

# UN Digital Transformation Group for Europe and Central Asia (#DTG4ECA)

## UN Digital Transformation Group for Europe and Central Asia Draft Terms of Reference

### I. Background

*Please briefly describe the issue/s that the IBC is tackling, the status of the respective matter in the region, the reason for establishing the IBC and a short history of the coalition to date (2-3 paragraphs).*

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) form the backbone of today's digital economy and have enormous potential to fast forward progress on the SDGs and improve people's lives in fundamental ways. Emerging technologies like 5G, Big Data, Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, together with high-speed broadband connectivity, create new avenues for addressing global challenges in the fields of education, employment, health, agriculture, inequalities, climate change, governance and many more. In the wake of COVID-19, the role of ICTs and services, and the digital infrastructure that countries ride and scale on have become central to maintaining economic and societal activity, thus lessening the pandemic's impact. In these regards, the United Nations Digital Transformation Group for Europe and Central Asia (UNDTG4ECA) was formed to enhance multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral and inter-agency coordination in the digital domain at national and regional levels, capture the enabling potential of ICTs in achieving the SDGs, ensure that no one is left behind from the digital world, and build back better from COVID-19 using the full potential of ICTs.

Europe and Central Asia are at the heart of this historical transformation, and ICT infrastructure has become the predominant enabler, along with fit-for-purpose policy, of the regions' future competitiveness and global leadership. The UNDTG4ECA recognizes how cooperation and collaboration are crucial accelerators of ICTs development, ensuring enhanced accessibility, scalability and affordability of digital tools and platforms. The group's mandate further underlines the potential of digital transformation to enhance global supply chain integration, the use of critical health information, the opportunity for citizens to improve their options in the workforce, the ability for students to gain skillsets previously unavailable to them, and many more positive externalities that are changing the course of history. Guided by these overarching priorities, the group offers a platform to share competencies of diverse UN System agencies in the digital domain to strengthen coordination through the implementation of actions of cross-cutting character, building upon the enabling power of ICTs and advancing digital transformation. This strengthened regional cooperation takes into account the great potential of synergies at the regional level which are created through joint actions and multi-agency initiatives and programs.

### Main activities carried out by the UNDTG4ECA since its formation:

- Flagship multiagency partnerships and projects to support digital transformation in Europe and Central Asia involving UN agencies members of the group:
  - **ITU-UN Women** report "[Digitally empowered Generation Equality: Women, girls and ICT in the context of COVID-19 in selected Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries](#)"
  - **ITU-FAO** activities to foster [Digital Excellence in Agriculture in Europe and Central Asia](#)
  - **ITU-UNICEF** collaboration on the report "Connectivity in Education: Status and recent developments in 9 non-EU countries" and related activities.
  - [UNDTG4ECA ICTs Solutions Stocktaking Report](#), a collection of UN agencies' initiatives and projects to foster digital transformation in Europe and Central Asia.



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- Support to Resident Coordinators (RCs) and UN Country Teams (UNCTs) to foster digital transformation.:
  - Development of a questionnaire for RCs and UNCTs, forming the value proposition of the UNDTG4ECA.

To provide appropriate support to the UN Country Teams (UNCTs) in reaching the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) objectives, the UNDTG4ECA developed a questionnaire seeking inputs from the UNCTs members and RCO representatives in Europe and Central Asia. This questionnaire will allow to understand which type of tailored support (e.g., regional trend analysis, national, sub-regional and regional assessments, policy guidance and recommendations, advisory services, advocacy messages, webinar, trainings etc.) and focus areas where the UNDTG4ECA can offer their assistance (e.g., Connectivity, digital skills, digital inclusion, cybersecurity, digital transformation of business and productive sector, digital services etc.). This survey will enable to build a detailed mapping of country priorities vs. the work of the DTG4ECA and identify country-specific support to be provided.

- Information sharing on activities of the UN System
  - Launch of the [public website](#) on the work of the UNDTG4ECA on the UNECE Issue Based Coalition and Groups dedicated webpage.
  - Launch of the [UNDTG4ECA ICTs Solutions Stocktaking Report](#) presenting UN system efforts in advancing digital transformation in Europe and Central Asia at the regional and national levels.
  - Creation of a repository to collect UN studies and reports related to digital transformation in Europe and Central Asia into a single platform.
  - Organization of outreach events:
    - 15 March 2021, within the framework of the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development (RFSD) 2021: [Cross-cutting Session on Digitalization: Digital Transformation in the Wake of COVID-19](#)
    - 26 May 2021, within the framework of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2021: [Driving the WSIS Action Lines to foster digital transformation in Europe and Central Asia](#)
    - End of October 2021: Western Balkans Digital Summit 2021. The UNDTG4ECA coordinated with 10 UN agencies a proposal of over 10 sessions and side events to be carried out during the summit, and covering the following topics: Digital agriculture, innovation, smart manufacturing, disaster risk reduction, ICT accessibility, meaningful and inclusive connectivity, gendered digital divide, digital health, the role of data in the recovery of tourism.
- Support to the work of the Issue Based Coalitions (IBCs) and Knowledge Hub
  - Creation of a coordination channel between the UNDTG4ECA and the IBCs through the identification of liaison officers. Regular updates on the work of IBCs with particular focus on digital component are provided during the UNDTG4ECA's meetings.



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## II. Main goal and Objectives

Please describe the main goal and objectives of the IBC

The main goal of the **UNDTG4ECA** is to constitute a regional platform for UN agencies to exchange common and good practices to advance digitalization and digitization processes at the regional and national levels through the adoption of a multi-agency, multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral approach to achieve the SDGs through ICTs by 2030.

Specifically, the core objectives of the **UNDTG4ECA** are the following:

- (i) facilitate cooperation and collaboration between different UN agencies in the field of digital transformation, realizing synergies among related areas of work and contributing to the relevant platforms, processes, conferences, etc.;
- (ii) promote coordinated UN support to Member States in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda through ICTs, while providing support to the UN Country Teams (UNCTs) on digital transformation issues;
- (iii) strengthen information sharing on the activities of the UN System in Europe and Central Asia in the field of digital transformation and their impact on advancing achievement of the SDGs;
- (iv) provide support to the work of the Issue Based Coalitions and Knowledge Hub of the UN System for Europe and Central Asia, with focus on digital transformation, while keeping track and sharing updates on the information of new technologies and trends which may be utilized as SDG enablers and accelerators.

All types of support services provided by the UNDTG4ECA to UNCTs are request based. The UNDTG4ECA does not engage in operational matters, or in mobilizing resources for programmes or projects, or in implementing them.

## III. Typology of activities / Menu of Services

Please outline the IBC thematic coverage (e.g. Environment and CC IBC: water management; waste management, etc.), geographic coverage (where relevant) and the main support modalities. Outline linkages with the Peer Support Group and other regional mechanisms as needed.

IBC thematic coverage	Geographic Coverage	Main support modalities	Linkages and coordination with regional/country-level mechanism
<i>E.g. Environment and CC IBC: water management; waste management, etc.)</i>	<i>List countries/sub-regions for support</i>	<i>(E.g. regional advocacy, regional policy guidance, technical support to CCAs and UNSDCF, trainings/webinars, etc).</i>	<i>E.g. Mention consultation and coordination with RC/UNCT/results groups, PSG and other regional mechanisms (to show demand for support)</i>
Digital Transformation, which includes but is not restricted to: Meaningful connectivity; digitally skilled population and highly skilled professionals; digital inclusion (e.g., overcoming the gendered digital divide, youth inclusion and creation of new	The UNDTG4ECA focuses on countries and sub-regions from Europe and Central Asia (please see full list of countries below). Special attention is dedicated to countries and territories with UN	- Coordination on flagship multiagency partnerships and projects to support digital transformation in Europe and Central Asia involving UN agencies members of the group. This	The UNDTG4ECA started a consultative process to identify digital related areas that are of prior importance to UNCTs and RCOs members to achieve the objectives of the UNSDCF. This consultation will form the foundation for customization of the support that could be offered by the UNDTG4EDCA or its members. The identified type of





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<p>opportunities in the digital space, digital inclusion of elderly people); ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities and minorities; data protection, data privacy, cybersecurity and mitigation of cyber harassment (including Child Online Protection and prevention of online violence against women); digital health and social protection; digital agriculture; digital governance; digital trade; digital transformation of business and productive sector; digitization and ICT upgrade for weather, water and climate monitoring; observation, information management and services; e-waste management; disaster-resilient ICT infrastructure for saving lives and reduce damages; enabling policy, legal and institutional environment; digital innovation ecosystem development, sustainable smart cities, emerging digital technologies (including, AI, Blockchain, IoT etc.)</p>	<p>field presence, which are identified as priority to support digital transformation. Countries and territories with UN field presence are: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Kosovo*.</p> <p>To note that a number of UN entities (such as UNDP) have a mandate to provide support to programme countries exclusively.</p> <p>List of countries in the Europe and Central Asia: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Rep., Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Republic of North Macedonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway,</p>	<p>includes organization of regional policy guidance, trainings and webinars.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional advocacy: information sharing on activities of the UN System, participation in/ organization of UN system events, elaboration and dissemination of joint report taking the stock of ICT related initiatives at the regional and national level, creation of a repository to collect relevant knowledge products.</li> <li>- Support to the work of the Issue Based Coalitions (IBCs) and Knowledge Hub</li> </ul> <p>The group is currently going through the consultative process with the RCs and UNCTs and customization of its support. Please see next column.</p>	<p>supports will be carried out upon availability of resources. This support may include development of national, sub-regional and regional analysis, with the objective to provide a knowledge base to the UN Country Teams, leading to enhanced assistance at the national level. The group may offer further types of services and products, for example: bi-monthly virtual meetings updating the RCs/UNCTs of progress and initiatives recorded by the UNDTG4ECA at the regional, sub-regional and national level; quarterly newsletter to share information and resources on ICT, advocacy messages to address key digital trends, assistance in identifying appropriate technical expert(s) at the national or sub-regional level).</p> <p>Additionally, the UNDTG4ECA held a series of consultations with IBCs focal points leading to the setting of a communication channel between IBCs and the UNDTG4ECA.</p>
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	<p>Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uzbekistan, Vatican</p> <p>*References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)</p>		
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Moreover, define clear criteria for:

- *IBC performance assessment*
  - (i) Number of new UN agencies collaborative efforts on digital-related topics.
  - (ii) Number of knowledge products elaborated.
  - (iii) Number of supports services provided to UNCTs.
  - (iv) Number of events organized under the umbrella of the UNDTG4ECA.
  
- *a knowledge product to be considered / branded as an IBC result (as opposed to single-agency product). The minimal guidance could include, inter alia, a minimum number of AFPs that need to contribute to or clear an IBC product; working procedures or division of labour under well-defined task teams to lead on specific topics/ knowledge products, etc.*
  - (i) At least 2 UN Agencies involved in the activity and committing resources to finalize the deliverables;
  - (ii) Development of each product should be co-led by minimum 2 UN Agencies (not more than 4) and should demonstrate clear collaborative efforts;
  - (iii) Product should address at least one of the specific issues related to the digital transformation;
  - (iv) The product should focus on the country or group of countries of the ECA region;
  - (v) The activity should not duplicate any ongoing efforts in the ECA region.

## IV. Membership

Please include the current Chair/Co-Chairs and members of the IBC, as well as potential criteria you may want to observe when accepting new members.

- **Coordination**
  - **Co-Chairs:** ITU and UNECE
  - **Members:** FAO, ILO, IOM, ITU, UNDP, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN Habitat, UNICEF, UNIDO, UN Women, UNWTO, WHO, WIPO, WMO



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- **Secretariat:** ITU
- **Membership**
  - The UNDTG4ECA is open to all UN funds, agencies and programs. Once entering the group, each member agency designates a focal point and an alternate, ideally a specialist working on digital transformation. Any cost of participation is met by each participating member agency. The focal points represent their agencies and are responsible for providing an update on their activities in the field of digital transformation. The focal point is also responsible for keeping their colleagues in the respective agencies informed on the activities of the digital transformation.

## V. Management Arrangements

*Please include: chairing arrangements (including rotation frequency), secretariat arrangements, accountability and reporting lines, annual planning arrangements, reporting frequency, frequency and modality of holding internal meetings, etc. You may also want to include modalities to ensure that the IBC work is driven by all members, who equally contribute to the design and implementation of the work plan activities.*

The group is co-chaired by ITU and UNECE on an equal footing. No rotation is expected.

The secretariat is led by ITU. The secretariat is responsible, among others, of organizing the quarterly meetings, drafting and finalizing minutes of the meetings as well as finalizing joint annual work plan and following up on the status of activities in annual joint work plan.

To ensure accountability of the members of the group, a list of priorities identifying areas of common interest to advance digital transformation in Europe and Central Asia has been elaborated. This list includes (i) UN Agencies which are able to commit financial, capacity and human resources on specific areas of work; (ii) UN agencies which cannot commit the aforementioned resources but are willing to provide light support to the work of the group on specific areas of work.

Reporting by members of the group on the progress made in advancing digital transformation and/or supporting the mandate of the group is done during the group's regular conference call (at least one per quarter). Additionally, the leading agencies per key activity is responsible for coordinating with other agencies to ensure effective implementation and monitoring. The co-chairs of UNDTG4ECA will report on the overall status of joint annual work plan as well as key achievements and challenges at the meetings of the RCP and to the DCO mechanism as relevant and necessary.

- **Work Modalities**
  - For the overall coordination of the work, a MS Teams Repository has been created with all members of the group;
  - Dedicated [public website](#) serving as the main repository of information;
  - Regular video conferences, which includes coordination of activities and reporting by members of the group on the progress made in advancing digital transformation and/or supporting the mandate of the group;
  - Ad-hoc calls if needed to prepare for supporting UN Missions, reports and interventions at the national and regional level;
  - Yearly review of work, results, progress towards achievement of the group's terms of reference, monitoring of engagement and attendance of agencies, country feedback and UN Regional Coordination Platform;
  - Overall coordination of all regional activities which include ICT component.





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## VI. Sunset Clause

Please outlining the conditions for the discontinuation of the IBC. Examples of such considerations could include, inter alia, insufficient engagement of a critical mass of IBC members, situations in which the work of the IBC is taken over by other mechanisms or if the thematic area is not considered a priority for the regional UN system for the coming year.

Members of the group acknowledge that should one of the following situations were to occur, the UNDTG4ECA will be dissolved:

- Insufficient engagement and commitment of resources by UNDTG4ECA's members leading to poor results;
- Situation in which the thematic area is not considered a priority for the regional UN system in the coming year.

