UKHIH: Humanitarian Rapid Research Initiative (HRRI)

Stage 1 – Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) – Call for Applicants
21 May 2025

This Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) has been issued by UKHIH in connection with a competitive procurement for the **HRRI: Research Service Delivery** with submission date no later than **23:59 GMT Wednesday 4th June 2025**.

This competitive procurement takes place in two stages:
- **Stage 1** – Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ), whereby the expertise and organisational capacity of applicants relevant to the services to be provided are evaluated; and
- **Stage 2** – Invitation To Tender (ITT), where organisations considered to hold the required expertise and capacity are invited to submit a proposal for delivering the Services.

Contents

I: SERVICES DESCRIPTION

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Elrha Overview

We are Elrha. A global organisation that finds solutions to complex humanitarian problems through research and innovation. We are an established actor in the humanitarian community, working in partnership with humanitarian organisations, researchers, innovators, and the private sector to tackle some of the most difficult challenges facing people all over the world.

Through our globally recognised programmes, we have supported more than 200 world-class research studies and innovation projects, championing new ideas and different approaches to evidence what works in humanitarian response.

UK Humanitarian Innovation Hub (UKHIH) and HRRI

The UK Humanitarian Innovation Hub (UKHIH), hosted by Elrha, supports research and learning initiatives that respond to emerging humanitarian challenges. One of our flagship mechanisms is the Humanitarian Rapid Research Initiative (HRRI), designed to generate timely, actionable learning to inform humanitarian response in new or evolving crises. Since its inception, HRRI has delivered over a dozen rapid reviews across a range of crises and themes. These include:

- Conflict-driven responses (e.g. Afghanistan, Ukraine)
- Natural disasters (e.g. the Syria-Türkiye earthquake, Pakistan floods)
- Public health crises (e.g. cholera response)
- Political transitions and displacement (e.g. in Bangladesh and Syria)

Each review is typically completed within 10 days to 3 months, depending on complexity, and has employed approaches including document analysis, key informant interviews, and engagement and consultation with crisis-affected populations. The HRRI has become known for its ability to produce high-quality, accessible, and timely outputs to inform humanitarian coordination, decision-making, and localised response efforts.

Examples of series reports include:
- "Enabling the Local Response: Emerging Humanitarian Priorities in Ukraine"
- "Slipping Away? A Review of Humanitarian Capabilities in Cholera Response"
- "Solidarity at Scale: Local Responder Perspectives and Learning from the First Week of the Earthquake Response in Syria and Turkey"
- "Floods in Pakistan: Rethinking the Humanitarian Role"

The initiative is cost-effective and designed for agility, offering timely evidence at critical junctures at onset or escalation point of a crisis. Insights have been used by a wide range of stakeholders including local and international NGOs, CSOs, UN agencies, local governments and funders. Reports and accompanying products, including webinar recordings, podcasts, videos and digital storyboards, are publicly available on the UKHIH website.

1.2 Context of HRRI: 2025/26 Procurement

UKHIH is launching a new procurement for the delivery of the HRRI during the 2025/26 cycle. The selected provider will be responsible for:

- Monitoring emerging humanitarian developments to inform research priorities
- Proposing and co-developing potential research topics with UKHIH, ensuring alignment with humanitarian needs, strategic priorities, and timeliness and actionability of recommendations for impact
- Leading research design, implementation, analysis and results to generate evidence-based insights and actionable recommendations for humanitarian decision-making
- Producing targeted research outputs to directly support decision-making needs of humanitarian actors within the focal context, and where relevant and feasible, generate insights applicable to other crises
- Leading the validation, dissemination and uptake of research outputs among humanitarian actors

Under this model, all reports and outputs will be principally published under Elrha and UKHIH branding, with appropriate acknowledgements to the service provider. Final sign-off on outputs rests with UKHIH.

The provider will be expected to work in close coordination with UKHIH throughout the process. This includes research topic selection; inception planning; research design and analysis; developing emerging findings and outputs; peer review; quality assurance; oversight; and collaborative learning.

The total funding available is up to £100,000 (inclusive of taxes) to produce two or three reports, depending on scope and focus. Providers must demonstrate capacity to deliver more than one review simultaneously during the contract period, if necessary. External peer review may be separately arranged and funded by UKHIH in some cases.

2. OBJECTIVES, DELIVERABLES AND ACTIVITIES

2.1. Overall aim and objective(s)

The overall aim of the HRRI is to provide high-quality, timely, and actionable research and learning products to inform humanitarian response to new and evolving crises. Specifically, objectives are to:

- Co-create knowledge to inform humanitarian decision-making in dynamic crisis contexts, grounded in the lived realities and priorities of affected communities
- Ensure meaningful inclusion and leadership of local researchers and other actors through equitable research partnerships demonstrated by co-creation, co-authorship and mutual respect and learning.
- Disseminate and promote uptake of research insights in accessible, contextually appropriate ways to support local action and, where feasible, broader sectoral uptake and learning

2.2. Scope of work: outputs, deliverables and activities

Outputs / deliverables	Activities
1. Rapid research trigger proposals	- Monitor humanitarian developments - Identify potential HRRI topics - Co-develop research focus trigger memo with UKHIH, including rationale and potential uptake pathways
2. Inception reports	- Identify local partner(s) and co-researcher(s) - Co-design study: define research objectives, research questions, methodology, analysis plan, ethical considerations, research outputs, timelines, and communication, engagement and uptake strategy
3. Data collection, analysis and outputs	- Conduct scoping, literature review, primary and secondary data collection, as appropriate - Conduct data analysis and validation - Share preliminary findings with UKHIH
4. Produce final outputs	- Finalise reports and accompanying communication outputs - Submit outputs for UKHIH approval and publication - Address UKHIH feedback (and peer review feedback, if undertaken)
5. Dissemination and uptake support	- Coordinate with UKHIH and Elrha communications teams to deliver comms plans - Prepare, contribute and/or deliver communication products (e.g. summaries, reports, infographics, digital storyboards, blogs, webinars etc.) - Track dissemination and document lessons learned
6. Learning papers and reflections	- Prepare brief internal post-research reflection papers - Contribute to complementary learning initiatives, when requested

2.3. Ways of working

The selected provider will:

- Work in close coordination and collaboration with UKHIH technical and communications colleagues throughout
- Follow a clear and staged documentation and review process
- Be responsive and agile to shifts in humanitarian contexts
- Ensure all processes and outputs are quality assured and ethically designed and implemented
- Work collaboratively on communication and advocacy related to the research
- Contribute to after action learning to support continuous improvement

II: REQUIREMENTS

3. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

As part of the Stage 1 – PQQ evaluation, the applicant must demonstrate the following minimum requirements are met. These will be assessed through the information provided in the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (Annex 1) and the documentation requested.

3.1. Experience, knowledge, skills and capacities

Applicants must demonstrate they possess the following areas of experience, knowledge, and capability to deliver the Humanitarian Rapid Research Initiative (HRRI) to the required standard:

Humanitarian research and contextual expertise
- Demonstrated experience conducting applied research in humanitarian or crisis-affected contexts, particularly under time-sensitive conditions.
- Deep understanding of humanitarian coordination systems, funding mechanisms, and sectoral dynamics, with the ability to tailor research to inform operational or policy decision-making.
- Experience working in a range of humanitarian contexts, including conflict, disaster, displacement, and public health emergencies.

Technical and analytical skills
- Capacity to design and implement robust rapid research including, though not limited to, literature review, key informant interviews, stakeholder consultations, validation to generate actionable insights.
- Ability to apply ethical research principles in humanitarian contexts, including safeguarding, data protection, and working with vulnerable populations.
- Familiarity with localisation agendas and proven approaches to meaningful partnership and co-creation with local actors in research, including the ability to inform and influence humanitarian decision-making in the focus crisis.

Project and quality management
- Experience delivering multiple research projects in parallel, with strong internal coordination, oversight, and responsiveness.
- Ability to manage projects through structured phases: focus identification, inception, implementation, respond to review, and produce high-quality final outputs in a timely manner.
- Track record of working to tight timelines while maintaining high standards of accuracy, relevance, and clarity.

Communications and uptake
- Skills in translating research into accessible outputs, such as summaries, blogs, infographics, and presentations.
- Experience working with communications and engagement teams to design and execute dissemination strategies across digital, institutional, and practitioner channels.
- Capacity to track and reflect on dissemination reach and uptake.

Team composition and inclusion
- Proven ability to deploy or coordinate diverse research teams, including technical specialists, local partners and researchers, and communications staff.
- Requirement to partner with a named local research lead as co-researcher and co-author for each review, to ensure research design is grounded in local realities, knowledge systems and priorities, unless this expertise is present in-house.
- Ability to work collaboratively with external stakeholders, including donors, UN agencies, NGOs, and community-based organisations.

3.2. Registration and nationality

The service provider(s), including the implementing partners in a consortium, must be legally registered with a relevant institution. This registration can be in any country in the world. There are no restrictions to the legal status of the service provider(s), and any type of organisation (e.g. private sector, non-for profit, academic institutions etc.) are welcome to submit their interest.

3.3. Deliver modality: single provider / consortium / sub-contracting

We welcome proposals that reflect different implementation modalities to deliver the HRRI. This may include single-provider models, formal consortium arrangements, or sub-contracted delivery structures. In each case, the proposed approach must be clear, feasible, and well-coordinated, and demonstrate how it will uphold the values and requirements outlined in this PQQ.

We are particularly interested in arrangements that enable inclusive, localised, and contextually grounded research, while maintaining operational responsiveness and technical rigour.

As outlined in Section 3.1, applicants must demonstrate experience and capabilities across key technical and research functions, including humanitarian research delivery in time-sensitive contexts, ethical and inclusive approaches, project management, and communications for uptake. These requirements apply across all implementation modalities.

Minimum expectations for delivery arrangements:

- The lead provider must assume full contractual responsibility and oversee coordination, delivery, and quality assurance of all workstreams. This includes ensuring that:
  - Contracts or agreements are in place with any individuals and/or partner organisations involved in delivery;
  - Each contributor is supported by a clear workplan and adequate access to management and operational oversight.
- The provider must have access to a team with the technical, research management, and communications capabilities needed to deliver the HRRI to a high standard.
- A named local research lead must be assigned to each rapid review. This person will act as a co-researcher and co-author and ensure that local perspectives, priorities and insights shape the research process.
- Given the wide geographic and thematic scope of HRRI, we do not expect local leads to be pre-identified across all contexts. However, the provider must have a clear and agile approach for rapidly engaging and partnering with appropriate local individuals or

organisations within days of activation, and to draw in relevant technical subject matter expertise as needed.

- A local research lead may include: 1. An independent local researcher; 2. A local research actor, such as a university, NGO, or qualified private sector entity.
- In all cases, the local lead should contribute meaningfully research co-design, implementation, analysis, contextualisation and interpretation, and dissemination and uptake of research insights.

Definitions

- A sub-contractor is an individual or organisation delivering a defined portion of the services under the direction of the lead provider.
- A consortium is a partnership of two or more organisations jointly delivering the services, with one identified lead provider holding contractual responsibility.

Required information

Where a consortium or sub-contracting model is proposed, applicants must provide the following in Section 6 of the PQQ (Annex 1):

- A clear description of the delivery structure, including how equitable partnerships will be maintained – particularly with respect to local leadership, knowledge integration, priority setting, and decision-making.
- A summary of each party's role, responsibilities, thematic expertise, and location of registration and operation.
- An outline of how resources will be allocated across the delivery team, highlighting how local researchers or LMIC-based technical experts will be supported.
- Full organisational and personnel details for each confirmed consortium member or sub-contractor. UKHIH must be informed of any significant personnel changes.
- Additional documentation may be submitted to elaborate on coordination, governance, or value-add elements of the delivery model (optional).

3.4. Organisational capacity

Applicants must have the organisational and managerial capacity to deliver the Services in an effective and timely manner. Areas to be assessed include (this is not an exhaustive list):
- Legal registration with a relevant regulatory body
- Financial capacity and stability
- Insurance arrangements
- Experience managing contracts of a similar size and value

3.5. Organisational policies

Applicants are required to have organisational policies, procedures and/or minimum standards in place to ensure ethical, safe, and high-quality delivery of research activities in humanitarian settings. As a minimum, applicants must demonstrate that they have current and operational policies or frameworks covering the following areas:
- Research ethics – including principles of informed consent, risk mitigation, and respect for participants in crisis-affected contexts

- Data protection and privacy – ensuring safe handling of sensitive or personal data in line with international standards
- Safeguarding – including procedures for preventing harm to participants, particularly vulnerable groups
- Do no harm and conflict sensitivity – frameworks or guidance to assess and mitigate unintended negative consequences of research
- Complaints and accountability mechanisms – systems in place to allow participants or stakeholders to raise concerns relating to the conduct of the research
- Responsible publication and authorship – approaches to ensure appropriate and equitable co-authorship, acknowledgement of contributors (particularly local actors), and adherence to open-access or institutional branding protocols, where required
- Where formal policies are not available, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they apply equivalent good practice through standard operating procedures or documented approaches.

3.6. Provider's availability

The successful provider must be available to commence work no later than June 2025, with the contract expected to run until March 2026.

Given the nature of the HRRI, the provider must also demonstrate the ability to mobilise quickly in response to new and evolving crises. This includes being able to initiate a review within a matter of days where required, and to deliver research outputs within short, predefined timeframes (typically 10 days to 3 months per review).

Only service providers who are available throughout this period and who can operate with flexibility and agility to meet evolving humanitarian timelines should consider applying.

4. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Elrha is committed to ensuring its financial resources are used as effectively and efficiently as possible, so that it can focus them on achieving maximum impact for the humanitarian actors and they communities affected by crisis they serve. Applications to be consider for Stage 1 – Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) will be evaluated against the Requirements described above and under the criteria set out below.

Applicants must provide information that demonstrates and supports their understanding of, and ability to meet, the Services and Requirements contained within this document.

4.1. Evaluation grid

Question no.	Section	Scoring/weighting
1-3	**Part A – Organisational Capacity**	**20% overall weighting**
1	Basic details of your organisation	Pass / Fail
2	Financial information	10% sub-weighting
3	Policies and Procedures	10% sub-weighting
4	**Part B – Technical Capability**	**65% overall weighting**
4.1	Previous performance	20% sub-weighting
4.2	Multi-project delivery capacity	15% sub-weighting
4.3	Local co-authorship and inclusion	15% sub-weighting
4.4	Communications and dissemination	15%sub-weighting
5 - 6	**Part C – Delivery modality**	**15% overall weighting**
5	Priority of resources for LMIC partners	10% sub-weighting
6	Sub-contractors	5% sub-weighting

4.2. Evaluation parameters

In evaluating the applicants organisational capacities and capabilities, each criterion defined above will be evaluated against the relevant Requirement. They will be marked based on the level for which the requirement is met, as demonstrated in the Pre-qualification questionnaire and other submitted documents, and in accordance with the following table:

Score	Guidelines
0 Points	Wholly unsatisfactory – fails to meet the requirement or not answered.
1 Point	Poor – only partially meets specified requirements.
2 Points	Satisfactory – meets specified requirements in full.
3 Points	Good – exceeds the specified requirements and provides significant added value to Elrha.

4.3. Invitation To Tender

At the conclusion of the evaluation process and subject to the provisions contained in this document, Elrha will communicate to all Applicants whether they are invited to Stage 2 – Invitation To Tender.

III: SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

The deadline for submitting this Stage 1 – PQQ is **23:59 GMT on Wednesday 4th June 2025.**

Incomplete questionnaires or submissions after the deadline will not be considered.
Please submit the completed Annex 1 and Annex 2, with a covering letter and the supporting documents listed below to information@ukhih.org as per the following instructions:

- email address: information@ukhih.org with contracts@elrha.org in copy
- subject line: **HRRI: Research Service Delivery**

- signed with the name and title of the person making the submission
Submissions emailed to any other Elrha or UKHIH email address will not be considered.

5. DOCUMENTS SUBMISSION

5.1. General instructions

All documents shall be written in English.

The complete Application must be submitted in electronic format. Electronic files must be set out and named in such a way that Elrha evaluators can easily find any information. Documents must be properly formatted to allow easy reading and understanding of its content. Documents that have not been adequately formatted might not be considered.
In order to evaluate the Application, all required documents must be included with the submission. If any of the required documents are not submitted with the Application, Elrha reserves to itself the right to reject such bid.

Please follow the instructions below for the completion of the following documents that are to be part of each Application:

- Pre-Qualification Questionnaire
- Declaration
- Any supporting document(s) listed below

5.2. Completing Annex 1 and Annex 2
Every question in the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (Annex 1) must be answered:

- if the question does not apply to your organisation, write N/A, and explain why it does not apply.
- If you do not know the answer, please write N/K.

The Declaration (Annex 2) must be signed by an authorised person. Unless the submission email is sent by the same person signing the Declaration, this must be signed with ink before scanning, or through an e-signature service.

5.3. Supporting documents

The following documents must be submitted as part of this Stage 1 – Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ). Failure to submit these may result in disqualification:

1. **Examples of relevant work**:
   At least two examples of previous humanitarian research or learning outputs, preferably from time-sensitive or crisis-response settings. These should demonstrate quality, relevance, accessibility, and where possible, influence on humanitarian action.

2. **Organisational policies**:
   Copies of the following current policies (or equivalent documented procedures):
   o   Anti-Racist and Decolonisation commitments and practices

- o Research ethics
- o Safeguarding
- o Data protection and information security (equivalent to EU GDPR standards)
- o Conflict of interest

3. **Last three audited accounts**:
   Including profit and loss statements and balance sheets, or equivalent financial records.

4. **Bank reference letter**:
   A letter signed and dated on headed paper from your bank, confirming your organisation's banking details and stating that the banking relationship is in good standing, with no known defaults.

Additional documentation may be requested during the Stage 2 – Invitation to Tender (ITT) process or at the due diligence stage.

6. CONSORTIUM AND SUB-CONTRACTING ARRANGEMENTS

Where a consortium approach is envisaged, the following information must be provided as part of the application:

1. Details of the proposed consortium arrangement including equitable partnering (centring local leadership and knowledge, priority setting and decision-making).
2. Details of areas of knowledge or expertise to be provided by members of the consortium and where they are physically located.
3. Percentage of the contract value expected to be managed by each consortium member.
4. The full details for each of the proposed known consortia members, if known.

This information must be, at least, included in section 6 of the PQQ (Annex 1), but additional details can be provided in other supporting document(s).

7. ANTICIPATED TIMELINE

Activity	Deadline
Stage 1 – Pre-Qualification Questionnaire issued through an open call	21 May 2025
PQQ submission deadline	04 June 2025
Evaluation of PQQs completed (anticipated)	09 June 2025
Stage 2 - Invitation to Tender (ITT) issued to selected applicants (anticipated)	10 June 2025
ITT submission deadline (anticipated)	17 June 2025
Evaluation of ITTs completed (anticipated)	18 June 2025
Award of contract (anticipated)	19 June 2025
Start date of Services delivery (anticipated)	30 June 2025

8. QUESTIONS

8.1. Scope of enquiries

Elrha will only provide clarity on content or items that might not be sufficiently self-explanatory in this Stage 1 – PQQ, but no additional information will be supplied to potential or actual applicants on individual basis.

Elrha will use best endeavours to provide such explanation as a matter of assistance to the bidder, but it shall not be construed as to add, modify or take away from the meaning and intent of the proposed contract and/or the obligations and liabilities of either party.

No representation, explanation or statement made to an applicant, or anyone else by or on behalf, or purportedly on behalf of Elrha as to the meaning of the procurement documents, or otherwise in explanation as aforesaid, shall be binding on Elrha in the exercise of its obligations under a subsequently awarded contract.

Where the enquiry is beneficial to all applicants, both the original enquiry and the response will be sent to the other applicants anonymously.

8.2. Timeframe

Questions can be submitted up to 3 working days before the submission deadline, to allow sufficient time to respond to the query.

Once the submission period has been closed, Elrha will not respond to any question or query.

8.3. Contact information

Queries concerning information or documents required as part of this Stage 1 – PQQ and/or unclear content, can be submitted to UKHIH, as per the following instructions:

- email address: information@ukhih.org with contracts@elrha.org in copy
- subject line: QUERY – Stage 1 PQQ - HRRI: Research Service Delivery – [your organisations name]

IV: GENERAL INFORMATION

9. CALL FOR APPLICATIONS INFORMATION

This Call for Applicants is issued to ensure that all received Applications are given equal and fair consideration. It is important therefore that applicants provide all information asked for in the format and order specified in this Call for Applicants.

Applications shall be submitted in accordance with the instructions contained in this call for Applicants, save as may be allowed elsewhere in the issued document, without alterations or qualifications.

No alteration or addition shall be made by bidders to any part of the PQQ except where expressly allowed herein or in the other issued documents.

Applications that do not comply with any mandatory requirement (i.e., where the words "shall" or "must" are used) will not be considered.

This Call for Applicants does not constitute an offer and Elrha does not bind itself to accept any Applications.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY

All information and documents received by Elrha in response to this Stage 1 – PQQ shall be treated as private and confidential, save where the disclosure is required by law.

The Applicant shall not:

(a) Release to third parties any information relating to the proposal that they intend to submit, other than with professional advisers who need to be consulted with regards to the preparation of the proposal.

(b) Canvass directly or indirectly with any other applicant concerning the award of the contract or directly or indirectly obtain or attempt to obtain information.

(c) Canvass directly or indirectly with a member of Elrha or their trustees concerning the award of the contract or directly or indirectly obtain or attempt to obtain information from said individuals.

(d) If an Applicant does not observe points a), b) and c) above, Elrha will reject their proposal and may decide not to invite the agency to bid for future business opportunities.

11.   CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

In order to ensure a fair and competitive procurement process, Elrha requires that all actual or potential conflicts of interest are identified and resolved to Elrha's satisfaction.

11.1.   Conflict of interest in connection to this procurement process

Without limitation and common definition of conflict of interest standing, Elrha may perceive conflicts of interest to arise in connection to this procurement process where:

(a) the Applicant, or their Implementing Partners and/or Sub-contractors, or any person employed / related to / engaged by / otherwise connected with them, has been within the last two years engaged or employed by, or otherwise connected with Elrha

(b) the Applicant, or their Implementing Partners and/or Sub-contractors, or any person employed / related to / engaged by / otherwise connected with them has discussed within the last 12 months matters relevant to this procurement process with Elrha

(c) an applicant, or their Implementing Partners and/or Sub-contractors, propose to provide services or advice to, or is otherwise connected with, more than one other applicant in relation to this procurement process.

11.2. Notification

Applicants should notify Elrha in writing of any actual or potential conflicts of interest in their response to this procurement of the Services.

If the Applicant becomes aware of an actual or potential conflict of interest following submission of this Stage 1 – PQQ, it should immediately notify Elrha in writing providing details of such actual or potential conflict of interest.

11.3. Exclusion on the basis of conflict of interest

Elrha reserves the right to exclude applicants s from this procurement process should actual or potential conflicts of interest be found, which confer an unfair competitive advantage on one or more applicant, or to otherwise undermine a fair and competitive procurement process and, following consultation with the Applicant, such actual or potential conflicts are not resolved to the satisfaction of Elrha.

V: ANNEXES
ANNEX 1: PRE-QUALIFICATION QUESTIONNAIRE
ANNEX 2: DECLARATION
ANNEX 3: ELRHA CONTRACT TERMS
ANNEX 4: ELRHA INCIDENT PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT POLICY