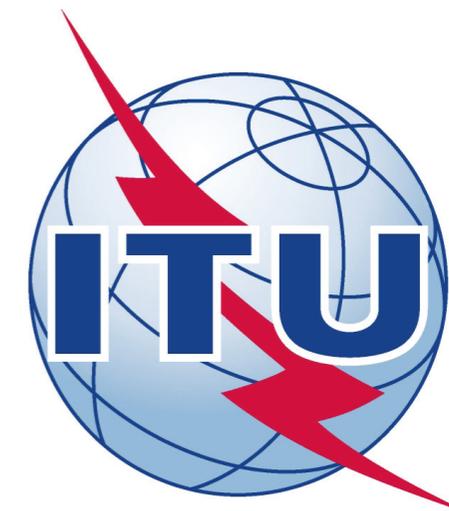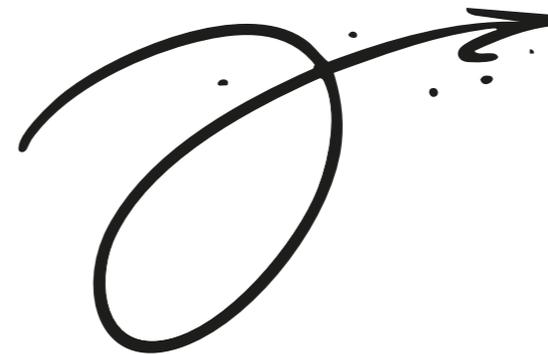CASE STUDY

ITU

GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM FOR REGULATORS

ABOUT ITU

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies, or ICTs.

ITU 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 all of the world's people—wherever they live and whatever their means. Through our work, we protect and support everyone's fundamental right to communicate.

With the help of our global membership, ITU brings the benefits of modern communication technologies to people everywhere in an efficient, safe, easy, and affordable manner.

In addition to our 193 Member States, ITU membership includes ICT regulators, many leading academic institutions, and some 700 tech companies.

EVENT CONTEXT

Setting the scene: Today we live in a connected world—an interconnected world—a world where our lives, our incomes, our societies, countries, and regions, and even our world depend on ICTs. ICTs offer new tools to directly address poverty by providing access to information, contributing to pro-poor market developments such as microfinance and mobile money, and equalizing opportunities in rural areas. Today, the ecosystem is much wider, more complicated, while at the same time richer, more diverse, and more demanding. Young startups develop and define new platforms with new ideas—for example openness—which they aggressively and commercially pursue and develop. More players have entered the market. Stakes are higher and more commercially relevant. Big money is involved—some ICT companies have revenues worth more than many countries' GDP.

Technology continues to change as do the business models and offerings of network operators, service providers, and equipment manufacturers. Although voice, data, and images (i.e. Internet telecommunications, and media services) are already offered on a common platform and present clear commonalities, there are differences in terms of access and connectivity, return on investment, and costs and tariffs, as well as transparency and quality of service obligations in terms of network traffic control and content.

WHO IS ORGANISING THE CHANGE?

When Soffie Maddens joined the organisation as ITU's new Head of Regulatory and Market Environment, she knew that in order to progress the mission of ITU, a core task would be to evolve the Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR).

WHAT WAS THE CHALLENGE?

The Event Design Team analyzed the evolution of GSR since its creation in 2000 when regulation first came to the Telecom sector. Dissecting 15 years of GSR gave them the necessary insights to then look forward for 4 years to 2020. Together with her team responsible for the event and the leadership of the organisation, she embarked on an innovation journey to train her team while using the Event Design methodology and the Event Canvas to design the future of this mission-critical event.

WHO ARE THE MAIN STAKEHOLDERS?

For over 15 years, the Global Symposium for Regulators has brought together regulators, industry professionals, and other Stakeholders from around the World to share experiences, interact with other Stakeholders, including the private sector, and other ITU-D members. Regulators come to GSR because they want to be a part of the circle of influence. That is what also attracts other ITU-D members, since it is the unique platform where they can meet regulators from around the world within four days. Since 2012, GSR has also attracted sponsors, both at local and global levels. It is recognized as a neutral platform where regulators can learn, speak, be seen, and contribute to valuable discussions.

THE EVENT DELTA

The aim of GSR16, and beyond: GSR's promise is to recognize and integrate emerging trends in regulation to make GSR the unique, neutral platform for regulators to come so that they can join GSR, gain a head start on regulation, and create a common space for collaborative regulation. ITU wants to give its members the tools to share their experiences and expertise, and become leaders in the field of regulation, not only in the ICT/telecommunications sector, but also in terms of how ICT/telecommunications interacts with other regulation so that ITU can leverage its head start on regulation in a collaborative, 4th, and even 5th generation ICT regulatory environment. This means inviting regulators from other sectors to GSR starting with finance regulators for the 2016 edition.

#eventcanvas

EVENT DESIGN *collective*
©EVENT DESIGN COLLECTIVE GMBH

EVENT NARRATIVE

Information and communication technologies drive economic and social development, but building an inclusive digital society that empowers countries, businesses, and individuals remains a challenge. Global partners must work together toward a connected world where everyone can benefit from the digital economy.

The Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR) has, since 2000, been the place where regulators meet annually to discuss policy and regulatory challenges, opportunities, and best practices. It is the world's largest neutral platform for regulators to engage with other regulators, policymakers, and businesses.

As the ICT sector rapidly evolves, inclusive dialogue and cooperation with other sectors are increasingly essential.

Jobs to be done
• Craft practical regulatory solutions, best-practice guidance, and discussion papers
• Understand the role of collaborative regulation in building more connected global societies
• Tackle topical and emerging issues
• Address regulatory concerns, including privacy, data protection, and cybersecurity
• Learn about the latest technologies and their impact on the digital economy

Why attend GSR 2016?
Event promise: Be empowered, Be included, Build smarter societies in a connected world.

Participants benefit from over 15 years of GSR experience and 150 years of ITU expertise. GSR offers a neutral platform for inclusive dialogue to foster an enabling environment for ICTs for development.

"I truly believe that for digital opportunities to fully materialize, collaboration between regulators to foster innovative approaches to policy and regulation is now, more than ever, required. The Global Symposium for Regulators is a unique platform that for over 16 years has built a community of regulators to exchange, learn, and listen," states Brahima Sanou, Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau.

Together, these stakeholders build a more inclusive society through ICTs.

The 16th GSR was held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, from 11–14 May 2016, organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) with the Government of Egypt and under the Patronage of H.E. Abdel Fatah El Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Pre-events on 11 May included a Thematic Pre-Conference for a Global Dialogue on Digital Financial Inclusion, supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other partners, as well as the Regional Regulatory Associations Meeting and the Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officers Meeting.

The Global Regulators-Industry Dialogue (GRID) sessions on 12–13 May were open to regulators, policymakers, and ITU Development Sector members. On 14 May, two parallel tracks were held: a Regulators' track (for regulators and policymakers) and an Industry track (for ITU-D sector members), followed by a closing ceremony open to all participants.

THE DESIGN PROCESS

A critical objective was to align GSR with ITU's development bureau's strategic mission for 2020. This allowed the team to design the 2020 version of GSR and then backcast the steps needed to be taken for the next four editions of GSR, creating a clear, stepped approach to the role that the yearly GSR has in delivering the long-term strategic objectives. The team was able to adapt the event's promise to the new environment and maintain ITU's strong position in the market.

THE BRAIDING POINT

The decision to reimagine VMware Explore Singapore was driven by a shared desire to elevate the event's impact and relevance in a rapidly evolving multi-cloud landscape. The challenge was not just to deliver another successful edition,

but to align diverse stakeholders—internal teams, sponsors, and event partners—around a unified vision of success. This alignment became the catalyst for transformation.

NEXT?

The need to look at the matter as a 'bigger picture' encouraged the leaders at ITU to become committed and involved in the Event Design process of GSR. The team drafted the 2020 horizon and overarching aim; they recognised the potential of getting their mandates in their overarching roles delivered through a successful evolution of the event into the next decade. Building on GSR's role as a driver of behaviour change was the common goal of everyone on the ITU team and that momentum now gives clarity on where the event and the organisation is headed through 2020.