**Republishing of the call for tenders**

**Mid-term evaluation of the Improving Access to Justice in the Great Lakes Region project** **, "*Uhaki bila mipaka*".**

1. **BACKGROUND**

**Period assessed: 1st December 2022 to 30 November 2024**

**Evaluation period:** May to August 2025

**Project title:** Improving access to justice in the Great Lakes region/ Uhaki Bila Mipaka (AtJ)

**Project intervention zones:** Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) around 5 border points with Rwanda (Petite and grande Barrières in Goma, Ruzizi 1 and Ruzizi 2 in Bukavu and Kamanyola); in Rwanda around 5 border points with DR Congo (La corniche border post and poids lourd border post in Rubavu, Rusizi 1 and Rusizi 2 in Kamembe and Bugarama).

**Project duration:** 4 years (1st December 2022 - 30 November 2026)

Since December 2022, the consortium of three organisations, International Alert (lead), Pole Institute and iPeace, has been implementing *the "Improving access to justice in the Great Lakes region" project*, which aims to contribute to improving access to justice in order to reduce tensions and strengthen stability in the Great Lakes region.

The AtJ project is being implemented in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) around 5 border points with Rwanda (Petite et grande Barrières in Goma, Ruzizi 1 and Ruzizi 2 in Bukavu and Kamanyola); and in Rwanda around 5 border points with DR Congo (La corniche border post and poids lourd border post in Rubavu, Rusizi 1 and Rusizi 2 in Kamembe and Bugarama), with funding from the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for a period of four years.

The project is providing direct support to various stakeholders, in particular communities living in cross-border areas, civil society organisations and state institutions that are either directly involved in the governance, delivery and promotion of justice, or impacted by the issue of access to justice.

This mid-term evaluation is scheduled to take place at the end of the second year of the project's implementation, with a view to examining the progress made and taking stock of the changes achieved so far by the project, with a view to learning how to contribute to peace-building in the Great Lakes region, identifying the lessons learned and addressing the challenges that could hinder the successful achievement of the project's results.

This evaluation will be carried out externally by an independent consultant or consultancy firm, working under the lead of the AtJ consortium's MEAL teams and in liaison with consortium coordination, to ensure the quality of the data and the report produced.

1. **OBJECTIVES OF THE MID-TERM REVIEW**

The purpose of this mid-term evaluation is to determine the progress made in achieving the expected results of the *Uhaki Bila Mipaka* project during the first two years of implementation (**from December 2022 to November 2024**) and to identify corrective measures, if necessary.

In particular, this assessment will make it possible to :

* Assess criteria including the relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency and sustainability of the AtJ project. In addition to these criteria, the evaluation will also assess the integration of gender, location and cooperation issues.
* Analyse the effectiveness of the implementation and partnership agreements between the members of the AtJ consortium.
* Assess progress, identifying successes, opportunities, challenges and risks in order to identify lessons learned about the design, implementation, coordination and management of the project.
* Carry out an analysis of the project's key approaches, highlighting in particular technical achievements and lessons learned.
* Propose mid-term corrections and/or adjustments to the work plan, if necessary, to be taken into account in the remaining period of the project or in another likely access to justice project/intervention.

Specifically, the following topics will be addressed

**Accountability**: The evaluation will analyse and report on performance and results achieved to date:

* Evaluate the Uhaki Bila Mipaka project intervention in accordance with OECD principles (details of the questions for each criterion are given in section 4 of these ToRs)
* Verify the modalities of knowledge about rights and free and rapid access to legal aid services for communities living in the target areas in order to prevent the escalation of conflicts in the Great Lakes region.
* Assessing the degree of achievement of the results framework indicators: a baseline study was carried out at the start of the project and an annual survey for the last two years has just been finalised, making it possible to compare the progress of the indicators with the baseline data.

**Participation**: The evaluation will seek to analyse the way in which the project's stakeholders, including community structures, officials in charge of border management and the political, administrative and judicial authorities in both countries, the beneficiaries of the legal clinics, etc., are involved in the implementation of the project. And how this involvement facilitates the achievement or non-achievement of results.

**Learning**: The evaluation will identify the reasons why certain outcomes occurred or did not occur, in order to draw lessons, best practices and indications for learning. It will provide evidence-based conclusions to inform operational decision-making. Observations will be actively disseminated and lessons will be incorporated into appropriate lesson-sharing systems throughout the project:

* Capture existing lessons and good practice to feed into recommendations and the planning process
* Analyse the strengths and weaknesses, best practices and critical issues of the intervention
* To refine recommendations on the intervention logic of the Uhaki Bila Mipaka project and, where appropriate, programming proposals concerning the main stakeholders in the project.
1. **SCOPE**

**Period**: this mid-term review covers the period from 1December 2022 to 30 November 2024.

**Geographical coverage**: the evaluation will cover all project implementation areas - around 5 border points with Rwanda (Petite et grande Barrières in Goma, Ruzizi 1 and Ruzizi 2 in Bukavu and Kamanyola); in Rwanda around 5 border points with DR Congo (La corniche border post and poids lourd border post in Rubavu, Rusizi 1 and Rusizi 2 in Kamembe and Bugarama). The methodology proposed by the evaluators will have to determine in what way, and with what risk analysis, information will or will not be gathered in the area currently controlled by the AFC/M23 or will be gathered remotely.

**Direct beneficiaries of the project:** the beneficiaries of the legal clinics, the members of the community structures supported by the project in both countries, the border officials in post during the evaluation period, in particular with regard to the Operational Order of the Congolese land borders, the judicial authorities and the local authorities also in post until 30 November 2024 (mayors, district managers, burgomasters, territorial administrators, group leaders, magistrates, lawyers, representatives of the Ministries of Justice). At the time of writing, some key informants who were involved in the project are no longer present in DRC implementation zone due to the war situation in Goma, Bukavu and Kamanyola. The selected firm will be able to propose to the consortium its approach and methodology for reaching these key informants.

1. **EVALUATION CRITERIA AND KEY QUESTIONS**

**Relevance**

* Are the objectives of the Uhaki Bila Mipaka project still valid and well-founded?
* Do the activities implemented enable the expected results and objectives to be achieved?
* Are the project's activities and products well adapted to the desired impact and effects?
* Were there any major risks that were not taken into account by the project team during the past period?
* Was the project relevant in view of the cross-border political context between the DRC (Goma, Bukavu and Kamanyola) and Rwanda (Rubavu, Rusizi 1 and 2) which prevailed until 30 November 2024?
* Does the project meet the needs of the target groups[[1]](#footnote-2) ?
* Was the project aligned with the work of other national and international organisations working on cross-border issues?

**Efficiency**

* To what extent is the project moving towards its objectives? Are these objectives likely to be achieved by the end of the project?
* What were the main factors that led to the objectives being achieved?
* What is the added value of the project at its current stage of implementation?
* Are the approaches and methodologies used to implement the project effective? Are there links between these approaches and the results of the project?
* What results have been achieved through the advocacy efforts in Kinshasa, Kigali and Goma? Which issues seem to have been more successful than others, and why? What specific recommendations should be made to the consortium and the donor?
* To what extent has the project been able to achieve results at regional level (holiday university, student training, etc.), while navigating the current political and security context? To what extent has the project succeeded in adapting to these issues? What advice can the project take into account in its regional approach and in the way it involves governments?

**Efficiency**

* Are the activities cost-effective?
* Are the objectives achieved at the current stage of the project reasonable?
* Is the project being carried out in the most efficient way compared to other possible approaches?
* Have the available resources (human, material and financial) been managed rationally to achieve results over the past period?

**Durability**

* To what extent have the positive results of the project lasted or will they last after the end of the project?
* To what extent will the various community structures/areas for dialogue set up or revitalised by the project last after the end of the project?
* Do all key stakeholders continue to demonstrate effective commitment (ownership)?
* What are the main factors that have determined the viability or non-viability of the project at this stage?

**Partnership, localisation and cooperation[[2]](#footnote-3)**

* To what extent have the project's collaboration and external partners been sought out and established? To what extent have synergies been created?
* How effective has collaboration between consortium members been over the past period?
* What was the level of integration and participation of the beneficiaries/participants in the implementation of the project and the achievement of the results during the past period?
* To what extent have the members of the consortium learnt and exchanged with each other?
* To what extent does the project incorporate the "Localisation" approach in its implementation?

 **Gender mainstreaming**

* To what extent does the project integrate the gender approach into its implementation?
* To what extent is legal support gender-sensitive?
1. **DELIVERABLES, TIMETABLE AND DURATION OF THE EVALUATION**

The assessment is scheduled to take place between May and August 2025. It should take around 60 days. The precise timetable will be discussed and agreed with the consultant or consultancy firm, but we envisage a work schedule based on the following dates and deliverables:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Deliverables** | **Deadlines** |
| Publication of ToRs  |  19 March to 04 April 2025 |
| Recruitment and contracts | 04 to 30 April 2025 |
| Evaluation work plan and dissemination plan (to be developed and delivered during the preparation phase) | 2 May 2025 |
| Methodological note, data collection and analysis tools (questionnaire, etc.), required for approval by the Consortium | 31 May 2025 |
| Draft report | 15 July 2025 |
| Final report  | 30 August 2025 |
| Summary report | 30 August 2025 |

It should be noted that the AtJ Consortium team will review and respond to the draft report within the days agreed in the work plan. The consultant will amend the draft report in the light of the Consortium's comments and the final report should incorporate them in full.

The main body of the report, in Word format, to be produced in French and English, must be no longer than 30 pages (excluding annexes/attachments) and must include the following elements:

* Summary of key evaluation findings
* Table of contents
* Summary
* Introduction
* List of acronyms
* Context (description of the project and areas of intervention)
* Objectives of the mid-term review
* Methodology and limitations
* Main results and analysis, clearly meeting the evaluation criteria and referring to the project's key indicators
* Updated project monitoring and evaluation matrix and a summary of the status of each indicator at the current stage of the project;
* Analysis of the risks and vulnerabilities that are important to consider over the remaining period of the project. Suggest strategies to mitigate these risks and draw lessons from them;
* Analysis of opportunities for enhancing the impact of the project that can be used to develop future projects and for advocacy purposes;
* Conclusions and recommendations
* Appendices :
	+ Terms of reference for the evaluation
	+ Meeting schedule
	+ Assessment tools (question guides, questionnaires, observation grids)
	+ List of documents consulted
	+ Updated logical framework of the project summarising the achievement of results and performance indicators
1. **METHODOLOGY**

The evaluation methodology will be proposed by the consultant in its technical proposal. It must be sensitive to the context, the conflict, gender and both the national context in the DRC and Rwanda, and the regional context involving the two implementing countries. It will be presented to the member organisations of the Access to Justice consortium for a favourable opinion before being validated by the consortium and before the consultancy begins. In general, the consultant will have to combine quantitative and qualitative approaches and answer the various evaluation questions mentioned above. It should be noted that the consortium has already collected the current data (for the first 2 years) on the results indicators. The methodology should clearly explain how the whole assignment and the expected outputs are sensitive to gender, conflict and the context in the two countries.

The methodology and the various data collection tools will be approved by the AtJ Consortium team before launching the actual mid-term evaluation activities.

This assessment will include the following steps:

1. **Preparation**

Key project documents will be provided to the consultant for exploitation (official project documents, baseline study reports, annual survey report for the first 2 years, project implementation reports, results framework, updated M&E framework, and any other necessary guidance documents).

The consultant will be responsible for :

* Review the documentation ;
* Produce an updated analysis of the project implementation context at country and regional level;
* Prepare an evaluation work plan in conjunction with the project team;
* To finalise the evaluation methodology and data collection tools, including a list of contacts and people who will be involved in data collection at each project site;
* Coordinate the programme of invitations and contacts with key informants with the support of the Access to Justice project team
1. **Field work**

The fieldwork will take place on the project sites, according to the risk analysis presented to the consortium and validated by it, under the lead of the consultant. During this fieldwork and with the support of the Access to Justice consortium project team and civil society partners, the consultant will :

* Recruit data collectors locally and train them in each of the two countries. The training should cover the methodological approach to be used and the data collection tools. If it is not possible to recruit data collectors, Alert could make its database of people qualified to collect data in the various project implementation sites available to the firm/consultant.
* Test the data collection tools in the field with the various target groups through a pilot survey or pre-survey.
* Conducting data collection.
1. **Data analysis and processing**

Data collection, encoding and processing will be the responsibility of the firm or consultant recruited for this mid-term evaluation. Data analysis and processing should also include an analysis of any contradictions between the qualitative and quantitative data collected. It is expected that all data will be triangulated and, if any such contradictions arise, they will be explored and hypotheses presented as to why such contradictions might exist.

The consultant will be expected to take into account the project team's series of comments. Creative ways of presenting results would be encouraged. The consultant will take care to develop and document the databases in professional manner, International Alert will request the consultant to share these databases in a timely manner during or after the consultancy.

The Access to Justice project team working on Rwanda and the DRC will accompany the consultant throughout the implementation of all these tasks without compromising his/her independence and objectivity.

The consultant will be supervised by Alert-RDC's Design, Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Manager.

1. **Restitution**

At the end of the field data collection, analysis and processing work and before submission of the draft mid-term evaluation report for the Access to Justice project, the consultant will be responsible for the following tasks in particular:

* Prepare a presentation summarising the provisional results, findings and recommendations of the consultancy mission to be shared with the consortium teams and the Alert MEAL team.
* Leading a workshop to present the provisional results, findings and recommendations of the consultancy mission with the main stakeholders so that they can present their initial observations, conclusions and recommendations.
1. **Preparation of the draft report**

The report will be produced by the consultant and reviewed by the M&E team, representatives of each consortium member, the CoP and Alert's programme management. Comments will be compiled by the MEAL team focal point and sent to the consultant for consideration in an improved version of the AtJ project mid-term evaluation report.

1. **Development of the final evaluation report**

A final report taking into account the observations and comments of the AtJ Consortium will be developed by the firm/consultant. The report must meet technical reporting standards, in particular it must be written in clear, precise and concise language and be no longer than 30 pages; the detailed information required for the report may be included in the appendices. The report must clearly show the performance of the project, including quantitative data on the indicators as well as qualitative and contextual analyses for each indicator concerned by the midline. This final report and the appendices developed in due form will be submitted to the AtJ consortium, which will process and validate it as soon as possible. Validation of the final report of the mid-term evaluation of the AtJ project will be carried out in writing by means of an email or letter sent to the consultant or firm concerned. **The report will be produced in English**.

1. **Capitalisation, learning and possible readjustment of project implementation strategies**

AtJ is a pilot project for Alert in this field in the Great Lakes region. The mid-term evaluation will be used for further mutual learning based on the findings and recommendations. Once the final report has been validated, the ATJ consortium and Alert's MEAL department will organise a series of technical activities to publicise the results of the evaluation, capitalise on them and draw lessons learned for stakeholders:

* Together with the donor, the AtJ Consortium will organise a debriefing session during which the consultant will share the results and key recommendations of the mid-term evaluation. The donor's feedback will be used in the re-adjustment, learning and capitalisation that will result from this evaluation process
* For the AtJ consortium: a learning workshop will be organised with the partners to share the recommendations of the evaluation, which will be discussed to determine the project components and strategies that need to be adjusted or readapted if the project is to achieve its objectives, both at the level of each country of intervention and in its regional dimension.
* A session will be held with the Project Managers and AtJ Consortium management to communicate the agreed next steps with a view to adjusting the project as necessary at national and regional levels and developing a management response to the observations, recommendations and findings of the evaluation,
* With the communities and participants in the ATJ project, community sessions to share the results of the evaluation will be organised by the MEAL agents of the member organisations of the AtJ consortium in the two countries to capitalise on and provide feedback on the evaluation.
1. **SUPPORT AND RESOURCES PROVIDED BY THE CONSORTIUM**

The human resources required for this assessment are :

* A consultant/firm to be recruited to be responsible for the evaluation; who will in turn identify/recruit a team of staff (which may include data collectors, supervisors or other staff), adapted to the project contexts in the target areas of the two countries in accordance with the consultancy methodology. International Alert should ensure that data collectors have been recruited locally, are fluent in local languages (mainly Swahili and Kinyarwanda) and are up to the task.
* Logistical and material requirements include vehicles, accommodation and per diem costs for the Alert team supervised by the consultant.
* The need to put the consultant or firm in contact with project participants, including the political, administrative and judicial authorities in the countries targeted by the AtJ project

The actual budget to be used will be submitted by the consultant/cabinet and must be validated in advance by International Alert. This budget will cover all expenses related to the evaluation, including fees, transport and per diems for consultants and data collectors, data collection in the field, transport, communication, reporting, etc

It should be noted that the consultant or firm will also be responsible for recruiting the data collectors in collaboration Alert's MEAL department, training them and providing them with mobility (transport).

1. **ETHICS AND DATA PROTECTION**

Data protection will follow the guidelines of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The assessor will seek the consent of the interviewee prior to the interview.

In order to provide anonymity to respondents, notes from interviews and group discussions will be numbered and referenced in the report with these numbers so that the report is anonymous. A list of dates and locations where interviews took place will be included in the appendix, but the evaluator will avoid using names in the report and appendices if possible. The anonymised raw data will remain on PROMPT and the list linking the data to the names will remain in the evaluators' personal files.

The assessor will be aware of the process to be used to ensure anonymity and will be able to explain this to interviewees. Interviewees should understand this and be comfortable with the process before the interview begins, or the interviewer should be able to provide additional arrangements if necessary. Where a subject is particularly sensitive, the assessor may suggest different options, including not recording, not quoting, not keeping recordings, etc.

The Assessor shall not, either during the assignment or after completion of the assignment, disclose any proprietary or confidential information relating to the Service without the prior written consent of the Awarding Authority. Proprietary interest in all materials and documents prepared by the incumbent contract under this assignment shall become and remain the property of Alert.

**9. SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED**

We are looking for an external consultant/firm familiar with the context of the Great Lakes region to carry out the evaluation. A consultant or the lead consultant proposed by the firm must be able to lead the entire consultancy mission in order to carry out the expected tasks and obtain the required products

Qualifications of the lead or principal consultant who will be primarily responsible for the firm's account :

* Excellent written and oral skills in French and English required, including a proven ability to write programmatic performance evaluation reports;
* Master's degree in a relevant field, preferably in law, conflict resolution or peace-building;
* Proven ability to mobilise key informants in border management and political-administrative-judicial structures in Rwanda and the DRC
* At least 7 years' experience in research and monitoring-evaluation, including at least 5 years' experience in conducting evaluations of projects, including peace-building and/or access to justice projects in the Great Lakes region;
* Experience in developing and managing focus groups, interviews and surveys;
* Ability to understand and take into account the dynamics of ongoing conflicts in the Great Lakes region, conflict sensitivity, national and regional contexts and gender in evaluations of projects in the justice, stabilisation and peace-building sector
* Ability to be flexible with time and work schedule while being culturally sensitive;
* Excellent skills in writing programme performance evaluation reports;
* Knowledge of the socio-cultural, economic, legal, judicial and political context of the Great Lakes region;
* Able to read, digest and analyse large amounts of information accurately, provide succinct summaries and explain the significance of the information.

If the consultant or firm proposes national agents or consultants to support the lead consultant, the above criteria will apply with the possibility of adapting the criteria below:

* Bachelor's degree (Bac+5) in a related field, preferably in law, conflict resolution, peace-building, human rights, international relations, development or a related field
* At least 5 years' experience in research and monitoring-evaluation, including at least 3 years' experience in conducting evaluations of projects, including peace-building and/or access to justice projects in the Great Lakes region.

**10. APPLICATION PROCESS**

Candidates interested in this call for tenders may submit to International Alert a file containing :

1. A letter of expression of interest ;
2. Two mid-term evaluation reports on a previous, more or less similar project
3. A draft evaluation for this consultancy (10 pages maximum). This draft evaluation should contain a technical proposal including a description of the methodology and a detailed financial proposal (number of days and daily rate);
4. Official documents authorising the firm to work in the DRC and/or Rwanda, if it is a national or international consultancy firm;
5. Up-to-date and truthful CVs of the evaluation consultants proposed for this evaluation;
6. Three (3) references from organisations for which the consultant or firm has carried out recent evaluations for similar projects.

Expressions of interest for this call must be sent by e-mail to the following address

 Drc-hr@international-alert.org by coping plwanzo@interntional-alert.org no later than **11 April 2025**.

Goma, 14 March 2025

1. The judiciary, administrative and local authorities, members of civil society organisations, people in vulnerable situations, asylum seekers, refugees, migrant workers, detainees and foreigners in irregular situations. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. NB: Alert is going to make available the report of a discussion we had in consortium with the landlord on issues. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)