

Frontier Technologies for Sustainable Development: Unlocking Women's Entrepreneurship through Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Afghanistan and Iraq

Prosperity

Type:	Course
Location:	Web Based
Date:	15 Jan 2020 to 15 Apr 2020
Duration of event:	12 Weeks
Programme Area:	Public Finance and Trade
Specific Target Audience:	No
Website:	http://www.unitar.org/ai
Price:	No Fee
Event Focal Point Email:	pft-elearning@unitar.org

BACKGROUND

This activity is supported with funding allocated from the Swedish International Development Agency's (Sida) contribution to the UNITAR Strategic Framework Fund. UNITAR is grateful to Sida and other contributors for supporting the SFF. The SFF was established by the UNITAR Board of Trustees in 2018 to support projects and activities that respond to needs of developing countries and in particular the least developed countries, African countries, the small island developing States and countries in and emerging from conflict, in order to strengthen capacities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- **Only 30 slots are available, exclusively for women from Afghanistan and Iraq**
- **Deadline for Application: ~~November 30, 2019~~ EXTENDED to December 15, 2019**
- **Start of the Programme: January 15, 2020 to April 15, 2020**
- **Registration link: www.unitar.org/sff**

In recent years, the emergence of frontier technologies has become a propeller to the increasing growth of entrepreneurship activities globally. At the forefront of frontier technologies, which is also bringing the most significant impact, is artificial intelligence or AI. AI is often implied as the new electricity and assumed as being the fulcrum of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Frontier technologies also present immense potential for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as it offers a multitude of opportunities to re-imagine how our economies could serve better social and environmental needs.

In a 2018 UNDESA publication on Frontier Technologies for Sustainable Development, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres reiterated the need to harness frontier technologies — which increasingly transcend sectoral, geographic and generational boundaries — and ensure that it supports commercial viability that is also equitable and ethical.

In addition, while the frontier technologies offer a multitude of opportunities, there are also significant challenges which could fuel increased inequalities including the risk of triggering a new frontier technology divide, compounding digital divide that persists within and between countries.

It has become increasingly important that training programmes that enhances knowledge and skills in harnessing the transformative potential of frontier technologies be accessible to beneficiaries from developing countries and countries in special situation to ensure that no one is left behind.

The Programme aims to build the knowledge, skills, network, and attitudes needed for effective entrepreneurship and leadership of women professionals from public sector, private sector, academia, media, and civil society organizations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Programme is scheduled to take place over a period of three months and includes modules on entrepreneurship and innovation, artificial intelligence, and gender equality and women's empowerment. This training will be conducted fully online and mentored by an international expert through webinars and other online communication tools.

At the end of the Programme, each participant will have a peer-reviewed business plan that will harness artificial intelligence that addresses a specific development challenge in the country or region.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the Programme, participants will be able to:

- Explain the tools for innovation that every organization needs to succeed.
- Develop innovation skills customized to fit professional and organizational needs.
- Develop a business plan combining current research on AI and entrepreneurship to address national/regional/global development challenges.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

Training Activities and Timeline *(estimated weekly workload/study time: 20 hours. The module titles and dates provided here are subject to change.)*

Activity 1: Webinar 1 (January 15, 2020)

Programme launching; Introductions; Expectations

Activity 2: Online Training 1 (January 15 to 28, 2020)

Cultivating the Entrepreneurial Mindset (Online)

Activity 3: Online Training 2 (January 29 to February 11, 2020)

Building Business Models (Online)

Activity 4: Webinar 2 (February 11, 2020)

Introduction to AI

Activity 5: Online Training 3 (February 12 to 18, 2020)

Gender, Entrepreneurship and the SDGs

Activity 6: Online Training 4 (February 19 to 25, 2020)

Empathize and Prototype: A Hands on Dive into the Key Tools of Design Thinking (Online)

Activity 7: Knowledge Application (February 26 to March 10, 2020)

Individual project: Business Model integrating AI to address a specific business/organizational problem (+ peer review)

Activity 8: Online Training 5 (March 11 to 24, 2020)

Product Marketing Essentials (Online)

Activity 9: Webinar (March 31, 2020)

Wrap-up, Graduation and Closing

METHODOLOGY

The Programme will combine synchronous and asynchronous learning tools to provide “anytime and anywhere” learning model. Interactive Learning Environment will host all the learning tools and materials including the following online elements:

- Interactive webinars,
- Individual and group exercises,
- Weekly assessments,
- Discussions and peer-review,
- Self-directed readings, and
- Mentoring by international and regional experts.

TARGETED AUDIENCE

Qualifications and Eligibility Criteria

- **Age group:** Applicant must currently be between 18 to 40 years old. This Programme is open for women only.
- **Areas of interest:** Entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs with strong interest in the areas related to frontier technology and innovation, digital economy, engineering, SME development, value-chain development, start-up, and mentoring are encouraged to apply.
- **Education:** Preferably with bachelor’s degree or equivalent. Graduating university students with strong background on information technology, computer programming, engineering or business-related courses may also apply
- **Geographical Distribution:** Geographic diversity is an important factor. Applicants who meet the requirements from the different provinces are highly encouraged to apply.
- **Work Experience:** Preferably the applicant has at least two (2) years of professional working experience.
- **Affiliation:** Applicant must be an Iraqi or Afghan national and affiliated with a national or local organization. Applicants working for an international organization or the United Nations may be considered but will have to cover the associated cost in participating for this Programme.
- **Current Role:** Currently (a) in a position relevant to entrepreneurship, frontier technology and innovation, digital economy, SME development, value-chain development, start-up, and mentoring, (b) in a junior to mid-level position in a Government institution, or (c) leading a startup company.
- **Language and Computer Skills:** Excellent working knowledge of spoken and written English. Proficient in the use of Microsoft Office.
- **Participant Supervisor’s Commitment:** Participants must secure their supervisors’ written support for their involvement in the training Programme. Please use the provided “Supervisor’s Support and Recommendation Form” or the “Startup Certification Form”. UNITAR will provide supervisors and/or organizational representatives with written feedback regarding the performance of participants at regular intervals for the duration of the Programme.
- **Availability:** Participants are required to actively participate in all online sessions, webinars, interact with resource persons, and complete training readings/ assignments. Attendance and participation at all online training sessions is mandatory, even if sessions occur on national holidays. Participants must commit up to 20 hours per week from the start of the Programme. Must be in good health to be able to follow the Programme sessions.

Selection Process and Guidelines

The selection process entails document screening/review and interview. Participants are selected based on specific criteria established by UNITAR and its partners, including professional background, motivation, and human resource development role in specific areas of professional responsibility in addressing sustainable development.

- Thirty (30) female participants (15 from Afghanistan and 15 from Iraq) will be selected to participate based on the results of the written and interview stages of the application process.
- The participants selected in the training cannot be replaced or substituted by another individual at any time.
- UNITAR reserves the right to terminate a participant if they do not fulfil the requirements of the Programme. There is no right-of-replacement for terminated participant.
- Please note that candidates may be requested to submit additional information/document during the selection process.
- This is highly competitive process. Considering the expected large volume of applications, only successful candidates will be contacted.
- Incomplete applications or applications received after the final submission date will not be examined.

Sample text for the Supervisor's Support and Recommendation Form

Please type or print the text below in your Ministry or Company letterhead. To be completed by the applicant's supervisor. If you are an applicant who is head of a startup DO NOT fill this form, please fill the Startup Certification Form.

(Your Letterhead)

The Ministry or Company: _____

Recommends (name): _____

To participate in the UNITAR Programme on Frontier Technologies for Sustainable Development: Unlocking Women's Entrepreneurship through Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Afghanistan and Iraq, and certifies that:

- *The applicant has adequate knowledge, appropriately tested, of the working language of the training Programme (English) and basic computer skills;*
- *The absence of the applicant during his/her participation in the Programme events (Web-seminars and online/onsite training) would not have any adverse effect on his/her status, seniority, salary, pension, and similar rights within our organization.*
- *Moreover, the applicant is authorized to participate/attend all UNITAR online training/workshops and other training sessions from January to April 2020 (up to 20 hours per week); and*
- *The applicant will act as a representative of this ministry or company and as such will behave in accordance with the law, rules, and regulations of UNITAR or any foreign country hosting the training events.*

Applicant's Immediate Supervisor/Manager:

Name: _____

Title/Position: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Fax Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Signature: _____

Place and Date: _____

Institutional/Official Stamp: _____

Sample text for the Startup Certification Form

Please type or print the text below in your Startup letterhead. To be completed only if you are a startup in existence that has been in operation for more than 6 months.

(Your Letterhead)

Startup name: _____

Applicant's name: _____

Wishes to participate in the UNITAR Programme on Frontier Technologies for Sustainable Development: Unlocking Women's Entrepreneurship through Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Afghanistan and Iraq, and certifies that:

- I can provide evidence of my company such as business permits and documentation, if requested.
- I have adequate knowledge and appropriately tested of the working language of the training Programme (English) and basic computer skills;
- My participation in the Programme events (Web-seminars and online/onsite training) would not have any adverse effect on my business startup.
- I will participate in all online/onsite training sessions from January to April 2020 (up to 20 hours per week); and
- I understand I will act as a representative of my startup company and as such will behave in accordance with the law, rules, and regulations of UNITAR or any foreign country hosting the training events.

Name of Applicant: _____

Title/Position: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Fax Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Signature: _____

Place and Date: _____

Official Stamp: _____

Institutional/Official Stamp: _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Key Characteristics of the Programme

The Programme offers an exceptional opportunity to learn how to harness frontier technologies especially Artificial Intelligence (AI) through entrepreneurship. Compelling content has been carefully curated from leading universities and institutions and contextualized to the region by experienced international experts with real-world exposure to technology start-ups.

It is an exceptional online learning experience where participants, mentors and experts are effectively engaged and challenged to learn, innovate, collaborate, and develop individual peer-reviewed business plan that bridges new concepts and ideas to real-world applications and development challenges.

This outcome-focused approach relies heavily on interactive learning environment and mentoring by the experts through synchronous and asynchronous communication tools.

UNITAR's technical team will be available to support the participants in their learning journey and to ensure a high-quality learning environment.

Graduation: Participants will be awarded a UNITAR Certificate of Completion upon the satisfactory completion of all the Programme requirements. Satisfactory completion means:

- Active participation in all the webinars
- Completion of all the session modules and activities
- Submission of the individual assignments and the final peer-reviewed Business Plan
- Participation in the business plan peer-review
- Completion of the weekly session assessments with a passing grade of 80%

Follow-up: After graduating from the training Programme there are a number of follow-up activities to ensure the long-term benefits of the skills and knowledge gained.

- One month: Participants hold workshops within their own departments to share the knowledge and experience gained with co-workers.

- 90 days: Participants provide written evaluations to identify changes in skills, knowledge or attitudes, and changes to on-the-job behaviours.
- 90 days: UNITAR provides a Programme Completion Report to participating Ministries and organisations.

For inquiries, please contact the Project Manager via email (pft-elearning@unitar.org) indicating “AI and Entrepreneurship for Women in Afghanistan and Iraq” in the subject line.

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