**Empowering Women Entrepreneurs through Digital Transformation**

***Maldives, 14-16 December 2024***

Supporting women entrepreneurs, particularly those engaged in micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), in harnessing the potential of digital tools and platforms is of paramount importance. It is a crucial step towards gender equality in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Women, despite their immense potential, often face systemic barriers and disparities in accessing resources and opportunities. Digital tools and platforms can level the playing field by providing them with accessible and cost-effective means to market their products, access financial services, and acquire the skills necessary to grow their businesses.

The integration of digital tools and platforms into the business strategies of women entrepreneurs can also lead to increased economic resilience and sustainability. Women-owned MSMEs, in particular, are vulnerable to external shocks, such as economic downturns or natural disasters. Digitalization, such as e-commerce and digital marketing, allows for diversification of revenue streams by tapping into other markets. Additionally, digitalization enables better inventory management, cost optimization, and improved customer engagement, all of which are critical for the survival and growth. Supporting women in MSMEs to adopt digital solutions enhances their ability to weather economic uncertainties, thereby contributing to the overall stability and resilience of their businesses.

The Ministry of Social and Family Development and the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for ICT for Development (APCICT) are organizing the “Training on Empowering Women Entrepreneurs through Digital Transformation” on 14-16 December 2024. The programme aims to empower women entrepreneurs in Maldives to develop the mindset, knowledge, and skills needed to embrace digital transformation and succeed in the digital economy.

# **ABOUT THE PROGRAMME**

The programme is based on APCICT’s Women ICT Frontier Initiative, a flagship capacity building programme for women entrepreneurs to utilize digital tools and platforms in their businesses. The training will include the following courses:

* **Digital Technologies and Financial Management.** This course empowers women entrepreneurs with financial literacy and analytical skills, enabling them to assess their financial status and interpret data effectively.
* **Business Continuity Planning.** This course addresses the need for proactive planning in the face of uncertainties. Business continuity planning will provide knowledge and skills for women entrepreneurs to plan, strategize, and manage crisis situations in their businesses.

# **TARGET PARTICIPANTS**

The training will be attended by women entrepreneurs, women associations, and potential trainers.

# **RESOURCE PERSONS**

**Dr. Tanatat Puttasuwan**

Dr. Tanatat is a Financial Economist and Digital Economy Development and Transformation Expert. For over 20 years, he has worked extensively in Southeast Asia and South Asia Regions, and more specifically in assessing the state of digitalization and transformation in ASEAN, preparing Digital Economy Development Strategy and Digital Government Strategy for such countries as Bhutan, Thailand, Indonesia and Mongolia. He is also APCICT’s consultant and trainer in Digital Government, Promoting Digital Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and Digital Governance.

Previously he served as the Senior Economist for the World Bank’s Financial, Competitiveness and Innovation Department of Asia and Pacific Region, where he was responsible for leading the Private Sector Development Programs in Thailand, Cambodia, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Lao PDR, including the Business-Ready Report, enabling business environment, legal and regulatory reforms, firm competitiveness and innovation.

**Ms. Maria Juanita R. Macapagal (Mayette)**

Mayette has over 25 years of work experience in development management, capacity building, and social research. She has helped implement institutional strengthening strategies in the private sector, civil society groups, and in government organizations in the Philippines and in other parts of Asia and the Pacific. She has also worked as program consultant for Canadian government-funded projects, and other multilateral organizations. She was a serial entrepreneur and later focused on free-lance consulting on social development projects. At present she is the Corporate Secretary of T.G. Reyes Realty Corporation, a Fellow of Ideacorp Inc, a non-profit organization focused on ICT policy research, and currently a Consultant of APCICT.

# **CONTACT**

Ms. Nuankae Wongthawatchai, Programme Management Officer, APCICT/ESCAP, [wongthawatchai@un.org](mailto:wongthawatchai@un.org)

**DRAFT PROGRAMME**

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| Day 1 | |
| Time | Description |
| 08:30 – 09:00 | Breakfast |
| 9:00 – 9:30 | Registration |
| 9:30 – 10:00 | **Opening Session** |
| 10:00 - 10:15 | *Energizer (Ministry of Social and Family Development to lead)* |
| 10:15 – 12:00 | **Session 1: Promoting Women’s Entrepreneurship through Digital Transformation**  This session aims to enhance the understanding of the growing importance of the development and transformation of digital economy, together with opportunities and challenges facing women digital entrepreneurs. The course prepares entrepreneurs to engage with the following sessions.  *Facilitator: Dr. Tanatat Puttasuwan* |
| 12:00–13:30 | *Lunch* |
| 13:30 – 15:00 | **Session 2: Fundamentals of Business Finance Management**  In this session, participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of essential business finance management practices. They will explore digital tools and best practices for managing financial resources efficiently, including how to digitalize bookkeeping, keep personal and business finances separate, and apply effective strategies for managing cash flow. By the end of the session, participants will be better equipped to make informed decisions and maintain financial stability for their businesses**.**  *Facilitator: Dr. Tanatat Puttasuwan* |
| 15:00-15:15 | *Coffee Break* |
| 15:15-16:30 | **Session 2 continued**  *Facilitator: Dr. Tanatat Puttasuwan* |

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| Day 2 | |
| Time | Description |
| 08:30 – 09:00 | Breakfast |
| 9:00 – 10:30 | **Session 3: Profit and Loss Report Analysis**  This session focuses on analyzing profit and loss statements to improve business profitability. Participants will learn how to distinguish between fixed and variable costs, calculate profit margins, and evaluate financial performance through detailed analysis of P&L reports. The session will emphasize the use of digital tools for accurate financial reporting and decision-making, helping business owners optimize costs and boost profit margins.  *Facilitator: Dr. Tanatat Puttasuwan* |
| 10:30 – 10:45 | *Energizer (Ministry of Social and Family Development to lead)* |
| 10:45 – 12:00 | **Session 4: Access to Finance and 12-Month Cash Flow Forecasting**  In this session, participants will learn about different sources of financing for their businesses and how to confidently access these funds using digital tools. The session will also cover the importance of forecasting cash flow over a 12-month period, allowing participants to plan for future financial needs, anticipate potential cash shortages, and make strategic financial decisions. Attendees will leave with practical tools and templates to create cash flow forecasts and improve their financial readiness.  *Facilitator: Dr. Tanatat Puttasuwan* |
| 12:00 – 13:30 | *Lunch* |
| 13:30 – 15:00 | **Session 5: Business Continuity Planning**  This session introduces the key concepts of Business Continuity Planning, focusing on the importance of having a BCP in place, especially for digital businesses. Participants will learn how to prepare for unexpected crises. Participants will analyze internal and external risks that could affect their business operations. This session teaches how to identify potential threats and implement mitigation strategies.  *Facilitator: Ms. Maria Juanita R. Macapagal (Mayette)* |
| 15:00-15:15 | Coffee break |
| 15:15-16:30 | **Session 5 Continued**  *Facilitator: Ms. Maria Juanita R. Macapagal (Mayette)* |

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| Day 3 | |
| Time | Description |
| 08:30 – 09:00 | Breakfast |
| 9:00 – 10:30 | **Session 7: Individual Activity and Presentation**  Participants will apply what they've learned by creating their own Business Continuity Plans. They will outline specific action steps to ensure their business can continue operating in the face of adversity.  *Facilitator: Ms. Maria Juanita R. Macapagal (Mayette)* |
| 10:30 – 10:45 | *Energizer (Ministry of Social and Family Development to lead)* |
| 10:45 – 12:00 | **Session 7 continued**  *Facilitator: Ms. Maria Juanita R. Macapagal (Mayette)* |
| 12:00 – 13:30 | *Lunch* |
| 13:30 – 15:30 | **Wrap-up & Evaluation** |
| 16:00 – 17:00 | **Closing Ceremony** |
| 17:00 | Tea |