

You can now save as low as Shs500 under NSSF's voluntary scheme

Retirement.

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The National Social Security Fund (NSSF) has said that it will roll out a voluntary savings scheme that will allow contributors to save as low as Shs500.

The move, NSSF says, follows clearance from the Cabinet through the Attorney General for an initiative that is part of government's efforts to increase the number of informal sector workers saving for retirement to 15 million by 2035.

Speaking during the handover of livelihood project common user facilities in Kayunga District, NSSF managing director

Patrick Ayota said that since the launch of the SmartLife Savings Scheme in 2024, the fund has onboarded about 3.4 million voluntary savers.

"Since inception, voluntary savings have grown to about Shs30b, with 3.4 million members and 113,300 accounts holding assets," he said, noting that the initiative aligns with the NSSF Vision 2035, a 10-year strategic plan that seeks to grow the Fund's assets under management to Shs50 trillion.

Mr Ayota noted that the Fund also seeks to expand coverage to at least 50 percent of the working population, while increasing customer and staff satisfaction levels to 95 percent.

The strategy, he said, is informed by the

Fund's expanded mandate following the 2022 reforms, a changing economic environment, and a stronger focus on member value, particularly in terms of savings security, service convenience, and financial empowerment.

Meanwhile, Gender, Labour and Social Development minister Betty Amongin said that less than 11 percent of Ugandans are currently covered by conventional social security, leaving about 90 percent of eligible individuals excluded.

"Through initiatives such as this, users of these facilities will be able to contribute to their social security through targeted savings products like the SmartLife Savings scheme," she said, adding that the approach goes beyond encouraging people

to save by also building their capacity to do so.

Smartlife Flexi was introduced after the publication of the NSSF (Voluntary Contributions and Benefits) Regulations, which paved the way for NSSF to introduce products that address the diverse needs of savers and expand the reach of social security in Uganda.

In 2021, NSSF conducted a Members Needs Research to guide the development of new products, in which it found that 60 percent of its members felt they were not saving enough and desired more voluntary options.

The findings also indicated that members expressed a need for savings solutions that address retirement planning,

education, health, and capital accumulation for business ventures, thereby introducing Smartlife Flexi, which is designed to address such needs.

Under Smartlife Flexi, members can contribute as low as Shs5,000, of which returns are computed on a daily balance but credited monthly.

Under the scheme, while the minimum lock-in period is one-year, it allows early withdrawal options with minimal costs, ensuring members can adapt their plans as needed.

Uganda's informal sector, which constitutes a significant portion of the country's workforce and GDP contributors, remains largely excluded from traditional social security systems.