



**Royal Holloway, University of London
University of Eldoret, Kenya
Kibabii University, Kenya
Makerere University, Uganda**

**REPORT ON THE SECOND BRITISH ACADEMY ODA RESEARCH
MANAGEMENT CAPACITY STRENGTHENING GRANT PROJECT
WORKSHOP HELD AT ROYAL HOLLOWAY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
(RHUL), UNITED KINGDOM**

Theme: Knowledge Exchange and Commercialisation, Research Culture

Dates: 10–13 November 2025

1. Background of Project

The Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) Research Management Capacity Building Grant of **£49,994** was awarded to the three institutions by the British Academy. The project is jointly led by Dr. Hilary Lynch – Head of Strategic Grants at Royal Holloway University of London (RHUL), Dr. Becky Aloo – Head of Intellectual Property Management Office (IPMO) at University of Eldoret (UOE), Dr. Manasi Echaune – Coordinator Research and Innovation at Kibabii University (KIBU), and Prof. John Baptist Tumuhairwe – Dean & Associate Professor at Makerere University (MU)'s College of Agricultural Sciences. The project team at UOE also includes Dr. Jafred Muyaka (Policy Workpackage), Dr. George Ariya (Knowledge Exchange & Commercialization Workpackage), Dr. Grace Mureithi (Motivation Workpackage), Mr. Stephen Anditi (Legal Workpackage), and CPA Barnabas Agar (Finance Workpackage).

The multi-institutional collaboration project aims to strengthen research management systems, knowledge exchange, commercialisation pathways, and research culture across partner institutions. The UK workshop is the second one after the first workshop that took place in Kenya in July 2025, which formed foundational engagement and context-setting. The UK workshop was purposed for immersion into RHUL systems and best practices. The third workshop will be held in Kenya/Uganda in April 2026 for joint implementation and peer learning, and the last workshop will

be held in RHUL in August 2026 for consolidation, reflection, and sustainability planning.



Fig. 1: Photo taken during the workshop session

2. Objectives of the second project Workshop in the UK

The UK workshop focused on three core areas:

1. Knowledge exchange and commercialisation;
2. Research culture and researcher development;
3. Grant writing, costing, and post-award management.

The specific objectives of the UK workshop were to:

1. Share institutional updates on finance, policy, and legal frameworks supporting research and innovation.
2. Expose African partner institutions to RHUL's systems for pre-award costing & pricing and post-award financial management.
3. Strengthen capacity in intellectual property (IP), commercialisation, spin-outs, and stakeholder engagement.
4. Enhance skills in grant writing, including proposal design, budgeting, impact framing, and communication.
5. Deepen understanding of research culture, including the researcher development, research integrity, and research data management.
6. Identify actionable follow-up steps for each institution to implement.

3. Workshop Proceedings

Day 1 (10 November 2025) – RHUL Careers and Enterprise Hub

Focus: Institutional systems, finance, and research engagement

The first day of the workshop focused on a review of the Finance, Policy, and Legal updates from each institution. Representatives from each university shared recent reforms and ongoing challenges in research support in terms of finance systems and policies, to provide a baseline for peer learning. The policy gaps from each institution were highlighted to promote cross-learning on policy alignment in Global South institutions with Global North funder requirements. MU participants were unable to travel to the UK but participated virtually in some of the sessions and shared their experiences and challenges. An important highlight of the day was a demonstration of RHUL's pre-award costing and pricing system and post-award finance systems, illustrating end-to-end research grant support from budgeting to financial reporting to support researchers in grant writing and grant management. There followed a networking session with RHUL academicians to learn about the research areas and interests and foster future collaborations. The Director for Research and Innovation, Prof. Ruth Livesey, emphasised RHUL's commitment to equitable partnerships and research capacity strengthening. There were research presentations and a networking session between RHUL academics and those from UOE and KIBU.

Day 2 (11 November 2025) – RHUL Careers and Enterprise Hub

Focus: IP, commercialisation and industry engagement

The second day focused on innovation, knowledge exchange, and commercialisation. Representatives from UOE, KIBU, and MU presented their IP and commercialisation structures, procedures, and challenges, highlighting existing Technology Transfer Offices, limited funding for proof-of-concept work, and low awareness of IP among researchers and students. A session on stakeholder engagement and identification of commercial products in research explored how to move from academic outputs to market-facing products and services, including the role of industry partnerships and co-creation with users. Using case studies, participants brainstormed barriers to commercialisation, such as weak IP policies, lack of incentives, inadequate seed funding, and limited legal and business development support. RHUL experts then presented the commercialisation and spin-out process, illustrating how inventions progress from disclosure to patenting, licensing, and start-up creation. A dedicated Intellectual Property session covered key IP types, ownership questions, and strategies for protecting and managing IP in academic settings.

Day 3 (12 November 2025) – Chambord Room, Founders Building

Focus: Grant writing and proposal development

Day 3 was a full-day grant-writing workshop facilitated by *Scriptoria*. The workshop was designed to equip participants with practical proposal development skills. The workshop included sessions on:

- Understanding the review process and what funders look for;
- Defining the project vision, including background, aim, and expected impact;
- Setting SMART objectives that are measurable and deliverable within funding timelines;
- Outlining the research approach, including methods, work packages, the Gantt chart, and expected outputs.
- Developing a realistic workplan, timelines, and risk mitigation strategies;
- Showcasing the value of the project team through narrative CVs;
- Crafting a clear lay summary for non-specialist reviewers;
- Applying the grant writing lifecycle.

Day 4 (13 November 2025) – Picture Gallery, Founders Building

Focus: Research culture, integrity, and institutional action planning

The final day centred on research culture and enabling environments for high-quality, ethical research. Key sessions included:

- **Researcher Development Concordat** – outlining principles for supporting researchers’ careers, training, and wellbeing.
- **Research funding and grant support at RHUL** – including roles of central offices, faculties, and professional staff.
- **Pre-award costing and pricing** – reiterating critical steps in preparing compliant budgets.
- **Post-award project management and finance** – covering monitoring, reporting, and accountability to funders.
- **Knowledge Exchange and Impact** – exploring how universities can evidence impact and engage stakeholders beyond academia.
- **Research contracts** – key clauses, risk management, and negotiation strategies.
- **Research integrity, good practice, ethics, and research data management** – emphasising responsible conduct of research, data security, and open science practices.

Participants also had an opportunity to visit the RHUL Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Julie Sanders, for a courtesy call, to reinforce institutional commitment at the leadership level. The discussions with the Vice-Chancellor included what the participants had

learnt or gained during the UK workshop, as well as the project grant, and areas for continued or future collaborations between our institutions.

4. Additional Activities and Learning

In addition to the formal workshop programme, several supplementary activities significantly enhanced the learning experience and opened new avenues for collaboration.

Visit to the Drone Testing Centre

The participants also visited the drone testing centre at Royal Holloway. This visit offered a practical illustration of university–industry collaboration, where private drone companies utilise university facilities to test and refine their technologies. The team also interacted with engineering postgraduate students, showcasing ongoing projects, underscoring how industry-engaged research can generate real-world solutions while building student capacity.

Strategic Discussion on Future Grant Applications

The team held a focused discussion with Dr. Jennifer Cole and Hilary Lynch on the next steps for joint grant applications. The group agreed on the importance of strategically targeting large, competitive grants, while recognising that such applications typically require a track record of prior collaboration, including joint publications and preliminary data.



Fig.2: Group photo of the project partners with the Vice Chancellor of Royal Holloway University of London (second from left)

To build this track record, it was agreed that the partners should actively pursue: smaller institutional, local, or government-funded grants, and postgraduate research projects aligned to shared thematic areas, as platforms for generating preliminary findings and demonstrating that the problems being addressed are real, significant, and warrant larger-scale funding. This approach was identified as a practical pathway to position the consortium competitively for big grants in the near future.

Visits to Research Laboratories at RHUL

The team also visited several research laboratories at RHUL, gaining exposure to advanced facilities and potential areas for scientific collaboration. Key capabilities observed included:

- **High-end analytical and imaging facilities**
 - Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM);
 - Microscopes for rock and mineral samples, pollen analysis, palaeontology (with imaging capability), and phytoplankton from marine environments;
 - Facilities for aerosol analysis.
- **Environmental and soil science laboratories**
 - Soil and water nutrient analysis;
 - Carbon, phosphorus, and nitrogen analysis in soil;
 - Measurement of greenhouse gases from different sources (e.g., barns, compost, agriculture, livestock);
 - Microbial analysis of bacteria in soil.
- **Pollution and environmental chemistry facilities**
 - Analysis of organic and inorganic metals;
 - Facilities for identifying sources of microplastics and assessing microplastics in water and fish;
 - Environmental chemistry and microfossils laboratories;
 - Earth sciences and geology labs.
- **Specialised controlled environments**
 - Zero-oxygen (anoxic) hoods, clean hoods, and clean rooms;
 - Work on anoxic soil bacteria and metal-degrading bacteria.

During the lab visit, it was highlighted that it is possible to send selected samples from partner institutions in Kenya and Uganda to RHUL for specialised analysis, especially for tests that cannot currently be conducted with existing facilities at home. This creates a practical opportunity to enhance the quality and depth of ongoing and future

research projects, particularly in environmental science, soil health, pollution, climate change, and microbiology.

5. Key Outcomes of the UK Workshop and Lessons Learned

1. **Enhanced understanding of research support systems:** Participants gained practical insights into RHUL's integrated research support, from pre-award to post-award, which will inform ongoing improvements in their own institutions.
2. **Strengthened capacity in IP and commercialisation:** The workshop demystified the commercialisation process and highlighted the need for robust IP policies, clear procedures, and institutional support structures to move innovations to market.
3. **Improved grant-writing skills:** Participants were equipped with tools for structuring competitive proposals, framing impact, budgeting accurately, and communicating clearly with funders.
4. **Deeper appreciation of research culture at RHUL:** Sessions on the Researcher Development Concordat, research integrity, and research data management underscored the importance of supportive, ethical, and inclusive research environments.
5. **Concrete institutional action plans:** Each partner institution identified specific actions to implement, such as updating IP and research policies, strengthening pre- and post-award offices, piloting researcher development programmes, and identifying priority projects for commercialisation.

6. Challenges experienced

Despite the overall success of the workshop, several challenges were encountered, particularly around participation logistics and virtual engagement.

Visa-related Travel Constraints

The workshop was originally designed for six participants to travel to the UK – two from each partner institution (University of Eldoret, Kibabii University, and Makerere University). However, due to visa complications, only three participants were ultimately able to attend in person. Both participants from MU were unable to obtain visas in time and therefore could not travel. One participant from KIBU did not receive any response to his visa application until the workshop dates had already passed. As a result, only one person was able to attend. **Two** participants from UOE travelled and took part in the workshop as planned. These constraints reduced in-person

representation, limited the diversity of perspectives in some sessions, and placed additional responsibility on those who did attend to cascade the learning back to their institutions.

Virtual Participation and Connectivity Challenges

In an effort to ensure inclusivity, the organisers attempted to facilitate virtual participation for those who could not travel. However, this proved difficult in practice. Dr Rosemary Isoto from Makerere University was able to join part of Day 1 virtually, but could not consistently attend the remaining sessions. Time zone differences, competing institutional commitments, and internet connectivity challenges across countries made it difficult to maintain smooth hybrid sessions. As a result, sustained virtual engagement over the four days was not achieved, and some intended participants could not fully benefit from the workshop content.

7 Next Steps

- **Institution-level follow-up:**

Each university will convene internal meetings to share workshop outcomes.

- **Preparation for Workshop 3 (Kenya/Uganda – April 2026):**

The next workshop will focus on tracking progress against action plans, deepening work on commercialisation cases, and supporting joint grant applications. The tentative workshop structure would include:

1. Scriptoria Grant Writing Workshop – 2 days
2. Grant writing practice
3. Pre-Award Costing – Chris -half day
4. Policies and Contracts – half day – Cathrine & Miranda
5. IP training online/physical

As a build-up to the third workshop, virtual project meetings will focus on the policy gaps and developing draft policies using the templates from RHUL.

- **Documentation and reporting:**

This report will be shared with institutional leadership, and submitted to project funders as part of ongoing reporting requirements.



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