

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all participants in this study. The consent process was conducted as follows.

Means and process of consent. Consent was obtained in written digital form via a detailed disclosure statement presented on the first page of the anonymous online survey instrument (Google Forms), immediately prior to any data collection questions. Participants could access the survey questions only after reviewing this disclosure. Consent was not obtained orally; the written digital format was selected because the survey was administered entirely online, ensuring that all participants received identical information in a standardised format and creating a permanent, auditable record of the information provided. A copy of the full consent script (disclosure statement) is supplied with this submission as Supplementary Material.

Date, by whom, and from whom consent was obtained. Consent was obtained from each individual participant at the point of survey access, immediately before data collection commenced. Data collection took place between 20th of April 2025 and 25th July, 2025. The consent process was administered by the research team at the Global Center on AI Governance, led by the Principal Investigator (S.T.S.). The disclosure statement was embedded within the survey instrument and was therefore presented automatically and uniformly to every prospective participant, regardless of recruitment channel. Consent was obtained from all 91 respondents who completed the survey; all participants were adult professionals, comprising AI practitioners, researchers, industry stakeholders, and policy-makers, actively engaged in AI-related activities within low- and middle-income countries.

Scope of consent. The consent obtained from participants encompassed the following: (a) *Participation* – voluntary completion and submission of the anonymous survey after reviewing the disclosure statement constituted informed consent to participate; participants were free to exit the survey at any time without consequence, and no incentive or compensation was offered; (b) *Data use* – the disclosure statement explicitly informed participants that the data gathered would be used solely for research purposes and that findings would contribute to a peer-reviewed publication on AI and infrastructure in LMICs, supporting the development of evidence-based policy recommendations; and (c) *Consent to publish* – by completing and submitting the survey after being informed that the data would be used for peer-reviewed publication, participants provided informed consent for the publication of aggregated, anonymous findings. No individual responses are identifiable or reported in a manner that could permit identification. No signed consent form was required given the anonymous and minimal-risk nature of the research, consistent with the research ethics guidelines.

Vulnerable individuals. This study did not involve vulnerable individuals (e.g., patients, refugees, persons with diminished decision-making capacity) or minors. All participants were adult professionals recruited through professional networks, AI research communities, and

targeted outreach to AI organisations. No special consent procedures for vulnerable populations or legal guardians were required.

Non-interventional research confirmation. This study constitutes non-interventional research based on an anonymous online survey. All participants were fully informed, through the disclosure statement presented prior to data collection, of the following: (i) *Anonymity* – the statement explicitly confirmed that participation was "completely voluntary and confidential" and that "no personally identifiable information will be retained"; (ii) *Purpose of the research* – participants were informed that the study forms part of ongoing research by the Global Center on AI Governance into how infrastructure capacities influence AI innovation in LMICs; (iii) *Data utilisation* – participants were informed that data would be used "solely for research purposes" and would "contribute to a peer-reviewed article on AI and infrastructure in LMICs, supporting the development of more tailored, evidence-based policy recommendations," in compliance with GDPR regulations; and (iv) *Risks of participation* – given the anonymous design, the professional (non-sensitive) nature of the survey questions, and the complete absence of any intervention, the risk of harm to participants was assessed as negligible. No foreseeable risk of identification, embarrassment, legal liability, or professional disadvantage exists. The survey collected no names, email addresses, IP addresses, or unique demographic combinations that could permit re-identification at any point during or after the data collection process.

For more information, find below a sample of the Disclosure Statement shared with survey participants.



Dr Samuel T. Segun
Principal Researcher of the Study
Global Center on AI Governance
Date: 30/07/2025

The following disclosure was displayed to all participants on the first page of the Google Forms survey instrument, prior to any data collection questions:

Disclosure Statement: Thank you for participating in this survey.

This survey should take approximately 8–10 minutes to complete. Your responses should reflect your recent experience with AI-related projects.

This research is led by the Global Center on AI Governance (GCG) and forms part of an ongoing study into how infrastructure capacities influence AI innovation. We are particularly interested in your insights on the availability, affordability, and reliability of AI/ML infrastructure and how these affect AI development across regions. Data into barriers AI innovators and users face in LMICs are currently scarce, so your response is important.

Data Privacy Policy: Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and confidential, and no personally identifiable information will be retained. The data gathered will be used solely for research purposes, in compliance with GDPR regulations, ensuring your privacy and confidentiality are protected.

Consent to Participate & Publish: The findings will contribute to a peer-reviewed article about AI infrastructure in LMICs, supporting the development of more tailored, evidence-based policy recommendations.

By submitting a completed survey, following a review of the above disclosure, you consent to participate in this study and signify your agreement to the publication of its findings.

Thank you for contributing to this important work!