

NIEA Business Network

CONCEPT NOTE 2025

Connecting Uganda's Credible Enterprises to Growth, Visibility, and Capital

About the Initiative

The NIEA Business Network is a national platform that the Nishati Initiative East Africa (NIEA) curated to identify, amplify, and support Uganda's most credible, impact-driven businesses. With a special emphasis on women and youth-led enterprises, the network connects growth-ready businesses to visibility, partnerships, and capital beyond traditional financing instruments.

The platform aims to close critical gaps in enterprise visibility, investor readiness, and access to strategic growth support. It ensures that Uganda's most promising businesses are well-positioned to scale sustainably and competitively.

Vision

To build a trusted ecosystem of credible Ugandan enterprises that solve real problems, create dignified work, and drive inclusive economic growth across priority sectors.

Target Profile

The network targets registered Ugandan businesses that meet the following criteria:

- Women- or youth-led, where applicable
- Demonstrated market traction, community impact, and clear growth potential
- Actively seeking investment, strategic partnerships, or market entry support
- Operating in high-potential sectors, including but not limited to:
 - Clean and renewable energy
 - Agribusiness and agro-processing
 - Artificial intelligence and advanced digital technologies
 - Light and heavy manufacturing
 - Technical trades such as welding, pipefitting, fabrication, and engineering services

- Circular economy and waste-to-value models
- Logistics and supply chain optimisation
- Health-tech, EdTech, and other socially relevant business models

What the Platform Offers

Visibility

- National-level promotion through NIEA's media, digital, and public storytelling platforms
- Quarterly features on selected enterprises, including founder interviews and success stories
- Exposure through NIEA's media partnerships and institutional outreach

Support and Partnership Brokerage

- Curated introductions to relevant government programs, donor initiatives, and corporate collaborators
- Participation in sector-specific roundtables, showcases, and exhibitions
- Access to NIEA's technical partners for business development, packaging, or legal support

Investor and Market Readiness

- Diagnostic assessments to identify investor readiness or operational gaps
- Capacity-building clinics with customised growth tools and advisory
- Exposure to non-bank financing mechanisms, including grants, venture capital, and blended finance

Enterprise Insights and Advocacy

- Participation in research efforts on enterprise development and investment challenges
- Inclusion in quarterly briefings shared with policymakers, funders, and development partners
- Invitations to contribute to enterprise policy dialogue and knowledge-sharing spaces

How the Platform Works

1. *Call for Applications*

NIEA periodically invites enterprises to express interest in joining the network through a guided application process.

2. *Screening and Curation*

Applications are reviewed to assess credibility, readiness, and alignment with the platform's objectives. Selected enterprises are officially onboarded.

3. *Showcasing and Promotion*

Member businesses are profiled and promoted through NIEA's digital assets, newsletters, and partner platforms.

4. *Brokered Connections*

NIEA facilitates tailored linkages to capital providers, buyers, grantmakers, and ecosystem enablers.

5. *Capacity Building and Strategic Opportunities*

Members receive invitations to participate in technical clinics, business dialogues, and training sessions hosted or co-hosted by NIEA.

6. *Enterprise Tracking and Insight Sharing*

Member businesses are tracked over time to generate insights and aggregate learning that informs national enterprise policy and development support.

Benefits to Participating Enterprises

- Elevated visibility and public credibility
- Direct referrals to investors, buyers, and technical service providers
- Media exposure through NIEA campaigns and features
- Strategic introductions and opportunities for co-creation
- Access to a curated resource bank, pitch tools, and grant information
- Inclusion in NIEA's institutional reports, policy briefs, and public research

