

Cisco and WomHub partner to help women in STEM

Cisco and WomHub will collaborate to empower female entrepreneurs in South Africa's tech sector. Two new Cisco EDGE Centres will launch at WomHub spaces in Johannesburg and Cape Town, as part of Cisco's Country Digital Acceleration programme. The centres will provide access to technology, mentoring, incubation and training opportunities for woman-led SMEs to create an inclusive ecosystem of female-run tech businesses that can drive the country's digital future.



Cisco will bring EDGE Centres into WomHub incubation spaces. Source: x.com

[WomHub](#), an incubator for female science, technology, engineering, mining and manufacturing (STEM) business founders in South Africa, offers business mentoring, incubation and training opportunities, to help advance their market access and exposure.

EDGE, which stands for 'experience, design, GTM (go-to-market) and earn', provides access to Cisco connectivity and collaboration technology, as well as tools and resources, to local innovators and entrepreneurs. The programme is designed to support the development of secure, intelligent and connected solutions to help shape SA's digital future.



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Karabo Ledwaba 1 Aug 2023



"The tech start-up scene in South Africa is evolving at a phenomenal rate," added Smangele Nkosi, GM at Cisco South Africa. "We are keen to proactively support these innovative small businesses, and foster a diverse, inclusive tech landscape by boosting support for women in the sector. Targeted collaborations with organisations like WomHub, that seek to empower female-led businesses and are already doing great work, is the ideal way to do this."

An inclusive future for all

Cisco's vision, in collaboration with WomHub, is to support entrepreneurs with GTM strategies, creating a new-age network of female-owned, certified Cisco partners offering innovative tech solutions in country.

The partnership builds on Cisco's existing commitment to empower an inclusive digital future for all, in this case by promoting gender equality and driving innovation and job creation in South Africa's rapidly evolving technological landscape.

"This new, powerful collaboration further demonstrates Cisco's commitment to fostering innovation and supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs, focusing on women who are often underrepresented in the tech sector," said Francine Katsoudas, executive vice president and chief people, policy & purpose officer of Cisco.

"With Cisco's digital skills development training and cutting-edge technologies, and WomHub's network of aspiring female entrepreneurs in South African STEM sectors, we believe we can make an important and tangible difference in the industry and help to drive the country's digital economy."

Access to experts

Through the Cisco EDGE Centre collaboration, participants in WomHub's incubation programme will have access to Cisco experts and receive specialised training and mentorship. This connected start-up ecosystem has the potential to create more female-run tech businesses with a direct impact on South Africa's digital future.

"We're excited to bring the power of WomHub and Cisco together to create a lasting legacy in the South African tech ecosystem," said Anjani Harjeven, CEO at WomHub.

"Everything we do is about building the entire ecosystem to support women in STEM. With the help of a global tech leader like Cisco, we hope to give female business founders the skills, technology, and confidence they need to take their tech start-ups to the next level. We're very excited to embark on what we know will be a prosperous journey."

The EDGE Centre is part of Cisco's Country Digital Acceleration (CDA) programme. CDA was founded in 2015 and has since evolved into programs in 49 countries, with over 1,500 active or completed projects – spanning more than two-thirds of the world's population and 75% of global GDP.

A key pillar to the CDA program is Cisco's Networking Academy. In South Africa, 61% of the current academy intake of 82,219 students are female. This dedication to inclusivity also translates to instructors: half of the 1,127 academy instructors are female.