



CALL FOR 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 Uganda Communications Universal Service and Access Fund (UCUSAF), has launched a call for business plan proposals to establish a collaboration with suitable partners for the implementation of basic digital literacy training to address the digital divide among women in underserved and unserved communities. The collaboration is targeting digital literacy for at least 2,500 women from 25 districts with at least 100 women trained from each of the 25 districts as contained in Annex 2.

This intervention was initiated in the Financial Year 2021/22 and has resulted in up to 8,000 selected women from over 50 selected districts being equipped with basic digital literacy skills. The districts are: Buvuma, Buyende, Dokolo, Kitgum, Otuke, Nebbi, Maracha, Zombo, Koboko, Kayunga, Kween, Kiryandongo, Nakapiripirit, Kyenjojo, Mayuge, Kagadi, Alebtong, Kanungu, Kalangala, Napak, and Ntoroko. Others are, Kaabong, 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.

The prioritization for these districts is based on a 2018 USAID report that listed them among the lowest GDP per capita-contributing districts.

The 2024/25 UCUSAF budget aligned to the UCUSAF IV strategy further sets aside resources to be utilized under a collaborative grant framework between UCC/UCUSAF and a suitable partner in this financial year 2024/2025 to implement activities related to addressing the digital divide among women in the mentioned districts.

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.

The International Telecommunication 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 (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 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). 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. Barriers 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.

Access is a major barrier to women and girls' digital inclusion 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. These disparities in usage limit women's access to the full range of opportunities offered by digital.

Without increased digital adoption and use, women and girls will have fewer employment opportunities and will face additional barriers to workforce participation. One such barrier is the underrepresentation of women in high-paying tech jobs and leadership positions. Digital skills training can help bridge this gap by preparing more women for roles in the tech industry and other sectors where digital competencies are in high demand. Empowering women with these skills can lead to more equitable pay and career advancement opportunities. 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.

In many countries, gender inequality means that women and girls have lower levels of literacy and are disengaged in using or creating digital content. This presents a gender gap in digital literacy, which means that female users are more likely to report difficulties in using digital technology, compared to males. As a result, women and girls' confidence in digital adoption and use is limited. For example, the Web Foundation found that in Africa and Asia women who have some 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. Another study also 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 trouble 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 resources and services available to them. A study in Brazil found 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.

Investing in digital skills training for women is not just an educational initiative; it is a strategic imperative for building a more equitable, prosperous, and resilient society. By empowering women with digital literacy, we unlock their potential to contribute meaningfully to the economy, close gender gaps, and drive sustainable development. It is essential that governments, educational institutions, and private sector entities collaborate to provide accessible and inclusive digital skills training programs and access facilities to ensure that women everywhere have the opportunity to thrive in the digital age.

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

UCC/UCUSAF therefore seeks to carry out a digital literacy programme in selected areas, aiming to build capacity in digital literacy for women especially in the informal sector so as to mitigate some of the challenges highlighted above.

3.0 Objectives of the Grant

The general objective of the grant is to facilitate digital skilling that will empower women to utilize digital tools effectively to harness the innovations that have been developed by government and the private sector, enhance their employability, foster entrepreneurship, and contribute to economic growth and societal progress.

The specific objectives are:

1. Increase uptake of ICTs and smart devices among women in the urban areas, anticipating a trickledown effect to the neighboring rural parts of the districts.
2. Equip women with skills to access a wide range of information, including educational resources, healthcare information, and government services.
3. Increase awareness and usage of digital financial services, including mobile money, mobile banking, and existence of microfinance platforms.

4. Reduction in the overall digital illiteracy in the district.

4.0 Project Key Output Actions

1. Conduct digital literacy training for up to 2,500 selected rural community women as contained in the locations in Annex 2 attached.
2. Review the available content and ensure it is customized for the training of eligible farmers in basic digital literacy.
3. UCC will provide financial support in the form of grants to facilitate successful proposals. Grant payments will be milestone based to ensure commitment and adherence to the proposal plans, as agreed with the organisations from the onset.
4. Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis prior to the training.
5. Stakeholder engagement and mobilization.
6. Training delivery/implementation for a minimum of 5 days per location.

5.0 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.

6.0 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 programme, 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 UCC/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 a 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: 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

Preference will be accorded to applicants with a clean record of performance in fulfilling obligations of past assignments and those 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 between UCC/UCUSAF strategic objectives with the national and international development agenda.
3. Show evidence of being innovative, possessing the capacity for effective implementation to achieve programme 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. Demonstrate higher value for money.

7.0 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- focus on assessment of eligibility.
2. Technical –focus on clarity of the motivation, smartness of goals, appropriateness of methodology and project management, feasibility of work plans, impact of the project, ability to meet project priorities, addressing of crosscutting issues and project sustainability capacity to deliver.

3. Financial – Focus on value for money, sustainability, and ability to mobilize more resources to scale the initiative.

8.0 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.

9.0 Required 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 (Template provided by UCC/UCUSAF).

3.0 Business Plan Requirements

1. Project understanding
2. Project linkage to UCC/UCUSAF strategy, national and international development agenda
3. Experience in 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

4.0 Application Timeline

The grant application is open from **26th July to 13th August 2024.**

A pre-grant application meeting will be held online on **6th August 2024 at 9.00 am**. Participants should register in advance for this meeting:

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/24a18c1e-fab7-420a-aab0-ab9883e60726@f7ffcd5e-44c0-4686-8452-78ea57432de7>

For further clarification or guidance on the grant application process, please contact +256 412 339000; or +256 312 339000 or email ucusaf@ucc.co.ug.

Applications should be submitted in triplicate hard copies (3 copies) by **4.00 pm on 13th August 2024** to:

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

A soft copy of the proposal should also be sent to the following email addresses by the deadline: registry@ucc.co.ug; ucusaf@ucc.co.ug

Disclaimer

Personal information supplied in an application will be used by UCC under the Laws of Uganda.

ANNEX 1

CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT IN BUSINESS FOR GRANT APPLICANTS

1. Ethical Principles

Applicants shall always-

- (a) maintain integrity and independence in their professional judgment 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 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

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

4. Confidentiality and Accuracy of Information

- (a) Information given by Applicants during the grant processes, or the performance of contracts shall be true, fair and not designed to mislead.
- (b) Providers shall respect the confidentiality of information received during the 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 the Uganda Communications Commission that might be viewed by others as influencing a grant decision.

6. Inducements

- (a) 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.
- (b) Applicants shall not ask a public official to do anything inconsistent with the Code of Ethical Conduct in Business.

7. Fraudulent Practices

Applicants shall not:

- (a) collude with other businesses and organisations to deprive the Uganda Communications Commission of the benefits of free and open competition.
- (b) enter 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 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 to influence the process or execution of a contract to the detriment of the Uganda Communications Commission.
- (f) Withhold 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

Annex 2: Selected 25 Districts for Digital Literacy Training

	District	No. of Women to skill
1	Rubirizi	100
2	Mitoma	100
3	Kamwenge	100
4	Namutumba	100
5	Kisoro	100
6	Kamuli	100
7	Bududa	100
8	Kiboga	100
9	Kanungu	100
10	Kyankwanzi	100
11	Kyegegwa	100
12	Oyam	100
13	Apac	100
14	Kole	100
15	Kapchorwa	100
16	Buhweju	100
17	Rukungiri	100
18	Bukwo	100
19	Shema	100
20	Arua	100
21	Bukomansimbi	100
22	Busia	100
23	Adjumani	100
24	Kiruhura	100
25	Luuka	100