Regional Training of Women Entrepreneurs

on

Utilizing E-commerce and Digital Marketing Platforms

for Enhanced Access to Supply Chains

6-8 September 2022

Venue – Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS), Dhaka, Bangladesh

Concept Note and Tentative Programme

1. Introduction

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has drastically changed the ways firms operate and economies function, accelerating the need for deeper digitalization among as well as within economies. This stands true, especially for the vital sub-region of South Asia, whose potential is undermined by gender inequality in all aspects of economic and social life. According to statistics, only 8 to 9% of formal SMEs are owned by women in South Asia as compared to 38% to 47% in other regions, along with the female labour force participation rate in South Asia being less than 30%. Further, a report on "COVID-19 and the Unpaid Care Economy in Asia and the Pacific" by ESCAP states that the ongoing pandemic has exacerbated the risks for women and girls across the region. The unequal distributional effect of the pandemic has resulted in adversely affecting the women with medium, small and micro enterprises due to the lack of capacity development and practical training on ways to leverage digital infrastructure for e-commerce and digital marketing. Therefore, in a post-COVID-19 economy, the labour force requires greater economic participation of women and assistance to women-led enterprises is also crucial.

On the other hand, there has been an exponential expansion of e-commerce businesses in the region, providing a huge opportunity for women entrepreneurs. E-commerce has inarguably reduced the burdens of conducting business and the "new normal" has brought along a change in shopping behaviors as well. By addressing the outmoded barriers of geographic isolation and limited access to information and financing, e-commerce can greatly empower South Asian women entrepreneurs socially and economically. Hence, Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality) needs to be the foundation of actions taken to achieve an inclusive and sustainable future for the Asia-Pacific region.

Keeping this in view, this training is being organized to equip the women entrepreneurs from South Asia to use e-commerce and digital marketing platforms for enhanced access to supply chains well as contribute towards the global economic development. Additionally, this training seeks to

establish a network amongst the women entrepreneurs by providing an opportunity to showcase their products, and services and share their entrepreneurial journey with an aim to inspire and motivate fellow women entrepreneurs.

2. Objectives

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

- introduction to digital marketing and e-commerce
- hands-on training on how to register and link their business to e-commerce and digital marketing platforms
- building a network of women entrepreneurs and provide an opportunity to display their products and services to fellow participants along with sharing their experiences.

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. Required to bring a personal laptop/tab with internet connectivity on all the days of the training.
2. Need to have a valid email account
3. Have a product/service brochure of their business and bring a soft copy to the training
4. There is a product, services display session and it is encouraged that they bring a few for display for non-commercial purposes
5. Mobile phones are not recommended for usage during the hands-on sessions.
6. Any identity proof issued by National Agency

4. Tentative Programme

Day 1: Tuesday, 6 September 2022 (Bangladesh Standard Time)	
9:00 - 10:00	**Registration**
10:00 - 11:15	**Inaugural session** ***Welcome Remarks:*** • **Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna,** Deputy Director, ESCAP South and South-West Asia Office, New Delhi • **Colonel M A Saadi, afwc, psc,** Acting Director General, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) • **Dr. Ratnakar Adhikari**, Executive Director, Enhanced Integrated Framework, (EIF) Geneva (online) • **Ms. Shubhra Bhattacharya,** Senior Development Coordination Officer, Strategic Planning, United Nations, Bangladesh • **Ms. Nasreen F. Awal**, Vice-President, SAWDF Chapter, Bangladesh and Founder President, Women Entrepreneurs Association of Bangladesh (WEAB)

	• **Ms. Nasima Aktar,** President, Women and E-commerce, Bangladesh ***Inaugural address:*** • **H.E. Mr. Mustafa Jabbar, Minister for Posts and Telecommunications Division, Government of Bangladesh** ***Vote of thanks:*** • **Md. Hafizur Rahman**, Director General, WTO Cell, Ministry of Commerce, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
11:15 - 11:30	**Group Photo**
11:30 - 11:45	**Tea /Coffee**
11:45 - 12:15	**Session 1: Introduction - Online e-learning course on e-commerce and digital marketing** • **Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna,** Deputy Head, ESCAP South and South-West Asia Office, New Delhi
12:15 - 13:15	**Session 2: Session on setting goals and exercise on business plan canvas** • **Mr. Shahid Uddin Akbar,** Founder and CEO of Bangladesh Institute of ICT in Development
13:15 - 14:15	**Lunch**
14:15 - 16:15	**Session 3: Panel discussion on "Policy advocacy for creating opportunities for women entrepreneurs of South Asia"** This session aims to bring together leading women entrepreneurs from South Asian countries to discuss the role and importance of policy advocacy in promoting women entrepreneurship. The discussions will focus on bringing changes in policies which can benefit women entrepreneurs. The platform would help to share experiences and identify areas for policy advocacy that are required to address challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in expanding their businesses. **Moderator: Ms. Mikiko Tanaka, Director and Head, ESCAP South and South-West Asia Office, New Delhi** **Panelists:** • **Ms. Salma Masud,** President**,** Women Entrepreneurs Association of Bangladesh (WEAB) • **Ms. Sangay Wangmo**, Founder, Sangay's Creation, Bhutan • **Ms. Harmeet Kaur,** Founder, Dhanjal Enterprises**,** India • **Ms. Mehnaz Huda,** Secretary General of Bangladesh India Business Council of Women Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Chairman of Women Entrepreneurs Sub-committee, Sylhet Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Bangladesh • **Ms. Aishath Sama,** Founder, Meeru Meeru Havaadhu, Maldives

	• **Ms. Prakriti Gautam**, CEO, Khetipati Organics, Nepal • **Ms. Yukti Hamal**, Product Manager, Sustainable Business Initiative Pvt. Ltd., Nepal • **Mrs. Manoja Wadugodapitiya,** Chairperson of Hydro Power Pvt. Ltd & Arusalana Eco Lodge Hotel, and Founder, Simply Women, Sri Lanka Followed by Q&A
16:15 - 16:30	**Tea /Coffee**
16:30 - 17:30	**Session 4: How to start and manage your business** • **Mr. Suman Shakya,** Trainer/Resource Person ESCAP (online)
17:30 - 17:45	**Recap for Day 1** • **Ms. Suveera Saxena,** ESCAP South and South-West Asia Office, New Delhi
Day 2: Wednesday, 7 September 2022 (Bangladesh Standard Time)	
9:00 - 9:15	**Registration**
9:15 - 10:45	**Session 5: Digital marketing using social media platforms and search engine optimisation for promoting business** • **Ms. Deepali Gotadke**, Resource Person, ESCAP
10:45 - 11:00	**Tea/Coffee**
11:00 - 12:30	**Session 6: Hands-on training for registering to e-commerce websites** • **Ms. Deepali Gotadke,** Resource Person, ESCAP
12:30 - 14:00	**Lunch**
14:00 - 15:00	**Session 7: Assessment of gender digital infrastructure divide** • **Dr. Radika Kumar,** Adviser, Infrastructure Policy, Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources Directorate, The Commonwealth Secretariat, London (online)
15:00 - 16:15	**Session 8: Hands on training on creating profile as an entrepreneur on www.wesellonline.org** • **Ms. Deepali Gotadke, Resource Person, ESCAP**
16:15 - 16:30	**Tea/Coffee**
16:30 - 17:30	**Session 9: Hands on training on uploading product catalogue as an entrepreneur on www.wesellonline.org** • **Ms. Deepali Gotadke**, Resource Person, ESCAP
17:30 - 17:45	**Recap for Day 2** • **Ms. Suveera Saxena,** ESCAP South and South-West Asia Office, New Delhi

Day 3: Thursday, 8 September 2022 (Bangladesh Standard Time)	
9:00 - 9:15	**Registration**
9:15 - 11:00	**Session 10 - Hands on training on creating product and services catalogue and uploading profile as an entrepreneur on www.wesellonline.org** (contd) • **Ms. Deepali Gotadke**, Resource Person, ESCAP
11:00 - 11:15	**Tea/Coffee**
11:15 - 12:30	**Session 11: Hands on exercise on how to generate online enquiry** **(***Participants will learn how to generate online enquiry and respond to them***)** • **Ms. Deepali Gotadke**, Resource Person, ESCAP • **Ms. Suveera Saxena,** ESCAP South and South-West Asia Office, New Delhi
12:30 - 14:00	**Lunch**
14:00 - 15:30	**Session 12: Exhibition (display) of products and services and networking with fellow women entrepreneurs *(Group-1)***
15:30 - 16:45	**Session 13: Exhibition (display) of products and services and networking with fellow women entrepreneurs *(Group-2)***
16:45 - 17:00	**Tea/Coffee**
17:00 - 17:15	**Session 14: Post training feedback** • **Ms. Suveera Saxena,** ESCAP South and South-West Asia Office, New Delhi
17:15 - 17:45	**Concluding session** ***Remarks*:** • **Ms. Mikiko Tanaka,** Head, ESCAP South and South-West Asia Office, New Delhi • **Dr. Mahfuz Kabir,** Research Director, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) (tbc) • **Ms. Nasreen F. Awal**, Vice-President, SAWDF Chapter, Bangladesh and Founder President, Women Entrepreneurs Association of Bangladesh (WEAB) • **Ms. Nasima Aktar,** President, Women and E-commerce, Bangladesh • **Md. Hafizur Rahman**, Director General, WTO Cell, Ministry of Commerce, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh ***Special address:*** • **H. E. Mr. Tenzin Lekphell,** Secretary General of BIMSTEC