ONLINE   **ENTERPRISES**

DIGITALIZATION AND AI FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

TRAINING OF TRAINERS

22 JUNE – 17 JULY 2026
🕐 **60 HOURS**

Information Note

International Labour Organization

ITC
International Training Centre

OVERVIEW

This course is designed to equip trainers with the knowledge and practical tools they need to support SMEs in leveraging the potential of digitalization and artificial intelligence. Participants will explore essential concepts of digital transformation, focusing on how to optimize business operations, strengthen market competitiveness, and enhance workplace productivity through accessible and cost-effective solutions. Special emphasis is placed on AI, covering key applications relevant to SMEs—from automation that frees up resources for higher-value tasks to data analytics for better decision-making. Recognizing that AI is widely used but often misapplied, the programme focuses on effective methods of AI adoption while highlighting the importance of responsible and people-centred approaches. Upon completion, trained professionals will be fully prepared to deliver their own training programmes or advisory services centred on digitalization and AI, unlocking new growth opportunities for SMEs.

BACKGROUND

Small and medium enterprises often struggle to keep pace with the rapid advances in digital technologies. While digital tools and AI solutions hold the potential to streamline operations and unlock new markets, many SMEs lack the in house expertise to implement them effectively. Without targeted support, efforts to adopt new technology can fall short, leading to wasted resources and missed opportunities.

Today, a course on digitalization cannot ignore AI tools. However, in times of widespread AI hype and sensationalism, our approach to artificial intelligence is cautious and responsible. The accelerating adoption of AI brings significant risks to individuals and businesses. Its misuse often comes from a lack of clarity about its scope and constraints. Myths portraying AI as a universal fix or a replacement for human expertise hide its true role: a tool that amplifies—but does not replace—human decision-making. Effective adoption begins with dispelling misconceptions, avoiding over-reliance, and setting realistic expectations. AI education must emphasize not only what AI can achieve but also what it cannot. Only by anchoring AI in this clarity can we harness its power responsibly.

Moreover, many SMEs rush into AI without first developing essential digital skills. Reliance on AI without a solid foundation can lead to outcomes that are ineffective—or even harmful—for business operations. For this reason, our programme is structured to build core digital capabilities first, laying the groundwork before diving into AI applications.

In this evolving landscape, there is an increasing demand for qualified trainers who understand both the technical and human dimensions of digital transformation and AI. This course aims to contribute to the growth of this new generation of experts. By equipping trainers with hands on skills, proven methodologies, and reliable resources, we can create a multiplier effect—empowering a network of professionals to guide SMEs through every step of their digital journey.

WHO IS THIS COURSE FOR?

- Trainers working for public or private institutions, BDS providers, microfinance institutions or as consultants.

- Established ILO-certified trainers who want to upgrade their skills.

- Managers of enterprise development organizations or microfinance institutions.

- Consultants specializing in SME development seeking to incorporate AI knowledge into their service offerings.

- Digital skills educators aiming to modernize their training methodologies for SMEs.

WHAT WILL I LEARN AND BE ABLE TO DO?

By the end of this course, participants will:

- Understand the core concepts of digitalization for SMEs, including digital business models, digital marketing, data-driven decision-making, cloud solutions, e commerce channels, and cybersecurity fundamentals.

- Learn to apply AI tools across key business functions such as marketing, operations, customer service, and finance.

- Understand responsible and human-centred approaches to digital transformation and AI.

- Be able to design and deliver effective training programmes, advisory support, or coaching services that empower SMEs to adopt digital and AI solutions confidently.

- Gain access to ready-to-use training materials and facilitation toolkits that will help deliver engaging learning sessions.

- Unlock their own dedicated course space on ITCILO's e-learning platform Jumu. Trainers will be able to deliver online training on digitalization and AI with a pre-built, customizable course—complete with essential materials, integrated webinar access, and interactive features to effectively engage with learners.

TRAINING STRUCTURE

The programme consists of two distinct phases:

Phase 1:   Core skills development (4 weeks)

Participants engage in a blended learning experience, integrating live expert-led webinars with structured self-paced learning. Over four weeks, participants dive into core concepts of digitalization and AI for SMEs and learn how to design and deliver impactful training programmes. Key activities include collaborative group work, curated readings, hands on assignments, and peer discussions. This phase involves approximately 3 to 4.5 hours of live webinars per week, while the rest of the content will be available in self-guided format.

A Certificate of Participation will be awarded upon successful completion of Phase 1.

Phase 2:   Training delivery (3 months)

In this phase, participants have the opportunity to put their newly acquired knowledge into practice. They are tasked with designing and rolling out a complete training programme to their target group of local SMEs, addressing context-specific challenges and opportunities. Throughout this period, ITCILO experts provide ongoing e coaching—offering tailored feedback, facilitation tips and troubleshooting via virtual check ins.

A Certificate of Achievement will be awarded upon completion of Phase 2, which give successful candidates the title of ITCILO SME Digitalization trainer. Furthermore, successful candidates will receive privileged access to Jumu, the ITCILO eLearning platform designed for business management trainers and SMEs.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

The course is offered in English. To apply for this activity click here https://oarf2.itcilo.org/DST/A9719151/en.

The application deadline is **18 June 2026**, and the participation fee is **1,375 Euro**. A limited number of partial scholarships is available – please contact see@itcilo.org to learn more about how to seek financial support.

WITHDRAWAL, CANCELLATION POLICY, AND REFUNDS FOR OPEN COURSES

If an enrolled participant wishes or must withdraw from a course, they may choose to apply to a different course or be substituted by another candidate. The participant must notify the Centre, in writing, of their decision at least 14 days prior to the start date of the course. Cancellation of participation in regular courses will result in the following penalties:

- 14 days or more prior to the start date of the course: No penalty, 100% refund of amount paid less applicable bank charges
- 8 to 13 days prior to the start date of the course: Penalty of 50% of course price, refund of residual amount paid (if any) less applicable bank charges
- 7 days or less prior to the start date of the course: Penalty of 100% of course price.

INFO

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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