

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

Key features

Type of organisation: United Nations specialised agency
Charter/Constitution: Constitution of the International Telecommunication Union,
www.itu.int/en/history/Pages/ConstitutionAndConvention.aspx

Membership:

- Nature: Representatives from governments, ICT industry and academia
- Number: 193 member States and more than 700 private entities and 150 academic institutions

Year of establishment: 1865

Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

Country offices: 12 regional and area offices

Secretariat staff: 705 (2016)

Total budget: EUR 159 million (2018)

Type of activity: Policy dialogue, information exchange, development of legal instruments, standardisation

Sectors of activity: Telecommunication and information and communication technologies and related areas, in particular managing global radio spectrum and satellite orbits, developing the technical standards that ensure networks and technologies seamlessly interconnect, and striving to improve access to ICTs to underserved communities worldwide. ITU has also other related areas of action such as accessibility, broadband, cybersecurity, emergency telecommunications, internet, climate change

Webpage: www.itu.int

Members

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentine, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China (People's Republic of), Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, France, Gabonese Republic, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Korea, Kuwait, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Holy See, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

In addition to its 193 member states, ITU brings together more than 700 sector members and associates from industry, international and regional organisations, as well as more than 150 from academia.

Mandate

The ITU is the United Nations specialised agency for information and communication technologies. It allocates global radio spectrum and satellite orbits, develops the technical standards that ensure networks and technologies seamlessly interconnect, and strives to improve access to ICTs to underserved communities worldwide. ITU is committed to connecting the entire world's people – wherever they live and whatever their means. Through its work ITU protects and supports everyone's fundamental right to communicate.

IRC processes taking place within the International Telecommunication Union



Categories of legal and policy instruments

	Is it taking place within the IO?	Approximate number
Treaties for ratification by States (excluding the funding one)	√	2
Legally binding decisions	√	0
Recommendations (Resolutions approved by Governing Bodies of ITU)	√	600
Political declarations	√	
Model treaties or law		
Production of technical standards	√	4 000
Non-binding guidance/best practices document	√	

Interactions with other international organisations active in the field

Mechanisms of interaction	Approximate number of IOs involved	Examples
Develop joint instruments	√	
MoU or other agreements	√	
Participate in co-ordinating institution	√	
Joint meetings that provide forum for co-ordination	√	
Observe relevant actions of other bodies	√	
Exchange information	√	

ITU history

On 17 May 1865, the first International Telegraph Convention was signed in Paris by its 20 founding members, and the International Telegraph Union (the first incarnation of ITU) was established to supervise subsequent amendments to the agreement. In 1932 it was decided that a new name would be adopted to reflect the full range of ITU's responsibilities: International Telecommunication Union. On 15 November 1947, an agreement between ITU and the newly created United Nations recognised ITU as the specialised agency for telecommunications.

Source: Updated from OECD (2016), *International Regulatory Co-operation: The Role of International Organisations in Fostering Better Rules of Globalisation*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264244047-en>