

PRESS RELEASE

New Iron Women program strengthens Ukraine rebuilding efforts by reskilling workforce towards construction

Volvo Construction Equipment (Volvo CE) announces the start of its Iron Women program, a global vocational initiative enabling women to get specialized training for operating construction machines.

- The program harnesses the power of people to address both the need for skilled operators and the industry gender disparity.
- The first Iron Women group is set to commence this October in Ukraine, where Volvo CE, ETS Group, and Swedish non-profit organization Beredskapslyftet have teamed up to help bridge an urgent gap.
- It will then be rolled out to further countries including India.



The Iron Women program builds on a concept originally introduced by [Volvo Trucks](#) in 2016, which has since enabled over 700 women across 10 countries to enter the professional world of truck driving. Now, for the first time, this successful model is being adapted for the construction equipment industry, with Volvo CE planning to roll out the program in several countries over the coming years in collaboration with local and regional partners.

Addressing urgent needs in Ukraine

The first country where the program will be implemented is Ukraine, where the need for qualified operators has never been more critical. The nation has been forced into ongoing reconstruction efforts,

while facing unemployment and labour market gaps. On completion, participants will earn a government-recognized certificate qualifying them to operate both excavators and wheel loaders, opening doors to employment within construction and mining companies across Ukraine.

“The Iron Women program tackles our country’s challenges by equipping women with special skills that will enable them to take on a new, stable and rewarding profession in the construction industry, a field traditionally dominated by men, while also helping grow a workforce critical for our nation’s societal development and rebuilding efforts in the long-term,” said Anastasia Marisenkova, program lead at [ETS Group](#), Volvo CE’s long-standing retail partner in Ukraine since 2004.



Anastasia Marisenkova, program lead at ETS Group in Ukraine

Supporting long-term rebuilding by reskilling



Malin Crona, Secretary General, Beredskapslyftet

The program will be implemented in Ukraine within the framework of *Reskilling Ukraine*, an initiative by [Beredskapslyftet](#) and supported by Swedish corporate donors and private foundations, as well as the Swedish Government.

Since the start of 2024, over 200 Ukrainian women have already been trained as truck or bus drivers, and the project is expanding into new industries and professions, aiming at reskilling and upskilling 1,000 women in 2025.

“We are happy to collaborate with such well known partners, and to bring our experience to help make this project a success. Since the war began, we have been trying to help Ukrainians in need of a job, both in Sweden

and in Ukraine. We believe Iron Women is the kind of project that can make a real change, where we not only help women into a job, but also help society at large”, said Malin Crona, Secretary General of Beredskapslyftet.

A collaborative effort

The Iron Women program in Ukraine combines the strengths and contributions of its three key partners:

- **Volvo CE** brings cutting-edge technology to the table, providing essential training equipment and materials, including a Volvo simulator and several compact excavators and wheel loaders. Within the machine line-up is a recently introduced electric compact wheel loader - the first of its kind in Ukraine - underscoring the program’s commitment to sustainable development and preparing participants for the future of construction.
- **ETS Group** has established a training facility near Kyiv and will be leading the hands-on practical training for this program. With a strong track record of advancing industry skills in Ukraine, ETS ensures the program meets the highest standards of industry readiness.
- **Beredskapslyftet**, a Swedish non-profit organization dedicated to mobilizing resources during crises, manages the participant selection process, promotes the program across Ukraine, and oversees the administrative aspects. With extensive experience from other Reskilling Ukraine projects, Beredskapslyftet brings invaluable expertise to this initiative, ensuring that the program reaches women most in need, including sole providers and family members of military personnel.

First step in building Iron Women programs worldwide

By the end of 2025, the Iron Women program aims to have trained at least 50 women in Ukraine, and Volvo CE already is actively setting up similar programs in other countries.

“We believe in the power of people and collaborate closely with the communities in which we operate. The Iron Women program is an excellent initiative that will help fill needed skill gaps, break down gender stereotypes, and contribute to the important shift towards a more inclusive workforce in the construction industry. Starting in Ukraine, addressing a critical urgent need, this program will also be rolled out in India and other countries where it can have a positive impact,” said Melker Jernberg, Head of Volvo CE.



Melker Jernberg, Head of Volvo CE

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