

# United Nations Institute for Training and Research

## Strategic Framework 2014 - 2017

Revised, January 2016



## Contents

Introduction.....	3
The Strategic Thinking Process.....	3
Our Vision.....	5
Our Mission .....	5
Our Core Functions .....	6
High-level programmatic and functional objectives.....	7
High-level programmatic objectives (PO).....	8
PO 1. Strengthen Multilateralism .....	8
PO 2. Promote economic development and social inclusion .....	10
PO 3. Advance environmental sustainability and green development .....	12
PO 4. Promote sustainable peace .....	14
PO 5. Improve resilience and humanitarian assistance .....	16
PO 6. Supporting the Adoption and Adaptation by Member States of the 2030 Agenda .....	17
High-level functional objectives (FO).....	18
FO 1. Sound Executive Leadership .....	18
FO 2. Strengthen programming for results.....	18
FO 3. Optimize efficiency.....	18
FO 4. Increase and Diversify Financial Resources and Partnerships .....	19
FO 5. Enhance Communication.....	19
Assessing Risk .....	20
Measuring and Reporting Results .....	20
Photo credits.....	21

## Introduction

1. The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) was established with the purpose of enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations in achieving the major objectives of the Organization. Since its establishment by the General Assembly in 1963, some fifty years ago, UNITAR has grown to become not only a recognized and respected service provider in professional, executive-type training, but also in the broader realm of capacity development, with priority placed on developing countries.
2. Today, the scope of UNITAR programming is truly global with an outreach spanning the entire membership of the United Nations and with over 25,000 individuals benefitting from the delivery of some 400 training and related events yearly. Never before has the Institute's programming been as diverse as it is presently, with a wide range of learning and other types of events covering topics in the broad areas of peace, security and diplomacy; post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction; public finance, trade and decentralized cooperation; human mobility and migration; youth entrepreneurship; climate change, chemicals and waste management and environmental governance; and disaster risk reduction. The Institute has also greatly diversified the delivery of training, with e-Learning courses now accounting for one-third of all events and with over 5,000 learners from all corners of the world benefitting from the Institute's virtual learning environment in 2012. While training targeting Member States continues to be the primary area of focus, the Institute continues to design and facilitate high-level knowledge and experience-sharing events, such as the annual seminar held for the senior-most United Nations peacemakers.
3. Parallel to its training programming, the Institute has developed research capacity on technology applications and innovative learning approaches, methods and tools, as well as their application in a variety of learning settings. UNITAR has also developed a clear results-based orientation to its programming and operations, established quality assurance processes to validate quality and provide platforms for knowledge sharing and quality improvement, and strengthened capacities for monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
4. Many of these and other achievements which have undeniably helped position UNITAR better in the training and capacity development industry are the result of having pursued a set of strategic reforms and objectives since 2007. The Institute's Board of Trustees has been instrumental in providing guidance and advice, including, most recently, on the occasion of the review of the 2010-2012 Strategic Plan in November 2012.

## The Strategic Thinking Process

5. Building on the experience, results and lessons-learned from its previous strategic planning exercises, Management engaged in a strategic thinking process in the third quarter of 2013 to define the strategic direction that the Institute would pursue over the next four years and to which its results-based biennium programme budgets would be closely aligned
6. The process identified a number of internal and external factors which will undoubtedly present both challenges and opportunities in the years ahead. The external factors identified include, among others, high-level action plans and development goals, including the Secretary-General's Five-Year Action Agenda and efforts underway to define the Post-2015

sustainable development agenda; the changing political and economic landscape influencing donor funding, including the more visible and active role that middle income countries are playing in supporting development; new roles for development cooperation, including advisory roles that training service providers are being asked to perform; and a number of global trends marking the training and capacity development industries, including the transformative role that technology is playing, the rising costs for education and increased competition, and the move to more open-sourced and freely available information as witnessed by the surge in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

7. Management also identified a number of internal factors, including the need to further increase resource efficiencies by promoting synergies among UNITAR programmes and developing an effective approach towards addressing cross-cutting thematic areas such as sustainable development. Recognizing important inroads from 2010-2012, the need to further enhance programming for results, scale up interventions for greater impact and further strengthen the quality of UNITAR products and services through quality assurance and certification processes was also identified.
8. The outcome of the strategic thinking process resulted in revised vision and mission statements, and the identification of a set of core functions and high-level programmatic and functional objectives for the period from 2014 to 2017. Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the General Assembly in September 2015, the Institute has revised the present strategic framework with the inclusion of a sixth high-level programme objective on supporting the adoption and adaptation of the Agenda by Member States.



# Vision Mission Core Functions

## Our Vision

“A world in which knowledge-empowered people, institutions and organizations achieve results to overcome global challenges.”

9. Management redefined its vision to reflect a more outward-oriented statement. The vision for which the Institute aims reflects a drive for results and programming to develop the capacities of individuals, institutions and organizations with a view to overcoming global challenges.

## Our Mission

“To develop capacities to enhance global decision-making and to support country level action for shaping a better future.”

10. Management also redefined the Institute’s mission statement for achieving its vision. Broadly speaking, the Institute’s programming targets two particular sets of beneficiaries: the delegates and other global actors who are engaged in intergovernmental debates and decision-making processes to establish norms, policies and procedures; and the stakeholders at the regional, national and sub-national levels who work to translate agreements into concrete action, with developing countries’ nationals as our priority.

## Our Core Functions

### The Institute:

- designs and delivers innovative training to address needs of individuals, organizations and institutions;
- facilitates knowledge- and experience-sharing through networked and innovative processes;
- conducts research on and pilots innovative learning strategies, approaches and methodologies; and
- advises and supports governments, UN and other partners with technology-based knowledge-related services.

11. In carrying out its mission, the Institute naturally places much emphasis on delivering learning-related products and services, on transferring knowledge, imparting skills and raising awareness with an aim to bring about changes in behavior, to enhance on-the-job performance and to develop other capacities of its beneficiaries, be they individual or organizational, with a view to achieving or contributing to the achievement of higher order, longer-term objectives. Parallel to learning, the Institute also engages in training-related and other advisory support services to governments at achieving broader social and economic development outcomes, such as developing institutional capacities e.g. strengthening public participation in decision-making and improving relief coordination in the wake of humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters. Priority in all areas is placed on supporting developing countries.

## High-level programmatic and functional objectives

12. The principal output of the strategic thinking process was the formulation of a set of high-level programmatic and functional objectives. The objectives and their respective sub-objectives will be operationalized through the 2014-2015 and 2016-2017 results-based programme budgets.
13. In accordance with its mandate, the Institute will work towards achieving its high-level programmatic results by placing emphasis on strengthening the capacities of beneficiaries from developing countries and in particular the least-developed countries. Some 70 per cent of the Institute's beneficiaries come from African, Asian and Latin American and Caribbean countries, and the Institute will continue to monitor the geographic coverage of its beneficiaries and assign importance to beneficiaries from least-developed countries, where possible, with a view to achieving maximum results. In accordance with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, UNITAR will also place emphasis on reaching the furthest first, including beneficiaries located in the small island states (SIDS) and the landlocked least developing countries (LLDCs).
14. The Institute will also emphasize gender as an important crosscutting thematic area in its programming. In 2012, and as highlighted in the Report of the Secretary-General on UNITAR to the Economic and Social Council (E/2013/63), the Institute made noteworthy progress in balancing the gender ratio of its beneficiaries with the overall female-to-male ratio now standing at 51:49, as compared to the 2011 ratio of 41:59.
15. Finally, and as called for by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 2011/11 of 22 July 2011, UNITAR will also strive to maximize its impact by strengthening institutional capacities e.g. by enhancing the capabilities of learning centres in developing countries with innovative methodologies through training of trainer type initiatives



# Strengthen Multilateralism

## PO 1. Strengthen Multilateralism

### 1.1. Empower delegates for effective participation in intergovernmental debates and decision-making

In an increasingly globalized world, where the importance of multilateral dialogue and cooperation is ever growing, the demand of Member States for capacity development in the field of multilateral diplomacy is constantly rising. As governments are facing the challenge of covering a growing number of increasingly complex and interconnected issues on policymaking agendas with a decreasing budget, it is vital that their diplomats perform effectively and efficiently. To support Member States in the achievement of this goal, UNITAR will raise awareness and transfer knowledge on the practices, policies and procedures of the multilateral working environment and the United Nations intergovernmental machinery as well as on emerging diplomatic issues including, as a special focus, negotiations related to climate change, trade and intellectual property issues. The Institute's approach to strengthening multilateralism will involve important contributions from the Multilateral Diplomacy, Climate Change and Public Finance and Trade programmes, as well as from the New York Office.

## 1.2. Develop research capacity to broaden participation of citizens in international work and debates on global issues

New online and cloud technologies have the potential to link in innovative ways global citizens and the UN system. As part of its efforts to innovate through the application of new technologies, UNITAR is conducting activities to estimate and partially test this potential. Part of the work will involve two initiatives of the UNITAR Operational Satellite Programme (UNOSAT): participation in EU-funded research on online collaborative thinking processes involving citizens and cyberscience; and development a cooperation network with CERN and the University of Geneva citizen open-science centre in Geneva to strengthen research and discussion on this topic.



## Promote Economic Development and Social Inclusion

### PO 2. Promote economic development and social inclusion

#### 2.1. Strengthen capacities for trade, finance, investment and intellectual property

To achieve sustainable growth and development and to attain internationally agreed objectives such as the UN Millennium Development Goals, developing countries including LDCs need to fully grasp the social, economic, political and environmental implications of current and future challenges. However, many countries are poorly equipped to design, implement and monitor sound development strategies. UNITAR works with developing countries including LDCs to strengthen their capacities for trade, finance, investment and intellectual property to help them achieve their development priorities and translate multilateral norms and decisions into practice.

#### 2.2. Strengthen capacities to address human mobility in the context of development objectives

International migration represents a field of growing interest for policy makers given its increase in scope, its impact on societies in origin and destination points, the growing complexity of migration patterns, and human mobility's links to development and other sectors including public health, environment and national security.

The Institute's niche areas of work in this field are to: provide greater coordination of capacity development activities and greater attention to effective learning for migration and development practitioners within and across countries in part through UNITAR's role in the Global Migration Group (GMG) Task Force on Capacity Development; develop training packages and provide technical

support in the actualization of recommendations emanating from the annual states-led Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD); and dedicate capacity development programming to strengthening the capacities of local and regional authorities to meet the challenges and address the benefits afforded by international migration.

### 2.3. Strengthen capacities for development and good governance

Among the most pressing dynamics confronting governing institutions today is the increasing complexity of governance at all levels, partly due the growing and interconnected number of actors, institutions and territories, as well as a host of challenges associated with decentralization processes. This places much pressure on the abilities of governments to handle effective governance and to engage in transformative change with a view to ensuring sustainable development and poverty eradication.

In order to achieve development results, local, national and regional authorities need the capacity to take the lead in making the right decisions on the right policies and programmes for the benefit of their constituencies. In this context, developing capacity means much more than transferring knowledge; it requires efforts that respect unique conditions and contexts, and harnessing innovative and low-cost uses of information and communication technologies with potential for wide development impact.

UNITAR contributes to strengthening the capacity of a wide-range of key actors involved in shaping and implementing actions, strategies and policies directed towards the enhancement of governance with direct and measurable impact on sustainable development.

### 2.4. Strengthen capacities to increase employability, to optimize the potential of creative economies, and to protect cultural land natural heritage

Promoting youth employment is one of the priorities in the Secretary-General's Five Year Action Plan. Promoting employability requires national establishments to train youth in skills required by employers in the 21st Century. Moreover the explosion in the use of IT and social media has created important employment opportunities in developing content used by IT users worldwide. In order to respond to this imperative the Institute will work with national partners to raise awareness of this opportunity and build capacity for its application.



## Advance Environmental Sustainability and Green Development

### PO 3. Advance environmental sustainability and green development

#### 3.1. Strengthen capacities to foster a green, low-carbon and climate resilient transition

As countries continue to build human and institutional capacities to overcome critical environmental challenges and to promote low carbon growth, UNITAR offers unique solutions based on its experience in: assessing learning needs, designing tailored learning approaches, and using the latest in instructional design techniques. In order to advance the objective of 'advancing environmental sustainability' UNITAR will work with UN partners, other organizations and countries to develop systematic and results oriented learning strategies and plans, as a pathway towards achieving green, low carbon and climate resilient development goals. To achieve this UNITAR programmes and projects will focus on strengthening skills in: analysis of vulnerabilities and risks, identification and prioritization of response measures, and the design and implementation of strategies to promote green growth as well as greater resilience to climate change.

#### 3.2. Strengthen capacities to manage dangerous chemicals and wastes in a sound and sustainable manner

Addressing challenges to the sound management of chemicals and wastes is imperative in order to advance environmental sustainability and green development. Around the world, there are numerous substances and practices using chemicals that present hazards to human health and the environment; at the same time, when used properly, chemicals are a central part of our daily lives and contribute to increasing standards of living. Faced with such challenges, a growing number of international agreements, instruments and strategies require countries and stakeholders to work

together on common solutions, such as embracing multi-stakeholder and multi-sector approaches; engaging in country-driven processes; and committing to an integrated approach by addressing chemicals issues across all stages of the life cycle, including waste.

Through its Chemicals and Waste Management Programme, the Institute addresses capacity needs and challenges in partnership with a broad range of countries, UN, and other entities, with a view to contributing to the achievement of the 2020 goal of sound management of chemicals as adopted at the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002.

### 3.3. Strengthen governance capacities and skills for public participation and open, transparent, accountable and rights-based decision making

Access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters are increasingly considered a key for sustainable development and advancing global environmental objectives. Consistent with this Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, multilateral environmental agreements, such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 2011 UNEP Bali Guidelines, promote effective public participation in decision-making. Responding to these developments, the thematic area addresses the growing interest in developing countries to develop individual and institutional capacities for effective participatory, transparent and accountable environmental decision-making. Building on collaboration with UNEP and Yale University, further partnerships will be developed during the biennium, including with UNDP in this area.



## Promote Sustainable Peace

### PO 4. Promote sustainable peace

#### 4.1. Strengthen capacities of Member States, UN and regional organizations to prevent and resolve conflict and build peace

The peaceful resolution of conflict is one of the cardinal purposes for which the United Nations was established, is at the heart of its work, and continues to be a pressing priority for Member States. UNITAR contributes to the realization of this objective through strengthening the capacities of Member States, the United Nations and regional organizations in the prevention and sustainable resolution of conflict. To achieve this, the Institute designs and conducts intensive training programmes to deepen the knowledge and strengthen the skills of mid and senior level diplomats, UN and regional organization staff, and among the most marginalized groups in the world in the areas of conflict analysis, negotiation and mediation. To enhance UN practice in peace missions, the Institute organizes a regular seminar to facilitate high-level knowledge and experience-sharing among senior most UN peacemakers. The Institute's work to contribute to meeting this objective is undertaken by the Peacemaking and Conflict Prevention and Peacekeeping Training programmes.

#### 4.2. Improve the preparedness of civilian, military and policy personnel to serve in peace operations

The United Nations peacekeeping operations involve some 130,000 military, police and civilian personnel. Insuring that UN peacekeepers are equipped with the necessary awareness, knowledge, skills and other capabilities prior to being deployed on the ground is strategically important in order

for these men and women to contribute effectively to the peace operations in complex and challenging post-conflict environments.

Through its Peacekeeping Training Programme, the Institute has defined an important niche by strengthening the endogenous capacities of national and regional training institutions from larger troop and police contributing countries through a training of trainers approach, thereby contributing to on-going capacity needs in a sustainable manner and maximizing ownership. This strategy has proven its results in the last biennium and has been welcomed by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping (commonly named C34) that requested this approach (training of trainers programme) to be expanded to other regions, including Asia and Latin America.

#### 4.3. [Develop capacities for governance recovery of countries in transition from conflict and in particular fragile states](#)

Good governance promotes equity, participation, pluralism, transparency, accountability and the rule of law, in a manner that is effective, efficient and enduring. Strengthening capacity for governance in countries in transition from conflict and in particular fragile states can help to advance development, by bringing its energies to bear on such tasks as eradicating poverty, protecting the environment, ensuring gender equality, and providing for sustainable livelihoods. It can ensure that civil society plays an active role in setting priorities and making the needs of the most vulnerable people in society known.

Supported by 10 years of continuous engagement in Afghanistan, the Hiroshima Office and Decentralized Cooperation Programme contribute to strengthening capacity of a wide range of governmental and nongovernmental partners in governance recovery, in partnership with various UN and national partners.



# Improve Resilience and Humanitarian Assistance

## PO 5. Improve resilience and humanitarian assistance

### 5.1. Leverage technology to generate geospatial information and create integrated solutions for human security, peace and socio-economic development

Through the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and satellite imagery, provide timely and high-quality geo-spatial information to UN decision makers, Member States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations. Develop solutions integrating field collected data with remote sensing imagery and GIS data through web-mapping and web-based data and information sharing mechanisms, including support to monitoring of development projects and sharing of geographic data using web-services.

### 5.2. Develop credible and reliable support systems for improved disaster risk reduction

Support systems using satellite technologies and geographic information systems can be used to assess disaster risk, improve response capacities and reduce risk and vulnerability of schools children in disaster prone areas. Through the UNOSAT-UNICEF Map Your School initiative, school children use a UNOSAT developed interface to map exact location of schools and related local risks. Activities include capacity development, including training, technical support and system design for the use of geo-spatial technologies for disaster risk reduction, as well as hands-on training and local datasets used for capacity development including areas of East Africa and South-East Asia.



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



## Capacity for the 2030 Agenda

### PO 6. Supporting the Adoption and Adaptation by Member States of the 2030 Agenda

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a far-reaching plan of action containing universal and indivisible goals and targets. The implementation of the Agenda requires unprecedented levels of policy integration and collaboration. Training for capacity development in many areas is a key to the success of the new development paradigm. Under this objective, a cross-cutting inter-programme area will design and disseminate a set of in-country training kits for national briefing and other on-line resources for experts and general public. The Institute's Research Department will coordinate work under this objective area and support the crosscutting elements, while working closely with various training programmes. Work will continue efforts to build capacity where needed, including enhancing national statistical capacity, and promoting in-depth understanding of each of the goals, targets and indicators, and the linkages between them. Many developing countries will need help in capacity building to monitor and evaluate progress.

## High-level functional objectives (FO)

### FO 1. Sound Executive Leadership

#### 1.1 Maintain sound executive leadership, stewardship and governance.

Positioning the Institute in an increasingly competitive and resource constrained environment is critical to enable the Institute to successfully deliver on its mandate and achieve organizational results. The Office of the Executive Director, led by the Executive Director, provides overall direction, executive management and stewardship and strategy formulation, as well as liaison with and reporting to the Board of Trustees.

### FO 2. Strengthen programming for results

#### 2.1 Further strengthen internal capacities for effective and efficient planning and delivery of results.

Delivering effective, efficient and sustainable results in an increasingly resource constrained and competitive environment requires policies, practices and systems to be in place to ensure accountability and organizational learning. Since 2010, the Institute has developed an integrated results-based management system with a monitoring and evaluation policy framework at its core. While systems and policies are in place for effective planning, monitoring, evaluation and performance reporting, promoting a results-based culture across the Institute where practices for strong accountability and organizational learning are given the right balance of attention is still in progress. During the 2014-2015 programming cycle, the Institute will continue to work towards addressing this imperative under the leadership of the Planning, Performance and Results Unit.

#### 2.2 Further strengthen the quality of UNITAR products and services

Strengthening the quality of the Institute's products and services was one of the objectives of the 2010-2012 Strategic Plan. Over the course of the planning exercise, the Institute under-took a number of important steps in this direction with the identification and adoption of quality standards and processes. In 2010, UNITAR contributed to the development of an international process to establish quality criteria and certification processes for technology-enhanced learning in the field of capacity building, known as ECBCheck. Building on the ECBCheck experience and a review of other quality assurance schemes, the Institute developed its internal Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) for learning-related events in 2012 to validate and strengthen quality, as well as provide a platform for sharing experiences and lessons on quality review.

Further strengthening learning and other training-related services is undeniably central to positioning UNITAR among the leaders in the training and capacity development industry.

### FO 3. Optimize efficiency

#### 3.1 Optimize our efficiency by leveraging programme synergies, streamlining internal operations and reducing external service costs

Quality programming and delivery of effective results require a light and efficient administrative apparatus and minimal external service costs. Over the course of the biennium, the Institute will continue efforts to streamline internal operations and reduce administrative costs, while at the same time ensuring compliance with the applicable United Nations rules, regulations and procedures.

The Institute will aim to achieve the expected results through the Operations Unit, comprised of the following four sections: Administration and Procurement, Budget and Finance, Human Resources and Communications and Information Technology Support.

## FO 4. Increase and Diversify Financial Resources and Partnerships

### 4.1 Increase and diversify financial resources with an emphasis on new, emerging donor countries and the private sector

Changes in the global political and economic landscape, with the emergence of new economic leaders, are having profound implications on development funding. On the one hand, traditional donors have experienced economic challenges in recent years; on the other hand, emerging economies are showing growing interest in funding their own capacity development and providing support to others. For example, Afghanistan, Algeria and Nigeria are now ranked among the Institute's top sources of funding. The Institute has to continue to explore new development partners both in terms of emerging economies and other non-traditional donors, including the private sector, while at the same time continuing to nurture close relationships with traditional donors.

### 4.2 Increase the breadth and depth of partnerships in programming

Forging partnerships with a wide spectrum of actors is fundamental for the Institute to deliver effectively and efficiently on its mandate. During 2012-2013, some 50 per cent of UNITAR events and some 40 per cent of its beneficiaries resulted from partnerships. This includes not only the bilateral and multilateral donor communities, sister agencies within the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, but also non-governmental and civil society organizations, academia and the private sector. The Institute's 2014-2017 Strategic Framework recognizes the importance for UNITAR to not only maintain partnership building as a key enabling functional objective, but to work to increase the breadth and depth of partnerships in all facets of its programming.

## FO 5. Enhance Communication

### 5.1 Enhance coherence and effectiveness of communications, engage stakeholders and strengthen branding

Good communications are vital to helping achieve strategic objectives. They increase awareness, build trust and credibility, and attract more beneficiaries and partners in the long run. Communicating effectively with and engaging our internal and external stakeholders will increase the impact of our work. Effective communications should be embedded in all our work, from project level to corporate level activities.

In order to achieve this functional objective collectively by all programmes, offices and sections, the Communication and Information Technology Support Section will provide tools, guidance and platforms, and facilitate exchanges of good practices from within and outside the Institute.

## Assessing Risk

16. Moving forward with a set of programmatic and functional objectives cannot be done in the absence of risk. As a small, autonomous United Nations agency funded entirely from voluntary contributions, the Institute is exposed to a number of risks, which include financial, in terms of lingering uncertain financial and economic climate and the impacts this may have on development assistance; political, in terms of potential instability and security threats in regions or countries where the Institute has programming and interests; and administrative and organizational, in terms of the hierarchical structure of the larger organization to which UNITAR belongs.
17. A specific set of external factors and assumptions on delivering the expected results under the high-level programmatic and functional objectives are included in the respective results-based budgets.

## Measuring and Reporting Results

18. Management will monitor progress towards achieving its high-level programmatic and functional objectives in accordance with the indicators of achievement and performance measures in the respective results-based programme budgets. Management will also undertake annual programme performance reporting exercises and report to the Board of Trustees annually.
19. In addition to the programme-level indicators and performance measures, Management will also track a number of key performance indicators which will provide an indication at the macro level of progress toward the achievement of the overarching programmatic and functional objectives of the strategic framework.

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