

31 January 2018

English only

**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space**
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
Fifty-fifth session
Vienna, 29 January–9 February 2018

Capacity-Building Network: Description and Roadmap

I. Introduction

1. In 1999, The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, issued during the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), called for enhancing education and training opportunities and ensuring public awareness of the importance of space activities.
2. Seventeen years later, and in preparation for UNISPACE+50, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, at its fifty-ninth session, agreed to seven thematic priorities (see [A/71/20](#), para. 296): (1) Global partnership in space exploration and innovation; (2) Legal regime of outer space and global space governance: current and future perspectives; (3) Enhanced information exchange on space objects and events; (4) International framework for space weather services; (5) Strengthened space cooperation for global health; (6) International cooperation towards low-emission and resilient societies; (7) Capacity-building for the twenty-first century.
3. Thematic priority 7 is the most cross-cutting and horizontal of the thematic priorities. It follows the spirit of the Vienna Declaration for capacity-building and calls for strengthening the use of space as a driver and contributor, in a holistic manner, to global frameworks and agendas, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the Paris Agreement on climate change.
4. The objectives of thematic priority 7 are the following:
 - (i) Define new innovative and effective approaches to overall capacity-building and development needs as a fundamental pillar of global space governance;
 - (ii) Strengthen comprehensive capacity-building and outreach activities of the Office for Outer Space Affairs;
 - (iii) Develop infrastructure for cross-sectoral and integrated applications, with combined scientific, technical, legal and policy outputs;
 - (iv) Enhance existing partnerships and forge new ones to strengthen and deliver targeted capacity-building and technical advisory activities based on needs assessments;



- (v) Promote efforts to encourage science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, especially for women in developing countries.

II. The need of the Capacity-Building Network

5. The capacity-building network is proposed as a cost-efficient manner of supporting the implementation of this thematic priority and the aforementioned associated objectives. It consists of a network of institutions which are delivering capacity-building and awareness raising activities related to space and the sustainable development goals. These activities are promoted by the Office as being part of the Capacity-Building Network and included in the Space Solutions Compendium (para. 13, [A/AC.105/1162](#)).

6. This approach will reduce fragmentation and will streamline information on activities for anyone interested in space-related capacity-building activities. It will also allow to identify gaps in the aforementioned activities and to cover them with either activities of the Office or new activities carried out by members of the Capacity-Building Network. In addition, the Capacity-Building Network will serve to identify activities at regional or at country levels which are contributing to raise awareness on space and sustainable development goals. This information will be available to the Member States through the Space Solutions Compendium.

7. The Capacity-Building Network is not to replace the regional centres for space science and technology education, affiliated to the United Nations, but is building on the realisation that networks are essential for capacity-building, and that not only long-term programmes are needed, but one-shot, short or medium-term activities are also important for capacity-building and awareness raising.

8. Without prejudice to their capacity to develop regional networks, the regional centres are encouraged to be part of the capacity-building network, in order to support and raise awareness of the role of space in monitoring progress made in the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

9. The initial idea of the capacity-building network was presented during the meeting of directors of regional centres at the margins of the sixtieth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in Vienna, on 13–14 June 2017. The Office has been advancing since then in the development of the concept and its implementation. The capacity-building network was subsequently further developed and presented as a global initiative to bring together various stakeholders from the space field during the United Nations/Austria Symposium ([A/AC.105/1162](#)), where the proposal was welcomed.

10. During the United Nations/Russian Federation Workshop ([A/AC.105/1164](#)) a more refined proposal was presented and, it was recommended to widen its scope including not only formal educational institutions but to extend it to other actors, in particular museums, research centres and institutes, in order to expand the network's awareness-raising potential and extend its reach beyond purely academic circles. Such inclusive approach will facilitate the development of space society and will acknowledge the role of entities participating in the capacity-building network as hubs for inclusive space society development, addressing all interested groups targeting from students at all educational levels to general public and to those who work professionally in space-related activities.

III. Objectives of the Capacity-Building Network

11. The purpose of the Capacity-Building Network is to support the mandate of the Office in enhancing education, increasing the number of training opportunities and raising public awareness on the importance of space activities and the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular for developing countries. To this aim, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Space for Development Profile

(para. 13, [A/AC.105/1162](#)) shall be guiding frameworks for the expected contributions of the Capacity-Building Network members.

12. With the establishment of the Capacity-Building Network, the Office seeks to provide a collaborative framework to other interested partners, governmental or non-governmental entities, in particular educational institutions, such as universities, schools, museums, research institutions, excellence centres, research institutes, and non-governmental organizations, aiming at streamlining and increase the reach of activities supporting the Space2030 agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

IV. Setting up the Capacity-Building Network

13. Any entity (university, research institution, museum, non-governmental organizations, ...), hereafter, governmental or non-governmental, can apply to the Office for Outer Space Affairs to become a member of CBN. Entities from developing countries are particularly encouraged to be part of CBN. A condition for membership is a commitment to implement a capacity-building activity (fellowship programme, training course, event, ...) that supports the mandate of the Office. The activities of the entity shall not be in conflict with the aims and purpose of the United Nations.

14. A call for interest will be opened by the Office with the terms of reference defining the rights and obligations of the entities part of the Capacity-Building Network. This call for interest is expected to be launched during the first half of 2018. The membership will be enabled by satisfactory conclusion of the following actions by an applicant when responding to the call for interest: (1) Submission to the Office of a letter of interest/intent; (2) Signing of the Terms of Reference and submission of a signed document to the Office; (3) Conclusion with the Office of a special agreement, which will be of a unified form for all prospective members of the Network. The documentation will be available as part of the call for interest.

15. In pursuing the creation of the Capacity-Building Network, the Office for Outer Space Affairs should engage also with the relevant observer organizations of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and other relevant stakeholders, to increase the reach of the network.

16. The Office will evaluate the responses to the call for interest and will communicate the acceptance by letter. Membership can be revoked by the Office if the entity does not respect the terms of reference or if the Office decides to suspend the Capacity-Building Network activities. The regional centres for space science and technology education, affiliated to the United Nations, will automatically be invited to be part of the Capacity-Building Network and, in that case, they will be subject to the same obligations that other members.

17. A train-the-trainers programme aimed at educators should be established as part of the capacity-building network. This program can benefit from the establishment of the Space Information and Training Centre (para. 143, [A/AC.105/1166](#)) as a reference centre for training, which can then be replicated by the Capacity-Building Network members if need be. Each Capacity-Building Network entity shall provide to the Office an implementation plan for the activities to be carried out by the entity during the year. The implementation plan will be reviewed and updated jointly with the Office for Outer Space Affairs and shall include the performance indicators and quality criteria to be measured and associated thresholds for each activity. The performance of the entity will be evaluated regularly.

18. An online community is expected to be set-up as means for communicating and informing other members of the activities carried out by an entity. The network should also serve, where applicable, to consolidate decisions and recommendations stemming from network-related workshops, with the goal of harmonizing best practices in capacity-building.

V. Operational phase

19. The call for interest will be continuously opened in the Office's website, unless this initiative is modified or interrupted, so any institution wishing to be part of the Capacity-Building Network could submit their application at any time. Therefore, the evaluation of new members is a routine process carried out in the operational phase of the Capacity-Building Network. The status of Capacity-Building Network entities will be assessed on a yearly basis.

20. On a yearly basis, the Office will lead the preparation of an annual report on the activities and achievements of the Capacity-Building Network. To maintain their status as members, each member has the duty to report on the achievement of the quality criteria, performance indicators for all the activities carried out under the umbrella of the Capacity-Building Network. The annual report will be made available online in the Office's website and will be disseminated to the relevant stakeholders with the objectives of increasing its reach.

21. The Office will hold a biennial conference of the Capacity-Building Network members, at which the work of the Capacity-Building Network will be reviewed. This conference will also be an opportunity to advertise and promote the work of the Capacity-Building Network and interact with other members. For the purpose of raising awareness of the work of the Capacity-Building Network, the conference will be opened to other interested entities.

22. The Capacity-Building Network members will also be invited to present their activities in pertinent workshops organized by the Office. This will give the opportunity to members based in the event host country to present their activities in front of a worldwide audience.

23. The online community created for the Capacity-Building Network will be moderated by the Office to ensure that the information disseminated by the members is in line with the objectives of the Capacity-Building Network and therefore does not conflict with the aims and purpose of the United Nations.

VI. Conclusions

24. The Capacity-Building Network will be a collaborative framework in which members will contribute to increase the reach of activities supporting the Space2030 agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. This network will be instrumental in bridging the Space Divide in a consistent manner, which, if no action is taken, threatens to deepen the gap between countries having access to space and those which have not.

25. More than twenty thousand attendees have benefited from activities organized by the Office for Outer Space Affairs, fifty-seven countries have hosted workshops on the Programme of Space Applications and forty countries have hosted technical advisory missions of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER). However, the resources of the Office are limited, and the creation of a Capacity-Building Network under the umbrella of the Office will have a multiplier effect on the capacity-building and awareness raising activities supporting space and the Sustainable Development Goals.

26. Once the Capacity-Building Network is established, the Office can analyse the gaps left by the network and propose activities to bridging those gaps. In addition, thanks to the biennial conference of Capacity-Building Network members, coupled with the train-the-trainers programme and the use of the Space Information and Training Centre, the members of the Capacity-Building Network will gradually develop a uniform approach to capacity-building taking advantage of the latest developments, tools and standards.

27. This initiative is expected to increase the number of countries engaged in activities with the Office, reaching out to more individuals and in a cost-efficient manner, which coupled with the Space Information and Training Centre would not only be an effective way of delivering capacity-building but also will homogenize the way it is provided, easing the exchange of information and knowledge between participating entities. The quality of the activities of the Capacity-Building Network will be controlled through a regular review process.
