



Digital Skill Development of South Asian Women Entrepreneurs on Enhancing Business Opportunities

18-20 November 2025

**Venue: Venue: SWRD Bandaranaike National Memorial Foundation (BMICH);
Colombo 07, Sri Lanka**

1. Introduction

To support women entrepreneurs in harnessing digital opportunities, UNESCAP piloted the “E-Commerce Capacity Building for Women-led MSMEs in South Asia”. The initiative aimed to empower women-led micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in South and South-West Asia to explore new business opportunities and integrate into local, regional and international supply chains through the use of e-commerce and digital marketing. As part of this effort, UNESCAP also developed e-learning courses and training manuals for the women entrepreneurs. Building on that initiative, UNESCAP will organize a national training in Sri Lanka that will help selected women entrepreneurs on enhancing business through use of digital tools as well as product and market development. The training will also introduce the Strategy to Promote Inclusive and Sustainable Businesses to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in Sri Lanka to the participants and also network amongst themselves and foster peer learning.

The national training will also utilize the WIFI DX (Women ICT Frontier Initiative – Digital Transformation) content developed by the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for ICT for Development (APCICT/ESCAP). WIFI DX focuses on equipping women entrepreneurs with practical digital skills to support their business transformation and growth. For this training in Sri Lanka, specific emphasis will be placed on e-commerce, digital marketing, and applications of artificial intelligence (AI) for women entrepreneurs. By integrating these WIFI DX modules, the training will provide participants with cutting-edge knowledge and tools to strengthen their online presence, expand their customer base, and harness emerging technologies for innovation and resilience.

This initiative is designed to address barriers and build the capacity of women entrepreneurs to thrive in the digital economy. By combining UNESCAP’s earlier e-commerce training resources with the updated WIFI DX modules on e-commerce, digital marketing, and AI applications, the programme seeks to empower women entrepreneurs with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to scale their businesses, increase competitiveness, and contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth in Sri Lanka.

2. Objectives

The training aims to provide the following to the women entrepreneurs:

- introduction to product and market development

- understanding nuances of e-commerce and digital tools to promote business
- building a network of women entrepreneurs.
- Promoting environmentally and socially sustainable businesses

3. Prerequisites for women entrepreneurs

Since this is in-person workshop where participants would be joining together in a hall, the participants are required to adhere to the following prerequisites:

1. Download Beginner's Manual on Digital Marketing and e-Commerce (website: <https://www.unescap.org/kp/2022/beginners-manual-digital-marketing-and-e-commerce#>)
2. Required to bring a personal laptop/tab/smartphone with internet connectivity on all the days of the training.
3. Need to have a valid email account
4. Have a product/service brochure of their business and bring a soft copy to the training

4. Programme

Day 1: 18 November 2025	
9:00-09:30	Registration
09:30 – 10:30	MC: • Ms. Jing Huang, Economic Affairs Officer, UNESCAP South and South-West Asia office, New Delhi Inaugural session and Introduction Welcome Remarks • Ms. Mikiko Tanaka, Head, UNESCAP South and South-West Asia office, New Delhi • Mr. Kiyong Ko, Director, APCICT/UNESCAP • UNRC, Sri Lanka • Ms. Jeevanthie Senanayake, Director General/CEO, Sustainable Development Council, Sri Lanka • Ms. Ameena Mohin, Director General, Department of Commerce, Sri Lanka Special address: • Dr. Harshana Suriyapperuma, Secretary to the Treasury/Ministry of Finance, Planning & Economic Development, Sri Lanka (TBC) Inaugural address: • H.E. Mr. Wasantha Samarasinghe, Ministry of Trade, Commerce, Food Security and Co-operative Development Minister, Government of Sri Lanka. (TBC)

	<i>Vote of Thanks:</i> • Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head, UNESCAP
10:30 – 11:00	<i>Group photo</i> <i>Self-Introduction by the participants</i>
11:00- 11:30	Networking break (Tea/Coffee)
11:30-12:30	Session 1: Overview of e-Commerce (1) • Mr. YS Koh, APCICT Resource Person
12:30-13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 14:45	Session 2: Overview of e-Commerce (2) • Mr. YS Koh, APCICT Resource Person
14:45 – 15:00	Tea /Coffee
15:00 – 16:00	Session 3: Introduction of ESCAP knowledge products on E-Commerce and Digital marketing • Dr. Jing Huang, Economic Affairs Officer, UNESCAP
16:00 – 17:00	Session 4: e-Coo and Trade Connect platform of India • DGFT official (TBC)
17:00- 17:15	Recap and conclude for the day • Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head, UNESCAP
Day 2: 19 November 2025	
9:15 - 9:30	Registration
9:30 – 9:45	Session 5: Introduction on WIFI DX – Capacity Building Resources for Women Entrepreneurs • Mr. Robert de Jesus, Programme Officer, APCICT/UNESCAP
9:45 – 10:45	Session 6: Overview of digital marketing (1) • Mr. YS Koh, APCICT Resource Person
10:45 - 11:00	Tea/Coffee

11:00 – 12:15	Session 7: Overview of digital marketing (2) • Mr. YS Koh, APCICT Resource Person
12:15 - 13:30	Lunch
13:30- 15:00	Session 8: Implementing AI for Marketing & Sales (1) • Mr. YS Koh, APCICT Resource Person
15:00 - 15:15	Tea/Coffee
15:15- 16:15	Session 9: Implementing AI for Marketing & Sales (2) • Mr. YS Koh, APCICT Resource Person
16:15 – 17:15	Session 10: Government e Marketplace – promoting women business • GeM, India
17:15 – 17:30	Recap and conclude for the day 2 • Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head, UNESCAP
Day 3: 20 November 2025	
9:30 - 9:45	Registration
9:45 – 10:45	Session 11: AI for digital marketing and product content (Hand on training) • Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head, UNESCAP
10:45 - 11:00	Tea/Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Session 12: Panel discussion - Bridging the digital divide: Identification of priorities and challenges on promoting seamless cross border trade <i>This panel will consist of policy makers as well as some leading women entrepreneurs who will answer the following:</i> (i) <i>What are the key barriers in accessing digital technologies, especially the women entrepreneurs?</i> (ii) <i>Are there any innovative strategies or successful examples of bridging such a divide?</i> (iii) <i>Are regional cooperation or cooperation amongst governments by sharing good practices important?</i>

	(iv) <i>What are the important interventions that governments need to bring in to equip them to use digital technologies?</i> Moderator: • Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head, UNESCAP Panel: • Ms Senanayake, SDC • DGFT • Commerce, Govt of Sri Lanka • GeM • Ms. Kruthanga Nadini Perera, Ceylon Speechie Company • WE Open discussion
12:30- 13:45	Lunch
13:45 - 14:45	Session 13: Product Development and Branding • Ms. Tusitha Kumarakulasingam, ESCAP resource person
14:45 - 15:00	Tea/Coffee
15:00 – 17:00	Session 14: Demonstration of products and services by WE • <i>All participants are required to bring their products for demonstration. They will also be asked to explain how they intend to market their products and services.</i>
17:00 – 17:30	Feedback and Concluding session • Ms. Mikiko Tanaka, Head, ESCAP South and South-West Asia Office, New Delhi • Mr. Kiyoungh Ko, Director, APCICT/UNESCAP • Ms. Jeevanthie Senanayake, Director General/CEO, Sustainable Development Council, Sri Lanka • Ms. Ameena Mohin, Director General, Department of Commerce, Sri Lanka