



COUNTRY: KENYA

PROJECT: KENYA DIGITAL ECONOMY ACCELERATION PROJECT (KDEAP)

IMPLEMENTING AGENCY: Information and Communications Technology Authority (ICTA)

PROJECT ID: P170941; **Credit Numbers** 7289-KE and 7290-KE

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR:

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
FOR
DEVELOPMENT OF OUK LEARNING CENTRE'S STRATEGY AND ROADMAP
(CONSULTING SERVICES)**

Contract No: KE-ICTA-545954-CS-QCBS

Issue Date: 9th June 2026

Closing Date: 30th June 2026 at 10:00AM EAT

Client:

The Chief Executive Officer,
ICT Authority

Teleposta Towers 12th Floor, Kenyatta Avenue

PO Box 27150 - 00100 Nairobi Kenya

Tel: +254 20 2089061/ 2211960 Fax: +254 20 2211960

Email: procurement@ict.go.ke , info@icta.go.ke

Website: www.icta.go.ke

1.0 Background

The Government of the Republic of Kenya (GoK) has received financing in the amount equivalent to US\$390 Million equivalent from the World Bank towards the cost of the first phase of the Kenya Digital Economy Acceleration Project and it intends to apply part of the proceeds to payments for goods, works, non-consulting services and consulting services to be procured under this project.

The project includes the following components.

1.1 Component 1: Digital Infrastructure and Services-The aim of this component is to increase access to high-speed internet for individuals, industry, and government—the ‘foundation of the foundations’ of a digital economy and strengthen Kenya’s role as regional digital leader—while leveraging investments from the private sector

1.2 Component 2. Digital Government and Services- This component will invest in the foundational digital services, platforms, architectures, and policies needed to transform the way the Government communicates and conducts its internal operations.

1.3 Component 3. Digital Skills and Markets- This component aims to equip young Kenyans with digital skills and strengthen their abilities to access and compete in domestic and regional markets through supporting skills development, to study mechanisms to improve access to affordable devices and through enhancing the enabling environment for e-commerce to support Kenya’s role as a regional digital hub.

1.4 Component 4. Project Management- This component will support project implementation, coordination, for the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) within ICTA and capacity building.

1.5 Component 5: Contingent Emergency Response Components-This component will be activated in the event of an emergency.

The project aims to accelerate digital transformation at the regional level focusing on critical digital enablers that ‘future-proof’ economic growth and leveraging Kenya’s leadership role in the region to facilitate the adoption and implementation of regionally harmonized frameworks for digital integration.

Context of the assignment

Under component 3, namely sub-component 3.2 focused on enhancing employment-ready digital skills, the project is supporting the Open University of Kenya (OUK) with the objective of creating digital content for impactful online learning programs. The OUK is a specialized public institution established and chartered on August 3rd 2023 to address the inequities faced by individuals who were unable to access public university education. The OUK was founded on the principles of inclusivity, accessibility, and affordability to ensure that no one is left behind. So far, the University has admitted over five thousand (5,000) students in the mainstream programs at undergraduate and postgraduate levels within and outside the country. In addition, the University has over 40 professional development courses which have attracted up to 10,000 students to date.

Although the OUK primarily delivers learning online, physical learning centres remain essential to ensure equitable access, learner engagement, and effective support—especially for students with limited connectivity or devices. These centres will provide safe and equipped spaces for blended learning, proctored examinations, tutoring, mentoring, and community interaction. For efficiency and sustainability, the OUK will seek to utilize existing facilities, such as innovation or digital hubs, other educational institutions and private facilities rather than invest in new infrastructure.

As part of Kenya’s digital inclusion and access strategy, the Ministry of ICT and Digital Economy (MICDE), the ICT Authority (ICTA), KONZA Technopolis, NGCDF and other Government (both at national and county levels) and private entities are implementing a national roll-out of *Digital Hubs* across the Country. These hubs serve as localized centres for citizen digital literacy training, access to online government services, youth skilling (e.g., Ajira), digital entrepreneurship, and internet access in both rural and urban communities. While curriculums for the digital centers have been developed by e-mobilis, under Mastercard foundation funding, there is a need for continuous enhancement and standardization of the skilling offer across the hubs.

These centers are enhancing access to various socio-economic services, including education, in alignment with a core mandate of the Open University of Kenya (OUK). The established digital centers, managed by MICDE are 300. As envisaged in the Digital Master Plan 2022 -2032 the GoK is establishing one digital hub in every ward targeting a total of 1,450 hubs.

Beyond assessing digital hubs, their service offering and underlying infrastructure this assignment also aims to foster collaborations with other educational institutions — particularly Technical Training Institutes — to utilize their facilities as OUK Learning Centers.

The purpose of this assignment is to develop a strategy and a roadmap to see whether OUK could leverage some of the 1,450 hubs to be established by the GoK, existing educational institutions, and private entities, as OUK learning centres across the country.

2.0 Objectives of the Assignment

The consultancy aims to develop a comprehensive strategy and implementation roadmap to inform the OUK’s decision-making on leveraging the digital hubs across the country as OUK learning centres, ensuring equitable access, sustainability, and quality and standardization of the service delivery. The strategy will start with the impact assessment of the existing hubs (including demand analysis and evaluation of the effectiveness of delivered content). It will also identify infrastructure and capacity gaps within the existing centres and provide recommendations to address them through collaboration with the MICDE and other partners.

The specific objectives of the services sought include:

1. Assess existing and prospective hubs through mapping, impact evaluations, demand analysis, content assessment and evaluation of underlying infrastructure.
2. Identify suitable physical facilities that can serve as OUK learning centers with a focus on leveraging already existing physical facilities (i.e., avoiding any new constructions)
3. Define the characteristics and requirements of an ideal OUK learning center.
4. Recommend effective collaboration and cost-sharing models with hosting institutions.
5. Define minimum technical and infrastructure standards for learning centers, including requirements for online proctored examinations.
6. Propose an operational management and quality assurance framework for the learning centers.

3.0 Scope of the Assignment

The assignment will be national in scope, covering all 47 counties of Kenya. The strategy should address ways, in which OUK establish or partner for learning centres in all parts of the country, including remote and marginalized areas, to guarantee equitable access to high-quality digital learning and assessment services all **OUK learners**.

The assignment will cover the following tasks which the consultant is expected to undertake:

a) Identification and assessment of potential learning centres

Assess suitable existing hubs that can be strategically utilised as OUK learning centres. The assessment should:

- Map existing and forthcoming hubs across all 47 counties, assessing geographic coverage and accessibility for learners in both urban and remote areas
- Conduct evaluation of the demand for services offered at the existing and forthcoming digital hubs matching it against the supply as well as assessing their impact (effectiveness of delivery models, number of people trained, level of satisfaction, learning outcomes, employment outcomes, etc.)
- Evaluate current physical and digital infrastructure, accessibility, and readiness.
- Consider the diversity of ownership (public, private, community-based) and existing usage patterns
- Evaluate potential for expansion

b) Definition of an ideal learning centre for the OUK

Develop a clear framework describing the purpose, target audience, functions, and service standards of an OUK learning centre, leveraging lessons learnt and impact assessment of the existing hubs and training programs. Identify minimum infrastructure, digital equipment, staffing, and learner support requirements. The task includes minimum technical specifications for:

- **Computing Devices:** Reliable computers or laptops with adequate processing power and memory.
- **Robust Internet Connectivity:** Stable and high-speed broadband or satellite internet capable of supporting multiple concurrent users for streaming, online learning platforms, and proctored exams.
- **Peripheral Devices:** Printers, scanners, and high-definition webcams, high-quality microphones, and comfortable headsets for effective online communication and proctoring.
- **Power Solutions:** Reliable backup power solutions to ensure uninterrupted learning and examination sessions.
- **Secure Environment:** Furniture suitable for digital learning (desks, ergonomic chairs) and consideration for private, quiet spaces within the hubs for examination purposes to minimize distractions and enhance security.
- **Software Requirements for Proctored Online Exams:** Recommendations for compatible operating systems, web browsers, and any specific software needed for remote proctoring platforms.

c) Gap Analysis and Recommendations for Infrastructure Enhancement

Using the findings from Task 1 and the standards defined under Task 1, conduct a comprehensive **gap analysis** comparing the current state of learning centers and digital hubs against the ideal OUK model.

The analysis should:

- Summarize impact assessment, effectiveness of content, delivery models
- Identify deficiencies in infrastructure, connectivity, staffing, or accessibility.
- Classify centers according to readiness (e.g., ready, requires minor upgrades, major upgrades).
- Provide actionable recommendations for addressing identified gaps, highlighting those requiring intervention or investment by the MICDE and other partners.

d) Development of collaborative sharing mechanisms

Propose practical, scalable, and sustainable collaboration models between OUK and the hosting institutions/entities of the identified digital hubs. These includes, but is not limited to:

- ↳ **Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs):** Clearly outlining roles, responsibilities, legal frameworks, and terms of use for shared facilities.
- ↳ **Time-Sharing Agreements:** Optimizing access schedules for OUK learners to minimize conflicts with existing hub activities.
- ↳ **Resource-Sharing Frameworks:** Defining the joint utilization of internet connectivity, physical space, essential equipment, and human resources (e.g., hub managers, digital literacy trainers).
 1. **Sustainable Cost-Sharing and Operational Models:** Proposing transparent revenue-sharing or cost-recovery mechanisms where applicable, especially in cases involving private or semi-private institutions , to ensure long-term viability.

e) Design of a robust management and cost sharing model for the learning centres

- i. Recommend viable, efficient and sustainable for managing and operating the learning centres, including::
 - ↳ **Centralized oversight with local management:** Proposing a model where OUK provides centralized strategic direction and academic oversight, with day-to-day management handled by hosting institutions or designated community coordinators within the hubs.
 - ↳ **Public-private partnerships (PPPs):** Investigating potential PPPs for funding, maintenance, and technological upgrades of the digital centres.
 - ↳ **Staffing models:** Recommending efficient and sustainable staffing models, potentially including volunteer-based, subsidized, or shared staffing arrangements to manage daily operations and provide basic technical support to learners.
 - ↳ **Detailed cost implications:** Providing a thorough analysis of the financial implications of establishing and operating the learning centres, including initial setup costs, recurring operational expenses, and potential revenue streams.

f) Supervision and Quality Assurance:

Develop a comprehensive model for the effective supervision and quality assurance of the learning centres. This will include mechanisms for monitoring adherence to technical specifications, operational guidelines, and ensuring a consistent quality of service delivery across all centres.

4.0 Duration and location of Assignment

The duration of the consulting services assignment shall be within eight (8) calendar months from the date of the consultancy commencement. The assignment shall be carried out at the consultant's office, at the Open University of Kenya Offices located at the KONZA Technopolis, the regions where the innovation hubs exists and any other location which circumstances may require.

5.0 Reporting requirements and timelines for deliverables/reports

Table 1 shows the reporting requirements and timelines for the project deliverables.

1) Table 1: Reporting requirements and timelines for deliverables/reports

Deliverables	Description of deliverables	Timelines after commencement date	Number and Format of reports presentation
Inception Report	Detailed plan describing the consultant's approach and methodology for carrying out the assignment, including data-collection strategy, stakeholder engagement plan, and detailed workplan aligned to the Scope of Assignment.	Three Weeks	4 hard copies and a digital copy
A draft report on the preliminary selection of Digital learning centers	A progress Report with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. assessment of existing and potential learning centers, including demand analysis and impact evaluation; ii. Distribution of existing and forthcoming centres and rationale for selection for OUK to leverage their premises; iii. initial parameters and definition of the ideal OUK learning centre model including clear definitions of the minimum technical requirements of an OUK learning center 	3 months	4 hard copies and a digital copy
Draft strategy Report	iv. A consolidated report covering: (i) results of the	4 months	4 hard copies and a digital

Deliverables	Description of deliverables	Timelines after commencement date	Number and Format of reports presentation
	gap analysis comparing existing hubs against the ideal model; (ii) proposed collaboration, resource-sharing, and cost-sharing mechanisms; (iii) proposed management and supervision frameworks; and (iv) draft quality-assurance strategy.		copy
A draft report on Monitoring and Evaluation, Sustainability Planning and Promotion	Report presenting: (i) sustainability models and financing options; (ii) monitoring and evaluation framework with measurable indicators to ensure that the learning centers serve the purpose in a sustainable manner; and (iii) communication and awareness strategy for stakeholder engagement and visibility. The stakeholders engaged/to be engaged and ways of engagement should be clearly documented.	5 Months	4 hard copies and a digital copy
Draft Implementation Roadmap	Practical roadmap outlining sequential steps, resource requirements, legal instruments, capacity-building needs, and any other enabling actions required to operationalize the learning-centre strategy.	6 Months	4 hard copies and a digital copy
Final Reports	i. Comprehensive final deliverable incorporating feedback on all drafts. It should include: (i) validated list and profiles of selected learning centres; (ii) finalized OUK	8 Months	4 hard copies and a digital copy

Deliverables	Description of deliverables	Timelines after commencement date	Number and Format of reports presentation
	learning-centre strategy; (iii) quality-assurance, resource-sharing, and sustainability models; (iv) monitoring, evaluation, and promotion plan; (v) stakeholder-engagement summary; and (vi) final implementation roadmap.		

All draft and final reports (in specified formats and copies) shall be submitted in the prescribed format to:

The Chief Executive Officer,
ICT Authority
Telposta Towers 12th Floor, Kenyatta Ave
PO Box 27150 – 00100
Nairobi Kenya
Tel: +254 20 2089061/ 2211960 Fax: +254 20 2211960
Email: procurement@ict.go.ke , info@icta.go.ke
Website: www.icta.go.ke

Attention:
The Project Coordinator
KDEAP

And additional four (4) hard copies and a digital copy of each required deliverable to the address below:

The Vice Chancellor
The Vice Chancellor,
Open University of Kenya (OUK)
KoTDA, 1st Floor, Konza Technopolis
PO Box 2440 - 00606 Nairobi Kenya
Tel: +020 2000211 / 020 2000212
Email: vc@ouk.ac.ke , info@ouk.ac.ke
Website: <https://ouk.ac.ke/>

Upon submission of every report, the consultant is expected to make a presentation of the submitted report to the Client in a scheduled meeting. The acceptance of the report shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

6.0 Payment Schedule

The payment schedules, which will be negotiated with the successful consultant based on satisfactory performance, are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Proposed payment schedule

No.	Deliverables	Timelines after commencement date	Payment Schedule
1.	Inception Report	3 weeks	20%
2.	A draft report on the selection of Digital learning centers establishment	3 Months	10%
3.	Draft strategy Report	4 Months	10%
4.	A draft report on Monitoring and Evaluation, Sustainability Planning and Promotion	5 Months	10%
5.	A draft report on roadmap implementing the findings	6 Months	10%
6.	Final Reports	8 Months	40%

Upon submission of every report, the consultant is expected to make a presentation of the submitted report to the Client in a scheduled meeting. The acceptance of the report shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

7.0 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR CONSULTANT'S QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

The minimum requirements for the Consultant's qualifications and experience are as follows:

- 1) **Core business and years in business:** The firm shall be registered/incorporated as a consulting firm with core business in education planning, digital infrastructure/ Education Technology/ICT assessment, institutional partnerships modelling, blended/ virtual learning, designing digital or learning labs/hubs or any other related area of expertise for a period of at least five (5) years.
- 2) **Relevant experience:** The firm shall demonstrate having successfully executed at least two (2) assignments of similar nature and complexity in the last five (5) years in similar operating environment. Details of the assignments (-Name and address of the client, scope, value, and period) should be provided
- 3) **Technical and managerial capability of the firm:** The firm shall demonstrate as having the requisite technical capacity and managerial capacity to undertake the assignment in the submitted company profile(s).

8.0 Team composition and minimum qualification and experience requirements for key experts

The consultant shall demonstrate well qualified and experienced experts as required and appropriate for the execution of the assignment. They should possess necessary resources to undertake works

of such nature, including human resources, equipment and software required. The key experts shall personally carry out (with any assistance of other experts deemed appropriate) the services as described in this TOR.

Table 3: Team composition and minimum qualification and experience requirements for key experts

	Key Experts
1)	<p>Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and Virtual University Specialist (One): Role- Overall coordination, quality assurance, and lead author of the impact assessment, strategy and roadmap Educational Requirements: A minimum of a masters degree in Open and Distance Learning, Education, Technology, or related field from a recognized University. General Experience: A minimum of ten (10) years of demonstrated experience in consultancy services related to education technology or distance education strategy; Proven experience designing or evaluating open/virtual university models, blended learning systems, or digital learning ecosystems. design or setting up a new learning institution. Specific Experience: Must be familiar with Kenya's specific digital landscape and eco-system.</p>
2)	<p>ICT Infrastructure and Digital Hubs Specialist</p> <p>Role: Lead the mapping, assessment, and gap analysis of existing hubs.</p> <p>Educational Requirements : Degree in ICT, Computer Engineering, or related discipline.</p> <p>Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 10 years of experience in digital infrastructure assessment, ICT hub design, or connectivity planning. • Familiarity with Kenya national digital infrastructure programs or government ICT initiatives. • Experience working with Ministries of ICT, regulators, or national broadband initiatives is an asset.
3)	<p>Institutional Partnerships and PPP Specialist Educational Requirements: Advanced degree in Economics, Business Administration, or Public Policy.. General Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 8 years' experience in PPPs, institutional partnerships, or higher education financing. • Experience designing or managing multi-stakeholder education programs.

	Specific Experience: The candidate will have experience of a minimum of four (4) years working with national and county governments, tertiary institutions or any other entities running digital learning centers.
4)	<p>Monitoring, Evaluation & Quality Assurance Expert (One)</p> <p>Educational Requirements: A minimum of a bachelors degree in the areas of Monitoring and Evaluation, Education, Quality Assurance, Computer Science, ICT or a related discipline from a recognized University in Kenya.</p> <p>General Experience: The minimum years of experience should be four (4) years in monitoring and evaluation on an education related assignment within Kenya.</p> <p>Specific Experience: The candidate will have experience of a minimum of two (2) years in working on a similar project.</p>

9.0 ESTIMATED TIME INPUTS FOR KEY EXPERTS

The number of key experts and the estimated time input for each key expert for the assignment are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Estimated Time Inputs for Key Experts

S/No	Key and support Staff	No	Estimated Time Input (staff-weeks)
1)	Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and Virtual University Specialist	1	24
2)	ICT Infrastructure and Digital Hubs Specialist	1	24
3)	Institutional Partnerships and PPP Specialist Educational Requirements	1	24
4)	Monitoring, Evaluation & Quality Assurance Expert	1	24
Total			96 weeks

10.0 Responsibilities of the Client

ICTA will engage the consultant on behalf of OUK, requiring the consulting firm to carry out the identified tasks with a focus on achieving the expected outputs and outcomes outlined in this TOR. The firm is encouraged to leverage local expertise.

OUK will endeavour to do the following:

- 1) Supplying available data, studies, and relevant literature necessary for completing the identified tasks.

- 2) Granting access to required university officials, relevant MDAs and SAGAS, as well as key education and industry players as applicable.
- 3) Facilitating stakeholder engagement meetings to allow the consultant to gather pertinent information relevant to the tasks at hand.
- 4) Offering timely feedback on reports and deliverables.

11.0 Responsibilities of the consultant

The Consultant shall be responsible for the provision of all the necessary resources to carry out the services such as market surveys and any other required resources. The consultant is expected to undertake activities that will ensure that outputs are consistent with the professional and legal requirements. All outputs will be presented using modern technology. It is also required that the data is generated through a consultative process that guarantees authenticity and ownership.

The Consultant bears the responsibility of providing all essential resources for rendering the services, including market surveys and any other necessary requirements. The consultant is tasked with undertaking activities to ensure that the outputs align with professional and legal standards. It is imperative that a consultative approach is employed when carrying out the tasks. Furthermore, the consultant is accountable for delivering all pertinent resources, including the strategy, monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance plan and any other required resource to OUK upon the conclusion of the consultancy.

12.0 Ownership rights for reports and records: Any resources, outputs or software tools, except proprietary ones, developed under this consultancy will be released under an open-source licence such as the Creative Commons and GNU General Public License.