



Unleashing Women's Potential in the Digital Economy



National Digital Strategy for
Women Development

2024-2026

**Information and Communication Technology
Agency of Sri Lanka
Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment**

Suhuruliya 2.0

**Unleashing Women's Potential
in the Digital Economy**

**National Digital Strategy
for Women Development**

2024-2026

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1. Executive Summary

In an increasingly digital world, ensuring gender equality in access to technology and digital skills is essential for fostering inclusive economic growth and empowering women to thrive in the digital economy. This executive summary provides a synopsis of the comprehensive national strategy designed to enhance women's digital competency and bridge the gender gap in the technology sector.

The primary objective of the Suhuruliya 2.0 national strategy is to empower women of all backgrounds with the digital competencies necessary to participate fully in the digital society and economy. This strategy seeks to break down barriers to women's digital inclusion, promote gender diversity in technology fields, and leverage technology as a tool for women's economic and social advancement.

This strategy consists of comprehensive initiatives aimed at empowering women to thrive in the digital era. By focusing on education, training, and creating an inclusive digital environment, the strategy aims to equip females of all ages with the knowledge and skills needed to excel in the digital world. Through collaboration with educational institutions, industry partners, and community organizations, the strategy envisions a future where women are at the forefront of innovation, contributing to economic growth and societal progress. By fostering digital competency among females, the nation will unlock new opportunities, enhance diversity, and ensure a brighter, more equitable future for all.

This is a journey of collaboration and determination. We invite governments, businesses, educators, civil society, and women themselves to join us in this endeavour. By unleashing women's potential in the digital economy, we are not only fostering gender equality but also propelling our societies toward greater prosperity and innovation.

2. Background

The Women and ICT Frontier Initiative (WIFI) for “gender equality and empowerment of women in society” was embarked on in 2016 by the United Nations Asia Pacific Centre for ICT (UN-APCICT) in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. This programme aimed to promote women's entrepreneurship in the Asia-Pacific by enhancing the capabilities of women entrepreneurs in ICT and entrepreneurship so that their enterprises can become more productive, and hopefully grow and be sustainable.

ICTA jointly with UN-APCICT launched the first-ever nationwide Women and ICT Frontier Initiative in Sri Lanka in 2017. The Ministry of Women and Child Affairs partnered in strengthening and rolling out this initiative. The adoption of WIFI in Sri Lanka was customized to suit the Sri Lankan context and named as “Suhuruliya” or “Pudumaippen” (meaning, “smart woman”). Meta partnered with “She Means Business” in 2018 with this initiative. Moreover, multiple other government and nongovernment entities also tied up with Suhuruliya in the national roll-out. Phase I of Suhuruliya was concluded and resulted in the following outcomes

- 17,500 trained female entrepreneurs and 340 trained Women Development Officers (WDOs) on Digital Skills and Digital Marketing Skills

- Policies developed to enhance women empowerment through digital mechanisms by the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs with other policy-making entities
- Increased digital literacy among 47% of the females who participated in Suhuruliya programmes
- Increased digital marketing adoption among 34% of the participants in their businesses
- Increased income of entrepreneurs by 36% by adopting digital marketing in their businesses
- LKR 1.2bn annual increase in revenue through digital marketing adoption in businesses

3. Introduction

In an era defined by technological innovation and rapid digital transformation, the ability to navigate, utilise, and thrive in the digital landscape is becoming increasingly essential. However, as we embrace the benefits of the digital age, it has become apparent that not all segments of our society are reaping its rewards equally. A significant gender gap in digital competencies persists, creating a divide that hampers women's ability to fully participate in the opportunities presented by the digital economy.

In today's fast-evolving digital landscape, the power of innovation, growth, and transformation is at our fingertips. The digital economy presents boundless opportunities, shaping industries, economies, and societies in ways previously unimaginable. However, as we stride into this new era of possibilities, every individual must have the chance to partake in its benefits, without exclusion or disparity.

This is a call to action, a rallying cry to unleash the full potential of women in the digital economy. While the digital revolution has broken barriers and brought the world closer together, it has also unveiled disparities that persist between genders. A digital divide looms, limiting the access and participation of women in a realm that knows no boundaries.

Our aim envisages a digital economy that thrives on diversity, innovation, and equal opportunity. It's time to dismantle the barriers that impede women from fully embracing the digital age. By empowering women with digital skills, fostering an inclusive tech culture, and creating pathways for their leadership in digital innovation, we can unlock a new era of progress.

Considering the rapid development of the global digital landscape and national priorities for the digital economy in 2030, it was identified that the formulation of a new strategy is required to fulfil the upcoming demands of the digital economy.

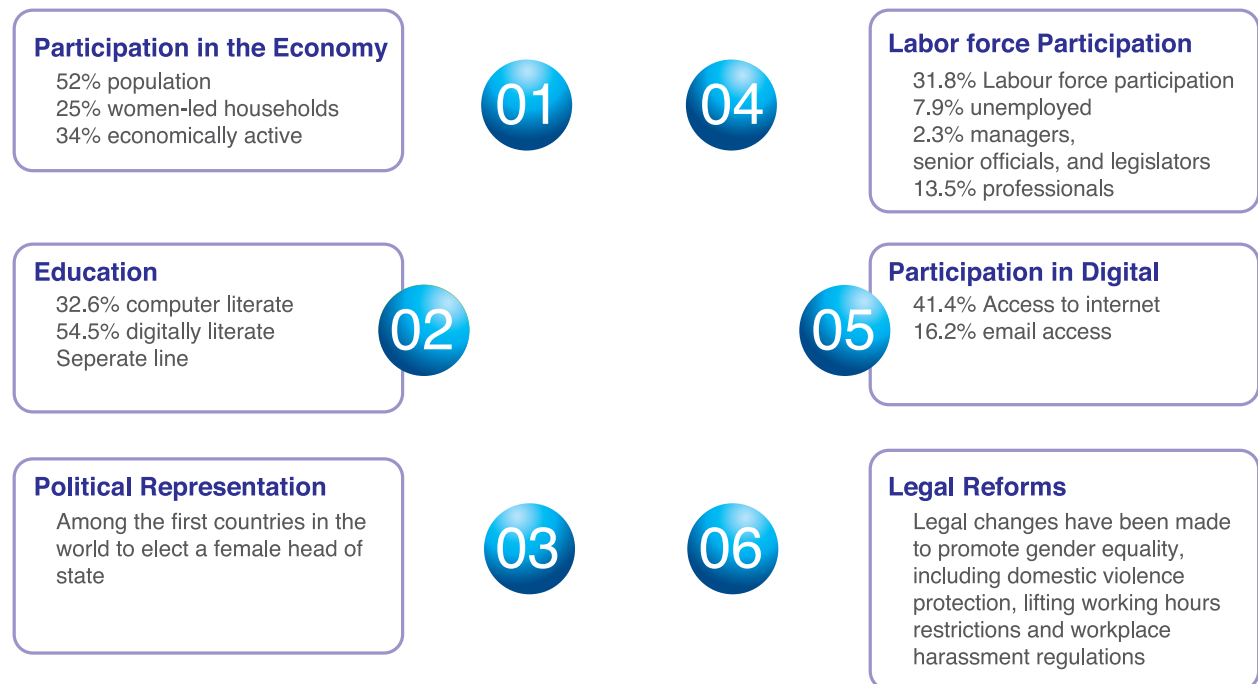
UN-APCICT has embarked on the reformulation of the WIFI programme where the ICT agency of Sri Lanka also contributed by sharing the country's experience and expertise to make and shape the next stage of the WIFI initiative which is to be launched during the end of 2023.

The Suhuruliya 2.0 strategy for "Unleashing Women's Potential in the Digital Economy" is a visionary response to this pressing challenge. This strategy acknowledges that the power of digital skills extends beyond mere technical proficiency; it signifies a means to empower women, bridge inequalities, and foster inclusive growth. By addressing barriers, amplifying opportunities, and promoting gender equality in the digital realm, this strategy aims to reshape the future for women across our nation.

4. Contextual Analysis

4.1 Women in the Digital Economy - Sri Lanka Overview:

Women's empowerment in Sri Lanka has been a multifaceted journey that has seen significant progress over the years but also faces ongoing challenges. Here's an overview of women's participation in the digital economy in Sri Lanka:



4.1.1 Participation in the Economy:

Sri Lanka's female population has increased to 52%, and 25% of the female population leads household activities in the country. However, only 34% of Sri Lanka's female population is economically active. Despite a high literacy rate that is on par with most of the other developing countries, digital adoption among females is still relatively low.

4.1.2 Education:


Sri Lanka has made commendable strides in achieving gender parity in education. Computer literacy and digital literacy among females stand at 32.6% and 54.5%, respectively. In addition, 55% of female students participate in the Bio Science and Physical Science streams in GCE Advanced Level, but the IT industry's workforce is only 34% female. Out of the economically inactive female population, 16.3% are having GCE A/L, and higher, qualifications.

4.1.3 Political Representation:

Sri Lanka was among the first countries in the world to elect a female head of state. The country has a history of women holding important political and administrative positions.

4.1.4 Labour Force Participation:

Women's participation in the labour force in 2021 was at 31.8% while the global average was around 50%. The unemployment rate of females has decreased from 8.5% in 2020 to 7.9% in 2021. Even though



female participation has increased, particularly in sectors such as education, healthcare, and government administration, gender gaps still exist in terms of pay and representation in higher level positions. Only 2.3% of females work as “Managers, Senior Officials and Legislators” against 4.8% of males in Sri Lanka. However, 13.5% of females work as “Professionals”, versus 3.9% of males.

4.1.5 Participation in Digital:

The increased participation of women and girls in digital technology and innovation, and their engagement as students and professionals in digital activities, are crucial to the digital economy. In Sri Lanka, 41.4% of females have access to the internet while only 16.2% of females have access to e-mail.

4.1.6 Legal Reforms:

Legal changes have been made to promote gender equality, including domestic violence protection, lifting working hours restrictions and workplace harassment regulations in Sri Lanka

A considerable portion of women in Sri Lanka still endure low levels of ICT skills, lack of access to technology, as well as lack of capacity to use emerging technologies, which leads to a gender divide in ICT despite the increased usage of computers, mobile phones and the internet. Even though ICT is universally acknowledged as an enabling tool for socio-economic development, female entrepreneurs face an array of problems when it comes to tackling technological advancements. Phase 1 of the Suhuruliya initiative was designed to address these gaps. Suhuruliya 2.0 has been crafted to offer targeted education, training, and resources to empower women to actively participate and excel in the digital workforce. The strategy emphasizes collaboration between educational institutions, industries, and governmental bodies to create tailored initiatives that cater to the unique needs of all segments of females in the country. By equipping them with essential digital skills, from basic literacy to advanced technical proficiencies, the strategy aims to bridge the gender gap in the digital landscape. Through these collective efforts, we aspire to harness the full potential of our female workforce, driving innovation, economic growth, and ensuring equal opportunities in the rapidly evolving digital economy.


4.2 National Digital Strategy 2030:

Sri Lanka wants to transform the country’s economy and society through the full integration of digital technologies in order to be amongst the digital leaders in the Asia-Pacific. This involves ensuring that it can compete globally in areas such as innovation, entrepreneurship, and digital skills. It also includes promoting sustainability and inclusiveness in the digital economy to ensure that no one is left behind and that all citizens benefit from the opportunities provided by the digital revolution.

The National Digital Strategy for Sri Lanka will support the building of one of the three pillars identified for the new economy. Through its implementation, the strategy shall accelerate Sri Lanka’s development trajectory towards becoming a developed country. For this, the strategy should position Sri Lanka to use digital technologies that:

1. Enhance economic competitiveness to drive exports and foreign exchange earnings
2. Create high paying jobs for young people, women, and rural populations
3. Deliver trusted and inclusive public services to everyone, everywhere

(National Digital Strategy 2030, <https://www.icta.lk/connected-government/>)



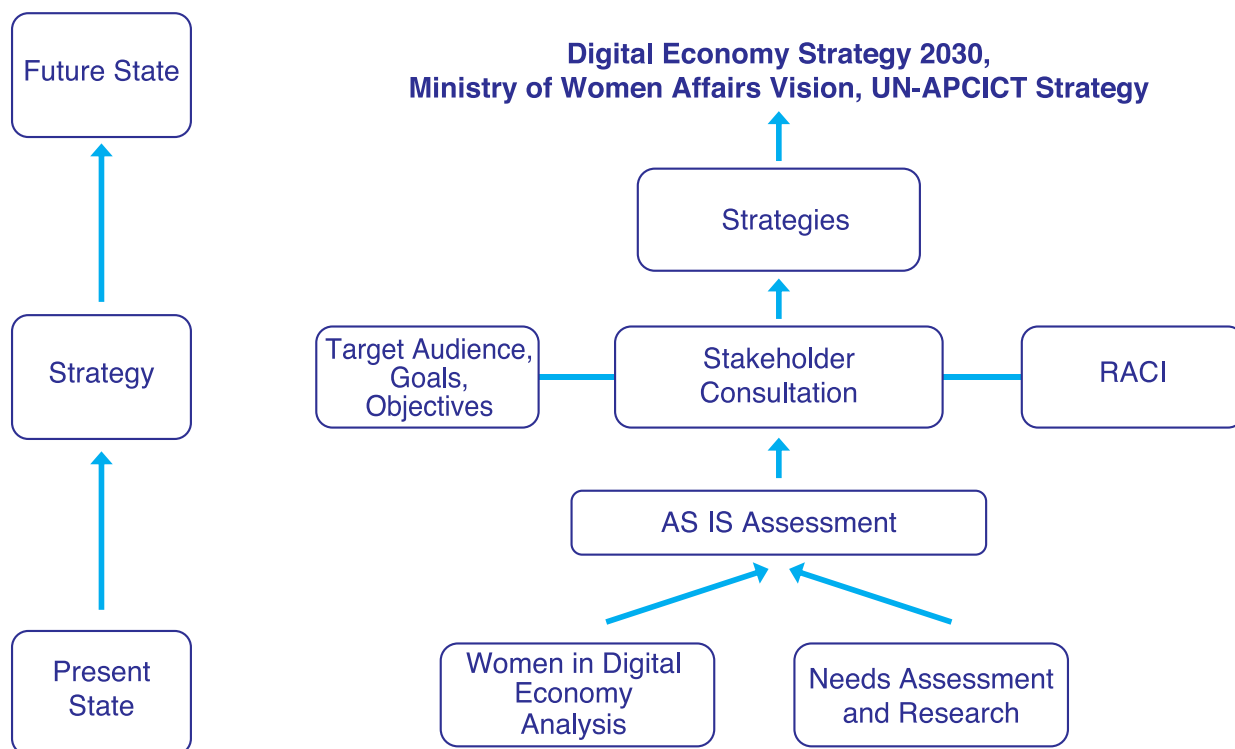
Female empowerment has been given significant attention in the National Digital Strategy 2030. The first phase of Suhuruliya has concentrated on developing the digital skills and digital literacy required for female entrepreneurs to effectively utilize digital technologies for business growth. The Suhuruliya 2.0 strategy encompasses skills that enable the direct use of technologies, such as good comprehension of emerging technologies and their applications, as well as knowledge of digital privacy and security. Within this domain, digital entrepreneurship, freelancing, etc. can be powerful avenues for women's inclusion in the digital economy, enabling new business opportunities, efficiency gains and better access to markets and global value chains. One of the key focus areas in the National Digital Strategy 2030 - "create high-paying jobs for young people, women, and rural populations" – highlights the importance of women's participation in the digital economy as well as their contribution to the national GDP. The Suhuruliya 2.0 strategy has been focused on improving the digital skills and competencies of all segments of women in line with the National Digital Strategy 2030 to "unleash women's potential in the Digital Economy".

4.3 Ministry of Women and Child Affairs Strategy / Vision:

The Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, which is the designated ministry for female development, has a vision to be the "most respected model ministry (RMM) in the South & South East Asia - in creating Poverty Free, Right Protected and Justice and Equality Ensured (PF-RP-JEE) Sri Lanka by 2030." Presently the Ministry is also working on formulating and implementing policies and strategies and delivering results in creative and innovative ways to provide people-friendly social and economic services to women, children and marginalized, disadvantaged people (including the poor, the elderly, the disabled, single parent families, substance addicts, and orphans) through institutions, networks and professionals in an effective, efficient, speedy and productive manner to enhance their quality of life in collaboration with local and global agencies.

5. Strategy Formulation Approach


The Suhuruliya 2.0 national strategy formulation for improving the digital competencies of all segments of females followed a comprehensive approach with the following key steps.



5.1 Needs Assessment and Research:

A thorough needs assessment to understand the current digital competency needs of females has been conducted to understand the future requirements of females in the digital economy. Information and data relating to technology, existing skill gaps, barriers, and the specific needs and aspirations of females in various demographics have been analysed, followed by a comprehensive study of models adopted by other countries during the strategy formulation process. The following steps have been followed to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment and research to have tailored strategies to meet the specific needs of Sri Lanka's female population, leading to more effective outcomes and greater gender equality in the digital landscape.

1. Collecting Demographic Data: Demographic data related to the digital skills of females in various age groups, education levels, and regions has been gathered and analysed.
2. Skills Gap Analysis: Existing digital skills gap among females compared to their male counterparts has been analysed.
3. Stakeholder Engagement: Various stakeholders, including government agencies, educational institutions, private sector companies, non-governmental organizations, and community groups have been consulted throughout the strategy formulation process.
4. Barriers and Challenges: Focus group discussions to identify the barriers and challenges that females face in acquiring digital skills have been conducted during the consultation sessions.

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5. Best Practices Review: Research on successful initiatives from other countries and UN-APCICT reports that have effectively addressed gender-based digital competency gaps have been carried out.
 6. Education System Assessment: Current education system to determine how digital skills are integrated into curricula and teaching methods has been analysed.
 7. Access to Technology: Assessment has been conducted to evaluate the accessibility of technology, including internet access, digital devices, and training resources.
 8. Industry Demand and Trends: Research has been conducted on the digital skills that are in high demand within the digital economy, female participation in ICT workforce and the barriers that they face to enter the technology industry.
 9. Career Pathways: Investigation has been carried out on the types of roles and career pathways available for females in the digital economy to identify barriers that prevent females from entering or advancing in these fields and develop strategies to address them.
 10. Existing Capacity-Building Programmes: Study existing capacity-building programmes for digital skills and assess their effectiveness to determine what modifications or additions are needed to make them more female-friendly and inclusive.

5.2 Stakeholder Engagement:

Seventy-five organizations were identified as key stakeholder organizations relating to women empowerment, including government agencies, educational institutions, industry associations, NGOs, private sector organizations, and women's groups and activists. Three consultative sessions were conducted with stakeholders to gather insights, share best practices, and ensure a coordinated effort for developing the Suhuruliya 2.0 strategy.

1st Session – Focus group discussion on identifying the present problems and future expectations

2nd Session – Stakeholder consultation for strategy formulation

3rd Session – Strategy review and validation

5.3 Defining Goals and Objectives:

Goals and objectives, clearly defining the overarching goals of the strategy, such as reducing the gender digital divide, increasing female participation in tech-related fields, and promoting gender equality in the digital space were set by the stakeholders through group exercises.

5.4 Target Audiences:

The total female population has been segmented into several groups considering factors like age, educational background, socioeconomic status, and geographical location. Strategies and initiatives have been tailored to address the unique needs of each audience segment.

5.5 Strategy Development:

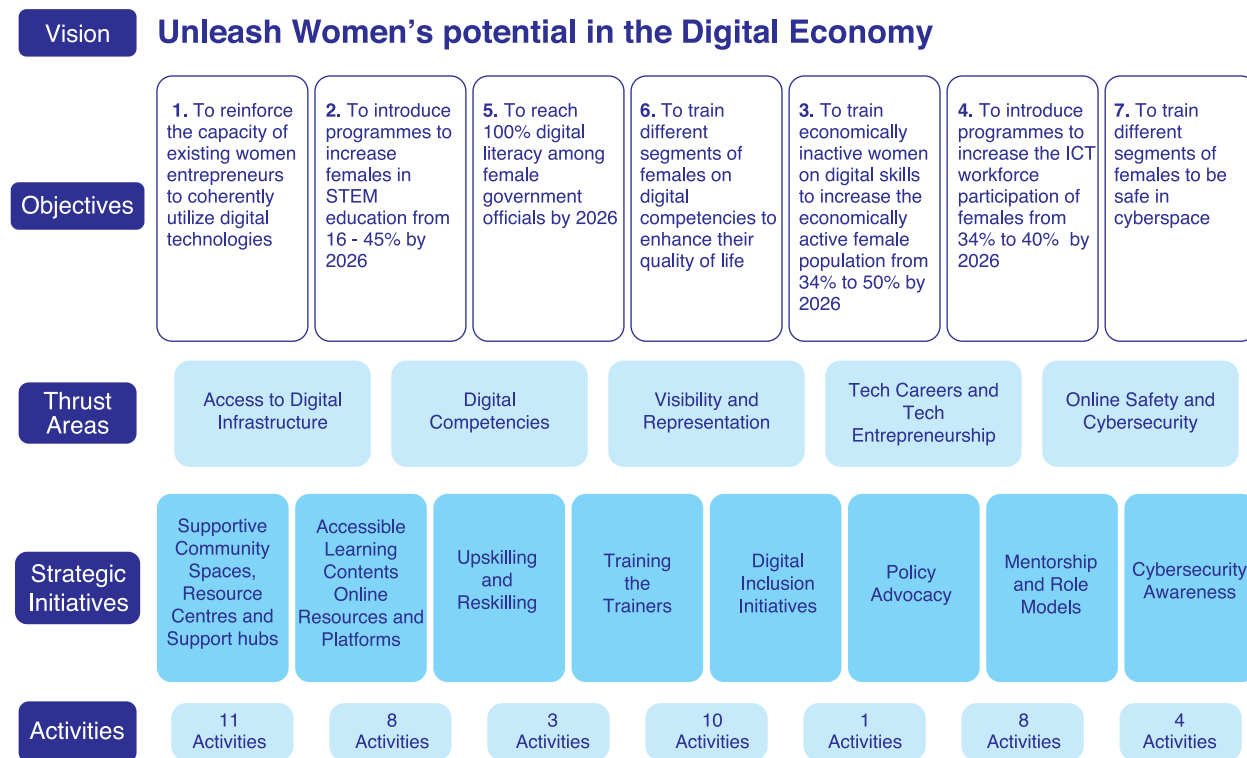
A multi-dimensional strategy has been developed together with key stakeholders that addresses the key areas of focus mentioned below. Specific programmes, initiatives, and interventions have been defined that will be undertaken to achieve the defined goals and objectives.

5.6 RACI

This strategy outlines the framework for a set of prioritized, meaningful objectives which will shape planning, designing, implementing, monitoring and learning. It is complemented by an ambitious action plan which maps out specific and targeted activities to operationalize this strategy, with time frames, indicators and

responsibilities. The RACI has been prepared to define responsibilities, major milestones, and timelines in key tasks and major areas of responsibility.

6. Vision, Mission, Objectives and Thrust Areas



6.1 Vision:

‘Unleash Women’s Potential in the Digital Economy’.

Making Sri Lankan females effectively consume the benefits of the digital economy through engaging proactively and positively with the next version of the Industrial Revolution by making them digitally capable, and enhancing access to digital technologies and life enhancing opportunities through improved digital skills.”


6.2 Mission:

Creating an enabling environment and implementing strategic initiatives through interventions, mediation, facilitation, prioritization, and policy reforms for the successful adoption of digital skills and competencies among all segments of females and breaking barriers which restrain women from incorporating digital technologies for livelihood development to make them on par with digital skills and competencies required to unleash their potential in the digital economy.

6.3 Objectives:

Objective 1 : To reinforce the capacity of existing women entrepreneurs to coherently utilize digital technologies to:

- Increase their annual contributions to the GDP
- Make 10,000 female entrepreneurs connected with international markets
- Make 25,000 females adopt technology in their core businesses by 2026.



Objective 2 : To introduce programmes to increase females in STEM education from 16 - 45% (Engineering and Technology) by 2026

Objective 3 : To capacitate economically inactive women on digital skills to increase the economically active female population from 34% to 50% by 2026.

Objective 4 : To introduce programs to increase the ICT workforce participation of females from 34% to 40% by 2026.

Objective 5 : To reach 100% digital literacy among female government officials by 2026

Objective 6 : To train different segments of females on digital competencies to enhance their quality of life (persons with disabilities, women working in other industries, non-ICT graduates, women leaving for foreign employment)

Objective 7 : To train different segments of females to be safe in cyberspace

6.4 Thrust Areas

1. Digital Competencies (Obj. 1, 2, 5, 6)
2. Online Safety and Cybersecurity (Obj. 7)
3. Access to Digital Infrastructure (Obj. 1)
4. Tech careers and Tech Entrepreneurship (Obj. 3, 4)
5. Visibility and Representation (Obj. 4)

7. Strategic Initiatives

This national strategy for improving the digital competencies of females has addressed various dimensions to create a holistic and effective approach. Here are key areas of focus in the Suhuruliya 2.0 strategy:

7.1 Upskilling and Reskilling

Specifically tailored training programmes will be delivered to address the needs and preferences of different segments of women, considering their diverse backgrounds and skill levels to reskill and upskill them to meet the competency requirements to be efficient in the digital economy.

7.2 Accessible Learning Contents, Online Resources and Platforms:

Online and offline learning content and platforms that are easily accessible to women across different regions, including rural areas, have been planned to be in place with the implementation of the Suhuruliya 2.0 strategy. A repository of high-quality online resources, tutorials, and courses for women to learn at their own pace will be created during the national rollout.

7.3 Mentorship and Role Models:

Mentorship programmes connecting women with experienced professionals in the tech industry have been proposed to create awareness on ICT careers for females by showcasing successful women in tech as role models to inspire and motivate aspiring learners.



7.4 Digital Inclusion Initiatives:

Introducing initiatives to bridge the digital divide by providing affordable technology and internet access to underserved communities has been a key focus area of the new strategy. Collaborations with the TRC and telecom service providers will be established.

7.5 Supportive Community Spaces, Resource Centres and Support Hubs:

Establishing physical and virtual spaces where women can connect, share experiences, and collaborate on tech projects will foster a sense of community and belonging in the tech sector.

7.6 Policy Advocacy:

Advocating for policies that promote gender equality in education, the workplace, and technology access has been identified as key focus areas. During the strategy implementation phase, collaborations will be created with policymakers to ensure a supportive legal and regulatory framework in place for encouraging females to reap the benefits of the digital economy.

7.7 Initiatives for Cybersecurity Awareness:

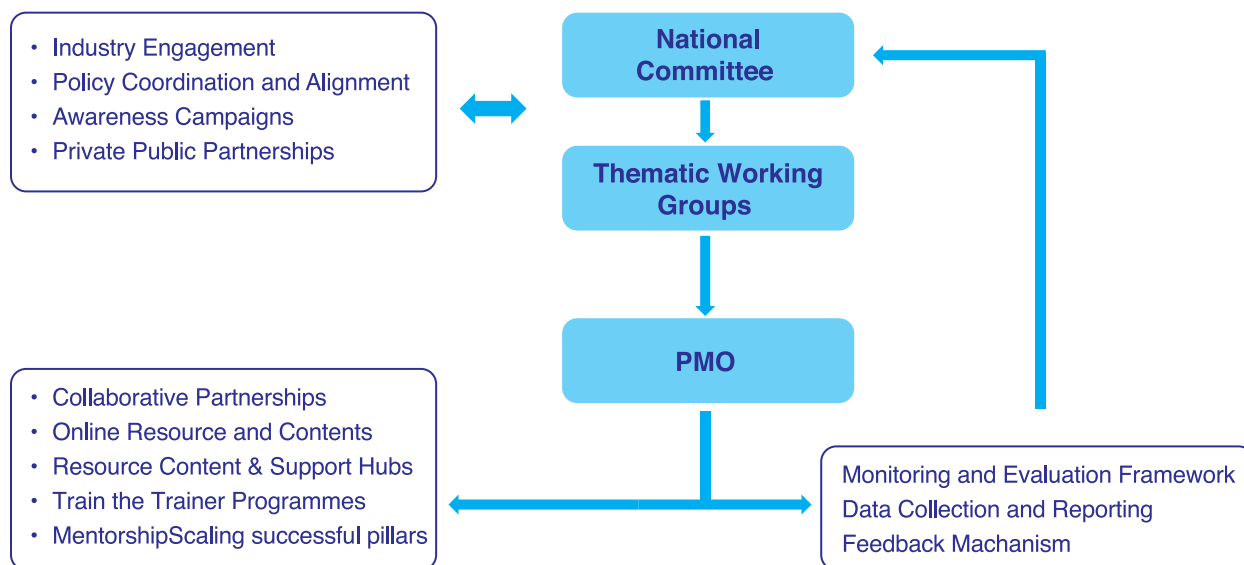
Cybersecurity education to empower females with the knowledge to protect themselves online has been included in Suhuruliya 2.0 to make all women free and safe on the internet.

7.8 Train-the-Trainer Programmes:

Conducting upskilling programmes for Women Development Officers (WDOs) in the Ministry of Women Affairs, train-the-trainer programmes to equip educators, mentors, and trainers with the necessary skills to deliver effective and gender-sensitive programmes to women, and empowering trainers to adapt content to the specific needs of female learners are key focus areas.

8. Governance Mechanism

Effective governance mechanisms will be established for a successful implementation of the Suhuruliya 2.0 national strategy to improve the digital competencies of women. It ensures that the strategy is implemented efficiently, resources are allocated effectively, and progress is monitored and evaluated. By establishing a robust governance framework, the strategy can effectively address gender disparities in the digital realm and create an environment conducive to women's empowerment and economic inclusion. The following governance has been structured within the context of the strategy:



8.1 Established National Committee, Thematic Working Groups

Dedicated national committee and working groups comprising representatives from relevant government agencies, NGOs, educational institutions, industry partners, and women's organizations have been planned to be established in the strategy implementation phase.

8.2 Project Management Office (PMO):

ICTA will act as the PMO responsible for overseeing the implementation, monitoring, and coordination of all initiatives under the strategy. The PMO should ensure consistency, alignment with goals, and efficient resource allocation.


8.3 Policy Coordination and Alignment:

Ensuring that the strategy is aligned with existing national policies related to the digital economy strategy, gender equality, education, technology, and economic development is important. Fostering collaboration between different government bodies to ensure a holistic approach in implementation will also be critical.

8.4 Resource Allocation and Budgeting:

Allocating a budget specifically for the implementation of the strategy, ensuring sufficient funding for training, capacity-building, infrastructure, and awareness campaigns are important. Monitoring budget allocation to ensure resources are used efficiently and transparently will be done.

8.5 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework:



Developing a comprehensive framework to track and assess the progress of the strategy's initiatives and objectives is critical. Established key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure outcomes such as increased digital literacy rates among women and improved representation in tech fields will be monitored. A monitoring and evaluation mechanism will be introduced through the Women Development Officers (WDOs) located in the District Secretariat, appointed by the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs.

8.6 Data Collection and Reporting:

Implementing a system for collecting gender-disaggregated data to measure the impact of the strategy accurately through the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs is important. Regularly reporting progress to stakeholders, the public, and international partners to maintain transparency and accountability will also be key.

8.7 Stakeholder Engagement:

Engage a diverse range of stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, private sector, and academia, to collaborate on strategy implementation. Encourage active participation and input from women themselves to ensure their needs are addressed.

8.8 Capacity-Building for Implementers:

Provide training and capacity-building programmes for Women Development Officers (WDOs) to execute the strategy by equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to oversee and manage digital competency development initiatives effectively.

8.9 Coordination of Programmes and Initiatives:

Ensure that various programmes under the strategy, such as digital literacy training, STEM education initiatives, and entrepreneurship support, are well-coordinated and complementary.

8.10 Feedback Mechanisms:

Mechanisms for collecting feedback from beneficiaries of the strategy, including women who have participated in digital competency programmes, have been established through the Women Development Officers (WDOs). Use this feedback to make necessary adjustments and improvements to the strategy's implementation.

8.11 International Collaboration:

Collaborate with international organizations such as UN-APCICT, UN-ESCAP, development partners, and global networks to share best practices, access resources, and align with global gender and tech goals.

8.12 Policy Flexibility and Adoption:

Monitor the evolving digital landscape and adapt the strategy to incorporate new technologies, trends, and emerging challenges.

Milestones and Activities Objectives

2024

- 1) Annual contributions to GDP from female entrepreneurs increased up to LKR 10bn
- 3) Females in STEM education increased up to 20%
- 4) Economically active female population increased up to 40%
- 5) Female ICT Workforce increased up to 37%
- 6) 50% digital literacy among female government officials
- 7) Increased digital skills among 1mn females in other sectors
- 8) Increased online safety skills among 1mn females in different segments

2025

- 1) Annual contributions to GDP from female entrepreneurs increased up to LKR 15bn
- 3) Females in STEM education increased up to 35%
- 4) Economically active female population increased up to 45% 5) Female ICT workforce increased up to 40%
- 6) 75% digital literacy among female government officials
- 7) Increased digital skills among 3mn females in other sectors
- 8) Increased online safety skills among 3mn females in different segments

2026

- 1) Annual contributions to GDP from female entrepreneurs increased up to LKR 25bn
- 3) Females in STEM education increased up to 50%
- 4) Economically active female population increased up to 50%
- 5) Female ICT workforce increased up to 45%
- 6) 100% digital literacy among female government officials
- 7) Increased digital skills among 5mn females in other sectors
- 8) Increased online safety skills among 5mn females in different segments

Activities

2024

- 373 WDOs, 319 Counselling officers, 119 Women Development Field Assistants upskilled
- 10,000 female entrepreneurs trained
- 2,000 entrepreneurs for technology diffusion
- 2,000 entrepreneurs for exports
- 250,000 girls given career guidance
- 250 Career Guidance Officers trained level 1
- 50,000 converted to IT industry through rapid conversion
- 4,000 graduates connected with IT industry through the industry bridging programme.
- 25 role model and mentoring programmes conducted
- 500,000 trained on freelancing and digital entrepreneurship
- 10,000 females in the IT workforce re-skilled
- 5,000 females who got career breaks connected with the IT industry through refresher programme
- 100,000 female government officials trained
- 25,000 female school teachers trained
- 5 Digital Support Units established
- 50,000 females with disabilities trained
- 5,000 girls with disabilities provided career guidance
- 100,000 females in agriculture sector trained
- 1,000,000 female workers in different sectors trained
- 500,000 elderly females trained
- 5,000 females coming down from foreign employment trained
- 1,000,000 females trained on online safety
- M&E and feedback mechanism established
- 1 annual networking event completed
- Initiation of NVQ qualifications for female entrepreneurs
- National awareness campaign completed for women development
- Strategy implementation included to the duty list of the field officers
- 1 national forum conducted to recognize achievements of females
- 1 annual survey published
- Initial work completed for strengthening digital platforms for online sales.
- First-hand contact for women established together with SLCERT and Hithawathi
- Digital solutions that can be used for family harmony and prosperity identified.
- A programme for women researchers to research women's IT practices conceptualized.

2025

- 373 WDOs, 319 Counselling Officers, 119 Women Development Field Assistants trained
- 25,000 Female entrepreneurs trained
- 5,000 entrepreneurs for technology diffusion
- 5,000 entrepreneurs for exports
- 500,000 girls given career guidance
- 250 Career Guidance Officers trained level II
- 100,000 converted to IT industry through rapid conversion
- 8,000 graduates connected with IT industry through the industry bridging programme
- 50 role model and mentoring programmes conducted
- 1,000,000 trained on freelancing and digital entrepreneurship
- 25,000 females in the IT workforce re-skilled
- 20,000 females who got career breaks connected with the IT industry through refresher programme
- 250,000 female government officials trained
- 50,000 female school teachers trained
- 15 Digital Support Units established
- 100,000 females with disabilities trained
- 10,000 girls with disabilities provided career guidance
- 250,000 females in Agriculture sector trained
- 3,000,000 female workers in different sectors trained
- 750,000 elderly females trained
- 15,000 females coming down from foreign employment trained
- 3,000,000 females trained on online safety
- 2 annual networking events completed
- NVQ qualifications for female entrepreneurs launched
- Strategy implementation included to the duty list of the Field Officers evaluated
- 2 national forums conducted to recognize achievements of females
- Annual survey published
- Digital platforms for online sales launched together with SLCERT and Hithawathi
- Digital solutions that can be used for family harmony and prosperity established
- A programme for women researchers to research women's IT practices launched

2026

- 373 WDOs, 319 Counselling Officers, 119 Women Development Field Assistants trained
- 40,000 Female entrepreneurs trained
- 10,000 entrepreneurs for technology diffusion
- 10,000 entrepreneurs for exports
- 1,000,000 girls given career guidance
- 250 Career Guidance Officers trained level III
- 200,000 converted to IT industry through rapid conversion
- 15,000 graduates connected with IT industry through the industry bridging programme
- 75 Role model and mentoring programmes conducted
- 2,000,000 trained on freelancing and digital entrepreneurship
- 40,000 females in the IT workforce re-skilled
- 35,000 females who got career breaks connected with the IT industry through refresher programme
- 500,000 female government officials trained
- 100,000 female school Teachers trained
- 25 Digital Support units established
- 250,000 females with disabilities trained
- 15,000 girls with disabilities provided career guidance
- 750,000 females in agriculture sector trained
- 5,000,000 female workers in different sectors trained
- 1-500,000 elderly females trained
- 25,000 females coming down from foreign employment trained
- 5,000,000 females trained on online safety
- 3 Annual networking events completed
- NVQ qualifications awarded for 10,000 female entrepreneurs
- Strategy implementation included to the duty list of the field officers evaluated
- 3 national forums conducted to recognize achievements of females
- Annual survey published
- Digital platforms for online sales established
- First-hand contact for women strengthened together with SLCERT and Hithawathi
- Digital solutions that can be used for family harmony and prosperity strengthened
- A programme for women researchers to research women's IT practices implemented

9. Objectives, Outcome and Outputs Mapping

Audience	Activities	Outputs	Outcome	Stakeholder / Initiative(s)	Impact
<p>Objective 1 : To reinforce the capacity of existing women entrepreneurs to coherently utilize digital technologies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase their annual contributions to the GDP - Make 10,000 female entrepreneurs connected with international markets - Make 25,000 females adopt technology in their core businesses by 2026. 	<p>1. Upskilling programme for 373 WDOs, 319 counselling officers/ assistants, 119 Women Development Field Assistants and field officers of relevant implementing ministries on the new strategy</p> <p>2. Establishing M&E and feedback mechanism with online portal for Suhuruliya 2.0 strategy implementation</p> <p>3. Suhuruliya annual national forum to recognize the significant achievements of females and WDOs trained under Suhuruliya programme</p> <p>4. Including the strategy implementation to the duty list of the field officers and setting KPIs</p>	<p>373 WDOs, 319 counselling officers/ assistants, 119 Women Development Field Assistants and field officers are upskilled to effectively deliver Suhuruliya 2.0</p> <p>Established M&E and feedback mechanism to get real-time feedback and data</p> <p>Contributions and achievements of WDOs and other women are recognised</p>	<p>373 upskilled WDOs for national rollout of Suhuruliya initiative</p> <p>Effective two-way communication established among WDOs</p> <p>Effective implementation of Suhuruliya 2.0 strategy</p>	<p>Ministry of Women Affairs</p> <p>Meta</p> <p>Non-profit organisations</p> <p>Other subject ministries and organizations</p> <p>Meta</p>	<p>Accelerated rollout of Suhuruliya initiative</p>

	Female Entrepreneurs	<p>5. Conducting a survey to determine the digital competency levels of existing female entrepreneurs</p> <p>6. Training 40,000 female entrepreneurs on digital marketing, eCommerce, and digital platforms to increase revenue</p> <p>7. Upscaling 10,000 selected entrepreneurs for technology diffusion to introduce technology to their business</p> <p>8. Strengthening platforms/portals such as lankawomenmarket.gov.lk to support female entrepreneurs for sales/support services incorporating such portals with payment gateways</p> <p>9. Organising an annual networking event for all segments of women to establish strong relationship with other stakeholders</p> <p>10. Lobbying with TVEC to provide NVQ qualifications for female entrepreneurs who successfully complete Suhuruliya trainings</p>	<p>40,000 female entrepreneurs trained on digital marketing, eCommerce, and digital platforms</p> <p>LKR 5 billion annual contribution to national GDP through technology adoption by the entrepreneurs through Suhuruliya interventions</p> <p>10,000 female entrepreneurs directed for technology diffusion</p> <p>Network portal established for sales/support services</p>	<p>Increased GDP</p> <p>Increased digital economy contribution from female entrepreneurs</p> <p>Increased use of digital platforms for sales</p> <p>Increased level of technology adoption among businesses</p>	<p>Craft Council</p> <p>UN-APCICT</p> <p>Chambers</p> <p>SLT</p> <p>Ideamart of Dialog</p>	<p>Accelerated economic growth</p> <p>Accelerated digital economy growth</p> <p>Increased quality of life</p> <p>Female entrepreneurs' digital skills enhanced on par with the DE</p>
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	Female entrepreneurs with exports potential	11. Introducing an integrated programme to train 10,000 entrepreneurs on export-oriented digital platforms (together with relevant stakeholder organisations)	10,000 females connected with export markets through digital platforms	Increased exports revenue Increased contribution of women entrepreneurs to digital economy	EDB (SheTrades initiative) Meta	Accelerated economic growth Accelerated digital economy growth
Objective 2 : To introduce programmes to increase females in STEM education from 16 - 45% (Engineering and Technology) by 2026	Schoolgirls (from grade 6-13)	12. Introducing ICT Career Guidance programme for 1mn females in schools. 13. Training the Career Guidance Officers in schools on importance of female participation in IT and digitally enabled industries (schools, TVET and universities)	1mn school girls have been made aware about the ICT industry and its opportunities Career Guidance officers in education sector made aware of the importance of female participation in the technology industry 500,000 girls registered with career platforms such as Future Careers Bridge	Increased female participation in Engineering and Technology degrees from 16%-45% Increased female participation in the IT workforce from 34% to 45%	MoE IEEE	Bridging the skills shortage in the IT-BPM industry
	Girls in Vocational Education Sector	14. Introducing a rapid conversion programme (with employability skills) for 50,000 females in the TVET Sector to make them employment-ready in the technology sector 15. Organising special career guidance programme for girls with disabilities (in university, schools and TVET sector)	50,000 females added to the IT industry through a rapid conversion Trained females with disabilities in schools and TVET sector on digital skills to participate in the digital economy	Increased female participation in the IT workforce from 34% to 45% TVET sector female unemployment reduced by 50%	TVEC Skills Council	Bridging the skills shortage in the IT-BPM Industry

		Girls following STEM degrees in university	<p>16. Introducing an industry-bridging programme (with employability skills) for female STEM graduates to absorb 75% of passing out STEM graduates to the IT-BPM and digitally enabled industries</p> <p>17. Introducing role model and mentoring programme with existing women in leadership roles in the technology industry to promote technology-related careers (targeting schools, universities and TVET sectors)</p>	75% female students in STEM degrees attracted to the IT Industry	Increased female participation in the IT workforce from 34% to 45%	UGC SLASSCOM IEEE	Bridging the skills shortage in the IT-BPM Industry
	Girls in university education following non-IT degrees	<p>18. Introducing a rapid conversion programme to convert 10,000 female non-IT graduates for IT-BPM and digitally reenabled jobs.</p> <p>19. Introducing a capacity-building programme to train 25,000 female non-IT graduates on freelancing and digital entrepreneurship</p>	<p>10,000 female non-IT graduates converted for IT jobs</p> <p>25,000 female non-IT graduates trained on freelancing and digital entrepreneurship</p>	Increased female participation in the IT workforce from 34% to 45%	Increased economically active female population from 34%-50%	Freelancer clubs ADB IEEE	<p>Increased female participation in the digital economy</p> <p>Increased female contribution to GDP</p>

<p>Objective 3 : To capacitate economically inactive women on digital skills to increase the economically active female population from 34% to 50% by 2026</p>	<p>Unemployed females</p>	<p>20. Introducing a programme for training 1,000,000 unemployed females on freelancing and digital entrepreneurship</p>	<p>1,000,000 Unemployed females trained on freelancing and digital entrepreneurship</p>	<p>Increased the economically active female population from 34% to 50%</p>	<p>Freelancer clubs ADB Skills Council</p>	<p>Increased female participation in the digital economy Increased female contribution to GDP</p>
<p>Objective 4 : To introduce programs to increase the ICT workforce participation of females from 34% to 40% by 2026</p>	<p>Existing Female Workforce in the IT-BPM Industry</p>	<p>21. Upskilling and reskilling of existing female workforce in the IT-BPM industry 22. Introducing a programme to recognise female leaders in technical roles in the technology industry 23. Introducing an awareness campaign to tech industry leadership, recruiters, on implementing women-friendly/supportive workspaces 24. Conducting a national campaign to promote IT industry for females (labour law, opportunities and prospects) 25. Lobbying technology companies to introduce more benefits for female employees</p>	<p>90% of existing females in the IT-BPM industry acquired skills on par with the industry Females' role in the IT-BPM industry recognised and celebrated Friendly and supportive environment created for females in the technology industry Awareness has been created among wider community on importance of female participation in technology careers</p>	<p>Increased IT workforce participation of females from 34% to 40% by 2026</p>		<p>Increased IT workforce participation of females from 34% to 40% by 2026</p>

<p>Objective 5 : To reach 100% digital literacy among female government officials by 2026</p>	<p>Females having IT degrees but not in the IT industry (doing non-IT jobs, career breaks, not working in the IT industry)</p>	<p>26. Introducing a reskilling (gap filling) programme for 5,000 females who got career breaks from the IT industry</p> <p>27. Introducing a refresher programme to attract 45,000 female IT graduates doing non-IT jobs to the IT Industry (mindset change, job security, freelancing)</p> <p>28. Creating/ strengthening networking and coaching portals and a mentor pool to support skills bridging for females with career breaks</p>	<p>50,000 female IT graduates attracted to the IT Industry</p>	<p>Increased IT workforce participation of females from 34% to 40% by 2026</p>	<p>SLASSCOM FITIS CSSL BCS</p>	<p>Increased exports Revenue from IT industry Gender balance in the IT Industry</p>
<p>Objective 5 : To reach 100% digital literacy among female government officials by 2026</p>	<p>Female government officers</p>	<p>29. Training 500,000 female government officials on digital skills</p> <p>30. Transforming 182,000 female school teachers through teacher competency framework</p>	<p>500,000 female government employees trained on digital skills</p> <p>182,000 female teachers trained on digital skills required for education</p>	<p>Increased efficiency of government services</p> <p>Increased use of digital technologies in government services</p> <p>182,000 female teachers to use digital technologies in education</p>	<p>MoE Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs</p>	<p>Citizen-friendly government Digital transformation in education</p>

	Establishing 25 Digital Support Units at district secretariats	Women with disabilities		Increased digital adoption	Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs National Learning and Innovation Centre, ICTA	Increased digital adoption
<p>Objective 6 : To train different segments of females on digital competencies to enhance their quality of life (persons with disabilities, women working in other industries, non-ICT graduates, women leaving for foreign employment)</p>	<p>31. Establishing 25 Digital Support Units at all district secretariats</p> <p>32. Introducing programmes to support 500,000 females with disabilities</p> <p>33. Train 500 women with disabilities in 25 districts</p> <p>34. Career guidance programme for 500 girls with disabilities in 25 districts</p>	<p>500,000 females with disabilities trained on technology and digital skills to be part of the digital economy</p>	<p>Increased digital skills and digital adoption among females with disabilities</p>	<p>Increased quality of life for females with disabilities</p>	<p>Deaf Federation Social Welfare Ministry</p>	<p>Increased efficiency of life for females with disabilities</p>
Women in agriculture	<p>35. Training 725,000 females in the agriculture sector on digital skills</p>	<p>725,000 females in the agriculture sector trained on digital technologies</p>	<p>Increased digital adoption in the agriculture sector</p>	<p>Increased efficiency in the agriculture sector</p>	<p>"Sithamu Kantha" initiative</p>	<p>Increased efficiency in the agriculture sector</p>

	Women employed in other sectors (handicrafts, tourism, retail, education, gem and jewellery, etc.)	<p>36. Introducing a programme to train 1mn female workers in different sectors</p> <p>37. Providing digital solutions for work-life balance of working women</p> <p>38. Introducing digital solutions that can be used for family harmony and prosperity</p> <p>39. Creating a group of female researchers to research women's IT practices</p> <p>40. Creating a digital programme or forums for different women segments (e.g. DigiMother for Mothers, Digiwomen for working women, DigiGirl for teen girls)</p>	1mn trained females in different sectors	Increased digital adoption among all sectors	N/A	Increased efficiency in the agriculture sector
Elderly females		<p>41. User-friendly training of 2mn elderly females and mentoring females on digital skills</p>	1mn elderly females trained on digital technologies	Increased digital adoption among females	eLankapura University of Kelaniya	Increased digital literacy rate

<p>Objective 7 : To train different segments of females to be safe in cyberspace</p>	<p>Women coming back after foreign employment</p>	<p>42. Introducing a programme to train 20,000 females coming down from foreign employment on freelancing and digital entrepreneurship</p>	<p>Trained 20,000 females coming down from foreign employment on freelancing and digital entrepreneurship</p>	<p>Increased economically active female population</p>	<p>Foreign Employment Bureau</p>	
	<p>All segments of females</p>	<p>43. Introducing a module on online safety for all programmes under Suhuruliya 44. Conducting national campaign on online safety and how to avoid negative impact of technology through 25 support centres established in District Secretariats 45. Lobbying existing organisations and initiatives (SLCERT, Hithawathi, etc.) on strengthening 1st level escalations and helpdesks (1938) to address issues faced by females 46. Lobbying relevant organizations on strengthening law enforcement and support services to assure online safety for women</p>	<p>Trained 1mn females on online safety and avoid gender-based violence in cyberspace</p>	<p>Enhanced awareness on online safety among females Reduced gender-based violence in cyberspace</p>	<p>SLCERT LK Domain Registry CID</p>	<p>Safe internet access for all women</p>

Annex 'A'

1. Analysis of potential female segments

Audience	Source	Number by Categories		
		Major	Sub	Subset
Economically active female population	Confirmed	3,097,744		
Female Entrepreneurs	Estimated		40,000	
-Female Entrepreneurs for Export Markets				36
Female Own Account Workers	Estimated		700,000	
Female IT Graduates not in the IT Industry (unemployed/underemployment/doing non-IT jobs)	Estimated		100,000	
Female Government Officers	Estimated		725,000	
- Female Teachers in Schools	Confirmed			182,519
Employed female population by sectors	Confirmed		2,896,104	
- Agriculture (25.5%)	Confirmed			738,507
- Industry (24.8%)	Confirmed			116,778
- Services (48.7%)	Confirmed			1,410,403
Total economically active audience with estimations			4,461,104	

Annex 'B'

Economically inactive female population	Confirmed	6,120,265		
Unemployed females with above A/L qualifications	Confirmed		1,100,000	
Total schoolgirls	Confirmed		1,231,805	
- Grade 6-9 schoolgirls	Confirmed			667,666
- Grade 10-11 schoolgirls	Confirmed			327,877
- Grade 12-13 schoolgirls	confirmed			236,262
- Girls in STEM in A/L	confirmed			63,000
Total girls in university education (4 Batches)	confirmed		106,800	
- Girls in STEM degrees (4 batches)	confirmed			44,500
- Girls in ICT degrees (4 Batches)	confirmed			7,584
Total number of girls in TVET ICT courses	confirmed			23,196
Females registering for foreign employment	Confirmed		21,286	
Persons with disabilities (both economically active and inactive)	confirmed		258,262	
Unpaid family workers (20.4%)	Confirmed		2,244,000	
Total economically inactive audience with estimations			4,962,153	
Untapped			1,576,743	
Total			11,000,000	

List of Organisations That Contributed to Suhuruliya 2.0 Strategy Formulation

1. ICT Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA)
2. Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment
3. Women's Bureau of Sri Lanka
4. Ministry of Education
5. Ministry of Agriculture
6. Ministry of Public Administration, Home Affairs, Provincial Councils, and Local Government
7. Meta
8. UN Women
9. UN Development Programme (UNDP)
10. UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)
11. Saubhagya Development Bureau
12. LK Domain Registry
13. Nawaliya Newspaper
14. Diversity Collective Lanka
15. Federation of IT Industry Sri Lanka (FITIS)
16. Sri Lanka Association for Software Services Companies (SLASSCOM)
17. BCS, Chartered Institute for IT, Sri Lanka Section
18. Computer Society of Sri Lanka (CSSL)
19. ICT Industry Skills Council
20. Computer Society Sri Lanka Chapter
21. Digital Marketing Association of Sri Lanka
22. Craft Council Sri Lanka
23. Asian Development Bank
24. National Secretariat for Elders
25. Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission of Sri Lanka
26. Telecommunication Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka (TRCSL)
27. Sarvodaya Fusion
28. Exports Development Board (EDB)
29. Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration
30. Innova Technologies
31. Hemas Holdings
32. IEEE (Women in Engineering) WIE Sri Lanka Section
33. YouLead Sri Lanka
34. 99X Technologies
35. Oxfam Sri Lanka
36. Sector Skills Development Project, Ministry of Education
37. Employers' Federation of Ceylon
38. Sri Lanka CERT
39. Dialog Axiata Ltd.
40. ILO Sri Lanka
41. Ministry of Public Security
42. CISCO Sri Lanka
43. Sri Lanka Telecom
44. OREL Corporation
45. Sri Lanka Central Federation of the Deaf
46. National Innovation Agency
47. Nagarro Sri Lanka
48. Sampath Bank PLC
49. Regional Development Bank
50. ACTED Global
51. ChildFund Sri Lanka
52. Trainocate Sri Lanka
53. Institute of Money and Entrepreneurship Development
54. University of Moratuwa
55. Save the Children Foundation
56. Department of Census and Statistics
57. Women Development Officers
58. Female entrepreneurs



<https://lightingdigital.gov.lk>



<https://www.icta.lk>



<https://www.facebook.com/suhuruliya>

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