



GPGS

Governance for Public
Goods and Services



WOMEN DIGITAL CHAMPIONS

Empowering women civil servants to
lead digital transformation

In partnership with UNDP's Digitalization, AI
and Innovation (DAI) Hub, and UNDP Gender
Team



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WOMEN DIGITAL CHAMPIONS

IN BRIEF

Women Digital Champions (WDC) is a joint initiative by UNDP's Governance for Public Goods & Services (GPGS) and the Digital, AI and Innovation (DAI) Hub, implemented in close collaboration with UNDP's Gender Team.

The initiative is designed to equip women civil servants with the technical and leadership skillsets required to drive digital transformation across government.

By focusing on both upstream governance processes and frontline service delivery, **WDC** empowers women to play a central role in shaping and implementing digital reforms that are responsive, inclusive, and citizen-centered – including through the responsible use of AI.

By contributing to bridging the gender digital divide, **WDC** advances an agenda for more agile, inclusive, and future-ready public institutions.

THE CHALLENGE

Despite significant investments in digital transformation, **women remain underrepresented in public sector digital leadership**. This can hamper the inclusiveness of digital transformation journeys: too often, digital strategies are conceptualized and implemented without considering the barriers women face in the digital space.

As a result, valuable perspectives are missed, and digital services may not fully address the needs of all citizens and end-users. Without targeted interventions, **digitalization can inadvertently widen gender gaps** instead of closing them.

There is a pressing need for approaches that actively empower women within government to become digital leaders, ensuring that technological advances benefit everyone and do not reinforce existing inequalities.



THE OFFER

WDC provides a modular, scalable package of support that can be tailored to different country contexts and reform agendas. The core components include:

- **Specialized Training-of-Trainers (ToT):** An intensive programme for women civil servants focusing on digital skills, emerging technologies (such as AI), and leadership and communication. The curriculum aims to help participants become effective digital champions in their institutions. The ToT is highly practical and interactive—using case studies, group exercises, and project-based assignments—to ensure skills are indeed applicable in the workplace. As a ToT initiative, participants also learn facilitation techniques, enabling them to mentor peers and cascade these skills across their agencies.



THE OFFER

- **Advisory & Technical Support for Pilots:** After the training, UNDP provides ongoing coaching and technical assistance as participants launch small-scale pilots in their respective teams or departments. WDC guides the design of these pilots, helps troubleshoot technical issues, and ensures robust monitoring so that results can be measured and scaled. The goal is to move from training to tangible improvements in public services and organizational performance—leveraging women’s digital leadership in the process.
- **Peer Learning & South–South Exchange:** WDC facilitates knowledge exchange and networking among women leaders across countries. Participants join communities of practice—both in-person and online—where they share experiences, challenges, and success stories. Through UNDP’s global network and in partnership with initiatives such as the “Gender Equality Seal for Public Institutions”, women digital champions in different countries can learn from one another and collaborate on practical solutions.
- **Integration into Broader Reforms:** The WDC offer is designed to be “plugged into” larger institutional transformation and gender equality initiatives. It creates synergies with efforts such as Gender Equality in Public Administration (GEPA), e-governance projects, and civil service modernization programs. This portfolio approach generates positive feedback loops: as women champions demonstrate what is possible with inclusive digital innovation, they inspire further reforms and help mainstream gender-responsive practices in the public sector.

KEY FEATURES

- ▶ Hands-on capacity building: Practical training that builds digital skills and leadership among women civil servants.
- ▶ Inclusivity as a major focus: Emphasis on ethical, accessible technology adoption (including AI; user-centric design).
- ▶ Training-to-action: Support for participants to apply their skills via post-training projects and innovation experiments, contributing to tangible improvements in internal processes or in service design/delivery.
- ▶ Systemic change: WDC can be embedded in larger reform efforts—including national digitalization strategies and public administration reform initiatives.



KEY PARTNERS

WDC is co-led by UNDP's Governance for Public Goods & Services (GPGS) team and the Digitalization, AI and Innovation (DAI) Hub – and is being rolled out in close collaboration with UNDP's Gender Team.

WDC engages closely with national government counterparts (such as civil service commissions or Ministries responsible for digitalization and information technologies). The initiative has been supported by key contributing partners, including Denmark, Luxembourg and the Republic of Korea, through UNDP'S Funding Windows.



WOMEN DIGITAL CHAMPIONS IN PRACTICE

In **Ethiopia**, a WDC pilot was launched in 2025, under the FutureSmart initiative, to train 35 women civil servants across multiple ministries as part of a six-month Training of Trainers (ToT) programme. Participants then received online mentorship to facilitate a cascading, ripple effect. WDC "graduates" in Ethiopia have, to date, trained 130 additional civil servants across public institutions, and the positive multiplier effect is set to continue.

In **Bhutan**, as part of the WDC's programme, UNDP and the Royal Civil Service Commission trained 30 women officers from key ministries in digital innovation and AI literacy. The trainees developed action plans to advance gender-inclusive e-governance across their respective organizations. These early successes of WDC have sparked further interest in replicating WDC elsewhere, including Chad.

By empowering women as digital champions, public institutions are better positioned to achieve demonstrable wins in organizational performance while fostering a culture change.





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