CfCA Study on Trends in Public Investment in Uganda's Culture Sector: A 2025 Follow-up to the 2024 Baseline Assessment

CONNECT FOR CULTURE AFRICA

SELAM

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CfCA Study on Trends in Public Investment in Uganda's Culture Sector: A 2025 Follow-up to the 2024 Baseline Assessment

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1. LIST OF ABREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
CCIs	Cultural and Creative Industries
CDSP	Content Development Support Programme
CfCA	Connect for Culture Africa
CMOs	Collective Management Organisations
CURF	Creative Uganda Revolving Fund
ICT	Information and Communication Technology / Technologies
MakRIF	Makerere University Research and Innovations Fund
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MoGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MoICT	Ministry of ICT and National Guidance
MoTIC	Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Entreprises
NDP IV	National Development Plan IV
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UCC	Uganda Communications Commission
UEPB	Uganda Export Promotion Board (if used, align to final text as UEPB)
UIA	Uganda Investment Authority
UNCC	Uganda National Cultural Centre
URA	Uganda Revenue Authority
URSB	Uganda Registration Services Bureau
UPRS	Uganda Performing Right Society

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Uganda's cultural and creative industries (CCIs) remain structurally underfunded relative to their economic and social potential, even as recent budgets and policy frameworks signal growing recognition of the sector. Quantitatively, this report shows that direct culture allocations have hovered at a tiny fraction of the national budget (well below 0.1%), with culture often embedded in broader envelopes such as "Recreation, Culture and Religion" or large STI/ICT programmes; in FY 2025/26, the creative arts component is estimated at about UGX 66 billion within an UGX 835.98 billion STI/ICT/creative arts package under a roughly UGX 72 trillion national budget. Earlier years' figures indicate that while nominal allocations to culture and CCIs have risen from roughly UGX 4-9 billion baselines, this growth has not kept pace with sector needs nor with continental benchmarks like the African Union's 1% target.

Qualitatively, the study finds that CCIs generate significant livelihoods – especially for youth – across music, film, audio visual media, festivals, design, crafts and heritage, yet most activity remains informal and geographically concentrated in Kampala and a few urban centres. Funding and policy support are heavily skewed towards music, audio visual and ICT enabled content, while books and publishing, visual arts, crafts, design, and heritage innovation receive sporadic, small scale or indirect support, often via generic MSME or tourism schemes rather than tailored cultural programmes. Stakeholders report persistent coordination gaps between key public actors (MoGLSD, MoICT, UCC, UIA, URSB, local governments, etc.), limited transparency around beneficiary selection for funds and presidential initiatives, and the risk of politicisation and elite capture of new instruments such as revolving funds and creative SACCOs.

On the quantitative side, the report documents that CCI related allocations now include: a dedicated creative arts envelope (UGX 66 billion) nested in the STI/ICT cluster; resources for copyright implementation (around UGX 5 billion); capitalisation of an artists' revolving facility (part of about UGX 28 billion for creatives and musicians); and investment in regional creative hubs and recording studios (about UGX 18 billion earmarked for infrastructure). At the same time, central and local government spending under "Recreation, Culture and Religion" remains consistently below 1% of total public expenditure, confirming that culture is still treated as a low priority function compared with infrastructure, security or commercial agriculture. Data constraints are a major cross cutting issue: the absence of culture satellite accounts, inconsistent programme level reporting and infrequent mapping exercises limit the ability to quantify CCIs' contributions to GDP, employment and exports or to track domain and region specific trends over time.

The report recommends, first, translating existing commitments (NDP IV, National Culture Policy, AU 1% decision) into a costed, time bound Culture and Creative Economy Implementation Plan with clear roles for MoGLSD, MoICT, MoTIC, UIA, UCC, URSB, URA, UBOS, UNCC and others, and an explicit roadmap for gradually increasing culture's budget share towards 1%. Second, it calls for strengthening financing instruments by operationalising and reforming the Creative Uganda revolving fund and UCC's Content Development Support Programme through transparent calls, clear eligibility criteria, quotas for youth, women, PWDs and rural creatives, and collaboration with financial institutions to design CCIs friendly products such as IP backed loans and revenue based finance. Third, the report urges a deliberate rebalancing of allocations to under served domains (books, visual arts, crafts, design, heritage), ensuring that new regional hubs are truly multi disciplinary, and integrating CCIs into education and skills policies via a national CCIs skills framework, apprenticeships, and stronger links between training institutions and industry.

Finally, the study recommends a data and governance agenda: institutionalising regular cultural statistics modules and periodic CCIs mapping (every 3-4 years), requiring annual public CCIs investment reports from key implementing bodies, and supporting civil society and artist associations to provide legal aid, rights awareness and organisational development while leading evidence based advocacy for increased and better targeted public investment. Together, these qualitative and quantitative recommendations aim to move Uganda from fragmented, symbolic support toward a coherent, adequately financed cultural and creative ecosystem that can realise its full contribution to GDP, employment, social cohesion and national identity.

3. BACKGROUND

Uganda's Cultural and Creative industries (CCIs) are increasingly recognised in national and continental policy frameworks as engines of employment, social cohesion and economic transformation, yet public investment in the sector continues to lag far behind its demonstrated potential. The National Development Plan IV (NDP IV, 2025/2026-2029/2030), the Uganda National Culture Policy and the African Union's 2030 target of allocating 1% of national budgets to culture all affirm the strategic importance of CCIs, but Uganda's allocations have remained below 0.1% of the national budget over multiple fiscal years. This persistent underfunding has constrained the sector's capacity to contribute fully to national development, despite evidence that CCIs already generate significant GDP contributions, livelihoods and spill-over benefits across tourism, education, technology and urban development.

In 2024, Selam's Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative commissioned a pioneering baseline study and actor mapping on public investment in Uganda's culture sector, which documented the scale, patterns and institutional dynamics of public funding at that time. The baseline provided an essential reference point for advocacy by the Culture Sector Working Group and other stakeholders, highlighting chronic underinvestment, fragmented institutional responsibilities, weak data systems and the absence of a costed implementation plan for culture. However, the policy and budget landscape has since evolved, with new commitments such as the UGX 66 billion allocation to creative arts within the 2025/26 budget, the design of national and regional revolving funds for artists, and efforts to operationalise an updated copyright framework.

The follow-up study to the 2024 baseline assessment is therefore critical to ensuring that advocacy and policy dialogue are grounded in current evidence and capture emerging opportunities and risks in the 2025/26 fiscal context. This study thus systematically reviews national budget documents and recent government programmes to quantify allocations to CCIs, identify which domains and regions are being prioritised, and map the evolving roles of key ministries, departments and agencies. It also interrogates how new financing mechanisms, regulatory reforms and infrastructure investments align with continental benchmarks and earlier recommendations, and where significant gaps persist.

The findings presented in this report offer an up-to-date picture of public and selected private investment in Uganda's CCIs, highlighting key trends, constraints and opportunities across the nine cultural domains. Building on this analysis, the report advances targeted, evidence-based recommendations directed at government, development partners like Selam, civil society, the private sector and practitioners, aimed at moving Uganda closer towards a more equitable, adequately funded and coherent cultural and creative ecosystem.

4. STUDY OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

4.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The study aims to analyse trends in public investment in Uganda's cultural and creative sector since the 2024 baseline assessment, with a focus on developments reflected in the 2025/2026 fiscal framework. By examining recent national budget allocations and newly introduced government programmes, incentives, and policy interventions, the study seeks to generate evidence to inform advocacy, policy dialogue, and strategic engagement under the CfCA initiative

4.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

i. To analyze national budget allocations for Uganda's CCIs in the 2025/2026 financial year.

ii. To identify the latest government initiatives and interventions for Uganda's cultural and creative sector.

iii. To identify emerging gaps and global trends in funding Uganda's CCIs

iv. To identify priority domains and programmes for funding within Uganda's CCIs

v. To provide evidence-based and actionable recommendations to strengthen advocacy and inform future public investment in Uganda's cultural and creative sector.

5. RESEARCH APPROACH

5.1 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a mixed approach consisting of in-depth review of budgetary documents and government reports, interviews with key sector stakeholders and other primary data collection methods as explained below;

i. *Budget Document Analysis:* Scrutiny of the 2025/26 national budget and supporting documents to identify direct and indirect allocations to CCIs, including sectoral breakdowns under the MoGLSD. Recent reports from other line ministries, departments and agencies in the cultural sector – including Uganda Investment Authority (UIA), Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives (MoTIC), Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology (MoICT), Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB), Uganda Export Promotion Board (UEPB), and Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) among others will also be reviewed.

ii. *Secondary Data Review:* Examination of existing literature, prior mapping studies (2014, 2022), policy documents, government and international agency reports, and stakeholder data to triangulate trends in public funding, sector employment, domain prioritization, and incentive frameworks.

iii. *Comparative Assessment:* Alignment of 2025/26 allocations and policy measures with recommendations and pathways proposed in the 2024 baseline study to identify shifts, gaps, and emerging opportunities.

iv. *Consultation Inputs:* Incorporation of qualitative feedback from Culture Sector Working Group members, government technocrats, and sector practitioners as documented in previous studies.

This approach, as explained above, focused on quantifying public investment, assessing prioritization trends, and highlighting funding gaps or opportunities for Uganda's cultural sector in the 2025/26 fiscal year.

6. ANALYTICAL TOOLS EMPLOYED

To achieve the objectives of this consultancy and ensure the credibility of findings, the study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative analytical tools, as outlined below:

i. *Budget Trend Analysis.* This tool entailed systematic quantitative examination of Uganda's 2025/2026 national budget and related sectoral budgets. Detailed line-item reviews and sectoral breakdowns have been conducted to identify direct and indirect allocations to cultural and creative industries, allowing for clear tracking of annual funding fluctuations, identification of new allocations, and benchmarking against historical allocations and stated policy targets (e.g., the AU 1% benchmark). Comparative allocation tables and time-series graphs have been generated to visualize trends in the final project report.

ii. *Policy and Literature Content Analysis.* The study undertook qualitative content analysis of policy documents, government interventions, and prior mapping studies. Key themes, policy shifts, and incentive structures were extracted and coded to identify domain prioritization, alignment with sector strategies, and emerging policy gaps or opportunities. Comparative matrices were used to map recommendations from the 2024 baseline study against current measures and interventions.

iii. *Domain Prioritization and Programme Mapping.* Sectoral data (collected from budget documents, ministry reports, and stakeholder input) has been mapped onto UNESCO's cultural domains framework. This enabled systematic identification of which sub-sectors (e.g., performing arts, visual arts, new media) receive prioritization in funding and policy support.

iv. *Stakeholder-Based Validation.* Qualitative insights from key informant consultations (including members of the Culture Sector Working Group, government technocrats, and sector practitioners) were used to validate and contextualize desk review findings. This triangulation process helped to enhance result reliability and ensure alignment with sector realities.

v. *Gap and Opportunity Analysis.* The study applies a comparative assessment framework, contrasting current public investments and interventions with recommendations proposed in the 2024 baseline study. Analytical matrices and SWOT-style tables have been utilized in the final report to clearly document shifts, persistent gaps, and emerging opportunities in sector funding and policy.

7. LIMITATIONS

i. *Time and resource constraints. The study was* implemented within a limited three month consultancy period and with modest resources, which constrained the breadth of primary data collection, the number of respondents reached, and the depth of follow up or repeat interviews across regions and domains.

ii. *Coverage of primary respondents.* Although key informant interviews were conducted with MDAs, civil society representatives and industry stakeholders, it was not possible to comprehensively cover all relevant agencies, associations and informal groups, which may have left out some perspectives, especially from less visible or emerging sub sectors and regions.

iii. *Data aggregation in budget documents.* Many CCIs related allocations remain embedded within broader envelopes (such as STI, ICT, recreation, tourism or MSME support), and are not consistently disaggregated by sub sector or domain, limiting precise attribution of amounts to specific cultural domains and interventions.

iv. *Inconsistent programme level reporting.* Some implementing entities and funds provide limited or irregular public information on beneficiaries, regional distribution, implementation status and results, which reduces the granularity of programme level analysis and makes it harder to assess equity and impact.

v. *Gaps in cultural statistics.* The absence of institutionalised culture satellite accounts and dedicated cultural modules in regular labour force or enterprise surveys constrained the ability to fully quantify CCIs' contributions to GDP, employment and exports and to track long term structural trends.

vi. *Scope boundaries of the assignment.* The update was designed to focus primarily on public investment in FY 2025/26 and selected government linked schemes; therefore, many private, philanthropic and community based funding flows, as well as certain cross cutting issues such as social protection and working conditions, could only be addressed in indicative rather than comprehensive detail.

8. STUDY FINDINGS

8.1 OVERALL PUBLIC FUNDING LEVELS AND TRENDS

Public investment in CCIs in FY 2025/26 remains below 0.1% of the approximately UGX 72 trillion national budget, far short of the African Union's 1% benchmark and the pathways proposed in the 2024 Selam baseline study. The creative arts component receives an estimated UGX 66 billion within a broader UGX 835.98 billion package for science, technology, innovation (STI), ICT and creative arts, indicating symbolic recognition but continued low prioritization relative to other sectors such as infrastructure, security, and commercial agriculture.

The 2025/26 budget shows gradual upward movement from earlier allocations that hovered around UGX 4 billion directly earmarked for culture, but this growth is largely tied to bundled STI-ICT "innovation" envelopes rather than a standalone culture vote, limiting visibility and tracking of CCIs-specific expenditure. Budget speech narratives emphasize job creation, youth employment, export potential and tourism linkages as the primary drivers for government interest in CCIs, but findings of this study indicate that these ambitions are yet to be matched by proportional and predictable funding flows.

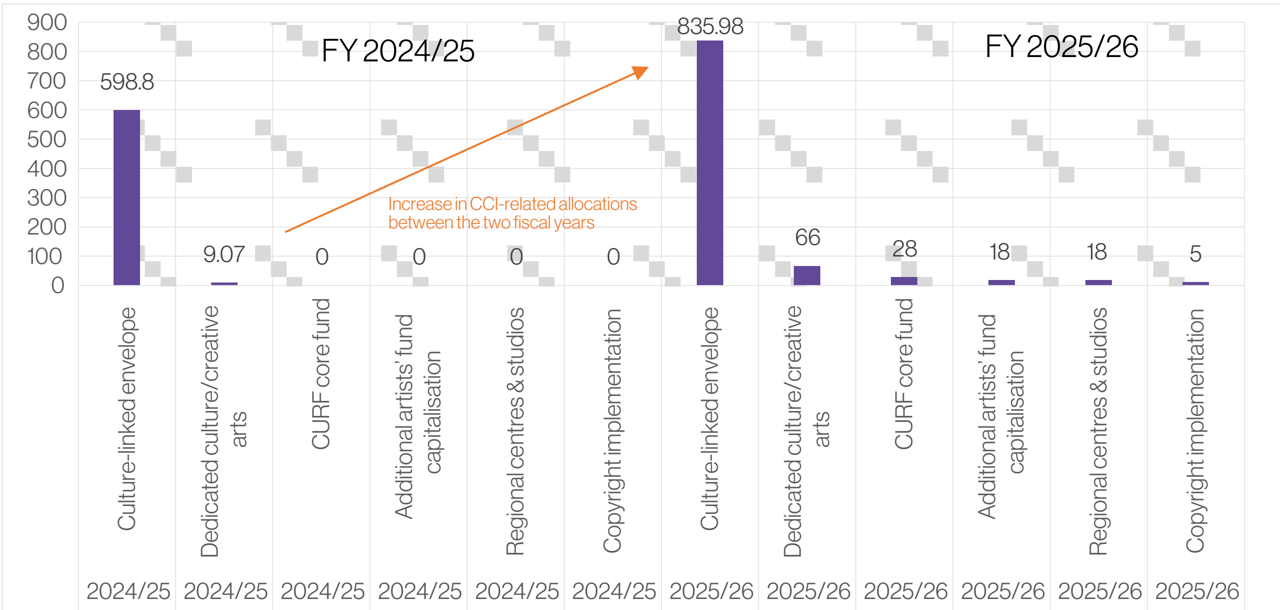

Figure 1: CCI-related Allocations in Uganda, FY 2024/25 Vs 2025/26 (UGX billion)

MDAs BUDGETARY MANDATES FOR FY 2025/26

The 2025/26 budget does not list a single "CCIs vote", but channels the UGX 66 billion for creative arts and related support through several key ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs). The main MDAs with clear CCI-related funding or programmes in 2025/26 include;

i. ***Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD)*** – Hosts the culture and creative arts portfolio and is the principal MDA for the UGX 66 billion creative arts allocation, including:

Fast-tracking implementation of the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act (about UGX 5 billion); capitalisation of the Creative Uganda Revolving

Fund / artists' fund (part of the UGX 28 billion revolving facility for creatives and musicians) and; development of regional creative and cultural centres and recording studios (about UGX 18 billion for regional hubs).

ii. ***Ministry of ICT and National Guidance*** – Sits within the broader "Science, Technology, Innovation including ICT and Creative Arts Industry" envelope of about UGX 835.98 billion, and implements digital transformation and content/innovation programmes that directly support CCIs (media, film, digital content, creative tech).

iii. ***Uganda Communications Commission (UCC)*** – A key agency under the ICT sector that continues to finance audio-visual and other content through the Content Development Support Programme (CDSP), Uganda Film Festival (UFF) and related innovation and local-content schemes, funded within the ICT/ digital transformation and communications allocations.

iv. ***Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB)*** – Receives resources under the Justice/law and registration portfolios and is explicitly involved in operationalising part of the creative fund for musicians and copyright support (UGX 5 billion for copyright plus UGX 5 billion for musicians within the Shs 28 billion Creative Uganda Revolving Fund).

v. ***Uganda National Cultural Centre (UNCC)*** – Financed through the culture vote and development partners (e.g. World Bank projects) for modernization of the National Theatre complex and related cultural infrastructure, under MoGLSD's culture and arts development programmes.

vi. ***Science, Technology and Innovation Secretariat / Office of the President*** – Manages STI-related funding that includes the wider innovation and digital-creative components under which some CCIs (creative tech, digital content) are supported within the UGX 835.98 billion knowledge-economy allocation.

vii. ***Uganda Investment Authority (UIA)*** – Investment promotion and facilitation for creative and digital businesses within priority sectors, though not separately costed for CCIs in the national budget tables.

viii. ***Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives (MoTIC)*** – Micro, small and media enterprises (MSME) and cooperative support that also reaches creative enterprises and SACCOs, including regional creative SACCOs connected to the revolving fund.

ix. ***Local governments (districts and cities)*** – Receive transfers that finance cultural festivals, heritage activities and community arts as part of their culture and community development mandates, albeit at very low levels (typically well below 1% of local budgets).

Table 1: Public budget allocation to Culture sector in Uganda (FY 2021/22–2024/25)

Vote / Item	FY 2021/22	FY 2022/23	FY 2023/24	FY 2024/25	FY 2025/26
Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development (MoGLSD)	163.31	186.694	180.824	181.432	834.000
Department of Culture and Family Affairs	5.268	5.298	7.453	9.069	66.000
National Budget (UGX bn)	44,778.8	43,083.2	41,083.2	58,000 (approved envelope	72,376.000
Culture Dept. budget as % of total National Budget	0.0012%	0.0012%	0.018%	0.016%	0.091%

Note: *FY 2025/26 values are based on the approved national budget of about UGX 72.376 trillion and the UGX 66 billion creative industry allocation in the national budget. In addition, the MoGLSD total for 2025/26 is taken from the central government draft/approved estimates for Vote 018; it is shown here to keep the table structure consistent, but the main focus of the report's analysis is the UGX 66 billion culture/creative allocation and its share of the national budget.*

8.2 CONTRIBUTION OF CCIs TO UGANDA'S ECONOMY

Uganda's cultural and creative industries are an increasingly important growth pole, combining high youth employment, strong spill overs and a predominantly informal enterprise base. Recent policy reporting estimates that CCIs generate about 3% of Uganda's GDP – roughly UGX 3.18 trillion in total business income – despite chronic underfunding and weak cultural statistics. Official national accounts still register Arts, Entertainment and Recreation at only about 0.2% of GDP over 2017–2022, underscoring how current systems under capture creative value added.

Moreover, employment evidence confirms CCIs as a major labour absorber, especially for youth. UBOS and EAC mapping exercises indicate that more than 280,000–386,000 people are directly engaged in cultural and creative activities, with some studies placing total CCI employment above 400,000 – more than the entire civil service. Youth aged 18–30 dominate in performing arts, audio visual media, design, books and sports, while older cohorts are concentrated in heritage and traditional knowledge domains. In music and film alone, a 2022 survey suggests that over 70% of young people in the sub sector earn some form of livelihood from creative work.

The informal sector is the core engine of this contribution. More than 10,000–12,000 CCI enterprises operate nationally, the vast majority as micro and small businesses employing 1–5 workers, with around half unregistered and earning under USD 5,000 per year. URA's PAYE data captured only 9,279 formal employees in arts, entertainment and recreation in 2022, confirming that most creative work, income and job creation occur outside formal payroll and tax systems. Even so, formalised CCI firms already contribute an estimated UGX 11.3 billion in annual tax revenue, with potential to rise significantly if informality is reduced and investment scales up.

8.3 DOMAIN-LEVEL FUNDING AND PRIORITIZATION

Using the nine domains recognized under the culture policy and in the 2024 baseline, the 2025/26 budget and associated programmes show uneven domain support, with clear skewing towards music, audio-visual content and ICT-enabled creative services, often at the expense of other domains as indicated below;

i. Music and Performing Arts:

- Government has continued to channel resources to music and live performance through SACCO-based schemes, presidential donations, targeted support to promoters and event organizers, and special regional initiatives such as the recent UGX 1 billion revolving fund for the WALK Arts Creative Foundation in Northern Uganda, aimed at music production, asset financing and commercial agriculture for creatives. The fund is part of a long-term UGX 49-billion development plan for the burgeoning creative sector in the northern region, spread over a ten-year period starting 2025.
- National and regional festivals, campaigns and concerts are intermittently supported under Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD) and State House budgets, though allocations are often ad hoc, personality-driven, politically-oriented and poorly documented, reinforcing informality and patronage of the sector.

ii. Film, TV and Audio-visual:

- The Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) continues to implement the Content Development Support Programme (CDSP), which provides competitive grants and in-kind support for commercially and culturally-relevant films, series, animation and documentaries, with new calls issued in early 2025 under CDSP III. Launched in 2020 as part of the creative industry's post-COVID recovery plan, the programme has so far funded local film projects to the tune of UGX 1.7 billion over the last two cohorts, with the 2025 cohort expected to double the figure.
- CDSP remains one of the few structured, recurring public funding facilities targeted at the audio-visual domain, but its envelope is relatively small compared to demand, and current documentation emphasizes project selection and recoupment arrangements more than long-term sector infrastructure or social protection.

iii. Cultural and Natural Heritage:

- Heritage-related spending – museums, monuments, cultural sites and archives – continues to be embedded within MoGLSD and tourism-linked votes, with allocations focused on upkeep and occasional capital works rather than systematic digitization, community-based safeguarding or innovation in heritage-based enterprises. Notable public expenditures during the FY 2025/2026 include funding towards the completion of the UGX 13 billion 15-year restoration efforts on the main mausoleum at Buganda kingdom's Kasubi Royal Tombs following a devastating fire that destroyed the structure back in March 2010.

- Local governments across the regions remain under-resourced to maintain cultural sites and support heritage events, with district-level culture spending still below 1% of local budgets, mirroring the national underinvestment highlighted in the 2024 baseline study.

iv. *Visual Arts, Crafts and Design:*

- Visual arts and crafts benefit indirectly from enterprise schemes (e.g. Emyooga, Youth Livelihood Programme, Women Empowerment Program and the Parish Development Model) but lack a dedicated national facility for production spaces, export promotion or social protection tailored to artisans.

- Occasional procurement of artworks for public institutions and support for craft markets are reported, but these remain marginal and highly localized, with limited data from Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB) and Uganda Export Promotion Board (UEPB) on formalized craft enterprises and export volumes.

v. *Books, Publishing and Literary Arts:*

- Public investment in books and publishing remains dominated by education-sector textbook procurement, with minimal targeted investment in creative writing, independent publishing, or literary festivals beyond sporadic grants or sponsorships.

- The absence of a sector-wide reading and publishing strategy, and limited engagement by URSB on ISBN systems and copyright enforcement, constrains monetization and export of Uganda's literary content.

vi. *Media, Radio and Digital Content:*

- Media outlets benefit from broader ICT, digitization and communication strategies led by the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance through its ongoing five-year Digital Transformation Roadmap (FY 2023/24-2027/28), but there is no explicit media development fund focusing on public interest, cultural or community media content.

- Regulatory interventions by UCC, including local content quotas and licensing frameworks, shape the media and digital content environment, but are not consistently aligned with funding and capacity-building instruments for independent producers. Moreover, digital spaces in Uganda remain heavily censored with the likes of Facebook remaining under effective ban since 2021.

vii. *Software, Innovation and Creative Tech:*

- Under the STI and ICT envelopes, Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) and ICT sector programmes emphasize innovation hubs, digital skills, and a planned Hi-Tech City, positioning creative tech and gaming as emerging domains.

- However, budget and programme documents rarely disaggregate how much of this innovation spending flows to cultural and creative applications, limiting the ability to track support to software-based CCIs such as gaming, AR/VR and creative apps.

viii. *Support Services and Infrastructure:*

- The 2025/26 budget introduces or reinforces investments in infrastructure and support services: UGX 18 billion for regional creative and cultural centres, theatres and recording studios; modernization of the Uganda National Cultural Centre (UNCC) under a World Bank-backed project; and operationalization of a Creative Uganda revolving fund for artists.

- These infrastructure investments promise to decentralize access to production and performance spaces, but timelines, governance mechanisms and inclusion safeguards remain unclear, raising questions about who will actually benefit outside Kampala and high-profile artists.

ix. *Cross-cutting Domains (Education, Training, Research):*

- Public universities, technical institutes and community training centres continue to deliver arts and creative skills, but there is no dedicated national skills fund for CCIs, and limited linkage between training programmes and the new financing instruments like the revolving funds and SACCO schemes. However, Makerere University, the leading public university, manages a UGX 25 billion competitive annual grant – the Mak-RIF grant – where research projects by the staff and students are supported, although rarely are these projects CCI-oriented.

- Research and statistics on CCIs remain thin, with Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) yet to institutionalize regular satellite accounts or labour force modules dedicated to cultural employment, hindering evidence-based planning.

8.4 DRIVERS, ACTORS AND IMPLEMENTATION DYNAMICS

The dominant drivers of government funding to CCIs remain macroeconomic narratives of youth employment, export diversification, digital transformation and tourism branding, often framed within broader industrialization and STI agendas. Political consideration – particularly presidential initiatives, regional appeasement and elite artist patronage – continue to shape who benefits from direct transfers, subsidized loans and high-visibility grants.

Multiple ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) share responsibility for CCIs-related programmes: MoGLSD, Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives (MoTIC), UIA, UCC, URSB, URA, UBOS, as well as UNCC and local governments. However, the absence of a dedicated culture sector implementation plan and clear inter-agency coordination framework produces duplication, fragmented reporting and missed synergies between regulatory tools (e.g. copyright enforcement), funding schemes and export promotion.

8.5 GAPS AND EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

Persistent gaps include chronically low and unpredictable funding levels, limited ring-fenced allocations for specific domains, weak social protection for artists, and inadequate data systems to track sector performance. The informality of the sector, limited registration of creative enterprises with URSB, and low compliance with tax and copyright regimes further constrain the fiscal space and visibility of CCIs within planning and public financial management systems.

At the same time, emerging opportunities are visible in: the increase to UGX 66 billion for creative arts within the STI-ICT envelope; the planned network of regional creative hubs and studios; the operational and planned revolving funds (including the WALK Arts Creative Foundation facility, and Creative Uganda fund); and continued calls under UCC's CDSP and other innovation funds. These developments provide strategic entry points to align public investment with the 2024 baseline recommendations, especially if linked to rights-based frameworks such as the amended Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act, which is receiving UGX 5 billion to support implementation in the FY 2025/2026.

Private funding in the CCIs remains limited but important: local promoters, telecom sponsorships, brand endorsements and donor-supported projects (including Selam, UNESCO and other cultural cooperation initiatives) continue to underwrite a significant share of production, events and capacity-building, often filling gaps left by the state but also creating uneven, projectized support landscapes. Without stronger public-private coordination frameworks, impact evaluation and incentives, this private contribution risks remaining fragmented and short-term, rather than leveraging and complementing public investments in a coherent manner.

Summary of Key Government CCI Programmes, FY 2025/26

**The main programmes that emerge in the 2025/2026 context are summarized below; where exact internal splits are not yet public, the table reflects only amounts that are explicitly reported.*

Programme / Instrument	Approx. amount (UGX)	Target Beneficiaries	Main Objectives	Lead MDA / Implementing body
Creative arts allocation within STI/ICT & Creative Arts envelope	66 billion for creative arts (within 835.98 billion for STI, ICT & creative arts)	Artists and creative enterprises across nine domains; sector institutions (e.g. UNCC)	Support job creation, formalisation and innovation in CCIs; acquire a permanent "home"/hub for creatives; scale infrastructure and financing for the creative arts	Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development (MoGLSD) in collaboration with Ministry of ICT & National Guidance and STI structures under Office of the President
Creative Uganda Revolving Fund (artists' SACCO fund) – CURF	28 billion total: 5b musicians, 5b copyright support, 18b other creative SACCOs	Musicians and other creatives organised in 19 regional SACCOs; CMOs and IP rightsholders	Provide affordable, revolving finance (5% interest) to creatives; use copyrights/royalties as collateral; professionalise artist savings groups and expand access to credit	MoGLSD (lead), with URSB (IP registration), SACCO unions and CMOs; oversight from Finance and Culture Sector Working Group
Additional capitalisation of artists' revolving fund within Shs 66b package	Extra 18 billion added in 2025/26, bringing this artists' fund envelope to 23 billion (within/ linked to CURF)	Artists' savings groups and SACCOs countrywide	Scale up the existing artists' revolving fund so more creatives can access concessional loans for production, equipment and business expansion	MoGLSD (culture & community development directorates), working with SACCO apex structures
Regional creative and cultural centres & recording studios	18 billion (capital development)	Creatives across regions (musicians, performers, visual artists, media producers, etc.)	Construct/equip regional hubs and studios to decentralise production infrastructure and reduce Kampala concentration	MoGLSD (culture), with possible project support from development partners and local governments
Permanent home / hub for creative artists (Hi-Tech City / creative hub component)	Part of 66 billion creative arts allocation and wider Hi-Tech City plans; amount not fully disaggregated, but included in that package	National-level creative community; innovation and digital-creative enterprises	Establish a permanent home for creatives and integrate CCIs into a Hi-Tech City for innovation, content production and export-oriented creative tech	Ministry of ICT & National Guidance; STI secretariat / Office of the President; MoGLSD for sector linkages
Implementation of Copyright & Neighbouring Rights Act and copyright management system	About 5 billion earmarked within culture allocation for implementation and copyright support; plus system roll-out funding	Musicians and other rightsholders (through CMOs such as UPRS); broadcasters and digital platforms	Operationalise the new copyright law; deploy a national copyright management system; strengthen IP protection and improve royalty collection for creatives	MoGLSD (policy & oversight), URSB (IP registry), UPRS and other CMOs; technical support from ICT sector

UCC's Content Development Support Programme (CDSP III and related calls)	Exact FY 2025/2026 envelope not stated publicly but expected to be more than the 1.3 billion given out in the last cohort; CDSP remains the main audio-visual grant window within ICT allocations	Film, TV, animation, radio drama and other local content producers	Co-finance development and production of quality Ugandan content; promote local content on broadcast and digital platforms; build production capacity	Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) under Ministry of ICT & National Guidance
Northern Uganda Arts & Creative Industry Revolving Fund (WALK Arts)	1 billion (first tranche of a 10-year 49 billion plan: 20b SACCO, 29b infrastructure & commercial agriculture)	Creatives in Greater Northern Uganda (musicians, publishers, promoters, media practitioners and other artists registered with WALK Arts)	Provide revolving credit for asset financing, music/ content production and commercial agriculture; build a strong creative SACCO base in Northern Uganda	MoGLSD (through Operation Wealth Creation links) partnering with WALK Arts Creative Foundation/SACCO and regional leaders
President's pledges to artists' savings groups (additional support)	Up to 20 billion pledged nationally to artists' savings groups in coming year, complementing existing funds	Artists' savings groups and associations countrywide	Strengthen artist SACCOs and savings groups; expand revolving finance for creatives linked to political/ mobilization efforts	State House / Office of the President, working with MoGLSD and Operation Wealth Creation structures
Broader STI & ICT programmes that include CCIs components	835.98 billion total: 388.23b STI, 381.75b ICT & digitalisation, 66b creative arts	Innovators, tech and creative entrepreneurs (including gaming, digital media, creative apps)	Build a knowledge- and innovation-driven economy; expand digital infrastructure and skills; position CCIs within digital transformation and export strategy	STI Secretariat / Office of the President; Ministry of ICT & National Guidance; allied agencies (UIA, innovation hubs)

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Strategic Public Financing and Budget Architecture:

i. i) Establish a dedicated culture and CCIs budget programme

- There is a need to create a clearly labelled culture and CCIs programme within MoGLSD (or a cross-cutting vote), with sub-programmes aligned to the nine domains, to improve visibility, tracking and accountability for public investment.
- Disaggregate the current UGX 66 billion creative arts allocation from the broader STI/ICT envelope in budget documentation and reporting, and progressively increase it towards the AU 1% benchmark by setting medium-term expenditure targets with annual milestones.

ii. Institutionalize multi-source financing mechanisms

- Formalize and consolidate existing funds – such as the Creative Uganda revolving fund, Walk Arts Creative Foundation support, CDSP allocations and other SACCO-based schemes – into a harmonized "Creative Economy Financing Facility" with clear eligibility, governance and reporting standards.
- Leverage blended finance by inviting development partners (Selam, UNESCO, EU, UN agencies) and private financial institutions to co-finance this facility, using public money as de-risking capital for loans, guarantees and equity instruments targeting creative enterprises.

iii. Strengthen local government culture financing

- There is a need to introduce minimum budget thresholds or conditional grants for culture at district and city levels, ensuring that local authorities allocate at least a defined percentage of their budgets to culture, heritage and creative enterprise support, with performance indicators tied to implementation of the National Culture Policy and community impact.
- Facilitate capacity-building for district planners and cultural officers to integrate CCIs into District Development Plans and to access national funds and public-private partners schemes for festivals, cultural centres and creative hubs.

Policy, Coordination and Regulatory Frameworks:

iv. Develop and implement a national culture and creative economy implementation plan

- Translate the National Culture Policy and NDP IV commitments into a costed, time-bound implementation plan that assigns clear roles to MoGLSD, MoICT, MoTIC, UIA, UCC, URSB, URA, UBOS and UNCC among other MDAs, with measurable indicators, financing scenarios and an explicit 1% budget roadmap.
- Establish an inter-ministerial Culture and Creative Economy Steering Committee, anchored in the Culture Sector Working Group, to coordinate policy, funding, data and advocacy, and to host regular public-private dialogues with practitioners and civil society.

v. Operationalize the amended copyright regime and related IP instruments

- Ensure that the UGX 5 billion allocation for implementation of the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act is directed towards strengthening collective management organizations (e.g. UFMI and UPRS), enhancing enforcement capacity, digitizing registries and running sustained public awareness campaigns on IP rights.
- Encourage URSB and URA to simplify registration and tax procedures for creative enterprises, and explore tax incentives (e.g. exemptions, deductions and rebates) for investments in local content production, gallery spaces, book publishing and cultural infrastructure.

vi. Align regulatory tools with funding incentives

- Link UCC's local content requirements in broadcasting to accessible funding and training under CDSP and related schemes, ensuring that quotas are matched by resources for independent producers and fair remuneration mechanisms.
- Work with UIA and MoTIC to formally classify CCIs as priority investment sectors, accompanied by tailored investment codes, export promotion measures and aftercare services for foreign and domestic investors in film, music, gaming, design and cultural tourism.

Domain-Specific and Inclusive Programming:

vii. Balance domain prioritization beyond music and audio-visuals

- Earmark specific envelopes within the creative arts budget for underfunded domains such as books and publishing, visual arts, crafts, design and heritage innovation, including competitive grants for literary festivals, residency programmes, craft design labs and heritage-based creative enterprises.
- Ensure that new regional creative and cultural centres allocate space and resources for multidisciplinary activities – galleries, rehearsal spaces, reading rooms, screening rooms, training studios – rather than focusing solely on recording facilities and music events.

viii. Decentralize and democratize access to funds

- Institutionalize transparent calls for proposals and clear selection criteria across all schemes (revolving funds, CDSP, presidential initiatives), with public disclosure of beneficiaries disaggregated by region, gender, age and domain.
- Prioritize youth, women, persons with disabilities and rural creatives by reserving dedicated quotas in funds and infrastructure programmes, and by partnering with community-based CSOs and associations to provide outreach, application support and financial literacy training.

ix. Integrate CCIs into education, skills and employment policies

- Collaborate with the Ministry of Education and Sports and higher education institutions to develop a national CCIs skills framework that connects curricula in arts, media, design, ICT and entrepreneurship to the emerging financing instruments and regional hubs.
- Expand apprenticeship and internship schemes in collaboration with private sector players – production companies, publishers, galleries, studios – linking public wage subsidies or tax incentives to the creation of structured placements for young creatives.

Data, Evidence and Monitoring:

x. Strengthen statistics and sector mapping

- Support UBOS, in partnership with MoGLSD and UBOS's counterparts in line ministries, to develop regular cultural statistics modules within labour force, business and household surveys, and to pilot culture satellite accounts that capture CCIs' contribution to GDP, employment and exports.
- Institutionalize periodic national CCIs mapping exercises (e.g, every 3-4 years), building on the 2014, 2022 and 2024 studies and the current update, to track structural changes and trends, inform budget advocacy and monitor progress towards the 1% target.

xi. Improve transparency and reporting by MDAs and funds

- It is imperative for UCC, MoGLSD, UIA, UNCC and other implementing bodies to publish annual CCIs investment reports, including detailed breakdowns by domain, region, gender and instrument (grants, loans, infrastructure), and to make data accessible to researchers and advocacy coalitions.
- Encourage WALK Arts Creative Foundation and other publicly supported creative SACCOs to adopt robust governance, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, including public reporting on loan performance, outreach, and sectoral impact to avoid politicization and elite capture.

Roles for Development Partners, Civil Society, Private Sector and Practitioners:

xii. Development partners (Selam, UNESCO, others)

- Support the government and the Culture Sector Working Group to design the national culture and creative economy implementation plan, including costing, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and capacity-building for MDAs and local governments.
- Co-finance catalytic windows within the proposed Creative Economy Financing Facility -such as innovation challenges, export readiness programmes and social protection pilots for artists – while insisting on adherence to transparency, inclusiveness and human-rights-based principles.

xiii. Civil society and artist associations

- Intensify coordinated advocacy for the 1% cultural budget target and for implementation of the 2024 baseline pathways and this update's recommendations, using evidence from budget analyses and lived experiences of practitioners.
- Provide legal aid, rights awareness and organizational development support to creative collectives, SACCOs and CMOs, helping them to meet governance standards required for public and donor funding and to engage effectively in policy dialogue.

xiv. Private sector and financial institutions

- Collaborate with the government to develop CCIs-friendly financial products (e.g. revenue-based financing, IP-backed loans, performance insurance) that leverage public guarantees and data from CMOs and digital platforms.
- Partner with MDAs and hubs to sponsor talent development programmes, export showcases, festivals and incubation labs, explicitly linking corporate social responsibility and marketing budgets to sustainable CCIs ecosystem building.

xv. Practitioners and CCIs enterprises

- Strengthen internal governance, registration and compliance (with URSB, URA, CMOs), enabling enterprises and associations to access public funds, bank finance and regional markets more effectively.
- Engage proactively with new opportunities such as UCC's CDSP calls, regional hubs, and revolving funds, while documenting and sharing evidence of impact to reinforce advocacy for scaled-up and better-targeted public investment.

Table 2: Summary of the Recommendations, Organised by Time Horizon, Lead Actor and Projected outcome

Time Horizon	Recommendation	Lead MDA / Stakeholder	Projected Outcome
Short term	Finalise and adopt a costed national Culture & Creative Economy Implementation Plan linked to NDP IV and AU 1% target.	MoGLSD with NPA, MoFPED, Culture Sector Working Group (CSWG)	Clear roadmap and budget scenarios for scaling culture funding, with defined roles and indicators.
	Establish/activate an interministerial Culture & Creative Economy Steering Committee anchored in the CSWG.	MoGLSD, OPM, key MDAs (MoICT, MoTIC, UIA, UCC, URSB, URA, UBOS, UNCC)	Improved coordination of policies, funds and data across CCIs and regular public–private dialogue.
	Direct the UGX 5bn copyright allocation to strengthening CMOs, enforcement, digital registries and IP awareness.	MoGLSD, URSB, URA, UCC, Police/ Judiciary	Increased IP registration, better royalty collection and reduced piracy for creators.
	Simplify business registration and tax procedures for creative enterprises; design basic tax incentives for local content and cultural infrastructure.	URSB, URA, MoFPED, MoTIC	Higher formalisation of CCIs, broader tax base and greater private investment in local content.
	Link UCC local content quotas to accessible funding and training windows (e.g. CDSP) for independent producers.	UCC, MoICT, MoGLSD	Better quality local content, higher compliance with quotas and fairer remuneration to producers.
	Institutionalise transparent, competitive calls and disclosure of beneficiaries for all schemes (CDSP, revolving funds, presidential initiatives).	MoGLSD, UCC, URSB, UIA, fund managers (e.g. WALK Arts)	Reduced politicisation and elite capture, more equitable regional and demographic reach.
	Reserve quotas in funds and hubs for youth, women, PWDs and rural creatives; use CSOs to support outreach and applications.	MoGLSD, local governments, CSOs & artist associations	More inclusive access to finance and infrastructure, with improved participation of marginalised groups.
	Require implementing MDAs and funds to publish annual CCIs investment reports disaggregated by domain, region and instrument.	MoGLSD, UCC, UIA, UNCC, MoFPED	Greater transparency, easier evidencebased advocacy and monitoring of the AU 1% trajectory.
	Support creative SACCOs and foundations (e.g. WALK Arts) to adopt robust governance, M&E and public reporting.	MoGLSD, MoTIC/ Cooperatives, CSOs	Stronger accountability and sustainability of publicly backed creative finance schemes.Draft-Report-Baseline-Study.docx
	Development partners to codesign the implementation plan and cofinance catalytic windows (innovation, export, socialprotection pilots).	Selam, UNESCO, other DPs with MoGLSD & CSWG	Betterdesigned, wellresourced pilots that derisk public investment and model good practice.
	CSOs and associations to intensify coordinated 1%budget advocacy using budget evidence and artists' testimonies.	CSOs, federations, unions, CSWG	Stronger political pressure and public awareness around culture financing gaps.
	Practitioners and enterprises to strengthen governance, registration and compliance to qualify for funds and markets.	CCIs enterprises, guilds, SACCOs	Higher eligibility for public funds and credit, improved bargaining power and market access.

Medium term	Formally classify CCIs as priority investment sectors with tailored investment codes and export promotion measures.	UIA, MoTIC, MoFPED, MoFA/UEPB	Increased FDI and domestic investment in film, music, gaming, design and cultural tourism.
	Earmark dedicated envelopes for underfunded domains (books, publishing, visual arts, crafts, design, heritage innovation).	MoGLSD, MoFPED, MoES, UNCC	More balanced domain support and diversified CCIs revenue streams beyond music/ audiovisual.
	Ensure regional creative centres are genuinely multidisciplinary (galleries, rehearsal, reading, screening, training spaces).	MoGLSD, UNCC, local governments, project donors	Decentralised, multiuse infrastructure that serves diverse practitioners and audiences.
	Integrate CCIs into education and skills policies via a national CCIs skills framework and updated curricula.	MoES, MoGLSD, universities/TVETs	Better alignment between training and labour market needs in CCIs, improved employability of graduates.
	Scale apprenticeships and internships with public wage subsidies or tax incentives for host creative companies.	MoGLSD, MoES, URA, private sector	Structured entry pathways for young creatives and stronger firmlevel capabilities.
	Develop regular cultural statistics modules and pilot culture satellite accounts for GDP, jobs and exports.	UBOS with MoGLSD and line MDAs	Reliable evidence on CCIs contribution, enabling stronger budget claims and policy design.
	Institutionalise national CCIs mapping every 3–4 years building on 2014, 2022, 2024 and current update.	MoGLSD, UBOS, UNATCOM, DPs	Continuous sector intelligence to track structural shifts, regional gaps and financing impact.
	Development partners to fund innovation challenges, exportreadiness and socialprotection pilots within a Creative Economy Facility.	Selam, UNESCO, other DPs	Tested instruments that can be scaled by government (e.g. income support, export bursaries).
	CSOs to provide legal aid, rights awareness and organisational development to creatives and CMOs.	CSOs, bar associations, unions	Stronger rights protection, betterrun associations and greater ability to absorb funding.
	Financial institutions to cocreate CCIsfriendly products (IPbacked loans, revenuebased finance, performance insurance).	Banks, MFIs, DFIs with MoFPED, UIA	Improved access to tailored finance and risksharing instruments for creative enterprises.
	Corporates to link CSR and marketing budgets to sustained support for festivals, labs and talent programmes.	Private sector, brand sponsors	More predictable private coinvestment in ecosystembuilding rather than oneoff events.

Long term	Gradually raise public culture allocation towards the AU 1% of national budget benchmark by 2030 through phased targets.	MoFPED, Parliament, Cabinet, MoGLSD, CSWG	Predictable, adequate public funding that unlocks CCIs' full GDP, jobs and export potential.
	Fully operationalise a national Creative Economy Financing Facility (revolving funds, grants, guarantees) with blended finance.	MoGLSD, MoFPED, DPs, financial sector	Sustainable, scalable financing architecture for CCIs across all regions and domains.
	Complete and maintain regional creative and cultural hubs plus modernised UNCC/National Theatre as anchor infrastructure.	MoGLSD, UNCC, local governments, infrastructure MDAs, DPs	A permanent network of quality spaces enabling production, exhibition and training countrywide.Draft-Report-Baseline-Study.docx
	Embed CCIs into wider industrialisation, digital transformation, tourism and urbandevelopment strategies beyond isolated projects.	OPM, NPA, sector MDAs (ICT, Tourism, Trade, Urban Dev.)	Mainstreamed CCIs with strong linkages to other sectors and resilient, diversified urban economies.Draft-Report-Baseline-Study.docx
	Consolidate a culture of routine transparency, public reporting and participatory governance across all CCIs institutions and funds.	All CCIs MDAs, funds, CSOs, Parliament	Reduced patronage, stronger public trust and more efficient allocation of resources to impactful programmes.Draft-Report-Baseline-Study.docx

10. CONCLUSION

Uganda's cultural and creative industries hold significant, yet still under realised, potential to drive employment, social cohesion and economic transformation, as recognised in NDP IV, the National Culture Policy and the AU's 1% budget target for culture. This study shows that, despite gradual increases and the creation of new instruments such as revolving funds, regional hubs and copyright implementation support, public investment in CCIs in FY 2025/26 remains below 0.1% of the national budget, unevenly distributed across domains, and fragmented across multiple MDAs and programmes.

By combining detailed analysis of national budget allocations with insights from key MDAs, civil society and industry stakeholders, the study provides an up to date evidence base on funding levels, institutional mandates, domain level priorities, and emerging opportunities and gaps. Its recommendations – ranging from establishing a dedicated culture/CCIs budget programme and a harmonised Creative Economy Financing Facility, to strengthening local government financing, cultural statistics and inclusive, domain balanced programming – offer a practical roadmap for aligning Uganda's public investment with its policy ambitions and the 2024 baseline pathways. If taken up by government, development partners, the private sector and practitioners, these measures can unlock the full contribution of CCIs to jobs, innovation, identity and resilient, inclusive development in Uganda.

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