



CALL FOR BUSINESS PLAN PROPOSALS FOR THE UCC/UCUSAF GRANT FOR ENHANCING ICT ADOPTION THROUGH DIGITAL LITERACY FOR WOMEN IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR

STATEMENT OF REQUIREMENTS

1.0 Introduction

Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), through the Uganda Communications Universal Service and Access Fund (UCUSAF), which is a Universal Service Fund (USF) for communications in Uganda, has launched a call for business plan proposals to establish a collaboration with two (2) suitable partners. The partnership is to implement a basic digital literacy training program to address the digital divide among women communities in 15 districts - Otuke, Buvuma, Nakapiripirit, Kyenjojo, Dokolo, Kiryandongo, Kween, Buyende, Bukedea, Zombo, Koboko, Kitgum, Kayunga, Mayuge and Maracha. The districts are split into 2 lots; Lot 1 and Lot 2, as contained in Appendix 1. At least 130 women are to be selected from each of the 15 districts, bringing the total to approximately 2,000.

This is a continuation of the first phase of the project in Financial Year 2022/23 in which up to 6,000 women from 35 districts were equipped with basic digital literacy skills. The districts were: Kagadi, Alebtong, Kanungu, Kalangala, Napak, Ntoroko, Kaboong, Lamwo, Moyo, Sironko, Ngora, Agago, Butambala, Namayingo, Kumi, Pader, Katakwi, Amuria, Kaberamaido, Abim, Kibuku, Kaliro, Bundibugyo, Namisindwa, Nakaseke, Bulambuli, Amudat, Amolatar, Butaleja, Gomba, Budaka, Bulisa, Kakumiro, Pallisa and Rubanda.

Beneficiary districts are selected based on being the lowest GDP per capita contributing districts as per the 2018 USAID report on the same.

The 2023/24 UCUSAF budget aligned to the UCUSAF IV strategy set aside resources to be utilized under a collaborative grant framework between UCC/UCUSAF and a suitable partner in this financial year 2023/2024 to implement activities related to addressing the digital divide among women in the above mentioned 15 districts of Uganda.

2.0 Background

Digital literacy includes “both the skills to functionally be able to use the internet and digital technology, as well as the knowledge of how to do so safely, securely and with trusted information and protected data.” Digital literacy is increasingly seen as an essential skill for employability and has been linked to higher earning potential and new economic opportunities.

Online experiences and opportunities are critical for people’s development across a wide range of areas. These include engagement in online education, both formal and informal learning, access to critical information and support related to health and wellbeing, participation in creative and cultural practices, civic engagement and expression of ideas and opinions, leisure and connecting with peers, and searching for employment, career information and entrepreneurship opportunities.

However, distinct geographic, economic, and social gaps in access persist, including those related to disability and gender. Closing the digital divide for all citizens in Uganda needs tailored understanding and actions for each of these barriers. Gender inequality in the physical world is replicated in the digital world. There is a large gap in women and girls’ digital adoption and use compared to men and boys.

The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) reports that more than 50% of the world’s women are offline. This is more pronounced in developing countries like Uganda, where the internet penetration rate for adult women is 41%, compared to 53% for men. The Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA) found that 393 million adult women in developing countries do not own mobile phones, and globally, women are 8% less likely to own a mobile phone than men.

The gender gap in mobile ownership in sub-Saharan Africa is 13%. Women are more likely than men to borrow or share mobile phones (often within a household or from a male family member) and are rarely the primary owners of a mobile device. GSMA further reports that women are more likely to have simpler feature phones that do not support mobile internet use, and women are 20% less likely than men to own a smartphone.

This gender gap in digital access is accompanied by a gender gap in meaningful digital use. Several studies have found that women tend to use mobiles and the internet differently than men. For example, limited by less

expensive and sophisticated handsets, women use a smaller range of digital services (often primarily voice and SMS). Women also use digital services less often and less intensively, and they access the internet less frequently, for fewer reasons. These disparities in usage limit women's access to the full range of opportunities offered by digital.

As the digitization of economies expands, economic and social growth will increasingly depend upon people's ability to use technology. While some jobs require very advanced digital skills, most jobs and daily activities need basic digital literacy to engage with a digital economy.

Without increased digital adoption and use, women and girls will have fewer employment opportunities and will face additional barriers to workforce participation. Digital adoption and use can also offer women, and girls in particular, opportunities to overcome hurdles they may face in the physical world. Digital access can empower women and girls, help expand their sense of self in the world, increase civic engagement, and raise awareness of their rights.

Reasons for the digital gender gap include inequitable access to education and harmful social norms that exist in the "offline" world and impact digital realities and potential benefits for women and girls. Factors that need to be addressed to close the gender digital divide can be broadly categorized into three interlinked areas: access, digital literacy, and online safety.

A key barrier to women and girls' digital inclusion is lesser access, compared to men and boys. This includes access to devices, to data, and to networks. Low levels of infrastructure, network quality, and coverage disproportionately affect access for women and girls. Their choice of network is often restricted by various factors, such as more basic handsets, fewer choices of SIM, and the cost of data. The Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI) reports that costs tend to be higher in areas with lower connectivity due to lack of market competition and found that women and girls tend to be more price-sensitive than men. Women often have lower levels of income (women often earn 30–50% less than men) and are often less financially independent. GSMA found that women and girls with less disposable income to spend on mobile or internet services go online less frequently. Women and girls who live in remote areas were particularly affected, due to significant gaps in infrastructure and network coverage in rural areas.

In many countries, gender inequality means that women and girls have lower levels of education and less practice in using or creating digital content. As a result, digital adoption and use among women and girls is frequently limited by lower levels of digital literacy, and a lack of confidence. For example, the Web Foundation found that in Africa and Asia, women who have attained secondary education are six times more likely to be online than women with only primary education or less. Inequality in education represents a major contributor to the gender digital divide.

The gender gap in digital literacy means that female users are more likely to report difficulties in using digital technology, compared to males. One study found that women are 1.6 times more likely than men to report lack of skills as a barrier to internet use. Several studies report that more female users report difficulty reading content and require help from others to use more complex features.

Limitations in digital literacy make women and girls more vulnerable to online risks than men and boys. When they experience harmful or negative digital experiences, women and girls often report a sense of helplessness. They may have little information or knowledge about staying safe online or the resources and services available to them. A study in Brazil found that girls do not know how to proceed or where to turn for help when faced with online harassment or non-consensual sharing of nude photos. This is also true of parents: many parents or gatekeepers have low levels of digital literacy themselves, and so their responses to their daughters' use of social media or the internet is informed predominantly by fear of the risks, rather than by educating their children (and themselves) on how to stay safe online and what prevention and counselling services might be available to them.

Uganda Communications Commission has over the years set up a number of public access centers equipped with ICT equipment at various locations, including libraries and post offices, and envisages these locations to provide post training support to the training beneficiaries so as to address continuous and further learning.

UCC through UCUSAF therefore seeks to carry out a digital literacy program in selected areas, to sensitize and build digital literacy capacity for women, especially in the informal sector, so as to mitigate some of the challenges discussed above.

3.0 Objectives of the Grant

The general objective of the grant is to impart digital transversal skills on to women that will enable them to harness the innovations that have been developed by government and the private sector so as to increase efficiency and productivity in their livelihoods.

The specific objectives are:

1. Increased uptake of ICTs among women in the urban areas and a trickledown effect on the neighboring rural areas of the selected districts.
2. Increased sensitization and awareness on the necessity of smartphone devices, thus an anticipated increase in purchase and penetration.
3. Reduction in the overall digital illiteracy in the district.

3.0 Project Key Output Actions

1. Review available content and ensure customization for the targeted women to be trained in basic digital literacy.
2. Conduct digital literacy training for up to 2,000 selected women, at least 130 from each of the 15 districts. The trainings will be delivered by 2 providers in 2 separate region-based Lots 1 & 2, as indicated in Appendix 1.
3. Put in place a mechanism for the training beneficiaries to obtain access to the most convenient ICT public access centers for post training further and continuous learning. UCC public access centers attached in Appendix 2.

4.0 Target Group

This initiative targets women and girls with no or very basic digital literacy skills in the informal sector, especially groups such as church groups, Saccos, associations, etc.

5.0 Eligibility of Applicants

6.1 General Criteria

1. The lead applicant is a legally established entity in Uganda. In order to address the diverse needs of the program, it is likely that the training will be delivered through consortia of providers.
2. The applicant organization (in case of consortia both lead and co-applicant organization) will assume overall responsibility and sign a

memorandum of understanding with UCC to enforce joint accountability of action.

3. The applicant organization must be in satisfactory financial health and have adequate financial structures and systems to report to UCUSAF as shall be required.
4. Lead applicant has at least 3 years' experience in digital literacy training in similar initiatives.
5. The applicant has documented experience in mobilizing, coordinating, and delivering similar social development initiatives at national scale, especially working in upcountry areas.
6. Lead applicant has a clear strategic plan incorporating such projects.
7. The applicant has demonstrable capacity to network and mobilize complimentary resources to sustain the initiative.
8. The applicant and co-applicant must have an established working relationship.
9. Co-applicants must demonstrate complimentary competencies to the applicant.

N.B: A due diligence may be conducted on the applicant organization(s) at any point of the process to ascertain demonstrated capability to execute the assignment.

6.2 Preference

The Fund will give preference to applicants whose Business Plan proposals highlight the following:

1. Well presented, clear, logical, well-conceived and reflecting a good understanding of the relevant issues in the subject matter.
2. Make linkages to UCUSAF & UCC strategic objectives, national and international development agenda.
3. Show evidence of being innovative, possessing the capacity for effective implementation to achieve program objectives, and present a practical approach to attaining the stated goals.
4. Demonstrate ability to establish baselines, indicators, and methodologies for measuring progress.
5. Recognize potential project risks and present corresponding strong mitigation strategies.
6. Clear financial and/or material contribution towards the implementation of the project.
7. Proposals that demonstrate higher value for money.

6.0 Assessment Criterion

The grant applications will be assessed based on a 3-stage process (Administrative, Technical and Financial) but also incorporating the four equally-weighted, all-encompassing criteria:

1. Administrative- will focus on assessment of the eligibility.
2. Technical – will focus on clarity of the motivation, smartness of goals, appropriateness of methodology and project management, feasibility of workplans, impact of the project, ability to meet project priorities, addressing of crosscutting issues and project sustainability, capacity to deliver.
3. Financial – will focus on value for money, sustainability and ability to mobilize more resources to scale the initiative.

7.0 Risk Assessment

The Assessment Team will carry out a risk assessment of the indicated and non-indicated risks. The assessment based on the risks assessed will consider the totality of an applicant's submission in evaluating whether a potential engagement would involve low, medium, high, or extreme risk to UCC/UCUSAF.

8.0 Required Applicant's Legal Documents

1. Applicant's certificate of incorporation or registration providing a legal name – the name that identifies the applicant for legal, administrative, and other official purposes.
2. Applicant's memorandum and articles of association.
3. Applicant's address (physical, postal, email, and web site where applicable).
4. Applicant's contact details –name, position, phone, and email contact for an authorized representative.
5. Applicant's affiliated entities.
6. Applicant's audited financial account statements for the last 2 years.
7. Applicant's signed Code of Ethical Conduct in Business for Grant Applicants and Providers (Appendix 3).

9.0 Business Plan Requirements

1. Project understanding

2. Project linkage to UCC/UCUSAF strategy, national & international development agenda
3. Experience managing similar projects (Organization & Staff)
4. Project implementation methodology
5. Project management framework
6. Project sustainability approach
7. Risk management framework
8. Integration of cross-cutting issues
9. Monitoring and evaluation approach
10. Project implementation budget

10.0 Application Timeline

The grant application is open effective 18 September – 02nd October 2023.

An online pre – grant application meeting on Teams will be held on 26th September 2023 at 2.00pm. Meeting log-in link is here below:

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/767cbcdf-3ead-4707-a7f1-2952088fa6e0@f7ffcd5e-44c0-4686-8452-78ea57432de7>

For any clarification or guidance on the grant application process, please contact telephone +256414339099 or email, registry@ucc.co.ug / gkatongole@ucc.co.ug.

Final applications should be submitted in triplicate hard copies (3 copies) by 4.30 pm on 02nd October 2023 to:

The Executive Director
Uganda Communications Commission
Plot 42-44, Spring Road, Bugolobi
P.O. Box 7376, Kampala
Uganda

And, by email to the email addresses: registry@ucc.co.ug & gkatongole@ucc.co.ug

Please note that any form of solicitation for favors in the application process will lead to automatic applicant disqualification.

Appendix 1: Selected 15 Districts for Digital Literacy Training

	District	Region	No. of Farmers to skill	Lot
1	Buvuma	East	130	1
2	Nakapiripirit	East	130	1
3	Kayunga	East	130	1
4	Mayuge	East	130	1
5	Kyenjojo	Mid West	130	1
6	Kiryandongo	Mid West	130	1
7	Dokolo	North	130	2
8	Kitgum	North	130	2
9	Otuke	North	130	2
10	Zombo	West Nile	130	2
11	Koboko	West Nile	130	2
12	Maracha	West Nile	130	2
13	Kween	East	130	1
14	Buyende	East	130	1
15	Zombo	West Nile	130	2

Appendix 2: UCC/UCUSAF Supported Public Access Centers

No	Location	Institution
1	Nakaseke	National Library of Uganda
2	Pallisa	National Library of Uganda
3	Hoima	National Library of Uganda
4	Paidha	National Library of Uganda
5	Soroti	National Library of Uganda
6	Jinja	National Library of Uganda
7	Bugiri	National Library of Uganda
8	Moyo	National Library of Uganda
9	Mbarara	National Library of Uganda
10	Kampala	National Library of Uganda
11	Kitgum	National Library of Uganda
12	Moroto	National Library of Uganda
13	Kabale	National Library of Uganda
14	Masaka	National Library of Uganda
15	Kisoro	National Library of Uganda
16	Mbale	National Library of Uganda
17	Lira	National Library of Uganda
18	Masindi	National Library of Uganda
19	Kamuli	National Library of Uganda
20	Busia	National Library of Uganda
21	Entebbe	National Library of Uganda
22	Kabarole	National Library of Uganda
23	Mitooma	National Library of Uganda
24	Bundibugyo	National Library of Uganda
25	Arua	National Library of Uganda
26	Nebbi	National Library of Uganda
27	Tororo	National Library of Uganda
28	Kasese	Posta U Ltd
29	Mubende	Posta U Ltd
30	Kitgum	Posta U Ltd
31	Moroto	Posta U Ltd
32	Luwero	Posta U Ltd
33	Entebbe	Posta U Ltd
34	Hoima	Posta U Ltd
35	Masaka	Posta U Ltd
36	Arua	Posta U Ltd
37	Busia	Posta U Ltd
38	Gulu	Posta U Ltd
39	Lira	Posta U Ltd
40	Kasese	Foundation for community development and empowerment

No	Location	Institution
41	Wakiso	Kakiri Community Environment Protection Initiative (KACEP) (Community Access center)
42	Kasanda	Myanzi Farmers Association
43	Ntoroko	Kibuuku primary school
44	Kamwenge	Rwengobe Primary School
45	Gulu	Gulu Public School
46	Kibuku	Nandere S.S
47	Tororo	Victors Youth Empowerment Community
48	Kayunga	Bukeeka c/U Primary School
49	Soroti	Soroti ICT Resource Centre
50	Hoima	Hoima ICT Resource Centre
51	Wakiso	Canan Achievers Vocational
52	Wakiso	Harmony Urban Oasis
53	Wakiso	Kira Youth Association
54	Wakiso	Masulita Vocational Centre
55	Wakiso	Marham Junior School
56	Rwampara	Rwampara Farm Institute
57	Mityana	Nkokonjeru Area Co-operative Enterprise Limited
58	Kampala	Bridge a Gap Community Initiative
59	Kampala	Bloggers Association of Uganda
60	Kampala	Agali Awamu Vocational Training Institute
61	Rubirizi	Rubirizi Public Library
62	Nebbi	Nebbi Public Library
63	Buikwe	Uganda Military Engineering College (UMEC)
64	Lyantonde	Uganda National Medical Alliance for Prisoners
65	Kiruhura	Rushere Community Hospital
66	Ntungamo	South-Western Institute of Policy and Advocacy
67	Rukungiri	Joint Clinical Research Center (JCRC)
68	Wakiso	St. Apollo Kivebulaya C.O.U
69	Mubende	Kasambya Community Computer Center
70	Wakiso	Kawanda Health Center III
71	Kampala	Inspiration Women Ltd
72	Kampala	YEEI Uganda Foundation

Appendix 3

CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT IN BUSINESS FOR GRANT APPLICANTS

1. Ethical Principles

Applicants shall at all times-

- (a) maintain integrity and independence in their professional judgement and conduct;
- (b) comply with both the letter and the spirit of-
 - i. the laws of Uganda; and
 - ii. any contract awarded.
- (c) avoid associations with businesses and organisations which are in conflict with this code.

2. Standards

Applicants shall-

- (a) strive to provide works, services and supplies of high quality and accept full responsibility for all works, services or supplies provided;
- (b) comply with the professional standards of their industry or of any professional body of which they are members.

3. Conflict of Interest

Applicants shall not accept contracts which would constitute a conflict of interest with, any prior or current contract with Uganda Communications Commission. Applicants shall disclose to all concerned parties those conflicts of interest that cannot reasonably be avoided or escaped.

4. Confidentiality and Accuracy of Information

- (1) Information given by Applicants in the course of THE grant processes or the performance of contracts shall be true, fair and not designed to mislead.
- (2) Providers shall respect the confidentiality of information received in the course of performance of a contract and shall not use such information for personal gain.

5. Gifts and Hospitality

Applicants shall not offer gifts or hospitality directly or indirectly, to staff of Uganda Communications Commission that might be viewed by others as having an influence on a grant decision.

6. Inducements

- (1) Applicants shall not offer or give anything of value to influence the action of a public official in the grant process or in contract execution.
- (2) Applicants shall not ask a public official to do anything which is inconsistent with the Code of Ethical Conduct in Business.

7. Fraudulent Practices

Applicants shall not-

- (a) collude with other businesses and organisations with the intention of depriving Uganda Communications Commission of the benefits of free and open competition;

- (b) enter into business arrangements that might prevent the effective operation of fair competition;
- (c) engage in deceptive financial practices, such as bribery, double billing or other improper financial practices;
- (d) misrepresent facts in order to influence a grant process or the execution of a contract to the detriment of the Uganda Communications Commission; or utter false documents;
- (e) unlawfully obtain information relating to a grant process in order to influence the process or execution of a contract to the detriment of the Uganda Communications Commission;
- (f) Withholding information from the Uganda Communications Commission during contract execution to the detriment of the Uganda Communications Commission.

I ----- agree to comply with the above code of ethical conduct in business.

AUTHORISED SIGNATORY

NAME OF APPLICANT