UGANDA COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE UCC/UCUSAF DIGITAL SKILLING FOR MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMES) IN KYOTERA (MUTUKULA), MOYO, MASINDI AND NTUNGAMO DISTRICTS FY 2026/2027

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 Business Plan Proposals for the implementation of a Digital Skilling Programme for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Kyotera (Mutukula), Moyo, Masindi and Ntungamo Districts during the Financial Year 2026/2027.

The programme aims to strengthen the digital capacity of approximately 2,000 MSMEs by equipping them with practical, market-oriented digital skills that enhance business productivity, competitiveness, financial inclusion and participation in the digital economy. The intervention will enable participating enterprises to effectively adopt and utilise digital technologies in business operations, customer engagement, digital marketing, e-commerce, financial management and other technology-enabled business processes.

Through this Call for Proposals, UCC/UCUSAF seeks to partner with qualified organisation(s) with the technical expertise and institutional capacity to design and deliver practical, results-oriented and sustainable digital skilling interventions that contribute to enterprise growth, digital inclusion and local economic development.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The Government of Uganda has prioritised digital transformation as a key driver of socio-economic development, recognising that the adoption and effective utilisation of digital technologies are essential for improving productivity, innovation, competitiveness and inclusive economic growth.

Through continued investments in ICT infrastructure, broadband connectivity, digital public services and digital financial systems, Government has established an enabling environment for businesses to participate in the digital economy.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are central to Uganda's economy, contributing significantly to employment creation, income generation, entrepreneurship and local economic development. As markets become increasingly digital, MSMEs require the knowledge and skills to adopt digital technologies that improve operational efficiency, strengthen customer engagement, expand market access and enhance business resilience.

Despite the progress made in expanding digital infrastructure and services, many MSMEs continue to face limited digital capabilities, preventing them from fully leveraging opportunities presented by e-commerce, digital financial services, online marketing and technology-enabled business processes. This challenge is particularly evident in Kyotera (Mutukula), Moyo, Masindi and Ntungamo Districts, which serve as important commercial and cross-border trade corridors where increased digital adoption can enhance enterprise competitiveness, facilitate access to regional markets and stimulate local economic development.

To address this gap, UCC, through UCUSAF, seeks to partner with qualified organisation(s) to implement a practical, market-driven Digital Skilling Programme that will equip approximately 2,000 MSMEs in the four target districts with the knowledge and skills required to adopt digital technologies, improve productivity, access new markets, strengthen business resilience and participate more effectively in Uganda's growing digital economy.

3.0 PROBLEM STATEMENT

While access to ICT infrastructure has improved, a significant proportion of MSMEs in Uganda especially in underserved districts lack the digital skills and capacity to effectively adopt and use digital technologies. This results in:

1) Limited use of digital platforms for marketing and customer engagement,
2) Low adoption of digital financial services for business transactions,
3) Inefficient business operations due to lack of digital tools,

4) Restricted access to wider markets, including cross-border trade opportunities.

In the selected districts of Kyotera (Mutukula), Moyo, Masindi, and Ntungamo, these challenges are more pronounced due to varying levels of digital literacy, limited exposure to e-commerce and inadequate support systems for digital transformation.

Without targeted intervention, MSMEs in these areas risk falling further behind in an increasingly digital economy, thereby limiting their contribution to local economic development and national growth. This underscores the need for a structured digital skilling program to bridge the skills gap and enable MSMEs to harness the full potential of ICTs.

4.0 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

4.1 General Objective

The general objective of the scheme is to enhance the digital capacity, productivity and competitiveness of MSMEs in the selected districts through targeted digital skilling interventions.

4.2 Specific Objectives

1) Strengthen the digital literacy and practical digital competencies of MSMEs to enable the effective adoption and use of digital technologies in business operations.
2) Promote the adoption and effective utilisation of digital business tools and technologies to improve operational efficiency, productivity and business performance.
3) Increase MSME participation in e-commerce, digital marketing and online marketplaces to expand market access and business opportunities.
4) Promote the adoption of digital financial services to enhance financial inclusion, improve business transactions and strengthen financial management.
5) Enhance the competitiveness, resilience and sustainability of MSMEs through the integration of digital technologies into business processes.
6) Improve access to local, regional and cross-border markets by equipping MSMEs with the skills to leverage digital platforms and technology-enabled trade opportunities.

7) Promote digital entrepreneurship, innovation and business growth by enabling MSMEs to harness digital technologies to create value, increase sales and access new economic opportunities.

5.0 PROJECT SCOPE

The project will focus on enhancing the digital capabilities, productivity, competitiveness, and sustainability of approximately 2,000 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the districts of Kyotera (Mutukula), Moyo, Masindi and Ntungamo with a target of 500 MSMEs in each district through digital skills development, digital technology adoption, and ecosystem strengthening interventions.

The implementation period for the project shall be FY 2025/2026.

Details about the identified districts are listed in Annex 2 below.

6.0 PROJECT KEY ACTIONS

The project will be implemented through the following key actions aligned to the expected outputs:

1) UCC/UCUSAF will Provide milestone-based grant support to facilitate successful project implementation, with disbursements linked to agreed deliverables and performance milestones.
2) Conduct a needs assessment and gap analysis in the target districts to identify MSME digital skills needs, business challenges, and opportunities for digital adoption.
3) Engage and mobilize stakeholders, including local government authorities, business associations, MSME groups, telecom operators, fintech partners, and other relevant ecosystem actors.
4) Review, customize and deploy an MSME-focused digital skilling curriculum covering but not limited to: Basic digital literacy, Digital marketing, Social media marketing, E-commerce and online marketplaces, Digital financial services, Business productivity tools, Customer relationship management (CRM) and Cybersecurity and online safety.
5) Deliver hands-on digital skills training to approximately 2,000 MSMEs across Kyotera (Mutukula), Moyo, Masindi, and Ntungamo, ensuring practical application of acquired skills.
6) Support digital platform onboarding by assisting MSMEs to:
    a) Create and manage digital business profiles.

b) Utilize social media platforms for marketing and customer engagement.
c) Access and transact through e-commerce marketplaces.
d) Adopt digital financial services and payment solutions.
e) Use digital business management and productivity tools.

7) Conduct awareness and sensitization sessions on the Electronic Fiscal Receipting and Invoicing System (EFRIS) to promote business formalization, tax compliance, and digital record keeping.
8) Provide structured mentorship and technical support to facilitate the adoption, utilization, and sustained application of digital tools and solutions by trained MSMEs.
9) Establish sustainability mechanisms through:
   a) Identification and training of Digital Champions.
   b) Formation of MSME peer-learning and support networks.
   c) Linkages with innovation hubs, business development service providers, and incubation centres.
   d) Partnerships with telecommunications and fintech service providers.
10) Undertake continuous monitoring, evaluation, learning, and reporting to assess project performance, track outcomes, document lessons learned and ensure accountability and sustainability of project interventions.

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(s) 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 the Lead Applicant and any co-applicant, in the case of a consortium) shall be legally registered and established entities in Uganda.

3) Where an application is submitted by a consortium, both the Lead Applicant and the co-applicant(s) shall sign the Grant Agreement with UCC and shall assume joint responsibility and accountability for the implementation of the project, including compliance with all grant conditions, deliverables and reporting obligations.

4) 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.

5) 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.

6) The Applicant (both the Lead Applicant and any co-applicant, in the case of a consortium) shall provide documented evidence of at least two (2) years' experience in designing and implementing digital skilling, ICT capacity-building and enterprise development programmes for MSMEs.

7) Applicants shall demonstrate experience in delivering practical, market-oriented training that promotes the adoption and effective utilisation of digital technologies, including digital business tools, e-commerce, digital marketing, digital financial services and other ICT-enabled solutions that improve business productivity, competitiveness and market access.

8) The Applicant (both 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.

9) 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.

10) The Lead Applicant and co-applicant must have an existing working relationship spanning at least two years, supported by an agreement.

11) Co-applicants must demonstrate complementary competencies to the applicant.

12) District Focus: Each applicant shall be eligible to submit only one proposal covering a maximum of two (2) districts within the prescribed district groupings. Refer to the Annex 2 for the district grouping.

7.2 Preference

In evaluating proposals, the Commission will accord priority to applicants whose submissions clearly demonstrate ICT training with Business Plan proposals that highlight the following:

In evaluating proposals, the Commission will give preference to applicants whose Business Plan Proposals demonstrate the following:

1) A clear understanding of the programme objectives, the digital skilling needs of MSMEs, and the socio-economic context of the target districts, supported by a well-structured, logical and technically sound implementation approach.

2) Alignment with the strategic objectives of UCC/UCUSAF, the Uganda Vision 2040, the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV), the Uganda Digital Transformation Roadmap, the Parish Development Model (PDM) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

3) Demonstrated experience and institutional capacity to design and implement practical, market-driven digital skilling programmes for MSMEs, including training in digital business tools, e-commerce, digital marketing, digital financial services and business digitalisation.

4) An innovative, practical and results-oriented implementation methodology that promotes the adoption and meaningful use of digital technologies by MSMEs and demonstrates clear pathways to improved business productivity, competitiveness and market access.

5) A robust Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework, including clearly defined baselines, performance indicators, targets, data collection methodologies and mechanisms for measuring programme outcomes and impact.

6) A comprehensive risk management approach that identifies potential implementation risks and provides practical mitigation measures to ensure successful programme delivery.

7) Evidence of financial and/or in-kind contributions, strategic partnerships or other complementary resources that enhance programme sustainability, ownership and long-term impact.

8) Strong value for money, demonstrated through realistic budgeting, cost-effectiveness, efficient use of resources and a clear linkage between proposed activities, outputs, outcomes and expected impact.

9) Approaches that promote inclusion and equitable participation, including strategies to ensure meaningful participation of women-owned MSMEs, youth, persons with disabilities and enterprises operating in underserved communities.

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 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 the Commission/UCUSAF.

10.0 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.

11.0 PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Applicants shall submit a comprehensive Business Plan Proposal that includes, at a minimum, the following:

1) Project rationale, objectives and expected outcomes, clearly demonstrating how the proposed intervention will strengthen the digital capabilities, competitiveness and growth of MSMEs in the target districts.

2) Alignment with the strategic objectives of UCC/UCUSAF and relevant national development frameworks, including the Uganda Vision 2040, the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV), the Uganda Digital Transformation Roadmap, the Parish Development Model (PDM) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

3) Demonstrated organisational experience and capacity in implementing digital skilling, enterprise development, MSME support programmes or other related capacity-building initiatives, including evidence of successful delivery of similar projects.

4) A detailed implementation methodology describing the proposed training approach, curriculum, participant selection criteria, delivery modalities, practical learning activities, mentorship and post-training support to facilitate the adoption of digital technologies by MSMEs.

5) A project management and governance framework outlining the implementation structure, key personnel, roles and responsibilities, quality assurance mechanisms and coordination arrangements with UCC/UCUSAF and other stakeholders.

6) A detailed work plan with clearly defined activities, deliverables, milestones, timelines and responsibilities for each implementing partner, where applicable.

7) A detailed implementation budget with a clear justification of costs and allocation of resources across project activities and implementing partners, including any proposed financial or in-kind contributions.

8) A sustainability strategy describing how the project outcomes, digital skills and adoption of digital technologies by MSMEs will be sustained beyond the project implementation period.

9) A Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework that includes baseline assessments, performance indicators, targets, data collection methods, reporting arrangements and mechanisms for measuring outputs, outcomes and programme impact.

10) A risk management framework identifying key implementation risks, assessing their potential impact and proposing practical mitigation measures.

11) An approach for integrating cross-cutting issues**,** including gender equality, youth empowerment, disability inclusion, environmental sustainability and digital inclusion, to ensure equitable access to and participation in the programme.

Note:
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.

12.0 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.

13.0 APPLICATION TIMELINE

The grant application is open from **10th August to 21st August 2026.**
A pre-grant application meeting will be held online on **17th August 2026 at 11.00 am.** The meeting link is below.
https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/349587469613529?p=tzW9qAxh7Nu7ovthSQ

Applications must be submitted through the grant application portal at https://eservices.ucc.co.ug/web by 5:00 pm on 21st August 2026.

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

The Executive Director
Uganda Communications Commission
Plot 42 - 44, Spring Road Bugolobi
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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.

UGANDA COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

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-

1. the laws of Uganda; and
2. any contract awarded.

c) avoid associations with businesses and organisations that 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

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

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AUTHORISED SIGNATORY	**NAME OF APPLICANT**

ANNEX 2

DISTRICTS WHERE ENHANCING DIGITAL LITERACY AND SKILLING FOR MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES WILL TAKE PLACE IN FY 2026/2027

PARTNER	DISTRICTS	Number of participants
Grant Implementer 1	Moyo	500
	Masindi	500
Grant Implementer 2	Kyotera (Mutukula)	500
	Ntungamo	500