



CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE UCC/UCUSAF GRANT FOR DIGITAL SKILLING FOR MECHANICS IN THE AUTOMOTIVE INFORMAL SECTOR

STATEMENT OF REQUIREMENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), through the Uganda Communications Universal Service and Access Fund (UCUSAF), invites eligible Organisations to submit proposals for the provision of digital skills training for mechanics in the Automotive Informal Sector in Uganda.

The Automotive Informal Sector, particularly informal automotive mechanics, garage operators, vehicle electricians and workshop-based technicians, plays a critical role in employment creation, vehicle maintenance, safety, productivity and service delivery. However, the sector remains largely informal, cash-based and digitally excluded, limiting productivity, income growth, compliance and access to digital services.

In line with its universal service mandate, UCC/UCUSAF seeks to support a structured, digital skilling programme aimed at equipping informal automotive mechanics with practical digital skills to improve livelihoods, workshop productivity, service quality and integration into Uganda's digital economy.

UCC, through UCUSAF, has earmarked resources under a collaborative grant framework to engage a suitable implementing partner(s) to deliver this pilot initiative in FY 2025/2026. The selected partner will work closely with UCC/UCUSAF to implement the project in line with the UCUSAF Five-Year Strategic Plan (2023/24 – 2027/28) and national digital inclusion priorities, with a focus on expanding equitable access to digital services and strengthening the digital capacity of the automotive mechanics in the underserved and unserved communities.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Automotive mechanics play a critical role in supporting Uganda's transport system, trade, and daily economic activity by ensuring the safety, functionality, and reliability of vehicles and motorcycles. The majority of these mechanics operate within the informal sector, where skills are largely acquired through

apprenticeships and experiential learning. While this model has sustained the sector for decades, it has not kept pace with the increasing digitization of modern vehicles, workshop operations, and service delivery ecosystems. The need for tailored digital literacy training for mechanics can therefore be justified by the following reasons:

I. Nature of Mechanics' Work Requires Sector-Specific Digital Skills

Unlike general ICT users, mechanics interact with technology-embedded machines. Modern vehicles increasingly rely on electronic control units (ECUs), sensors, and software-driven systems. As a result, effective vehicle diagnosis and repair now require the ability to use digital diagnostic tools, interpret fault codes, access online repair manuals, and apply software-supported troubleshooting methods. Tailored digital literacy training ensures that mechanics can translate ICT skills directly into improved diagnostic accuracy, reduced repair time, and safer vehicle operation.

II. General Digital Literacy Programmes do not Address Workshop Realities

Most digital literacy programmes focus on basic computer use, email, or general internet navigation. While important, these skills do not adequately address the real operating environment of informal garages, which is characterised by hands-on, tool-based work, cash-based transactions, informal customer management, and limited time for classroom learning. Tailored training contextualises digital skills to workshop realities by focusing on smartphone-based tools, simple diagnostics applications, digital payments, workshop record-keeping, and customer communication platforms that mechanics can adopt immediately without disrupting daily operations.

III. Tailored Digital Literacy Improves Productivity and Incomes

Mechanics with relevant digital skills are better able to; diagnose faults faster using digital tools, source correct spare parts through online platforms, keep basic digital records that improve pricing accuracy and cost control and use digital payments that reduce cash-handling risks and improve financial discipline. These improvements translate into higher productivity, more consistent income, and improved customer trust.

IV. Digital Literacy is Key to Safety, Compliance and Professionalisation

Poor vehicle maintenance contributes to road safety risks. Tailored digital literacy enables mechanics to; access up-to-date repair standards and manuals, verify parts authenticity, use digital platforms for licensing, insurance verification, and compliance information and improve service quality and

accountability. This contributes not only to individual livelihoods but also to broader public safety and regulatory objectives.

V. Tailored Training Supports Inclusion and Reduces the Digital Divide

While some mechanics own mobile phones, productive use of ICTs among informal mechanics remains limited due to lack of targeted training. Tailored digital literacy addresses this gap by focusing on how ICTs are used in the trade, rather than assuming that access alone leads to adoption. This approach aligns with UCUSAF's mandate to promote equitable access to digital services, particularly among underserved and informal economic actors.

VI. Tailored Training Ensures Sustainability and Long-Term Impact

Training that is directly linked to daily work is more likely to be retained, applied, and shared through peer learning and apprenticeships. Mechanics who receive relevant digital skills become local digital champions, supporting sustained adoption within workshops and communities. Generic digital literacy risks low uptake and limited long-term impact, whereas tailored training embeds ICT use into routine workshop practices.

Tailored digital literacy training for automotive mechanics is essential to ensure that ICT investments translate into real productivity gains, safer vehicles, and improved livelihoods. By aligning digital skills with the specific tasks, tools, and operating conditions of informal garages, such training addresses market failures, promotes inclusion, and supports the professionalization of a critical sector of Uganda's economy.

3.0 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Uganda's automotive repair and maintenance sector is largely informal and employs a significant number of youths, yet most mechanics remain unable to use digital technologies productively in their daily work. While mobile network coverage is widespread, access to suitable smartphones, affordable data, and relevant digital skills among mechanics remains limited, particularly in peri-urban and rural areas.

As vehicles increasingly rely on electronic and software-based systems, informal garages continue to depend on manual diagnostics, cash-based transactions, and informal record-keeping due to high device costs, irregular incomes, limited access to financing, low confidence in digital tools, and the absence of training tailored to workshop environments.

Generic and basic digital literacy trainings do not address the practical realities of informal garages, leaving mechanics disadvantaged in adopting digital

diagnostics, online repair information, structured spare-parts sourcing, or basic digital business practices. Without targeted intervention, informal automotive mechanics risk being excluded from the benefits of digital transformation, undermining productivity, service quality, road safety, and sustainable livelihoods.

4.0 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

4.1 General Objective

To enhance digital literacy and ICT competencies among informal automotive mechanics in Uganda.

4.2 Specific Objectives

- Conduct a baseline digital skills assessment for mechanics in the selected 5 district locations.
- Equip at least 500 mechanics - 100 from each of the 5 Eastern Region districts of Jinja, Mbale, Iganga, Busia and Tororo districts - with practical digital skills.
- Promote digital payments and workshop record-keeping.
- Improve productivity using diagnostics and online tools.
- Establish sustainable peer-learning mechanisms.

5.0 PROJECT SCOPE

A regional deep-dive pilot targeting informal automotive mechanics, garage operators, vehicle electricians and apprentices in the 5 districts of Jinja, Mbale, Busia, Tororo and Iganga. The eastern region is selected for the pilot based on the high concentration of informal automotive mechanics, strong transport and trade corridors (Kenya–Uganda axis), clear digital exclusion gap and mix of urban, peri-urban, and rural contexts. The digital literacy training will focus on:

1. Digital Diagnostics and Repair Support Tools: Mobile phone-based vehicle and motorcycle diagnostics applications, original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) digital service manuals and online repair guides, fault-code readers and mobile diagnostic interfaces, online technical forums and professional mechanics' knowledge platforms.
2. Workshop Business Management Tools: Simple digital job cards and work order applications, digital record-keeping tools for parts, labour and payments, basic inventory management and stock-tracking applications, workshop scheduling and customer appointment tools.

3. Digital Payments and Financial Management Tools: Mobile money applications for customer payments, digital invoicing and receipt-generation tools, savings, credit and micro-insurance digital platforms, expense tracking and basic financial management applications.
4. Online Spare-Parts Sourcing and Marketplaces: E-commerce platforms for automotive spare parts, supplier comparison and price-checking platforms, online dealer and distributor directories, logistics and delivery coordination applications.
5. Customer Communication and Marketing Tools: Messaging platforms for customer follow-up and service updates, digital business profiles and location-mapping services, online ratings, reviews and reputation management tools, basic social media tools for workshop visibility.
6. Navigation, Safety and Compliance Tools: Digital maps and navigation applications, traffic and road safety information platforms, access to e-government portals for licensing, standards and compliance, digital insurance and verification platforms.
7. Cybersecurity and Digital Safety Tools: Device security and antivirus applications, secure authentication and password management tools and fraud awareness and digital safety resources.

6.0 PROJECT KEY ACTIONS

- Conduct training needs assessment and baseline digital skills profiling for targeted automotive mechanics.
- Develop standardized training curricula and learning materials aligned to automotive mechanics and operational requirements.
- Conduct training using a participatory and practical approach, incorporating interactive presentations, hands-on practical sessions, group discussions, demonstrations, and pre- and post-training assessments.
- Provide on-site coaching, mentorship and practical application support to reinforce skills transfer and adoption.
- Conduct post-training assessments and prepare implementation and performance reports.
- Deliver training materials in both print and digital formats; administer pre- and post-training evaluations (including skills assessments and feedback instruments); and submit a comprehensive final report comprising attendance registers, key recommendations and a list of trained ICT champions (two per district) to provide ongoing support.

7.0 ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS

The grant may be awarded to a single applicant entity or a consortium of partners under a partnership.

7.1. General Criteria

1. The applicant organisation must be a not-for-profit entity. Where the proposed solution is to be delivered through a consortium, the lead applicant must be a not-for-profit organisation.
2. The Applicant (Both Lead and co-applicant in case of a consortium) is a legally established entity in Uganda. To address the diverse needs of the project, it is likely that a solution will be delivered through consortia of providers. The applicant organization (in case of consortia, both Lead and co-applicant organisation) will assume overall responsibility and sign a Grant Agreement with UCC to enforce joint accountability of action.
3. The Applicant (Both Lead and co-applicant in case of a consortium) must be in satisfactory financial health and have adequate structures and systems to manage the project and report to the UCUSAF as shall be required.
4. The Applicant (Both Lead and co-applicant in case of a consortium) must be willing to implement activities in unserved and underserved communities across Uganda.
5. The Applicant (Both Lead and co-applicant in case of a consortium) must provide documented evidence of at least three (3) years' experience in ICT skilling mechanics, support and training for mechanics.
6. The Applicant (Lead or co-applicant in case of a consortium) must demonstrate documented experience in mobilising, coordinating and delivering similar initiatives at a national scale, especially working in rural areas.
7. The Applicant (Both Lead and co-applicant in case of a consortium) must show a clear plan and capacity to mobilize additional resources or partnerships to support project sustainability beyond initial funding.
8. The Lead Applicant and co-applicant must have an existing working relationship spanning at least two years, supported by an agreement.
9. Co-applicants must demonstrate complementary competencies to the applicant.

7.2. Preference

In evaluating proposals, the Commission will accord priority to applicants whose submissions clearly demonstrate ICT training and automotive capacity-building with demonstrated experience in delivering large-scale, decentralized training programmes within in Uganda. The organisation should possess the following characteristics:

1. Proven Experience in Automotive Mechanics Digital Capacity Building.
 - a) Demonstrated experience delivering ICT training or digital transformation programmes for automotive mechanics.
 - b) Familiarity with On Board Diagnostics (OBD)-based diagnostics, automotive information systems, telemedicine platforms and data protection requirements in automotive repair settings.
2. Strong ICT Training and Curriculum Development Capability.
 - a) Proven capacity to design and deliver competency-based training programmes, including development of standardised curricula, training manuals and practical learning materials for garage facilities.
 - b) Demonstrated use of adult-learning methodologies, hands-on training approaches and structured assessment frameworks.
3. Institutional Governance and Grant Management Capacity.
 - a) Strong governance structures, financial management systems and grant compliance experience.
 - b) Demonstrated ability to manage public-sector funding responsibly and produce timely technical and financial reports.
4. Digital Automotive Mechanics and Cybersecurity Awareness.
 - a) Knowledge of data privacy, cybersecurity and regulatory compliance relevant to automotive information systems.
 - b) Ability to embed safe digital practices into training delivery.
 - c) Sustainability and knowledge transfer capability.
 - d) Ability to design sustainability mechanisms such as training-of-trainers, mentorship models, refresher training plans and institutional handover strategies.
 - e) Capacity to support post-training adoption and continuous improvement.

8.0 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Grant applications will be evaluated through a structured three-stage assessment process comprising: Administrative, Technical and Financial evaluations.

8.1 Administrative Evaluation

This stage focuses on verifying the eligibility of the applicant. Key areas assessed include:

- i. Legal registration and status of the organisation in Uganda.
- ii. Submission of all required administrative and legal documentation.
- iii. Compliance with minimum eligibility requirements as outlined in the call.

8.2 Technical Evaluation

The technical assessment will evaluate the overall quality, relevance and feasibility of the proposed project. This includes:

- i. Clarity and rationale of the project motivation.
- ii. Alignment of project objectives with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) principles.
- iii. Applicant's relevant experience and track record in similar ICT and multimedia training programs.
- iv. Appropriateness and innovation of the proposed methodology and project management approach.
- v. Feasibility and practicality of the work plan and timelines.
- vi. Anticipated project outcomes, impact and alignment with UCC/UCUSAF priorities.
- vii. Integration of cross-cutting issues such as gender inclusion, disability mainstreaming, and environmental considerations.
- viii. Demonstrated strategy for sustainability beyond the project period.

8.3 Financial Evaluation

This stage will assess the proposal's financial soundness and cost-effectiveness, including:

- i. Clear and realistic budgeting with a strong value-for-money proposition.
- ii. Sustainability of project funding post-grant.
- iii. Ability to leverage additional resources (financial or in-kind) to scale and sustain the initiative.

9.0 LEGAL DOCUMENTS REQUIRED

All applicants are required to submit the following legal and administrative documents to support their eligibility and capacity. In the case of partnerships or consortia, these requirements apply to both the lead applicant and co-applicants.

- 1) Certificate of Incorporation or Registration: A valid certificate showing the legal name and registration status of the organisation in Uganda.
- 2) Beneficial owner form, in case of a company.
- 3) Memorandum and Articles of Association: Foundational documents outlining the organisation's governance, objectives and operational mandate.
- 4) Official Address Details: Current physical address, postal address, email and website (where applicable).
- 5) Authorised Contact Person Information with Powers of Attorney: Full name, title/position, phone number, and email of the designated representative authorised to act on behalf of the organisation.
- 6) Letters of Support (if applicable): Endorsement letters from affiliated entities, proposed implementing partners, or supporting institutions if any (co-applicants).
- 7) Audited Financial Statements: Certified financial statements for the last two (2) financial years, demonstrating sound financial health and reporting systems.
- 8) Signed Code of Ethical Conduct: A duly signed copy of the "Code of Ethical Conduct for Grant Applicants and Providers" (refer to Annex 1 of the Call for Proposals).
- 9) Proof of Relevant Experience: Provide evidence of the organisation's experience skilling mechanics, such as project completion reports, client testimonials and/or records of previous awards.

10. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Project motivation, objectives and outcomes
- 2) Project linkage to UCC/UCUSAF strategy and the National Development Agenda
- 3) Experience managing similar projects
- 4) Project implementation methodology
- 5) Project management framework
- 6) Project work plans and associated milestones, with clear description of responsibilities for each partner
- 7) Project implementation budget with clear allocation of resources to implementing partners
- 8) Sustainability approach
- 9) Monitoring and evaluation approach
- 10) Risk management framework
- 11) Integration of cross-cutting issues of gender, youth, and digital divide, among others.

N.B: The Commission reserves the right to conduct due diligence at any stage of the evaluation process to verify the authenticity and accuracy of the information and documentation submitted by applicants.

11. RISK ASSESSMENT

The Commission's assessment team will conduct a comprehensive risk evaluation, including both stated and unstated risks. This assessment will holistically review the applicant's submission to determine the overall level of risk classified as low, medium, high, or extreme that the proposed engagement may pose to UCC/UCUSAF operations, resources, and objectives.

12. APPLICATION TIMELINE

The grant application is open effective **29th January 2026 to 10th February 2026.**

A pre-grant application meeting will be held online on 3rd February 2026 at 11:30am. Participants should register in advance for this meeting:

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/37e19ef0-535a-4c95-a40b-f55c8cdda844@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 soft copy at the email addresses: registry@ucc.co.ug; ucusaf@ucc.co.ug and in triplicate hard copies (3 copies) by 4.00 pm on 6th February 2026 to:

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

DISCLAIMER

1. Personal information supplied in an application will be used by UCC in accordance with the Laws of Uganda.
2. The Commission reserves the right to carry out any form of due diligence at any time of the application process once an application is received.

ANNEX 1

CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT IN BUSINESS FOR GRANT APPLICANTS

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-
 - 1) the laws of Uganda; and
 - 2) any contract awarded.
- (c) avoid associations with businesses and organisations that conflict with this code.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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