Standard Cover Sheet

Project No.:	130069
Country Office	Ethiopia Office: The liaison office to AUC and ECA
Thematic Areas:	Relevant SDGs the project is contributing to:
Project Title:	Closing the Digital Gender Gap in Africa: Equipping Young Girls with Digital Literacy, CODING and Personal Development Skills - Phase III AGCCI
Project Objectives:	- **Promote and support** the young girls' entry into the sector of ICT and coding. - **Encourage** leadership and confidence in young African girls. - **Create** national attention on girls, ICT and coding through media - **Collect** good practice developing and scaling up AGCCI - **Inspire and Advise** policymakers and legislators to mainstream ICT, gender and coding into national curricula. - **Encourage** and **Support N**ational ownership and Customisation of AGCCI - **Update** the virtual space to discuss gender, ICT and coding
Project Duration:	December 2023- December 2025 (TBC)
Expected Start Date:	
Geographical Coverage:	Regional: Burundi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Tanzania
Target beneficiaries:	Young African Girls in secondary school between 17-25 years
Total Budget ($):	1.5 million Euros
Funding Source:	Government of Belgium
Implementing organization:	UN Women
Implementing Partners:	AU Member States
Collaborative Partners:	African Union Commission, ITU, UNECA, private sectors and CSOs
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Signature	Date: November 20, 2023

1. **PROJECT BACKGROUND**

African Union's Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024) declare "an enabling environment for STI development on the African continent" is one of the pillars for achieving the vision for Agenda 2063.[1] AU through STISA hopes to raise Africa's role in global research, technology development and transfer, innovation and knowledge production.

STISA has the following priorities that AGCCI can use to its advantage:
- Improving Science, Technology & Innovation readiness in Africa in terms of infrastructure, professional and technical competence, and entrepreneurial capacity. This will aid in sustaining the interest of the participants by having electricity and Internet access to continue working on their projects.
- Implementing specific policies and programmes in science, technology and innovation that address societal needs in a holistic and sustainable way. This will ease getting support from governments in implementation of AGCCI.

Prioritizing education in ICT is necessary to foster a culture of scientific interest, inquiry, invention and achievement that would support the AU's ambitious goals for this century A trained and highly skilled class of technologists and scientists across the continent will not only lead in achieving an African renaissance but will also provide the knowledge base to sustain it.

Global System for Mobile Communications highlights that women are 16% less likely to use mobile internet, in low and middle-income countries. This figure is 37% in sub-Saharan Africa, with variance across countries. Africa's women and girls are disproportionally represented in the use and creation of technologies and often bear the brunt of its harmful effects. For example, the mobile internet use gender gap is widest in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, and the smartphone ownership gender gap has increased in 2022.[2]

Also, limitations in digital skills puts women and girls at higher online risk than men and boys.[3] Additionally, where women have limited access to mobile phones, the internet, or lack digital literacy, introduction of online social and government services deepens their exclusion and leads to negative outcomes like delayed payments.[4] Thus, the digital gender divide leads to exclusionary innovations, poor digital literacy among women, and high economic costs, among other drawbacks.

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[1] AU's Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024)

[2] GSMA. (2022). The Mobile Gender Gap Report. Quoted in UN Women ESARO, 2023 CSW67 Background document on Gender, Innovation and Technology in Africa.

[3] UNICEF. (n.d). What we know about the gender digital divide for girls Quoted in UN Women ESARO, 2023 CSW67 Background document on Gender, Innovation and Technology in Africa.

[4] Molala. T, Makhuele.J. (2021). The connection between digital divide and social exclusion. Quoted in UN Women ESARO, 2023 CSW67 Background document on Gender, Innovation and Technology in Africa.

2. PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

AGCCI 2023-2025 is part of the new UN Women LO **Strategic Plan 2023-2025,** *OUTPUT 2.4 Young girls from different background have equitable access to STEM education, decent job opportunities and increased skills in digital literacy and leadership.*

AGCCI is also one of the tools to boost achievement of the agenda 2030, especially **SDG 5 on gender equality** aiming to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, **SDG 4** aiming to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; **SDG 8** focusing on full and productive employment and decent work for all and its Target 8.2 says: "Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors.

Regarding ICT, AU's Agenda 2063 states that Africa should be "a continent on equal footing with the rest of the world as an information society, an integrated e-economy where every government, business and citizen has access to reliable and affordable ICT services. and providing access to ICT to children in schools…"[5]

AGCCI CODING camp participants upon completion of the programme will acquire new skills in ICT and programming. In addition, through the online platform they will have the ability to continuously update their skills, connect with a supportive online community to share ideas and opportunities. Moreover, they will have skills, confidence, and the resolve to tackle barriers, overcome gender stereotypes and challenge institutional cultural practices and social norms that keep them away from JOBS, and from pursuing higher education. It's also important to stress that Africa member states will increase awareness on the impact that mainstreaming gender, coding and ITC in national curricula would have on their development.

This project is a contribution to the entire AGCCI programme which was kicked off in 2018 and the first phase concluded in 2019, its second phase has been implemented during the period 2021-2023. It adopts a results-based management (RBM) approach and is informed by UN Women's Global Strategic Plan and the Africa Regional Strategy among others and the regional strategic plan. In addition, the results framework of this programme draws from UN Women's approach of Flagship Initiative. This project is a third phase of the initiative's implementation process with some adjustments being made based on lessons learned from phase one and two.

The initial cohort of young girl coders from phase 1 of AGCCI were able to make a number of notable achievements in the ICT sector using the skills they have gained from the coding camp trainings. A tory book of their individual achievements in developing various innovative digital products that would positively contribute to the lives of their communities, has been produced and shared among the program stakeholders. To point out some of the achievements of the initial cohort,
  - A live session has been organized where the Girls who Code shared their personal innovative ventures and some entrepreneurship activities, they developed during COVID-19.
  - The young girl coders have also had different opportunities to showcase their digital products in

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[5] http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/agenda2063.pdf

different regional as well as global platforms including at the high-level side event organized in the margins of CSW67 in March 2023 in New York.

Some of the innovative digital products created by the girl coders also include:
- o **Fatou Ndiaye**, 21 years old from *Senegal,* created an online platform where young girl entrepreneurs can sell their products.
- o **Reotshepile Mmutle** and **Maleroto Mphahlele**, from *South Africa*, supported their friends to produce emergency bracelets/alerting system to help combat human trafficking and flatten the exponential curve of GBV.
- o **Hanna Wasihun**, a learner from *Ethiopia*, built a mobile application with resources on women empowerment with the support of her friends.
- o **Sizolwethu Maphanga**, a recent graduate from high school in *Swaziland* initiated a project that teaches kids from age 10-13 how to code and use the coding

3. GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

Five Africa member states (Burundi, Mali, Mozambique Niger and Tanzania,) were selected among the 10 priority countries based on agreed criteria including:

- ✓ Commitment to Girls Education
- ✓ Country leadership on Girls Education
- ✓ Geography and language balance
- ✓ Country of interest for the donor
- ✓ Non covered by ECA programme (complementarity)
- ✓ Un women country presence for ownership and sustainability

4. BENEFICIARIES

The contribution of the phase 3 initiative supported by the Government of Belgium will target young girls between the age of 17-25 years (with the aim to target those girls in high school and also to inspire those transiting to tertiary education level to chose ICT field in the colleges and universities they will be joining). Due consideration is given to ensure inter-sectionality whereby young girls from rural, semi-urban and more disadvantaged communities are included in the selection/shortlisting process following the call for application postings.

- ✓ A minimum of 500 African young girls from secondary school to participate in the 10 national coding camps that will be organized in each one of the five target countries i.e, 100 young girls per country as direct beneficiaries of the skills training to be provided, on ICT and coding.

✓ Thousands of girls among the population to be reached out by different communication channels including national media outlets, to create awareness on ICT and coding and inspire them to apply for the coding camp training opportunity.

✓ While 11 countries (including the five funded by the government of Belgium) are to be reached by the mainstreaming component as an indirect outreach. The additional six countries are those countries where AGCCI phase 2 implementations are still undergoing - Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, South Africa and Senegal which are funded by Siemens Tech Co. and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) supported by the Finland NatCom.

5. GOALS

This project contributes to the Goal of the entire AGCCI programme: More women across Africa work in and create Jobs in the sector of ICT and coding. For this to happen, two areas are targeted: Bridging the technological divide by providing tangible programmes to increase women's access to modern technology and Empowerment through access to Education and Employment providing young girls and women with pathways to contribute and participate in material ways to Africa's innovation, industrialization, and growth by mastering ICT.

6. THEORY OF CHANGE

If young girls are accessing educations and careers within coding and ICT, ministries of education and ministries of ICT in the target African countries have mainstreamed ICT, gender and coding into the national curricula and young girls and women seek employment opportunities in the ICT sector,
then More women and girls across Africa will work in and create jobs in the sector of ICT and coding.

7. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The following are the specific objectives of the proposed project:

- **Promote and support** the young girls' entry into higher education sector of ICT and coding.
- **Encourage** leadership and confidence in young African girls.
- **Create** national attention on girls, ICT and coding through media and other communication channels.
- **Collect** good practices for developing and further scaling up AGCCI
- **Inspire and Advise** policymakers and legislators to mainstream ICT, gender and coding into national curricula.
- **Encourage** and **Support N**ational ownership and Customisation of AGCCI
- **Update** the virtual space to discuss gender, ICT and coding

The project will employ a number of strategies to achieve the above listed objectives. These strategies including working in close collaboration with national stakeholders including the three ministries (education, gender and ICT) towards effective mainstreaming of gender, ICT and coding into the national curricula and ensure national ownership of the program for sustainability of impact. Besides, working with private tech companies, CSOs and media to enhance stakeholders' awareness on ICT and coding among young girls, parents and communities. Developing mechanisms whereby schools provide advice to young girls on their choices of fields of education

and encouraging them to choose fields in the area of STEM. Organizing multi-country regional stakeholder workshops to influence policy makers and legislators who can enforce the mainstreaming process of ICT, gender and coding into national curricula.

7.1.   Programme Outcomes/Outputs/Activities

Outcome 1: **Young girls are accessing education and careers within CODING and ICT**

Output 1.1: Young girls have increased skills in digital literacy, coding and personal development through Coding Camps across Africa

Activity 1.1.1 Host 10 national coding camps in 5 priority African country (2 per country)
Activity 1.1.2 Purchase 500 computers/ modern desktops for 500 girls (100 per country) that will take part in the national coding camps during the 1st quarter of 2024.
Activity 1.1.3. Establishment of new learning centers (one per country) in collaboration with government ministries at national level

Output 1.2: Awareness created amongst young women and girls on coding and ICT using various communication channels.

Activity 1.2.1 Carry out advocacy and awareness creation activities targeting the general public with particular emphasis to young women and girls, in collaboration with the private sector, media bureau and young girl coders as role models and as ambassadors.

Outcome 2: Ministries of Education and Ministries of ICT in the Targeted African countries have mainstreamed ICT, gender and coding into the national curricula

Output 2.1: Relevant ministries have the capacity (tools) to mainstream gender, coding and ICT into the national curricula.

Activity 2.1.1. Organize regional level capacity building training of the technical focal points of the relevant ministries to familiarize them with the continental mainstreaming guide developed under AGCCI program.

Activity 2.1.2. Coordinate multi-country dialogue platforms and Inter-governmental processes to promote exchange of promising practices and lessons learnt on gender mainstreaming in education curricula as well as ICT and Coding initiatives

Output 2.2: Secondary and high schools include education and career options within ICT and coding in their career advice to girl students.

Activity 2.2.1. Create country-level Platforms through national ministries to develop the roadmap for the implementation of the existing mainstreaming guide on gender, coding and ICT into the national curricula
Activity 2.2.2. Conduct a desk review to document lessons learned of the AGCCI and disseminate in 4 AU languages.

Outcome 3: Young girls and women seek employment through connections with key actors in the ICT sector.

Output 3.1: Girls who have participated in the Coding Camps are able to access e-modules and are aware of available employment opportunities in tech clubs, tech companies and CSOs working within ICT and Coding sectors

Activity 3.1.1. Ensure the existing e-learning platform established by ITU academy is user friendly and that the girl coders have access to free e-courses, to stay connected, find job opportunities and support each other across borders promoting regional integration.

Activity 3.1.2 Facilitate young girls' access to similar e-Learning platforms that provide e-courses on work preparedness with MenDex certification as well as online mentorship opportunities.

Activity 3.1.3. Create an online tracking mechanism of the project impact and continuity of e-Learning practices among the AGCCI Beneficiaries following the national coding camps.

8. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The project will be implemented in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the relevant African union member states, ITU, ECA and other partners including the Belgium Embassy in Addis Ababa. The AGCCI steering committee (PSC) which facilitates strategy setting, programme guidance to the Programme Team, and monitor execution and progress of the programme, will be revised to include the Belgium Embassy as representative of the donor community and the representative of the AUC Department of Human resources, Science, and technology (AUC-HRST).

A small Programme Team will be put in place including a Programme Specialist (UN Women), the Project coordinator and the IT Specialist (AUC-HRST) as well as the Programme associate (UN Women). This team will be supported by part time Youth Volunteers who will be hired to support organising CODING Camps at Regional and Country levels accordingly.

9. DURATION

The project has a duration of 25 months starting in December 2023 and concluded End December 2025.

10. BUDGET

The total programme budget for the 2 years (2023 – 2025) is Euro 1.5Million.

11. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Member states in collaboration with UN women offices will identify the trainers and the girls and take care of required facilities for national camps, mobilize domestic resources including from country-based donors to sustain this initiative.
African Union Commission will provide Political and technical directions and guidance as well as supporting advocacy for national ownership of the programme. AUC will also support resource mobilization for additional funding to close the funding GAP of phase 2.
Implementing partners: UN Women, ITU, ECA and AUC
Donors (The government of Belgium) will provide funding support to the AGCCI and support the

advocacy and resource mobilisation for additional funding.

Private Sector including philanthropies, Tech and other companies, Media, and international organizations will promote job access, provide mentors and needed equipment when among others.

12. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

There will be a quarterly monitoring review of the implementation process which will be carried out through review of the quarterly reports submitted by program focal points based in the UN Women country offices, a virtual quarterly review and planning meeting involving the program coordination team and UNW focal points as well as onsite supportive supervision visits to each target country by the program coordination team. Quarterly meeting will also be held with the Technical Working Group (TWG) constituting technical focal points from AUC, ITU, ECA and other partner UN agencies to review the implementation progress of the program. In line with UN Women's evaluation policy, this 2-year initiative will be evaluated through a final evaluation which will be carried out during the last four months of the project. Findings and recommendations from the evaluation will inform UN Women strategic planning, as well as a potential next phase of the initiative or otherwise any future programming in related issues.

The evaluation will be managed by monitoring and evaluation independent consultant supported by the Monitoring and Evaluation manager in the regional office. It will follow a participatory approach that includes the multiple stakeholders involved in the implementation of the initiative. The evaluation criteria to be used include relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, inclusiveness, participation, equality, non-discrimination, and social transformation.

13. REPORTING

The reporting on this two-year project will follow UN women regulations.

<u>Narrative reports</u>:
A Project progress report and the latest available approved budget will be submitted within six (6) months after each annual reporting period (by end of June 2024 for the period covering December 2023-June 2024) and by end of June 2025 for the period covering July 2024 to December 2024. A final report summarizing Project activities and the results of those activities will be submitted within six (6) months of the date of operational completion or termination of the Project (by end of December 2025 as the closing date will be end of June 2025).

<u>Financial reports</u>
An annual certified financial statement as of 31 December will be submitted by 30 June of the following year (same dates as above). A provisional financial data will be submitted with the final narrative report, while a final certified financial statement will be submitted by 30 June of the year following the financial completion of the Project (end of June 2025).

14. PROJECT STAFFING

A one-year contract extension has been made for the three project staff members including the Program Coordinator, Program associate and a Communication and Knowledge management assistant.

15. PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

This project will promote its sustainability through different interventions and activities including: i) **Mainstreaming of national curricula** With a successful integration and implementation, the national education systems will sustain and enhance the impact of the programme further past the lifetime of the initiative itself; ii) **Carry out advocacy and awareness creation activities using** role models from different sectors and targeting tech companies and tech clubs to make them aware of AGCCI and the benefits of involving more women and girls in their businesses; iii) an **Online platform to support the girls coding ideas,** their confidence and leadership among others and to facilitate access to mentorship from trained instructors; iv) **Continues access to technology as the girls are able to use the existing and newly to be** established learning centers equipped with laptops/modern desktops in collaboration with Government ministries at national level. This would enable the young girl coders to continue practicing their skills and keep an eye on relevant and timely information through internet; v) Make use of existing and new partnerships with global and regional Tech companies such as Siemens and IamtheCODE to provide the young girl coders with enhanced access to e-Learning platforms with free courses, higher education and mentorship opportunities. Additionally, partnering with AUC will allow AGCCI to explore ways to tap into the Pan African University, which is working to revitalize technology and innovation by positioning ICT education at the centre of the continent's development agenda.

Annexes:

i)   Result Framework Phase III
ii)   AGCCI- Phase III Budget
iii)   Implementation Plan Phase III