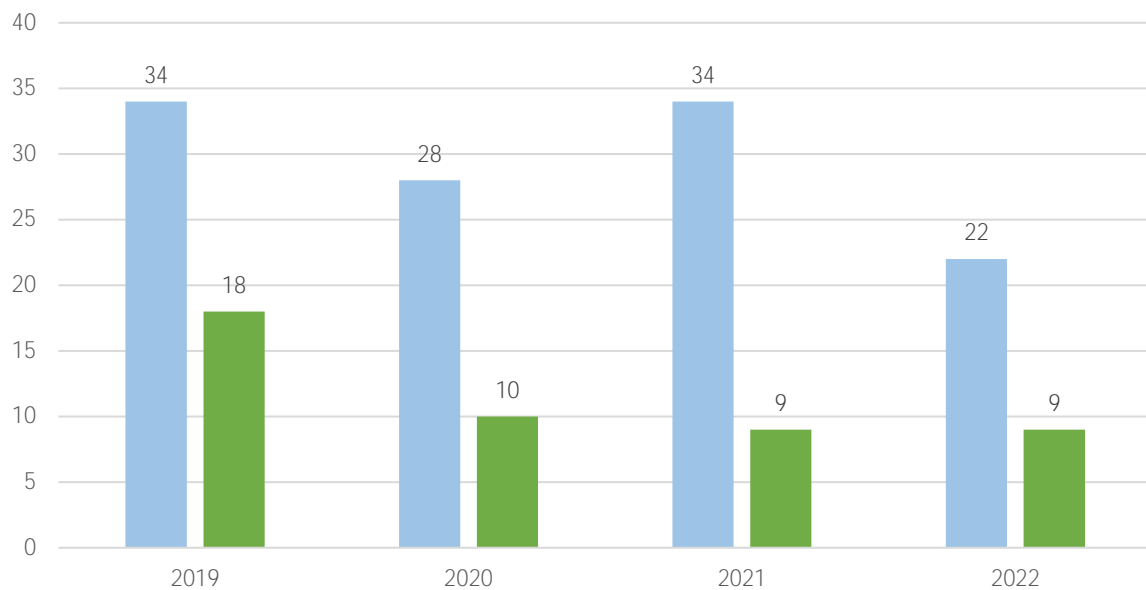
2.2.3 Arab Region

CoE	Country

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	2019	2020	2021	2022
Blue	34	28	34	22
Green	18	10	9	9

The delivery methodology started with 100% face-to-face courses implemented in 2019 and subsequently shifted to 100% online courses in 2021, which shows a strong resilience in adapting to the pandemic. Compared to other regions, CoEs within the Arab region moved to a more balanced and mixed delivery modality in 2022 (Chart 10) by delivering half of the courses online and a nearly equal proportion of them in a face-to-face format.

2.2.4 Asia-Pacific Region

CoE	Country	Priority Area(s)
National Information Society Agency (NIA)	Rep. of Korea	ICT applications
Advanced Level Telecom Training Centre (ALTTC)	India	Wireless & Fixed Broadband, Internet of Things and Cybersecurity
China Academy of Information and Communications Technology (CAICT)	China	Conformance & Interoperability and ICT Applications
State Radio Monitoring Center (SRMC)	China	Spectrum Management
Wireless Communication Centre, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)	Malaysia	Wireless & Fixed Broadband
IoT Academy	Iran	Internet of Things

The Asia-Pacific region had five CoEs operational during this cycle. They delivered a total of 78 courses out of 85 courses planned, which corresponds to an implementation rate of 92% – significantly higher than the average global implementation rate of 60%. Notable is the fact that even

2.2.5 Commonwealth of Independent States Region (CIS)

| CoE	Country	Priority Area(s)

3. CoE feedback and inputs

To facilitate an accurate analysis of the programme

participate in the programme. 'Network of cooperation' was ranked third on average, underlying that cooperation between the centres was also a very important aspect of the programme. The list was completed by other possible response categories, such as 'Access to ITU Curriculum' and 'Access to new markets' which came in after those previously mentioned (Table 4).

Table 4: What did you value most as a Centre of Excellence?

Distribution per individual ranking option.

	1	2	3	4	5
Cooperation with ITU	80%				
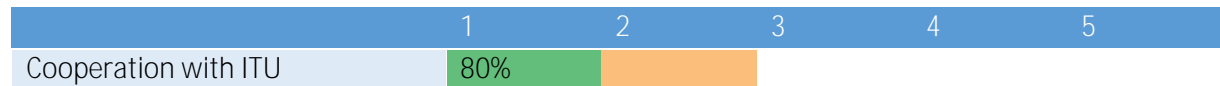
Centres were given the opportunity to share concrete recommendations on how to improve the training platform. Some

3.2 Experiences with online training delivery

The second part of the survey **looked** at the experiences of CoEs in transitioning to online training formats in the context of the pandemic.

Among the respondents, 8 out of the 25 CoEs that participated in the survey stated that they did not offer online training before the pandemic. A first set of questions was addressed to those CoEs who had not delivered any online training before and therefore had to develop this capacity from scratch. Responding to the question on what the greatest challenge was in adapting their training offer from F2F to online delivery, three main points were mentioned:

To assist the CoEs in conducting their courses online, provide support in different ways
during the pandemic, for example through standardized templates, one-to-one tutorials, as
well as pedagogical support and webinars on how to create and deliver courses online. When

On average, the two main sources of funding for training activities, as ranked by the CoEs, were training fees (43%) and/or the institutional budget of individual centres (42%) (Chart 19).

A few centres financed CoE activities entirely through the training fees charged, whereas some others primarily used the institutional budget, as not all centres charged fees for their courses. In some rare cases, government donations were used (Chart 20).

The top two expenses for the Centres which charged fees for all or some of their courses were hiring instructors and developing training content. Training expenses related to logistics to organize face-to-face training were ranked lower in the budget as the number of face-to-face

Marketing and promotion: recommendations to promote courses to professional associations and to offer course packages to increase interest in ITU training. Respondents also called for increasing the presence of the programme on social media to reach a wider target audience.

Accreditation of courses from internationally recognized institutions were mentioned as potentially helpful in increasing the appeal of the courses in the ITU catalogue.

Modularization of certain courses in order to obtain credits for industry certifications was indicated as potentially increasing the attractiveness of ITU courses.

Cooperation: another key point reflected throughout the responses was to further strengthen collaboration among the CoEs (e.g. in the form of joint courses).

Quality assurance: several centres emphasized the importance of amplifying the monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

Data analysis: more in-depth analysis of participants feedback and performance was recommended along with sharing the findings with the CoEs.

4. Strategic review of the Centres of Excellence programme and transition to the ITU Academy Training Centres programme

While the ITU CoE programme was launched in 2001, Resolution 73 on the CoE programme was introduced almost 10 years later, at WTDC-10. At that time, Member States requested the BDT Director, among other things, to carry out an analysis of the programme and develop a plan of action to improve it. A strategic review of the programme was carried out in 2012 and proposed a new approach, which was applied starting with the CoE cycle 2015-2018.

After the 2015-2018 cycle, a performance evaluation was carried out by the ITU Secretariat. As a result, several new features were introduced with the 2019-2022 cycle including a complete review of the operational processes and procedures of the programme.

In 2017, WTDC revised and expanded Resolution 73. The revised Resolution resolved 'that the activity

The report[2] that resulted from the strategic review, addressed several observations on the current CoE programme, such as:

the 4-year cycle of the programme makes it less agile and flexible;

the number of Centres is too large to manage it effectively and ensure quality training;

the selection process does not attract high-quality institutions;

while some CoEs do very well, others struggle to deliver training courses or attract participants;

the current business model (cost sharing between ITU and CoEs) is administratively burdensome;

the annual planning of course catalogues through regional Steering Committee meetings is not effective (most courses and dates are changed during the year); and

the current programme is not integrated well into the overall ITU-D capacity development work.

A SWOT analysis of the CoE programme was included in the report (see table below).

Table 2: Summary of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
The programme has delivered a considerable volume of capacity development to a good standard of training to a substantial number of participants.	Lack of interest from high-quality training providers to join the programme and anticipated difficulty in retaining those who currently participate.	The opportunity to integrate the Centres programme more closely with ITU/BDT priorities, responsibilities and expertise.	The risk that the programme will be unable to attract or retain high-quality providers with relevant experience in priority areas.

It is valued by Member-

Source: Report on the Strategic Review of the ITU Centres of Excellence programme (2022).

Based on the evaluation and in-depth analysis of the current of the current programme, the report provided several recommendations for the way forward:

Rebranding and relaunching:

The CoE programme should be rebranded and relaunched from 2023.

It should be more strongly associated with the ITU Academy and operate under its umbrella.

The new programme should be named ITU Academy Training Centres.

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[2] The final report is available here:
https://academy.itu.int/sites/default/files/media2/file/ITU%20CENTRES%20OF%20EXCELLENCE%20PROGRAMME_STRATEGIC%20REVIEW%202021%20AND%20RECOMMENDATIONS.pdf

<u>Objectives and strategy:</u>

The relaunched programme should have clear objectives, aligned with those of ITU/BDT, and a clear strategy for delivering these into the future.

The programme should have a clear, brief, defining mission statement which encapsulates its purpose.

The programme should have a clear strategy for achieving its objectives within the overall programme of work of the ITU. Its Centres should become training delivery partners for ITU and BDT priorities and programmes. It should focus on issues:

- o that are high priorities for Member-States, particularly those with limited resources for capacity development;
- o in which the ITU has special responsibilities or expertise; and
- o in which there is a limited supply of equivalent high-quality training available from alternative providers at a cost affordable to (all) Members.

<u>Schedule:</u>

The programme should be continuous, rather than tied to the WTDC cycle.

The 4-year cycles of the current programme should therefore be discontinued.

Scheduling of the course portfolio should also be continuous, rather than tied to annual catalogues issued at a single point in time.

<u>Needs assessment:</u>

Membership was invited to submit written comments on the draft report. A final version of the report, incorporating the comments made during the information session as well as the written comments received was circulated to the ITU Membership in March 2022. The report provided the basis for revisions made by Member States to Resolution 73 at WTDC-22 (Kigali).

At WTCD-22, the revised Resolution 73 was adopted, including (among others):

> The rebranding of the programme to ITU Academy Training Centres (ATCs) (and renaming Resolution 73 accordingly).
> A request to the BDT Director to implement the results of the strategic review, with new ATC programme to be launched in 2023.
> A request to change the operational procedures document of the programme in line with the results of the strategic review.

Following the adoption of the revised Resolution, the ITU Secretariat started to prepare the transitioning from the CoE to the ATC programme. The Operational Guidelines[3]

Annex 1: Centres of Excellence feedback survey questionnaire

Part 1: About your organization

1.	Official name of institution:
2.	Region:
3.	Country:
4.	Category of institution Ministry Private sector company Research institution Academic institution Other institution dealing with ICT Other training institution
5.	Please specify the priority area(s) for your CoE for the cycle 2019-2022 Wireless and fixed broadband Digital broadcasting Conformance and interoperability Spectrum management Cybersecurity ICT applications ICTs and the environment Internet governance Digital inclusion Smart cities and communities Internet of Things Innovation and entrepreneurship Digital economy Big data and statistics

Part 2: Overall experience

6.How would you rate your experience as a Centre of Excellence during the cycle 2019-2022?
poor fair good very good

excellent

7.What did you value most as a Centre of Excellence?
Please rank the answer options with 1 being the highest

Cooperation with ITU
     Better brand image
     Access to new markets
     Access to ITU curriculum
     Network of cooperation
     Other: _____

8. What have been your biggest challenges in delivering training as a Centre of Excellence?

9. Do you have any other comments concerning the overall experience?

Part 3: ITU Academy

10. How do you evaluate the user experience with the ITU Academy platform?

poor
     fair
     good
     very good
     excellent

11. What improvements would you recommend ITU to make on the ITU Academy platform?

12. Which feature of the platform did you like most?
Please rank the answer options with 1 being the highest

Cost, registration, enrolment
     Catalogue of training
     Create an account
     Tutor rights
     Payment options

Training reports
FAQ

Annex 2: List of CoEs (2019 – 2022)

Africa Region	Country	Priority Area
Digital Bridge Institute (DBI)	Nigeria	Cybersecurity and Innovation & Entrepreneurship
Ecole Supérieure Multinationale des Télécommunications (ESMT)	Senegal	Digital Broadcasting, Spectrum Management and Digital Economy
Ecole Supérieure Africaine des Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication (ESATIC)	Ivory Coast	Cybersecurity, Wireless & Fixed Broadband and Internet of Things
African Advanced Level Telecommunications Institute (AFRALTI)	Kenya	Spectrum Management and Digital Broadcasting
Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Postes, des Télécommunications et des TIC (SUP'PTIC)	Cameroon	Digital Economy, Innovation & Entrepreneurship and Wireless & Fixed Broadband
National Computer Board (NCB)	Mauritius	Cybersecurity

Americas Region	Country	Priority Area(s)

Asia-