1. Promoting gender equality

In the era of rapid digitalization, gender equality is paramount for ensuring inclusive and sustainable development. This document sheds light on the remarkable achievements in promoting gender equality within the digital economy in Rwanda, focusing on the efforts led by GIZ/Digital Transformation and Digital Economy Cluster. By addressing the disparity in women's participation in ICT, the unit has successfully trained over 72,000 women, laying the foundation for a more equitable and prosperous digital future.

Context: Digitalization and Women in Tech in Rwanda

Rwanda, like many countries, has witnessed a significant shift towards digitalization, presenting both opportunities and challenges. However, women, unfortunately, have often been left behind in the digital economy and broader ICT sectors, limiting their access to the benefits of technological advancements.

Approaches: Effective Strategies for Inclusivity

- ❖ **Mandatory quota with focus on women and people with disabilities:** Every project we implement should have at least 10% of total beneficiaries being people with disabilities while at least 50% of total beneficiaries should be women.
- ❖ **Women focused trainings:** In collaboration with our partners, we developed women focused training such as women moto riders training.
- ❖ **Engagement with Public and Private Institutions:** Partnerships with both public and private institutions have enabled a holistic approach to gender equality in the digital economy.

Results Achieved

- ❖ **Over 72,000 Women Trained in ICT:** The unit has successfully trained a staggering number of over 72,000 women in various aspects of information and communication technology. This not only enhances individual skills but also contributes to building a skilled and diverse workforce in the digital sector.
- ❖ **Increased Women's Participation in Digital Economy:** The initiatives have led to a noticeable increase in the participation of women in the digital economy. Women are now making meaningful contributions to sectors such as digital entrepreneurship, online services, and technology-driven innovation.

Impacts

Short-Term Impact	Medium-Term Impact	Long-Term Impact
Immediate impacts include increased digital literacy among women, fostering confidence and enabling basic participation in the digital landscape.	We anticipate a growing number of women actively engaging in the digital economy, contributing to economic growth and innovation. This will also result in a more diverse and inclusive digital workforce.	A transformed digital ecosystem where gender equality is the norm. Women will play key roles in shaping the future of technology, fostering innovation, and driving sustainable economic development.

2. Gender as a quality feature of our work

Examples of Key Projects and Impact:

Project Name	Number of Women Trained	Local Partner
Digital Ambassador Program	51,662	Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA)
Digital Literacy for Farmers	15,355	One Acre Fund
Digital Literacy for Entrepreneurs	4,122	Rwanda ICT Chamber
Digital Tools for Women Drivers	85	Safi Universal Link Mobility
Digital Marketing for Entrepreneurs	400	RICTA*
Digital Literacy for People with Disabilities	200	OPDs*
Total Number of Women Trained	**67702 Women in Tech**	

Recognition and Acknowledgment:

❖ **Beneficiaries Testimonials:** Our team has received positive feedback from beneficiaries who recognize the team's commitment to promoting gender equality.

❖ **Partner Requests on Same and Similar Projects:** Key partners, including RISA, OAF, Rwanda ICT Chamber, and Safi Universal Link Mobility, have requested our team to have another round of similar projects due to a valuable impact we are making.

❖ **Recognitions by Other Donors:** GIZ/DSSD's efforts in promoting gender equality have been acknowledged through recognitions from relevant stakeholders and other Gouvernement partners including World Bank, KOICA, Ministry of ICT and Innovation, RISA, and all other stakeholders from both public and private sectors.

3. Implementing feminist core principles

Gender-Equal Education: By championing the integration of Robotics in Rwandan schools while encouraging local innovation, our focus on girls' participation in international robotics competitions is fostering inclusivity and breaking down gender barriers in STEM fields.

Economic Empowerment: Our initiatives prioritize women's economic empowerment through inclusive training quotas, specialized programs addressing underrepresentation in sectors like cybersecurity and transportation, and extensive partnerships that have reached over **72,000** Rwandan women, including entrepreneurs and farmers, within two years.

Leadership and Decision-Making: Through tailored business development and agile project management training, we're equipping women in government and young graduates in the private sector with skills essential for leadership roles, promoting gender parity in decision-making positions.

Combatting Gender-Based Violence: Our ongoing development of a GBV Chatbot demonstrates our commitment to combating gender-based violence and providing accessible support to those affected.

Legal and Policy Reforms: Initiatives like the national digital inclusion strategy emphasize inclusivity across diverse groups, bridging gaps in rural communities, empowering women in male-dominated sectors, and ensuring opportunities for individuals with disabilities, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society. Our strategy actively recognizes and seeks to tackle the barriers hindering women and marginalized communities from accessing and utilizing digital technologies. Through a focus on affordability, awareness campaigns, skill development, and the creation of a supportive ecosystem, our aim is to foster a more inclusive digital landscape in Rwanda, ensuring enhanced gender equality within the country's digital evolution.

Social and Cultural Change:
In our pursuit of social and cultural change, we've facilitated training programs led by female cybersecurity experts and supported female involvement in male-dominated sectors, such as the moto driving industry. Our aim is to empower our trainees, ensuring they secure their place in these traditionally male-dominated fields.
These activities reflect a commitment to feminist principles within German development cooperation, aiming to address gender disparities and promote equality at various levels of society.

4. Cooperation

How?

In an effort to bridge the gender divide, we specifically centered women as the target beneficiaries for some of the digital literacy trainings conducted.

Who?

Organizations that already had a network of women they were working with:

- ❖ Farmer training carried out in partnership with One Acre Fund where the goal was to train 20,000 farmers; 15,000 of these being women.
- ❖ We partnered with PSF Specialized Cluster which includes women, youth and people with disabilities to conduct digital literacy and entrepreneurship training for women entrepreneurs.

- ❖ Rwanda Internet Community and Technology Alliance (RICTA); with them we were able to build the capacity and equip female entrepreneurs with digital literacy and marketing skills.
- ❖ NUDOR
- ❖ Broadcasters of ICT, Rwanda's cybersecurity Community of Practice; with them we were able to build the capacity of female software engineers.

What united us?

Rwanda has earned global recognition for its outstanding efforts in advancing gender equality and empowering women, making it a common ground for collaboration. In the 2022 Gender Gap Report by the World Economic Forum, Rwanda claimed an impressive 6th place worldwide for its notable achievements in gender parity, spanning key dimensions such as economic opportunities, education, health, and political leadership. Complementing this success, the National Strategy for Transformation is dedicated to fortifying and championing gender equality across all sectors. This collective commitment underscores the presence of numerous stakeholders from the private, public, and civil society realms, all invested in fostering the promotion of gender equality.

Challenges encountered?

- ❖ Due to cultural mindset, there are not many girls in the ICT/tech field so consequently they are left behind.
- ❖ Limited involvement of marginalized groups is attributed to demanding schedules that necessitate them to fulfill responsibilities related to childcare and household management.
- ❖ Constrained accessibility to infrastructure and mobile devices stems from a combination of geographical remoteness and economic challenges.
- ❖ Navigating the concept of feminist foreign policy poses challenges, as there currently exists no comprehensive toolkit to provide guidance on its various components and principles.

Key success factors:

Some of the major reasons we have been successful in our capacity building and digital literacy training efforts:

- ❖ The backing of esteemed organizations such as the National Women's Council and the National Council for People with Disabilities (NCPD), as well as the overarching support from the government in our collective pursuit of advancing digital literacy. Furthermore, several institutions had pre-existing training plans, facilitating a seamless transition for us to provide additional support.
- ❖ The existence of mandatory quotas (as detailed on page 2)
- ❖ The collaborative initiatives from both public and private sectors to enhance the affordability of handsets, coupled with the establishment of training centers dedicated to the setup of computer/assistive technology labs. Examples of this are the Connect Rwanda and Connect Rwanda 2.0 initiatives by MTN Rwanda and Airtel, respectively.