



Telecommunication  
Development Bureau (BDT)



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- ITU Member States Africa and Arab regions
- ITU-D Sector Members
- Academia
- Regional/International Organisations
- ITU Cybersecurity Focal Points
- EQUALS Partners

**Subject: Inaugural rollout of the Women in Cyber Mentorship Programme**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am pleased to announce the inaugural rollout of the **Women in Cyber Mentorship Programme**, which will run from March to August 2021, fully virtual, with the launch taking place on the 8 March 2021, at the occasion of International Women's Day.

The Women in Cyber Mentorship Programme builds on, and benefits from, the ongoing efforts of ITU to close the digital gender divide by mainstreaming gender-focused activities. The Programme is jointly organized with the Forum of Incident Response and Security Teams (FIRST) and EQUALS, the global partnership for gender equality in the digital age, co-founded by ITU.

It will feature guided monthly mentorship circles with supporting activities, including a series of inspirational keynote webinars, and technical and soft skills training courses. Participation is opened to women working in cybersecurity at junior levels, as well as women in ICT/STEM seeking to enter the cybersecurity workforce. The aims are to shift the mentality and tackle systemic barriers that prevent broader inclusion in the cybersecurity field, encourage women to take on leadership roles in cybersecurity, and promote knowledge sharing of professional best practices.

The current inaugural rollout focuses specifically on women residing in the Africa and Arab regions, but in collaboration with our partners, we plan to expand it to all regions in the future. Therefore, I wish to invite our Membership from the Africa and Arab regions to nominate potential mentees and mentors to participate.

This effort comes within a global context where women approximately account for only a fraction of the cybersecurity workforce and face a persistent compensation gap compared to their male counterparts. Despite the worldwide proliferation of programmes and trainings in cybersecurity, there is still a significant lack of women in the field, even more so in leadership and managerial positions.

For further information and to register for the Women in Cyber Mentorship Programme, please visit our website <http://itu.int/go/WiCmp>. Please note that seats are limited.

My colleagues Ms. Rouda Alamir Ali ([rouda.alamirali@itu.int](mailto:rouda.alamirali@itu.int)) at the ITU Arab Regional Office and Mr. Serge Valery Zongo ([serge.zongo@itu.int](mailto:serge.zongo@itu.int)) at the ITU Africa Regional Office also remain at your disposal.

For more details on the programme and the eligibility criteria, please find Terms of Reference along with the programme calendar in the annex.

I look forward to the participation of your nominees and to a successful mentorship programme during the upcoming months.

Yours faithfully,

[ORIGINAL SIGNED]

Doreen Bogdan-Martin  
Director

**Annex 1: Terms of reference**



**ITU/BDT Cyber Security Program**

**Women in Cyber Mentorship Programme**

**Terms of Reference**

February 2021

## Introduction

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Forum of Incident Response and Security Teams (FIRST), with the support of EQUALS Global Partnership (EQUALS) have joined forces to empower women in the cybersecurity sector, by promoting a diverse and inclusive cybersecurity community through targeted peer-to-peer capacity development.

The Women in Cyber Mentorship Programme is an outcome of the CyberDrill 2020 *Empowering Women in Cybersecurity* Webinar, where the need for role models and mentorship was identified as pivotal for increasing the number of women leaders in cybersecurity.

### 1. Objectives

The Women in Cyber Mentorship Programme will unfold along three pillars: **INSPIRE, TRAIN, EMPOWER**

- **INSPIRE: Shift the mentality and tackle systemic barriers that prevent broader inclusion.** Promote the perception of women not as a special needs group, but as valuable additions to the cybersecurity workforce, by inviting remarkable women in the field to deliver inspirational keynote webinars, thereby exposing young women professionals to inspiring role models.
- **TRAIN: Encourage women to take on leadership roles in cybersecurity.** Provide expert training courses from leaders in the field and equip women with not just technical skills, but also the soft skills needed for successful professional development.
- **EMPOWER: Promote knowledge sharing of best practices in cybersecurity career development.** Provide a platform where women in senior positions can mentor and foster the professional and personal growth of women at junior levels.

### 2. Foreseen Activities

All activities will be delivered online over the course of six (6) months, from March to August 2021. The ITU, FIRST and EQUALS experts, in cooperation with partners in the field, aim to conduct and/or host:

- **Four (4) Inspirational Keynote Webinars (INSPIRE):** Featured speakers are well-known women in cybersecurity showcasing their career paths, hence promoting role models and the perception of women as valuable additions to the cybersecurity workforce. Talk formats may vary depending on the speaker. Run-times vary anywhere from 30-45 minutes in length with audience Q&A.
- **Six (6) Technical and Soft Skills Online Trainings (TRAIN):** Training courses to provide participants with the various technical and soft skills needed for professional and personal development in the field of cybersecurity. Training format may vary depending on the course materials. Run-times vary anywhere from 2-3 hours in length and are interactive.
- **Six (6) Mentorship Circle Sessions (EMPOWER):** Six mentorship circle sessions to provide participants a platform to further explore and discuss professional and personal development topics with high-level women in cybersecurity. 3-5 mentees will be matched with a single mentor to form a Mentorship Circle. Mentorship Circles are expected to meet live over videoconference at least once a month to engage in group discussion and activities.

### 3. Target Audience

This inaugural rollout of the Women in Cyber Mentorship Programme is being **offered specifically to women residing in the Africa and Arab regions**. By limiting regional participation, the programme aims to provide women support in their local cybersecurity communities.

The Women in Cyber Inspirational Keynote Webinars are open to the general public.

### 4. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to participate in the Women in Cyber Mentorship Programme, interested women must have:

- Minimum 2-3 years junior level experience in the field of cybersecurity or seeking to enter the cybersecurity workforce from another junior level ICT/STEM position.
- The keynote webinars and trainings will be held in English. Participants must have a good working knowledge of English to attend these two activities.
- Based on the mentor's working language, the sessions of the mentorship circle will be available in English, Arabic or French.
- A computer and stable internet connection.
- There are no age restrictions.
- The eligibility criteria are not applicable to participants wishing to attend the Women in Cyber Inspirational Keynote Webinars.

## 5. Additional Information

- Programme seats are limited.
- The delivery platform of the webinars and trainings is Zoom. The mentorship circles will take place on Converse.
- Selected participants must register to all three parts of the Women in Cyber mentorship programme (i.e., inspirational keynote webinars, trainings and mentorship circles).
- The WiC Inspirational Keynote Webinars are open to the public, upon registration through the dedicated link.
- Selected applicants to the mentorship circles will be contacted by email by the end of March 2021.
- Upon completion of the mentorship circles, participants will receive a Certificate of Participation.

## 6. Registration

Submissions to participate in the programme will be open from **26 February to 31 March 2021**.

Registration must be made via the following links:

[Women in Cyber Mentorship Programme Launch Event](#)

[Women in Cyber Inspirational Keynotes](#)

[Women in Cyber Expert Trainings](#)

[Women in Cyber Mentorship Circles](#)

These can also be found on the programme webpage: <http://itu.int/go/WiCmp>.

**Please note that seats are limited and are not guaranteed**, and selected participants will be notified via email by 30 March.

The WiC Inspirational Keynote Webinars are open to the general public. The trainings and mentorship circles are open exclusively to eligible women to the programme.

## 7. Contact details

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the ITU regional representatives:

Regional Office for the Arab region, Ms. Rouda Alamir Ali ([rouda.alamirali@itu.int](mailto:rouda.alamirali@itu.int))

Regional Office for Africa, Mr. Serge Valery Zongo ([serge.zongo@itu.int](mailto:serge.zongo@itu.int))

or

Ms. Yasmine Idrissi Azzouzi ([Yasmine.idrissiazzouzi@itu.int](mailto:Yasmine.idrissiazzouzi@itu.int))

Ms. Carla Licciardello ([carla.licciardello@itu.int](mailto:carla.licciardello@itu.int))

**8. About EQUALS ([www.equals.org](http://www.equals.org))**

Launched in 2016 by the International Telecommunication Union and four founding partners – GSMA, the International Trade Centre, the United Nations University and UN Women – EQUALS contributes to the UN Sustainable Development Agenda through actions and evidence-based research aimed at closing the global gender digital divide.

Now made up of more than 90 partners and growing fast, EQUALS uses a multidisciplinary approach that integrates research, policy and programming to promote gender equality in technology access, skills and leadership, as well as conducting ground-breaking, evidence-based research.

**9. About FIRST ([www.first.org](http://www.first.org))**

Founded in 1990, the Forum of Incident Response and Security Teams (FIRST) is an international confederation of trusted computer incident response teams who cooperatively handle computer security incidents and promote incident prevention programs. FIRST brings together a wide variety of security and incident response teams including especially product security teams from the government, commercial, and academic sectors. FIRST membership spans 95 countries with over 540 active member teams.

## Annex 2 – Timeline

**Dates are subject to change.** Regular update will be posted to the programme webpage, please check the online calendar for additional details and up-to-date information: <http://itu.int/go/WiCmp>

