

GOVT LAUNCHES PLATFORM TO SUPPORT SMES

By Joseph Makumbi

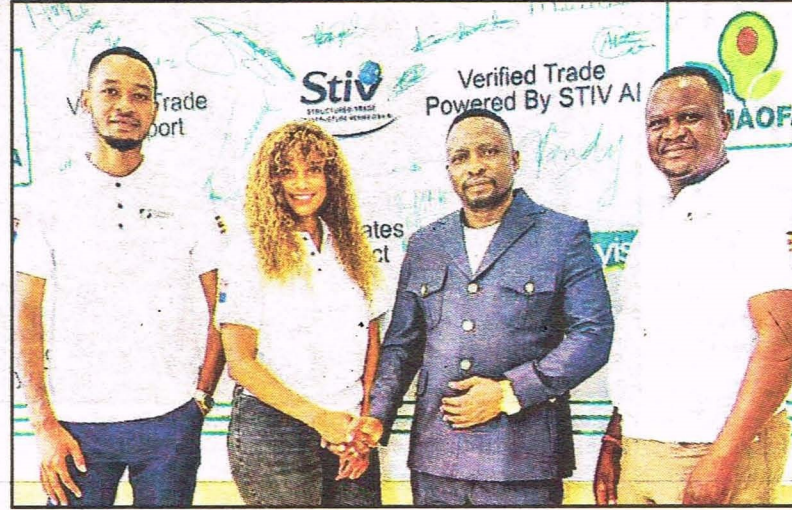
The Government, through the office of the senior presidential adviser on agri-business and value addition, has launched a new digital trade platform aimed at helping farmers, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), processors, exporters, and manufacturers access local, regional and international markets.

Designed to improve market access and export readiness, the platform, dubbed STIV AI, helps businesses organise and verify critical trade information, including product details, traceability records, production capacity, compliance status, and supporting documentation required by buyers and financiers.

The multilingual platform, available in English, Luganda, Swahili and French, functions as a digital trade-readiness mentor. It guides businesses through the process of organising product and business information into formats that can be reviewed by buyers, financial institutions, export agencies, and other market actors.

The platform was unveiled at Nican Resort Hotel in Lweza by Dr Hillary Emmanuel Musoke Kisanja, the senior presidential adviser on agri-business and value addition. It was developed by Crossgates Connect Limited, a UK-registered trade technology company.

Kisanja said the platform addresses one of the biggest challenges facing Ugandan



farmers and enterprises — connecting quality products to structured markets.

“Uganda has fertile soils, hard-working people, and enormous agricultural potential, but many producers struggle to access reliable markets. Technology platforms like STIV AI can help businesses become more visible, organised, and prepared to engage with serious buyers,” he said.

He urged Ugandans to embrace agribusiness and value addition as pathways to wealth creation, emphasising

From Left: The product innovation manager at Crossgates Connect, Joshua Kizaalwa; the CEO Crossgates, Atigo; Dr Kisanja and CPA Bernard Robinson Maqulu at the launch of a new digital trade platform in Lweza recently

growth, industrialisation, value addition, innovation, and SME development.

According to Doris Beth Atigo, founder and chief executive officer of Crossgates Connect Limited, modern trade is increasingly driven by trust, traceability, compliance, and verified business information.

“Many SMEs have good products but lack structured information that buyers, financiers, and export agencies can easily assess. STIV AI helps transform fragmented business information into credible export evidence,” Atigo said.

She added that global buyers increasingly require proof of identity, traceability, source verification and compliance records before entering commercial relationships.

The initial roll-out will focus on export-oriented sectors such as coffee, cocoa, vanilla, horticulture, fisheries, fruits and vegetables, and value-added agricultural products. The platform is expected to expand to packaging, light manufacturing, natural products, and other SME-led value chains.

BETWEEN THE LINES

The platform is primarily designed to improve market access and export readiness.

that land and production must be transformed into sustainable commercial value.

The platform aligns with government priorities on export