HOW INVITE IS BOOSTING EXPORTING FIRMS

By Aloysious Kasoma

The Investment for Industrial Transformation and Employment (INVITE) project is increasingly boosting efforts to increase Uganda's exports.

The project is an initiative of the Government, funded by the World Bank and a multi-donor trust fund, with support from the Netherlands, the UK, and Sweden for the manufacturing and export sectors.

The Export Firm Support (EFS), a sub-component of the project, has issued finance grants to support business development services (BDS) for private sector enterprises engaged in manufacturing and exporting value chains.

Under the EFS, 114 grant agreements have been signed with firms, and a business may access up to $40,000 to support four required activities to enhance its export performance to high-value markets worldwide.

Upon completion of their activities, the firms are reimbursed up to 80% of the costs incurred during implementation.



Raw and Organic Investments Limited on display during a recent exhibition, showcasing the company's organic shea butter products that add value to Uganda's agro-processing chain through manufacturing and export



MUGISHA

ABOUT INVITE

Investment for Industrial Transformation and Employment (INVITE) is a Government of Uganda initiative financed by the World Bank and other development partners, including the Netherlands, the UK, and Sweden through a multi-donor trust fund grant. The Project provides grant products for business development.

OPPORTUNITY

114 GRANT AGREEMENTS HAVE BEEN SIGNED WITH FIRMS.

PROJECT IMPACT

INVITE features one of the businesses under the EFS, which benefited from the BDS on export market intelligence - market identification and segmentation.

Enid Natukunda Mugisha, the proprietor of Raw and Organic and winner of the 25th East African Community Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Trade Fair, manufactures hair and skin products from shea butter.

She began her business after suffering premature loss of hair due to traction alopecia caused by hair relaxer chemicals.

The traumatising experience tortured her for years, and by 2019, she had conducted research and hired chemists to formulate a lasting solution in the form of hair treatments with shea butter as the base.

Almost seven years later, Raw and Organic is adding value to the shea butter agro-processing chain by manufacturing and exporting organic shea butter hair and skin products, including leave-in and deep conditioners, pomade, shampoo, body lotion and lip balm.

"I was thrilled when I was awarded the grant because I would never have been able to attend the 25th Annual MSME Trade Fair in Nairobi," Mugisha says.

She says INVITE accorded her the opportunity, and she "won an award for the best product among over 300 participants from Uganda."

EXPOSURE

The exposure at the fair, which was held between November 7 and 16, 2025, gave Raw and Organic visibility and contacts beyond Kenya and Tanzania, including Malawi, South Africa, and Ghana.

Raw and Organic Investments Ltd has appreciated the benefit of responding to the INVITE EFS call for applications among 309 applicants. The investment has paid off.

COMPANY REACH

The company works with 105 women in Agago district and contributes to the chain by providing a steady market for shea nuts, which pickers and collectors, including youth, depend on.

This has a multiplier effect at the community level, amplifying INVITE's impact on its core objective of transforming the manufacturing and export industry.