= A Serial Introduction Part 1 = Winners of ITU-AJ Encouragement Awards 2024

In May every year, The ITU Association of Japan (ITU-AJ) proudly presents ITU-AJ Encouragement Awards to people who have made outstanding contributions in the field of international standardization and have helped in the ongoing development of ICT.
These Awards are also an embodiment of our sincere desire to encourage further contributions from these individuals in the future.
If you happen to run into these winners at another meeting in the future, please say hello to them.
But first, as part of the introductory series of Award Winners, allow us to introduce some of those remarkable winners.

Mikiya Agata

KDDI CORPORATION Standard Strategy Department
Standardization Specialist, Radio Access Network
agata@kddi.com https://www.kddi.com/english/
Fields of activity: WRC-23 (Agenda Item 1.17),
ITU-R SG5 WP5D (IMT-2030 framework)

Resolution of Issues in WRC-23 and Development of IMT-2030 Framework Recommendations

I would like to express sincere appreciation upon receiving this prestigious ITU Association of Japan Encouragement Award.

I participated in WRC-23, which is in charge of agenda item 1.17 (additional allocation for inter-satellite services) focusing on protecting terrestrial services from satellite interference.

At the meeting, there were different proposals for the protection criteria from satellite and terrestrial parties, so we had many discussions to unify them. As a result, we reached consensus on protection criteria appropriate for terrestrial service protection.

In addition, developing the IMT-2030 Framework Recommendation, to achieve approval of the recommendation by the deadline, we promoted collaboration with related countries, coordinating their respective needs to finalize the draft Recommendation.

From these experiences, we have learned that when conflict arises, it can be resolved by 1) clearly communicating the objectives to both sides, 2) providing a logical and accurate evaluation, and 3) consolidating opinions fairly.

I would like to contribute to WRC-27 by making the best use of my experience to reach a good conclusion.

Ryusuke Utsunomiya

Rakuten Mobile, Inc.
ryusuke.utsunomiya@rakuten.com https://business.mobile.rakuten.co.jp/
Fields of activity: Interference coordination, ITU-R standardization

Successful Establishment of WRC Agenda Item for Direct Connectivity between Satellite and Mobile Phones

I would like to offer sincere appreciation for this ITU-AJ Encouragement Award. I would also like to thank everyone at the ITU-AJ, and all who participated in activities toward establishing the agenda item for satellite direct communications at the WRC.

Satellite direct communications is a technology for communications directly between satellites and existing mobile telephone equipment. Implementing it will enable phone calls and other smartphone communications in areas where it was previously difficult, using existing mobile phone lines. To realize such a service, both adjustments to domestic systems and international standardization will be imperative. Since 2022, I have participated in ITU-R meetings to promote discussion at the WRC.

I submitted the first proposal for discussion of satellite direct communications at APG23-6, hoping to submit an APT common proposal together with other APT members who share a common interest, but we did not reach agreement. We negotiated hard with each country, making compromise after compromise and finally brought it to the plenary meeting, but in the end, some administrations opposed. I keenly felt that international negotiation is not easy or straightforward.

At the 3rd ITU Inter-regional Workshop and the following WRC-23, I collaborated with other businesses and held bilateral meetings and negotiations with each country as the APT coordinator. Also, based on guidance from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, we created leaflets and other materials to promote the concept of satellite direct communications and details of the Japanese proposal and lobbied by holding an event at WRC-23. We received much support and cooperation until finally, with most of the administrations giving their support and agreement to the shared understanding, it was accepted as an agenda item for WRC-27.

I will continue working to achieve the result that Japan hopes for, a resolution at WRC-27.

Kyohei Unno

3D Space Transmission Laboratory / KDDI Research, Inc.
ky-unno@kddi.com https://www.kddi-research.jp/english/
Fields of activity: ITU-T Q6/16 (VCEG), ISO/IEC JTC1/SC29/WG5 (JVET), WG7 (MPEG-3DGH)

Contributions to the International Standardization of Video Coding and Point Cloud Coding

I am deeply honored to receive the ITU Association Encouragement Award. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the ITU Association of Japan and everyone who has supported me thus far.

Since joining KDDI Research in 2018, I have been actively involved in the international standardization of video coding technologies within ITU-T Q6/16 (VCEG) and ISO/IEC JTC1/SC29/WG5 (JVET). I contributed to establishing the latest international video coding standard, H.266, by proposing several technologies to improve coding efficiency with over 60 contribution documents. I also contributed verification data for H.266.1, a standard for verifying the interoperability of H.266, contributing to recommendation. H.266 is being considered for adoption in the next generation of terrestrial digital broadcasting in Japan. I sincerely hope that H.266 will be widely used globally in the future.

Since 2020, I have also participated in the international standardization of point cloud coding technologies, V-PCC and G-PCC, within ISO/IEC JTC1/SC29/WG7 (MPEG-3DGH). Particularly in G-PCC, I made numerous contribution proposals and contributed to the publication of G-PCC 1st edition in 2023. For study on the G-PCC 2nd edition, which began in 2021, I mainly proposed techniques related to Trisoup, a method for encoding geometry (coordinate) information. Currently, I lead the development of this technology as the exploration experiment coordinator. Recognizing these efforts, I am now one of the editors for G-PCC 2nd edition. Although the widespread adoption of G-PCC is still in its early stages, I hope that it will also be widely beneficial to society.

Once again, I am deeply grateful for this prestigious recognition and will continue to strive for excellence in my contributions to international standardization efforts.

Junichi Kawasaki

KDDI Research, Inc.
ju-kawasaki@kddi.com https://www.kddi-research.jp/english/
Fields of activity: ETSI ISG ZSM, ITU-T SG13

Standardization Activities toward Network Automation Using AI/ML

It is a great honor for me to receive the ITU-AJ Encouragement Award, and at this time, I would like to extend my deep appreciation to everyone at the ITU-AJ and to those who supported me in standardization activities up to now. In 2018, when I began to participate in standardization meetings, it was a time of much progress in network virtualization. Expectations were growing toward network automation that could guarantee communications quality without human intervention in a network that was becoming increasingly complex. There was much activity in this area at related standardization organizations (ITU-T, ETSI, TM Forum, etc.) and open source communities (ONAP, etc.) During this time, I submitted proposals for achieving network automation and drafted specifications for closed-loop automation mainly at the ETSI ISG ZSM group. Additionally, I participated in research and development activities toward the use of AI/ML in network automation as a Japanese national project. I made proposals based on this project at ITU-T SG13 in collaboration with project partners and formed them into a ITU-T Recommendation as a framework for network automation using AI/ML. The results of this research and development were also applied to problems related to network failure detection posed at a competition held by ITU with the aim of expanding the application of AI/ML to network operations. We were therefore able to connect our R&D achievements to the development and spread of this technical field. At present, standardization activities toward 6G are beginning, and I believe that operations technology using AI/ML will become even more important in the 6G era from the viewpoint of resilience. I will continue to contribute to the realization of a reliable network infrastructure through the development of network operations technology together with partners both in Japan and abroad while leveraging the experiences I have had through my activities to date.