



DISTRICT COOLING

Closing the Gap: Bringing More Women into India's Cooling Sector

India is rapidly urbanising, and its demand for cooling is growing exponentially – from homes and offices to hospitals, data centres, and industrial facilities. Yet, the sector faces a major challenge: women remain largely absent from the cooling workforce. At a time when the country needs skilled professionals to design, operate and manage sustainable cooling solutions, we are effectively limiting ourselves by drawing talent from only half the population.

We are missing out on 50% of the potential workforce.

India has the world's largest youth population, but female participation in technical cooling roles – HVAC, district cooling planning, O&M, digital energy management – remains extremely low. By enabling more women to enter technical and leadership positions, the sector could access a vast pool of talent, fill skill shortages faster, and build the workforce needed for a climate-resilient future.

Cooling becomes smarter when the people shaping it are diverse. Different experiences and perspectives lead to more innovative, inclusive and future-ready solutions.

Diverse teams make better cooling systems for diverse users.

Cooling is not only an engineering task – it is a public service that influences comfort, productivity and health. Women bring valuable perspectives that strengthen planning and improve outcomes, and diverse teams deliver solutions that work better for more people.

India's shift to smart, efficient cooling creates a timely opportunity to bring more women into the sector. The digitalisation of District Cooling – remote monitoring, AI optimisation, thermal storage – lowers physical entry barriers and opens technical, analytical and leadership roles.

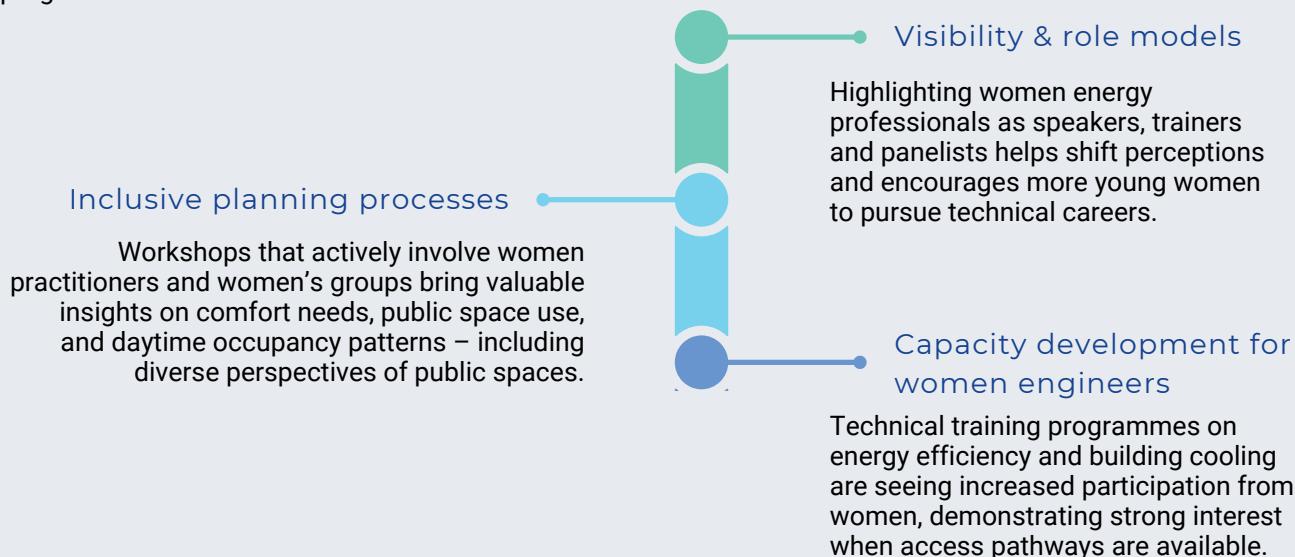


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To achieve national cooling goals, India needs not only more infrastructure, but more women shaping how systems are planned, built and operated. District Cooling Systems involve planners, utilities, engineers, facility managers and financiers – all of whom stand to gain from a more gender-diverse workforce.

How to increase women's participation in the cooling eco-system

There is growing momentum to make the cooling eco-system more inclusive. While expanding gender-disaggregated data remains essential, the following entry points show where targeted action can accelerate progress:



Recommended actions for stakeholders

To unlock the full benefits of gender-responsive District Cooling, stakeholders can:

Policy & Planning



- Introduce gender-responsive indicators as part of project approval and monitoring frameworks.
- Ensure women's participation in technical committees, working groups, consultations, and vision-setting processes.

Workforce Development



- Expand HVAC/O&M training for women through internships and apprenticeships.
- Partner with universities and Industrial Training Institutes to increase women's enrolment in cooling-related STEM fields.
- Promote gender-inclusive HR policies in utilities and operators.

Market & Industry Engagement



- Include gender criteria in procurement and bidding frameworks for District Cooling infrastructure.
- Promote female entrepreneurship in cooling-related services and circular-economy activities (maintenance, auditing, controls, smart metering).
- Work with industry associations to create mentorship networks and visibility for women professionals

With structured policy support, training access, and workplace reform, women can significantly contribute to the skilled workforce required for India's cooling transition.

Inclusivity Powers the Future!

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Project

Energy Efficient Cooling

Registered offices

Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

T +49 61 96 79-0
F +49 61 96 79-11 15
E info@giz.de
I www.giz.de/India

Bureau of Energy Efficiency, Ministry of Power

West Block 2,
R.K Puram, Sector 1
New Delhi – 110066, India

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IKI through the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN)

Responsible

Nitin Jain
nitin.jain@giz.de

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