

REPORT — 23 – 24 SEPTEMBER, 2026

Majipreneurs Summit

Uganda 2026

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Introduction

The Majipreneurs Summit bridges the gap between entrepreneurs, investors, development partners and policy makers, creating a supportive space and common mission to build an ecosystem for sustainable water and sanitation initiatives.

The fourth Majipreneurs Summit Uganda brought together over 150 entrepreneurs, investors, development partners and policymakers on 23 and 24 September 2026 at the Innovation District in Kampala. Building on three years of momentum, the Summit continued to strengthen the ecosystem for sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) enterprises in Uganda and across the region.

Since its inception, Majipreneurs has bridged the gap between the actors whose collaboration is essential for WASH enterprises to thrive: entrepreneurs seeking finance and partnerships, investors looking for bankable opportunities, development partners designing support programmes, and government institutions shaping the policy environment. The 2026 Summit marked a significant step in the maturation of this ecosystem, with three thematic Focus Groups having worked for months before the event, a dedicated career fair connecting enterprises with young talent, and a full plenary programme designed to translate working-group results into actionable priorities for the sector.

Day 1 was dedicated to the Focus Group sessions, in which preliminary results from ongoing research and consultation processes were presented, validated and enriched by Summit participants. In parallel, the MajiTalent Career Fair connected hiring WASH enterprises with motivated young professionals.

Day 2 opened with the Investor Room, where investment-ready enterprises pitched to financiers and impact investors, followed by matchmaking rounds, the official opening with remarks by the State Minister of Planning of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED), and the plenary sessions: the MajiWorld Café and MajiFutureLab.

The Summit was organised by the Majipreneurs Alliance, a south-led consortium of WASH ecosystem enablers including Cewas, Viva con Agua, WASEU, Young Water Solutions, OPERO and Toilets for All, with generous support from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation.



Majipreneurs Initiatives

Financing piped rural water supply

In rural piped water supply, where can repayable finance realistically work, and where does grant funding remain indispensable?

Rural piped water supply is not yet a fully bankable business in Uganda, and opinions among funders diverge significantly on where repayable finance can realistically play a role. These differing perspectives create uncertainty and additional economic pressure for operators, particularly at a time when traditional development funding is becoming increasingly scarce.

Hosted by COMOS, the Consortium of O&M Operators and Supporters of Uganda, this Focus Group collected and standardised financial data from multiple rural piped water operators, building on the Business-in-a-Box (BinBox) programme run by Cewas in 2024 and 2025. By making unit economics directly comparable for the first time, the analysis identified which investment areas, such as new household connections, could potentially be financed through repayable capital and under what conditions. A household connection loan calculator model was presented and tested with participants, with the findings intended to provide practical guidance for financiers and support the development of financing instruments that reflect the realities of the sector.



Key takeaways from the summit

- There is a strategic shift from handpumps to private connections among Ugandan rural water operators. With thousands of new connections to be installed annually in the coming years.
- Debt is a viable financing mechanism for almost all operators, as long it is concessional with an extended grace period.
- Digital prepaid meters substantially increase CAPEX costs and might need to be subsidized by grants. There is no consensus yet on whether digital or analogue meters make more sense for small water operators.
- Operators and financiers agree that it would make sense to test such a financing mechanism with clear assumptions that would need to be tested.

The Majipreneurs Community

What would it take to build a peer network where Uganda's WASH entrepreneurs learn from each other, solve shared challenges and speak to government and investors with one voice?



WASH entrepreneurs across Uganda have consistently voiced a strong appetite for peer exchange and shared problem-solving on the practical challenges they all face: accounting for social enterprises, accessing finance, salary benchmarking, hiring, and establishing government partnerships. The Majipreneurs Community envisions a peer network of like-minded Ugandan WASH enterprises that can learn from one another, speak with a collective voice and inform the efforts of the broader Majipreneurs Alliance.

Building on an exploratory call in July and an on-site Focus Group session in Kampala in early September, this Summit session opened the conversation on the Community to all WASH entrepreneurs present. The session shared back what had been heard so far, including where views diverged, and invited the wider room to react to early draft ideas about the Community's structure, membership and priorities. In mixed small groups, participants tested these questions and helped define what the Community should offer and what its most important success factors are.

Key takeaways from the summit

- Strong interest in more formalised, structured engagement has been verified among the wider Community.
- All three pillars of the proposed Community (Finance & Expertise Hub, Peer Exchange, and Collective Voice) received strong interest in the sessions, but the former was highlighted by most people as a key element of a future Majipreneurs Community Uganda, which will inform the starting point of future work on making the Community a reality.
- Early feedback indicated that the sessions at the Summit helped entrepreneurs better understand linkages and common interests, regardless of whether their business model focuses on sanitation, water or female health and hygiene.

WASH Entrepreneurship Sector Report 2026: First Insights

Uganda's WASH entrepreneurship sector is growing yet fragmented, with limited market intelligence, weak investor visibility and insufficient data on enterprise performance and financing needs. The Uganda WASH Entrepreneurship Sector Report 2026 is the first national-level ecosystem overview, mapping enterprises across water supply, sanitation, menstrual health and enabling segments and surveying their business models, performance, financing needs and growth barriers.

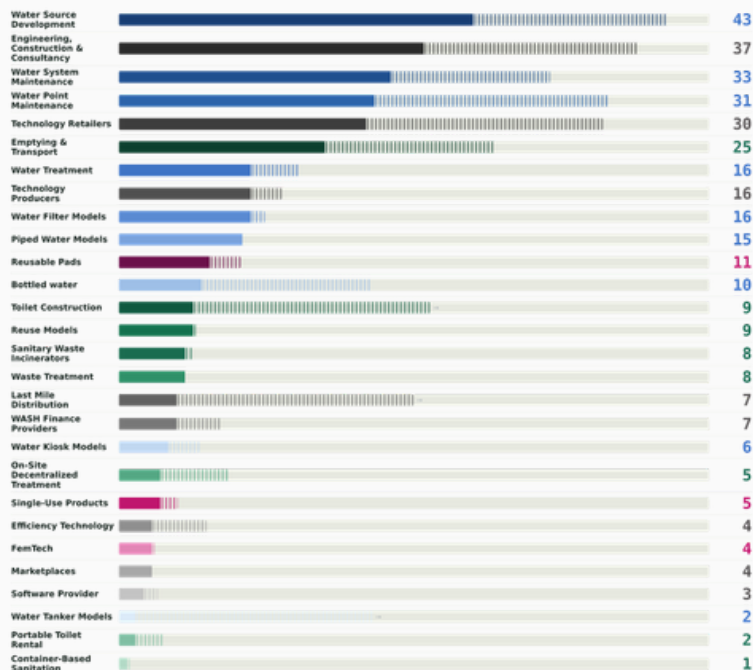
Led jointly by Cewas and WASEU, the report draws on a comprehensive enterprise mapping exercise targeting >150 WASH enterprises and a structured enterprise survey covering governance, revenues, employment, customer segments, financing history and perceived growth barriers. The research is complemented by stakeholder consultations and key informant interviews with government institutions, financial institutions, impact investors and development partners.

At the Summit, preliminary findings from the ongoing research process were presented and participants were invited to validate the conclusions and add perspectives that the data alone cannot capture. Roadblocks and potential intervention areas identified during this session fed directly into the MajiFutureLab on Day 2. The final report, including an executive summary and infographic package, is planned for publication in the next couple of months.

Key takeaways from the summit

- Blended finance is essential, but grants should target only where commercial viability is limited.
- Pooling resources and expertise would ease the burden on small enterprises.
- Public-private collaboration remains untapped and requires active facilitation.
- WASH enterprises need a joint voice toward policymakers.

Initial WASH enterprise mapping



Water Resilience Solutions Hub

Proven climate resilience solutions already exist, but how can water operators in collaboration with WASH enterprises find, assess and adopt them in a way that fits the Ugandan context?

The Water Resilience Solutions Hub (WRSH) is a Majipreneurs Initiative that seeks to support water service providers (like the National Water and Sewerage Corporation, Umbrella Authorities and rural water providers) in strengthening climate resilience through targeted collaboration with enterprises and other sector actors. The initiative connects water operators with WASH enterprises along a structured pathway, from climate risk assessment through co-designed pilots to formalised partnerships. Having already started in Kenya, where water operators have been selected and climate risk assessments completed, work under WRSH in Uganda was set to begin shortly after the Summit.

This side event introduced the WRSH approach to the Ugandan water sector and shared first lessons from the Kenyan experience, including the climate challenges identified and the collaboration solutions being explored to address them. Building on this shared understanding, participants engaged in a facilitated co-creation session to jointly define what will make WRSH successful in the Ugandan context: what adaptations are needed, which stakeholders should be involved, and what conditions must be in place for the initiative to deliver lasting impact. The session produced initial input on climate challenges and potential collaboration solutions relevant to the Ugandan water sector, as well as joint reflections on the conditions required for a successful launch.

Key takeaways from the summit

- New but promising: Public-Private Collaboration is still a new concept in Uganda's WASH sector, yet participants quickly identified opportunities with demand.
- Existing PPC cases should be explored to align on how PPCs are best facilitated.
- Closer engagement between water operators, including UAs and NWSC, could create opportunities for Ugandan and regional WASH enterprises and ease stretched sector capacities.



MajiTalent Career Fair

How can the WASH sector attract the skilled professionals it needs to grow, when it competes for talent with better-known industries?

Attracting and retaining skilled talent remains one of the most pressing challenges for WASH enterprises in Uganda. As the sector matures, enterprises require professionals with specialised expertise in areas ranging from water engineering and financial management to sales, marketing and community engagement. Yet the WASH sector is not always perceived as an attractive career destination, particularly by young graduates and early-career professionals.

The MajiTalent Career Fair, a new addition to the Majipreneurs programme in 2026, was designed to address this gap by connecting hiring WASH enterprises directly with motivated young professionals. Held as an invitation-only event running in parallel with the afternoon Focus Group sessions on Day 1, the Career Fair offered a series of short, focused job interviews in a structured format. Hiring enterprises were assigned dedicated spaces across the venue, and pre-screened candidates rotated through the booths for face-to-face conversations.



The format was deliberately practical: rather than a panel discussion about the importance of talent, the Career Fair created a space where recruitment could happen in real time. Enterprises had the opportunity to present their organisations, explain the roles they were looking to fill, and assess candidates on the spot, while young professionals gained direct exposure to WASH enterprises and the range of career paths available in the sector.



MajiWorld Café Working Stations

What does it take to build an ecosystem that can finance, staff and sustain WASH enterprises at scale?

The Ugandan Sanitation Economy - An Investment Opportunity for Financing

The Sanitation and Hygiene Fund (SHF) presented findings from SANEMAT, a maturity assessment tool that scores Uganda's readiness to receive sanitation investment across five pillars, with finance emerging as the weakest. The session highlighted that sanitation enterprises face a fundamental comprehension gap with the financial sector and that an enabling ecosystem of policy, regulation and tailored finance must develop alongside them.



Engaging Young Talents in WASH

This workstation explored how WASH enterprises can attract young professionals into a sector not always perceived as a compelling career destination. Participants concluded that the challenge is as much about positioning as recruitment: WASH needs to present itself as a dynamic, multidisciplinary field at the intersection of business, technology and social impact, and to bring young people directly into sector spaces and conversations rather than designing initiatives for them in their absence.



MajiFund Progress

Hosted by VOx Impuls, this station reflected on the MajiFund's track record in addressing the "missing middle" of nationally led WASH enterprises too large for microfinance yet too early-stage for most investors. Participants valued the fund's role not only for its concessional finance terms but equally for preparing enterprises for follow-on investment and generating evidence. Potential avenues to be explored included ideas for new vehicles for the pathway to local finance, including a dedicated Maji bond and partnerships with consumer-financing institutions.



Investor Room

Connecting investment-ready WASH enterprises with financiers and impact investors

Connecting investment-ready WASH enterprises with financiers and impact investors has been a central element of the Majipreneurs Summit since 2025, when the format was first introduced as the Investor Pitch Room. In 2026, the Investor Room opened Day 2 of the Summit, bringing together 10 enterprises with interested investors for a morning of pitches, questions and structured follow-up.

10 WASH enterprises spanning water supply, sanitation and female health and hygiene presented their business models, growth strategies and investment needs in focused four-minute pitches, each followed by a brief question-and-answer round with priority given to investors. Throughout the session, investors indicated which enterprises they wished to engage further with. Based on these signals, the Summit team organised a tailored matchmaking session immediately afterwards, pairing each investor with the enterprises that matched their interest for structured follow-up conversations.

Featured Enterprises

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Smart Girls | 6. Sunda |
| 2. Mapalo | 7. Water Compass |
| 3. Yo-Waste | 8. WaterQuip |
| 4. RDF | 9. Aquatrust |
| 5. Water Giants | 10. Irrisol |

Scan me to download the list of featured enterprises!



MajiFuture Lab

What happens when all Summit participants sit down to agree on what actually needs to change?

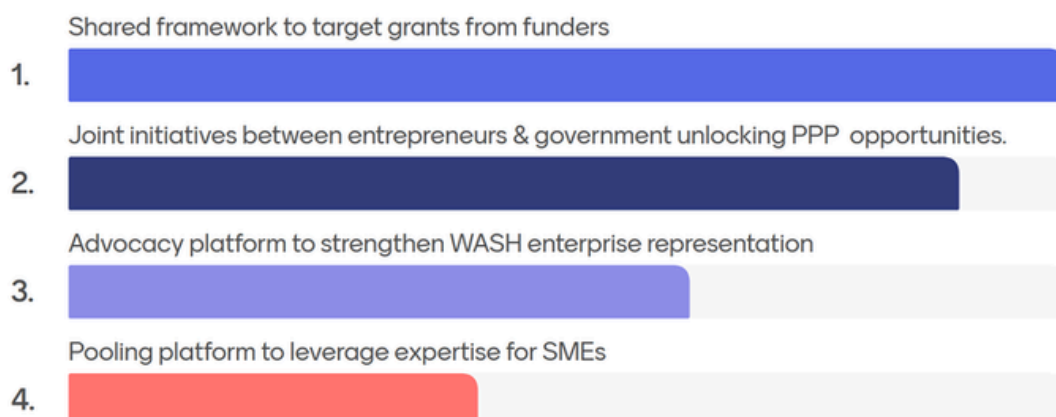
The MajiFutureLab closed the Summit programme as the second and final plenary session of Day 2. Drawing on the priority roadblocks identified through the WASH Entrepreneurship Sector Report, the session shifted the conversation from diagnosis to action. Four potential areas for collective action were discussed:

- Because blended finance is essential but grants can distort markets, funders will develop **a shared framework to target grants** where commercial viability is limited, enabling sustainable enterprise growth and service delivery.
- Because WASH enterprises remain largely invisible to government, policies and regulations do not adequately support them. To overcome this, SMEs and NGOs will jointly **establish an advocacy platform** to strengthen WASH enterprise representation.
- Because WASH entrepreneurs and governments lack clear ways to work together, opportunities for public-private collaboration remain untapped. To overcome this, NGOs and ecosystem support organisations will actively **facilitate innovative joint initiatives between entrepreneurs and government**.
- Because small enterprises currently manage regulation, sourcing, distribution channels, etc. individually, they have too much on their plate to succeed. To overcome this, **a pooling platform** will be set up to allow multiple enterprises to leverage expertise, etc. jointly.

The session concluded with an audience poll on the priorities participants considered most important and most likely to materialise.

Priority areas for collective action

Which collective action would you consider the most relevant to develop in the next 2-3 years?







Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our findings further, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

in Majipreneurs Alliance

 <https://majipreneursalliance.org>

 www.majipreneurs.creation.camp

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See you soon!