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DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY AND CYBERSECURITY PARTNERSHIP (DCCP)

SARDI Activities

TO ADVANCE A SHARED VISION for a free and open Indo-Pacific, USAID/India, through the Indo-Pacific Office, is implementing Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity Partnership (DCCP) activities through the "South Asia Regional Digital Initiative (SARDI)." SARDI supports DCCP objectives to:

Advance an open internet

Grow global markets for U.S. ICT goods and services

Enhance partner countries' cybersecurity

SARDI is working to improve digital connectivity in the South Asia region, strengthen the private sector and civil society's digital capacity, and improve their ability to engage on ICT policy issues. SARDI also plans to work closely with the private sector, leveraging their catalytic role in bridging the digital gender divide that is increasingly preventing women from accessing life-enhancing services for education, health, and financial inclusion. These efforts work to enhance the enabling environment for the digital economy and support economic development in the region.

SARDI is part of the larger DCCP whole-of-government initiative that was launched in July 2018 by Secretary of State Michael Pompeo. DCCP works to build partners' cybersecurity capacity to address shared threats through engagement with the private sector, government, and civil society. It is a priority of the U.S. Government to promote an open, interoperable, inclusive, reliable and secure internet. Through DCCP, USAID is implementing activities in 14 countries across South and Southeast Asia to expand opportunities for U.S. technology exports through public-private partnerships and to make citizens and small businesses more digitally savvy and safe from cyber threats.

SARDI INDIA ACTIVITY FRAMEWORK

A two-pronged approach is being adopted to address digital gaps in India. The below graphic describes SARDI India activities:

POLICY ENGAGEMENT

– SME AND CSO CAPACITY BUILDING –

Advocacy-skill development for SMEs and CSOs on:

Cybersecurity; 5G; data localization and data protection laws

Data governance

Implications of digital policies for SMEs

– PRIVATE SECTOR COLLABORATION –

To expand the reach of digital governance initiatives and to leverage their catalytic role in bridging the digital gender divide

– ADVISORY PLATFORM –

To enable policy dialogue between the GoI, industry associations, SMEs, and CSOs

SARDI INDIA

DIGITAL UPSKILLING

– DIGITAL ECONOMY –

Creating and expanding sustainable empowerment models

– WOMEN-LED ENTERPRISES (WES) –

Strengthening the capacity of WEs and CDOs through digital tools

– LAST-MILE CONNECTIVITY –

Providing last-mile connectivity to remote villages/districts

Country-level digital policies and data governance backed by a digital ecosystem supporting economic growth of CSOs, SMEs, MSMEs and communities

The digital upskilling track will work to strengthen and build the resilience of 10,000 rural women entrepreneurs (MSMEs) and 500 woman-led Community Development Organizations (CDOs) through digital up-skilling activities in ten districts across seven states in India. The activities started in September 2020.

Through the policy engagement track, SARDI will work with urban youth- and women-led small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) and help them translate "digital policies into action." The focus of the policy engagement track will be to help these SMEs/CSOs better understand, comply with, take advantage of, and think critically about the technology policy environment which governs their businesses and organization's actions, while also developing their skills to advocate and articulate opinions about key ICT policy issues.

This awareness raising and advocacy-skill development activity will help the target SMEs/CSOs operate more efficiently and effectively, and take advantage of beneficial public incentives and programs, while complying with all the policy guidelines set out under the various digital policies being finalized by the Government of India. This activity is in the design stage and is likely to commence by November 2020.

Photo: Gram Vaani

CONTACT US/LEARN MORE

KOMAL BAZAZ SMITH▸ TEL: 301-771-7337 | EMAIL: Komal_BazazSmith@dai.com
Digital Connectivity & Cybersecurity Partnership (DCCP) Project Director, Digital Frontiers

HARRY KRIZ▸ TEL: +(91) 11-2419-8427 | EMAIL: hkriz@usaid.gov
General Development Officer, USAID

ROSHAN NAIR▸ TEL: +(91) 11-2419-8000 | EMAIL: rnair@usaid.gov
Specialist-Digital Inclusion, USAID