

Development of the  
Strategic Plan  
2018-2021

# Harnessing the Digital Revolution for the Achievement of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

*Informal briefing to the Executive Board  
7 April 2016*

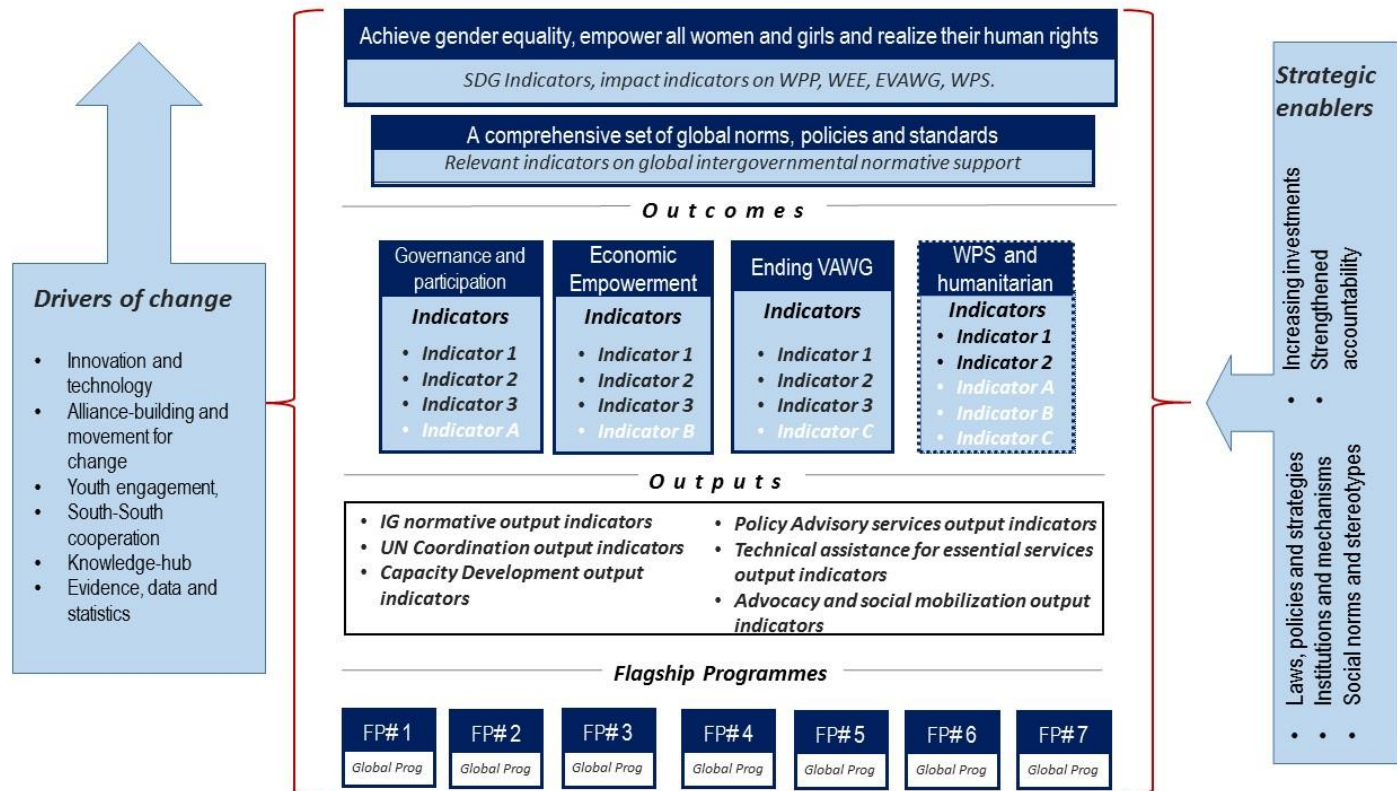


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# I. Introduction

- Innovation and technology have been identified as a “driver of change” in the results framework of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021
- This document provides an overview of UN Women’s strategy on harnessing rapid digital developments for gender equality and women empowerment
- It also outlines UN Women’s ongoing and proposed efforts to leverage digital solutions to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of its external and internal operations.



# II. Opportunities & Challenges

## of the digital revolution for gender equality and women's empowerment

- 5 billion mobile subscribers and an additional 1.6 billion forecasted by 2020.
- Increased connectivity can improve access to health, education, political representation, financial and other services that can transform people's lives. Around 500 million patients using mobile health applications in 2015 and mobile banking is improving financial inclusion prospects for the 2 billion people that are unbanked
- Access to digital technologies can help boost GDP through job creation and greater productivity: developing countries could benefit from an increase in their GDP of up to 2 trillion euros (Deloitte 2014).
- Mobile phone apps and digital platforms are increasing farmers' and SMEs' revenue by linking them to information, global supply chains, and creating online local market places.
- Digital technologies have given voice to marginalized people by increasing the availability of, and access to, information, as well as the ability to express opinion.
- Digital technologies provide unprecedented opportunities for data collection and analysis.



# II. Opportunities & Challenges

## of the digital revolution for gender equality and women's empowerment

- Despite the positive impacts of the digital revolution, its gains have yet to be widely shared:
  - Largest beneficiaries tend to be the well-educated, middle to high income, technologically literate, urban population.
  - 89 % of the world's urban population had 3G mobile broadband coverage, compared with just 29 % of its rural population.
  - It is feared that the rapid digitalization of the economy could destroy jobs faster than it creates them.
- Challenges are compounded for women and girls by the existing digital gender divide:
  - On average, 12% less women than men have access to the internet and the gender divide has increased over the last few years.
  - Only 18% of undergraduate computer science degree-holders and 26% of computing jobs are held by women.
  - Less than 25% of the tech workforce are women and even fewer are in senior management positions.
  - More than 150 countries have national broadband plans establishing broadband as a national priority, but only 29% of them included gender-specific actions.
- These challenges can ultimately undermine the digital revolution itself and what it can offer to leave no one behind.

# III. Closing the gender digital divide

Unprecedented normative agreements highlight the importance of leveraging ICT for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment



## Beijing+20 Political Declaration (CSW 59)

- Commitment to enhance “*access to and use of information and communications technologies*” in support of the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Platform for Action (para 6).

## 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

- emphasizes the enormous potential of ICTs to accelerate human progress overall and specifically for women.
- SDG target 5.b. focuses on enhancing “*the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women*”.

## Addis Ababa Action Agenda

- Many references to technology and innovation
- Established a UN Technology Facility and transfer mechanism, which will require a gender lens.

### III. Closing the gender digital divide

## Some of UN Women efforts to date

- Provision of support and technical inputs to Member States in several processes to strengthen the commitment for ICTs to deliver results for women and girls
- Inputs to the 10-year review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+10), with a focus on:
  - Improved implementation and monitoring of gender equality commitments,
  - Actions against cyber-related violence against women,
  - Strengthening the quality of women's engagement in the information society, including their full participation in decision-making processes related to ICT,
  - Increased access to the development and use of technologies for women and girls
- UN-Women was given a facilitation role in the WSIS+10 outcome in implementing and monitoring gender equality commitments.
- UN Women co-chairs the Working Group on Broadband and Gender of the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development with UNDP.

# III. Closing the gender digital divide

## Some of UN Women efforts to date

### Leveraging UN Women's coordination mandate

- Foster UN-wide initiatives to close the digital gender divide
- Response to the call for use of big data for improved programme planning and implementation by promoting a gender responsive data revolution that enables policy makers to address multiple gaps in gender data and make visible women's activities, needs, interests, opportunities and challenges.
- UN Women also contributed significantly to the focus of the new UNDAF guidance on digital technologies as a means to deliver development results.

### Development of a multi-stakeholder initiative to bridge the gender digital divide in partnership with ITU and mobile phone industry associations

- Create global AWARENESS and drive action to close the gender digital divide and ensure women's equal participation and leadership. EQUALS, the campaign designed to foster this global movement and commitment, was launched in September 2016.
- Conduct gender ANALYSIS to mainstream gender perspectives in ICT and broadband plans, policies and legal frameworks; and identify appropriate financing mechanisms for implementation.
- Ensure that women and girls have equal AFFORDABLE ACCESS to digital technologies, devices and services.
- Remove discriminatory social norms around the use of digital technologies and empower women and girls to acquire skills to become both ICT users and creators in the digital world.



# IV. Leveraging digital solutions to deliver transformational results for women and girls

## *UN Women's Digital Platform Ecosystem*

UN Women aims to harness digital solutions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of all its programmatic activities.

UN-Women's digital engagement, learning and enterprise platforms contribute to three strategic areas for women's empowerment:

### ENGAGE

- Informing and engaging the wider public, including individual women and girls, men and boys, UN member states, companies and civil society organizations in action towards gender equality

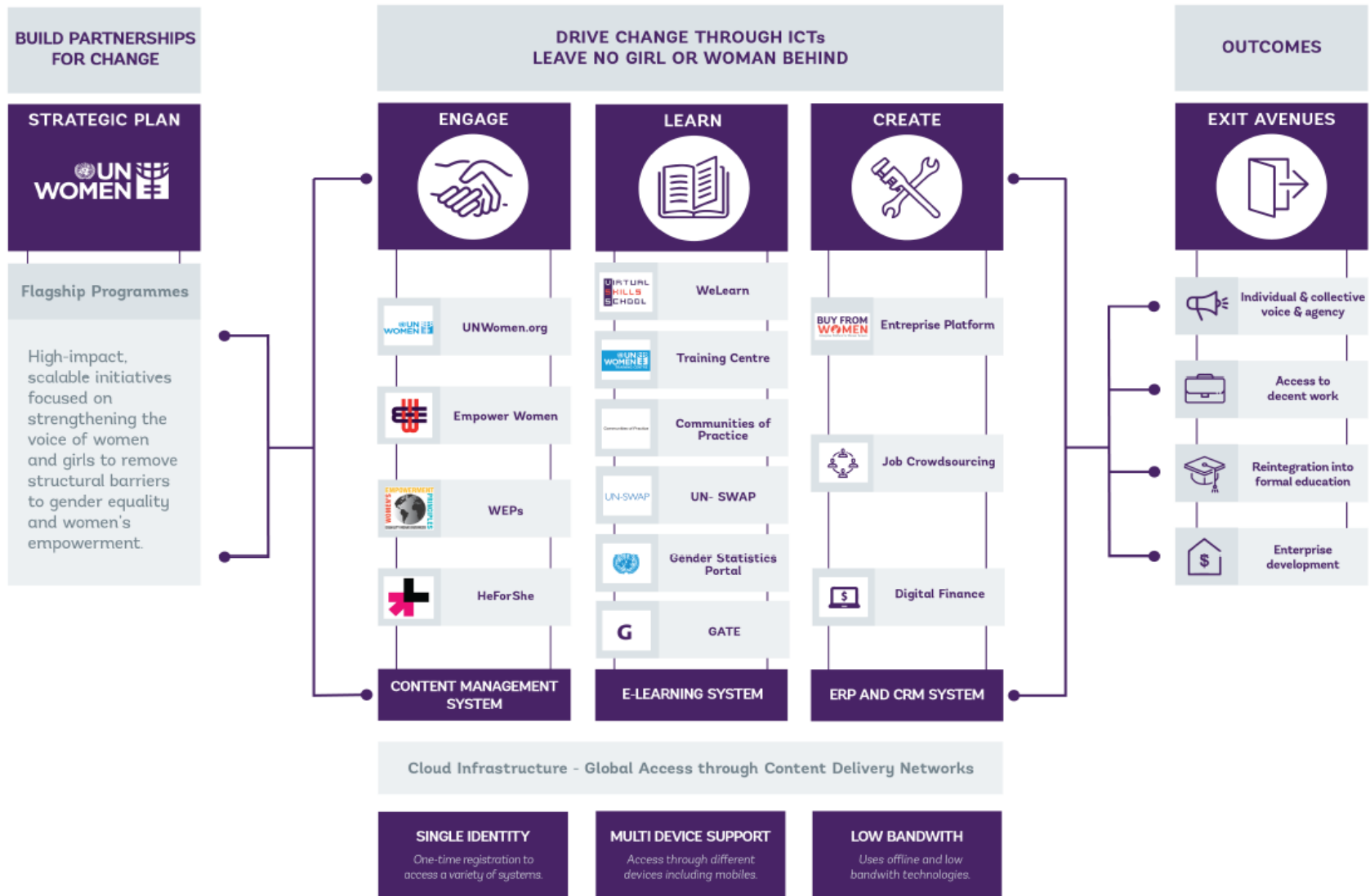
### LEARN

- Providing gender advocates and women and girls as rights holders with learning opportunities

### CREATE

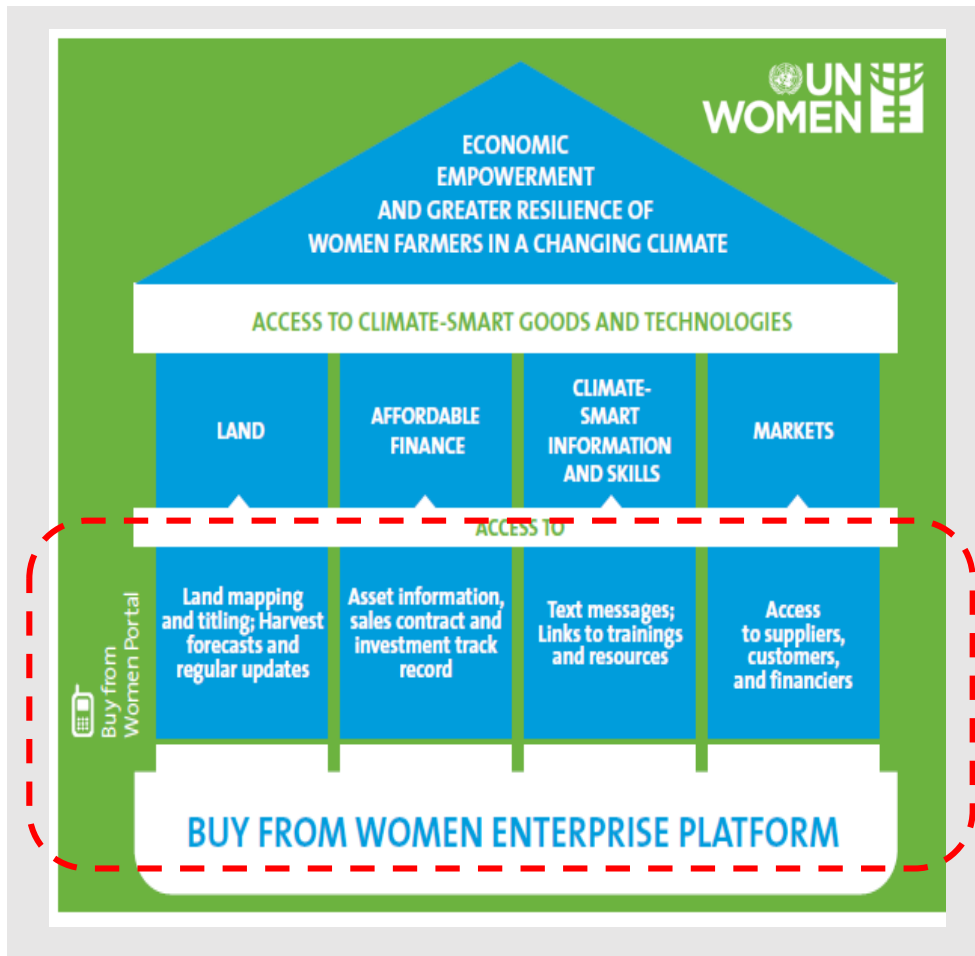
- Creating decent work and facilitating entrepreneurship to provide them with opportunities to earn an income, be more independent and improve their quality of life

# IV. Leveraging digital solutions to deliver transformational results for women and girls



## IV. Leveraging digital solutions to deliver transformational results for women and girls

- UN Women's platforms are systematically incorporated within its Flagship Programming Initiatives (FPIs) to facilitate and accelerate their implementation and scale up.



- Through such platforms, UN Women will:
- enhance the voice and agency of women and girls; and
  - provide customize vocational, entrepreneurial and leadership skills to women at risk of being left behind.

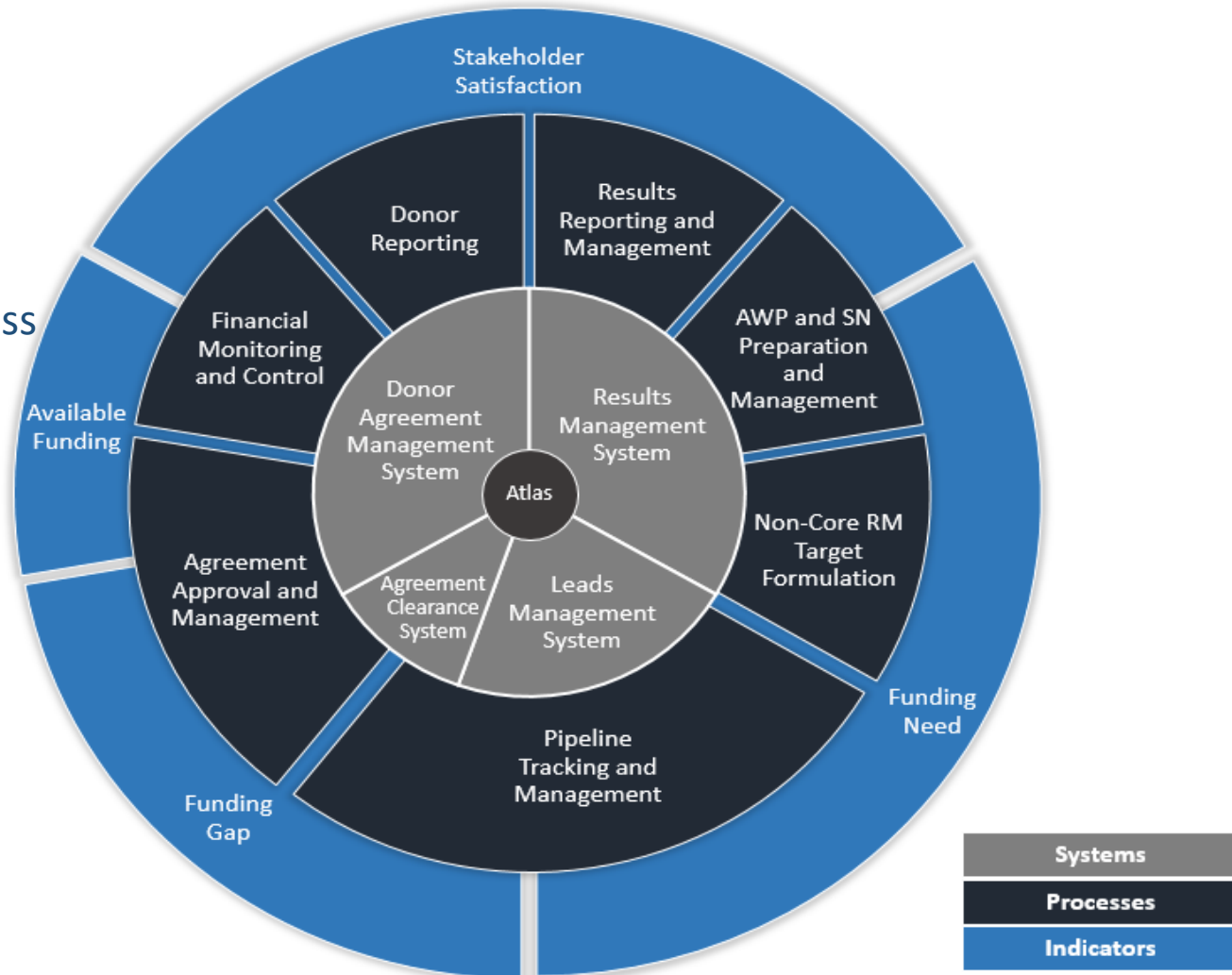
This will create a pipeline of confident and empowered women with 21st century skills and strongly positioned to participate in public life, access decent jobs in work places and markets or launch their own businesses.

Example of the *Buy From Women* Platform within the FPI on closing the gender gap in climate smart agriculture, which aims to increase women's access to land; affordable finance; climate-smart agricultural information and skills; and markets. Buy From Women supports the implementation of all four programmatic pillars. [More information](#) and watch a [demonstration](#) of the platform.

# V. ICTs for Operational Management

## Programme Management Information Systems

This data will enable UN-Women to deliver more efficiently and effectively a number of internal operations and enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the Entity



## V. ICTs for Operational Management

# Benefits of Programme Management Information Systems

### Strategic and Annual Planning

- Accurate data for decision-making, reporting and analysis to help fine-tune strategic priorities.
- Accurate data on achievements of results, funding opportunities and gaps, programmatic trends, and absorption capacity.
- Connect individual staff activities to corporate strategic results and link these results to resources to assess expected value-for-money;

### Financing

- Clear and real-time picture of core funding and non-core funding anticipated as hard and soft pipeline
- Track budgets and expenditures against the Strategic Plan
- A picture of funding needs and gaps in a dynamic and transparent manner
- A critical input to inform budget adjustments, if needed.

### Portfolio Management

- Group activities and results from approved Annual Work Plans at project, regional or thematic level.

### Monitoring at the project and office level

- Real-time monitoring of results
- Empower staff at all levels to track the operational efficiency of UN Women's initiatives and take timely remedial measures as required.



## V. ICTs for Operational Management

# Benefits of Programme Management Information Systems

### Learning

- Decentralize access to corporate information at all levels.
- Identify and benchmark proposed activities against good practices;
- Assess the comparative effectiveness of different input configurations;
- Engage in evidence-based dialogue with key stakeholders.

### Reporting

- Capture measurable progress, analyze it, draw lessons and make decisions to further improve performance and delivery.
- Provide qualitative and quantitative data to inform the narrative of the Annual Report, helping to communicate the value-added of the organization, along with a clear picture of the challenges UN Women faces.
- Inform the Structured Dialogue on Financing with the Executive Board.

### Transparency

- Fully meet its commitments under the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI).

## VI. Management considerations

- Need to consolidate individual digital solutions to minimize:
  - duplication of efforts across the organization
  - cyber security risks
  - costs associated with the requirements necessary to maintain the security, content and hardware of a multiplicity of sites, platforms and systems

# VI. Management considerations

Both the digital platforms and the Programme Management Information Systems build on a common information technology infrastructure

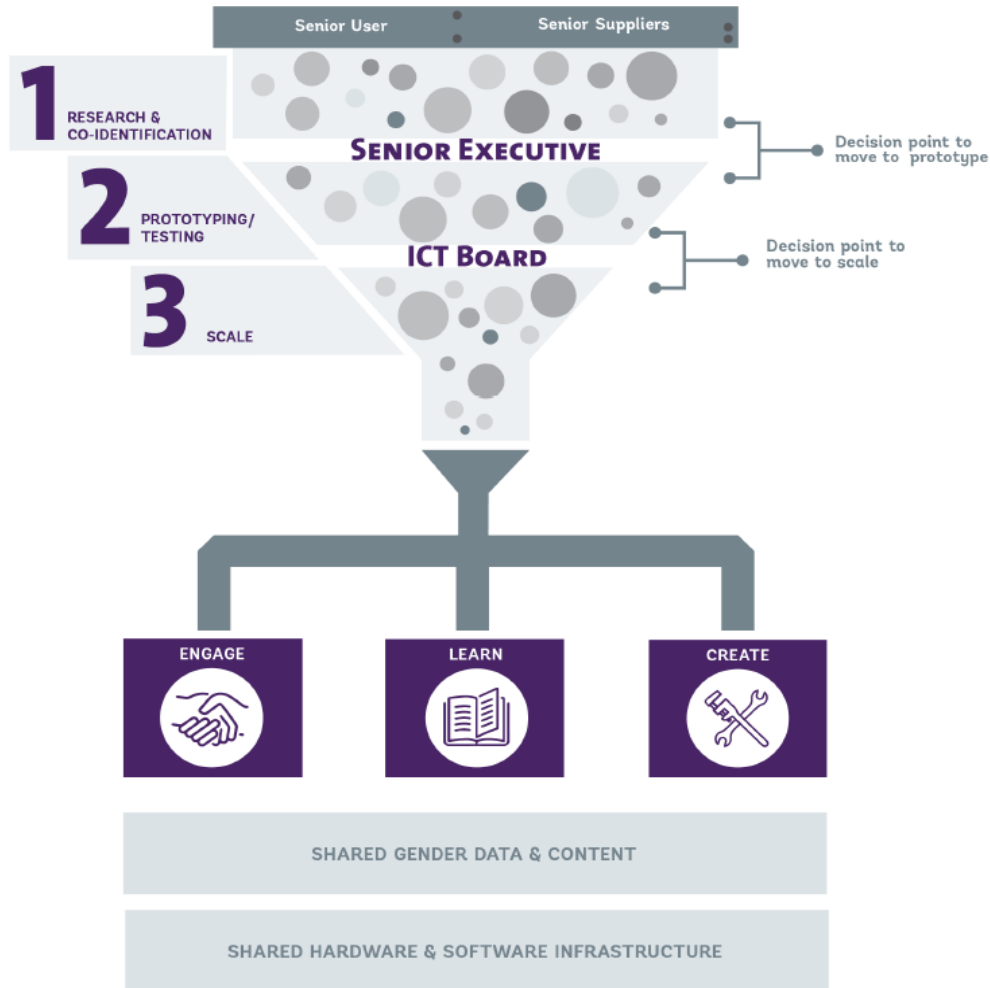
The Common Digital Architecture consists of two core elements:

- *Shared gender data and content*
  - the different websites and platforms will be progressively consolidated into a comprehensive portal to
    - reduce operational costs
    - avoid content overlap
    - strengthen the UN Women brand
- *Shared hardware and software infrastructure*
  - Shared tools to ensure security, sustainability and economies of scale on the technology side that offer the following functionality:
    - content management;
    - customer relationship management;
    - e-learning management;
    - search functionality;
    - digital financing.

## VI. Management considerations

- **Cyber security**
  - Need to ensure cybersecurity, combatting cybercrime and addressing risks to privacy.
  - Full conformity with international human rights standards and ensuring the right to privacy, as well as protection of personal data.
  - UN Women must proportionally invest in cyber security related processes and tools as the portfolio of ICT tools grows and as the dependency on ICTs grows.
- **Creation of long-term financial liabilities**
  - Consideration of technical and financial sustainability of a platform from the outset.
  - Ensure that the need of end-users are met and that valuable content and large numbers of users is retained in case platforms need to be closed.

# VI. Management considerations



UN Women has a rigorous internal process to determine the objectives, technical specifications, and business plan for each platform.

As mentioned in the [Innovation Brief](#), UN Women uses a funnel approach to allow management to evaluate risk and select potentially high impact opportunities.

Weak ideas are eliminated before they consume excessive resources, while allowing strong ideas to filter through the process and be scaled up.



# VII. Conclusions

- The digital revolution is one of the most transformative forces that the international development sector has seen in decades
  - Enormous opportunities to accelerate efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment and leave no women or girl behind.
  - Dramatically increase efficiency and transparency and bridge internal silos.
- Harnessing the power of ICTs in support of gender equality and women's empowerment is a key strategy of UN Women's Strategic Plan 2018-2021.
  - Reflected as a “driver of change”, i.e. a change strategy prioritized by UN Women to catalyze change across the entire programmatic portfolio and all thematic areas and operational contexts.
  - A set of key performance indicators will be developed to measure the effectiveness of the strategy.

# VII. Conclusions

- UN Women's earlier investment in ICTs and in innovation gives it a robust foundation to expand digital solutions.
  - UN Women will also need to enhance its capacity to further leverage this area of work in support of results for women and girls.
  - UN Women will need to systematically embed digital solutions in its Flagship Programming Initiatives and business processes.
- This requires sustained investment in staff capacity to:
  - use digital solutions in day-to-day operations
  - establish public-private partnerships to address the gender digital divide
  - identify emerging opportunities
  - manage digital investment to ensure financial sustainability
  - contribute to UN Women's cybersecurity policies
- The integrated result and resource framework of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 will aim to reflect these opportunities and requirements.