



MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND IMPLEMENTATION FOLLOW-UP

2021 Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report

Management Response, Action Plan, Results, and Means of Verification

Date of submission of final evaluation report: November 2021
Date of finalization of management response: November 2021

Recommendation No. 1 Optimize the operationalization of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025:

- a) The strategic planning function to prepare an implementation framework bridging between medium- to long-term high-level objectives in the Strategic Plan 2022-2025, and the subsequent further-operationalized objectives in annual operational plans.
- b) Monitor and report progress in the implementation of all Strategic Plan 2022-2025 objectives accordingly.

Management Response and Justification:

The recommendation is:

Accepted:

Partially accepted:

Rejected:

In the Strategic Plan period 2018-21, the annual Operational Plans and CCITF reports were fully aligned with the ITC Results framework and Strategic Plan chapters on ‘Strategic Focus’, ‘Core products and services’ with the specified, planned ‘key initiatives’, and on ‘Managing for results’. The Strategic Plan evaluation identified that this approach has resulted in insufficient monitoring of a small number of commitments that appeared as part of the narrative in other chapters.
ITC therefore accepts the finding that an Implementation Plan is a useful instrument to optimize the implementation of the Strategic Plan, by explicitly listing all key commitments throughout the 2022-25 document, and planning and reporting against them.

Action Plan and Responsibilities:

Actions:	Expected Result and means of verification	Responsible office or partner	Contributing* Section(s) or partner(s)	Implementation deadline	Remarks
(a) The strategic planning function to prepare an implementation framework bridging between medium- to long-term high-level objectives in the Strategic Plan 2022-2025, and the subsequent further-	<i>Expected result:</i> An implementation framework, outlining the Strategic Plan commitments, intended actions and responsibilities, is approved by the senior management committee, and is available as an internal document. It will	SPPG	SMC	02/2022 for the finalized implementation plan and OP 2022	

operationalized objectives in annual operational plans.	<p>serve as the basis for the annual operational plans.</p> <p><i>Means of verification:</i> Implementation Plan document; Operational Plans</p>				
(b) Monitor and report progress in the implementation of all Strategic Plan 2022-2025 objectives accordingly	<p><i>Expected result:</i> The Implementation Plan, supported by ITC-s results framework, form the basis of ITC-s annual Operational Plans. Reporting on the annual operational plan, in form of bi-annual CCITF reports, will therefore reflect both the ITC results framework and the implementation plan. ITC will also produce a final review of the operationalization of the Strategic Plan to report on cumulative achievements against Strategic plan commitments (summaries of data reported in the CCITF reports /Annual reports)</p> <p><i>Means of verification:</i> Operational plans and CCITF reports; Documentation of annual SMC discussion on the status of the implementation plan. Final Strategic Plan review report</p>	SPPG	All ITC sections	Until 12/2025 (end of SP period)	

Recommendation No. 2: Enhance the capabilities of internal resources to better align them with ITC’s growth agenda requirements:

- a) **Develop and implement sub-strategies that are conducive to achieving the objectives of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025. Elaborate for each of them an action plan with objectives and milestones and follow up on progress.**

b) During the 2022-2025 period, develop a clear, organization-wide understanding of internal value chains and of how best to combine individual products and services, in which order and context, to achieve specific goals.

c) Promote the values of coordination and collaboration into the Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

Management Response and Justification:

The recommendation is:

Accepted:

Partially accepted:

Rejected:

ITC accepts the recommendation. The development of additional sub-strategies - for selected areas - and further efforts to streamline internal value chains will benefit the implementation of the Strategic Plan, resource allocation, and efficient and effective adaptations to a changing environment. The development of sub-strategies for key (novel) areas – has already been a practice in ITC (e.g., development of programme theories of change for all ITC programmes in 2016; new programme strategies such as Green to Compete or OneTrade Africa; operational strategies such as on private sector resource mobilization partnerships).

In some areas ITC will not engage in the development of own sub-strategies but will align with the UN System- wide strategies. An example is the UN-wide South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development 2020-2024 strategy, to which ITC contributed.

Action Plan and Responsibilities:

Actions:	Expected Result and means of verification	Responsible office or partner	Contributing* Section(s) or partner(s)	Implementation deadline	Remarks
(a) Develop and implement sub-strategies that are conducive to achieving the objectives of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025. Elaborate for each of them an action plan with objectives and milestones and follow up on progress.	<p><i>Expected results:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the Strategic Plan commitments and UN System-wide strategies, Senior Management decides on the sub-strategies that should be developed. The sub-strategies are identified in the Implementation Plan, with responsibilities for their development 	SMC will assign responsibilities for the development and implementation of the sub-strategies	As assigned by SMC	06/2022 for the development of sub-strategies	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-strategies are elaborated and key strategy milestones are integrated in the SP implementation plan • Monitoring is carried out accordingly <p><i>Means of verification:</i> Implementation Plan document; sub-strategy documents and related reporting.</p>				
(b) During the 2022-2025 period, develop a clear, organization-wide understanding of internal value chains and of how best to combine individual products and services, in which order and context, to achieve specific goals.	<p><i>Expected results:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a comprehensive 'blueprint' theory of change for each core area and each impact area and the corresponding internal value chains, with the understanding that the blueprint will be customized to each individual project context in form of project specific results chains. • Directory of products and services <p><i>Means of verification:</i> Availability and quality of the documents</p>	SPPG	DCP, DEI and DMD	12/2022	
(c) Promote the values of coordination and collaboration into the Strategic Plan 2022-2025.	<p><i>Expected results:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAG discussion on drivers and impediments to coordination and collaboration, setting of concrete objectives and how to implement them. • SMC and Directors' emphasis on productive coordination and collaboration, and setting incentive structures accordingly (project approvals, 	SMC	All ITC sections	06/2022 and throughout the SP period	

	<p>KPIs in performance appraisals, conflict reviews).</p> <p><i>Means of verification:</i> Strategic Plan document states that coordination and collaboration are guiding principles for all ITC personnel. Evidence of management efforts to strengthen coordination and collaboration</p>				
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Recommendation No. 3: Enhance continuous learning and accountability for Strategic Plan 2022-2025 implementation

- a) Within the annual CCITF report, include an analysis of the lessons learned from the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025, ideally through a steering mechanism, incorporating collective feedback from across the organization.
- b) Undertake an independent mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

Management Response and Justification:

The recommendation is:

Accepted:

Partially accepted:

Rejected:

ITC supports the recommendation to formalize a structure for learning and knowledge management purposes, on the Strategic Plan implementation.
ITC suggests that the independent coordination of the steering mechanism and the collection of lessons learned from the implementation become an integral part of the evaluation activities, in view of IEU’s knowledge and learning function, lessons learnt are reported in the Evaluation section of the CCITF report.

Action Plan and Responsibilities:

Actions:	Expected Result and means of verification	Responsible office or partner	Contributing* Section(s) or partner(s)	Implementation deadline	Remarks
<p>a) Within the annual CCITF report, include an analysis of the lessons learned from the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025, ideally through a steering mechanism, incorporating collective feedback from across the organization.</p>	<p><i>Expected result:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering mechanism established, in form of a group at the mid-management level (MAG or selected Division representatives at Chief level). Annual review of the implementation plan and implementation by the Steering group, with a documentation of the lessons learnt that will be shared with Senior Management and included in the annual CCITF reports. <p><i>Means of verification:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section on lessons learnt in the annual CCITF report 	SMC / IEU	All sections	09/2022 and 12/2025	
<p>b) Undertake an independent mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025.</p>	<p><i>Expected result:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid-term review of the ITC Strategic Plan priorities and implementation as per Implementation Plan, by IEU with a panel of experts Adjustments in the Implementation Plan, by SMC, if required. <p><i>Means of verification:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEU report and Implementation Plan 	IEU	Internal and external expert panel	3/2024	

Recommendation No. 4: Underscore the Strategic Plan 2022-2025 results-focus

- a) The Strategic Plan 2022-2025 to determine four to five corporate key high-level or transversal objectives to which projects will contribute, along with concrete and measurable client-focused objectives, partly but not exclusively framed within the SDGs.
- b) Place the responsibility to develop coordinated solutions for the achievements of key high-level or transversal objectives on parts of the organization and request the interested ITC sections to track achievements accordingly.

Management Response and Justification:

The recommendation is:		
Accepted:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>ITC has had an SDG-oriented results focus since the adoption of the SDGs in 2015, and has reported against SDG goals and targets since 2018. The Strategic Plan 2018-21 clearly formulated ‘Good Trade’ as ITC’s vision, defined as trade that contributes to the SDGs.</p> <p>In the Strategic Plan 2022-25, ITC has re-emphasized its focus on inclusiveness, sustainability and prosperity – or as otherwise often referred to ‘People, Planet and Prosperity’ – supported by Peace and Partnerships. These are the interrelated goals of the 2030 Global Agenda. ITC’s impact areas and priority countries have been selected in view of these transversal objectives. Mainstreaming of tools and approaches for a maximum contribution to inclusiveness, environmental sustainability and decent work will be re-enforced.</p>
Partially accepted:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Rejected:	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Action Plan and Responsibilities:

Actions:	Expected Result and means of verification	Responsible office or partner	Contributing* Section(s) or partner(s)	Implementation deadline	Remarks
a) The Strategic Plan 2022-2025 to determine four to five corporate key high-level or transversal objectives to which projects will contribute, along with concrete and	<i>Expected result:</i> Strategic Plan identifies key high-level objectives and defines the results framework for them.	SPPG / SMC		12 / 2021	

measurable client-focused objectives, partly but not exclusively framed within the SDGs.	<i>Means of verification:</i> Strategic Plan document				
b) Place the responsibility to develop coordinated solutions for the achievements of key high-level or transversal objectives on parts of the organization and request the interested ITC sections to track achievements accordingly.	<p><i>Expected result:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the overall ITC results framework, validation or new development of theories of change for each impact area, with corresponding generic internal value chains collaboratively developed by contributing sections • Sub-strategies for selected areas (see recommendation 2) • Reporting on the respective results indicators by the contributing sections <p><i>Means of verification:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related documents 	SPPG / impact area leads	all sections	12 / 2022 and 12 / 2025	

Recommendation No. 5: Ensure that the implementation of Strategic Plan 2022-2025 remains client-focused and adjusts to stakeholders’ continuously evolving and increasing needs over the next four years

- a) Build on the Strategic Plan 2022-2025 objectives to engage in extensive and in-depth dialogue with ITC’s clients about their needs related to the high-level or transversal objectives, backed with preparatory need assessments. This will pave the way to co-design and co-implement concrete initiatives to fulfil these objectives.
- b) Develop transferable general models (or ‘blueprints’) for "integrated solutions" oriented towards the needs of specific client groups or contexts, which can then still be adapted as the situation requires.
- c) Develop sub-strategies for different types of partnerships, oriented towards the needs of specific client groups or contexts, including at the country level, and ensure due measurement of their results.

Management Response and Justification:					
The recommendation is:					
Accepted:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ITC already has a set of transferrable model / blueprint solutions that it implements across its projects. Recently, ITC published a catalogue of innovations in 'ITC's Innovation Directory'.			
Partially accepted:	<input type="checkbox"/>	At the country level, engagement with specific client groups/contexts will be guided by the joint UN principles (within the One UN – in line with the Resident Coordinator-led activities), often through the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, where ITC will seek to actively participate.			
Rejected:	<input type="checkbox"/>	ITC will make use of the Common Country Analysis mechanism, for capacity assessments, stakeholder engagements and programming in addition to its own needs assessment methodologies which will be further refined during the Plan period.			
Action Plan and Responsibilities:					
Actions:	Expected Result and means of verification	Responsible office or partner	Contributing* Section(s) or partner(s)	Implementation deadline	Remarks
a) Build on the Strategic Plan 2022-2025 objectives to engage in extensive and in-depth dialogue with ITC's clients about their needs related to the high-level or transversal objectives, backed with preparatory need assessments. This will pave the way to co-design and co-implement concrete initiatives to fulfil these objectives.	<p><i>Expected result:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients' needs related to the impact areas are discussed at the regular high-level events organized by the ITC (JAG, WEDF, She Trades Global, WTPO Conference and Advisory board, Good Trade Summit, T4SD Forum, MSME day, etc.), with the purpose of engaging clients in prioritization, co-creation and co-implementation of concrete initiatives. These discussions are nurtured with preparatory value-added analysis related to clients' evolving needs. 	OED, DEI, DMD DCP, DMD, DEI	All sections	12/2025	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ITC participates in UN-led Country Common Country Assessment (CCA) and Coordination Frameworks (CF) in countries where ITC has a comparative advantage. <p><i>Means of verification:</i> Reports on high-level events discussions presented and discussed at the MAG annual review meeting. ITC actively contributes to a minimum of 5 CCA / CF p.a.</p>				
b) Develop transferable general models (or 'blueprints') for "integrated solutions" oriented towards the needs of specific client groups or contexts, which can then still be adapted as the situation requires.	<p><i>Expected result:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In view of selected specific client groups or contexts, theories of change for interventions that are linked to ITC's core services and impact initiatives. (see above) <p><i>Means of verification:</i> Documentation</p>	SPPG	All sections	12/2022	
c) Develop sub-strategies for different types of partnerships, oriented towards the needs of specific client groups or contexts, including at the country level, and ensure due measurement of their results	<p><i>Expected result:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership sub-strategy, with sections for selected types of partners, including development of monitoring framework and reporting. <p><i>Means of verification:</i> Documentation</p>	OED	All sections	12/2022	

Recommendation No. 6: Ensure full understanding and adherence of staff to Strategic Plan 2022-2025

- a) Maximize staff participation in Strategic Plan 2022-2025 design and implementation. Extensively diffuse and explain the Strategic Plan 2022-2025.
- b) Invest in clarifying with staff the corporate value agenda to meet Strategic Plan 2022-2025 objectives through targeted dialogue, orientation, and training initiatives.

Management Response and Justification:

The recommendation is:

Accepted:

Partially accepted:

Rejected:

ITC has involved staff extensively in the preparation of the new Strategic Plan 2022-25, initially through working groups and then through platforms to share and invite comments on the Consultative Document, discuss the text for sub-sections of the draft Strategic Plan with cross-divisional teams and invite comments on the draft Strategic Plan.

Through the development of theories of change for ITC's impact areas and the corresponding internal value chains, core services and their intersections, and through the implementation plan and sub-strategies, the joint understanding of the strategic plan will be further enhanced. All new project proposals will continue to be reviewed in light of the Strategic Plan objectives.

Action Plan and Responsibilities:

Actions:	Expected Result and means of verification	Responsible office or partner	Contributing* Section(s) or partner(s)	Implementation deadline	Remarks
a) Maximize staff participation in Strategic Plan 2022-2025 design and implementation. Extensively diffuse and explain the Strategic Plan 2022-2025.	<p><i>Expected results:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff involved and consulted during the design process of the Strategic Plan • Strategic Plan and the management response shared and discussed with staff through Townhall, division and section meetings. 	<p>SMC / SPPG</p> <p>OED / Directors / Chiefs</p>	<p>All sections</p>	<p>Until 12/2021</p> <p>03/2022</p>	

	<p><i>Means of verification</i> Strategic Plan design process Meeting records</p>				
<p>b) Invest in clarifying with staff the corporate value agenda to meet Strategic Plan 2022-2025 objectives through targeted dialogue, orientation, and training initiatives.</p>	<p><i>Expected results:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linked to the point above - staff understand the strategic priorities and where and how their work contributes to them. • The Strategic Plan is included in the induction programme for new staff. <p><i>Means of verification</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting records (see above) • Induction programme for new staff 	<p>OED / Directors / Chiefs</p> <p>HR/SPPG</p>	<p>All sections</p>	<p>Until 12/2025</p>	