KEY INFORMATION ON HOSTING THE 11TH OR THE 12TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COMMUNICATIONS (NCC 2027 & 2028)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) is mandated under the Uganda Communications Act, 2013, specifically Sections 5(1)(l), 5(1)(m), and 5(1)(r), to promote research into new communications technologies, ensure equitable distribution of communications services, and collaborate with educational institutions to advance specialized communications education.

1.2. In fulfilment of this mandate, UCC established the National Conference on Communications (NCC) as an annual flagship platform to strengthen locally relevant ICT research, showcase innovations, and facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue across Uganda's digital ecosystem. The conference has been successfully convened ten times since its inception in 2011.

1.3. Following comprehensive operational reviews and the NCC Impact Assessment Study (2011-2025), the conference framework has been strategically realigned to address historical gaps in industry adoption, commercialisation pathways, and post-conference ecosystem continuity. The 11th and 12th editions will transition from a traditional academic convening to a demand-driven, solution-oriented innovation platform featuring a phased conference structure comprising School ICT Club Competitions, Academic Research Paper Submission, and the new component of an Industry Problem-Solving Challenge.

1.4. These Terms of Reference outline the requirements, responsibilities and evaluation framework for eligible universities seeking to host the 11th NCC in 2027 and the 12th NCC in 2028. The selected Host Institutions shall implement the respective Conferences in accordance with the NCC Guidelines, and the collaboration agreement entered into with UCC. Universities that hosted the NCC within the preceding two years are not eligible to apply.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE NCC

The NCC aims to advance communications research and innovation, particularly the development of practical solutions, by bringing together academia, industry professionals, and government representatives. More specifically, the objectives of NCC are to: -

i. Provide a national forum for the presentation of outputs of peer-reviewed research into solutions for local challen[1]ges and proposals to improve and (or) develop ICTs in Uganda.

https://www.ucc.co.ug/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/NCC_Guidelines_Sept2026.pdf

ii. Provide a platform for discussion and deliberation on local challenges, industry trends, and innovations, by all stakeholders including ICT industry players, government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) and academia.
iii. Facilitate networking between young professionals, senior practitioners, and accredited training institutions.
iv. Build technical and practical capacity in innovation, research, and paper writing or publishing at secondary and tertiary levels.
v. Increase the pool of available researchers, innovators and writers/ publishers at all academic levels and industry in general.
vi. Recognize outstanding innovations from secondary and tertiary students in the development and adoption of ICTs in Uganda.
vii. Inspire, nurture, and facilitate Ugandan youth to develop a culture of research, innovation, and entrepreneurship by leveraging ICT.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

3.1. Pre-Conference Preparation and Capacity Building

3.1.1. Create awareness and conduct capacity-building activities for at least 200 secondary school ICT clubs, at least 10 tertiary institutions covering a minimum of 50 students per institution, and industry professionals.

3.1.2. Organise regional pitching events and selection processes to identify top School ICT Club innovations and research outputs for national competition.

3.1.3. Develop and disseminate the Call for Papers, Call for Industry Challenges, and innovation demonstration guidelines aligned with the approved conference theme.

3.1.4. Design and deliver scholarly publishing masterclasses across different regions to equip researchers with advanced competencies in academic writing, manuscript preparation, and presentation of research findings

3.1.5. Design and deliver Intellectual Property management and technology commercialisation masterclasses for all interested innovators, and industry participants across different regions

3.1.6. Coordinate implementation of the Industry Problem-Solving Challenge under UCC oversight, including industry challenge identification, mentorship and technical support, evaluation, and presentation of shortlisted solutions at the Conference.

3.2. Conference Execution and Program Management

3.2.1. Host a two-day Conference with hybrid participation capabilities and accommodate the participation targets approved by UCC for the respective NCC edition.

3.2.2. Implement the National Conference on Communications main event ensuring parallel and plenary sessions for student competitions, technical paper presentations, industry solution pitches, keynote addresses, panel discussions, and innovation exhibitions, in line with the NCC Guidelines.

3.2.3. Provide adequate venue space, audio-visual equipment, exhibition platforms, networking areas, and virtual streaming infrastructure to support seamless conference delivery.

3.2.4. Manage conference registration, media coverage, delegate communication, and logistics for keynote speakers, panelists, judges, and technical reviewers.

3.2.5. Implement mandatory digital feedback surveys for all physical and virtual participants, with aggregated results compiled and shared within thirty days post-conference

3.3. Industry collaboration

3.3.1. Coordinate the identification, documentation, and dissemination of priority industry challenges in collaboration with UCC and relevant ICT sector stakeholders to inform the Industry Problem-Solving Challenge.

3.3.2. Mobilise and coordinate participation of industry stakeholders through exhibitions, demonstrations, sponsorship opportunities, panel discussions, keynote addresses, and technical presentations.

3.3.3. Organise and carryout technical visits to selected ICT companies, innovation hubs, telecommunications facilities, or other relevant industry sites to expose some NCC participants to operational technologies and industry best practices.

3.3.4. Incorporate an NCC Alumni Progress Showcase within the conference programme to provide former NCC participants with a platform to showcase their research, innovations, entrepreneurial ventures, and career experiences, while inspiring current participants and strengthening collaboration with industry.

3.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

3.4.1. Conduct real-time digital feedback surveys during the Conference and other key NCC activities to assess participant satisfaction, identify areas for improvement, and generate information to support measurement of the applicable NCC Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The feedback shall be analysed and incorporated into the Conference report to inform future NCC planning and implementation.

4. DELIVERABLES

4.1. Inception Report: A comprehensive planning document submitted within the first month of contract execution, detailing the host institution's project management framework, implementation timeline, resource allocation strategy, risk mitigation plan, and organizational structure for delivering all pre-conference and conference activities.

4.2. Call for Academic Papers: A formally structured and publicly disseminated solicitation for peer-reviewed research submissions, clearly outlining the phased conference activities, approved sub-themes, submission guidelines, formatting standards, and technical evaluation criteria.

4.3. Call for Industry Innovation Challenges:

Following identification and validation of industry challenges, a nationwide Call for Industry Challenge Solutions shall be issued at least three months before the Conference, targeting researchers, innovators, start-ups, students and technology developers.

4.4. Regional ICT Club Competition Invitations: Official circulars and outreach materials distributed to secondary schools nationwide, outlining registration procedures, eligibility requirements, project categories, judging rubrics, and regional pitching schedules for the School ICT Club Competitions.

4.5. Publicity and Communications Strategy: A detailed marketing and stakeholder engagement plan specifying media outreach timelines, digital campaign activation, press release schedules, social media content calendars, and targeted communication for pre-conference capacity building, registration drives, and live event coverage.

4.6. Regional School ICT Club Competitions: Successfully executed regional pitching and selection events across at least six geographic sub-regions, ensuring broad school representation, documented judging processes, and shortlisted innovations advanced to the national finals.

4.7. Paper Publishing and IP/Commercialisation Masterclasses: Conducted capacity-building workshops on academic writing, peer-review navigation, research dissemination, intellectual property and commercialisation training, held in each of Uganda's four main administrative regions, supplemented by at least two virtual sessions to ensure nationwide accessibility for tertiary students, early-career researchers and innovators.

4.8. Fully Executed Two-Day Conference: A successfully delivered flagship event meeting approved physical and virtual attendance targets, seamlessly integrating all phased activities, industry validation panels, keynote addresses, technical sessions, innovation exhibitions, and hybrid participation protocols.

4.9. Technical Program Committee (TPC) Report: A comprehensive post-review document summarizing the peer-review process, paper acceptance rates, thematic trends, technical session outcomes, best paper selections, and strategic recommendations for future research directions.

4.10. School ICT Club Competitions Report: A detailed evaluation document capturing the regional and national competition processes, participant demographics, showcased projects, judging criteria, award distributions, and post-competition mentorship or incubation referrals.

4.11. Main NCC Conference Report: A comprehensive NCC Conference Report submitted within one month after the Conference, covering the key activities undertaken, participation, Conference outcomes, performance against the applicable NCC KPIs, participant feedback, lessons learnt, and recommendations for future Conferences.

4.12. Conference Proceedings: A formally edited, peer-reviewed, and UCC-approved publication compiling accepted research papers, abstract summaries, industry challenge outcomes, and keynote addresses, disseminated in both print and digital formats to academic and industry repositories.

4.13. Paper Publishing: Outstanding papers presented at the conference shall be selected through the established review process for publication in the scholarly publication platforms. The publication process shall be coordinated by the NCC Host Institution with support from the Uganda Communications Commission.

5. ELIGIBILITY

5.1. The applicant must be a legally established university in Uganda that has been granted a University Charter by the National Council for Higher Education.

5.2. The applicant must not have hosted the NCC within the preceding two years. Institutions that convened the 9th and 10th editions are explicitly ineligible for the 11th and 12th hosting cycles.

5.3. The applicant must demonstrate a minimum of four years of continuous operation offering accredited courses in Engineering, Information and Communications Technology, or related technical disciplines.

5.4. The applicant must provide evidence of prior experience in hosting large-scale academic conferences, working with secondary school networks, and engaging industry stakeholders and government agencies.

5.5. The applicant must propose a qualified event management partner with a minimum of two years proven experience in corporate and academic event coordination.

5.6. The applicant shall demonstrate its commitment to contribute financial and/or in-kind resources towards implementation of the NCC. In-kind contributions may include venues, facilities, personnel, ICT infrastructure, publicity, logistical support or other relevant institutional resources. Administrative or overhead costs shall not be deducted from UCC allocations or third-party sponsorships.