Safeguarding Electoral Integrity: Countering Gendered Disinformation in Kenya's 2027 Elections

Call for Research Proposals

Online Violence Against Women in Politics in Kenya

2027 General Election | Submission deadline 20 November 2026

The Council for Responsible Social Media (CRSM) invites researchers, research teams and institutions to submit proposals for a study on online violence against women in politics (OVAWP) in Kenya. The study will establish a pre-election baseline and identify what political parties, electoral institutions and other actors can do to prevent and respond to OVAWP ahead of the 2027 General Election.

1. Background

Violence against women in politics (VAWP) is a pervasive and escalating threat to women's political participation and Kenya's democratic integrity. Despite constitutional and legal protections for gender equality, women in Kenyan politics continue to face psychological, sexual, physical, economic and digital violence. Entrenched patriarchal norms, weak institutional accountability and impunity sustain these harms.

Online Violence Against Women in Politics (OVAWP) amplifies these threats, making online spaces hostile and deterring women from seeking or remaining in political office. The study will examine how political parties and electoral institutions can protect women's rights online and support their full participation in the 2027 electoral process.

2. Justification for the study

The study will identify which women face the greatest risks, where reporting and response mechanisms break down, and what can be improved before nominations and campaigning. It will also examine how online abuse and distorted information about women leaders affect public debate, voter attitudes and women's decisions to enter or remain in politics and the quality of democracy in Kenya more broadly. The findings will also be used to improve the outcomes of the Program 'Safeguarding Electoral Integrity: Countering Gendered Disinformation in Kenya's 2027 Elections' that is currently being implemented by CRSM towards the 2027 elections.

3. Research objectives

1. Document the scale and nature of OVAWP in Kenya and its effect on women's political participation.

2. Assess current policies, practices and gaps in political parties and electoral institutions in preventing and responding to OVAWP.

3. Identify global best practices for protecting women in politics online.

4. Propose strategies to prevent and mitigate OVAWP in the 2027 General Election.

4. Proposed approach and methodology

Use a phased mixed-methods design. Findings from the desk review should determine which questions, locations and respondents to prioritise in fieldwork. Analyse the evidence across sources before presenting preliminary findings for stakeholder validation.

4.1 Desk review. Review evidence from the 2022 elections and the current electoral cycle, alongside party rules, institutional protocols, available complaints records and international approaches. Use a gendered political economy analysis to examine how party gatekeeping, campaign incentives, platform practices and social norms influence online abuse and institutional responses. Identify evidence gaps and use them to refine the research questions, sampling and data collection tools.

4.2 Field research. Conduct in-person field visits in selected counties and use secure remote methods to consult national actors and respondents in other counties. Justify site selection, language and platform coverage, and the observation period. Use confidential interviews with women in politics, key informant interviews, group discussions where safe, and systematic analysis of public online content. Propose a survey where feasible and explain the sampling approach.

Include aspirants, candidates, elected officeholders and party officials, with attention to younger women, women with disabilities and women from marginalised communities. Consult political parties, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties, relevant security and justice actors and civil society. Where appropriate, involve county-based organisations in contextual advice or data collection and brief them on safeguarding and confidentiality.

4.3 Analysis. Define and code forms of OVAWP, including incidents involving multiple forms of abuse. Cross-check accounts of institutional practice against policies, complaints records and participant experiences. Explain how the study will examine effects on participation and voter attitudes. For prevalence estimates, specify the population, denominator and reference period, and distinguish estimates from counts of posts or complaints. Discuss underreporting and limits on generalising the findings.

4.4 Ethics and safeguarding. Use informed consent, confidential recruitment, accessible participation, secure data handling and safe referrals. Protect participants from identification or retaliation, including through quotations, screenshots and examples used in presentations.

4.5 Validation and policy brief. Prepare draft findings and summary slides and facilitate a stakeholder validation workshop using anonymised material. Document feedback, incorporate it as appropriate and use the validated findings to develop a policy brief with practical recommendations for the 2027 General Election.

5. Reporting and supervision

The researcher will report to a designated CRSM focal point. CRSM will review the inception report, draft findings and final deliverables against the agreed scope.

6. Duration and workplan

The entire research should be finalized by mid-February, 2027. The researcher should present a draft by mid- January and hold a validation workshop towards the end of January.

7. Deliverables and milestones

Milestone	Expected output
Inception	Inception report with methodology, sampling plan, tools, field schedule, safeguarding protocol and workplan.
After analysis	Draft report addressing the four objectives, with an assessment of institutional preparedness and international practices relevant to Kenya.
Validation	Summary slides, facilitated stakeholder workshop and a record of feedback and how it was addressed.
Final submission	Final report, abridged summary and policy brief with proposed actions, responsible actors and milestones. Annex the research tools and aggregated evidence tables.

8. Applicant qualifications

Demonstrate experience in applied research on gender, elections, governance or digital rights in Kenya. The team should bring skills in mixed-methods research, online content analysis, safeguarding, stakeholder engagement and policy writing.

9. Proposal requirements and submission

Technical proposal. Explain your understanding of the assignment, methodology, safeguarding approach, and workplan. Attach applicant CV and a sample of comparable work.

Financial proposal. Provide an itemised budget in Kenya shillings covering professional fees, field logistics, validation and production costs. Include quantities, unit costs, applicable taxes and assumptions.

CRSM will assess methodological rigour and feasibility, relevant experience, safeguarding and value for money.

Email both proposals as one package by 20 November 2026.

Use the subject line “Research Proposal – OVAWP – Kenya 2027”.

To info@accountablebigtech.org
Cc leah@accountablebigtech.org