GRANT DESCRIPTION

The Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW) Project is an initiative of the Government of the Republic of Uganda, through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), with support from the World Bank. One of the GROW Project products and services is **– Business Plan Competition Grant (BPCG).**

The grant is designed to provide business expansion financing to women-owned micro and small enterprises across Uganda, enabling them to grow, improve productivity, create sustainable employment opportunities and transition from micro to small enterprises, and from small to medium-sized enterprises.

The programme seeks to address the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in accessing conventional financial services, particularly businesses with limited collateral, emerging business models or financing needs that may not meet the requirements of traditional financial institutions. Through a competitive business plan selection process, the programme will identify and support commercially viable enterprises with strong growth potential, innovative business ideas and the ability to generate meaningful economic and social impact.

Purpose and Objectives of the Grant

The Business Plan Competition Grant aims to:

1. Increase access to finance for women-owned micro and small enterprises seeking to expand their businesses and improve their competitiveness.
2. Promote creativity, innovation and scalability, particularly in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), including the development of innovative products, services and business processes.
3. Support women entrepreneurs seeking to enter or expand in traditionally male-dominated sectors such as technology, construction and other non-traditional economic activities.
4. Promote green business practices, climate change adaptation and mitigation, sustainable production and environmentally responsible business operations.
5. Support the establishment, expansion and improvement of childcare facilities and other social enterprises that provide essential services and generate economic opportunities.

6. Support enterprises transitioning from research and development into commercially viable production and marketing.
7. Promote employment creation, revenue growth, export development, market access and value addition within women-owned enterprises.

Priority Business Sectors

The competition targets women-owned enterprises operating in sectors with relatively low participation of women, including:

- **Agribusiness:** Agricultural production and value addition, agro-processing, commercial apiculture, honey processing, milk processing, aquaculture, commercial fish farming, greenhouse farming, hydroponics, irrigation technologies, agricultural mechanisation and post-harvest management.
- **Green Businesses:** Renewable energy, solar energy systems, biogas, energy-efficient technologies, plastic recycling, solar water pumping and other environmentally sustainable business solutions.
- **Construction:** Metal fabrication, welding, carpentry, joinery, plumbing, electrical installation, masonry, tiling, civil works, industrial painting and construction equipment hire.
- **Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM):** Software and application development, robotics, automation, digital solutions, medical devices, assistive technologies, health technology, telemedicine, cold-chain infrastructure and industrial equipment maintenance.
- **Information and Communications Technology (ICT):** Software development, cybersecurity, cloud services, e-commerce platforms, digital applications, supply chain optimisation and technology-enabled business solutions.
- **Arts and Creatives:** Film, drama, music production, photography, digital media, theatre, visual arts, beadwork, basket weaving, knitting and other creative enterprises.
- **Social Enterprises:** STEM-focused education enterprises, licensed mental health rehabilitation centres and social tourism initiatives.
- **Manufacturing:** Innovative manufacturing, leather products, crafts, decorations, licensed beauty and cosmetics products, confectionery and bakery enterprises.

- **Child Care facilities/services**

Eligible Business Expansion Activities

The grant may support business activities that demonstrate a clear contribution to enterprise growth and development, including:

- Acquisition of specialised machinery, equipment and productive business assets.
- Automation and digitisation of business processes.
- Improvement and certification of production and business processes.
- Specialised training and capacity building for employees.
- Development of innovative products and services.
- Expansion of production capacity and improvement of productivity.
- Agricultural and industrial value addition.
- Creation of employment opportunities.
- Development of new markets, export promotion and access to international markets.
- Transition from research and development to commercial production.
- Childcare-related business expansion activities.
- Other eligible interventions that contribute to the objectives of the programme.

Grant Funding and Support

The programme provides business expansion grants based on the classification and size of the enterprise:

- Micro enterprises: Grants of up to **UGX 37,000,000**.
- Small enterprises: Grants of up to **UGX 111,000,000**.

Successful applicants will undergo further business assessment and due diligence, supported by Business Advisors, to develop bankable funding proposals, business plans, implementation workplans, budgets and measurable performance indicators.

Grant awards will be subject to approval and the signing of a Performance-Based Agreement with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. Disbursements

will be made in accordance with the approved funding proposal, grant contract and applicable financial management requirements.

Beneficiary enterprises will also receive appropriate business development support, implementation monitoring and performance assessment to ensure that the grant achieves its intended results.

Expected Outcomes

Through this intervention, the GROW Project seeks to strengthen women-owned enterprises, increase access to sustainable business financing, create employment, improve enterprise revenues, promote innovation and expand women's participation in traditionally male-dominated sectors.

The competition is open to eligible women-owned micro and small enterprises across Uganda, including refugees and refugee-hosting communities, Vulnerable and Marginalised Groups (VMGs), persons with disabilities, enterprises operating in hard-to-reach areas, and childcare service providers.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The GROW Business Plan Competition Grant is open to eligible women-owned micro and small enterprises operating in Uganda. Applicants must satisfy the programme's mandatory eligibility requirements relating to business ownership, legal status, enterprise size, business operation, nationality or refugee status, geographical coverage and proposed business activities.

1. Eligible Applicants and Business Ownership

Applicants must meet the following requirements:

- The applicant must be a legally recognised micro or small enterprise operating in Uganda.
- The enterprise must be majority-owned by one or more women, with women holding more than 50% of the business ownership or shareholding.
- The business must be managed and controlled by one or more women.
- A woman must be a signatory to the business's legal documents and financial accounts.
- The enterprise must operate independently from businesses that are not women-owned.

- The enterprise must be incorporated or registered in Uganda, with the relevant business registration evidence.

2. Eligible Enterprise Size

The competition targets micro and small enterprises, classified as follows:

Micro Enterprises

- Employ up to four (4) people; or
- Have annual sales/revenue turnover not exceeding UGX 10,000,000.

Maximum grant allocation: UGX 35,690,000.

Small Enterprises

- Employ fewer than 49 people (up to 48 employees); or
- Have annual sales/revenue turnover not exceeding UGX 100,000,000.

Maximum grant allocation: UGX 107,070,000.

3. Nationality and Refugee Status

The enterprise must be owned by:

- A Ugandan woman; or
- A woman refugee who is legally registered in Uganda and can provide the relevant supporting identification documents.

Women-owned enterprises operating within refugee-hosting communities are encouraged to apply.

4. Business Operational Requirements

- The business must have been operational for at least one (1) year.
- Applicants must provide evidence demonstrating the existence and operation of the business.
- The business must have a verifiable physical operating location within Uganda.
- Applicants must provide the relevant business location details, including locality and GPS coordinates, together with an LC1 letter confirming the existence of the business at the stated location.

5. Eligible Business Sectors

The proposed business expansion must fall within the programme's targeted sectors, including:

- Agribusiness and agricultural value addition.
- Green businesses and renewable energy.
- Construction and related technical services.
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).
- Information and Communications Technology (ICT).
- Manufacturing and industrial production.
- Arts and creative industries.
- Social enterprises, including childcare services and facilities.
- Other eligible activities aligned with the objectives of the GROW Project.

6. Eligible Business Activities

The proposed activities must contribute to enterprise growth, productivity, innovation, employment creation or market expansion. Eligible activities include:

- Innovation and development of new products, services and business processes.
- Digitisation and automation of business operations.
- Acquisition of specialised machinery and productive equipment.
- Improvement and certification of production processes.
- Employee training and capacity development.
- Expansion of production and service delivery capacity.
- Value addition and commercialisation of products.
- Market development, export promotion and access to overseas markets.
- Transition from research and development to viable commercial production.
- Childcare-related activities.
- Other activities that support the programme's growth objectives.

7. Geographical Coverage

The programme is open to eligible women-owned micro and small enterprises across Uganda, including those operating in:

- All Cities, Municipalities and Districts across the country.
- Hard-to-reach Districts
- Refugee Settlements and Refugee Hosting Districts (RHDs).
- Areas inhabited by Vulnerable and Marginalised Groups (VMGs).

8. Eligibility Period

Eligible activities must fall within the programme implementation period of **12th November 2026 to 11th December 2026**. Implementation of proposed plan must be with in nine months.

9. Mandatory Application Requirements and Supporting Documents

Applicants must provide the following information and supporting documents for eligibility verification:

- Applicant and business identification details, including name, address and contact person.
- Business location details, including locality and GPS coordinates.
- Business registration evidence, such as enterprise registration documents, Certificate of Registration of Partnership or Certificate of Incorporation, as applicable.
- Evidence of women ownership, such as CR12, CR13, enterprise registration documents or an LC1-stamped owner statement for qualifying owner-operated businesses without registration documents.
- National identification documents for Ugandan applicants or refugee identification documents for registered refugee applicants, as applicable.
- Evidence of at least one year of business operation, such as a current or previous trading licence or a bank statement for 12 months or Mobile Money statement for six months.

Applicants must complete all mandatory application requirements and submit the required supporting documentation to proceed to the next stage of evaluation.

10. Excluded Applicants

The following are not eligible to participate:

- Political party groupings, institutions, their subsidiaries and affiliates.
- Government of Uganda entities and Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), including regional and district-level authorities.

11. Grant Selection and Evaluation

Meeting the mandatory eligibility requirements does not automatically guarantee a grant award. Eligible applications will proceed to a competitive assessment and ranking process based on:

- Applicant motivation and the proposed business growth strategy.
- Employment creation, revenue growth and enterprise expansion potential.
- Innovation, scalability and digitisation of business processes.
- Alignment with the programme's priority sectors.
- Proposed business activities and expected development impact.
- Promotion and inclusion of special women groups, including refugee-hosting communities, persons with disabilities, Vulnerable and Marginalised Groups, youth and childcare providers.

Shortlisted applicants will undergo further due diligence, business assessment and field verification. Successful applicants will enter into a Performance-Based Agreement with the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development, and will receive Business Development Services as they implement the approved business plans.

Important: All applicants must meet the applicable mandatory eligibility conditions, provide verifiable supporting documents and demonstrate that their proposed business expansion activities align with the objectives of the GROW Business Competition Grant.