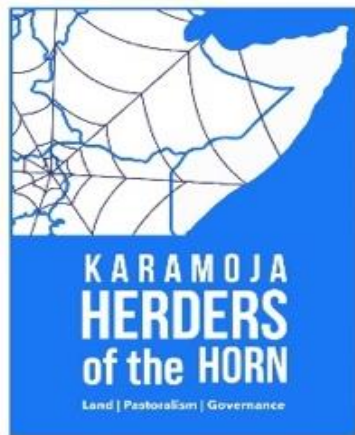




Training KHH Staff in Research and Advocacy, Digital Data Management, and Responsible Use of AI for Research

Terms of Reference and Call for Proposals

1. Background and rationale

ACODE and KHH, with support from the Embassies of Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Sweden under PACER, are implementing the project titled “Strengthening Civic Engagement, Voice, Service Delivery, and Climate Justice for Improved Accountability in Uganda (Karamoja Sub-region).” The project strengthens civic engagement, voice, service delivery, climate justice, and accountability in Karamoja.

Sustaining programme results requires KHH staff to generate credible evidence, communicate it effectively, manage digital information securely, and use emerging research tools responsibly. Staff need practical skills that link research to advocacy, support reliable data practices throughout the data lifecycle, and enable careful use of artificial intelligence (AI) without compromising accuracy, confidentiality, community trust, or KHH’s independence.

Karamoja Herders of the Horn (KHH) works with pastoralist communities in the Horn of Africa to enhance their resilience, secure access to resources, and protect traditional livelihoods. By combining local knowledge with practical support, KHH helps communities adapt to environmental, economic, and social challenges, ensuring sustainable futures for generations to come. KHH seeks to protect pastoralist livelihoods, strengthen land and resource governance, advance mobility and rights, and build peaceful, climate-resilient communities across the Horn of Africa

ACODE invites qualified consultants or firms to assess priority learning needs, develop context-specific training materials, deliver participatory training, and provide follow-up support that enables staff to apply these skills in KHH’s ongoing work. The training should reflect KHH’s work with pastoralist communities and its focus on rights, land and resource governance, peace, resilience, and inclusive development.

2. Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the assignment is to strengthen KHH staff capacity to undertake and use ethical, credible research and advocacy, manage digital data securely and effectively, and apply AI tools responsibly in research and related work.

Specific objectives

- a) Assess staff learning needs, current practices, available tools, and organisational constraints across the three learning areas.
- b) Design an accessible, practical training package suited to staff roles, digital access, connectivity, and KHH's programme context.
- c) Improve staff ability to plan and conduct research, analyse evidence, produce usable research outputs, and connect findings to advocacy objectives.
- d) Strengthen staff competence in digital data collection, organisation, quality assurance, storage, access control, protection, analysis, and responsible sharing.
- e) Build staff ability to use AI tools to support research tasks while checking outputs, protecting sensitive information, and disclosing or documenting AI assistance where appropriate.
- f) Produce individual and organisational action plans, reusable tools, and recommendations for sustaining learning after the assignment.

3. Scope of work

The consultant will work with KHH and ACODE to complete the following tasks. The final sequence and level of detail will be agreed at inception.

- a) Hold an inception meeting with ACODE and KHH, review relevant organisational and PACER documents, and agree the work plan, participant profile, learning priorities, logistics, and quality assurance arrangements.
- b) Conduct a brief training needs assessment through document review, staff consultations, and a baseline exercise. Identify differences in roles, prior experience, access to devices, software, and connectivity.
- c) Prepare a training design, session plans, facilitator guides, participant materials, exercises, assessment tools, and a post-training application plan.
- d) Deliver participatory, practice-based training across research and advocacy, digital data management, and responsible use of AI for research. Use KHH-relevant scenarios and exercises, including anonymised or synthetic data where appropriate.
- e) Provide coaching or guided practice to help participants apply the methods to a current or planned KHH research, evidence, or advocacy task.
- f) Assess learning before and after training, collect participant feedback, review practical outputs, and identify remaining capacity gaps.
- g) Submit a concise training report and final package of materials, tools, participant outputs, and recommendations for continued learning.

4. Learning areas and minimum content

A. Research and advocacy

- i. Translating a programme or advocacy issue into a clear research question, purpose, scope, and feasible study design.
- ii. Selecting appropriate qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods, including interviews, focus group discussions, observation, document review, surveys, and participatory approaches.
- iii. Sampling, field planning, informed consent, research ethics, safeguarding, gender and social inclusion, conflict sensitivity, and protection of participants.
- iv. Developing research instruments, field protocols, enumerator guidance, and procedures for data quality assurance.
- v. Organising, analysing, triangulating, and interpreting evidence, with practical exercises in thematic analysis and basic quantitative summaries as relevant to staff roles.
- vi. Preparing clear research products such as evidence briefs, policy briefs, reports, case studies, presentations, and community-facing materials.

- vii. Developing an advocacy objective, stakeholder map, evidence-based messages, engagement plan, and methods for tracking response and influence.
- viii. Communicating findings accurately and safely, including consent for quotations or images and approaches for returning findings to participating communities.

B. Digital data management

- i. Planning data collection and establishing a consistent data lifecycle from collection through use, retention, archiving, and deletion.
- ii. Selecting fit-for-purpose digital tools for forms, surveys, field notes, transcription, data cleaning, and analysis, taking account of cost, connectivity, and staff access.
- iii. Applying data dictionaries, file naming conventions, metadata, version control, validation rules, and documentation to improve consistency and reuse.
- iv. Managing data quality through completeness checks, range and logic checks, duplicate detection, cleaning logs, and verification procedures.
- v. Protecting personal and sensitive information through data minimisation, informed consent, role-based access, secure transfer and storage, passwords, encryption where available, backups, and incident response.
- vi. Applying ethical and legal safeguards when collecting, storing, analysing, sharing, or publishing information about individuals and communities.
- vii. Creating usable data management plans, secure folder structures, access registers, retention schedules, and practical standard operating procedures for KHH teams.

C. Responsible use of AI for research

- i. Understanding what generative AI and related tools can and cannot do, including common errors, hallucinations, bias, outdated content, and limits of automated analysis.
- ii. Using AI to support selected tasks such as refining research questions, developing search terms, summarising non-sensitive documents, organising notes, drafting interview guides, coding text for review, and improving clarity of writing.
- iii. Designing clear prompts, documenting tool use, comparing outputs with source material, verifying quotations and references, and retaining human responsibility for analysis and conclusions.
- iv. Using AI in ways that protect confidential, personal, politically sensitive, or unpublished information. Participants must not enter such information into public AI systems unless KHH has expressly approved the tool and safeguards.
- v. Checking for bias, exclusion, misrepresentation, fabrication, copyright concerns, and risks to community trust before using AI-generated content.
- vi. Establishing a practical decision framework for when AI use is suitable, when human review is mandatory, and when AI should not be used.
- vii. Identifying accessible tools and low-cost workflows. Any proposed paid tools, accounts, or licences require prior approval by ACODE and KHH and must not create unbudgeted recurring costs.

5. Training approach and participation

The training must use adult-learning principles and be participatory, inclusive, and practice-oriented. It should build on staff experience and produce work products that can be applied within KHH. A lecture-only approach is not acceptable.

- i. Use short presentations, demonstrations, guided exercises, group work, case studies, peer learning, and reflection. Allocate substantial time to hands-on practice and feedback.
- ii. Use examples relevant to KHH's research, community engagement, pastoralist rights, land and resource governance, climate resilience, peace, service delivery, and accountability work.

- iii. Consult KHH on participants and adapt sessions to their responsibilities, literacy in digital tools, language needs, accessibility, and prior experience.
- iv. Ensure participation by women and staff with varied roles and experience. Use accessible materials and facilitation methods that allow all participants to contribute.
- v. Provide editable materials in accessible digital formats and, where needed, printable or offline versions. Training should not depend on uninterrupted internet access.
- vi. Use anonymised or synthetic data for exercises involving personal, community, security-sensitive, or unpublished information. Do not use live sensitive data in public AI platforms.
- vii. Use pre- and post-training assessments, practical demonstrations, participant feedback, and review of work products to measure learning and identify follow-up needs.

6. Deliverables and indicative schedule

Deliverable	Minimum content
1. Inception report and needs assessment	Agreed approach, work plan, stakeholder and participant profile, needs assessment findings, baseline results, and logistical requirements.
2. Training curriculum and materials	Session plans, facilitator guide, participant workbook, presentations, case studies, practical exercises, baseline and endline tools, and responsible AI guidance.
3. Training delivered	Facilitated training in all three learning areas, attendance records, completed exercises, participant assessments, and initial action plans.
4. Coaching and application outputs	Guided application of learning to a KHH task, individual or team action plans, and documentation of follow-up questions and support needs.
5. Final report and training package	Training report, participant feedback and learning results, final editable materials, practical tools, recommendations, and sustainability actions.

The assignment is expected to take approximately 5 working days including preparation and delivery. The training itself should comprise three facilitated days. The consultant may propose a different schedule with a clear justification. ACODE and KHH will jointly review deliverables and provide consolidated feedback, normally within five working days. Final acceptance will be confirmed in writing by ACODE and KHH.

7. Required format and quality standards

- a) Submit the inception report, training report, facilitator guide, participant materials, and other narrative outputs in editable Microsoft Word format and PDF.
- b) Submit data tools, exercises, assessment instruments, and action plans in editable formats that KHH can adapt and reuse.
- c) Use clear English, accurate technical content, consistent terminology, practical instructions, and legible visual materials.
- d) Ensure all materials are usable by staff after the consultancy, identify sources for external content, and distinguish verified findings from examples or assumptions.
- e) Provide accessible and offline-capable versions where practicable and explain any software, equipment, or connectivity requirements.

8. Roles and coordination

Party	Responsibilities
ACODE as procurement entity	Issue the call, receive proposals, manage procurement and contracting, coordinate the assignment with KHH, participate in joint evaluation and review, consolidate feedback, and maintain the procurement record.
ACODE and KHH jointly	Evaluate proposals, agree the inception approach, provide technical direction, review deliverables, consolidate comments, and confirm acceptance in writing.
KHH as assignment owner	Appoint a focal person, identify participants, provide relevant documents and available equipment information, facilitate staff participation, review materials, and support application of learning.
Consultant or firm	Deliver the assignment independently and on schedule, use the agreed participatory methodology, protect confidential information, disclose conflicts of interest, and submit complete, usable outputs.

9. Consultant qualifications and experience

The assignment may be undertaken by an individual consultant, a multidisciplinary team, or a firm. The proposed lead consultant should demonstrate the following qualifications and experience.

- A postgraduate qualification in social sciences, research methods, development studies, public policy, information management, data science, ICT, communication, or a related field. A strong equivalent record may be considered.
- At least seven years of relevant experience in research, advocacy, organisational capacity strengthening, digital data management, or staff training.
- Demonstrated experience designing and delivering practical training for civil society organisations, NGOs, community-based organisations, or comparable institutions.
- Strong technical competence in research design, ethical field research, qualitative and quantitative methods, evidence communication, and advocacy planning.
- Demonstrated knowledge of digital data management, data protection, secure storage, data quality assurance, and appropriate digital collection or analysis tools.
- Demonstrated experience in responsible AI training or applied AI for research, including data privacy, source verification, bias, limitations, and human oversight.
- Knowledge of Uganda's civil society and development context. Experience in Karamoja, pastoralist contexts, climate resilience, peacebuilding, or community-led work is an advantage.
- Strong facilitation, instructional design, writing, communication, and coaching skills, with a clear ability to adapt complex topics to different skill levels.
- For a proposed team, identify the lead consultant, each member's responsibilities, relevant experience, availability, and level of effort. The team should collectively cover all three learning areas.

10. Proposal submission requirements

Interested consultants or firms must submit separate technical and financial proposals to ACODE. Submit the technical and financial proposals to procurement@acode-u.org by October 30, 2026.

10.1 Technical proposal

- Understanding of KHH, PACER, the assignment objectives, and the three learning areas.
- Proposed methodology for the needs assessment, curriculum design, participatory training, practical exercises, assessment, coaching, and follow-up.
- A detailed work plan and level of effort that addresses all deliverables and the indicative 20-working-day schedule.

- Relevant experience, including at least three comparable assignments, client references, and sample materials or outputs where available.
- CVs of the lead consultant and proposed team members, roles, availability, and evidence of relevant qualifications.
- An explanation of how the proposed approach will address inclusion, confidentiality, data protection, ethical research, responsible AI use, and safeguarding.
- Disclosure of any actual or potential conflict of interest.

10.2 Financial proposal

The financial proposal should provide a lump-sum price in Uganda shillings, itemised by professional fees, preparation, training delivery, coaching, travel and accommodation, materials, applicable taxes, and other expenses.

11. Evaluation criteria

ACODE, as procurement entity, will convene a joint evaluation with KHH. Proposals will be assessed against the criteria below and applicable procurement procedures. Technical proposals will be scored out of 80 points. A minimum score of 56 technical points is required to proceed to financial evaluation.

Technical criterion	Points
1. Understanding of KHH and the assignment	10
2. Quality and feasibility of methodology, including practical participation and learning assessment	20
3. Work plan, sequencing, and level of effort	10
4. Relevant experience of the consultant or lead consultant	15
5. Qualifications and complementary expertise of the proposed team	10
6. Quality, usability, accessibility, and sustainability of proposed outputs	10
7. Data protection, ethical research, safeguarding, and responsible AI safeguards	5
8. Technical subtotal	80
9. Financial proposal and value for money	20
Total	100

ACODE and KHH will jointly determine the evaluation outcome. ACODE will maintain the procurement record and communicate procurement decisions to applicants.

12. Contract management, acceptance, and payment

ACODE will manage procurement and contracting on behalf of KHH. The consultant will report to a joint ACODE–KHH assignment focal team. KHH will lead participant identification and facilitate the use of the training materials after the assignment. Payments will be made in accordance with the contract and applicable tax requirements, following submission and acceptance of the relevant deliverable.

13. Confidentiality, ownership, and ethical requirements

- a) All materials, data, tools, and outputs produced under the assignment will be owned by KHH. The consultant may not publish or share them without prior written permission from ACODE and KHH.
- b) The consultant must protect confidential information, use it only for this assignment, store it securely, and return or destroy copies when instructed.
- c) The consultant must obtain informed consent where required, minimise the collection of personal information, and follow agreed safeguarding and data protection procedures.
- d) The consultant must disclose actual or potential conflicts of interest and comply with applicable anti-fraud, anti-corruption, safeguarding, data protection, and professional conduct requirements.
- e) The consultant must not enter confidential or personal information into a public AI service unless ACODE and KHH have expressly approved the specific tool and safeguards.