**THE UGANDA COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (UCC)
RESEARCH SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION FRAMEWORK
2022-2025**

FEBRUARY 2022

**UGANDA COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE OF ICT AND RESEARCH
P.O. BOX 7376,
KAMPALA, UGANDA**

APPROVAL

This framework for the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) research support and collaboration, 2022-2025 was approved by the Top Management Team (TMT) on…………………………………. and takes immediate effect.

SIGNED BY:

Signature: ……………………………………. Date: ………………………………………

Executive Director.

IN THE PRESENCE OF:

Signature: ……………………………………. Date: ………………………………………

Commission Secretary

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ITB   : Innovation Test Beds
DCF   : Data Collection Facilitator
R&SD   : Research and Service Development
ICT   : Information and Communications Technology
RSP   : Research Support Program
TMT   : Top Management Team
GPA   : Grade Point Average
UCC   : Uganda Communications Commission
PDF   : Portable Document Format
ICT   : Information and Communications Technology
UGX   : Uganda Shillings
TORs   : Terms of References
QCBS   : Quality Cost Best Selection

1. INTRODUCTION

The Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) is mandated by section 5(1)(l) of the Uganda Communications Act, 2013 to promote research into the development and use of new communications techniques and technologies, including those which promote accessibility of persons with disability and other members of society to communications service. Since 2015, the Commission has collaborated through calls for research proposals with academia, students and researchers in advancing its strategy. This framework provides for a consistency in approach and structure to entering and implementing research support and collaborative arrangements with applicable stakeholders.

2. PURPOSE OF THE FRAMEWORK

The main purpose of the framework is to guide UCC in implementing the research support and collaborative programme objectives (see Annex 1) and initiatives as a driver of its strategic direction.

3. SCOPE OF THE FRAMEWORK

This framework applies to research support and research collaboration efforts as coordinated and implemented on behalf of UCC by the Department of ICT & Research.

4. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The following are specific objectives of the framework: -

   I.   Provide principles and guidelines to form the basis of implementation, monitoring and evaluation and reporting on the research support and collaborative programme

   II. To define the projects that are eligible for support under the research support and collaborative program

   III. To provide guiding principles and criteria for evaluation of and support for research support and research collaboration initiatives

   IV. To optimise resources (HR capacity, funds, tools, data) in undertaking research and support for initiatives under the programme

5. APPLICABLE FRAMEWORKS

This framework should be implemented while being cognisant of UCC which include: -

I.	The UCC strategic plan for 2021-2025
II.	The Department of ICT and Research Annual Strategy
III.	The Research Quality &Assurance framework
IV.	The Research Monitoring &Evaluation framework
V.	The UCC Communications test bed on emerging and future technologies also known as **"Innovation Test Bed"**
VI.	The UCC Framework for establishment of the Communications Journal (UCJ)
VII.	Applicable organisational operational frameworks and policies

6. APPLICABILITY

6.1.   Who Can Apply? Or Target groups

Except for Government workers and UCC staff, anyone eligible to undertake high-quality research can apply provided they have a qualifying research proposal. As a result, the following types of researchers are eligible: -

I.	Undergraduate students, in which case the projects must be submitted by the project supervisor (i.e., faculty member).
II.	Graduate students, in which case the projects must be submitted by the project supervisor (i.e., faculty member).
III.	Post-doc researchers
IV.	Lecturers
V.	Inter-University researchers
VI.	Research institutions that are hosted or affiliated to academia
VII.	Industry- academia partnerships

UCC special projects and UCC Research, technology, and innovation centric initiatives such as the National Conference on Communications (NCC), Uganda Communications Journal (UCJ) can be supported under this framework.

UCC shall not fund applications where the Government employee is the principal investigator / researcher. However, Government employees may be part of the project but must not be responsible for most of the project.

Applicants who are already receiving funding from UCC for any other ongoing project at the time of submission are ineligible and will often not be funded through this granting process.

Successful candidates must adhere to the Research Support and Collaboration Project Agreements or Memorandums of Understanding (MOU).

7. TYPES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT

Research support shall be in form of: Financial, Technical, and In-kind. This shall be dependent on the three broad strategic focus areas of: academia, UCC special projects and partnerships

7.1.   The UCC research support to academia

Discipline-specific and inter-disciplinary research projects will be supported through the research funding to academia. Support will be expected in four lots for each of these projects, as follows: -

   I.   Lot 1- Support to undergraduate research.
  II.   Lot 2- Support to postgraduate research.
 III.   Lot 3- Support to inter- university research collaborations.
 IV.   Lot 4- Support to research by academia for Industry.

In the research support to academia; -

a) Lot 1 and Lot 2 will provide partial or full research support funding in cash or in kind to undergraduate or postgraduate students seeking Bachelors, Masters, or Doctoral degrees for research in an area of interest to UCC and in support of UCC's strategic direction.

b) Lot 3 shall offer partial or full research support funding in cash or in kind to collaborative research initiatives that involve research participants (academic staff members and or students) drawn from at least two tertiary institutions with the lead institution from Uganda.

c) Lot 4 shall offer partial or full research support funding in cash or in kind to a team of academia with a project aimed at addressing the identified problem or challenges by the licensees/ operators.

The table below shows the maximum capping for each of the lots by project type: -

Table 1: Matrix of Indicative allocation financial capping under each lot.

	Lot 1 (UGX)	Lot 2 (UGX)	Lot 3 (UGX)	Lot 4 (UGX)
Discipline-specific	10, 000,000	30, 000,000	80, 000,000	55, 200,000
Interdisciplinary	20, 000,000	50, 000,000	100, 000,000	55, 200,000

7.2.   UCC special projects category.

In the UCC special projects, support will be expected in two lots for each of these projects, as follows: -

    I.   Lot 5- Collaborative research support
   II.   Lot 6- Support to innovative techniques: such as new communications technology and service development and innovation test beds, labs, and sand boxes.

More specifically; -

a) Lot 5 shall offer partial or full technical and or financial support to projects within the annual Research and Service Development (R&SD) agenda as approved by UCC Management. Such projects shall have been categorized as internal and for which the R&SD unit requires support at any node within the research cycle for example at the data collection stage, the UCJ etc.

b) Lot 6 shall offer partial or full technical and or financial support in activities or projects aimed at offering access to physical facilities, capabilities and services required for the development, testing and upscaling of development of a modern communications sector(which includes telecommunications, broadcasting, radio communications, postal communications, data communication and infrastructure). Eligible costs under this category may emerge from, Prototyping, Adaptation, Installation, and calibration; Testing equipment, Funding for test beds' customers, Design and development of prototype, Communication and dissemination activities related to the Innovation test beds.

The maximum funding for the UCC special projects category shall be capped as per the Management approved annual research and service development

agenda budget. However, supplementary non-financial facilitation such as in-kind contributions for other requirements associated with the research project shall be considered. These may include access to UCC technical monitoring tools, use of essential resources such as short codes and spectrum, among others.

Relevant authorisations or regulatory frameworks shall apply for example in consideration of use of short codes and spectrum.

7.3. Research Partnerships

As a regulator, UCC in a unique position to partner with others to contribute to the research and evidence base for the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) services sector. This has the potential to benefit our clients, UCC as an organization, and the broader ICT sector. This section lays out a clear and consistent framework for ensuring that research partnerships at UCC are aligned with the UCC's strategic pillars.

Internally, by the UCC team, or externally, by the intended partners, partnerships will be initiated and formed. Partnerships of the following types may be formed: -

The following are examples of possible partnerships: -

I. Collaborations with internal stakeholders on a research Topic of interest to the UCC

II. Collaboration with external organizations or institutions in implementing a UCC research agenda activity.

III. Joint implementation of an ICT related research study with third parties.

IV. Facilitation of a researcher with information such as relevant data, official introductions to undertake sector related studies.

V. Acquisition of external funding for UCC research activity.

7.3.1. Guiding Principles for Research partnerships Projects with the Department of ICT& Research/R&SD function shall include: -

I. Formally apply to UCC's Executive Director, stating their intent; this application must be accompanied by a detailed research proposal and clear details of the collaboration that is required from UCC. In the case of a data request, the proposal should clearly state the data that the researcher needs.

II.   Thereafter, UCC team shall review the proposal and engagement of the external researchers for a discussion to better appreciate their work were deemed necessary.

III.   An assessment report shall be written and shared with the Executive Director and/or Management for a decision on the request for partnership. Management reserves the right to accept or reject any application.

IV.   UCC Client Benefits: The primary evaluation criteria for approval of research to be conducted in partnership with Department of ICT&R/R&SD shall be whether the research will deliver a tangible benefit to our clients or to similar groups. In which case benefits shall include: - improved service delivery, policy change, a better understanding of ICT sector clientele needs and strengths and/or a more responsive use of ICT resources.

As such each application to conduct a research partnership should include a client benefit statement. UCC will not approve research projects that are unlikely to improve the circumstances of our clients or those in similar groups.

V.   Knowledge Transfer: With privacy and confidentiality requirements in mind, the findings, results, and any other pertinent information to arise from research partnerships should be communicated directly to all stakeholders

VI.   Informed Consent: All people directly participating in research must provide informed consent prior to participation in research projects. Consent can only be considered informed where the participant has been provided with a 'plain-language' information sheet that provides, at minimum, the following:

a) The purpose of the research or evaluation
b) What they will be asked to provide, or do
c) Who will have access to their data?
d) What will be done with the results
e) Their right to withdraw and have their data deleted prior to the completion of the study without adverse consequences
f) How their privacy will be protected
g) A point of contact for complaints, clarifications, and any other information they may require

VII. Time Commitment: While R&SD is committed to partnering in research, there is need to respect the time of our staff and clients. Projects with unreasonably onerous time commitments will not be approved.

VIII. Organizational Approval: All research partnerships with external groups must receive approval in principle from the Executive Director.

IX. UCC Client Involvement as Co-Researchers: Where possible, it is preferable for clients to be involved in research projects as co-designers and/or co-researchers rather than simply participants. UCC will give priority to research projects co-designed by UCC clients.

X. Regular Reporting to Management: Unless otherwise specified, updates on the progress of the research project will be provided by the Project Implementation Team(PIT) to UCC Management in a Management Paper, as a standing Agenda item.

XI. Maintenance of a Research Register: A register of all current and completed research partnerships with UCC shall be maintained by the R&SD Unit and at minimum shall include: -

    a) The title of the project and a summary of its methodology, purpose, and benefits
    b) The names and organizations of the project team and contact details for the project lead
    c) The name and contact details of the Executive lead
    d) The date of commencement and completion of the project
    e) When published, the location of the results of the project
    f) The estimated cost and actual cost of the project

XII. Final status Report to UCC Management: If stipulated as part of the Research Agreement or MOU, a final report to the UCC Management will be made and should contain an evaluation of the study itself as well as the results of the study as they are to be published.

XIII. Publication of Results: The anticipated publication of results should be stated in the research application form prior to the commencement of the project.

7.3.2.   Prerequisites for Research Partnership and Collaborations

The R&SD division must evaluate the following before commencing any research collaboration.

I.   The research project's activities and timeframe, as well as who will carry out specific components of the plan.

II. Working agreements for the duration of the project will be drafted collaboratively by the researchers and the R&SD team. In creating such agreements, the following considerations should be considered:-

   a) Description of the proposed research, including research questions, assignment methods, outcomes of interest, research activities, and intervention activities
   b) Objectives of the research partnership
   c) Approximate timeline of the intervention and research activities
   d) Deliverables or periodic updates to implementing partner
   e) Tasks to be undertaken by research team staff and implementing partner staff

Under the scope, the following key questions MUST be clearly answered.

   a) What is the purpose of this partnership? What questions are we seeking to answer and how will we answer them?
   b) Who is responsible for what? What kinds of support and analyses will the research team be able to offer the implementing partner? Who should be contacted for which type of question?
   c) How can we secure access to data that will inform the key outcomes of interest?
   d) What kinds of analytic support can the research team provide?
   e) How will we manage fundraising responsibilities? What will the funds cover?
   f) What data will the implementing partner need to provide?

III. Schedule: This will include determining when the cooperation and research activities will begin, as well as a timeline for communicating results. A Gantt chart must be utilized in this section to clearly establish the project timetable, unambiguous milestones, and the

relationship between activities such as data collection, data extraction, and analysis, dissemination, and so on.

IV.   The R&SD team working jointly with the intending partner shall define a clear communication strategy. As such, Questions to consider discussing with partners include:

    a) When and how should the partners notify each other about changes or aspects of the research that may have an impact on the analysis and results?

    b) How will the partners share results during and after implementing the research? key considerations must be put on trade-offs associated with sharing results before they are finalized

    c) Who can the research team and implementing partner share information with, and who should be removed from all communication? How can the research team and implementing partner coordinate? Clarify who should be able to access certain pieces of information about study implementation.

V.   When necessary, the R&SD team working with the UCC legal team shall establish a legal research agreement to suit the needs of participating partners. The UCC legal team shall provide more guidance about which agreement is appropriate to pursue.

VI.   Confidential data shall be secured in line with IT Policy and other applicable UCC operational policies. If Management deems it fit to share such information for research purposes, in which case, the UCC legal team shall: -

    a) Define the data use agreement or data sharing agreement, which shall clearly detail the applicable laws and regulations, data, requested and process for transferring, protecting, and using data.

    b) Depending on the specifics of the research, UCC might decide to explicitly restrict sharing information with external entities through non-disclosure agreements.

8. GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND RESTRICTIONS
8.1.   General principles:

This framework must adhere to the following general principles: -

I.   For the academic support streams, a request for applications will be delivered to potential applicants (tertiary institutions) throughout Uganda, as well as published in the daily newspapers, UCC social media handles for researchers and innovators and as per the UCC Communications Policy. For interested applicants, application forms will be available on the UCC website and in UCC regional offices.

II.   UCC maintains the right to amend the research support and collaboration framework and related terms and conditions in any of the assistance categories at any time.

III.   If it is in the best interest of the commission, UCC reserves the right to terminate any request for proposals at any time.

IV.   UCC reserves the right to define general access terms and conditions of support, which among others may include:

    a) Contractual relationships
    b) Financial requirements
    c) Final price, service level, delivery time
    d) Intellectual property rights and obligations and data protection
    e) Confidentiality
    f) Disputes settlements

V.   UCC reserves the right to issue a request for proposals, seek bids, or actively engage in direct discussions with individual or group applicants.

VI.   The following principles shall apply when it comes to dissemination, data sharing and intellectual property.

    a) Dissemination, Data Sharing, and Intellectual Property Information about research funded through the UCC Research Support & Collaboration framework shall be made available to the public on the UCC website.

    b) Recipients of support will also be required to provide information about their projects for UCC's Research for Development portal

    c) Recipients of the support will be required to collaborate with UCC on research uptake and dissemination activities, which may include, among others, presentations at seminars and conferences, blogs, interviews, and opinion pieces.

    d) The recipients of the support shall be expected to promote the dissemination of the results of their research as widely as

possible, based on the premise that publicly funded research data are a public good, produced in the public interest, and should be made openly available to other researchers in a timely manner to the maximum extent possible.

8.2.   Restrictions

The support schemes are subject to the following conditions: -

I.   The UCC research support to academia (undergraduate and postgraduate) will be limited to the following: -

a) Reimbursement of expenses (i.e., retroactive support) for completed activity is not possible.
b) The support cannot be used for infrastructure costs normally covered by your school or department.
c) Costs such as fees, stipends/salaries and other remuneration will not be eligible.
d) An applicant has priority if he/she has not received prior funding from the undergraduate research program, within the same academic year.
e) Support to at least one student delivering the same presentation abroad.

II.   A project or research proposal is required for all applicants. UCC encourage students to collaborate on ideas with their research supervisors, but the proposal must be developed and submitted by the student. The project description should include, among other things: -

a) Background, in which one is expected to describe the need for the project and how the proposal was developed. Explain why the project is being proposed, how it relates to indicator achievement and how it is innovative.
b) A statement of the research problem: A clear statement of the work to be undertaken including research questions and objectives.
c) A research plan: student must include a research plan specifying how the students will spend their time on the proposed project. Students should be able to elaborate what they want to do, how they plan to do it, their research timeline, and why they want to do it (importance to your field/discipline, importance to your professional development, etc.

d) A detailed budget: budget costs should be reasonable and credible if funds for materials or equipment are requested.

III. The funding under the inter-University research collaborations shall be restricted to the following: -

a) Reimbursement of expenses (i.e., retroactive support) for completed activity is not possible.

b) The support cannot be used for infrastructure costs normally covered by the Universities.

c) Costs such as fees, stipends/salaries and other remuneration will not be eligible.

d) Funding shall be only for collaborating universities/ institutions of higher learning.

IV. The funding under the support to internal research scheme shall be used solely for the research related expenses only. UCC may however offer other non-monetary support for example data collection tools if necessary.

V. The funding under the support to innovation test beds shall not include the following: -

a) Building costs

b) Research costs, including acquisition of equipment, if not used for upscaling materials as described in the Innovation Test Beds topics

c) Costs already paid for by third parties.

VI. Funding under innovation test beds shall not be availed to innovators for the following: -

a) Building costs

b) Research costs, including acquisition of equipment, if not used for upscaling materials as described in the Innovation Test Beds topics

c) Costs already paid for by third parties.

9. RESEARCH SUPPORT ELIGIBILITY CRITERION

Table 2: Matrix Research Support Eligibility Criteria

Support Category	Eligibility Criteria
Lot 1: - Support to Undergraduate research.	A student (s) can apply for an undergraduate research support if he/she has: - I. Full-time enrolment status in an undergraduate degree program at a university or institution of higher learning in Uganda. II. Must be registered as such during the period in which the research will be conducted. III. They must also be in good academic standing, with a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.5. IV. Submitted reports for previous grants received (if applicable). V. Have an endorsement from their supervisor or the Dean to confirm supervision. The academic staff member must be with a continuing appointment in the respective university department/school (or equivalent) at which the respective applicants are undertaking their studies. VI. All applicants must submit the detailed proposals.
	To be eligible to apply for the postgraduate research support, one must: - I. Be currently enrolled at a tertiary institution in Uganda.

Lot 2: - Support to Postgraduate research.	II. By the closing date of the call for applications, one's candidature Must not be exceeding the following full-time (or part-time equivalent) periods.
	
	    a) Five years full time if you are a doctoral student.
	    b) Two years full-time if you are masters by research student.
	
	III. Have an endorsement from their supervisor or the Dean to confirm supervision. The academic staff member must be with a continuing appointment in the respective university department/school (or equivalent) at which the respective applicants are undertaking their studies.
	
	IV. The application must be accompanied by an appraisal from a primary advisor in form of a confidential letter of recommendation addressing the applicant's merit and performance in the program, the significance of the project, and the project's relationship to the applicant's thesis/dissertation topic.
	
	V. They must be in good academic standing, specifically on Normal Progress (NP) at the time of applying for the support.
	
	VI. Submitted reports for previous grants received (if applicable).
	
	VII. Submit a detailed research or project proposal

	To be eligible to apply for the support to Inter- University collaborations, the applicants must fulfil the following eligibility requirements: - I. Be in collaboration with at least 1 or more tertiary institutions.

Lot 3: - Support to inter-university research collaborations.	II. Each collaborating tertiary institution should have at least one member of staff with a valid contract at the time of application; the lead must be a full-time lecture at a minimum of senior lecturer.
	
	III. the principal investigator must be an academic staff with a continuing appointment in a tertiary institution in Uganda
	
	IV. The lead applicant's (the principal investigator's) head of department/school (or equivalent) to confirm must sign the application form submitted in response to the call under the scheme: -
	
	   a) Support for the application.
	   b) The applicant's status within the university, and;
	   c) That the applicant will have access to such resources, equipment, facilities, etc. as may be required to undertake the proposed research.
	
	V. An endorsement by the heads of department/school (or equivalent) of other universities participating in the consortium should also be obtained.
	
	VI. Written collaborative research agreements among the collaborating tertiary institutions that must among others sell-out: -
	
	   a) Collaborator's expectations, indicating what each collaborators' expected contribution? what they expect to get out of the collaboration? Etc.
	   b) Authorship and credit. Where will the results be presented and/or published? Who will be included as authors? What will be the order of co-authors? Who will have the final authority to approve presentations or publications?

	c) Research Accountability. What type of access will members of the collaboration have to each other's original data and/or notes? How frequently will the members of the collaboration meet to discuss and evaluate their results? d) Use of Data. How shall the data to be used be generated? the collaborating institutions should be clear on their interest in sharing data to ensure the success of the project. e) Data Retention and Preservation. Once project information and data are collected, analyzed, and reported, it is vital that the researchers are made aware that the generated data shall be owned by UCC, this shall be for verification of the research results and the record of inventions and inventor ship, as well as to provide background data for future research. f) If collaborators from one institution will be using the facilities of the other institution, collaboration agreements may include the typical provisions of a Facility Use Agreement mentioned agreed upon by the collaborators. g) May also have detailed intellectual property terms. h) Interests of the Affected Parties, their Obligations as well as consequences of their actions. VII. Submit a detailed research or project proposal.
Lot 4: - Support to research by academia for Industry.	Funds under this scheme shall cover only the university's direct costs associated with the research activities needed to address the identified problem. I. An application under this scheme shall be made by the student that shall conduct such project. II. The student must be currently enrolled in a university in Uganda in an ICT related degree program.

	III. The application shall be accompanied by an endorsement by an academic staff member to confirm supervision and endorsement by a co-supervisor from the industrial partner. IV. The academic staff member must be with a continuing appointment in the respective university department/school (or equivalent) at which the applicant is undertaking studies while the industrial partner (and beneficiary of the research) must be a private company incorporated in Uganda under the Companies Act and engaging in commercial activities in Uganda.

Lot 5- Collaborative research support	To be eligible to apply for the support to internal research scheme, the applicants MUST:
	
	I. The applicant's application must be in response to a call for proposals issued by UCC. The issued call shall among others specify: -
	
	    a) Background and objectives of the assignment.
	    b) Tasks to be performed by the applicants.
	    c) The scope and duration of the assignment.
	    d) Expected deliverables from the applicants.
	    e) Qualification and team composition of applicants.
	    f) Reporting line of the applicants.
	    g) Copyright and disclosure.
	
	II. The Lead facilitator MUST be a Ugandan citizen.
	
	III. The lead facilitator must be an academic staff or an independent consultant from a registered University in Uganda with: -
	
	IV. At least a master's degree related to the research to be done.

	a) The lead should have a continuing appointment for at least two (2) years for academic staff. b) Previous experience with data collection, management, and analysis (required). c) Experience in working on similar or related studies as specified by UCC. V. Be an experienced individual researcher or a team with a minimum of 10 years' experience. VI. The applicants must submit both a financial and technical proposal in response to the call for proposals.
Lot 6- Support to innovation test beds.	To be eligible to apply for the support to innovation testbed, the applicants MUST: I. Anyone with a 'combinatorial' innovation in real-world settings. II. Have at least one Ugandan in case of collaboration with international entities. III. Be either public or private entities. IV. Tertiary institution. V. Research and technology organisations. VI. Research centres. VII. Consortiums with any relevant partners.

10.   FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

10.1.   Research and Collaboration support funding shall be made available to: -

  I.   The Research projects that meet and further the UCC mission:
  II.   Projects that contribute to the priorities as outlined in the UCC strategic Plan
  III.   Major funding priorities as identified and specified in the R&SD approved annual research agenda.
  IV.   Priority shall be given to projects that demonstrate a "self-help" attitude, i.e., partner contributions, matched funding, and public involvement.
  V.   Research projects that clearly meet Call for proposal funding criteria and demonstrate initiatives that have a wider relevance and further the development of ICTs in Uganda.

10.2.   Research and Collaboration support shall not be made available to: -

  I.   Research Projects outside of Uganda.
  II.   Government employee research projects, (see section 6.1 on; Who Can Apply?)
  III.   Travel to conferences and seminars, unless part of a larger project supported by UCC or eligible under this framework.
  IV.   Emergency or deficit financing
  V.   General fundraising.

11.   APPLICATION GUIDELINES

UCC shall issue a call for research support and collaborations on an annual basis. Information about the call for research and collaborations shall be made available at https://www.ucc.co.ug/. This information may also be accessed via any other applicable communications channel as per the UCC communications policy. Furthermore, all Applicants' questions about the submission process can be submitted to: research@ucc.co.ug.

11.1.   Application Procedure

11.1.1.   How to Apply?

UCC shall issue a call for research support or collaborative project.

Before drafting a formal proposal to UCC, an applicant must carefully read the research support or collaborative Project Submission Guidelines or issued call to ascertain if his or her project is suitable for funding.

During the eligibility period, candidates must download the call for research support and/or collaboration terms of reference (ToRs) and submit their application by e-mailing it to UCC.

Furthermore, it is the applicants' responsibility to verify that all portions of the application or the ToRs have been properly addressed or that they are complete, clear, and thorough. Additionally, all supporting documents must be included because they will be used in the review process.

Applicants shall be required to Contact the research office by Telephone on +256-414/312 339000 by email to: **research@ucc.co.ug** and registry@ucc.co.ug in case of any research and collaborative research project or programme.

11.1.2.   When to Apply?

UCC will issue a single call for research assistance and or collaboration once a year or every two years, except for special projects and partnerships. The call will be valid under the terms and circumstances that management and the Department of ICT & Research department would have approved and released from time to time.

11.2.   Application Requirements

All applications for research support and partnership must include the following full description: -

    I.   Contacts and profile information for researchers.

        a) Principal researcher/ investigator.
        b) Team members.

    II.   An Abstract of the proposed study and outcomes.

    III.   Detailed research or project proposal, which among others should contain: -

        a) Relevant background and literature in which one is expected to describe the need for the project and how the proposal was

developed. Explain why the project is being proposed, how it relates to indicator achievement and how it is innovative.

b) A statement of the research problem: A clear statement of the work to be undertaken including research questions and objectives.

c) Overall goals and objectives or specific aims

d) Scope of the work.

e) Detailed methods and procedures, including the data sources

f) Support required from UCC.

g) Detailed work plan with specified deliverables. In case of Collaborating institutions, they must include a research plan specifying how the collaborators will spend their time on the proposed project. Collaborators should be able to elaborate what they want to do, how they plan to do it, their research timeline, and why they want to do it (importance to your field/discipline, importance to your professional development, etc.

h) Equipment if any to be used.

i) Output dissemination plan.

IV. A detailed budget request and justification: Budget costs should be reasonable and credible if funds for materials or equipment are requested. See section 11.3 on guidance of allowable costs

V. Signed detailed Biographical/Curriculum Vitae of the applicants and proposed team members which must among others detail: -

a) Education. Indicate institution, degrees, and dates.

b) Employment History. Include postdoctoral research and/or professional experience if applicable.

c) Research Support. List research projects which highlight your accomplishments. Indicate grantor, inclusive dates, and amount of each award.

d) List, as appropriate, research/scholarly publications, juried performances, and/or curated exhibits most closely related to the proposed project and other significant publications: include titles and all authors. Indicate refereed journals, juried shows, etc. with an asterisk (*). Summarize your productivity by indicating the total number of refereed and non-refereed journal articles, books, book chapters, invited papers, invited performances, juried shows, etc.

VI. Citations

VII. Annexes, which should among others include: -

    a) appointment letter of the lead researcher, where applicable
    b) Appointment letters of the collaborating lecturers at the time of application, if applicable.
    c) A resolution of the collaborators on who should receive the financial support on behalf of the collaborators if applicable.

VIII. And any other supportive documentations

11.3. Guidance on allowable and not allowable costs associated with research support and collaborations

Only direct expenses connected to the conduct of research or product and service development are allowed under this scheme, as shown in the table below: -

Table 3: Overview of allowable and not allowable costs

Allowable Costs	Not Allowable Costs
I. Data collection costs	I. Financial Aid
II. Equipment or IT hardware	II. Tuition Fee Waivers
III. Software	III. Student Health Insurance
IV. Design and development of prototypes, including testing, installations, and calibrations.	IV. Salary for the PI,
V. Computing and data entry	V. Salary support for Co-Is
VI. Travel to primary destination for the conduct of research, scholarly and creative activities	VI. Preparation of textbooks
VII. Local travel	VII. Preparation of a course or portion of a course
VIII. Lodging and meal reimbursement	VIII. Projects of an explicitly commercial nature
IX. Consumable supplies	
X. Permission fees	IX. Book Indexing Costs

XI.	Publication costs	
XII.	Copying costs	
XIII.	Routine lab and field work	
XIV.	Computer Software	
XV.	conferences facilitation to present research outputs upon approval of UCC.	
XVI.	Travel to disseminate information generated through the support or collaborations	
XVII.	Support for use of specialist services, for instance benchmarking or learning socialist techniques necessary or directly related to one's research project.	
XVIII.	Specialist books and periodicals that are essential to your research, but are not normally available or are difficult to obtain at the University	

11.4.   Application Format

The following shall generally apply to all applicants.

I.   All applications must use a 12-point or larger font or 15 characters or less per inch and be single-spaced with 1-inch margins.

II.   The applicant's last name is to appear as a header in the upper right-hand corner of each page.

III.   Following the Application format in section 11.2, all applications are to be combined into a single PDF or word document in the order indicated below for submission to; research@ucc.co.ug.

IV.   All application text should be presented in English. If particular words, a section of text, or a document are essential and are not presented in English, a translation is to be provided.

V. Applications should be prepared without excessive jargon and in a style that is clear to reviewers who are not experts in the specified area.

VI. Re-submissions: Resubmissions must include an additional 2-page response to reviewers at the beginning of the revised application. Text that has been revised from the original application must be indicated by using a blue font. And in which case the initial submission shall be ignored, if submitted within the specified timelines as per the issued call for proposals.

VII. All research support and collaborative research applications shall be submitted electronically in either PDF or Word Format to: research@ucc.co.ug with a copy to: ictandresearchdirector@ucc.co.ug

12. APPLICATION EVALUATION AND DECISION PROCESS

The following will be included in the application evaluation and decision-making process under this framework: -

12.1. Nomination of Review/Evaluation Panel

I. The Director for ICT & Research shall nominate for appointment by the Executive Director, a Review/Evaluation panel of three(3) to (5) Individuals with research and technical expertise to evaluate the received applications based on a well-defined evaluation criterion.

II. The Review/ Evaluation panel shall comprise of at least one person from the R&SD Unit and any other panellists with substantial research experience and technical expertise in research or service and product development function in question.

Unless otherwise specified in the call for proposals and or the terms of references for a given research and or collaborations, all the projects where applicable in addition to the evaluation criteria specified against each support category specified in table 4 shall also follow where applicable the criteria specified in section 9.

Table 4: Matrix of evaluation methods for the support and collaborations

Support Category	Evaluation criteria
	Applications received shall then be competitively evaluated based on the quality of proposal. Priority will be given to: -

Lot 1&2: - Support to Undergraduate and postgraduate research.	I. Projects that are academically strong and will provide sound learning outcomes, relevant to the development of the communication sector in Uganda. II. Projects that are realistic, with credible timelines, resource requirements, and goals relevant to the communications Industry. III. Third and fourth year or post graduate students with good academic standing. IV. Document must be submitted in an appropriate format as shall be defined at the time of issuance of the call for proposals.
Lot 3: - Support to inter- university research collaborations.	Applications received shall be competitively evaluated with due consideration of the following: - I. Is the research of high academic quality, address a key societal challenge in Uganda using ICTs, is therefore likely to have significant impact on the development of the communication sector or of Uganda and is interdisciplinary? II. Does the project have access to or provide a plan for attracting sufficient resources for completion beyond the seed funding provided by UCC? III. Does the research team presented comprise of members from different universities and from across a range of relevant disciplines?
Lot 4: - Support to research by academia for Industry.	Applications received shall then be competitively evaluated based on the quality of proposal. Priority will be given to: - I. Projects that are academically strong and will provide sound learning outcomes, relevant to the UCC research agenda for the sector. II. Projects that are realistic, with credible timelines, resource requirements, and goals. III. Students with good academic standing.

	IV. iv. Document must be submitted in PDF or Word Format

Lot 5- Collaborative research support	In the evaluation of applicants, the evaluation team shall adopt a Quality cost-based selection (QCBS), in which both the technical and financial proposals shall be used to determine the winning submission. In doing this, weights shall apply as detailed below: -
	
	    I. Weight assigned to technical proposal = 80%
	
	    II. Weight assigned to financial proposal = 20%
	
	In the Technical evaluation, the following shall be taken into consideration.
	
	    I. The experience of the lead applicant.
	
	    II. Proof of continuing appointment at a university.
	
	    III. In case of collaboration with research firms, a copy of the agreement.
	
	    IV. Adequacy of proposed methodology and work plan.
	
	    V. Proposed team members qualifications.
	
	    VI. Proposed schedule for the project, including milestones.
	
	    VII. Extensive knowledge on the subject matter will be an added advantage.
	
	    VIII. Previous experience working with UCC will be an added advantage.

Lot 6- Support to innovation test beds.	In the evaluation of applicants, the evaluation team shall adopt a Quality cost-based selection (QCBS), in which both the technical and financial proposals shall be used to determine the winning submission. In doing this, weights shall apply as detailed below: -
	
	    I. Weight assigned to technical proposal = 80%
	
	    II. Weight assigned to financial proposal = 20%

12.2. Evaluation and selection of applications

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the R&SD unit with the possible assistance of external assessors as approved by the director ICT & Research. Unless otherwise specified, all applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

a) **STEP 1**: Opening & administrative checks evaluations

During the opening and administrative check, the following will be assessed:

I.   If the deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will be automatically rejected.

II.   Examination of the application based on the eligibility criteria detailed in section 9 or in the call for proposals. If the proposal does not meet the eligibility criteria, the application will be rejected on this sole basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The proposals that pass this check will be evaluated on their relevance and design of the proposed action where applicable. The evaluation criteria shall be divided into headings and subheadings.

Each subheading will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

Table 5: Matrix of proposal relevance and design of action Scores*

Section	Maximum score
1. Relevance of the action	**15**
a) How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call for proposals and to the specific themes /sectors /areas or any other specific requirement stated in the guidelines for applicants? Are the expected results of the action aligned with the priorities defined in the call proposals?	5
b) How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved, the operators, customers as well as final beneficiaries, target groups?	5

c) Does the proposal contain added-value elements (e.g., innovation, best practices)? and the other additional elements indicated under 1.2. of the guidelines for applicants?	5
2. Design of the action	**30**
a) How coherent is the overall design of the action? Does the proposal indicate the expected results to be achieved by the action? Does the intervention logic explain the rationale to achieve the expected results?	5x2**
b) Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved, and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders?	5
c) Does the design consider external factors (risks and assumptions)?	5
d) Are the activities feasible and consistent in relation to the expected results (including timeframe)? Are results (output, outcome and impact) realistic?	5
e) To which extent does the proposal integrate relevant cross-cutting elements such as communications issues, gender in ICTs as well as PWDs?	5
Maximum total score	**45**

**this score is multiplied by 2 because of its importance

b) **STEP 2: evaluation** of the full application

The application that passes step 1 will be further evaluated on their quality, including the proposed budget and capacity of the applicants. That is a two-stage selection and award criteria shall be adopted. The evaluation matrix below is given as a guide to help in the evaluation of application.

To be more specific, the evaluation grid is divided into Sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

TABLE 6: Matrix of proposal evaluation grid[1] .

Section	Maximum Score
1. Financial and operational capacity	**15**

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[1] *This is provided as a guide and shall only apply whenever applicable.*

a) Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies), have sufficient in-house experience to run the proposed project or collaboration?	5
b) Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies), have sufficient in-house technical expertise? (Especially knowledge of the issues to be addressed)	5
c) Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies), have sufficient in-house management capacity? (Including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)?	5
2. Relevance	**20**
Score transferred from the proposal relevance and design of action Scores matrix	
3. Design of the action	**10**
a) How coherent is the design of the action? Does the proposal indicate the expected results to be achieved by the action? Does the intervention logic explain the rationale to achieve the expected results? Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the envisaged outputs and outcome(s)?	5
b) Is the proposed work plan appropriate and is it budgeted for appropriately? With clear deliverables indicated. Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved, and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders?	5
4. Implementation approach	**25**
a) Is the action plan for implementing the action clear and feasible? Is the timeline realistic?	5
b) Does the proposed approach demonstrate adequate and in-depth knowledge of the techniques to achieve the required objectives? Are the models if applicable detailed? And are all relevant actors indicated?	15
c) Is the co-applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity (ies)'s level of involvement and participation in the action satisfactory?	5
5. Sustainability of the action	**15**
d) Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups?	5
e) Is the action likely to have multiplier effects, including scope for replication, extension, capitalization on experience and knowledge sharing?	5

f) Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable? Where applicable: -
 	
    i.   Financially (e.g., financing of follow-up activities, sources of revenue for covering all future operating and maintenance costs)
    ii.   Institutionally (will structures allow the results of the action to be sustained at the end of the action? Will there be local 'ownership' of the results of the action?)
    iii. At policy level (where applicable) (what will be the structural impact of the action — e.g., improved legislation, regulations)
    iv. Environmentally (if applicable) (will the action have a negative/positive environmental impact?)
	5

6. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action	**15**
g) Are the activities and the percentage indicated in the Guidelines appropriately reflected in the budget?	/ 5
h) Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the results satisfactory?	/ 10
Maximum total score	**100**

13.   IMPLEMENTATION

The Department of ICT & Research through its R&SD unit shall be responsible for administering the research and collaborative support. The designated R&SD officer and the project implementation team (PIT) approved by the executive director shall monitor the projects.

In addition, the R&SD unit will strictly follow the timelines restricted in the signed agreements or MOUs.

14.   REVIEW OF THE FRAMEWORK

The UCC Research Support and Collaboration Framework shall be subjected to review at least once every three (3) years or whenever need arises for relevance, clarity, and appropriateness. The reviews shall be subject to management approval.

ANNEX 1: THE UCC RESEARCH SUPPORT AND COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMME

Background

The Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) is mandated by section 5(1)(l) of the Uganda Communications Act, 2013 to promote research into the development and use of new communications techniques and technologies, including those which promote accessibility of persons with disability and other members of society to communications service.

Research is a systematic investigation, which entails, information gathering and analysis, research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge[2]. Research seeks to advance or create new knowledge. It is therefore instrumental in driving innovation, competitiveness, economic performance and in turn national development. Through Research, organisations can

i. Describe and explain a situation or an issue as well as provide forecast information of a given phenomenon,
ii. Expand the knowledge base and opportunities available to refine organisational processes and develop new products and services,
iii. Build knowledge and facilitate the development of a society's learning capabilities. For example, by supporting the training of students who in turn upon entering the industry, transfer their technical skills and knowledge into the operations within the information and communication technology (ICT) sector and in other sectors,
iv. Facilitate the improvement of performance of government, private sector and other operations in the sector
v. Facilitate the enhancement of the quality of life, of health and creative output.

To harness these benefits, in January 2011 approved the establishment of an "Open Call for Research Proposals Initiative. In 2015, the Initiative was reviewed and rebranded the UCC Research support Program (RSP). Over the years UCC extended research support and collaborated with researchers, students, academia to undertake research and support to inform decisions on policy and regulatory interventions. The programme has been reviewed and a framework developed to guide the implementation of the programme.

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[2] *Code of Federal Regulations, https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/sites/default/files/ohrp/policy/ohrpregulations.pdf*

Objectives

The UCC Research support Programme aims Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), to operationalise its mandate as implied in section 5(1)(l) of the Uganda Communications Act, 2013.

More specifically among others the programme aims at; -

i. The programme aims to stimulate basic and applied research at universities and to bolster Uganda's industrial competitiveness.
ii. To enhance and supplement UCC research and service development activities and capacity by tapping into the technical skills of individuals within the academia.
iii. Facilitating UCC to address its research needs at lower cost through tapping on expertise available in academia while in turn promoting research, innovation, and development in the sector
iv. To encourage collaborative research through knowledge exchange among universities and higher institutions of learning in Uganda.
v. To fund high quality research projects on Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs), which inform the effective regulatory of the communications sector in Uganda.
vi. To promote collaborative research between the industry and the academia aimed at improving communication services in Uganda.
vii. Ensuring that sector specific would-be innovations, research projects with anticipated greater impact on the economy or society are fully supported and exploited.
viii. To address the research needs of the communication sector players by ensuring that Research conducted is responsive to industry needs or sector development needs including informing government policy and legislation.

Outcomes

i. Increased collaborations are expected to save considerable time and money in execution of research related works.
ii. Effective establishment of partnerships with Academia, industry, and other researchers.
iii. Support to researchers through disciplinary, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary Collaborative research
iv. R&D staff skills enhancement.