INSTRUMENT GUIDE · APS-01



The AI Proof Sheet

No proof, no next budget. Twenty checks for AI projects in Africa, across four decisions, each with the evidence to ask for, who signs and the signal to stop.

14 NOVEMBER 2026 · EN · STREDGE PARTNERS

PUBLIC

PROOF BEFORE SCALE · AFRICA

No proof, no next budget: twenty checks for AI projects in Africa

For markets where power drops, currencies move and data needs a permit to travel.

	COMMIT Fund it?	PROVE Scale or stop?	SCALE Make it a product?	RUN Keep, fix or retire?
Return on investment	☐ 01 Return in local currency, at the CFO's stress exchange rate	☐ 02 Return visible in the monthly P&L against the baseline	☐ 03 Return still positive at full-volume unit cost, signed by finance	☐ 04 Return and year-two cost reviewed before renewal
Leadership and decisions	☐ 05 CEO or named delegate approves, business owner accountable	☐ 06 Approver decides scale or stop on the date set at Commit	☐ 07 Value target written into the business owner's objectives	☐ 08 Projects stopped last year: number reported to the ExCo
Process and people	☐ 09 Process to change named, baseline measured	☐ 10 Process redesigned before it is automated	☐ 11 Share of target decisions taken with it, by team	☐ 12 Two local people can run it without the vendor or builder
Data and connectivity	☐ 13 Data map: what leaves the country, regulator approval where the law requires it	☐ 14 Pilot run on your own records at the weakest site	☐ 15 Fallback tested: the decision still gets made if the link or power drops	☐ 16 Data owner named, availability by site in the ExCo pack
Build, buy and exit	☐ 17 Build or buy chosen on full cost, exit cost known either way	☐ 18 Code, data and model owned by the company, handover tested	☐ 19 No single vendor or person holds model, data and support	☐ 20 Dependence and exit cost re-priced each year

Missing a proof? Fix it by the next review or stop the project.

Already running AI? Put each live project through the column it has reached.

The twenty proofs, defined

For each proof: what it checks, the evidence to ask for, who produces and signs it, what counts as a pass and the signal to stop. The approver is the CEO or a delegate named under the delegation of authority.

NO.	PROOF AND WHAT IT CHECKS	EVIDENCE TO ASK FOR	WHO	PASS	STOP SIGNAL
Return on investment					
01 COMMIT	**Return in local currency, at the CFO's stress exchange rate** The business case is priced in the currency your accounts report in, and it still pays back if the exchange rate moves against you.	Business case in local currency, rerun at the stress rate the CFO sets. Licences, cloud and support billed in dollars or euros shown on their own line.	Business owner builds it. CFO sets the stress rate and signs.	Payback stays inside the target period at the stress rate.	The case only works at today's rate, or foreign-currency costs are missing.
02 PROVE	**Return visible in the monthly P&L against the baseline** The pilot's effect shows up in the management accounts, measured against the baseline taken at Commit (proof 09).	Monthly P&L line or cost-centre report for the pilot sites, set against the baseline or against comparable sites.	Finance business partner produces it. Business owner explains it.	The gain shows in the accounts, net of the pilot's running cost.	The only evidence is usage counts, estimated hours saved or user surveys.
03 SCALE	**Return still positive at full-volume unit cost, signed by finance** At full volume, the cost per transaction, user or site (compute, licences, support, connectivity and people) still leaves a positive return.	Unit-cost model at full volume, the vendor's price at that volume in writing, finance sign-off.	Project lead builds it. CFO or finance director signs.	Positive return at full volume, on written prices.	Pilot prices or time-limited discounts extrapolated to full scale.
04 RUN	**Return and year-two cost reviewed before renewal** Before any contract or budget renews, the return actually achieved is set against next year's full cost.	Renewal memo: return achieved, year-two cost with price rises and usage growth, options to renew, renegotiate or exit.	Business owner and procurement prepare it. The approver decides.	Renewal decided on actual figures, before the notice date.	Automatic renewal, or a decision taken after the notice date has passed.
Leadership and decisions					
05 COMMIT	**CEO or named delegate approves, business owner accountable** Funding is approved by the CEO, or by a delegate named in writing under the delegation of authority. One business owner answers for the value.	Signed approval stating the amount and the delegation it relies on, with the business owner named.	CEO or named delegate.	The approver acts within the delegated limit and is neither the project's builder nor the vendor's sponsor. The owner sits in the business line that gets the value.	The team building the project approved it, or the owner is the vendor or the AI team.
06 PROVE	**Approver decides scale or stop on the date set at Commit** The scale-or-stop decision has a date fixed at Commit, and the approver takes it on that date. If the scale budget exceeds the approver's limit, the decision goes up the delegation of authority on the same date.	Decision record dated on or before the planned date, listing the proofs reviewed.	The approver decides. The business owner presents.	A decision taken on time, whichever way it goes.	The pilot runs on with no decision. An extension counts only with a new date, a reason and a budget cap.
07 SCALE	**Value target written into the business owner's objectives** The value promised for scale is part of the business owner's annual objectives and variable pay.	The owner's objective sheet with the target, in the same unit as the business case.	The owner's line manager sets it. HR records it.	Target in the objectives before scale spending starts.	The target lives only in the project plan or with the AI team.
08 RUN	**Projects stopped last year: number reported to the ExCo** The ExCo sees how many AI projects were stopped, at which gate, why, and how much budget that released.	Annual portfolio report: projects started, projects stopped by gate, budget released.	CFO or portfolio lead. Reported to the ExCo.	The report exists and stops are recorded as decisions taken on evidence.	Zero stops in a year with several projects live. Ask why none failed a gate.

NO.	PROOF AND WHAT IT CHECKS	EVIDENCE TO ASK FOR	WHO	PASS	STOP SIGNAL
Process and people					
09 COMMIT	**Process to change named, baseline measured** The project names the business process and the decision it changes, and measures how that process performs today.	Process and target decision named, baseline figures (cycle time, cost, error rate, volume) over a stated period.	Business owner, with operations.	Baseline measured before the pilot starts.	"Improve productivity" with no named process and no baseline.
10 PROVE	**Process redesigned before it is automated** The process is simplified first (steps removed, approvals cut, data entry fixed) so the AI does not speed up waste, and the effect on jobs is planned before rollout.	Process map before and after, the list of steps removed, the roles affected and the plan for each, and who was consulted: employee representatives where the labour code or collective agreements require it, host communities where local employment commitments exist.	Business owner and process lead. HR signs the people plan.	Redesign tested at the pilot sites, people plan agreed before Scale.	The pilot automates the current process as it is, workarounds included, or job changes surface after rollout.
11 SCALE	**Share of target decisions taken with it, by team** Adoption is measured on the decisions the project was built for, team by team, instead of logins or licences issued.	System log or sample audit: decisions in scope, decisions taken with the tool, by team and by site.	Business owner. Data from the project lead.	Each team reaches the adoption threshold set at Commit before rollout continues.	The average looks good while key teams work around the tool.
12 RUN	**Two local people can run it without the vendor or builder** At least two employees in the country can operate, troubleshoot and reconfigure the system without calling the vendor or the original builder.	Two names, a written runbook, and a test in which they ran the system alone for a set period.	Business owner with HR. Operations signs the test.	Test passed and a retention plan in place for both people.	One person or nobody holds the know-how.
Data and connectivity					
13 COMMIT	**Data map: what leaves the country, regulator approval where the law requires it** Before funding, the project maps the data it uses, where it is stored and processed, and which flows cross a border, with the legal basis for each flow and any sector regulator's rules on outsourcing or cloud (banking, insurance, telecoms).	Data-flow map by country, the legal basis for each flow, and the filing or authorisation reference where the law or a sector regulator requires one.	Data protection officer or legal. Business owner signs.	Every cross-border flow has its legal basis or authorisation before live data moves.	Personal data sent to a foreign cloud or vendor with no filing where the law requires one.
14 PROVE	**Pilot run on your own records at the weakest site** The pilot uses the company's real records, gaps included, at the site with the weakest data, connectivity or staffing. That is usually a remote site, where records are thinner, kept on paper or entered late.	Pilot plan naming the site and why it is the weakest, a data-quality log, a sample of outputs checked by people, the rule for which outputs a person must confirm, error rate and results by site.	Project lead. Operations chooses the site.	Results hold at the weakest site, with an error rate within the threshold set at Commit, in the languages used there.	Results come only from vendor data, cleaned samples or head office, or nobody measured the error rate.
15 SCALE	**Fallback tested: the decision still gets made if the link or power drops** When connectivity or power fails, the business decision the tool supports still gets made, through an offline mode, a cached model or a manual procedure.	Written fallback procedure and the log of a real or simulated outage at a live remote site.	Operations. IT supports.	The decision is made within the agreed time during the outage test.	Work stops when the network drops, or the fallback has never been tested.
16 RUN	**Data owner named, availability by site in the ExCo pack** Every dataset the system depends on has a named owner, and system availability is reported site by site.	Data-owner register and monthly availability by site in the ExCo pack.	Data owners. The CIO reports.	Owners named and availability reported every month.	Availability reported only as a group average, or datasets with no owner.

NO.	PROOF AND WHAT IT CHECKS	EVIDENCE TO ASK FOR	WHO	PASS	STOP SIGNAL
Build, buy and exit					
17 COMMIT	**Build or buy chosen on full cost, exit cost known either way** Internal build, vendor product and partner build are compared on full cost over the project's life, including people, running cost and the cost of leaving.	Option table with full cost over three years or the project's life, and the exit cost of each option.	Project lead with procurement. CFO reviews.	Option chosen on full cost, exit cost written down.	The choice rests on a licence price or a demo.
18 PROVE	**Code, data and model owned by the company, handover tested** Contracts and internal rules make the company the owner of its data, of the outputs, and of the code or model built for it, and a handover has been tested.	Contract clauses on ownership and return of data, repository access in the company's name, handover test record.	Legal and procurement. The project lead runs the test.	Clauses signed and handover tested before Scale.	The vendor keeps the trained model or the data, or the code sits on one person's account.
19 SCALE	**No single vendor or person holds model, data and support** No single vendor, and no single employee, controls the model, the data and the support at the same time.	A map of who holds the model, the data and the support, with a tested backup for each.	CIO with procurement.	The three are not all in one hand, and each has a tested backup.	One provider or one person can stop the service.
20 RUN	**Dependence and exit cost re-priced each year** Every year, the cost of leaving the current vendor or set-up is re-estimated and the alternatives are checked.	Annual exit-cost estimate, alternatives reviewed, dependence rating.	Procurement. The approver reviews.	Re-priced before each renewal decision (proof 04).	Exit cost unknown, or last estimated at signature.

Proof 13: where the law requires approval

The table covers five countries where we checked the text of the law. For any other country, check the rule with the national data protection authority before live data moves.

COUNTRY	LAW	WHAT IT REQUIRES FOR TRANSFERS ABROAD	AUTHORITY
Morocco	Law 09-08 (2009)	Transfers abroad need prior authorisation from the CNDP, which publishes a list of countries it considers adequate.	CNDP
Côte d'Ivoire	Law 2013-450, Art. 7 and 26	Transfers to a country outside ECOWAS need prior authorisation from the protection authority.	ARTCI
Senegal	Law 2008-12, Art. 49 to 51	The destination must offer adequate protection and the CDP must be informed before the transfer. Without adequacy, only listed exceptions or a CDP authorisation with safeguards.	CDP
Togo	Law 2019-014, Art. 28 to 30	Every country other than Togo is a third country. Adequate protection required and the IPDCP informed beforehand. Without adequacy, only listed exceptions or an IPDCP authorisation.	IPDCP
Nigeria	Data Protection Act 2023, s. 41 to 43	Transfer only if the recipient is bound by an adequate law, binding corporate rules, contract clauses or similar, or a section 43 ground applies. The basis must be recorded.	NDPC

This summary helps scope proof 13. It is not legal advice, and laws change: confirm the current text with the authority or your counsel before any transfer.

Running the gate review

One meeting per gate, sixty minutes, chaired by the approver.

Five working days before	The business owner sends the proof pack: one page per proof, evidence attached.
Decision asked (5 min)	The owner names the gate and what is asked: budget, scope and date.
This column (30 min)	Each proof is marked met or missing, on the evidence alone.
Earlier columns (10 min)	Anything that slipped since the last gate, such as a new site that changes proof 13.
Decision (15 min)	The approver decides: go, go with a fix date, or stop. A fix date is the next review at the latest.
Two working days after	Decision record: proofs met, proofs missing, an owner and a date for each fix, next review date.

Already running AI: portfolio worksheet

One line per live project. Check every proof in its column and the columns to its left. Each missing proof gets an owner and a date, no later than the next review.

PROJECT	ANNUAL COST	APPROVER	COLUMN REACHED	PROOFS MISSING	OWNER	FIX BY	DECISION

Missing a proof? Fix it by the next review or stop the project.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Page 2: the sheet, for the ExCo pack.

Pages 3 to 5: the twenty proofs, defined, with the evidence to ask for.

Page 6: the gate review and the portfolio worksheet.

HOW TO CITE

Stredge Partners (2026). The AI Proof Sheet: twenty checks for AI projects in Africa. Instrument guide APS-01. stredgepartners.co/specimens/ai-proof-sheet

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PUBLISHER

Stredge Partners is a network of locally incorporated entities. Each entity is a separate legal person and contracts in its own name.

This guide is published by the STREDGEPARTNERS entity, 167 Great Portland Street, 5th Floor, London W1W 5PF, United Kingdom.

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contact@stredgepartners.co · stredgepartners.co