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**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, COSTA RICA, EL SALVADOR, HONDURAS,
GUATEMALA, MEXICO**

MUJER DIGITAL / SHE IS DIGITAL

(RG-T4160)

DONORS MEMORANDUM

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CONTENTS

PROJECT SUMMARY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I.	THE PROBLEM	1
A.	Description of the problem	1
II.	THE SOLUTION	3
A.	Project description	3
B.	Innovation	5
C.	Beneficiaries	6
D.	Components	6
E.	Project results, measurement, monitoring, and evaluation	10
III.	ALIGNMENT WITH THE IDB GROUP, COMPLEMENTARITY, SCALABILITY, AND PROJECT RISKS	11
A.	Alignment with the IDB Group	11
B.	Complementarity and scalability	12
C.	Project and institutional risks	14
IV.	BUDGET INSTRUMENT AND PROPOSAL	15
V.	EXECUTING AGENCY AND IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE	16
A.	Description of the executing agency	16
B.	Implementation structure	17
VI.	FULFILLMENT OF MILESTONES AND SPECIAL FIDUCIARY ARRANGEMENTS	17
VII.	ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY	18

PROJECT SUMMARY

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, COSTA RICA, EL SALVADOR, HONDURAS, GUATEMALA, MEXICO

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The pandemic caused a historic drop of 5.4 percentage points in the female labor force participation rate and an increase in the regional unemployment rate for women from 10.3% to 12.1%. This means that more than 13.1 million women have seen their jobs disappear. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the sharp economic contraction has had a negative impact on employment and contributed to increasing job precariousness in the region, setting back labor market participation for women in the region by over a decade.

The rapid expansion of the digital economy as a result of the pandemic is having a massive effect on the labor market and on the type of skills needed to participate in economic and social activities. In addition to information and communications technology professionals, new skills are needed in all areas being digitalized. In terms of training, just 30% of students pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) are women and, paradoxically, due to a lack of trained talent, 48% of the demand for labor in the digital market is unmet. Those women who do find employment in the tech industry face an average gender-based wage gap of 21%, which is significantly higher than the 16% average gender-based wage gap for the economy in general.

The lack of opportunities has a direct impact on migration. According to the International Labour Organization, young migrants make up more than 10% of the overall 232 million international migrants, and, being the most mobile social group, young people constitute the bulk of annual migration movements. Of all migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2020, a total of 50% were ages 18 to 29. While international migration represents an opportunity for young people to provide a better life for themselves and their families, the migration of young people takes place in the context of high youth unemployment and the lack of decent job creation in their country of origin. Worldwide, female migration corresponds to 49% of the total, compared to 50.1% for Latin America, where more women than men are already migrating.

This situation opens the door to explore initiatives that improve female employment opportunities in economic sectors with both greater value added and the potential for higher pay.

“She is Digital” is a regional project with a high impact on training and employability in the knowledge economy, co-designed by Junior Achievement together with Cisco, IBM, and Amazon Web Services, Inc. The project targets vulnerable women, which will help reduce gender inequality and promote female employment in the tech industry. The project will empower 7,500 women in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico through socioemotional and job skills development and technical certifications, which among other objectives will facilitate access to employment and/or self-employment, discourage migration driven by a lack of opportunities, and incentivize the creation of impact consortia between public-private stakeholders and the third sector. Aligned with the strategy of the Inter-American Development Bank, this project seeks to innovate and incentivize public-private-social collaboration to produce scalable, sustainable solutions.

Expected outcomes include: support being provided to 7,500 women, of which 60% are expected to obtain full certification from the training program and 50% are expected to become employable; a 15% increase in the gross compensation of beneficiaries; and strategic partnerships being structured with 150 private sector allies that will employ the women who graduate from the training program.

This initiative is consistent with the Employment Action Framework with Gender Perspective, the Labor Sector Framework, and the Bank's country strategies with the beneficiary countries.

ABBREVIATIONS

AWS	Amazon Web Services, Inc.
CRM	Customer relationship management
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILO	International Labour Organization
JADOM	Junior Achievement Dominicana, Inc.
JAWW	Junior Achievement Worldwide
MDGs	Millennium development goals
STEM	Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, COSTA RICA, EL SALVADOR, HONDURAS, GUATEMALA, MEXICO

MUJER DIGITAL / SHE IS DIGITAL

(RG-T4160)

Country and geographic location:	Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico		
Executing agency:	Junior Achievement Dominicana, Inc.		
Focus area:	Knowledge Economy, Education, Talent, and Employment		
Coordination with other Bank operations/donors:	ME-T1474, ES-T1316		
Project beneficiaries:	"She is Digital" will benefit 7,500 vulnerable women in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico between the ages of 17 and 30, but primarily women under 25.		
Financing:	Technical cooperation:	US\$1.2 million	33%
	Total MIF contribution:	US\$1.2 million	33%
	Counterpart:	US\$2.4 million	67%
	Cofinancing (if any; include a separate line item for cofinancing from the IDB if applicable):		00%
	Total project budget:	US\$3.6 million	100%
Execution and disbursement period:	36 months for execution and disbursement		
Special contractual conditions:	The following will be conditions precedent to the first disbursement: (i) signature of the cooperation agreement between Junior Achievement Worldwide and Junior Achievement Dominicana; (ii) creation of the project coordination unit; (iii) selection of the Project Coordination Director; and (iv) submittal of the annual work plan.		
Environmental and social impact review:	This operation has been screened according to the requirements of the new Environmental and Social Policy Framework of the Inter-American Development Bank (document GN-2965-21) of 30 June. Given that the impacts and risks of the project are limited, this is classified as a category "C" operation.		
Unit responsible for disbursements:	Country Office in the Dominican Republic		

I. THE PROBLEM

A. Description of the problem

- 1.1 **COVID-19 and impact on unemployment.** According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), 13 million women in Latin America and the Caribbean saw their jobs disappear due to the pandemic, causing an unprecedented decline in the labor participation rate and an increase in unemployment.¹ Added to about 12 million women who were already affected by unemployment before the pandemic, this means that around 25 million women are currently unemployed or out of the workforce.
- 1.2 As a result of the pandemic, the labor participation rate of women experienced a historical decline of 5.4 percentage points (a 10.3% drop). Meanwhile, the regional unemployment rate for women increased from 10.3% to 12.1%, outpacing the general unemployment average, which rose to 10.6%. This means that more than 13.1 million women have seen their jobs disappear.
- 1.3 In Honduras, the unemployment rate for the rolling quarter April to July 2022 was 7.8%,² with 49.7% of women of working age being employed, compared to 70.1% of men. Additionally, 88% of those who are not in school, in training, or working are women.³ In Costa Rica, the most recent figures for the rolling quarter May to July 2022 indicate a male unemployment rate of 9.7%,⁴ compared to 15% for women. In Mexico, 7 of every 10 jobs lost between the first quarter of 2020 and the same period in 2021 were held by women.⁵ In other words, 2.1 million people became unemployed in one year and, of that total, 1.5 million were women. Even though the labor force participation rate has rebounded in the second quarter of 2022 to the same level as the first quarter of 2020, prior to the pandemic the male participation rate was 76.5% versus 45.1% for females, which is a gap of 31.4 percentage points.⁶ For its part, the unemployment rate in the Dominican Republic was 6.4% for the rolling quarter January to March 2022.⁷
- 1.4 According to estimates by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC),⁸ the sharp economic contraction has had a negative impact on employment and contributed to increasing job precariousness in the region, setting back labor market participation for women by over a decade.
- 1.5 According to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), a rapid recovery in women's employment at the regional level could help the Latin American economy grow by up to 22% in the coming years.⁹ Accordingly, economic recovery plans

¹ ILO: [13 million women in Latin America and the Caribbean saw their jobs disappear due to the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)

² [National Institute of Statistics of Honduras.](#)

³ [Honduras Jobs Diagnostic published by the World Bank in 2020.](#)

⁴ [La Nación – Costa Rica.](#)

⁵ [National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico.](#)

⁶ [National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico, ¿Cómo vamos?, National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy of Mexico.](#)

⁷ [Central Bank, Dominican Republic.](#)

⁸ [ECLAC.](#)

⁹ IDB: [La crisis del empleo femenino en América Latina y el Caribe.](#)

should include the recovery and reconfiguration of employment with a gender perspective to facilitate the reincorporation of women in quality jobs.

- 1.6 **Lag in the incorporation of new digital skills.** According to ECLAC,¹⁰ the rapid expansion of the digital economy as a result of the pandemic is having a massive effect on the labor market and on the type of skills necessary to participate in economic and social activities. In addition to information and communications technology professionals, new skills are needed in all areas being digitalized. Professions and trades are experiencing a pressing need for increasing levels of digital skills. All sectors are requiring greater skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), which are closely tied to the jobs of the future. Those occupations will require abilities related to the development, implementation, and intensive use of technologies. In principle, for women, this opens the door to new employment opportunities that require higher qualifications and involve less routine tasks, offer a certain degree of flexibility (e.g., working remotely), and should be associated with higher pay. From a gender equality perspective, it is imperative to overcome labor market segmentation and to ensure that the new opportunities in the digital economy are accompanied by a transformation of gender roles so that women can achieve true economic autonomy.
- 1.7 **Gender disparity in the software development labor market.** The economic inclusion of more women in Latin America and the Caribbean could strengthen results in the labor market and bring significant benefits, promoting productivity and innovation, social well-being, inclusive growth, and sustainable development. According to a report published by the International Monetary Fund,¹¹ economic production in Latin America and the Caribbean would be 22% higher if the gender gap in labor force participation were closed. Cuberes, D. and Teignier, M. assert that in certain regions of the world losses in GDP per capita attributable to gender disparities in the labor market are as high as 27%.¹² Thus, the inclusion of women in the labor market is an undeniable force that is key to social development and new technologies, and decisive and ongoing support should be given to these efforts in various sectors. In terms of training, just 30% of students pursuing STEM careers are women and, paradoxically, due to a lack of trained talent, 48% of the demand for labor in the digital market is unmet.¹³
- 1.8 An article by Adermann points to how STEM¹⁴ careers are often portrayed as “masculine,” which, combined with the lack of visible female role models, makes these careers generally less attractive to girls. Londa Schiebinger, an international leader on the topic of women in STEM and project director for the Gendered Innovations project of Stanford University, the U.S. National Science Foundation, and the European Union, holds that a sex and gender perspective needs to be incorporated into science, health and medicine, engineering, and the environment at three basic levels: (i) fix the numbers of women in STEM; (ii) fix the institutions by incorporating a gender perspective in their processes, coordination, laws, protocols,

¹⁰ ECLAC: [*La autonomía económica de las mujeres en la recuperación sostenible y con igualdad*](#).

¹¹ International Monetary Fund. [Economic Gains from Gender Inclusion: New Mechanisms, New Evidence](#).

¹² Teignier, Cuberes 2014. [Aggregate Costs of Gender Gaps in the Labor Market: A Quantitative Estimate](#).

¹³ [Brechas de género en Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación en América Latina y el Caribe](#).

¹⁴ [Science, technology, engineering and mathematics](#).

and personnel selection; and (iii) fix the knowledge, production processes, development of processes, and methodology defined in science and in the various areas of work to introduce a sex and gender perspective, in order to make a radical inclusive and diverse change in society.¹⁵

- 1.9 When women do obtain employment in the **technology industry**, they face an **average gender-based wage gap of 21%**, which is significantly higher than the average gender-based wage gap of 16% for the economy in general. To mention just a few examples, according to data from the ILO, the wage gap for women in technology is 21% in Costa Rica and El Salvador and 14% in Mexico.¹⁶ This gap discourages women from participating in STEM training due to the level of effort required to pursue such a career and the salary outcomes.
- 1.10 **Migration and forced displacement driven by a lack of opportunities.** According to an ILO report published in 2022, young migrants make up more than 10% of the overall 232 million international migrants, and, being the most mobile social group, young people constitute the bulk of annual migration movements. Of all migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2020, a total of 50% were ages 18 to 29. While international migration represents an opportunity for young people to provide a better life for themselves and their families, pursue educational aspirations, improve their professional skills and prospects, etc., the migration of young people takes place in the context of high youth unemployment and the lack of decent job creation in their country of origin.¹⁷ Although unemployment is a crosscutting cause among youth, the specificities of gender are also notable, particularly with respect to the more disadvantaged status of women. Worldwide, female migration corresponds to 49% of the total, compared to 50.1% for Latin America, where more women than men are already migrating. In addition to the lack of professional development opportunities, female migration is driven by other factors such as escaping family and community violence, reuniting with family, and finding employment that provides sufficient income to support their children financially.
- 1.11 This situation opens the door to explore initiatives that improve employment opportunities for women in economic sectors with greater value added and the potential for higher pay.

II. THE SOLUTION

A. Project description

- 2.1 The **final objective** of the project is to increase the employability of women in tech jobs through a model for training in digital and soft skills, and the establishment of partnerships with public and private sector stakeholders. This project will provide human capital technical training for quality jobs in knowledge intensive industries (web development, cybersecurity, and cloud computing).
- 2.2 “She is Digital” is being proposed as a regional project with a high impact on training and employability in the knowledge economy that targets vulnerable women and

¹⁵ Schiebinger 2021. [Gendered Innovations](#).

¹⁶ ILO 2019. [Tech's persistent gender gap](#).

¹⁷ ILO 2020. [Youth and Migration](#).

helps reduce gender inequalities by promoting female employment in the tech industry. The project will empower women through development of socioemotional, job, and technical skills, which will discourage migration due to a lack of opportunities and incentivize public-private-social collaboration to produce scalable, sustainable solutions. This project seeks to innovate and incentivize, as well as to provide evidence for future interventions aimed at improving the employability of women in technology.

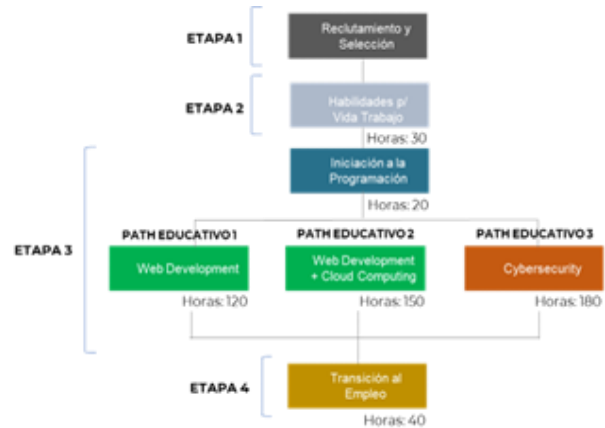
2.3 Although vulnerability is a dynamic concept referring to multiple risk factors that prevent a person or group of people from maintaining or improving their well-being, based on the experience of Junior Achievement with various programmatic proposals in more than 25 countries of the region, for purposes of this project “vulnerable women” refers to any woman who is not currently enrolled in the educational system but has completed her basic education, is not formally and actively employed in a stable job, is a migrant or victim of displacement or belongs to an ethnic group, is the head of household as a single mother or partner, and is primarily devoted to homemaking.

2.4 **Implementation.** The “She is Digital” training and employability project has four phases:

- **Phase 1: Recruitment and selection of beneficiaries.** Recruitment strategies will be applied to three planned segments of beneficiaries to identify and select participants that have the required profile for the project (see Annex VI, [Beneficiary Selection Criteria](#)).
- **Phase 2: Work and life skills training.** Participants will be trained in socioemotional, job, executive functioning, and financial literacy skills to equip them with the tools and basic knowledge needed for their personal and professional development. *Duration: 30 hours.*
- **Phase 3: Training and certification in tech skills.** The participants will be trained and certified in one of the three professional technical profiles identified for the project: web development, cloud computing, and cybersecurity. Prior to the start of this phase, participants will be trained in basic computer programming skills. *Duration: between 120 and 180 hours depending on the educational path selected (see diagram below).*
- **Phase 4: Connection with employment opportunities.** The certified participants will be assisted with the transition to employment while being trained in the knowledge and tools needed to conduct a job search. This phase of the project will leverage the specific labor demand from companies partnering with the training program and will look to tech companies that are both registered and unregistered in the Gender Parity Taskforces¹⁸ promoted by the IDB to facilitate insertion in the labor markets in the participating countries. *Duration: 40 hours.*

¹⁸ The [Gender Parity Taskforces](#) is a high-level public-private collaboration model that seeks to support countries interested in reducing the economic gender gap. With this objective, the World Economic Forum created the Gender Parity Taskforces in 2012. In 2016, the World Economic Forum partnered with the IDB to implement these initiatives in Latin America.

- 2.5 The project is expected to last 11 months per cohort (7 months of training and 4 months of assistance in transitioning to employment). There will be 4 cohorts over a span of 24 to 36 months. During phase 3, the beneficiaries have the option of selecting from the three educational paths depicted in the figure.



B. Innovation

- 2.6 The project is innovative because of its co-creation and implementation alongside experts of a holistic model that is regional in scope and has a gender perspective for inclusion at scale of vulnerable young women in the digital economy. Training and certifications will be provided by IBM, Amazon Web Services, Inc. (AWS), and Cisco, along with ongoing mentoring to access jobs that are in highest demand in the market. Self-employment will also be promoted. As a complement to technical training, and based on the vast experience of Junior Achievement, the beneficiaries will have access to socioemotional, job, executive functioning, and financial literacy training to help expand their opportunities for earning and maintaining a livelihood, as well as to strengthen their economic autonomy and resilience.
- 2.7 As an Impact Consortium that establishes strategic regional and national partnerships with employers, chambers of commerce, industry associations, innovation hubs, academia, governments, and civil society organizations in order to connect women with concrete employment and self-employment opportunities (including digital platforms and freelancing opportunities that allow women to self-manage and balance their work life and caregiving tasks), the project is innovative in that it shapes a more diverse, inclusive, and competitive digital economy in six countries, thus creating opportunities for each woman to develop her potential, transform her future, and transform the future of her community and country.
- 2.8 The project will have a customer relationship management (CRM) platform for full monitoring of all participants during each phase. Centralizing information on a single platform will permit an exhaustive analysis of the data and will promote optimization of all processes: recruitment and selection, training and support, monitoring and evaluation, and transition to employment. It will also produce evidence to support scalability of the model developed.
- 2.9 Lastly, the project is innovative in that it provides alternative solutions for a vulnerable population that is not currently being served, i.e., vulnerable unemployed young women in rural and urban areas across Central America and the Caribbean. Those solutions include connectivity, digital education, and labor inclusion, all with a gender perspective. The project proposes a transnational model and prescription at scale, which considers both local conditions on the ground and international standards and could be replicated for other gender and employability projects in different countries of the region.

C. Beneficiaries

- 2.10 The target population will be 7,500 vulnerable,¹⁹ low-income²⁰ young women between the ages of 17 and 30, from the following segments: (1) women who are in their final year of high school and their first years of university; (2) women who are not working or in school; and (3) women who work but are looking for training opportunities to enable them to access better jobs (reskilling)²¹ (see Annex VI, Beneficiary Selection Criteria).
- 2.11 The project scope includes several countries in the Central American and Caribbean region, primarily the areas surrounding the capital cities of Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico.
- 2.12 Participants will be selected based on the design of a profile of potential beneficiaries who can access training in soft skills and technology so that they can later obtain job opportunities aligned with the new knowhow acquired. Those beneficiaries (i.e., young people ages 17 to 30) will be selected using basic criteria such as belonging to any of the aforementioned segments and having access to an electronic device (computer) and the Internet (either personal or community access).
- 2.13 Beneficiaries will be selected for the components of this project through partnerships with educational institutions, private sector companies in various industries, grassroots and civil society organizations, government entities, etc., provided they have the right profile. Some of the institutions that will support the selection process are found in Annex V (see Annex VII, List of Strategic Partners by Country).

D. Components

Component 1: Training in socioemotional, job, and technical skills (IDB Lab: US\$608,100; Counterpart: US\$1,279,598)

- 2.14 The objective of this component is to develop socioemotional, job, executive functioning, and technical skills through trainings to enable the women included in the project to acquire the skills required by the tech industry and to fill existing gaps. In this way, they will be able to access employment opportunities in IT-related areas.
- 2.15 The following activities have been planned in order to achieve this component's objective: (i) alignment of educational paths and a partnership strategy for employability geared toward women joining, remaining, and growing in STEM, specifically in the tech market; (ii) recruitment and selection of participants; (iii) training in work and life skills, and basic financial literacy; and (iv) training and certification in technical skills: web development, cloud computing, and

¹⁹ Other vulnerability criteria to be defined as a combination of country-specific factors (social, economic, environmental/living conditions, etc.).

²⁰ We consider low-income youth to be those living in areas identified as such by either local governments or international organizations. This situation is generally characterized by large families and one or two monthly incomes that are close to the minimum wage in each country in the project. Low income status may also be determined by housing conditions, among other factors.

²¹ For purposes of the project, beneficiaries in the reskilling category are understood to be women who have previous training in other areas but desire technology training to get a better job in the tech industry. It may also refer to women who were employed but lost their job due to the pandemic and are actively searching for a job but have not found employment that matches their previous training, or who lack the skills/tools required by the current labor market.

cybersecurity, including leveling courses in basic digital skills (see Annex VI, Certifications and Educational Paths). To carry out these activities, a country training coordinator will be hired along with facilitators (1 for every 100 women) and technical instructors (1 for every 200 women), and agreements will be reached with various companies and organizations to recruit volunteer mentors. They will work with the regional executing unit to achieve the proposed objective of this component.

- 2.16 The expected results of this component include: (i) 7,500 enrolled participants begin training in socioemotional, job, and financial literacy skills; (ii) 6,750 women complete the socioemotional, job, and financial literacy skills training phase and begin the leveling course in basic digital skills for subsequent selection of their educational path of interest and training in web development, cloud computing, or cybersecurity; and (iii) 4,500 women complete training in the above-mentioned technical profiles, are assisted and mentored in preparing for certification exams, and obtain certification.

Component 2: Partnerships and employability (IDB Lab: US\$479,947; Counterpart: US\$464,987)

- 2.17 The objective of this component is to forge relationships with tech companies that have job openings to ensure the employability of the certified participants, the creation and/or strengthening of the proposed educational paths, along with data management and the analysis and evaluation of open positions at the local level where the beneficiaries can be employed.
- 2.18 Junior Achievement will reach agreements with companies, chambers of commerce, industry associations, innovation hubs, governments, and other organizations to permit the formation of local consortia in each country and at the regional level. Junior Achievement will coordinate with Manpower/Experis and other local consultants in each country to project the demand for tech jobs, specifically web development, cloud computing, and cybersecurity profiles, as well as to identify any existing gaps between participant profiles and market demand. The educational paths were selected based on prior market demand consultations with Manpower/Experis, AWS, Cisco, and IBM, as well as with local industry associations and chambers in each of the participating countries. As a result of those consultations, the project was designed to include training in web development with IBM, cloud computing with AWS, and cybersecurity with Cisco.

The project's main partners are:

- **AWS**, which will lead the creation and adaptation of cloud computing content, and the training and certification of participants on that educational path. AWS will make an in-kind contribution to the project in the form of use of its educational platform, the hiring of technical instructors, and donation of 1,000 Cloud Practitioner certifications.
- **Cisco Systems** will be responsible for training in cybersecurity through its educational platform and for providing corporate volunteers (technical instructors) as its in-kind contribution to the project.
- **IBM** will offer web development training to the beneficiaries using its SkillsBuild platform and will provide corporate volunteers (technical instructors) as its in-kind contribution to the project.

- **Platforms that promote business exchanges** in the countries of Latin America. Chambers of commerce will contribute information and quality connections to the “She is Digital” Hiring Consortium. **Manpower/Experis Mexico** will contribute to the project through a series of actions, including webinars with graduates, sharing of employability trends, interviews, resume writing, etc.; Market Scan and open positions data; consulting services related to selection and assessment processes; sharing of employability information and recommendations with graduates; and training of Junior Achievement’s people involved in the project in Recruitment and Selection-Good Practices and Methodology of the ManpowerGroup (virtual).
 - **Delta Airlines and CAT Foundation**, the philanthropic arm of the Caterpillar company, will make a monetary investment to the counterpart required to implement the project.
 - **Social Support Foundation of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (TBC)**. This Foundation promotes high-impact projects to accelerate the region’s development and improve its resilience. It will supply financial and social capital to strengthen the Impact Consortium and support achievement of the project’s employability objectives.
- 2.19 The following activities are planned to achieve the objectives of this component: (i) development of strategic partnerships; (ii) diagnostic assessment of labor demand; (iii) monitoring and preparation of participants to transition to employment; (iv) personalized assistance during the job search; and (v) job fairs.
- 2.20 The following outputs are expected as a result of the partnerships: (i) 150 local and regional partnerships are established with private sector companies; (ii) 12 agreements are signed with governments; (iii) 12 agreements are signed with nongovernmental organizations and academia; (iv) 48 job fairs are held; and (v) 4,500 participants are linked to digital job portals for the tech industry.
- 2.21 Furthermore, to facilitate participants’ job placement, partnerships will be sought with various institutions and training centers to offer the women supplemental training that covers the knowhow and tools required and desired by the local market (e.g., English classes).

Component 3: Knowledge creation and dissemination (IDB Lab: US\$32,500; Counterpart: US\$313,923)

- 2.22 This component is designed as a mechanism to create and disseminate information to improve services, programs, and projects executed by the stakeholders in the ecosystem. The knowledge products described below will be developed based on the experience with the project.
- 2.23 The objective of this component is to strengthen and promote recognition of the demand for the scarce digital talent in the region. Moreover, having information on the digital transformation that has occurred in industry will make it possible to identify and project the technical profiles required by the current market, as well as to see which services and economic activities require the profiles that are in highest demand.
- 2.24 Junior Achievement views this component as the means to gather, analyze, produce, and disseminate evidence that resolves the lack of information with a

gender perspective, and thus define strategies and strategic plans for stakeholders and decision-makers (from either the public or private sector) for adopting new technologies and strengthening the labor force.

- 2.25 This component will finance the following activities: (i) design and implementation of the communication plan; (ii) study of digital talent demand focused on Central America and the Caribbean; (iii) identification of the necessary executive functioning skills required for the digital market; (iv) consolidation of a learning community; and (v) development of multimedia and communications material.²²
- 2.26 For the first output, the Regional Communications Coordinator and local communications consultants will develop and implement a communications strategy and plan to achieve the main project outcomes. This component in particular promotes knowledge creation and dissemination, which, in turn, facilitates the creation and impact of local and global policies based on coordination with the various stakeholders in the ecosystem, including the media, associations, and social networks. Those policies are stored on a web repository to provide the various audiences access to the information.
- 2.27 For the second output, a survey will be designed for the main purpose of identifying occupational demand and the digital skills required now and in the future. The following will also be explored: (i) intentions of employers to invest in new digital technologies and processes; (ii) difficulties filling job openings in IT or in services that involve the use of a programming language and/or technologies; and (iii) development of trainings that build digital skills in the labor force.
- 2.28 The third output seeks to recognize the executive skills required by the market and any potential new skills that emerge. This output includes the use of prospecting techniques with circles of experts from companies, unions, academia, employment agencies, industry leaders, and/or agents of cooperation.
- 2.29 The fourth output supports knowledge management through the sharing of information and good practices. In this regard, actions are identified to meet labor intermediation needs both efficiently and collaboratively to fulfill the project objectives. This output is intended to create a learning community through a partner network to strengthen synergies rather than competition, and thus promote, improve, and demonstrate efficient practices and key actions to ensure good job placement.
- 2.30 Lastly, the knowledge creation outputs will be published and disseminated together with IDB Lab on its publications repository, as well as on Junior Achievement's repository and digital channels. Likewise, the executing agency will produce materials for dissemination, such as infographics, case studies, press releases, and bulletins for the various stakeholders.

²² Multimedia and communications material is understood as video testimonials of youth beneficiaries, infographics with relevant data on gender, employability, and the digital market, as well as case studies related to gender and the digital ecosystem/market. Also includes case study testimonials on gender, livelihoods, and migration, and case studies that showcase the holistic training and employability model proposed by the "She is Digital" project.

E. Project results, measurement, monitoring, and evaluation

The main progress and outcome indicators expected to be achieved with the project are:

- 7,500 participants are selected for the project
- 6,750 participants (90% of the total) strengthen their socioemotional, job, executive functioning, and financial planning skills
- 6,750 participants (90% of the total) learn to use basic programming tools (HTML, CSS styles, Bootstrap, JavaScript) and are trained in their choice of the following professional profiles: web development, cloud computing, and cybersecurity
- 6,000 participants (80% of the total) graduate in one of the project's three professional profiles
- 4,500 participants (60% of the total) take and pass the certification exam for Cloud Practitioner or IT-Cybersecurity Specialist
- 4,500 participants post their professional profiles and are included on digital job portals, such as LinkedIn and niche job portals for the tech industry
- 3,000 participants (40% of the total) become employed or self-employed in the knowledge industry in any of the areas mentioned within 4 to 6 months of completing their training
- The percentage variation in gross compensation for women who prior to starting the training program had gross employment and/or self-employment income increases by 15% within 6 months of completing the program compared to their initial income
- Strategic partnerships are formed with 150 private sector partners that employ women graduating from the program
- 48 job fairs are held in the 6 countries during the 2 years of the project
- 12 agreements are signed with governments from the various countries to support the different phases of the project
- 12 agreements are signed with nongovernmental organizations and entities from the academic sector to support the different phases of the project
- One learning community is established with partners to share good practices on the digital economy and job placement
- One digital talent demand study is completed for Central America and the Caribbean

In addition to the main indicators defined in the Logical Framework, the project plans to:

- Promote the creation of a public-private-social consortium between various stakeholders that support the objectives in the different phases of the project
- Adjust as needed based on the specific characteristics of the project and use a CRM platform to monitor the participants during their entire time in the project

- 2.31 Junior Achievement has a monitoring and evaluation system for all its projects. Its own tools will be customized to monitor the project activities and to carry out the activities and obtain the expected results according to the Results Matrix and the proposed timetable. Junior Achievement will also develop a monitoring and evaluation plan that will capture beneficiary profile information as part of the selection process.

III. ALIGNMENT WITH THE IDB GROUP, COMPLEMENTARITY, SCALABILITY, AND PROJECT RISKS

A. Alignment with the IDB Group

- 3.1 The initiative is consistent with the **Employment Action Framework with Gender Perspective**, specifically in the second thematic area of intervention “**Support for talent development to equip people with the necessary skills for lifelong learning and employment,**” since it supports development of the necessary human capital in the skills required by the productive sector and for the jobs of the future. The activities under Components 1 and 2 complement the interventions in the Action Framework, specifically with respect to: (i) training and certifying individuals with the skills required by the productive sector; and (ii) developing the cognitive, technical, and socioemotional skills at the secondary and vocational-professional education level needed to access quality jobs.
- 3.2 The proposal is also consistent with the **Labor Sector Framework** with respect to **line of action 1: “Interventions to accelerate the recovery of employment and bring people back to work,”** specifically the activities under Component 2 to facilitate orientation or intermediation services, as well as the activities under Component 1 for upskilling and reskilling. The project is also consistent with **line of action 4: “Strategies to promote a more inclusive labor market,”** specifically to develop skills so that women can take advantage of productive opportunities in the labor market through opportunities on digital platforms.
- 3.3 **Strategic alignment with the Bank’s country strategies and Vision 2025.** The proposal is aligned with Vision 2025 because it supports development of the digital economy by training human capital that can be inserted into more highly technical and better paying jobs. It also promotes gender equity and inclusion by developing a specific technical training program for women to promote the economic empowerment of this segment of the population.
- 3.4 **Dominican Republic.** The initiative is aligned with the Bank’s country strategy with the Dominican Republic 2021-2024 in the priority area of “Sustainable and inclusive productive reactivation” by promoting women’s participation in the labor market. Likewise, the initiative complements the priority area of “Strengthening of human capital” by developing the skills of young people to achieve improvements in the technical skills and abilities of the labor force that are aligned with the productive sector’s needs, with an emphasis on reducing gender and income inequalities.
- 3.5 **El Salvador.** The initiative is aligned with the Bank’s country strategy with El Salvador 2021-2024 in the operational area, “Revitalizing and restructuring production,” as well as the crosscutting theme of women’s empowerment and diversity, by seeking to strengthen and create digital talent, especially among women, and to promote digital transformation with new interventions that facilitate

adoption of information and communication technologies in the private sector to increase efficiency and productivity. These efforts will help close the digital gap and reduce inequalities in the labor market.

- 3.6 **Mexico.** The proposal is aligned with the Bank's country strategy with Mexico 2019-2024 (document GN-2982), specifically with the first pillar that focuses on social development, with an emphasis on the area of labor market access, as well as with the strategic objective of increasing the coverage and quality of education. The initiative is also aligned with the areas of innovation, digital agenda, and gender, which are addressed as crosscutting themes in the priority areas.
- 3.7 **Guatemala.** The initiative is aligned with the Bank's country strategy 2021-2024 with Guatemala in the priority area, "Promotion of the private sector for stronger growth" as well as the crosscutting themes of: (a) digital transformation, which includes greater adoption of information technologies and digitalization to increase access to public services, enhance the operations of beneficiary institutions, ensure the continuity of basic services, and improve conditions for advancing a digital agenda for the country; and (b) including a gender and diversity focus so that operations support underserved segments by reducing the barriers they face.
- 3.8 **Costa Rica.** The initiative is aligned with the Bank's country strategy with Costa Rica 2019-2022 in the strategic pillar, "Human capital accumulation for inclusion and competitiveness," as well as the crosscutting theme of gender and diversity by addressing the quality and relevance of job training, as well as developing services for connecting beneficiaries with employment opportunities and promoting female participation in labor markets, with the goal of reducing gender and income inequalities.
- 3.9 **Honduras.** The initiative is aligned with the Bank's country strategy with Honduras 2019-2022 in the pillar of human capital accumulation (which prioritizes offering specialized services for women). It is also aligned through its support for actions that promote women's empowerment and diversity, and the use of new technologies to achieve greater impact.
- 3.10 The project is aligned with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), specifically MDG 5: Gender equality, by supporting specific target 5.B *"Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women,"* and MDG 8: Decent work and economic growth, by supporting specific target 8.5 *"By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value."*

B. Complementarity and scalability

- 3.11 The project complements operation **ME-T1474: Support for implementation of the labor market policy and design of initiatives that support job creation in Mexico**, specifically Component 3 to design a skill development strategy for states in southern Mexico and a pilot project to improve the employability of young people through e-lancing platforms. The project is expected to support the pilot project to enhance employability by connecting the beneficiaries with online work (e-lancing) in the states of southern Mexico: Oaxaca, Tabasco, Chiapas, or Tabasco. In addition to identifying beneficiaries in southern Mexico to participate in the training programs and promote their employability, the project will make the technical skills training

methodology for youth available to operation ME-T1474 so that it can be adapted and incorporated into its curriculum.

- 3.12 The project also complements operation **ES-T1316: Support for job creation through reskilling and sector skills development**, which seeks to develop and pilot a reskilling and upskilling strategy for the digital services and tourism sectors. “She is Digital” will work with the same segment of women beneficiaries who are unemployed or whose employment status has been impacted by COVID-19. To that end, “She is Digital” will validate its implementation with the Tech Skills Council and will work with the Salvadoran Foundation for Integrated Education to select the youth participants. Project ES-T1316 may use the training platforms from the “She is Digital” project that will be offered by the participating companies, such as IBM, AWS, and Cisco, in the third phase of training to ensure that the training given is relevant and certifiable. Likewise, the project will make the technical and soft skills training methodology available to operation ES-T1316 so that it can support implementation of the second component.
- 3.13 The project complements operation **GU-G1010: Social Impact Incentives for twenty-first century skills and job retention for vulnerable youth in Guatemala**. The objective of that operation is expansion of training in Valentine Information Technologies, to then match certified participants with job offers, ensuring the best fit for both the certified participants and the hiring company. “She is Digital” will coordinate with the executing agency, Programa Valentina S.A., to exchange beneficiaries between the two training programs. Youth beneficiaries of “She is Digital” wishing to supplement their training with a more intensive boot camp style of training can apply to the Valentine program. Likewise, youth that apply but are not accepted into the Valentine program can apply to “She is Digital.”
- 3.14 The project also complements concluded operation **GU-T1303: Employment and online education programs to reduce the unemployment gap and provide economic empowerment to women in Guatemala (SheWorks!)**, which sought to develop and implement a platform to study the potential positive impact of online training on employability, and to corroborate the hypothesis that flexible work from home, supported by a technology platform, can provide economic income for women who are currently excluded from the labor market due to the inflexibility of work hours. The main lessons learned from this project are: (i) include a preliminary dialogue to get clarity on the needs and expectations of the skills required by companies and the existing supply of individuals with those skills, in order to more accurately determine the level of training necessary to bring that human capital to a baseline level of preparation for employability; and (ii) foster a sense of camaraderie and community among beneficiary cohorts, as well as strengthen the beneficiary-mentor relationship.
- 3.15 The scalability of the project will be based on the ability to adapt and expand its effective cost-benefit model, which with the financial support of new private sector allies will permit expansion of the regional scope and the number of beneficiaries, without diminishing the quality of the value proposition. The high capillarity of Junior Achievement, with operations and a territorial presence in more than 25 countries of the region, ensures the incorporation of more partners to expand the model.

- 3.16 To achieve the scalability of the project, new partners can join the Impact Consortium²³ to assist with financing and to add new tech education paths (e.g., data analytics, user experience, and artificial intelligence, among other profiles required by the market), and to expand tech employment opportunities with a gender perspective.
- 3.17 **Sustainability.** In addition, a series of actions are planned to identify possible paths to ensure the financial sustainability of the project in the medium and long term. Among those, the first step is to (i) ensure a *model of sustainable management and amortization of structure costs*. The initial investment will make it possible to design and implement a sustainable and amortizable management model and structure that can remain in place and be replicated in the future with greater efficiency, capitalizing on lessons learned and the preexisting structure; (ii) confirm *strategic pro-bono consulting services provided by McKinsey and Company* (offices in Central America), in order to identify potential innovative and resilient business models (and pilot models) for projects that seek to have a social and environmental impact while attaining economic sustainability, e.g., results-based payment, Social Impact Incentives, etc.; (iii) promote *Institutional Sustainability and Partnerships with Public Sector Stakeholders* (ministries of science and technology, education, employment, economy, and other), which will give validity to the project and make co-investments possible from new donors/investors; (iv) create a *Learning Community/Communities and Ongoing Exchange* between current and future beneficiaries as a way to add social capital and networking to the value proposition; and (v) identify and monitor the regulatory frameworks and local laws of the countries participating in the project that promote investment and establish various benefits (e.g., tax benefits) for the digital and knowledge industry in terms of training, employability, gender, public-private partnerships, entrepreneurship, etc. Based on the approval, dissemination, and promotion of certain laws, it could be possible to design fundraising strategies to ensure the project's sustainability, including investors, donors, and public and private contractors.

C. Project and institutional risks

- 3.18 **Risk 1. Limited access to Internet connectivity and computer devices.** The participants selected for the project might not have access to a computer device and Internet connectivity to participate in the trainings. To mitigate this risk: (i) access to a computer device and Internet connectivity will be a prerequisite for participant selection (this requirement can be met either through personal means or community/public access); (ii) partnerships will be formed with organizations that have the necessary infrastructure to enable participants to take classes from their facilities.
- 3.19 **Risk 2. Women may drop out of their educational paths.** Women may withdraw from training for several reasons: (i) school-home life balance; (ii) lack of motivation; (iii) they become employed during the training process; (iv) the time commitment is

²³ For purposes of Junior Achievement, an Impact Consortium is understood as a multi-stakeholder association of companies, public institutions, and other entities that share common interests to jointly participate in a project that produces a given social and/or environmental impact. The idea of an Impact Consortium is based on the fact that the whole (i.e., the consortium) is worth more than the sum of its parts, and that the synergy of the different members is a potential multiplier of the positive, high-impact results.

incompatible with their daily activities; and (v) other. To mitigate this risk: (i) the selection process will include an assessment of level of interest; (ii) facilitators will check in with the women individually on a weekly basis; (iii) volunteer tech mentors will give guidance and provide motivation during the process; (iv) learning communities will be established for ongoing interactions between the women; (v) there will be a permanent open forum for questions; and (vi) retention incentives will be identified: invitations to events, the possibility of participating in other programs/trainings, opportunities to network with partners, etc.

- 3.20 **Risk 3. Gap between market demand for labor and participant profiles.** There is a risk that when transitioning to the employment phase, companies will require specific technical skills/knowledge and the participants will not be prepared to meet those needs. To mitigate this risk: (i) the project will conduct ongoing assessments and analyses of the labor demands in each country and of the main requirements for each position; and (ii) partnerships will be established with other organizations to provide complementary training in the skills/knowledge required by the market.

IV. BUDGET INSTRUMENT AND PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The total cost of the project is US\$3.6 million, of which IDB Lab will contribute a total of US\$1.2 million (33%) in nonreimbursable financing, and the local counterpart will contribute a total of US\$2.4 million (66%). Following is a summary of the estimated budget. The table below is included to show the conditions upon project approval.

Component	IDB Lab 33%	Local contribution		Total 100%
		Cash 39%	In-kind 27%	
1. Component 1: Training in technical, job, and socioemotional skills	608,099.12	567,097.28	712,500.00	1,887,696.40
2. Component 2: Employability and partnerships	479,946.50	194,986.62	270,000.00	944,933.12
3. Component 3: Management of knowledge, knowledge communities, and scale	32,500.00	313,926.78	-	346,426.78
4. Component 4: Executing unit	42,000.00	298,943.70	-	340,943.70
5. Component 5: Audit and institutional strengthening	20,000.00	-	-	20,000.00
6. Component 6: Contingencies	17,454.38	42,545.62	-	60,000.00
Total	1,200,000	1,417,500	982,500	3,600,000

For the weight of the investment in each component, see [Annex IV. Itemized Budget](#).

V. EXECUTING AGENCY AND IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE

A. Description of the executing agency

- 5.1 The project's executing agency will be Junior Achievement Dominicana, Inc. (JADOM), a nongovernmental organization created according to the laws of the Dominican Republic. JADOM has been operating since 1995 and was granted legal status by the executive branch in Decree 117-00 of 15 March 2000, which authorizes it to operate nationwide.
- 5.2 JADOM is part of Junior Achievement Worldwide (JAWW), a nonprofit organization reaching 10 million youth worldwide each year, thanks to thousands of visionary entrepreneurs, educators, and a community of leaders who recognize the value of strengthening young talent in local economies. Each year, the global Junior Achievement network serves more than 12 million students in over 100 countries. In Latin America and the Caribbean, Junior Achievement Worldwide coordinates initiatives through Junior Achievement Americas, which focuses on fostering youth entrepreneurship, work readiness, and financial literacy in both rural and urban areas. JAWW has a presence in 31 countries and a network of more than 1,000 members on its board of directors, 3,500 partners, 600 employees, and 44,000 volunteers to be able to serve approximately 1 million youth each year.
- 5.3 JADOM was established in the Dominican Republic 22 years ago and is the largest JAWW office in the Caribbean region. JADOM serves the needs of the market by working with local companies and understanding the profile of required skills, to then tailor its programming to the companies' objectives and give them a sense of ownership and ensure sustainability. This approach maximizes the employability of the beneficiary youth and the real return on the investment. JADOM has implemented projects with the Ramos Group, United States Agency for International Development, Citi Foundation, Scotiabank, Banco Popular, Banco Ademi, Banco Adopem, and more than 97 schools in the Dominican Republic.
- 5.4 At the regional level, Junior Achievement Americas has been a strategic partner of international organizations and development banks, such as the United States Agency for International Development and the IDB in tech and youth employability training projects. Such is the case of "EmpleaTech," in partnership with SAP and Manpower, implemented in 2020 and benefiting 3,330 students in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Guatemala; and "IT Support Professional Certificate," in partnership with Google.org, which was started in Brazil in 2021 to train 1,200 youth over three years.
- 5.5 "She is Digital" complements and surpasses previous technology and employability value propositions implemented by Junior Achievement from a gender perspective. It proposes a holistic program that goes beyond technical training with expert certifications by including training in socioemotional, executive functioning, and financial literacy skills, as well as life and job skills, and helps develop the resilience and economic autonomy of the beneficiaries.
- 5.6 Of the programmatic initiatives carried out by the different Junior Achievement offices involved in the project that have prioritized a gender perspective from design through implementation, the **Women Entrepreneurs Program** is noteworthy. That program was supported by Citi Foundation, the United States Agency for

International Development, and other partners to train more than 32,000 women in entrepreneurship from 2010 to 2019 in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico, and other countries. Together with Coca-Cola and other partners, the program ***Let's Start it Up Together*** was developed focused on digital training for female owners of corner stores, small shops, and businesses. The ***Winning Women*** program was implemented in Mexico, which targets women who wish to develop their digital knowhow and basic IT skills to work in a digital world. That program was introduced in partnership with IBM on its SkillsBuild.org platform. For its part, Costa Rica has been implementing the ***STEM Promotion Program*** with the support of Johnson & Johnson. That program seeks to promote the participation of young female university students in the fields of science and technology.

B. Implementation structure

- 5.7 To implement the project, JADOM will sign a cooperation agreement with JAWW to support and monitor the project's operational management, while JADOM will be responsible for fiduciary management.
- 5.8 JAWW will create a project coordination unit made up of the following: (i) a Project Director; (ii) a Regional Project Coordinator (Chief of Party); (iii) a Regional Partnership Coordinator; (iv) a Regional Communications and IT Coordinator; and (v) a financial administrative unit based in the Dominican Republic at JADOM's offices with a full-time regional accountant and a half-time financial assistant. In each country, Junior Achievement will provide the necessary physical structure and logistical support to execute the operation effectively and efficiently. It will also be responsible for contributing the necessary counterpart resources to carry out the activities. Junior Achievement will further be responsible for submitting progress reports on project implementation every six months through IDB Lab's project management platforms. As part of project governance, a Working Committee will be formed comprised of the General Director of the project and the Regional Coordinators. The Working Committee will meet virtually each quarter to monitor the progress of the operation and will ensure that it remains on target to achieve the development objectives. Recommendations on the redirection of funds, adjustments to indicators, and/or any substantial change will be agreed upon and approved by that committee. The committee will be made up of the Regional Coordinator, the implementing agents in the countries, one representative from JAWW, and one representative from IBM, AWS, and Cisco, all with a voice and vote. IDB Lab will participate as an observer at Working Committee meetings. For each meeting of the Working Committee, Junior Achievement will designate an individual to act as secretary.

VI. FULFILLMENT OF MILESTONES AND SPECIAL FIDUCIARY ARRANGEMENTS

- 6.1 The level of risk determined by the Diagnosis of Institutional Capacity and Integrity was low, which is evidence that JADOM has a financial management system that is acceptable to IDB Lab and a monitoring and accountability structure for presenting its institutional financial statements to the Bank. A condition precedent to project disbursements will be verification that milestones have been met based on the means of verification agreed upon by the executing agency and IDB Lab.

Achievement of milestones does not exempt the executing agency from the responsibility to attain the agreed-upon results.

- 6.2 Unless decided by the Bank to the contrary over the course of the project, the executing agency's procurement policies will be used. An annual plan will be presented for the necessary project procurements and for achievement of the milestones, along with the annual work plan. IDB Lab will conduct an ex ante review of the technical aspects of procurement, as deemed necessary, particularly the procurements considered critical.
- 6.3 The executing agency will prepare its annual financial statements and ensure that they are available to the Bank. With resources from the contribution, the Bank may review the financial statements and the use of funds applied to the project, verifying financial practices and procurement.

VII. ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- 7.1 **Access to information.** The information contained in this document is classified as public once approved according to the Access to Information Policy of the Bank.²⁴
- 7.2 **Intellectual property.** All outputs, methodologies, and knowledge obtained from this project are the property of the Bank. The Bank may grant free public access to any information it deems pertinent through issuance of the Creative Commons IGO 3.0 BY-NY-ND license.

²⁴ Link to the Bank's [Access to Information Policy](#).