



Staying in Business Beyond Elections

An interview with CPA Frederick Kibbedi on the Strategic
Role of Auditors and Accountants in Uganda's 2025
Transition





Uganda is heading into another election year, and businesses are already cautious. What's different about 2025, and why should this concern strategic business leaders?

CPA Frederick Kibbedi:

Election years in Uganda often come with uncertainty—cash flow strain, regulatory inertia, delayed government payments, and risk of unrest. But 2025 is even more layered. We have heightened regulatory enforcement, the oil and gas sector reaching a tipping point, and global pressures on anti-money laundering. Most businesses are focusing on surviving the noise, yet they should be preparing to take advantage of the shift.



You're suggesting there's opportunity in the chaos?

CPA Frederick Kibbedi:

Exactly. Smart businesses won't just duck for cover—they'll rewire operations. But they'll need guidance. That's where accountants and auditors come in—not as form fillers or watchdogs, but as navigators. We need to reframe our role to help clients remain alive, relevant and resilient.



Let's talk about specifics. What are the top risks businesses face in 2025 that most owners might overlook?

CPA Frederick Kibbedi:

- **Regulatory shutdowns.** Over 10,000 companies risk being de-registered for non-compliance with URSB rules. This can collapse credit access and erase supplier contracts overnight.



- **Delayed public payments.** Many suppliers will not get paid on time as government reallocates budgets. This affects contractors, hospitals, agro-input suppliers, and even SACCOs that lend to civil servants.
- **Overexposure to a single customer or export route.** For example, coffee exporters relying on Mombasa and one EU buyer will be squeezed if port disruptions or sanctions hit.
- **Rogue financial practices.** With election spending up, tax evasion, fake invoices, and financial misrepresentation spike.



So, what can auditors or accountants do differently this year?

CPA Frederick Kibbedi:

- We need to move from auditing for compliance to auditing for resilience. That means:
- Stress-testing cash flows.
- Assessing continuity risks.
- Proactively identifying governance weaknesses.
- Advising on formalization and tax positioning.
- Helping clients access new opportunities—like oil and gas contracts reserved for Ugandans.



You mentioned oil and gas. What's the accountant's role there?

CPA Frederick Kibbedi:

EACOP is moving. Over 8,000 people are employed already, and \$500m has been spent locally. Sectors like logistics, hotel management, security, construction, and waste management are reserved for Ugandans. But many businesses don't qualify because they haven't registered with the National Suppliers Database or can't pass a basic tax or audit review.

Accountants must help their clients build bid-ready documentation—compliant tax returns, sound governance policies, and certified accounts.



How can SACCOs and financial institutions prepare?

CPA Frederick Kibbedi:

- **Reassess lending criteria:** Political exposure and cash flow stress will hurt recoveries.
- **Revalue loan book risks:** Accountants should evaluate the provisioning frameworks under IFRS 9, especially for portfolios with civil servant exposure.
- **Prepare AML frameworks:** Uganda is hosting the ESAAMLG meeting in 2025—AML/CFT rules will be enforced. SACCOs and MFIs must align now.



Let's talk manufacturing and distribution. What is your advice for that sector?

CPA Frederick Kibbedi:

- **Inventory valuation will be tricky:** Price volatility, import disruptions, and low consumer spending can lead to slow-moving stock. Auditors must scrutinize inventory recognition and obsolescence assumptions.
- **Tax planning:** Be careful with tax incentives and deferrals that may change post-election. Avoid aggressive interpretations—URA is watching.
- **Digitize processes:** With logistics and warehousing at risk during political tension, automation and system backups will save lives—literally.





Many SMEs tend to think accounting is just for filing taxes. What would you say to them?

CPA Frederick Kibbedi:

That mindset is dangerous. In times like these, a good accountant will save your business before a loan officer, supplier, or lawyer even sees your books. You need us early—before you're late on tax, behind on cash, or exposed to litigation.



What one mistake do you see entrepreneurs repeating every election cycle?

CPA Frederick Kibbedi:

They stop investing in internal systems and start “playing politics”—depending on contracts from political connections, delaying statutory obligations, and hiding risk. That’s not strategy. That’s gambling.



Let’s flip it. What’s the one action that could make businesses thrive despite the election?

CPA Frederick Kibbedi:

Formalization. Companies that are bankable, tax-compliant, transparent, and well-advised will win. That’s the club that development partners, oil and gas firms, and multinationals want to work with. It’s also the club that will survive the election aftermath.



Do you think the accounting profession is prepared to meet this moment?

CPA Frederick Kibbedi:

Some are. But most are not yet stepping into their strategic advisory role. We must grow from record keepers into interpreters and problem-solvers. Clients want insight, not just statements.



Final word to businesses looking for an accountant or auditor this year?

CPA Frederick Kibbedi:

Ask them: “Can you help me survive uncertainty and seize opportunity?” If they can’t answer in practical terms—find someone else.

Uganda is changing. Your accountant should help you change wisely.



About the Expert:

CPA Frederick Kibbedi is a Certified Public Accountant, Auditor, Author, and Consultant based in Uganda. He sits on various governance boards, including in the finance, insurance, and energy sectors, and a Partner at PKF Uganda. He has authored a number of books including *Becoming Future Ready* from which these insights are drawn.

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