

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The European Union and the British Council partner to support the establishment of a Women's Centre of Excellence for digital and hi-tech skills in Peshawar

11 February 2025, Peshawar, Pakistan: Under the presence of the KP Minister of Education, EU Ambassador Dr Riina Kionka and Country Director of the British Council James Hampson a ground-breaking ceremony was held today for the Centre of Excellence under the Team Europe's TVET Sector Support Programme at the IM SCIENCES in Peshawar. This initiative marks a significant step towards equipping women in KP with cutting-edge skills in Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, Internet of Things, and Data Science— all critical fields for Pakistan's growing digital economy.

The programme is part of the broader Team Europe Initiative involving the EU, France, Germany and Italy to build back better through green jobs creation, but also contributes to the EU's Global Gateway Initiative in which the EU is trying to leverage public and private sector investments, including by investing in skills of young people in Pakistan.

The EU Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Riina Kiionka reinforced the EU's commitment to supporting initiatives that enhance human capital and empower women in Pakistan. *"I am excited to attend this ground-breaking ceremony today and lay the foundation for a state-of-the-art TVET centre in Peshawar that prepares women in KP province for the digital transition, empowering them with the latest technological skills and fostering economic growth in the province"*

Mr. James Hampson, Country Director for the British Council in Pakistan, while introducing the programme and highlighting its role in promoting gender equality through inclusive access to high-tech training; also said, *"The launch of the Centre of Excellence under the EU-funded TVET Sector Support Programme is a game-changer for women's economic empowerment in Pakistan. By equipping them with cutting-edge digital and high-tech skills, this initiative will not only transform individual futures but also drive lasting change in the country's workforce and economy."*

The Chief Guest, [Name of Chief Guest], formally launched the COE, emphasizing the pivotal role it will play in addressing gender disparities and creating sustainable opportunities in hi-tech fields. *"The Centres of Excellence are a transformative initiative that will empower women across KPK, GB, and Balochistan with the skills needed to excel in the rapidly evolving digital landscape."*

Programme Background

The TVET Sector Support Programme (TVET SSP) is a five-year programme designed to strengthen Pakistan's TVET sector, by providing training opportunities to men and women in high-demand professions. The action aims to advance Pakistan's human capital development

through creation of decent jobs in green and digital areas. It places a special emphasis on empowering skilled female workers in digital and high-tech sectors. The programme will be jointly implemented by GIZ and the British Council.

Under this programme, the British Council is set to establish two Centres of Excellence (COEs), under an innovative "Hub & Spoke" model. Each COE will have a hub of high-tech and digital training. The hub will be connected with a number of spokes, strategically located across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Balochistan, to extend the programme's reach and impact to a wide range of beneficiaries. These centres aim to create safe, inclusive learning environments with provisions such as anti-harassment policies, daycare facilities, and transport support.



Funded by
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The COEs will focus on providing globally accredited training programmes, ensuring women, refugees, and other marginalized groups are equipped with future-ready skills in digital and hi-tech professions.

ENDS.

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