

UGANDA TARGETS 200,000 TECH PROFESSIONALS BY 2035

Uganda is charting an ambitious path to transform its digital economy by building a robust pipeline of skilled technology professionals, targeting 50,000 by 2031 and scaling up to 200,000 by 2035.

The move is expected to unlock new opportunities in software development, business process outsourcing and emerging digital services, positioning the country as a competitive player in the global technology landscape.

At the centre of this push is the National Tech Skills Talent Programme (2025–2035), a 10-year roadmap designed to bridge the gap between academic training and industry needs. Despite producing an estimated 700,000 graduates annually, Uganda continues to face a shortage of job-ready talent, leaving many young people underemployed while companies struggle to fill critical roles.

Industry leaders say this mismatch presents a clear opportunity. By aligning skills development with market demand, the program aims to convert thousands of graduates into productive professionals capable of serving both domestic and international markets.

Janey Nakato, the chief technology officer at Pearl Bank Uganda and a member of the tech forum behind the initiative, underscored the urgency of the intervention. “While Uganda produces roughly 700,000

graduates annually, organisations still struggle to find job-ready local talent. To reduce reliance on expatriate labour and position Uganda as a regional hub for digital outsourcing,” she said.

A key pillar of the programme is the establishment of a National IT Talent Registry, a centralised platform that will enable employers to verify certifications and competencies. This is expected to enhance trust in Uganda’s workforce and ease recruitment processes.

BEYOND EMPLOYMENT

Beyond employment, the initiative is seen as a gateway to broader economic gains. A stronger local talent base will allow Uganda to retain more value within its economy while tapping into global demand for remote digital services, a sector that continues to expand rapidly.

Gideon Nkurunungi, the forum’s executive secretary, said the organisation is shifting toward a more collaborative ecosystem that connects academia, industry and policymakers. “We are moving toward a more



integrated ecosystem that brings together academia, industry and policymakers to align training with market needs,” he said.

He also pointed to a significant gender gap within the sector. “While women represent a significant portion of IT graduates, only about 17% transition into professional employment,” Nkurunungi noted.

In response, the forum has

developed a CIO Women Sub-Position Paper aimed at addressing structural barriers and increasing female participation in the digital economy.

ADAPTABILITY

Joanita Asio Banda, head of emerging technologies at Stanbic Bank Uganda, highlighted the importance of adaptability. “True leadership value lies in the ability to apply strategic skills across different platforms rather than becoming attached to specific legacy systems,” she said.

The programme has also drawn strong participation from academia, with institutions such as Makerere University, Uganda Christian University, Victoria University, Nkumba University, ISBAT University, Mutesa I Royal University, UTAMU University and Ndejje University taking part in shaping the talent pipeline. Their involvement signals a growing commitment to aligning curricula with evolving industry demands.

International partnerships are also reinforcing the initiative. Eman Conde, a CCIE agent with Alchemy Global Networks LLC, pledged

“\$10m toward initiatives focused on developing high-quality datasets and fostering innovation.”

From a policy standpoint, Patrick Mundua, the commissioner for e-government services at the ICT ministry, emphasised the importance of soft skills in driving digital transformation.

Meanwhile, the CIO-CxO Digital Leadership Forum has strengthened its governance structures to support implementation of these ambitions. The forum recently unveiled its advisory and governing boards, bringing together top executives to steer efforts aimed at closing the digital skills gap.

Chaired by Collin Babirukamu of the Bank of Uganda, with Rowena Turinawe of RukaPay as vice chairperson, the advisory board includes leaders from major institutions across the public and private sectors.

The governing board, led by Jonathan Kayemba of Logos, is tasked with driving execution. “Technology leaders are often brought in to report, rather than to shape strategy. That must change,” Kayemba said.