



# METAL SUBSECTOR IN UGANDA

This factsheet is intended to highlight key features that are relevant to stakeholders in the metal subsector in Uganda that operates under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Tourism and Cooperatives.

The sector comprises metal works, rolling, recycling, extrusion, forging, art, fabrication and construction with metal works from iron, steel, aluminium and bronze. Its Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are mostly engaged in metal fabrication (in construction products like windows, doors, roofs, towers and bridges), scaffolding, furniture, steel bars and frames, sheet metal works, car body works, machining and fitting.

## SKILLS & TRAINING

There are both apprenticed and trained professionals ranging from vocational to graduate engineers. The sector has a high propensity for enterprise start-ups as skilled apprentices often start their own workshops.



However, many start-ups strain to survive because of inadequate skilling and training in areas of financial and entrepreneurial proficiency.

## INCOME

On average, a welder or metal fabricator earns

**UGX10,000 (€2.3)**  
and

**UGX150,000 (€35.5)**

per task and also depending on the facilities, equipment capacity, location and volume of customers and whether they are an employee or business owner.



The workers that are trained in vocational skill may demand higher wages but are not necessarily better skilled than apprentices.

## WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

The estimated working population in Uganda is **15.76** million of which **49%** are male.

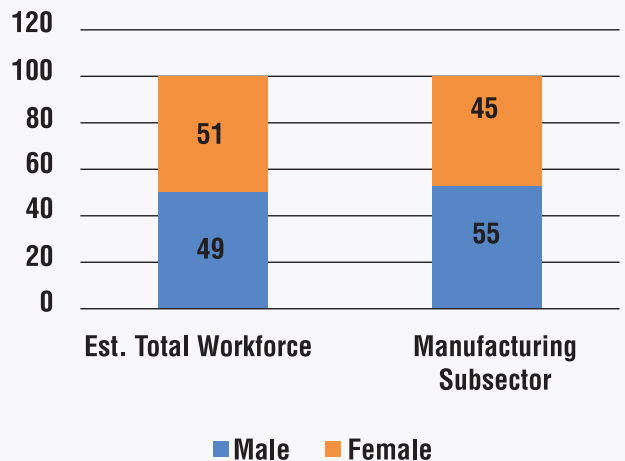


The manufacturing industry employs **4.9%** of Uganda's estimated working population.

This is equivalent to about

**780,000** labourers, **55%** of whom are men.<sup>1</sup>

Male/Female Ratio in the subsector



<sup>1</sup> Labour Market Profile 2016, Danish Trade Council for International Development and Cooperation



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## STANDARDS

While the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) has standards for the input, there are many inputs and equipment that are substandard. For example, sheet metal may have a different gauge than what is quoted to the client, steel pipes can be shorter in length and have incorrect corrosion levels all of which greatly affect the quality of work and deliverables.



However, there is great creativity and innovation in the sector to meet the ever-changing customer demands. The limitation in skilling and equipment used for cutting and finishing.

## BUSINESS MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

The Uganda Small Scale Industries Association (USSIA) provides a platform for networking and advocacy for all MSMEs.



Metal fabrication enterprises that are registered members of USSIA have access to skills upgrading and training, market information and other business development services.

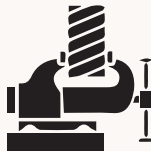
## TECHNOLOGY

A metal fabrication workshop should have:



**Machinery:** Plasma cutter, Computer Numerical Control (CNC) router, CNC cutter, mig and tig welders, oxy-acetylene gas welding kits, hydraulic shears, air compressors, air brush, galvanising bath, electro-plating bath and forging furnaces.

**Tools:** Bench vice, soldering iron, fitting hand tools, marker's ink, set of drills, measuring tools, cutting tools, metal forming tools, pipe benders, sheet benders, sanders, angle/table grinders and vices.



**Safety gear and equipment:** Workshop gloves, safety goggles, gas masks, industrial clothing and boots, fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, first aid kits and safety charts.

**To protect the environment:** There should be proper management and disposal of waste and restricted substances.



## JOINT VENTURE & PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The sector is highly fragmented and characterised by low levels of technology and innovation, poor and unreliable supply of inputs and constrained access to credit.

**Prospective areas of collaboration:**



- Development of appropriate technologies to increase productivity and quality of products
- Creation of clustered workspaces and common facilities
- Investment in research and product development to improve production efficiency
- Creation of opportunities for participation in local and international exhibitions and trade fairs for exposure to international standards and markets, new skills and business ideas
- Development of policies for environmental protection and management
- Financial and entrepreneurial literacy training to aid growth and development of the enterprise through development of good business practices

Funded by: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH & Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks (ZDH)

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As at: July 2019