



Terms of Reference

Lead Trainer - Audience Resilience Incubator

Project: Sudan Digital Resilience: Investigating Disinformation & Strengthening Media, Phase II

Location: Nairobi, Kenya, with remote preparation and reporting

Delivery: Four training days between 19–22 October 2026;

Reporting to: Head of Programmes – Middle East & Africa, Thomson Foundation

Applications open: 18 September 2026 | Deadline: 28 September 2026

Background

Thomson Foundation is seeking an experienced lead trainer to design and deliver a practical Audience Resilience Incubator for ten Sudanese media outlets. Demonstrable knowledge of Sudan's media landscape, including the realities of outlets working inside Sudan, in exile and across the diaspora, is essential.

The incubator forms part of Sudan Digital Resilience, Phase II, which strengthens Sudan's information integrity ecosystem through monitoring, journalism capacity development, safety and audience resilience. Participating outlets, including Sudan Media Forum members and non-members, will each nominate one or two representatives. The programme will help outlets translate audience insights and the project's monitoring findings into initiatives that build trust and strengthen audiences' ability to recognise and respond to information manipulation.

Objectives of the assignment

- Design and lead a coherent four-day programme tailored to Sudanese media outlets and their audiences.
- Strengthen practical skills in audience analysis, trust-building, prebunking, information literacy and responsible engagement.
- Guide each outlet to develop and present one audience resilience initiative, with a defined audience, delivery approach and intended results.

Ideas and pitches developed during the incubator will be evaluated for potential financial support and mentoring. This consultancy covers incubator preparation, delivery, technical assessment and reporting. Any subsequent implementation mentoring would require a separately agreed scope and fee.

Scope of work

- Attend an inception meeting and review the selected outlet profiles, the application call, relevant monitoring and audience analysis, and available learning resources.
- Develop the agenda, learning outcomes and Arabic-language curriculum, including presentations, facilitator notes, Sudan-relevant case studies, exercises and practical templates.
- Cover audience analysis and engagement data; trust gaps; audience segmentation and platform strategies; prebunking and explanatory formats; media and information literacy; responsible engagement and comment moderation; and safety, safeguarding and conflict sensitivity.
- Adapt the programme to differences in outlet resources, audience access, language, geography and operating conditions. Use anonymised examples and avoid amplifying harmful narratives or exposing sensitive information.
- Lead all four days of facilitation, combining practical exercises, peer learning and structured feedback. Coordinate any additional facilitator inputs agreed with Thomson Foundation.
- Guide ten outlet teams through concept development and pitches, addressing audience need, format, feasibility, dissemination, risks and proportionate measures of results.
- Prepare a common pitch template and assessment rubric for Thomson Foundation's approval. Provide a documented technical assessment of pitches against relevance, feasibility, safety, audience reach, potential impact and alignment with monitoring evidence. Declare conflicts of interest and leave final funding decisions to Thomson Foundation.
- Contribute learning questions, observations and interpretation of learning results. The project team leads monitoring and evaluation, participant data collection and administration of feedback tools.

Deliverables and indicative working days

Deliverable	Required output and timing	Days
Inception and design	Agreed learning outcomes, outline agenda and delivery approach, within three working days of appointment.	0.5
Curriculum and readiness	Complete Arabic curriculum, exercises, pitch template, assessment rubric and trainer learning questions; readiness discussion. Final package at least five working days before delivery.	1
Incubator delivery	Four days in Nairobi; facilitation, feedback and support for ten outlet concepts and pitches.	4.0
Assessment and reporting	Pitch assessment with reasons; final editable materials; observations and recommendations. Within five working days of the final training day.	0.5
Total		6

The final workplan and allocation will be agreed at contracting. The fee proposal should include one consolidated round of reasonable revisions. Additional work requires prior written agreement.

Required qualifications and experience

Essential

- Demonstrable, substantive knowledge of Sudan’s media landscape and information environment, including audience behaviour, trust dynamics, displacement and the constraints facing outlets inside Sudan and in exile. Applicants must evidence this through relevant work or sustained professional engagement.
- Proven expertise in audience engagement or audience development, media and information literacy, and practical responses to disinformation. Experience should include applying audience insights to content or product design.
- Experience designing and leading participatory training or incubators for media organisations, including guiding teams through practical concept development and pitches.
- Strong editorial judgement and understanding of conflict sensitivity, digital harms, gender-related risks, safeguarding and ethical media practice.
- Professional fluency in Arabic, with the ability to facilitate and prepare materials in Arabic; sufficient written and spoken English for coordination and reporting.
- Availability for preparation, all four days in Nairobi, and timely assessment and reporting.

Experience directly supporting Sudanese outlets, working with displaced media teams, and evaluating audience-facing initiatives is particularly relevant. Applicants should explain their own contribution and results rather than provide only a list of projects.

Coordination and quality expectations

The trainer will work closely with Thomson Foundation’s project team. Delivery must be practical, inclusive and feasible within four days, with materials adapted to the selected outlets. Thomson Foundation will approve the curriculum, assessment rubric and final deliverables. The trainer will protect editorial independence, handle restricted analysis and participant information confidentially, use trauma-aware facilitation, and promptly report safeguarding or security concerns through the agreed channels.

Fees and contractual arrangements

Applicants should quote a daily rate and total professional fee in GBP for the indicative six-day assignment, identifying any applicable taxes. Fees, travel arrangements and payment milestones will be agreed in the consultancy contract. Payment will be linked to approval of the agreed deliverables.

How to apply

Submit the following by 28 September 2026 to mea.recruitment@thomsonfoundation.org , using the subject line “Lead Trainer – Sudan Audience Resilience Incubator”:

- A current CV highlighting relevant Sudan experience, audience engagement expertise and training assignments.
- A statement of up to two pages outlining your understanding of the assignment, proposed approach to the four-day incubator and specific experience of Sudan’s media landscape.
- One or two relevant work samples or brief examples of comparable assignments; anonymised descriptions are acceptable where materials are confidential.
- Your financial proposal, availability during the delivery window and for preparation and reporting, and any relevant conflicts of interest.

Applications will be assessed on Sudan-specific knowledge, relevant technical and facilitation experience, the quality and feasibility of the proposed approach, availability and value for money. Shortlisted applicants may be invited to an interview and asked for professional references.