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**Launching of Women ICT Frontier Initiative (WIFI) DX**

# **Empowering Women Entrepreneurs through Digital Transformation**

# *Thursday 25 April 2024, 12:45-13:45, UNCC, Bangkok*

# **BACKGROUND**

The Asian and Pacific Training Centre for ICT for Development – a regional institute of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific with a mandate on capacity building on digital technologies for sustainable development – launched the **Women ICT Frontier Initiative (WIFI)** in June 2016 to promote women entrepreneurship through digital skills development. It aims to strengthen the capacities of women entrepreneurs to utilize digital tools in support of their businesses and the capacities of government leaders and policymakers to provide an enabling environment for ICT-empowered women entrepreneurs through gender-responsive ICT-enabled policies and programs. In addition, the program recognizes the challenges older women face in the digital entrepreneurial ecosystem. This includes bridging digital literacy gaps and combating societal stereotypes, ensuring that women of all ages have equitable access to digital opportunities.

Since WIFI’s launch, the technology landscape for women entrepreneurs has evolved considerably, with new tools and platforms that offer unprecedented opportunities for growth and innovation. The COVID-19 pandemic also underscored the critical importance of digital transformation and the necessity for businesses to adopt digital solutions. For women entrepreneurs, mastering digital proficiencies has become not merely a competitive advantage—it is a necessity for success and survival. Failing to adapt to these technological changes can result in missed opportunities, which is especially concerning given the existing gender disparities in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Recognizing the technology trends and challenges facing women entrepreneurs, the Centre is enhancing its WIFI strategy to provide more impactful and practical support to promote women’s entrepreneurship in the region. The Centre has developed new WIFI courses covering topics such as Women Empowerment through Business Innovation and Digital Transformation, Leveraging business through E-Commerce & Digital Marketing, Financial Management using Digital Technology, Cyber Trust and Security, Business Continuity Planning, and Data Analytics for Women Entrepreneurs.

The programme extends to enhancing the digital capabilities of varied demographics, including the ageing population and persons with disabilities. Emphasis will also be placed on including modules and sessions designed for older women entrepreneurs, focusing on age-appropriate technology training and creating network opportunities that cater to their specific needs and experiences.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS), APCICT is launching WIFI DX: Empowering Women Entrepreneurs through Digital Transformation on 25 April 2024 in UNCC, Bangkok, Thailand.

**OBJECTIVES**

The event aims to:

* Introduce the new WIFI programme and its importance in empowering women entrepreneurs, older persons, and marginalized populations through digital transformation;
* Exchange experiences and lessons learned on national ICT capacity-building strategies and programmes for women entrepreneurs; share perspectives and good practices on effective capacity building; and
* Tailor its support for older women entrepreneurs, providing specific resources and training to help them overcome unique barriers to better engage in the digital market place.

**PARTICIPANTS**

The event will be attended by partners and experts who have been engaged with and supported the development and delivery of ICT capacity-building programmes for women entrepreneurs from various countries.

**VENUE**

The event will be held on 25 April 2024 at Asia-Pacific Foyer, Ground Floor, UNCC, Bangkok

**PROGRAMME**

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| Thursday 25 April 2025, UNCC | |
| Time | Description |
| 12:45 – 12:55 | **Opening Session**   * Welcome Remarks by Ms. Lin Yang, Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCAP * Remarks by Mr. Thanasunthorn Swangsalee, Director-General, Department of Women’s Affairs and Family Development, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Thailand |
| 12:55 –13:20 | **Panel Discussion:**   * Ms. Miriam Mejias Bergado, Director, Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology System, University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines * Ms. Busaba Tonthong, Retired Professor & Entrepreneur * Mr. Shahid Uddin Akbar, Chief Executive Officer, Bangladesh Institute of ICT in Development   **Moderator**  Ms. Irene Boey, Founder & Data Strategist at Irene AI Training & Consulting and Resource Person for APCICT |
| 13:20-13.35 | **Launching of WIFI DX:**   * Introduction of WIFI DX, Mr. Kiyoung Ko, Director, APCICT * Overview of WIFI DX training programme, Ms. Irene Boey, Founder & Data Strategist at Irene AI Training & Consulting, and Resource Person for APCICT |
| 13:35-13:40 | Q&A |
| 13:40 – 13:45 | Closing |