



## Closure Event of the “Technical Assistance and Training to Uganda on ICT Development Strategy” Project

*Accelerating the achievement of the Digital Uganda Vision  
through future-ready policy interventions based on assessments and capacity development*

**28 November 2024**

@ National ICT Innovation Hub in Kampala

<http://itu.int/go/uganda-project-2024>

## Event Takeaways

### 1. Overview and background

The multi-year Government of Uganda and ITU joint project on ‘[Technical Assistance and Training to Uganda on National ICT Development Strategy](#)’ (2021-24), which is supported by the China’s Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund, held its closure event on 28 November 2024 at the National ICT Innovation Hub in Kampala on the topic ‘[Accelerating the achievement of the Digital Uganda Vision through future-ready policy interventions based on assessments and capacity development](#)’.

The project has aimed to contribute to a strengthened ICT policy and regulatory environment to enable Uganda to continue transformation into a digitally enabled society that is innovative and competitive. A three-pronged approach to implementing the project has been applied focusing on: 1) the development of policy recommendations (funded by SSCAF/GDF); 2) enabling capacity development (funded by SSCAF/GDF); and 3) the implementation of test pilots (funded by ITU ICT-Development Fund). The project is framed under the Digital Uganda Vision (DUV) framework and in line with Uganda’s Digital Transformation Programme in the Third National Development Plan (NDPIII). The project supports Uganda’s transformation into a digitally enabled society and knowledge economy and contributes through its implementation to the national Digital Transformation Roadmap.

### 2. Event details

The event, which welcomed over 300 participants joining in person and virtually, took place on 28 November 2024, from 9:00 to 16:30 at the National ICT Innovation Hub which is located inside the Uganda Institute of Information and Communications Technology (UICT) Nakawa Campus in Kampala. The event program is shared in **Annex 1**.

### 3. Opening of the event

The Permanent Secretary Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, Dr Aminah Zawedde provided introductory remarks and invited the Minister of ICT and National Guidance, Dr Chris Baryomunsi to officially open the event

In his opening remarks, the Minister recalled challenges of affordability of internet access due to high prices of user devices. He highlighted the ongoing collaboration between East African Community member countries to ensure that user devices were manufactured locally,

mentioning a factory in Mbale that was making phones at comparable quality with imported ones but at lower prices. He also recalled that, regarding infrastructure, in the next 2 years, the national optical fibre infrastructure will be extended to all corners of the country. He also mentioned the plans for regional satellite for northern corridor countries Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan and Tanzania. The Minister challenged the young people, who make up 70% of the Uganda population, to come out with solutions/applications to replace the foreign ones. The opening session was followed by a high-level panel setting the scene for Digital Uganda Vision and the efforts required to implement universal access and sustainable digital transformation, and technical sessions speaking to the project activities and impact.

- **High-level session setting the scene for Digital Uganda Vision and the efforts required to implement universal access and sustainable digital transformation**

The panel members were Dr Aminah Zawedde, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, Mr Richard Obita, Director of Technical Services, National Information Technology Authority of Uganda (NITA-U) and Ms Grace Achire Labong, Board member, ICT Association of Uganda. The panel moderator was Dr Emmanuel Manasseh, Regional Director for Africa, International Telecommunication Union. In his introduction, Dr Manasseh took the audience through the components of the project, hailed the project achievements. Dr Zawedde noted the impact created by the project, mentioning skilling, infrastructure and entrepreneurship. Mr Obita, noted the project for enabling the streamlining of service delivery, promoting integration, spurring the development of e-services and promoting capacity building. He also spoke to the importance of cybersecurity for government as well as the need for inclusiveness in government programs. Further, he noted the opportunities in e-waste recycling and salvaging of useful parts from electronic equipment as well as the commitment to environmental responsibility with regard to e-waste and green data centers. Ms Achire Labong, highlighted the importance of entrepreneurship and the private sector in the delivery of services.

- **Project overview by the project manager and video highlighting achievements and impact**

Dr Christine Sund, the ITU Project Manager, provided an overview of the project, recalling that the impact on the project by COVID-19, which led to a re-design to consider the experience from the pandemic in the work plan. The project funding is USD 1.8 million from the SSCAF/GDF and USD 100,000 contributed by ITU ICT Development Fund. The project has three components: policy and recommendations, capacity development and pilots/use cases. She made special mention of the pilots, like the techpreneurship pilot project whereby young entrepreneurs that had received coaching under the pilot were to take part in a project pitching session on 29 November 2024. Dr Sund also mentioned the mobile connectivity monitoring pilot which has engaged 10 motorcycle (bodaboda) drivers in data collection in actual connectivity service and quality of service in rural areas and the open data sets pilot which will enable students to explore big data usage for exploration, skills building and innovation. Winding up the presentation, it was mentioned that project technical reports and assessment will be shared on ITU and Ministry of ICT and National Guidance websites. A video that captured moments in the project and spoke to the project impact was shared.

- **Technical Panel Discussion 1: Digital transformation for sustainable socio-economic development (Part 1 – Access and connectivity)**

The first technical panel session dedicated to sharing findings from the project's technical studies related to connectivity and access was moderated by Mr Peter Ogule, Senior IT Officer, Ministry of ICT and National Guidance. Project consultants Mr Dennis Mugwanya, Mr David Turahi, Mr Alex Nkuyahaga, Mr Bernard Binagwaho, and Mr Georges Ouffoue, shared on the findings from

the assessments and studies they had been leading on with the project team. This included work the review of the broadband policy, 5G adoption strategy development, infrastructure sharing guidelines, last mile connectivity project review and green data center guidelines and strategy development. The discussion that followed touched upon the need about cyber protection when rolling out infrastructure, while noting that NITA-U had a Directorate for information security that handled cyber protection, but they acknowledged that more funding was required for the Directorate's cyber protection mandate. On a comment from the audience that basic access to the internet was lacking for those working in agriculture, the panellists recalled that under the World Bank's Uganda Digital Access Project (UDAP) and agriculture focused programs by UNDP respectively, existing gaps were being addressed. The studies presented on are finalized as publications on the project website.

- **Technical Panel Discussion 2: Digital transformation for sustainable socio-economic development (Part 2 – Emerging technologies and data for informed decision making)**

The second technical panel session dedicated to sharing findings from the project's technical studies related to the use of emerging technologies to engage service delivery and data for informed decision making was moderated by Mr Christopher Yikii, Senior IT Officer, Ministry of ICT and National Guidance. Project consultants Albert Kihangire, Washington G Okori, Martin Waidhuba and ITU's Garam Bel shared on the findings from the assessments and studies they had been conducting for the project. This included insights in the national big data landscape assessment and related capacity needs, review of the use and potential of artificial intelligence in the nation context, as well as findings from a review of local ICT equipment manufacturing value chains that is ongoing, together with highlights from the review of Uganda's E-waste and Extended Producer regulation and guidance.

The questions and comments that followed asked amongst other whether the e-waste study was benchmarked against other countries, which it had been. In response to a question about gender inclusion on the studies, the panellists clarified that the studies had consider opportunities and challenges face by women and men and that aspects of job creation when deploying emerging technologies were considered. In response to a question about the gaps in Uganda's legal regime on the machine learning and deep learning, the panellists clarified the AI landscape assessment included also this. On the nurturing of opportunities for local ICT equipment manufacturing, the need to consider seriously the contribution from academia was highlighted and appreciated. Ensuring that Uganda's intellectual property is protected and recognized when moving from research to production and joint ownership of intellectual property between academia and industry was further stressed. The free zone center in Namanve, Kampala was mentioned as one of the government initiatives on local ICT equipment manufacturing. The studies presented on are finalized as publications on the project website.

- **Technical Panel Discussion 3: Building the required capacity to accelerate digital transformation across sectors**

The third technical panel session dedicated to capacity development to accelerate digital transformation across sectors, was facilitated by Ms Agnes Lumala, Academic Registrar, Uganda Institute of Communications and Technology. The session discussants focused on the human being at the center of digital transformation and what is needed to capacitate all Ugandans, from IT professionals to entrepreneurs to teachers and community leaders across the country. Following a presentation by the project expert Mr Edward Dyson, who shared insight from the national digital skills assessment that had been conducted under the project, the session panellists Dr Tony Oyana from Makerere University College of Computing and Information

Sciences, Mr Moses Mugenyi Assistant Academic Registrar, Uganda Institute of Information and Communication Technology, Mr Patrick Muinda, Commissioner, Communications and Information Management, Ministry of Education and Sports and Mr Julius Peter Torach, Commissioner Information Technology, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions shared their perspectives.

Responding to a question on the key findings from the national digital skills assessment, the panellists noted the level of digital skills, including basic literacy across the country and that there was variation across different professions. The panellists highlighted the need to adopt innovative training models, lifelong learning, interactive and long-life digital competencies and the importance of focusing on emerging technologies. The critical importance of appreciating the digital skilling context (foundational and advanced) and the level (basic, intermediate and advanced) were highlighted. It was noted that diverse Government agencies, such as the police, were applying advanced digital skills in their work. The need to map out talent and to implement upskilling was noted. Also noted was the need for the enabling digital infrastructure and data centers to make the digital economy reality, while stressing that when people are digitally skilled, they will be more cyber secure. Collaboration with telcos was also emphasized. A panellist, who was also a beneficiary of the training courses under the project, highlighted that the Department of Public Prosecution was implementing a digital case management system. The panellist also noted the impact of social media, with its popularity among Ugandans, is playing a part in bridging the rural-urban digital divide, while not always for productive use. The need for clear training objectives, understanding study methods, demographics, practical applications, affordability of equipment was underscored for all capacity development.

- **Technical Panel Discussion 4: A focus on sustainable impact – Insights from pilot projects and the value as experienced by their beneficiaries and discussion on how synergies can be built across initiatives and projects to ensure consistent progress across Digital Uganda Vision pillars that leaves no one behind**

The third technical panel session considered the impact of project pilots and heard from the implementation of project interventions. The session also brought in interventors from the session dedicated to how synergies can be built across initiatives and projects to ensure consistent progress across Digital Uganda Vision and the national Digital Transformation Roadmap pillars to ensure that no one is left behind. The session was facilitated by Mr Ambrose Ruyooka, Assistant Commissioner for Research and Development, Ministry of ICT and National Guidance. Mr Bazil Onen shared on a development of a feasibility study with technical design and specifications for persons with disabilities (PwD) ICT-enabled learning center and integrated system in Uganda, while Mr Michael Nyitegeka spoke to the Uganda techpreneur skilling and mentorship program, its design and implementation, and the impact it was having on the 80 entrepreneurs that have benefitted from the capacity development. Ms Melissa Kyeyune, National Project Coordinator, Digital Skills and Micro Work, PROPECTS, International Labour Organization (ILO), Uganda noted that ILO labour rights speak to decent work and justice and link youth to digital skills, training them about labour rights. She recalled that ILO has developed a community of practice in partnership with the Federation of Uganda Employers, which bring together government, employers and labour providers and workers.

Speaking to the feasibility study led by Mr Onen, the moderator recalled that the tax regime currently in place in Uganda was conducive to the proposed integrated ICT platform for PwDs as it provided for exemptions for ICT solutions/equipment for PwDs. Mr Nyitegeka further observed that techpreneurship cut across sector and that agricultural practitioners can also be techpreneurs, as the pilot has seen evidence of. The pilot projects that have been elaborated on

in the project will be sharing its lessons learned with recommendations that will be useful when considering how the pilots, hen successful, can be scaled to reach more entrepreneurs, citizens, students and practitioners across the country.

- **Recognition of training courses completed under the project**

A dedicated session was held to recognize those who have been involved as beneficiaries and trainers in the over 40 certified training courses that have been delivered through the project. In total close to 6,000 people have taken training that may lead to certification further to final exams. Some training courses are still ongoing, and some trainees are preparing for their exams. Mr Moses Mugenyi, Assistant Academic Registrar, Uganda Institute of Communications and Technology (UICT) and Ms Annet Ingabire, Principal Human Resources Office, Ministry of ICT and National Guidance guided the session which hear training beneficiaries who shared on the positive impact of the training, including the advanced IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) training which was already enabling Ministry of ICT and National Guidance and Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives staff, among others to improve in their work. Moreover, under the project, an ICT Impact and Capacity Development framework was being developed by the Ministry. The framework will have a repository of training courses, a capacity tracker and a needs assessment for each officer, which will assist in identifying the demands and gaps in the Government for action to be taken. The framework includes an in-training assessment tool to assess impact to the beneficiary to track progress

#### **4. Conclusions and next steps**

In his closing remarks Dr Manasseh, Regional Director for Africa, International Telecommunication Union thanked the panellist, and participants and the event organiser and declared the event closed.

The Project Closure Event was organised to present and discuss the finding and recommendation of the “Technical Assistance and Training to Uganda on ICT Development Strategy (2021-2024)” and to chart a way forward. Implementation of the project recommendations is be undertaken by the Government of Uganda with the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance as the lead. Through the knowledge transfer element of the project, the government staff that have worked alongside the ITU experts have gained knowledge for accelerating the achievement of the Digital Uganda Vision through future-ready policy interventions. The practical knowledge gained through the pilot project and use case shall have a significant positive on impact on implementing key aspects of the Digital Transformation Roadmap also going forward.



## Annex 1: Closure Event Program

Thursday, 28 November 2024	
08:00-09:00	Arrival, registration and badging
09:00-09:05	<i>Welcome and opening of the event by the Master of Ceremonies</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joram Paul Ssonko</li> </ul>
09:05-09:10	<b>Welcome remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aminah Zawedde, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information Communication Technology and National Guidance, Uganda</li> </ul>
09:10-09:20	<b>Official event opening</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director, ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT)</li> <li>Chris Baryomunsi, Minister, Ministry of Information Communication Technology and National Guidance, Uganda</li> </ul>
09:20-10:15	<b>High-level panel session – Setting the scene for Digital Uganda Vision and the efforts required to implement universal access and sustainable digital transformation</b> This session seeks to frame the event emphasizing the importance of the project's achievements and contributions towards Uganda's digital transformation journey, and expectations going forward to accelerate the achievement of Digital Uganda Vision. <b>Moderator:</b> Emmanuel Manasseh, Regional Director for Africa, International Telecommunication Union (ITU) <b>Panelists:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aminah Zawedde, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information Communication Technology and National Guidance, Uganda</li> <li>Richard Obita, Director of Technical Services, National Information Technology Authority - Uganda (NITA-U)</li> <li>Grace Achire Labong, Board member, ICT Association of Uganda</li> </ul>
10:15-10:20	<b>Group photo</b>
10:20-10:45	<b>Coffee/tea break</b>
10:45-11:00	<b>Project video highlighting achievements and impact</b> <b>Project overview by the project manager</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Christine Sund, Senior Advisor, Regional Office for Africa, International Telecommunication Union (ITU)</li> </ul>
10:55-12:00	<b>Digital transformation for sustainable socio-economic development (Part 1 – Access and connectivity)</b> This session shares findings from the project's technical studies, highlighting key accomplishments, challenges, and lessons learned throughout the project duration. As such the stakeholders can engage with the outcomes and discuss the sustainability of the project's impact and contribute to paving the way for the next steps towards implementation of the findings. <b>Moderator:</b> Peter Ogule, Senior IT Officer, Ministry of ICT and National Guidance <b>Panelists:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dennis Mugwanya, Project expert, and David Turahi, Project expert, <i>Broadband connectivity for all – From broadband policy review to 5G implementation</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alex Nkuyahaga, Project expert, <i>Connectivity and infrastructure investment – last-mile connectivity project assessment</i></li> <li>• Bernard Binagwaho, Project expert and Georges Ouffoue, Project expert, <i>Green data centers – Guidelines, standards and path towards a national strategy</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Discussion</i></p>
12:00-13:00	<p><b>Digital transformation for sustainable socio-economic development (Part 2 – Emerging technologies and data for informed decision making)</b></p> <p>This session shares findings from the project’s technical studies, highlighting key accomplishments, challenges, and lessons learned throughout the project duration. As such the stakeholders can engage with the outcomes and discuss the sustainability of the project’s impact and contribute to paving the way for the next steps towards implementation of the findings.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Christopher Yikii, Senior IT Officer, Ministry of ICT and National Guidance</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Albert Kihangire, Project expert, <i>A focus on data – big data landscape assessment in Uganda</i></li> <li>• Washington George Okori, Project expert, <i>National AI landscape assessment – Future-proofing Uganda’s digital development</i></li> <li>• Garam Bel, ITU/BDT Circular Economy Coordinator – <i>Supporting the Government of Uganda on its e-waste/extended producer responsibility policy review</i></li> <li>• Martin Waidhuba, Project expert, <i>National ICT equipment manufacturing – Status and insights</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Discussion</i></p>
13:00-14:00	<b>Lunch break</b>
14:00-15:00	<p><b>Building the required capacity to accelerate digital transformation across sectors</b></p> <p>This session will focus on the human being at the center of digital transformation and what is needed to capacitate all Ugandans, from IT professionals to entrepreneurs to teachers and community leaders across the country and how to assess if capacity development interventions are making the promised contribution.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Agnes Lumala, Uganda Institute of Communications and Technology (UICT)</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edward Dyson, Project expert, <i>Overview of the national digital skills assessment</i></li> <li>• Fredrick Kitoogo, Principal, Uganda Institute of Communications and Technology (UICT)</li> <li>• Tonny J. Oyana, College Principal &amp; Professor of GIS and Spatial Analysis, College of Computing and Information Sciences, Makerere University</li> <li>• Patrick Muinda, Commissioner, Communications and Information Management, Ministry of Education and Sports</li> <li>• Julius Peter Torach, Commissioner Information Technology, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions</li> </ul> <p><i>Discussion</i></p>

15:00-15:30	<p><b>A focus on sustainable impact – Insights from pilot projects and the value as experienced by their beneficiaries</b></p> <p>This session showcases proposals and pilot projects implemented under the project with support of the ITU ICT Development Fund, allowing participants to hear about innovations and solutions that have been explored and developed.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ambrose Ruyooka, Assistant Commissioner for Research and Development, Ministry of ICT and National Guidance</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bazil Onen, Project expert, <i>Feasibility study with technical design and specifications for persons with disabilities (PwD) ICT-enabled learning center and integrated system in Uganda</i></li> <li>• Michael Niyitegeka, Pilot project expert, <i>Uganda techpreneur skilling and mentorship program design and implementation</i></li> <li>• Irene Karungi Sekitoleko, Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, <i>From policy to implementation in the context of the Digital Uganda Vision (DUV)</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Discussion</i></p>
15:30-15:45	<p><b>Recognition of training courses completed under the project</b></p> <p>This session will recognize those who have been involved as beneficiaries and trainers in the over 40 certified training courses that have been delivered through the project. In total close to 6,000 people have taken training that may lead to certification further to final exams. Some training courses are still ongoing, and some trainees are preparing for their exams. We will hear the Government, training providers and trainees and hear about how the impact of the training is being assessed and how the Government will be taking the lessons learned from the assessment of the training courses delivered forward.</p> <p><b>Moderators:</b> Moses Mugenyi, Assistant Academic Registrar, Uganda Institute of Communications and Technology (UICT) and Annet Ingabire, Principal Human Resources Office, Ministry of ICT and National Guidance</p>
15:45-16:15	<p><b>What is next – How can synergies be built across initiatives and projects to ensure consistent progress across Digital Uganda Vision pillars that leaves no one behind</b></p> <p>This session explores how synergies can be built across initiatives and projects to ensure consistent progress across Digital Uganda Vision and the national Digital Transformation Roadmap pillars to ensure that no one is left behind</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thangavel Palanivel, Senior Economist and Team Leader for Strategy and Policy, UN Development Programme (UNDP) Uganda</li> <li>• Sudhakar Mohapatra, Senior IT Service Delivery Management Officer, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)</li> <li>• Melissa Kyeyune, National Project Coordinator, Digital Skills and Micro-Work, PROPECTS, International Labour Organization (ILO), Uganda</li> </ul> <p><i>Discussion</i></p>
16:15-16:30	<b>Event closing</b>