

EDB–SLASSCOM “SHE EXPORT” PROGRAMME

Capacity Building Programme for Export-Oriented Women Entrepreneurs in the ICT-BPO Sector

Programme Report | 2024–2025

20

women-led companies

3

core programme pillars

ICT-BPO

sector focus

UAE

international exposure

1. Executive Summary

Implemented by the Sri Lanka Export Development Board (EDB) in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Association of Software and Service Companies (SLASSCOM), and supported by the International Trade Centre (ITC) SheTrades, the programme strengthened the export readiness and international market access of women-led businesses in Sri Lanka’s ICT-BPO sector. The initiative formed the pilot phase of a longer-term strategy for developing export-oriented women entrepreneurs, combining capacity building, expert mentoring, sustainability awareness, international exposure and business networking.

2. Programme at a Glance

Implementing institutions	EDB in collaboration with SLASSCOM
Supported by	International Trade Centre (ITC) SheTrades
Implementation period	2024–2025
Target group	Registered businesses with a minimum of 25% women ownership in ICT -BPM Sector

3. Programme Objectives

- **Market readiness** - Enhance the knowledge and capabilities of technology-based women entrepreneurs to enter and compete in international markets.
- **Knowledge & mentoring** - Connect participants with industry experts, successful ICT-BPO exporters and international specialists to understand global trends, market requirements and expansion opportunities.
- **International exposure & linkages** - Identify and handhold suitable businesses for trade missions, exhibitions and business networking programmes organised or supported by EDB.

4. Participant Profile & Capacity Building

Twenty women-led companies participated, representing a diverse range of technology-oriented sectors:

Software & Technology as a Service	AgriTech	E-commerce & Retail	Edutech	Fintech & Banking
Healthtech	Tourism & Travel Technology	HR Services	Chemtech	Other ICT-BPO related sectors

Knowledge areas covered | Market readiness • Cloud solutions • Technology trends • Cybersecurity • AI & IoT • ICT sustainability

5. Sustainability & Responsible ICT

A specialised ITC knowledge sharing session introduced participants to emerging international sustainability requirements relevant to ICT businesses, including:

- Energy efficiency and sustainable data storage
- Electronic waste management
- ICT sustainability certification

This component highlighted that international competitiveness increasingly extends beyond technology and pricing to responsible resource use, environmental management and sustainability practices.

6. International Exposure – GITEX GLOBAL & Expand North Star 2025, UAE

Selected women led businesses participated in a Technical Exposure Programme held parallel to GITEX GLOBAL and Expand North Star 2025 in the UAE. The exposure connected participants with technology companies, start-ups, investors, buyers, experts and other international stakeholders.

Key exposure areas:

- Global technology trends and competitive positioning
- B2B meetings and buyer networking
- Benchmarking against international technology businesses
- Product development, innovation, marketing and international business practices

7. UAE Market Knowledge & Business Networking

Through the **SheTrade MENA Hub (UAE)**, participants engaged with Dr. Ashraf Ali Mahate, Chief Economist, Department of Economy and Tourism, Dubai. The session provided practical insights into the UAE ICT market and the wider Dubai business environment, including considerations for Sri Lankan technology companies exploring market entry, partnerships and business relationships.

Potential collaboration areas identified through discussions and networking included:

- Joint ventures
- Technology partnerships and technology transfers
- Business-to-business collaborations
- Knowledge sharing
- Market linkages
- Other mutually beneficial business relationships

8. Key Outcomes

Market readiness Increased awareness of international market entry requirements.	Technology Improved understanding of AI, IoT, cloud solutions and emerging technology trends.
Cybersecurity Increased awareness of cybersecurity requirements for internationally oriented technology businesses.	Sustainability Improved awareness of energy efficiency, sustainable data storage, e-waste and sustainability certification.
International exposure Direct exposure to the global technology ecosystem through GITEX GLOBAL and Expand North Star 2025.	Business linkages Opportunities for B2B engagement, buyer networking and potential international collaborations.
UAE market Improved understanding of the UAE ICT market and Dubai's business environment.	Networks Stronger connections among Sri Lankan women-led technology entrepreneurs and international stakeholders.

9. Strategic Value

The programme moved beyond general awareness creation by combining practical capacity development with international exposure and business networking. The GITEX/Expand North Star experience and engagement with the SheTrade MENA Hub (UAE) created a platform for participants to explore longer-term international partnerships, technology cooperation and market opportunities.





What is Greening ICT?

Green ICT is the designing, manufacturing, using, and disposing of computers, servers, and associated subsystems efficiently and effectively with minimal or no impact on the environment.

Greening ICT involves reduction of energy consumption in ICT application and leveraging ICT to reduce environmental impact.

Adopting Green ICT practices offers enterprises and individuals financial and other benefits such as:

- reducing power consumption and lowering cost,
- lower environmental impact

Source: <https://www.ecg.govt.nz/>

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Misou Van Bruggen 16

Gladys Kwaia SMC (Guest) 16

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Why Energy Efficiency in SMEs?

WHY should you give attention to energy efficiency in ICT in particular?

- Energy costs have increased by 200 percent in the last three years -30% of the overall energy consumed by PCs is wasted by being left on when not in use
- "Almost a third of small firms highlight the cost of energy as a barrier to the growth and success of their business. Finding energy efficiency savings is the single best way of reducing these costs over the long-term."
- The average SME could reduce its energy bill by 18-25% by installing energy efficiency measures with an average payback of less than 1.5 years.
- An estimated 40% of these savings would require zero capital costs

Energy consumption (kWh)

Energy consumption distributions for ICT sectors.

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Misou Van Bruggen 16

Gladys Kwaia SMC (Guest) 16

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EDB-SLASSCOM “She Export” Programme

Capacity Building Programme for Export-Oriented
Women Entrepreneurs in the ICT-BPO Sector



**Implementation
Period**
2024–2025



Implemented by
Sri Lanka Export
Development Board (EDB)
in Collaboration with
SLASSCOM



Supported By
International
Trade Center (ITC)



Programme Nature
Pilot phase of a long-term
strategy to develop
export-oriented women
entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka

1. BACKGROUND



The EDB, in collaboration with SLASSCOM, implemented a capacity building programme to strengthen the export readiness and international market access of women-led businesses in Sri Lanka's ICT & BPO sectors during 2024–2025.

This pilot initiative responds to the growing importance of technology, digital services and innovation in international trade, while empowering women-led technology businesses with market knowledge, industry exposure, expert guidance and global business connections.



A total of **20** women-led companies were selected to participate in the programme.

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE



20

Women-led
Companies
Participated



8+

ICT-BPO
Sub-sectors
Represented



5

Core Capacity
Building
Areas Covered



1

International
Market Exposure
Mission



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Registered businesses with a minimum of 25% women ownership, ensuring meaningful women participation in ownership and decision making.

PARTICIPATING SECTORS



Software & Technology as a Service



Agritech



E-commerce & Retail



EduTech



Fintech & Banking



Healthtech



Tourism & Travel Technology



HR Services



Chemtech



Other ICT-BPO Related Sectors



1. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL MARKET READINESS

Enhance the knowledge and capabilities of technology-based women entrepreneurs to enter and compete in international markets.



2. KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND MENTORING

Provide access to industry experts, successful ICT-BPO exporters and international specialists to support participants in understanding global trends, market requirements and business expansion opportunities.



3. INTERNATIONAL EXPOSURE AND MARKET LINKAGES

Identify and handhold suitable women-led technology businesses for participation in international trade missions, exhibitions and business networking programmes organised or supported by the EDB.

3. CAPACITY BUILDING & AWARENESS SESSIONS – KEY AREAS COVERED



Market Readiness
& International
Competitiveness



Scalable Cloud
Solutions for
Start-ups



Latest Technology
Trends



Cybersecurity for
International
Business



Artificial Intelligence
(AI) & Internet of
Things (IoT)



4. ICT SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Participants were introduced to emerging international sustainability requirements in the ICT sector.

- ✓ Energy efficiency & sustainable digital infrastructure
- ✓ E-waste management & responsible recycling
- ✓ Green data centres & carbon footprint reduction
- ✓ Sustainable procurement practices



5. INTERNATIONAL EXPOSURE – UAE MARKET STUDY VISIT



Conducted from
21–24 October
2025



Dubai & Abu Dhabi,
United Arab
Emirates



Business meetings
with local
companies &
industry experts



Explored market
opportunities &
collaboration
possibilities



Valuable insights
on market needs
and business
practices



The visit provided participants with first-hand exposure to the UAE market and strengthened their confidence to pursue international opportunities.

KEY OUTCOMES & IMPACT



Enhanced knowledge
and skills of women
entrepreneurs in
ICT-BPO sector



Improved readiness
for international
markets and global
competitiveness



Stronger business
networks and
connections



Greater awareness
of emerging
technologies and
sustainability



Increased confidence
to expand and scale
in international
markets



STRATEGIC VALUE

This pilot programme lays a strong foundation for scaling up and creating a robust ecosystem for women-led technology enterprises to thrive in global markets.



WAY FORWARD

Building on the success of this pilot, the programme will be scaled to benefit more women entrepreneurs across the ICT-BPO ecosystem.

