

MEDIA RELEASE

**Reliance Foundation and Gates Foundation
advance scalable solutions for one million women;
announce first-round winners of ‘*SheConnects Digital Accelerator: India*’**

Round Two Funding Call Opens for Indian non-profits

- Six grantees selected in the first round will reach nearly one million women over 15 – 18 months with scalable digital solutions spanning health, livelihoods, and public education to reduce the gender digital divide.
- Round 2 ‘Request for Applications’ is open, inviting Indian non-profits to apply for funding of up to INR 4.2 crore to scale high-impact, replication-ready digital solutions

New Delhi, July 16, 2026: The *SheConnects Digital Accelerator* a joint initiative of Reliance Foundation and Gates Foundation, marked two major milestones in India with the announcement of the six non-profit organisations selected in Round 1, who will together reach nearly one million women, and the launch Request for Applications for the next round of grants.

The announcements were made in Delhi on Wednesday, bringing key stakeholders from government, academia, philanthropic, civil society, and technology ecosystems.

The *SheConnects Digital Accelerator: India*, aims to advance women’s digital inclusion by scaling proven, high-impact solutions that enable women and girls to participate fully in the digital world, improving their lives and livelihoods. The Accelerator aims to catalyse innovative partnerships, strengthen evidence on what works, foster south-to-south learning, and help shape a more inclusive digital ecosystem. GSMA Foundation will support selected awardees in India with capacity-building bootcamps and peer-to-peer learning, alongside technical support to enhance effectiveness and efficiency of the digital solutions and programmes that awardees are creating for women.

Speaking at the event, **Ms Deepthi Reddy, Chief – Women Empowerment, Reliance Foundation**, detailed the Accelerator’s vision for India and officially announced the opening of Round 2. *“Empowering women with tools and confidence to participate fully in the digital world is essential to a more equitable future. When empowered women are at the centre, they drive more than their own journey and catalyse transformation in society. At Reliance Foundation, it has been our long-standing commitment to identify and encourage scale-up of transformative solutions. We are excited to welcome the first cohort of our valuable partners who bring unique ideas for driving this mission forward together,”* she said.

Ms Saachi Bhalla, Deputy Director – Gender Equality, Gates Foundation, added perspectives from the Gates Foundation. *“The SheConnects Digital Accelerator represents an important opportunity for non-profit organizations to develop and scale solutions that advance women’s meaningful digital inclusion, while generating practical evidence that can inform efforts across India and the Global South. Ultimately, the success of digital transformation will not be measured by the sophistication of our technologies, but by whether they improve people’s lives. Through the SheConnects Digital Accelerator, we have an opportunity to ensure that innovation is both inclusive and impactful,” she said.*

Following a rigorous evaluation process, six non-profit organizations were selected for the inaugural round of grants with a collective commitment of INR 25.84 crore for this round, to deploy evidence-based digital solutions across India. In total, the Round 1 portfolio is projected to impact nearly one million individuals.

The initiative's grantees include Project Concern International (PCI) India, to drive economic resilience and digital agency for rural women through its government-backed 'EmpowerHer' platform in Odisha; the M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, to enhance agency of coastal fisherwomen across five states through digital skills and post-harvest facilities; Myna Mahila Foundation, leveraging Myna Bolo chatbot to expand last-mile healthcare access; the Digital Empowerment Foundation, to support rural women entrepreneurs through Sochnapreneur Business Mitras and one-stop centres across four states; A Society for Promotion of Inclusive and Relevant Education (ASPIRE), combining shared infrastructure with community-based training for women across four states; and Chaitanya, to equip self-help group (SHG) members with digital skills to navigate restrictive social practices and unlock economic advancement.

The SheConnects Digital Accelerator also announced the launch of applications for Round Two, inviting Indian non-profits to apply for funding **where each selected grantee will be eligible for grants of up to INR 4.2 crore per project**. The funding is designed for projects spanning 15 to 18 months that target post-pilot, scale-stage solutions with high potential for scalability and sustainability.

The Accelerator seeks innovative, woman-centred designs combining technology (such as AI, chatbots and regional language tools) with behaviour change communications. The initiative also envisages sharing research and insights from the outcomes of these initiatives to inform the wider ecosystem.

In addition to grants, the selected organisations will be part of expert bootcamps, technical MEL assistance, and learning exchanges.

Applications must be submitted in English through a two-step online process via the official application portal by **04 September 2026, 11:59 PM IST**. More information on: <https://www.reliancefoundation.org/media/updates/SheConnects>.

Enquiries can be directed to: SheConnectsDigitalAccelerator@gsma.com.

About SheConnects: The SheConnects Digital Accelerator was founded by Reliance Foundation and Gates Foundation to advance women's digital inclusion. The Accelerator grants in India are supported by Reliance Foundation with the aim to scale proven, high-impact solutions that enable women and girls to participate fully in the digital world, improving their lives and livelihoods. By catalysing innovative partnerships and use cases in India, the Accelerator will strengthen evidence on what works, foster south-to-south learning, and help shape a more inclusive digital ecosystem. The Accelerator's initiatives in India are also supported by Gates Foundation and are managed by the GSMA Foundation.

About Reliance Foundation: Reliance Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Reliance Industries Limited, aims to play a catalytic role in addressing India's development challenges through innovative and sustainable solutions. Led by Smt. Nita M Ambani, Founder and Chairperson, Reliance Foundation is relentlessly working for the overall well-being and enhanced quality of life for all, focusing on rural transformation, education, health, sports for development, disaster management, women empowerment, urban renewal and arts, culture and heritage, and has touched the lives of nearly 97 million people across India, in over 98,000 villages and urban locations. More on www.reliancefoundation.org

About Gates Foundation: Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people's health with vaccines and other life-saving tools and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to significantly improve education so that all young people have the opportunity to reach their full potential. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Mark Suzman and Chair Bill Gates.

About GSMA: About the GSMA: The GSMA is a global organisation unifying the mobile ecosystem to discover, develop, and deliver innovation foundational to positive business environments and societal change. Our vision is to unlock the full power of connectivity so that people, industry, and society thrive. Representing mobile operators and organisations across the mobile ecosystem and adjacent industries, the GSMA delivers for its members across three broad pillars: Connectivity for Good, Industry Services and Solutions, and Outreach. This activity includes advancing policy; tackling today's biggest societal challenges; underpinning the technology and interoperability that make mobile work; and providing the world's largest platform to convene the mobile ecosystem at the MWC and M360 series of events.