

NEW PARTNERSHIPS POWER UGANDA'S DIGITAL FUTURE

Kampala, Uganda

In Q1 2026, the National ICT Innovation Hub forged strategic partnerships across the innovation value chain—building a connected ecosystem that moves Uganda from innovation potential to innovation at scale.

“From innovation potential to innovation at scale.”



BUILDING TALENT AT THE SOURCE

Through the University Engineering Innovation Bootcamp, we equip students and graduates with technical skills, mentorship, and venture support to turn ideas into market-ready solutions.

Partner:
University Engineering Innovation Bootcamp



DEEP-TECH AMBITIONS TAKE SHAPE

Our partnership with Lwera Electronics & Semiconductors Limited and Pearl Hubs strengthens Uganda's hardware capabilities in robotics, chip design and semiconductors—unlocking labs, prototyping and advanced manufacturing expertise.

Partners: Lwera Electronics & Semiconductors Limited, Pearl Hubs



ENABLING INNOVATION THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE

GovNet Services Ltd provides cloud infrastructure, sandboxes, SMS integrations and payment gateways—lowering the cost of experimentation and helping startups build and scale faster.

Partner:
GovNet Services Ltd



SECURING THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

With Milima Technologies, we embed cybersecurity in the innovation lifecycle through training, audits and mentorship—ensuring that solutions are secure, compliant and resilient.

Partner:
Milima Technologies



BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP

In partnership with Women in Technology Uganda (WITU), we expand digital literacy, entrepreneurship and career pathways for women—creating greater access and participation across communities.

Partner:
Women in Technology Uganda (WITU)



FEATURE STORY

ICT HUB TRAINS OVER 100 WOMEN IN DIGITAL SKILLS DURING WOMEN'S MONTH

Kampala, Uganda - March 2026

Held under the theme "Code it. Create it. Protect it. Lead it.", the month-long program delivered hands-on training in animation, AI, cybersecurity, data analytics and more.

Code it. Create it. Protect it. Lead it.

100+
Women Trained

6
High-demand Digital Skills

Experts & Mentors from Industry

Stronger Pathways to Jobs & Enterprise

INNOVATION IN ACTION

SMART RANCH HACKATHON WHERE CODE MEETS CATTLE

University students built IoT solutions at the Smart Ranch Hackathon Cypher—an agriculture-focused innovation challenge.



“The future of farming is being written one line of code at a time.”

IoT solutions for livestock tracking, health monitoring & resource optimization

Showcasing the power of youth innovation in solving real-world challenges

Winning ideas pitched for incubation and investment opportunities

QUICK NEWS



UJ-CONNECT PROGRESS

Phase 1 of UJ-Connect is 77% complete, bringing high-speed internet to universities across Uganda.



KABALE ACCELERATOR

15 investor-ready startups graduate from the Kabale Innovation Village Accelerator Program.



ALLEN KAGINA VISIT

State Minister Allen Kagina visits the Hub, commending impact: 32,125 individuals trained to date.

OUR IMPACT (Q1 2026)



32,125
Individuals trained across programs



90%
Employment rate post-training



150+
Students in ICT programs supported



15
Startups launched or accelerated

FEATURE STORY

NEW PARTNERSHIPS POWER UGANDA'S DIGITAL FUTURE

Kampala, Uganda



“
From Innovation
Potential to
Innovation Scale
”



The National ICT Innovation Hub has continued to build a dynamic network of strategic partnerships, signaling a deliberate shift in Uganda's approach to developing its digital economy: moving from isolated interventions toward a more interconnected and collaborative innovation ecosystem.

Between January and March 2026, the Hub entered into strategic agreements with a diverse range of stakeholders, including deep-tech firms, training institutions, cybersecurity experts, STEM education providers, and inclusion-focused organizations. Each partnership is designed to strengthen a critical layer of Uganda's growing technology value chain.

While these collaborations may appear routine at first glance, they collectively reflect a broader and more coordinated vision. At the heart of these efforts is a commitment to addressing one persistent challenge: transforming Uganda's innovation potential into innovation at scale.

By bringing together expertise across technology, skills development, digital security, and inclusive participation, the National ICT Innovation Hub is laying the foundation for a more resilient, competitive, and future-ready digital economy.

INNOVATION IN ACTION

By Carol Kagezi



Smart Ranch Hackathon for Kisombwa Farm

A collaboration between the National ICT Innovation Hub and Kisombwa Ranch put innovation to work in agriculture, with a hackathon focused on building a digital livestock records system for smarter ranching.

Located in Mubende District, Kisombwa Ranch a 3,200-acre family-owned operation has long relied on manual, paper-based systems to manage its livestock. While this approach has sustained operations over the years, it has also introduced inefficiencies. Records are often fragmented, data is difficult to track in real time, and decision-making is slowed by gaps in information.

It is this challenge that sparked the Smart Ranch Hack, an initiative designed to bring together developers, engineers, and innovators to co-create practical digital solutions for the agriculture sector.

At the centre of the hackathon is the development of a Digital Livestock Record System (DLRS) a platform intended to digitise how livestock data is captured, managed, and used.

Participants in the hackathon were tasked with going beyond basic digitisation. Proposed solutions incorporated features such as animal identification systems, vaccination and breeding records, and data visualisation dashboards to support performance tracking and decision-making. Some teams explored integrating Internet of Things (IoT) technologies to monitor animal health and environmental conditions, while others focused on ensuring offline functionality to suit rural operating contexts.

The approach reflects a broader shift in how innovation is being applied within Uganda's key sectors—moving from theory to practice by connecting innovators directly to real-world problems. For the National ICT Innovation Hub, which led the initiative as organiser and technical facilitator, the hackathon model offers a way to accelerate solution development while strengthening linkages within the innovation ecosystem.

For Kisombwa Ranch, the expected impact is significant. A functional digital system would streamline record-keeping, reduce data loss, and enable more accurate, data-driven decision-making. In the long term, it could improve productivity, enhance transparency, and optimise operations across breeding, feeding, and disease management.

Beyond the ranch, the initiative signals a scalable opportunity for Uganda's livestock sector. By demonstrating how digital tools can be integrated into traditional farming practices, the Smart Ranch Hack provides a model that can be adapted by other ranches and agricultural enterprises across the country.

The hackathon itself was structured to ensure that solutions were grounded in practical realities. From initial planning and stakeholder engagement to on-site immersion and prototype development, participants engaged directly with the ranch environment translating lived challenges into workable digital solutions.

As the project moves from prototype to potential implementation, it underscores a growing trend: innovation in Uganda is increasingly being shaped by collaboration, context, and clear problem definition.

In Mubende, that shift is already underway! where technology is beginning to transform not just how livestock is managed, but how agriculture itself is imagined in a digital future.

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THE UJ-CONNECT PROJECT ENTERS FINAL YEAR



UJ Connects Engagement at the ICT Hub

Uganda's ICT ecosystem is steadily strengthening under the UJ-Connect project, with tangible progress recorded across skills development, entrepreneurship, and international market linkages as the project enters its final year.

Implemented by the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance in partnership with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the four-year initiative has, over the past three years, built a more coordinated and competitive digital ecosystem. Key milestones include the rollout of new industry-aligned training programmes at the Uganda Institute of Information and Communications Technology (UICT), the operationalisation of the BizLink business and talent matching platform, and the successful execution of pilot outsourcing projects linking Ugandan firms to international partners.

To date, over 150 students have been trained in high-demand digital skills such as data science, software development, and cybersecurity, while multiple cohorts of startups have progressed through structured mentorship programmes designed to move them from idea stage to market readiness. At the same time, business matching efforts have facilitated real partnerships between Ugandan ICT companies and global players, particularly in Japan.

As the project moves toward completion, attention is increasingly turning to sustainability ensuring that these systems, platforms, and partnerships continue to drive growth beyond the programme lifecycle.

Insights from a recent ICT study tour to Vietnam are helping shape this next phase. The delegation observed how Vietnam's success has been driven by strong government coordination, industry-led training models, and deliberate investment in global competitiveness particularly in ICT outsourcing.

For Uganda, these lessons reinforce the importance of deepening industry-academia collaboration, strengthening workforce readiness, and expanding international market access.

With one year to go, UJ-Connect is not only delivering results it is laying the groundwork for a resilient, globally competitive ICT sector.



KABALE ACCELERATOR PRODUCES INVESTOR-READY STARTUPS IN FIVE-DAY INNOVATION SPRINT



Kabale Accelerator

Kabale, Uganda – March 2026

The National ICT Innovation Hub, in partnership with Kabale University and Engage Consults, concluded a five-day innovation accelerator that produced 15 investor-ready startups and secured early-stage partnership agreements for participating teams.

Held from March 2–6, 2026, the Kabale-based program brought together **37 participants across 15 teams**, focusing on solutions in agriculture, tourism, ICT, and manufacturing sectors aligned to Uganda's economic priorities.

By the end of the program, all teams had developed **functional minimum viable products (MVPs)** and investor-ready pitch decks, **with three teams advancing to the national level**. Two Memoranda of Understanding were also signed on Demo Day, creating pathways for pilot implementation.

The accelerator is part of a national effort to address a long-standing gap in Uganda's innovation ecosystem where many young developers struggle to translate technical ideas into commercially viable businesses.

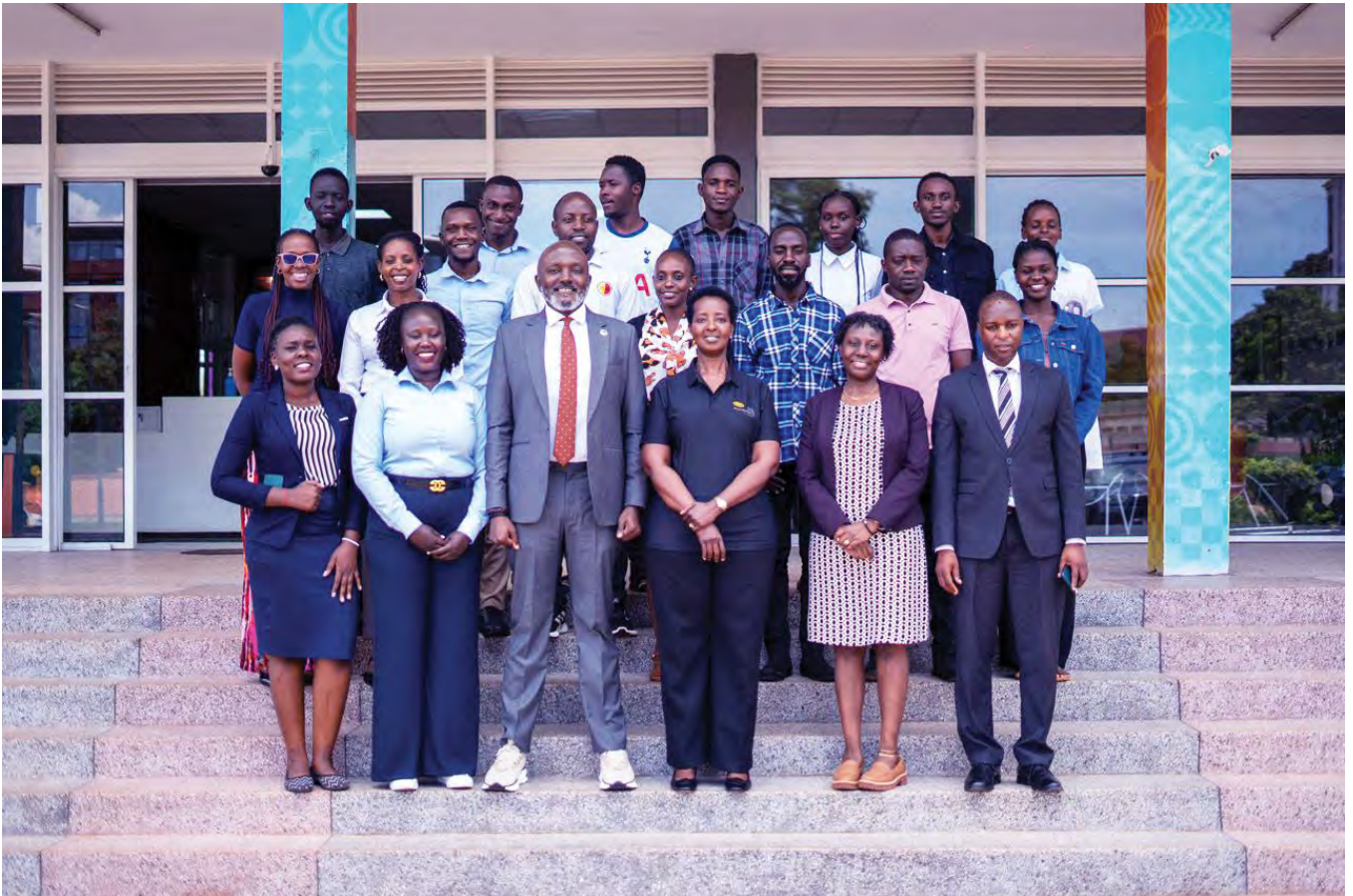
Program organizers attributed the outcomes to a model that integrates investors and sector partners throughout the training, rather than limiting engagement to final presentations. Participants received coaching, sector validation, and direct feedback from industry actors starting mid-program.

The Kabale pilot also tested the viability of regional innovation hubs. Western Uganda, traditionally underrepresented in national innovation programming, is now represented by three teams progressing to the next stage.



By the end of the program, all teams had developed functional minimum viable products (MVPs) and investor-ready pitch decks, with three teams advancing to the national level.

ALLEN KAGINA'S VISIT AT THE NATIONAL ICT INNOVATION HUB



Allen's visit at the ICT HUB. You can watch the full visit at

<https://x.com/innovationhubug/status/2041800664871764018?s=46&t=znecXBCFYSLAef6oBmOQ3w>

Uganda's youth unemployment statistics are far from abstract. With 16.1% of young people aged 18–30 unemployed, and nearly 700,000 new job seekers entering the labour market each year, the pressure on institutions to deliver practical, scalable solutions has never been greater.

In March 2026, Ms. Allen Kagina, Trustee of the MTN Foundation Board of Directors, paid a courtesy visit to the National ICT Innovation Hub in Nakawa and delivered a simple but powerful assessment: "This is working."

Her remarks reflected the growing impact of the MTN ACE Tech Programme, an initiative supported by MTN Uganda and implemented by Centenary Technology Services (Cente-Tech). Since 2022, the programme has helped transform the National ICT Innovation Hub into a centre for digital skills development, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

Through the partnership, the Hub has been equipped with industry-grade infrastructure, strengthened its digital skilling pathways, and established a full innovation pipeline—from training and mentorship to incubation and venture development. To date, 32,125 individuals have received digital skills training through the programme. Impressively, 90% of participants who completed advanced technical training secured employment or launched a business venture within six months.

During her visit, Ms. Kagina highlighted several facilities that demonstrate the programme's practical impact. These included modern computer laboratories that, for many trainees, provide their first experience with a connected workstation. She also pointed to the Hub's video conferencing suite, describing it not simply as a convenience, but as a strategic job-creation tool capable of connecting Uganda's young professionals to opportunities within the global Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) market, valued at over USD 250 billion.

Equally significant were the Hub's Internet of Things (IoT) laboratory and 3D printing facilities, which are helping innovators move rapidly from concept to prototype. Together, these resources are creating an ecosystem where young people can learn, build, collaborate, and pitch ideas within a single enabling environment.

Flavia Opiyo, Team Lead for Innovations at the Hub, reflected on the transformation brought about by the partnership: *"Before the programme, the Hub had the mandate but not the means."*

Steven Kirenga, General Manager for Product Business Development and Customer Experience at Cente-Tech, emphasized another critical aspect of the collaboration: institutional systems and sustainability. *"Equipment can be replaced," he noted. "Processes define what an institution can do."*

Beyond infrastructure, Cente-Tech supported the Hub in automating its operational processes thus strengthening its long-term capacity to deliver innovation programmes effectively and sustainably.

With Phase One now complete, the initiative is entering a new chapter. Phase Two is already underway, extending the model beyond Kampala to regional innovation hubs in Gulu, Kabale, Busitema, and Soroti. Because what proved successful in Kampala was never intended to remain there.

*"Before the programme, the Hub had the
mandate but not the means."*

Flavia Opiyo, Team Lead for Innovations at the Hub

AI for the sake of AI?

By Lailah Nalukwago



AI for the sake of AI?

In my mind, no one loves Artificial Intelligence (AI) more than I do, I truly believe its boom arrived at exactly the right time to transform how we work, communicate, innovate, and solve problems. However, working closely with ICT and AI projects and supporting innovators in Uganda, I have seen firsthand why we must pause before rushing into building AI solutions. While many problems can be solved with AI, not all problems should be.

Unfortunately, some organizations decide to implement AI projects before even identifying a relevant use case. This blind application of AI, or “AI for the sake of AI”, often leads to misaligned solutions, wasted resources, and systems that do not deliver meaningful value. Gartner indicates that over 70 percent of AI projects failed in 2025, largely due to poor problem definition, lack of clear use cases, and weak alignment with business value.

Many challenges faced by organizations, whether startups, enterprises, or government institutions, are not complex enough to require application of AI. They can be effectively addressed using simpler and more cost-efficient tools such as Excel or Google Sheets, rule-based systems, or even good old structured human processes. These approaches are often faster to implement, easier to maintain, and more practical, especially in low-resource environments such as Uganda. Introducing AI in such cases adds unnecessary complexity and cost without corresponding benefit.

AI solutions come with heavier operational burden, requiring quality data, compute infrastructure, and highly skilled talent to build, deploy, and maintain. In many instances, these requirements make AI significantly more expensive than traditional automation methods. Without careful evaluation, organizations risk investing heavily in solutions that do not deliver proportional value.

This is why frameworks such as the **PMI Certified Professional in Managing AI (PMI-CPMAI)** AI Go or No-Go decision are critical. Before committing to AI, organizations must assess whether the problem can be solved using simpler methods, whether the problem is complex enough to justify AI application, and whether the expected benefits outweigh the cost of AI implementation. The focus must always be on value, feasibility, and return on investment.

AI should not be adopted for its hype, but applied where it is truly necessary and impactful. Ultimately, the goal is not to build AI, but rather, to solve real problems effectively and sustainably.