5 June 2025

Supplementary information

Proposed programme budget for 2026

Part XIII
Development Account

Section 35
Development Account

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Annex I : Projects proposed for funding from the Development Account (for the period 2026-2029)

A. Enhanced statistical capacity for data governance and innovation across national data ecosystems

Implemented by DESA, in collaboration with ECA, ECE, ESCAP, ECLAC, ESCWA and with resident coordinator offices ($642,000)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 8.9, 9.1, 10.2, 13.2, 16.6, and 17.18

Objective

To enhance the capacity of national statistical offices in selected developing countries to implement effective data governance frameworks and harness innovation for digital transformation

Project Plan

Digital transformation offers significant potential for National Statistical Offices (NSOs) in developing countries to enhance data-driven policymaking and contribute to sustainable development. However, NSOs often encounter substantial barriers in adopting modern data practices and governance frameworks, especially in utilizing emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and Big Data. These capacity gaps restrict NSOs' ability to effectively support national and global development agendas. In response to recent Member States' requests and the emphasis of the UN Global Digital Compact on inclusive and responsible digital transformation, this project aims to build NSOs' foundational capabilities in data governance and innovation. This support will enable NSOs to play an essential role within national data ecosystems, advancing progress toward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This project will engage four target countries in Africa and Asia and the Pacific, focusing on Small Island Developing States and Landlocked Developing Countries. Through regional and national-level activities, NSOs will gain skills to manage data responsibly, utilizing artificial intelligence and data integration to enhance the accuracy and timeliness of statistics. The project will implement a series of national workshops, regional exchanges, and pilot projects tailored to each country's digital and development priorities, fostering data innovation and strengthening governance frameworks within high-priority areas. To ensure a broader and lasting impact, the project will also develop resources designed to extend the project's reach beyond the four target countries.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to strengthening NSOs' capacity for data governance and innovation, which will be demonstrated by establishing data governance frameworks and adopting new data practices in each participating country. This progress will be further reflected in improved self-assessment scores of governance maturity and the application of guidelines and toolkits. By the project's conclusion, NSOs will be better positioned to implement data-driven solutions aligned with their national priorities.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Consultants	176.2
Travel of staff	144.1
Contractual services	80.0
General operating expenses	24.0
Grants and contributions	217.7
Total	**642.0**

B. Advancing gender empowerment and innovation in Latin American and the Caribbean

Implemented by DESA, jointly with ECLAC and in collaboration with resident coordinator offices ($938,800)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 5.b, 5.c, 9.b, 9.c 10.2, 10.4, 16.7 17.8 and 17.17

Objective

To improve the capacity of selected Latin American and Caribbean countries to implement gender-responsive digital inclusion policies and frameworks that enhance equitable access to digital resources

Project plan

In line with the outcomes of the sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2023 and the Global Digital Compact adopted on September 22, 2024, this project addresses the urgent need to tackle the persistent digital divide affecting women and underserved communities in LAC. Recent developments have highlighted the systemic barriers that women, particularly in low-income and rural areas, face regarding access, usage, and digital skills. Increased requests from Member States for support in developing gender-responsive digital policies underscore the necessity for this project, which aims to ensure that digital transformation empowers all segments of society, particularly marginalized groups.

The project aims to empower stakeholders by providing a comprehensive capacity-building program focused on developing gender-responsive digital inclusion policies. It will support six countries in LAC to enhance access to the digital technology, improve digital skills training, and create inclusive online platforms. By facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogues and providing technical assistance, the project will leverage existing national digital strategies to foster inclusive digital governance and promote gender equality in the digital economy.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to strengthening the capacity of selected Latin American and Caribbean countries to promote gender-responsive digital inclusion policies and frameworks that address the digital needs of women and underserved communities, which will be demonstrated by the development and adoption of new gender-responsive digital inclusion policies, an increase in digital literacy rates among targeted populations and expanded access to digital technologies, including artificial intelligence. By the end of the project, it is anticipated that these countries will have implemented robust frameworks to ensure equitable access to the digital economy, with at least three target countries enacting new or updated policies that reflect gender-sensitive considerations.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Other staff costs	52.8
Consultants	186.6
Travel of staff	90.5
Contractual services	113.1
General operating expenses	9.4
Grants and contributions	486.4
Total	**938.8**

C. Innovative and digital technologies for forest monitoring and data sharing by indigenous peoples, local communities, women and youth

Implemented by DESA in collaboration with resident coordinator offices ($634,400)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 4.5, 4.7. 5.5, 6.6, 12.2,13.1, 13.3, 14.2, 15.1, 15.4 and 15.8

Objective

To build the capacity of selected countries to strengthen the engagement of indigenous peoples, local communities, women and youth in forest monitoring and sharing of forest-related data using both traditional and digital approaches

Project plan

Engagement of Indigenous People and local communities including youths and women offers significant benefits for making forest management decisions by leveraging local knowledge and providing timely, and realistic ground data. However, the importance of traditional knowledge and experiences has been undervalued, and countries have not been able to efficiently utilize the traditional knowledge and the best practices in forest management decisions.

This project will support four countries in Latin American region to build national capacity on integrating both scientific and traditional knowledge to meet the challenges of sustainable forest management (SFM) by promoting dialogue, and building the capacity of national officials, and stakeholders on data collection and best practices by Indigenous Peoples and local communities. The project will identify existing gaps and challenges and facilitate the exchange of information and best practices especially in the application of user-friendly digital technology and monitoring, assessment, and reporting on SFM and the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) implementation.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to build national capacity to strengthening the skills and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, and youth in sustainable forest management, which would be demonstrated by the integration of traditional knowledge and digital monitoring practices into national forest monitoring systems. Progress will be measured through the adoption of data collection practices that incorporate both scientific and Indigenous knowledge across target countries, as well as the completion of capacity-building workshops and the production of policy briefs on best practices. By project completion, it is anticipated that participating stakeholders will actively engage in forest monitoring, share forest related data, and use digital tools for forest monitoring and reporting, aligning their efforts with UNSPF objectives.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Consultants	100.2
Travel of staff	122.4
Contractual services	133.6
General operating expenses	166.9
Grants and contributions	111.3
Total	**634.4**

D. Promoting a socially inclusive creative economy to support digital transformation needs of SIDS and LDCs`

Implemented by DESA in collaboration with resident coordinator offices ($640,000)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 1.4, 5.b, 8.5, 8.9, 10.2 and 17.6

Objective

To enhance the capacity of selected LDCs and SIDS in Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa to develop policies and frameworks that promote digital inclusion and economic opportunities in the creative economy with a specific emphasis on women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and indigenous peoples

Project plan

UN General Assembly Resolution 78/133 entitled 'Promoting creative economy for sustainable development" highlights the importance of the creative economy in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and acknowledges the immense role of digital technologies in advancing and accelerating the development of the creative economy. It invites Member States to promote the inclusion and mainstreaming of the creative economy into economic policies that ensure that the social and economic rights of creators, artists and cultural professionals are guaranteed and protected in the digital era.

This project will support four countries in Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa to implement policies and frameworks that enable marginalized populations to participate in the digital economy, contributing to both economic resilience and social equity. It will address calls to support Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in leveraging the digital creative economy to create inclusive opportunities for women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, and indigenous peoples.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to the promotion of social inclusion and economic opportunities among women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and indigenous peoples, which would be demonstrated by increased government capacity to develop policies, laws or other administrative processes aimed at supporting social enterprises, cooperatives, and micro, small, and medium enterprises that involve marginalized population groups in the creative economy. By project completion, the participating countries are expected to exhibit enhanced capacities to grow the digital creative economy and strengthened capacity in policy design and implementation to foster digital inclusion.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Other staff costs	27.6
Consultants	121.1
Travel of staff	118.1
Contractual services	19.7
General operating expenses	231.4
Grants and contributions	122.1
Total	**640.0**

E. Improved investment policy making to foster an inclusive, responsible and sustainable digital economy in Africa

Implemented by UNCTAD in collaboration with ECA and resident coordinator offices ($645,600)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 1.4, 5.a, 5.b, 8.2, 8.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.c, 10.b and 17.3

Objective

To strengthen the capacity of selected developing countries in Africa to scale up investment that fosters an inclusive, responsible and sustainable digital economy

Project plan

The digital economy presents significant opportunities for developing countries. Attracting investment to enable its development, fostering the skills needed, and ensuring equitable access to digital tools require an all-encompassing approach, which can be challenging given limited resources, regulatory hurdles and the need for international cooperation. Developing countries must balance these demands to fully harness the transformative power of the digital economy and enhance its positive impact while limiting potential negative outcomes.

This project will support four countries in Africa in assessing and strengthening their readiness to attract investment for a digital transition. It will evaluate the existing strategies, policies, regulatory and institutional frameworks to promote investment and identify concrete investment policy recommendations to attract investment for an inclusive digital economy. The project will build capacity of policymakers and regulators, facilitate experience sharing on best practices, promote peer learning as well as monitor and evaluate the implementation of recommendations and progress towards the stated goals.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to building the capacity of policymakers in beneficiary countries to design and implement national and international investment policies that support the digital economy, with a particular focus on women, girls, youth and persons with disabilities, which would be demonstrated by the endorsement of an action plan for the implementation of investment policy recommendations in each beneficiary country.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Other staff costs	60.6
Consultants	197.7
Travel of staff	176.9
Contractual services	20.2
General operating expenses	106.1
Grants and contributions	84.1
Total	**645.6**

F. Better statistics on digital services trade for gender-responsive trade policies in Asia and the Pacific

Implemented by UNCTAD, jointly with ESCAP and in collaboration with resident coordinator offices ($938,800)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 5.a, 5.b, 5.c, 8.2, 8.3, 9.a, 10.2, 17.11 and 17.18

Objective

To strengthen the capacity of selected developing countries in Asia and the Pacific to measure digital services trade for evidence-based and gender-inclusive trade policy

Project plan

With the rapid growth of digital delivery of services, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that evidence-based policies and strategies are developed to harness opportunities for digital transformation and inclusive participation in global value chains. The Bridgetown Covenant, adopted at the 15th United Nations Trade and Development ministerial meeting, specifically called upon UNCTAD to support and promote activities and initiatives in developing countries through the improvement in trade in services; strengthening of the collection and processing of available data to produce statistics and policy analysis in relation to the opportunities and challenges of digital economy; and mainstreaming the cross-cutting issue of gender equality.

This project will support four countries in Asia and the Pacific region to measure and report statistics on digital trade in services disaggregated by sex to improve evidence-based and inclusive policymaking for increased resilience and transformational change via global digital services. The project will provide policy support, including an analysis of the role of digital services trade on gender equality, advisory services, and regional workshops on how to use data on trade in services for evidence-based and inclusive policies.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to enhancing the capacity of selected countries in Asia and the Pacific to measure digital services trade for improved design of gender-responsive trade policies that can foster sustainable and inclusive development in beneficiary countries, which would be demonstrated by the production of sex-disaggregated data and statistics on digital trade in services in each target country and using the data for gender-responsive trade policymaking.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Other staff costs	67.8
Consultants	337.9
Travel of staff	148.5
Contractual services	135.6
General operating expenses	52.1
Grants and contributions	196.9
Total	**938.8**

G. Advancing gender-responsive science, technology and innovation policies for inclusive digital transformation in ASEAN countries

Implemented by UNCTAD in collaboration with ECA and resident coordinator offices ($625,000)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 5.1, 5.5, 5.a, 5.b, 5.c., 8.2, 9.c, 10.2 and 17.9

Objective

To strengthen the capacity of selected ASEAN developing countries to design and implement gender-responsive science, technology and innovation policies that close gender digital divides, foster inclusive digital transformation, and advance the Sustainable Development Goals

Project Plan

On 22 September 2024, the UN General Assembly approved the Pact for the Future and Global Digital Compact (GDC), the first comprehensive global framework for digital cooperation. Advancing gender-responsive science, technology, and innovation (STI) policies is essential for realizing the goals of the GDC. By addressing the power of digitalization and the unique challenges women and girls face in accessing technology and information, policymakers can create a more inclusive digital economy that leaves no one behind.

This Project aims to strengthen policymakers' capacities in three developing countries across three regions - Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean - to design and implement STI policies that close the gender digital divide, accelerate SDG progress, and advance towards the Global Digital Compact. The project aims to achieve two major outcomes: first, generating knowledge and policy-oriented analysis, through robust evidence-gathering to assess how gender considerations are integrated within STI policies; second, enhancing capacities and transferring knowledge to strengthen policymakers' capabilities to design gender-responsive policies.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to assist beneficiary countries in better designing and implementing inclusive STI policies and strategies to harness the potential of digital technologies and advance the Global Digital Compact, which would be demonstrated by the development and validation of national action plans based on recommendations from gender assessments of digital technologies in each target country.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Consultants	270.4
Travel of staff	96.2
Contractual services	30.1
General operating expenses	88.1
Grants and contributions	140.2
Total	**625.0**

H. Digitalization and AI-powered transparency on trade-related regulations for gender-sensitive policymaking in Africa

Implemented by UNCTAD in collaboration with ECA, ESCAP and resident coordinator offices ($645,800)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 1.4, 5.b, 8.2, 16.6 and 17.11

Objective

To strengthen the capacity of selected African countries to improve transparency on trade-related regulations with digitalization and artificial intelligence to better develop gender-sensitive trade policies

Project plan

Trade has been identified as an enabler for sustainable development in SDG 17 (partnerships) and the Pact for the Future. However, the lack of transparency on trade-related regulations not only increases the cost of trade but also impedes progress on other SDGs such as gender equality in SDG 5 (gender equality), disproportionately affecting women and other marginalized groups. There have been increasing requests from African countries for more comprehensive and up-to-date information on both their own and their trading partners' trade-related regulations.

This project will support four countries in Africa in advancing digitalization and utilizing innovative AI technologies for increased transparency on trade-related regulations. Digitalization and AI can address the longstanding challenges of limited resources and capacity of traders, government officials and academics in collecting, analysing and disseminating trade-related regulatory information, and feeding the information to policymaking and research. This project will develop and integrate AI-powered features into digital transparency tools, and train women traders, policy makers and academics in using these tools for the access to information, gender-sensitive policy making, and evidence-based research on trade and gender equality.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to strengthening the capacity of four African countries to improve transparency on trade-related regulations with digitalization and AI in order to empower women traders, workers and consumers, which would be demonstrated by the reduced amount of time, budget and human resources to collect, analyse and disseminate trade-related regulatory information, and the use of trade-related regulatory information for gender-sensitive policy making. The AI-powered features and related technologies developed under this project could be applicable to other work in the UN, providing broader benefit beyond this project's scope.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Other staff costs	64.6
Consultants	219.6
Travel of staff	71.6
Contractual services	103.3
General operating expenses	87.1
Grants and contributions	99.6
Total	**645.8**

I. Digitalization of urban mobility in Latin American and Caribbean SIDS and LLDCs to shatter gender inequities and leave no one behind

Implemented by UNEP, jointly with UN-Habitat and in collaboration with ECLAC and resident coordinator offices ($821,300)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 3.6, 5.5, 5.b, 7.3, 9.c, 10.2, 11.2, 11.7, 13.2 and 17.6

Objective

To strengthen the capacity of selected countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to design and implement a transformative framework for transport digitalization that prioritizes the complex mobility needs and intersectionality of women, girls and other vulnerable groups

Project plan

This project is triggered by the UN General Assembly resolution on '*Strengthening the links between all modes of transport to achieve the SDG*' from November 2023, which recognizes the importance of safe and accessible transport systems and calls on the promotion of integration of technology and innovation and reaffirms the need to promote access for all to safe mobility that is gender-responsive. It is also aimed at ensuring that the need to enhance the efficiency, accountability and transparency of public services and infrastructure using ICT for the benefit of all, as identified in the sixty-seventh session on the Commission on the Status of Women, is a core component of the upcoming UN Decade on Sustainable Transport.

The project will support four countries in LAC to build capacity in gender and inclusive transport digitalization through: undertaking country-level assessments, providing capacity development for government officials and other stakeholders at the national and local levels, and developing country-level road maps, all of which will inform future policy and strategy formulation and amendments. Additionally, the project will create a comprehensive manual relevant to the region that will have enduring relevance beyond the lifespan of the project.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to strengthening the capacity of selected countries in LAC to design and implement a transformative framework for transport digitalization that prioritizes the complex mobility needs and intersectionality of women, girls, and other vulnerable groups, which would be demonstrated by scaling up of gender sensitive and inclusive transport digitalization projects and other initiatives and adoption of national frameworks for gender and inclusive transport digitalization.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Other staff costs	82.1
Consultants	276.9
Travel of staff	56.3
Contractual services	220.0
General operating expenses	96.8
Grants and contributions	89.2
Total	**821.3**

J. Better water quality monitoring using traditional and local knowledge of indigenous peoples, women, and other vulnerable populations

Implemented by UNEP in collaboration with ECA, ECLAC and resident coordinator offices ($949,300)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 5.5, 6.3, 6.5, 14.1, 14.2, 17.16 and 17.18

Objective

To strengthen the capacity of selected low and lower-middle income countries to monitor water quality in inland waters and oceans using traditional and local knowledge of indigenous peoples, women and other vulnerable populations to improve reporting and inform policymaking

Project plan

The UN Environment Assembly, in its resolution 6/13, recognized the importance of traditional, local and Indigenous knowledge as part of possible solutions for sustainable water management and requested the Executive Director of UNEP, in collaboration with relevant UN system entities and other relevant stakeholders, to promote dialogue and collaboration on water-related traditional, local and Indigenous knowledge.

This project will support three countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean to strengthen their capacity to monitor water quality in inland water and oceans using citizen science data. Particular attention will be paid to establishing communication between traditional and local communities of indigenous peoples, women and other vulnerable groups on one side and government authorities on the other side to build trust in the use of non-traditional data sources for reporting and informing policymakers. The project will be implemented through national awareness raising workshops, field work on data collection using mobile applications, and preparation of a roadmap mainstreaming citizen science data use in the three target countries, as well as development of a guideline for calculating the index of coastal eutrophication potential, an e-learning course on citizen science data, and organization of global webinars to provide other countries with the opportunity to learn more about citizen science data.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to strengthening the capacity of low and lower-middle income countries to monitor water quality in inland waters and oceans using traditional and local knowledge of indigenous peoples, women and other vulnerable populations to improve reporting and inform policy-making, which would be demonstrated by improved reporting on relevant indicators at the national level under various global initiatives.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Consultants	497.0
Travel of staff	161.4
Contractual services	152.2
General operating expenses	78.2
Grants and contributions	60.5
Total	**949.3**

K. Inclusive solutions to homelessness and severe housing deprivations in Latin America and the Caribbean

Implemented by UN-Habitat, jointly with ECLAC and in collaboration with resident coordinator offices ($819,300)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 11.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 5.1, 5.5, 5.a, 5.b, 5.c, 10.2, 10.4, 17.9 and 17.17

Objective

To strengthen the capacity of selected countries to develop and implement gender-responsive, human-rights based and data-driven policies and services for women and marginalized groups experiencing homelessness, extreme housing deprivation and housing-induced poverty

Project plan

This project responds to growing international recognition of homelessness as a critical barrier to achieving the right to adequate housing, as highlighted by the Secretary-General and the UN-Habitat Assembly. Persistent data gaps, particularly on the gendered dimension of homelessness, housing exclusion and housing-induced poverty, undermine effective policymaking and service provision, leaving behind women and marginalized groups.

The project will address these gaps by co-creating a digital tool and methodology centered on women's intersectional experiences and working with women with lived experience from the design phase, to capture diverse drivers, experiences, and solutions. Three cities in Latin America and the Caribbean will pilot, co-design and implement gender-responsive, intersectional approaches to homelessness and housing-induced poverty data collection, policymaking, and service design. The digital tool will link women experiencing homelessness, service providers and policy makers to integrate and facilitate design of and access to social services and adequate housing solution, while incorporating data analytics and predictive modelling to identify patterns and emerging trends. The tools' scalable, interoperable design will allow adaptability to diverse contexts and expansion to additional cities or regions. Each city will also mentor additional cities in their region, extending the project's reach and ensuring sustainability.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to improve gender-responsive, data-driven policies and service delivery for women and marginalized groups experiencing homelessness by applying digital technologies to provide actionable insights on their gendered and intersectional experience. Predictive analytics will enable policymakers to address compounding causes and proactively plan interventions, which would be demonstrated by interventions informed by the gathered data and city officials sensitized about gender-responsive homelessness interventions.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Other staff costs	20.5
Consultants	322.6
Travel of staff	92.2
Contractual services	107.5
General operating expenses	61.4
Grants and contributions	215.1
Total	**819.3**

L. Innovative and inclusive transport planning and street design in Africa and the Middle East

Implemented by UN-Habitat, jointly with UNEP and in collaboration with resident coordinator offices ($823,300)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 3.6, 3.9, 5.b, 11.2, 11.7, 13.2 and 17.9

Objective

To build the capacity of selected countries and cities to use innovative methods and digital tools to improve their urban street design standards, implementation approaches, and stakeholder engagement strategies for active mobility that is safe, efficient, and universally accessible

Project plan

This project aims to enhance the capacity of countries and cities to develop and implement street designs that prioritize pedestrians and cyclists. Key outcomes include strengthening the ability of engineers to create comprehensive street design standards and manuals that integrate safety, accessibility, and efficiency for all users - especially women, children, and persons with disabilities.

Additional capacity-building initiatives will train city engineers in street design, stakeholder engagement strategies and co-creation processes, ensuring that urban transport planning is inclusive, reflecting the diverse needs of the community, particularly people in vulnerable situations. In doing so, the project will promote the use of participatory tools. The project will furthermore facilitate exchange and city twinning to foster inspiration and momentum for scaling up initiatives between and beyond the six partner countries.

The project will support six countries across Africa and the Middle East. that will benefit from capacity-building initiatives aimed at enhancing cities' ability to implement improved walking and cycling infrastructure, in alignment with the National Street Design Guidelines. These designs will be developed through community-informed, participatory processes responding to needs of the most vulnerable.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to strengthen the capacity of national and local governments in the target countries to implement improved street design practices, which would be demonstrated by the endorsement of new or revised Street Design Standards aligning with international best practices. Progress will also be assessed based on the usability and user satisfaction of the digital tools developed throughout the project.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Other staff costs	41.2
Consultants	303.6
Travel of staff	92.6
Contractual services	143.0
General operating expenses	123.5
Grants and contributions	119.4
Total	**823.3**

M. Fostering women's digital entrepreneurship in Africa

Implemented by ECA in collaboration with DESA, UNCTAD, UN-Habitat and resident coordinator offices ($634,300)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 4.3, 5.2, 5.5, 8.3, 8.5, 9.5, 10.2, 17.8, 17.16 and 17.17

Objective

To strengthen the capacity of selected African countries in digitalization to advance regional integration under the African Continental Free Trade Area and empower women entrepreneurs for enhanced sustainable economic growth

Project Plan

Africa's entrepreneurial landscape is characterized by significant gender disparities, with women entrepreneurs facing daunting barriers to digital technologies, financial inclusion, and skills development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly SDGs 5 (gender equality) and 8 (decent work and economic growth), and the African Union's Agenda 2063, emphasize women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship as vital drivers of sustainable growth. Recently, the UN General Assembly's resolution on "Women's Economic Empowerment through Entrepreneurship" (A/RES/77/160) called for intensified efforts to address these challenges, prompting this project to empower women entrepreneurs in Africa through innovative digital and financial solutions.

The project addresses the digital and financial divides hindering women entrepreneurs' growth in Africa. It aims to enhance their access to digital technologies, financial resources, and capacity-building training, fostering economic resilience and sustainable development. It also contributes to the empowerment of women entrepreneurs and to motivate and encourage growth of new businesses by stimulating innovation and not just supporting existing businesses. The project will support four countries in Africa to develop and implement national strategies for women's entrepreneurship development, design and deliver digital literacy programs, and establish financial inclusion mechanisms tailored to women-owned businesses.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to strengthening the capacity of women entrepreneurs in selected countries through increased access to digital technologies, financial resources, and capacity-building training, fostering gender equality and sustainable economic growth, which would be demonstrated by the target countries establishing sustainable women's entrepreneurship ecosystems, with enhanced policy frameworks, business incubation centres, and financial inclusion mechanisms.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Other staff costs	24.1
Consultants	216.5
Travel of staff	39.3
Contractual services	27.2
General operating expenses	25.2
Grants and contributions	302.0
Total	**634.3**

N. Improved informal cross-border female business trade in Africa

Implemented by ECA in collaboration with resident coordinator offices ($637,800)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals targets 5.a, 5.c, 8.2, 8.9, 9.2, 10.2, 13.b and 17.18

Objective

To enhance the capacity of selected African countries to implement inclusive national trade strategies with a focus on vulnerable economic actors, especially informal female businesses

Project plan

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a game changer for development ambitions in Africa with an estimated total untapped export potential of intra-African trade $21.9 billion (yearly average for 2015-2019). To fully leverage the potential benefits of AfCFTA, its implementation needs to be accompanied by additional policies to ensure inclusive economic growth. There are persistent requests from Member States for support in implementing inclusive AfCFTA strategies.

This project will support 4 countries in Central Africa in piloting inclusive implementation of national AfCFTA strategies in priority sectors by creating a better understanding of informal regional trade, its actors and dynamics and their challenges, and facilitates inclusive evidence-based trade policies that take gender-specific barriers into account. The capacity building of national stakeholder will focus on trade facilitation measures that are of advantage to small businesses in the agri-food value chain like one-stop border posts, simplified trade agreements, use of minimis criteria which focus on efficient clearing of small trade transactions and gender-specific border challenges and the application of the AfCFTA protocol on women and youth.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to strengthening the capacities of stakeholders in beneficiary countries to design and implement inclusive AfCFTA strategies in selected priority sectors, which will be demonstrated by the number of government officials trained. By the end of the project, it is expected that beneficiaries in the target countries will have a better understanding of regional trade, its potential, the role that the AfCFTA can play to foster participation of informal female businesses.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Other staff costs	50.1
Consultants	117.6
Travel of staff	48.1
Contractual services	31.9
General operating expenses	194.1
Grants and contributions	196.0
Total	**637.8**

O. Enhancing the digital capacity of women-owned MSMEs in Africa

Implemented by ECA in collaboration with ESCWA, UNCTAD and resident coordinator offices ($635,300)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals targets 1.4, 5.7, 5.8, 8.3, 9.3, and 17.6

Objective

To strengthen the capacity of selected countries to design and implement digital policies that empower women-owned micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises

Project Plan (2026–2029)

Women-led Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (W-MSMEs) are vital to Africa's economic development but face barriers that hinder their productivity and growth potential. Limited access to digital tools, insufficient training opportunities, and inadequate financial resources restrict their ability to compete in regional and global markets.

The project aims to support an inclusive digital ecosystem by engaging public and private stakeholders based on country-specific needs. It will foster regional cooperation by aligning digital programs with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat, building scalable digital models tailored to national contexts to amplify the impact on African women-led SMEs, and integrating climate adaptation practices to enhance resilience against environmental shocks.

The project will support four African countries to enhance women-led SMEs' productivity through upskilling digital capabilities, access to digital infrastructure, digital programs and policy support in alignment with RECs and AfCFTA framework. It will provide targeted interventions, including improving access to digital tools, training programs on digital skills, expanding digital financial tools and support policy formulation.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of W-MSMEs, which would be demonstrated by an increase in digital tool adoption and a rise in the number of W-MSMEs engaging in cross-border trade. By the end of the project, participating enterprises will demonstrate improved integration into regional and global markets, fostering inclusive growth and reducing gender disparities.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Other staff costs	32.7
Consultants	169.7
Travel of staff	60.6
General operating expenses	171.3
Grants and contributions	201.0
Total	**635.3**

P. Empowering women in urban and food forest management and local and national level

Implemented by ECE, jointly with UNEP and ESCAP and in collaboration with resident coordinator offices ($500,000)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 2.3, 5.5, 11.3, 11.7, 12.2, 13.1, 15.2, 15.3, 15.9, and 17.18

Objective

To enhance the capacity of policymakers to empower women and mainstream gender in urban and food forest planning and management in the Western Balkans and Central Asia

Project plan

This project will support four countries in the Western Balkans and Central Asia to empower women and girls though digital tools and improved digital literacy in the planning and management of urban and food forests, building capacity to lead within their communities on nature-based solutions and strengthening their inclusion through policy action at the local and national level.

The project will address the importance of trees and forests as a source of livelihoods for communities and the substantial role of women and girls in building community cohesion and resilience, as well as their dependence on forest resources for incomes, safety, nutritious food, health and wellbeing, in urban and peri-urban settings. It will address the urgent need for better inclusion and empowering of women in the planning and managing the tree and forest resources at the household, community, city and national levels. It will also advance their digital inclusion and access to digital tools which is needed to be actively included in economic and environmental decisions, management and policy-development.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to improving community cohesion and resilience through women's empowerment and digital tools in urban and food forest planning and management, which would be demonstrated by the participation and leadership of women trained through the project in the elaboration of assessments and plans to manage urban and food forests.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Other staff costs	25.5
Consultants	234.5
Travel of staff	24.0
Contractual services	84.0
General operating expenses	2.0
Grants and contributions	130.0
Total	**500.0**

Q. A digital and gender-inclusive approach to climate-resilient transport

Implemented by ECE in collaboration with ESCAP and resident coordinator offices ($502,800)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 1.5, 3.6, 5.5, 5.b, 9.1, 9.4, 11.2, 11.5 and 13.1

Objective

To strengthen the capacity of selected countries in the Western Balkans and Asia to enhance the climate resilience of their transport infrastructure

Project plan

At its 86th session of the Inland Transport Committee, the Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gases Emissions from Inland Transport was adopted. The Strategy calls for action to "*develop and support uptake of guidance for vulnerability assessment/stress tests of transport asset to climate change hazards and for effective adaptation programmes*".

The project will support four countries in conducting climate hazard resilience stress tests and assessments of their transport assets and prioritise their resources in areas most in need of addressing this challenge. Phase 1 of the project focuses on creating a digital tool to help experts to conduct stress tests easily and digitally. This tool, will help national policymakers and experts to identify and formulate key consequence indicators, set thresholds, and assess stress scenarios for transport systems. The tool will help to enhance countries' capacities in climate adaptation, strategic foresight, and the use of digital solutions in policy. In Phase 2, the digital tool developed will be applied in four beneficiary countries to assess the climate resilience of key transport networks. These capacity building interventions will also increase awareness among policymakers and stakeholders to apply this tool to assess the resilience of their countries' transport assets and to develop a pathway on how this work would help the countries in formulating Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for adaptation.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to strengthen Member States' capacity in adapting transport infrastructure to the impact of climate change through the power of digital transformation, which would be demonstrated by. the targeted countries not only being better equipped to conduct qualitative resilience assessment against climate challenges, but also to empower women to participate actively in the decision-making processes for transport infrastructure planning and effective management in the transport sector.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Other staff costs	37.8
Consultants	204.1
Travel of staff (and consultants)	81.3
Contractual services	37.8
General operating expenses	33.1
Grants and contributions	108.7
Total	**502.8**

R. Power grid governance policies in support of inclusive digital transformation in countries with special needs

Implemented by ECE in collaboration with ESCAP, ESCWA and resident coordinator offices ($700,000)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 5.5, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.a, 7.b, 8.4, 9.1, 12.a and 17.14

Objective

To strengthen the capacity of selected countries to develop comprehensive digital governance policies to better plan and manage integrated power systems for an inclusive and gender-responsive sustainable digital transformation of the energy sector

Project plan

The need for resilient and sustainable energy systems has intensified in the recent years. In many countries with special needs, this is due to growing energy demand against the backdrop of aging energy infrastructure. In this context, integration of new renewables-based decentralized energy resources into legacy systems poses a significant challenge. Without strategic governance frameworks that embrace digital technologies and support their concerted integration, while addressing the risks such as cybersecurity vulnerabilities and data privacy, most initiatives and efforts to modernize energy systems might turn out to be fragmented and short-lived. Moreover, gender inequalities and socio-economic disparities can impede the inclusivity of these transitions.

This project will respond to these critical needs. It will support six potential target countries in the ECE and ESCAP regions. Through capacity development activities, these countries will be better enabled to integrate decentralized energy resources into their energy grids, enhance grid reliability, and foster regional cooperation for a more inclusive and sustainable energy transition. The project will also empower policymakers with the skills to measure and report on the progress of energy grid digitalization and modernization.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to the development of a comprehensive digital governance policy framework, adaptable to specific national contexts, that enables policymakers in the target countries to manage and coordinate integrated and smart grid systems more effectively while increasing the overall sustainability of the energy sector, which would be demonstrated by the adoption of national digital governance frameworks, the successful integration of digital tools, and the increased capacity of policymakers to implement these frameworks.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Consultants	183.0
Travel of staff	126.0
Contractual services	146.0
General operating expenses	65.0
Grants and contributions	180.0
Total	**700.0**

S. Digital transformation in the production of social and demographic statistics to improve inclusive, gender-sensitive policies in Latin America and the Caribbean

Implemented by ECLAC in collaboration with resident coordinator offices ($635,300)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 1.3, 4.5, 5.1, 10.2, 10.7, 11.3, 16.1, 17.9, 17.18 and 17.19

Objective

To strengthen the capacity of national statistics offices and relevant local institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean to produce official demographic and social statistics with a gender perspective

Project plan

The digital revolution opens new possibilities for enhancing data collection, management, and use, especially through administrative registers. Integrating these records into statistical systems improves coverage, cost-efficiency, and timeliness, paving the way for register-based censuses and complementing censuses and surveys, enabling detailed disaggregation by sex, age, and other variables.

Using an adaptive and participatory approach, the project will support up to five countries in Latin America and the Caribbean in building capacities to address the legal, institutional, and technical challenges of transforming administrative registers into statistical records. The project consists of two main components. First, a comprehensive assessment of the administrative registers in each participating country, identifying strengths and areas for improvement in critical population and social records. The second component will strengthen national or local capacities to innovatively use administrative registers and integrate them with censuses and surveys, improving record quality and adopting sound statistical methodologies.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to strengthening technical and institutional capacities of NSOs in Latin American and the Caribbean countries to integrate administrative registers to produce official population and social statistics with a gender perspective, which would be demonstrated by clear strategies to identify usable registers, enhanced national capacities to apply methodologies and techniques for processing and integrating registers with censuses and surveys, and increased understanding of the path towards a statistical population register.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Other staff costs	52.5
Consultants	210.6
Travel of staff	109.1
Contractual services	57.0
General operating expenses	14.0
Grants and contributions	192.1
Total	**635.3**

T. Improved social and economic policies and strategies for digital inclusion and transformation with a gender perspective in Latin America and the Caribbean

Implemented by ECLAC in collaboration with resident coordinator offices ($634,600)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 1.4, 4.4, 5.1, 5.5, 8.3, 10.2 and 10.3

Objective

To enhance the capacity of selected countries to design, adapt and implement social and economic policies and strategies that promote digital inclusion and transformation with a gender perspective

Project plan

At the Summit of the Future in 2024, the General Assembly adopted the Pact for the Future and its annexes, including the Global Digital Compact. Through this Digital Compact, member States commit to undertaking meaningful and measurable actions to eliminate digital divides and accelerate progress across all Sustainable Development Goals. Additionally, they pledged to expand inclusion within the digital economy, ensuring its benefits are accessible to all, and to promote an inclusive, open, and secure digital environment. Considering this commitment, as well as the agreements made within the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2026), this project aims to support three countries in the region in building capacities for the formulation of policies, strategies, and programs that promote the real and effective use of digital technologies among marginalized groups—especially women and girls—empowering them to fully participate in the digital transformation.

By the actions proposed in this project, policy makers in the three project countries will improve their abilities to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the digital world and thus advance away from the traps of weak capacity for growth and high inequality that affect the region. The project will use technical assistance, capacity building, regional advocacy and the development of knowledge products and training to bring about change among decision-makers to meet the demands of gender-responsive digital transformation.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to enhance the capacity of three selected countries to design, adapt, and implement social and economic policies that promote digital inclusion as a driver of economic growth and social and productive transformations, incorporating a gender perspective, which would be demonstrated by the inclusion of recommendations in the formulation of a strategy, policy or program in selected countries. At the end of the project, it is expected that intersectoral work between relevant actors of public institutions will be strengthened to address the challenges of digital inclusion.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Other staff costs	60.0
Consultants	228.9
Travel of staff	90.0
Contractual services	54.5
General operating expenses	47.0
Grants and contributions	154.2
Total	**634.6**

U. Building digitally enabled care economies addressing structural gender inequalities in Latin America and the Caribbean

Implemented by ECLAC in collaboration with resident coordinator offices ($637,500)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 1.3, 1.4, 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, 5.b, 5.c, 8.5, 17.6 and 17.8

Objective

To enhance the capacity of selected countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to advance women's digital and economic inclusion and empowerment in the care economy

Project plan

Structural challenges, hinder reaching SDG5 on gender equality. In Latin America and the Caribbean women dedicate more than three times as much time as men to unpaid domestic and care work and participate significantly less in labor markets and under worse conditions than men. Furthermore, on average, 1 in 10 employed women is in domestic work, and women represent 92.8% of those working in the sector. Governments in the region have committed to advance care policies and systems through a paradigm shift that recognized both the right to care and of care workers.

The project responds to a need for increased knowledge and capacities on how digitalization can be used in the care economy to advance the autonomy of women and girls. Governments will receive technical support and exchange experiences to better leverage digital technologies in policies on unpaid care work. The project will also provide answers to how digital platforms are affecting the domestic work labor market and will allow beneficiary governments to advance the digital and economic inclusion of domestic workers, where women living in poverty, as well as Afro descendent, indigenous and rural migrant communities are overrepresented.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to build capacities of governments in four target countries to advance policies for the digitally enabled care economy, including through application of innovative digital tools and improved economic opportunities for domestic workers, which would be demonstrated by the establishment of action plans and increased collaboration between sectors responsible for digitalization and for gender. At the end of the project, it is expected that there will be improved regional knowledge of promising practices when it comes to digital transformations in the care economy, and governments will have improved capacities in applying digital advances to care policies that promote the autonomy of women and girls.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Other staff costs	42.1
Consultants	255.9
Travel of staff	60.1
Contractual services	66.1
General operating expenses	91.1
Grants and contributions	122.2
Total	**637.5**

V. Harnessing digital solutions to catalyze inclusive businesses that leave no one behind

Implemented by ESCAP in collaboration with UNCTAD and resident coordinator offices ($640,800)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 1.4, 5.a, 5.b, 8.3, 8.5, 9.b, 9.c, 10.1, 17.6 and 17.9

Objective

To strengthen the capacity of selected developing countries in Asia and the Pacific to implement policy measures and strategies that enable inclusive businesses and women entrepreneurs to harness digital technologies that leave no one behind

Project plan

Governments in Asia and the Pacific are seeking to maximize the contribution that businesses and entrepreneurs can make towards the SDGs and are adopting strategies to promote inclusive businesses and women economic empowerment. In 2023, ASEAN member States adopted the Plan of Action for Promoting Inclusive Businesses to, among other policy measures, build the capacity of firms to develop inclusive business models. Harnessing digital solutions has become a cornerstone for inclusive business models. Yet, many inclusive business models face difficulties in harnessing digital technologies, including integrating digital solutions, accessing granular data, engaging smallholder farmers and clients in the use of digital tools; or in leveraging financial resources and partnerships to implement large scale digital solutions.

This project will support five countries in Asia and the Pacific to identify best practices and actions, to build capacities of businesses and women entrepreneurs, and to engage potential investors, partners and government officials to harness digital technologies to scale up impact and leave no one behind.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to strengthening the capacities of beneficiary countries to implement policy measures and strategies that enable inclusive businesses and women entrepreneurs to harness digital technologies, which would be demonstrated by policymakers, businesses and women entrepreneurs taking action, to harness digital technologies and integrate a gender-lens to leave no one behind.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Consultants	243.7
Travel of staff	56.4
Contractual services	130.7
General operating expenses	60.6
Grants and contributions	149.4
Total	**640.8**

W. Innovative and digital technologies for inclusive policies that leave no one behind in Africa and Asia and the Pacific

Implemented by ESCAP, jointly with ECA and in collaboration with resident coordinator offices ($632,900)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 1.3, 2.2, 3.8, 4.5, 5.4, 8.5, 13.2 and 17.8

Objective

To strengthen the capacity of selected countries in Africa and Asia and the Pacific to leverage innovative tools and digital technologies for inclusive policymaking that leaves no one behind

Project plan

The multidimensional nature of poverty and inequality of opportunity requires member States to formulate and implement evidence-based inclusive policies that are informed by scientific methodologies and digital tools. Addressing the intersectionality of barriers people face in accessing basic services and opportunities is high on the global agenda, including in preparation for the World Social Summit in 2025 and the 2027 Sustainable Development Goals Summit.

This project will support five countries from Africa and Asia and the Pacific to generate leaving no one behind evidence and mainstream results into national development plans and sectoral policies, including Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), as well as Common Country Analysis and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. The project responds to increasing country demands on identifying furthest behind groups for additional indicators, expanding the existing digital tools, and continuing to build national capacities to integrate results into national social development policies.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures
This work is expected to contribute to strengthening national capacities in Asia and the Pacific to leverage innovative and digital tools for inclusive social policymaking, which would be demonstrated by policy documents in target countries referring to the furthest behind groups with empirical evidence at national and local levels. This will support digital transformation not only in terms of boosting access to and use of digital tools but also in harnessing digitalization for inclusive policymaking.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Consultants	133.6
Travel of staff	112.5
Contractual services	150.7
General operating expenses	65.3
Grants and contributions	170.8
Total	**632.9**

X. Inclusive smart cities empowering gender-responsive digital urban transformation

Implemented by ESCAP, jointly with UN-Habitat and in collaboration with resident coordinator offices ($633,700)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 1.4, 5.5, 9.1, 10.2, 11.2, 11.3 and 17.17

Objective

To enhance the capacity of policymakers in South and Southeast Asia to improve services, gender equality and safety in smart city development

Project Plan

Smart cities are becoming a central strategy for enhanced governance and sustainability in Asia-Pacific, yet a significant digital gender gap persists. In 2023, only 54 per cent of women in the region had digital access, with even lower rates in South Asia, limiting women's engagement in urban and economic activities. This project responds to Member States' calls for gender-sensitive policies to close this gap.

The project will support three South and Southeast Asian countries in integrating gender-responsive approaches into smart city development. Currently, women and girls in these countries face significant barriers to participating in the digital transformation of cities. Barriers include limited access to digital services, economic opportunities, and smart city initiatives due to the digital gender divide, socio-cultural constraints, and gaps in policy frameworks. The lack of gender-sensitive smart city strategies results in urban planning and services that do not adequately cater to the needs of women and marginalized groups, reinforcing existing inequalities. By building capacity in national and local governments, the project will promote equitable access to digital services and economic opportunities for women. Efforts will focus on policies that foster gender equality, public safety, and women and girls' inclusion in digital urban initiatives, engaging both policymakers and relevant stakeholders.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures
This work is expected to contribute to empower women and girls by enhancing their access to digital services, economic participation, and engagement in smart city governance, which would be demonstrated by national and local governments having improved capacity to integrate gender considerations into smart city strategies, ensuring that urban services, infrastructure, and economic opportunities are equitably accessible. The project's gender-sensitive frameworks, policy guidance, and pilot initiatives will create scalable models for inclusive smart cities, fostering a sustainable and responsible digital transformation that leaves no one behind.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Consultants	214.0
Travel of staff	89.7
Contractual services	48.7
General operating expenses	52.0
Grants and contributions	229.3
Total	**633.7**

Y. Advancing e-commerce for women-led SMEs in the Arab region

Implemented by ESCWA in collaboration with UNCTAD and resident coordinator offices ($600,000)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 5.5, 8.3, 8.5, 9.3, 9.5, 10.2 and 17.8

Objective

To enhance the capacity of selected countries in the Arab region to drive digital transformation to improve women-led small- and medium-sized enterprises' market access and growth

Project plan

Women entrepreneurs in the Arab region face significant barriers to fully engaging in the digital economy, including limited access to technology, low digital literacy, and insufficient policies that address their unique challenges. Global commitments to gender equality, particularly through SDGs 5 (gender equality) and 8 (decent work and economic growth), underscore the urgency of these issues. There is a rising demand from member States for targeted initiatives to empower women economically and support SMEs in the digital space, motivating this project.

The project aims to enhance the skills of women entrepreneurs to facilitate digital transformation and tap into e-commerce opportunities, while simultaneously strengthening policymakers' capacities to mitigate barriers to women's economic participation. Focusing on four Arab countries, the project will analyze obstacles to digital inclusion and develop policies that promote women's entrepreneurship within the digital economy, fostering inclusive and sustainable growth.

To address these challenges, the project will design and implement a dedicated e-commerce platform with a mobile application, helping women-led SMEs leverage digital solutions for market access and growth. It will also provide enhanced skills training and support initiatives to navigate regulatory barriers. By engaging policymakers to create supportive frameworks, the project will establish a foundation for a more inclusive digital economy.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to improved capacities of women-led SMEs to utilize e-commerce effectively and to policy reforms, which would be demonstrated by the adoption of key recommendations by national authorities to enhance women's participation in e-commerce. Ultimately, the project aims to unlock the potential of women-led SMEs, fostering inclusive growth and advancing gender equality in the region.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Other staff costs	60.0
Consultants	59.7
Travel of staff	87.5
Contractual services	199.8
General operating expenses	50.4
Grants and contributions	142.6
Total	**600.0**

Z. Catalyzing digital transformation in a gender-responsive and inclusive public administration in Arab countries

Implemented by ESCWA in collaboration with resident coordinator offices ($551,400)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets 5.1, 5.5, 9.c, 10.2, 16.6, 16.7 and 17.18

Objective

To enhance the capacity of selected countries in the Arab region to implement gender-responsive digitalization policies in public administration from more transparent, accountable and inclusive governance

Project plan

The digital age presents immense opportunities for economic growth, improved public service delivery, and social inclusion. However, the benefits of digital transformation are not evenly distributed, and many Arab countries face a persistent digital divide, particularly for women and girls in public administration. Furthermore, the lack of gender-responsive digital policies and adequate data on gender disparities in public administration presents a challenge for inclusive governance. This project seeks to address these challenges by promoting digital transformation that incorporates gender equality as a central component, thus enabling more inclusive and effective public administration.

This project will support four Arab countries to utilize a comprehensive Public Administration Index (PAI) that integrates gender and digitalization metrics, build the capacity of policymakers and public institutions to use this index, and empower women in public administration through targeted digital skills training. The project will include technical assistance to member States to improve data availability and quality and pilot the index in at least two countries to refine it before further implementation.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to contribute to strengthening the capacities of Arab countries to design and adopt gender-responsive digital policies and foster an inclusive public administration, which would be demonstrated by the development and operationalization of the PAI and increased participation of women in digital policy formulation and implementation in the target countries. At the end of the project, it is expected that participating countries will have a measurable and actionable framework to guide gender-sensitive digital transformation in public administration.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Other staff costs	54.9
Consultants	87.9
Travel of staff	137.5
Contractual services	60.7
General operating expenses	56.6
Grants and contributions	153.8
Total	**551.4**

AA. Empowering policymakers for an inclusive, gender-responsive digital economy

Implemented by ESCWA in collaboration with resident coordinator offices ($551,400)	Relationship to Sustainable Development Goals: targets: 5.b, 8.2, 8.3, 8.5, 9.3, 9.4, 9.b, 17.6 and 17.8

Objective

To strengthen the capacity of policymakers in selected countries in the Arab region to design, implement, and evaluate data-driven digital transformation strategies that promote equitable access, gender inclusivity, and resilience in the digital economy

Project plan

In the Arab region, policymakers face significant challenges in driving digital transformation that is both inclusive and gender responsive. Barriers such as limited digital literacy, unequal access to reliable data, and the persistent digital divide hinder their ability to design and implement effective policies that reach underserved populations, particularly women and marginalized communities. Recent requests from Member States for enhanced support in strengthening digital policy capacities and promoting gender equality underscore the urgent need for targeted digital solutions.

This project will support three Arab countries in gaining access to insights and analytical tools that facilitate strategic digital policymaking. Through targeted capacity-building workshops, the project will train policymakers in each country to effectively use these tools, enabling them to design policies that promote digital inclusion, address gender disparities, and build resilient digital economies. Additionally, user-friendly interfaces and localized training materials will ensure that the tools meet specific country needs, fostering sustained adoption and integration into regular policy processes.

Expected Progress towards the Attainment of Objectives and Performance Measures

This work is expected to contribute to strengthening the ability of target countries to design and evaluate different policy options based on data-informed, inclusive digital transformation strategies that prioritize gender equality and sustainable development, which would be demonstrated by the creation and use of specialized decision-support tools, which will provide policymakers with actionable insights to address digital access gaps and promote inclusive digital growth. By the project's completion, policymakers in each target country will be equipped to make more effective and equitable decisions, leveraging relevant data to shape policies that foster digital inclusion and economic resilience.

Budget summary (thousands of United States dollars)	
Other staff costs	55.1
Consultants	51.2
Travel of staff	98.4
Contractual services	123.1
General operating expenses	88.6
Grants and contributions	135.0
Total	**551.4**

Annex II

A. Resources allocated and expenditure by object of expenditure, 2021–2026

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	13th tranche (projects implemented 2021-2024)			*14th tranche* (projects implemented 2022-2025)			*15th tranche* (projects implemented 2023-2026)			*16th tranche* (projects implemented 2024-2027)			*17th tranche* (projects implemented 2025-2028)			*2026*	
	2021 Appropriation	*Expenditure 2021-2024*	*Implementation rate*	*2022 Appropriation*	*Expenditure 2022 – 30 April 2025*	*Implementation rate*	*2023 Appropriation*	*Expenditure 2023 – 30 April 2025*	*Implementation rate*	*2024 Appropriation*	*Expenditure 2024 – 30 April 2025*	*Implementation rate*	*2025 Appropriation*	*Expenditure (Jan – 30 April 2025)*	*Implementation rate*	*Proposed*	*Variance (2025-2026)*
Other staff costs	649.7	901.8	139%	840.2	232	28%	851.4	291.6	34%	805	200.8	25%	762.1	10.5	1%	924.9	162.8
Consultants and experts	4,613.30	5,777.40	125%	6,605.40	4,148.60	63%	7,498.40	3,280.10	44%	6,836.30	2,584.20	38%	6,864.50	94.6	1%	6,358.40	(506.1)
Travel of staff	2,080.40	1,510.30	73%	1,994.30	1,523.00	76%	1,820.00	636.6	35%	2,673.20	716.4	27%	2,534.40	36.9	1%	2,580.80	46.4
Contractual services	2,165.30	2,025.10	94%	1,775.50	1,136.30	64%	2,003.40	848.8	42%	2,333.20	618.6	27%	2,880.00	58.4	2%	2,790.30	(89.7)
General operating expenses	1,078.70	752.6	70%	739.8	418	57%	939.7	335.4	36%	1,535.30	176.9	12%	1,433.50	3.5	0%	1,841.20	407.7
Supplies and materials	–	4.1	-	–	1.5	-	–	0.1	-	-	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Furniture and equipment	9.3	13.2	142%	15.6	32	205%	–	1.5	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grants and contributions	4,602.70	3,543.50	77%	4,228.40	2,174.40	51%	3,378.40	1,840.90	54%	4,319.90	808.1	19%	4,537.50	2.5	0%	4,516.30	(21.2)
Total	**15,199.40**	**14,528.00**	**96%**	**16,199.40**	**9,665.80**	**60%**	**16,491.30**	**7,235.00**	**44%**	**18,502.90**	**5,107.50**	**28%**	**19,011.90**	**206.4**	**1%**	**19,011.90**	**-**

B. Details by project for contractual services and geographical region

(United States dollars)

Project Code	Amount	Description of contractual services	Region(s)
A	80,000	Services in support of the development and maintenance of the Global Platform of a cloud-service ecosystem (OP2.3).	Africa, Asia and the Pacific
B	113,100	Venue hire, catering and interpretation services for 6 countries in support of OP1.1.	Latin America and the Caribbean
C	133,600	Piloting the integrated system in four countries in support of outputs OP 1.1, 1.2, 2.1: contractual services with the NGO or a company for consultations with major groups and provide technical inputs for analytical study, identification of recommendations and piloting the system.	Latin America and the Caribbean
D	19,700	Conduct awareness raising campaigns through media promotion for each of the 4 countries.	Africa, Asia and the Pacific
E	20,200	Software developer in support of output OP2.1, i.e. developing additional functionalities of the Live Implementation Matrix.	Africa
F	135,600	Adjustment of the TISSTAT information system for the specificities in data availability and statistical infrastructure in support of outputs OP1.3. Delivery of an e-learning module on Gender and Digital Services Trade in support of output OP2.2. Editing and design services of the regional report in support of output OP2.1	Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia
G	30,100	Translation, editing, and typesetting services related to the publication of 3 gender assessments of digital technologies in support of OP1.4.	Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean
H	103,300	Building of AI-powered features integrated into TRAINS data entry tool and for the building of AI-powered features integrated to TRAINS data dissemination tool services in support of outputs OP1.1 and 1.2. The services including the study of existing data available on TRAINS, train the AI modules to learn from the patterns of identifying the trade-related policy requirements within legal text documents and replicate such process, and produce the results of updated trade-related policy measures in the selected countries, and the products affected by such requirements.	Africa
I	220,000	Local NGO support for data collection (including sex/gender disaggregated data), country assessments, stakeholder consultation and workshop organization for services in support of outputs OP1.1-2.5	Latin America and the Caribbean

J	152,200	Interpretation and technical services in support of outputs OP1.1, OP2.1 and OP3.2 during national workshops in target countries and global webinars. Translation of materials into French and Spanish in support of output OP1.2, which will support work in two target country. Editing and layout service in support of output OP1.3 to finalize a step-by-step guideline developed to assist countries in calculating the Index of Coastal Eutrophication Potential at the national level. Visualization service in support of output OP3.1 to finalize an e-learning course on collecting citizen science data on water quality in inland waters and oceans.	Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean
K	107,500	Development, hosting and maintenance of data collection tools in support of outputs OP1.3 Hosting of online training, including interpretation in support of OP 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4. Translation of training and advocacy materials in support of OP 1.1, 1.3, 2.1, and 3.1.	Latin America and the Caribbean
L	143,000	International NGO services specialised in Global Street Design Standards in support of outputs OP1.2. NGOs shall support the country teams and consultants in aligning the national street design manuals to global best practice in three countries. Web development services in support of output OP1.3. App development services (open-source, augmented reality street design app) in support of output OP2.1 to be used in all 6 countries.	Africa, Middle East and North Africa
M	27,200	Technology support services in support of outputs OP1.4 (development of online training modules) Services will include software development and IT support for a duration of 6 months.	Africa
N	31,900	Printing and translating studies, policy review, database and data collection tool, and training materials in 2 languages (French, Spanish), services in support of outputs OP1.1, OP1.2, OP1.4, OP2.1, OP2.2, OP2.4.	Africa
P	84,000	Development of an online data platform in support of output OP2.2 in two countries. Collaborating partner to implement the assessment in support of output OP2.2 in two countries. Interpretation services in support of outputs OP1.4 and OP2.5. Service fees for a digital platform in support of output OP3.4 and OP2.5.	Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia
Q	37,800	Organisation and interpretation services for the regional workshops, translation and editing of reports in support of outputs OP1.2, OP2.1, OP2.2 and OP2.3:	Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia
R	146,000	Conduct of analytical studies, development of graphic materials, databases and substantive digital materials, and preparation of roadmaps for the digital governance frameworks in the six beneficiary countries in support of outputs OP1.1,	Asia and the Pacific, Middle East and North Africa, Europe

		OP.1.2, OP1.3 and OP2.2. Support analysis and modelling for capacity-building activities, and the development and improvement of the policy toolkit, in support of OP1.1.	and Central Asia
S	57,000	Collection of information and editing services in support of outputs OP1.1, OP1.5, OP1.3, and interpretation services for OP2.5: edition for 12 publications	Latin America and the Caribbean
T	54,500	Publishing services in support of outputs OP1.3, OP1.5, OP2.1, OP2.3,: it includes editorial, publishing, translation and layout services for the policy toolkits and national studies.	Latin America and the Caribbean
U	66,100	Editing, layout and printing services in support of outputs OP1.1, OP1.2, OP2.1, and OP2.2	Latin America and the Caribbean
V	130,700	Copywriting, editing, formatting and printing services in support of OP1.1, OP2.3. Design and organize a capacity building programme providing coaching to enable two cohorts of 10 women-led and women-focused inclusive businesses to harness digital technologies to scale up impact in support of output OP1.2. Technical support in support of output OP2.4.	Asia and the Pacific
W	150,700	Upgrading and expanding the existing LNOB Platform, equipping it with online training materials and infographics, offering interpretation services, translating and publishing knowledge products as per below: • Platform update and maintenance in support of OP1.1, OP1.2, OP1.3, OP2.1 - OP 2.4 • Interpretation services during national and regional events as needed in support of OP2.2, OP2.4, OP1.4 and OP1.5. Translation of the LNOB Platform to Russian. • Printing and design of knowledge products and training materials in support of OP1.3, OP 2.1, OP 2.2 and OP 2.4. • Production of video tutorials to ease navigating the platform and support self-paced online learning on the LNOB platform in support of OP 1.2, OP 1.3, OP2.1, OP 2.2 and OP2.4	Asia and the Pacific
X	48,700	A provision of $12,500 is required for communications editing and designing Output 1.3 and 3.1: design 2 assessments, 3 national reports, 3 cities report and 1 policy brief. A provision of $36,215is required for translation services in support of outputs OP1.1, OP 1.3, OP 2.1, OP 2.2, OP2.3, and OP3.1: provide translation for documents as well as simultaneous translation for workshops in Bangladesh, Cambodia and Lao PDR	Asia and the Pacific
Y	199,800	Conducting the analysis required to develop regional e-commerce ecosystem mapping report in support of OP1.1 Facilitate the creation of 300 women led ecommerce stores as well as printed materials in support of output OP1.3 Develop a regional dashboard data tool that enables policymakers to monitor and track the performance of online	Africa, Middle East and North Africa

		stores operated by women-led SMEs in support of output OP2.1 Organize the national community policy dialogues meetings in support of output OP2.2. Develop tailored national policy recommendations in support of output OP2.3	
Z	60,700	Organization of the workshops/meetings in support of outputs OP1.3, OP1.4, OP 2.2, OP2.3, OP2.4, OP2.5, OP3.1, OP1.2. Individual contractor in support of OP1.3, OP1.4, OP2.2, OP2.3, OP2.4 and OP3.1 to provide research and administrative assistance. Editing, translation and design in support of OP3.2.	Middle East and North Africa
AA	123,100	Digital tool development services in support of outputs OP1.1 and OP 1.2. Web design & development services (including project management, documentation, training material) AI and Machine Learning development (for specialized AI policy assistants on inclusion, policy options engine, etc.)	Africa, Middle East and North Africa

Annex III

Summary of follow-up action taken to implement relevant recommendations of advisory and oversight bodies

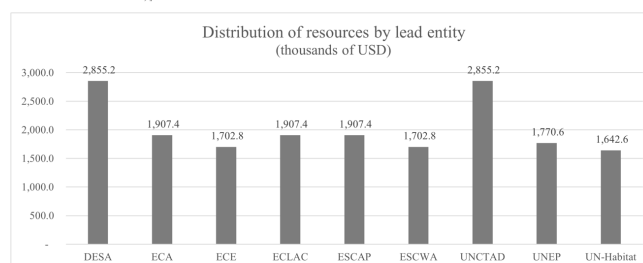| Brief description of the recommendation	Action taken to implement the recommendation
Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions A/79/7	
`XIII.1..... The Advisory Committee trusts that to allow for proper consideration of the budget implementation and performance, the current presentation of the information on the evolution of the financial resources will be revised, with a view to making it clear, transparent and more compatible with the results-based-budgeting principles, and will be included in the next budget submission.	A revised table has been included in the Supplementary Information under Annex II.A for this budget submission.
XIII.3. The Advisory Committee notes the information on the number of national and international consultants and, once again, recognizes the capacity building benefits and cost-effectiveness of the use of national and regional consultants. The Committee trusts that updated information on the use of national, regional and international consultants will be included in future budget submissions, as a matter of routine	Updated information on the use of national, regional and international consultants is included in paragraph 35.2 and table 35.3 of the Proposed Programme Budget.
XIII.4. …The Advisory Committee reiterates that it is of the view that there is still a need to rationalize the resource requirements for travel through efficiencies and more reliance on online tools and local experts, to dedicate more of these resources to the funding of the Development Account's sustainable projects (see A/78/7, para. XIII. 8).	As indicated in paragraph 35.19 of the Proposed Programme Budget, the Development Account implementing entities are non-resident in most of the target countries. Resource requirements for staff travel represent an average of 14 per cent of the total resources, similar to the last two tranches. While projects typically include e-learning components, and incorporating such elements is useful for maximizing efficiencies and broadening outreach, these tools cannot replace all face-to-face delivery modalities in their effectiveness, as has been found in project evaluations. As indicated in the evaluation section of the 14th Progress Report (see paragraph 23) lessons learned from projects convey that both project staff and beneficiaries have highlighted that the online setting are not ideal for capacity-building interventions, as it limit opportunities for interactive discussions, exchange and networking among the participants, thereby hindering potential follow-up with and among the participants of the events.
XIII.5. …The Advisory Committee trusts that more detailed information on contractual services by location of projects and the related costs will be	Additional information on contractual services by project is included in Annex II. Information contractual services by location of projects is at this stage provided by region as target countries have not yet been confirmed yet.

included in future budget submissions (see also A/78/7, para. XIII.9).	
XIII.8. The Advisory Committee points out that the changes that took place since the establishment of the Development Account, including the development reform, may call for the refinement of the modality being used to fund and manage the Account. The Committee reiterates that it is of the view that taking into consideration the integration of the resident coordinator system into the Secretariat, the issues of the funding stream and challenges, and the limitations of the Development Account as a tool for the capacity development programme in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including its level and sustainability of resources, its governance, programme oversight and management arrangements among its entities, as well as the lack of concrete tools to measure the impact of its projects, adversely affect the realization of its objectives and restrict its ability to inflict tangible results in support of the most vulnerable countries. The Committee, once again, recommends that the General Assembly discuss, at the appropriate level and platform, the number of implementing entities, concrete plans to strengthen the role of the Development Account and ensure its efficacy, the soundness of its management, and the sufficiency and predictability of its funding, with a view to repositioning the Account as an important tool and a dividend for development in the context of the development reform efforts in order to support the countries in need in implementing the 2030 Agenda (see paras. XIII.13, XIII.15, XIII.18, XIII.22 and XIII.23 below. See also A/78/7, para. XIII.28). In this regard, the Committee further recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to present a report to the Assembly to allow this discussion and update thereon in the next budget submission.	Please refer to the *Report of the Secretary-General on Strengthening the effectiveness and impact of the Development Account* submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 79/257.
XIII.13 The Advisory Committee notes that there continues to be a lack of clarity regarding the criteria applied in the distribution of resources among the implementing entities of the	Please refer to paragraph 35.17 and Figure 35.V in the budget Proposed Programme Budget (reproduced below for easy reference), where information on the distribution of

Development Account and recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to include detailed information on the distribution of resources among the implementing entities and the criteria thereon in future budget submissions as a matter of routine

resources among the implementing entities and the criteria thereon has been included.

35.17 The distribution of resources by entity for the proposed projects is outlined in figure 35.V. In general, there is a 50-50 distribution between global and regional entities. On average entities have three projects, with DESA and UNCTAD having an additional one, and the funds and programmes with more limited regular budget funding have two projects each. It should be noted that proposed resources for jointly implemented projects, which represent eight of the proposed projects, are counted towards the lead entities' shares at this stage. For jointly implemented projects, multiple entities receive a portion of the project budget. Therefore, the final distribution is only known at a later stage, after project documents have been drafted.

Figure·35.V·¶
Distribution·of·resource·requirements·by·entity·(before·recosting)¶
(Thousands·of·United·States·dollars)¶

Distribution of resources by lead entity
(thousands of USD)

	DESA	ECA	ECE	ECLAC	ESCAP	ESCWA	UNCTAD	UNEP	UN-Habitat
	2,855.2	1,907.4	1,702.8	1,907.4	1,907.4	1,702.8	2,855.2	1,770.6	1,642.6

XIII.15 The Advisory Committee notes the lack of detailed quantified information on the projects to be covered by the proposed budget and points out that the current funding modality of the Development Account and the lack of predictability of its resources adversely impact the development of the projects, including the selection of the beneficiary member states. The Committee trusts again that the Secretary-General will ensure transparency in the selection of countries and projects and will develop an outreach programme, including the dissemination of information on projects to countries with special needs in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, in close coordination with, among others, the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and the Small Island Developing States, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the resident coordinator system, to allow for the formulation of demands by the member states (see A/78/7, para. XIII.35). The Committee expects that the Secretary-General will include detailed

Additional quantified information on projects will be developed as part of the preparation of the project. These documents are currently under preparation by the implementing entities and will be finalized following the General Assembly's approval of the Proposed Programme Budget for the Development Account.
In addition, please also refer to the *Report of the Secretary-General on Strengthening the effectiveness and impact of the Development Account* submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 79/257 which provides further details on selection and outreach as requested by the GA.

information on the outreach programme in the next budget submission.	
XIII.18. The Advisory Committee trusts the complementarity between the Development Account and the regular programme of technical cooperation will continue to be ensured and further developed in order to maximize the combined impact of the activities implemented through them	Please refer to the *Report of the Secretary-General on Strengthening the effectiveness and impact of the Development Account*, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 79/257, for further information on the complementarity between the Development Account and the regular programme of technical cooperation.
XIII.22 The Advisory Committee stresses that the absence of uniform evaluation criteria and means of assessing the efficiency, productivity and impact of projects across all implementing entities is a serious shortcoming that must be overcome. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide in the future budget submissions and the future progress reports on the activities of the Development Account more comprehensive information on the project evaluation, such as the status and costs, including the date of commencement and completion, the expenditures, the overhead costs, and its impact, along with information on the criteria, guidelines, and standards applied, and the status of the project evaluation activities, as well as the lessons learned and good practices, as a matter of routine	Development Account project evaluations are guided by the *Development Account Evaluation Framework* and the *Development Account Project Evaluation Guidelines* developed in 2019, supplementary guidance note for the specific tranche, as well as the implementing entities' respective evaluation policies and guidelines. Comprehensive information on the evaluation of 12th tranche projects, including the status, timelines, costs, methodologies, common evaluation criteria, and lessons learned, is provided in paragraphs 17-23 of the *Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of projects financed from the Development Account: fourteenth progress report*.