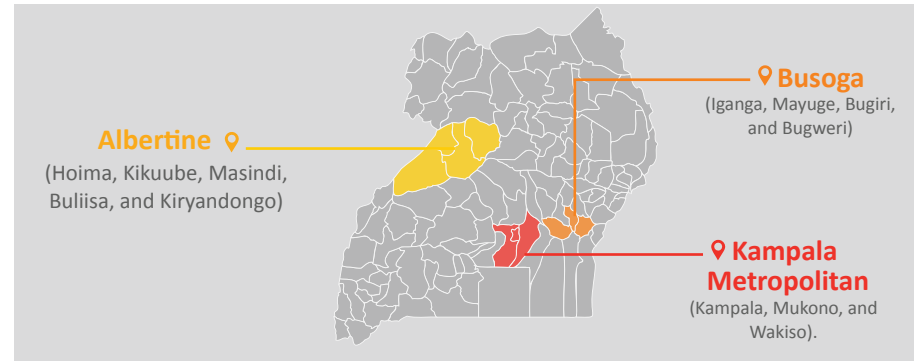


## Focus Regions/Districts



## Focus Sectors



## Legal and Policy Framework/Guidelines for Safeguarding your Digital Rights in the Business Context

In Uganda, various laws and policies govern digital rights in the business sector, ensuring privacy, data protection, and responsible corporate conduct. The Constitution (Article 27) protects personal privacy, while the Data Protection and Privacy Act (2019) and its Regulations (2021) regulate how businesses collect, store, and process personal data. The Computer Misuse Act (2011, amended 2022) and the Uganda Communications Act (2013) set guidelines for cybersecurity, communication standards, and consumer protection. However, some of these laws, particularly the Computer Misuse Act, have been used to restrict online freedoms, including speech and access to information.

Businesses must align with the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAPBHR) and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which emphasize corporate responsibility in respecting human rights. While compliance with data protection laws is essential, businesses should also be mindful of potential government surveillance and misuse of regulations against activists and critics. Companies operating in Uganda should adopt strong data protection policies, conduct human rights due diligence, and engage in ethical digital practices to uphold privacy rights and safeguard consumer trust.

## Gender Mainstreaming

Sustainable Development Goal five aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Target 5B calls for enhancing the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.

The project will partner with (and target as beneficiaries) women's rights groups and women entrepreneurs in project advocacy and engagements and will ensure at least 40% women's participation in project activities such as training. The action will also target youth to constitute at least 30% of the participants.

**40%**  
women's participation in project activities such as training.

**30%**  
of the participants targeted to constitute youth.

## Partners



## About CIPESA

The Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) works to defend and expand the digital civic space to enable the protection and promotion of human rights and to enhance innovation and sustainable development. With a focus on disparate actors including the private sector, civil society, media, policymakers, and multinational institutions, our work aims to engender a free, open, and secure internet that advances rights, livelihoods, and democratic governance. CIPESA's work responds to a shortage of information, research, resources, and actors consistently working at the nexus of technology, human rights, and society. Indeed, CIPESA's establishment in 2004 was in response to the findings of the Louder Voices Report for DFID, which cited the lack of easy, affordable, and timely access to information about ICT-related issues and processes as key barriers to effective and inclusive ICT policy-making in Africa.

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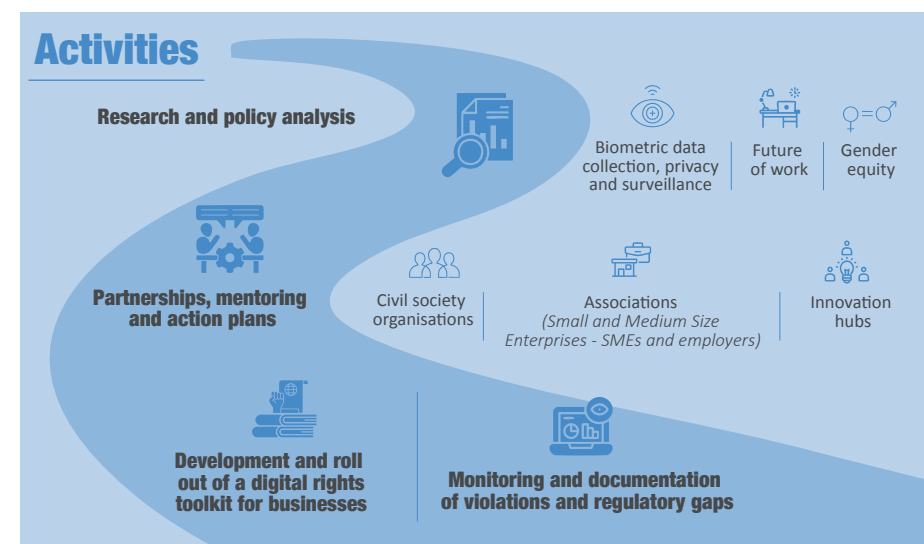


Advancing **Digital Rights** by Businesses in **Uganda**

## About the Project

With support from the European Union through Enabel, the Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) is implementing the Advancing Respect for Human Rights by Businesses in Uganda (ARBHR) project which seeks to reduce human rights abuses connected to business activities in Uganda.

Under the project, CIPESA is fast-tracking the digital rights and internet governance tier, with a focus on evidence based advocacy, sensitisation and awareness raising, reporting and redress mechanisms and public and private sector policy dialogues.



## Targets

<b>1</b> Research report	<b>2</b> Commentaries	<b>1</b> Formal submission to a legal and policy making or review processes
<b>10</b> Partnerships reaching at least <b>200,000</b> people	<b>2</b> Training and advocacy bootcamps for up to <b>60</b> practitioners	<b>150</b> Toolkits disseminated
<b>8</b> Businesses supported to integrate digital rights and security	<b>2</b> National policy dialogues	<b>400</b> Information and Education (IEC) materials



## Background

Africa has witnessed technological advancements that have raised optimism that data-driven digital solutions could revolutionise various sectors.<sup>1</sup> These advancements, driven by increased mobile phone penetration, improved internet access, and a growing tech-savvy population, could have profound implications for business and digital rights in the region.<sup>2</sup>

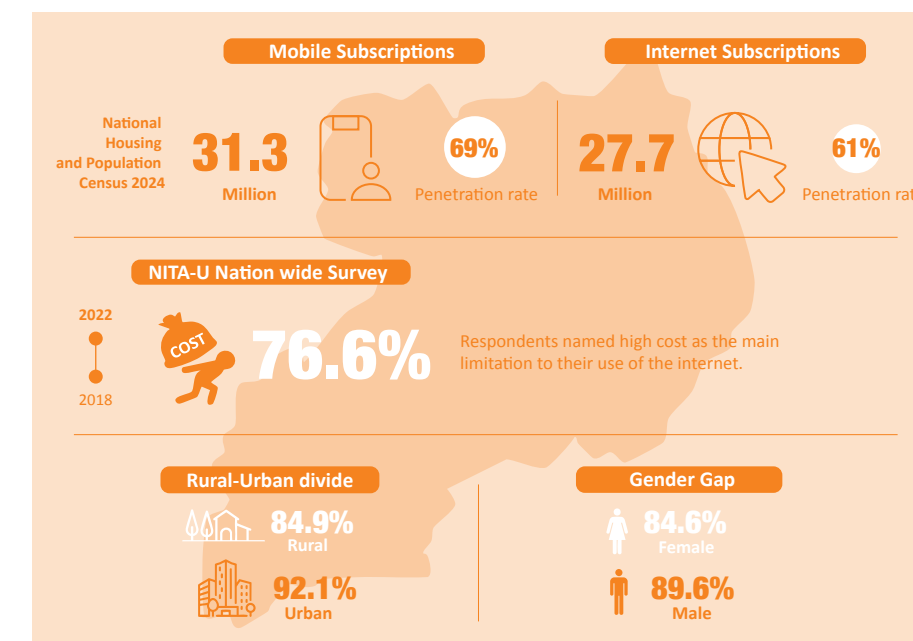
Furthermore, the convergence of data-driven digital technologies such as generative artificial intelligence (AI) and robotic automation, combined with new business models such as location-based platformisation and gig-work, could deliver considerable benefits. Those benefits could include creating job opportunities, particularly for youth,<sup>3</sup> stimulating economic growth by diversifying African economies towards more dynamic industries, reducing dependence on traditional sectors,<sup>4</sup> and developing homegrown innovations that attract foreign direct investments (FDI) and foster local digital entrepreneurship.<sup>5</sup>

In the digital age, the protection and promotion of digital rights - such as data privacy, freedom of expression, and cybersecurity - are critical to fostering a safe and inclusive digital environment. As businesses increasingly rely on digital technologies to operate and innovate, their role in upholding digital rights becomes paramount. The digital age thus presents new challenges and ways of working that necessitate a review of how the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) can be applied in the technology sector and indeed in other businesses. In Uganda, however, several challenges impede the advancement of digital rights by businesses, threatening the broader goal of achieving a secure and rights-respecting digital ecosystem. Accordingly, the advancement of digital rights by businesses in Uganda is crucial for creating a secure and inclusive digital environment.

<sup>1</sup> World Bank. (2019). *The Future of Work in Africa: The Roles of Skills, Informality, and Social Protection in Unleashing the Promise of Digital Technologies for All*.  
<sup>2</sup> Mohammed A.A. and Graham. M. (2022). *The Digital Continent: Placing Africa in Planetary Networks of Work*  
<sup>3</sup> International Labour Office (ILO). (2020). *Global employment trends for youth 2020: Technology and the future of jobs*  
<sup>4</sup> Emeana, E. M., Trenchard, L., & Dehnen-Schmutz, K. (2020). *The Revolution of Mobile Phone-Enabled Services for Agricultural Development (m-Agri Services) in Africa: The Challenges for Sustainability*.  
<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

## Uganda's Internet and Mobile Penetration Statistics

A significant portion of Uganda's population lacks access to the internet and modern digital technologies, limiting the reach and impact of digital rights initiatives. According to the National Housing and Population Census of 2024, Uganda had a total of 31.3 million telephone subscriptions thus a 69% penetration rate. At 27.7 million internet subscriptions, internet penetration is at 61%.<sup>6</sup> According to a 2018 nation-wide survey by the National Information Technology Authority of Uganda (NITA-U), 76.6% of respondents named high cost as the main limitation to their use of the internet.<sup>7</sup> The same reason was reported in the 2022 survey, which also cited the rural-urban divide (84.9% vs 92.1% vs) and a gender gap (84.6% female and 89.6% male) in mobile phone ownership.<sup>8</sup> Many Ugandan businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs), lack a comprehensive understanding of digital rights principles and their obligations in upholding them. Businesses often prioritise short-term economic gains over long-term investments in responsible digital practices such as data privacy and user security. The existence of insufficient digital infrastructure, especially in rural areas, hampers the effective implementation and enforcement of digital rights protections. Businesses face increasing cybersecurity threats that compromise data privacy and other digital rights, necessitating robust security measures.



<sup>6</sup> [1] <https://digital.ict.go.ug/chart?id=977>  
<sup>7</sup> NITA IT Survey 2018, <https://www.nita.go.ug/reports/national-it-survey-2018-final-report>  
<sup>8</sup> NITA IT Survey 2022, <https://www.nita.go.ug/sites/default/files/2022-09/NATIONAL%20IT%20SURVEY%20REPORT%202022.pdf>