



National ICT
Innovation Hub

THE NIIH POST

THROWING BACK TO THE YEAR 2025

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 National ICT Innovation Hub



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1.

INCLUSIVE SKILLS FOR A DIGITAL SOCIETY

Building participation
through access,
accessibility,
and local talent



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As Uganda advances its digital transformation agenda, ensuring inclusive access to digital skills remains foundational to long-term economic and social participation. In 2025, targeted interventions demonstrated that inclusion-focused digital literacy is not simply about access to tools, but about enabling individuals to engage meaningfully with education systems, labour markets, and public services.

One area of sustained progress was digital skilling for persons with visual impairments. Through the Introduction to Computer Basics for the Visually Impaired (ICBVI) programme, delivered in partnership with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), more than 150 visually impaired Ugandans acquired practical computer skills using assistive technologies such as screen readers and non-visual navigation tools. The curriculum extended beyond basic use, covering document creation, communication tools, and independent digital navigation—capabilities essential for employment and lifelong learning.

Importantly, the programme also addressed structural barriers to inclusion by developing a cohort of certified trainers equipped with inclusive teaching methodologies. This approach lays the groundwork for sustainability and scale, particularly in regions where access to assistive technologies and trained instructors remains limited.

This work was complemented by the continued expansion of the Digital Skills for Refugees Programme, implemented by the Government of Uganda through the Ministry of ICT & National Guidance and the National ICT Innovation Hub, in partnership with ICDL Africa. Over 1,230 refugees and members of host communities received internationally recognised digital skills certification across multiple regions. Training covered areas such as computer essentials, cybersecurity, data analytics, and digital marketing, with delivery adapted to different language and literacy contexts.

Alongside these inclusion-focused efforts, 2025 also saw diversification in skills development through targeted programmes in creative technology.

The 3D Computer Animation Bootcamp, held from 1–4 September 2025, brought together hundreds of aspiring creatives, students, and young professionals from institutions across the country through both in-person and online participation. The programme reflected a broadening of digital skills development beyond conventional ICT pathways, introducing participants to creative technologies with clear industry application. Through hands-on training and collaborative production, young Ugandan creatives developed original animated content rooted in local narratives, while gaining practical experience with tools and workflows used across the global animation, gaming, and immersive media sectors. This approach underscored the growing place of creative digital skills within Uganda's evolving digital economy, linking cultural expression with employability, entrepreneurship, and emerging digital industries.

The four-day programme by Crossroads Digital Multimedia Ltd immersed learners in the full animation pipeline; from storyboarding and character design to modelling, animation, rendering, and post-production using industry-standard tools such as Autodesk Maya and Blender. Participants collaborated on a short animated film and gained exposure to career pathways in gaming, virtual and augmented reality, and digital media.

With participation spanning universities, training institutes, and secondary schools from multiple regions, the bootcamp highlighted growing nationwide interest in digital creative skills and reinforced Uganda's potential as a hub for animation and multimedia innovation.

By supporting refugee entrepreneurs, ICT educators, women, and emerging creative professionals, these initiatives strengthened employability and local economic participation, while aligning inclusion with national digital transformation goals.

2. STRENGTHENING INNOVATION PATHWAYS

Platforms, Accelerators, and Partnerships

In 2025, the National ICT Innovation Hub sharpened its focus on initiatives designed to move innovation beyond ideation toward scale, market relevance, and sustained economic value.

This shift was anchored by the launch of The Innovators' Launchpad Programme, NIIH's first structured accelerator. Over a three-week period, participating innovators received targeted support across compliance, taxation, intellectual property, product development, and go-to-market strategy. Emphasis was placed on building sound operational foundations alongside technical innovation. The programme concluded with pitch sessions where ecosystem partners assessed business readiness and identified opportunities for professional support and investment preparation.

Beyond startups, upstream investment in innovation capacity also gained momentum. University-based initiatives, including intellectual property dissemination and research commercialisation support, strengthened the bridge between academic research and market application. These efforts reinforce the long-term sustainability of Uganda's innovation ecosystem by ensuring that ideas generated within institutions can progress toward viable products and enterprises.

Strategic partnerships then extended these pathways beyond the domestic ecosystem. UJ Connect, a Uganda–Japan collaboration, linked Ugandan innovators with international markets and production ecosystems through a structured approach to business matching, skills exchange, and co-development. Through platforms such as BizLink, Ugandan startups and SMEs were matched with Japanese firms based on sector focus, technical capability, and market readiness, enabling targeted B2B engagements rather than ad-hoc networking.

This was complemented by pilot projects and internship placements that allowed Ugandan technical talent to work directly within international business environments, translating collaboration into practical delivery. Together, these mechanisms supported the development and validation of deployable solutions across healthcare, tourism, enterprise software, and digital services, while strengthening cross-cultural competence and market understanding.

The initiative illustrates how structured international partnerships can move beyond exposure to create credible pathways for skills transfer, product validation, and sustained market integration.

Additional partnerships continue to play a critical enabling role. Memoranda of Understanding with PwC Uganda and dfcu Foundation signed in the later half of 2025 expand access to mentorship, advisory services, financial literacy tools, and innovation challenges. These collaborations are designed to strengthen startups, youth-led ventures, and women-led MSMEs by connecting innovation with finance, governance, and market discipline.





3. POSITIONING UGANDA IN GLOBAL MARKETS

From engagement to investment and collaboration

Uganda's international engagements in 2025 reflected a clear shift in approach: moving from visibility toward deliberate positioning that supports investment, partnership, and sustained collaboration.

At GITEX Africa 2025 in Marrakech, Morocco, Uganda delivered one of its strongest continental showings. Delivered through a collaboration between the Ministry of ICT & National Guidance and the Science, Technology and Innovation Secretariat, the delegation showcased scalable solutions across artificial intelligence, digital public infrastructure, business process outsourcing, and deep technology. Ugandan startups and institutions engaged directly with investors, policymakers, and development partners, generating partnership leads, market exposure, and policy dialogue. The participation of the DeepTech Centre of Excellence further underscored Uganda's intent to build capability in advanced research, electronics manufacturing, and frontier technologies.

This momentum extended beyond Africa through Uganda's participation at the Tamil Nadu Global Startup Summit (TNGSS) 2025 in Coimbatore, India. Supported by the Science, Technology and Innovation Secretariat, the Ugandan delegation was represented at ministerial level by Hon. Monica Musenero Masanza, Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, who addressed global policymakers, investors, and innovators under the summit theme "Empowering Innovation & Entrepreneurship." Drawing on Uganda's National Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy, the delegation articulated a clear vision centred on building a new economy through frontier sectors such as electric mobility, electronics, pathogen research, and space science, while accelerating value addition within traditional industries through innovation and industrialisation. This framing, reinforced by Uganda's "Loop and Leap" approach to bridging foundational gaps while adopting emerging technologies, positioned the country as a credible and forward-looking partner for innovation-led development and global collaboration.



At the Pearl of Africa Business Forum and Expo in Bangkok, Thailand, this positioning translated into targeted investment discussions. Structured B2B engagements highlighted opportunities in AI, BPO, green technology, device assembly, and digital public infrastructure, while follow-up conversations explored co-investment, technology transfer, and joint ventures, including early collaboration on smart security and urban solutions.

Regional engagement continued at TICON Africa 2025, held from 20–22 August in Accra, Ghana, where Uganda joined continental leaders to exchange perspectives on trust, innovation, and technology in evolving African markets. Under the theme “Thriving in Africa’s Evolving Markets: Trust, Trends, and Technology,” the conference convened policymakers, academics, innovators, and industry leaders from across the continent. Uganda was represented by the Team Lead Innovation, Ms Flavia Opio, and the Academic Registrar from the Uganda Institute of Information and Communications Technology (UICT),

Ms Agnes Lumala, who showcased national strengths in digital education and participated in exchanges on best practices shaping digital skills development across Africa. These engagements supported new partnerships while reinforcing regional collaboration and shared learning.

Uganda also strengthened its international policy and workforce engagement through participation in the International Labour Organization’s “Decent Work in the Digital Economy” programme in Turin, Italy. Officials from the Ministry of ICT & National Guidance and the National ICT Innovation Hub gained exposure to global approaches to regulating digital labour platforms, including worker protections, platform governance, and data-driven decision-making. These insights are relevant to Uganda’s expanding gig economy.

Taken together, these engagements reflect a mature international strategy; one focused on capability, credibility, and continuity. By aligning global exposure with practical pathways for collaboration, Uganda continues to strengthen its role in the digital economy.





4.

PREPARING THE WORKFORCE FOR EMERGING LABOUR MODELS

Policy
readiness,
trust, and
skills for
the future
of work





As digital labour platforms, immersive technologies, and automation reshape how work is organised globally, Uganda continued to invest in institutional, regulatory, and policy readiness for emerging labour models.

Trust and resilience emerged as critical enablers of the future of work. Platforms such as DataFest Africa 2025, organized by Pollicy and hosted at the National ICT Innovation Hub, explored how data systems can support inclusive, people-centred innovation grounded in African values. Discussions focused on data governance, digital equity, and community empowerment.

These conversations were reinforced through Cybersecurity Awareness EASTCON 2025, which convened stakeholders from government, the private sector, and academia to strengthen preparedness against digital threats.

This initiative championed by Milima Technologies curated sessions on cyber hygiene, mobile money security, data protection, and emerging AI-driven risks highlighting the importance of secure, trusted digital environments even as labour markets and public services continue to digitise.

In parallel, Uganda advanced workforce and skills readiness through applied technology programmes. The exploration of immersive Virtual Reality (VR) technologies as tools for workforce development and policy engagement enabled local facilitators, through training-of-trainers programmes, to simulate real-world work environments and problem-solving scenarios, supporting experiential learning for youth, communities, and refugee-hosting areas.



5. 2025 IN FOCUS

What shifted – and what it enables next

- **Inclusion moved into delivery**

Digital skills reached visually impaired learners, refugees, and host communities.



- **Global engagement matured**

International participation prioritised positioning and market access.



- **Innovation pathways strengthened**

Platforms, accelerators, and partnerships improved routes to scale.



- **Service delivery gained standards**

New frameworks introduced clearer benchmarks and accountability.





6.

DELIVERING THE DIGITAL AGENDA

Turning strategy, standards,
and infrastructure
into services





As 2026 begins, Uganda enters a new phase of its digital transformation journey, anchored by the launch of the ICT Five-Year Strategic Plan (FY2025/26–FY2029/30) and accompanying Service Delivery Standards. Together, these frameworks mark a shift from policy ambition to service delivery discipline.

At the core of the Strategic Plan is the expansion and improvement of e-government services, with more public services expected to be accessible online through integrated platforms. Clearer timelines, reduced reliance on paper-based processes, and improved interoperability across ministries aim to strengthen user experience and service efficiency.

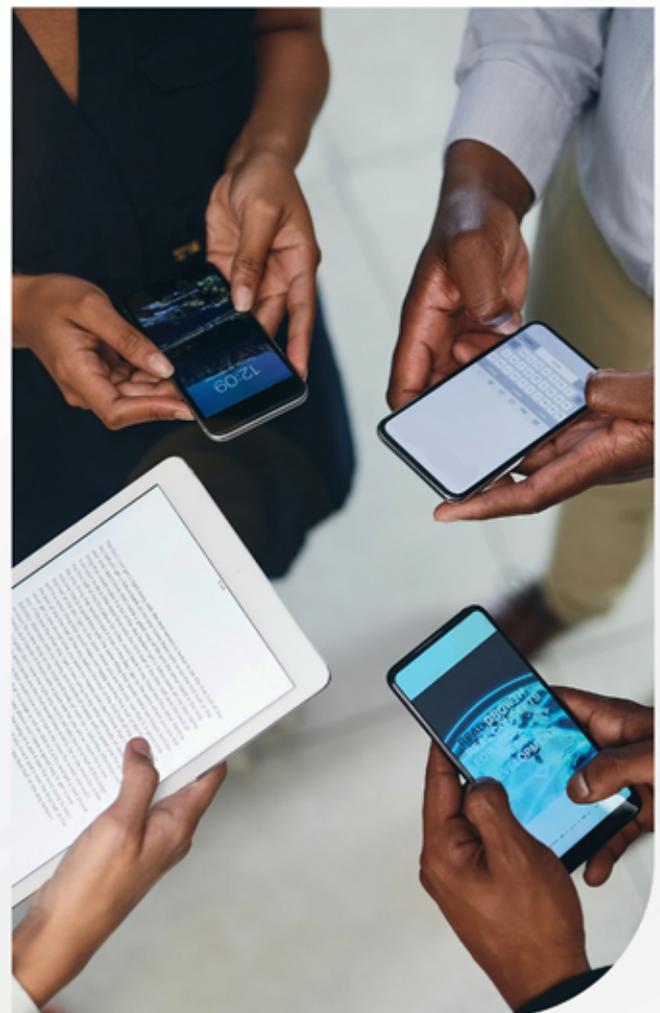
The Plan also prioritises broadband expansion and ICT infrastructure, aligning with the Digital Uganda Vision to extend reliable connectivity nationwide, including underserved areas. Defined quality benchmarks introduce clearer expectations around performance, uptime, and service consistency.

Equally central is the strengthening of cybersecurity and trust in digital services, with government ICT systems expected to adopt stronger data protection practices, coordinated incident response mechanisms, and consistent security standards.

For the first time, Service Delivery Standards establish minimum performance benchmarks for ICT services — covering timeliness, responsiveness, and communication — giving citizens clearer expectations and accountability mechanisms.

The Strategic Plan further reaffirms government commitment to local innovation and digital skills development, creating opportunities for startups, training institutions, and innovators to contribute directly to national service delivery and economic growth.

As implementation begins, the emphasis moves decisively toward execution, measurement, and impact. Within this evolving landscape, the National ICT Innovation Hub continues to play a central role in translating strategy into practice, supporting inclusive skills development, innovation pipelines, and partnerships that move Uganda from access to scale.





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