Press release

Women Entrepreneurs Urged to Apply for 2026 Women in Tech Accelerator Program

Kampala, Uganda — April 9, 2026: Women entrepreneurs running technology and tech-enabled businesses have been encouraged to apply for the 2026 cohort of the Standard Chartered Women in Technology (WiT) Accelerator programme as stakeholders intensify efforts to unlock the potential of women-led enterprises in Uganda's digital economy.

The call was made during the official launch of the programme's second cohort at the Sheraton Kampala Hotel, where partners positioned the initiative as a strategic intervention to address systemic barriers that continue to limit women entrepreneurs from scaling high-growth ventures.

Delivered by the Standard Chartered Foundation in partnership with Innovation Village and Village Capital, and implemented by Future Lab, the three-year programme goes beyond traditional entrepreneurship training. It combines market access, investment readiness, mentorship, and catalytic funding to support sustainable business growth.

Speaking at the launch, Standard Chartered Bank Uganda Chief Executive Officer, Sanjay Rughani, urged women founders to take advantage of the opportunity, noting that the programme is designed to address structural challenges that hinder enterprise growth.

"Persistent inequalities across Uganda and the region continue to limit the growth of women-led businesses. Yet empowering women is critical to economic development and the prosperity of communities," Rughani said. "This accelerator goes beyond skills development to provide mentorship, networks, and funding needed to build resilient, revenue-generating enterprises."

Running from April to October 2026, the 30-week accelerator targets women entrepreneurs with scalable, impact-driven solutions and is expected to deliver measurable outcomes, including job creation and increased market participation.

Unlike conventional accelerators, the Women in Tech programme adopts a three-pillar model aimed at tackling ecosystem-level constraints.

According to **Japheth Kawanguzi, Team Lead at Innovation Village**, the model comprises a Community of Practice, an Accelerator, and a Market Integration component.

“Beyond supporting individual enterprises, the programme is building a sustainable pipeline of women entrepreneurs while strengthening linkages across the technology ecosystem,” Kawanguzi said.

He added that up to 20 women-led businesses will be supported through the accelerator, with at least 14 expected to graduate as investment-ready ventures. The Market Integration pillar will connect participants to real business opportunities through pilot partnerships, commercial agreements, and investor networks. “A newly introduced Community of Practice will connect founders, investors, and industry leaders, ensuring continued support beyond the programme cycle,” Kawanguzi emphasized.

The launch comes at a time when gender disparities persist in Uganda’s technology sector, where women account for only about 18 percent of the workforce. Many continue to face limited access to financing, digital skills, and professional networks.

Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Dr. Monica Musenero, said government has taken deliberate steps to strengthen the innovation ecosystem and bridge gaps between policy and practice.

“We have established dedicated structures, including an economic unit for Science, Technology and Innovation metrics, to bridge the gap between policy and knowledge,” she said. “Through STI, we are rolling out town halls and platforms to improve access to information, facilities, and innovation spaces.”

She added that the Women in Tech programme aligns with Uganda’s national priorities. “It contributes directly to building a knowledge-based economy and advancing the country’s broader economic transformation agenda.”

Arthur Mukembo, Chief Executive Officer at Future Lab, noted that the inaugural cohort supported 12 women entrepreneurs, with top performers receiving up to $10,000 in catalytic funding to scale their ventures.

“In 2026, we aim to support up to 20 enterprises, deploy $50,000 in catalytic funding to top-performing entrepreneurs, and create over 100 direct and indirect jobs,” Mukembo said. “We also expect at least 60 new jobs and more than 10 live commercial pilots.”

Globally, the Standard Chartered Foundation has committed over $600,000 in grant funding for the 2026 cohort across 12 markets, including Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa. To date, the initiative has supported more than 4,000 women founders across 17 markets.

With applications now open, partners are positioning the Women in Tech Accelerator as a critical entry point for women entrepreneurs seeking to transition from early-stage ventures to scalable businesses.

Applications can be submitted via the programme website https://scwomenintech.futurelab.africa/

----- END ------

For further information please contact:

Cynthia Mpanga, Corporate Affairs Manager on email; Cynthia.Mpanga@sc.com or 0313294297/ 0706760001

Or

Electine Oyaga
Marketing and Communication – Future Lab
Email: eoyaga@innovationvillage.co.ug
Phone: 0783360780

Note to Editor

About the Women in Tech Program: The Standard Chartered Women in Technology (WiT) Uganda Programme is a high-impact initiative designed to address the systemic barriers limiting women entrepreneurs in Uganda's tech sector, including limited access to finance, capacity building, and mentorship. Delivered by Innovation Village in partnership with Village Capital and funded by the Standard Chartered Foundation, the program responds to the gender gap in the growing tech ecosystem by focusing on three key areas: enterprise growth, community building, and market access.