Terms of Reference: Independent End of Project Evaluation

Strengthening Regional Civil Society Engagement on Women, Peace and Security, 2022-2026

PROJECT NAME	Strengthening Regional Civil Society Engagement on Women, Peace and Security, 2022-2026	**DONOR/S**	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
PARTNER NAMES	Australian Civil Society Coalition for Women, Peace and Security (WPS Coalition) auspiced by ActionAid Australia; Pacific Women Mediators Network (PWMN); African Women Voices for Peace led by ActionAid Uganda	**DURATION OF EVALUATION**	25-30 days. To be completed by February 2027
LOCATION OF PROJECT	Australia and Asia-Pacific; Pacific region; Great Lakes region of Africa (DRC, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia)	**PERSON COMMISSIONING EVALUATION**	Sophie Ford, Head of Programs, ActionAid Australia
DATE OF ISSUE	2 November 2026	**COMPLETED BY**	Consultants

1. Introduction

This Terms of Reference (ToR) has been prepared for the independent end of project evaluation of the project 'Strengthening Regional Civil Society Engagement on Women, Peace and Security' (the WPS project) managed by ActionAid Australia with funding from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The evaluation is a commitment made in the project design and will generate independent, evidence-based findings to provide accountability to DFAT and inform the design of any future phase of work.

This ToR provides the following information:

- background to the project, its partners, and the evaluation;
- the purpose of the evaluation and its objectives;
- the scope of the evaluation, including the three project components and the dedicated Pacific Women Mediators Network sub-study;
- reporting requirements and deliverables;
- the schedule, methodology and evaluation team; and
- the indicative time frame and budget.

2. Background Information

About ActionAid Australia and the WPS partners

ActionAid is a global federation working in over 70 countries to advance women's rights and end poverty and injustice, guided by a feminist and human rights-based approach that places the voices and agency of women at the centre of lasting change. ActionAid Australia serves as the auspicing organisation for the project, alongside being a technical advisor in the African Women's Voices for Peace platform and Co-Chair of the WPS Coalition.

Partners in the project:
The project has the following partners: the Australian Civil Society Coalition for Women, Peace and Security, the Pacific Women Mediators Network (PWMN) and as part of the African Women Voices for Peace platform, ActionAid Uganda, DRC, Kenya, and Ethiopia. Further details on the partners are provided below:

- The Australian Civil Society Coalition for Women, Peace and Security (WPS) is a non-partisan, independent coalition of civil society organisations, networks and individuals working to advance the WPS agenda in Australia, the Asia-Pacific region and globally. The Coalition has over 150 individual and organisational members and has played a key role in informing intersectional perspectives on the WPS agenda through its research into First Nations women, Queer perspectives, and young women's role in the WPS agenda. It has also convened regional spaces to strengthen the network of women peace builders in Asia and the Pacific, alongside Australian civil society, and government. The Coalition has also supported women leaders from the region to engage in global and regional influencing spaces. It is recognised in the Australian government's primary domestic partner in the implementation of the Second National Action Plan on WPS.

- The Pacific Women Mediators Network (PWMN) is a women-led regional peacebuilding and mediation network that functions as a programme of the GPPAC Pacific regional network providing a Pacific Island civil society-led platform for diverse women peacebuilders, mediators, and civil society allies. It is a formal member of the Pacific Islands Forum Technical Advisory Group on Peace and Security. In 2026 through the Pasifika Peace Talanoa platform PWMN contributed to enhancing civil society input into a range of regional and multilateral processes elevating findings and recommendations from preparatory work in 2025 when the network convened four cross-movement regional convenings, including the inaugural Pacific Colloquium in Honiara. PWMN has strategically engaged in the UN Commission on the Status of Women, UN Security Council and UN Peacebuilding Commission and is currently a member of the CSO-UN Peacebuilding Platform as well as member of the Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediators Network ensuring Pacific Island experience and expertise continues to strategically drive accountability of diverse women's participation in peacebuilding and mediation efforts.

- African Women Voices for Peace is a platform established by ActionAid country offices in Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in partnership with women survivor led networks affected by conflict and sexual and gender-based violence in the Great Lakes region. It has focused on meeting the basic psychosocial and economic needs of survivors, alongside supporting their collective advocacy and peacebuilding efforts at national, regional, and global levels. It has developed a strategic relationship with the African Union's Special Envoy on WPS and other regional actors working to advance WPS with a focus on elevating the voices of frontline women. This platform has been co-financed by an Australian philanthropic organisation.

The investment

The investment supports Outcome 1 of Australia's National Action Plan on WPS 2021-2031 by strengthening women's meaningful participation in conflict prevention and peace processes. Over its five years it has sought to strengthen dialogue and engagement among women peacebuilders in the Asia, Pacific and African regions and to support their voices, visibility, priorities, and participation in national, regional, and global spaces.

Under the ActionAid investment, three projects were supported and guided by two detailed project proposals. These outlined the following objectives for each project:

The Australian WPS Coalition:

- To strengthen network and alliance building among women peacebuilders in the Asia-Pacific region and diverse Australian women, including First Nations and diaspora groups, to build a common agenda and take collective action to advance WPS in the region.
- To promote the participation, voice, and visibility of women peacebuilders from the Asia-Pacific and African regions in national, regional, and global spaces relevant to the WPS agenda.

The African Women Voices for Peace platform:

- To strengthen the role of women in the promotion of peace and security in the Great Lakes region of Africa through the establishment of a regional platform.

The Pacific Women Mediators Network:

- Influence on Policy and Decision-Making
- Amplification of Women's Leadership and Participation
- Strengthening Networks and Partnerships
- Advancing Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda
- Raising Awareness and Mobilizing Action

Evaluation Approach:

This evaluation aims to bring together the collective impact of the three projects under the investment as well as identify outcomes and learnings from each of three projects.

The African Women Voices for Peace platform has already been independently evaluated by an African led consultancy team. This has looked at the combined investment from an Australian philanthropic donor and DFAT (total combined investment: $1,050,000 with $300,000 AUD contributed from DFAT), and rather than duplicate this work, this overall evaluation will draw on this existing AWVP evaluation as the primary source of evidence for the Great Lakes component. No additional data gathering is envisaged.

PWMN - It is our preference that the Pacific Women Mediators Network also be evaluated by a Pacific Island based evaluator, particularly one familiar with Pacific Island Forum and other regional inter-governmental processes. This evaluation should be designed so that a discrete, Pacific-led sub-study of the PWMN work could be delivered by a Pacific Island evaluator and then integrated into an overarching evaluation of the whole program.

Australian WPS Coalition – as one of the smaller investments with fewer activities and budget, a discrete light touch evaluation of this project would also be undertaken and integrated within the overall evaluation.

Women's leadership and social inclusion

Women's leadership and social inclusion is central to the project. The evaluation should explore the meaningful participation of diverse women, including First Nations, migrant, refugee, and ethnic minority women, LGBTIQ women, and women with disabilities, and the accessibility and safety measures put in place to enable their engagement. Sustainability, localisation, and the quality of partnerships are also key lines of enquiry, given the project's emphasis on strengthening civil society networks and women-led organising over the longer term.

3. Purpose of the Evaluation and Objectives

Purpose

The purpose of this independent end of project evaluation is to assess the overall performance, outcomes, and impact of the project across its three components, and to draw together learning that demonstrates results to DFAT and informs the design of the next phase of investment.

Consistent with the project's monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework, the evaluation will assess the project against the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, with gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI), localisation, and partnership as cross-cutting lenses. The project's MEL matrix, including baseline and endline data, will serve as a primary basis for the evaluation.

Objectives of the evaluation

The evaluation aims to:

1. Assess the extent to which the project's objectives and intended results were achieved across all three components.
2. Evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of the project's strategies, including the network and platform models and the value of connecting women peacebuilders across regions.
3. Document changes in the capabilities, agency, voice, and participation of women peacebuilders in peace and decision-making spaces as a result of the project.
4. Deliver separate evaluations of the Pacific Women Mediators Network component and Australian WPS Coalition, using approaches and evaluators appropriate to the context
5. Assess the efficiency of implementation and the use of resources across the three projects
6. Examine the sustainability of the networks, platform and relationships established, and the prospects for continued impact beyond the funding period,
7. Assess how effectively GEDSI, including disability and social inclusion, was integrated across the project.
8. Identify key successes, challenges, lessons learned and best practices and provide actionable recommendations for future phases.

Evaluation design:

The evaluation is structured in four connected strands:

- **Strand A - PWMN sub-study.** A discrete evaluation of the Pacific Women Mediators Network component, using Pacific-appropriate and culturally safe methods. This sub-study produces its own findings and a short standalone output.
- **Strand B - Great Lakes review.** Integrating the Great Lakes component based on reviewing the recent independent African Women Voices for Peace (AWVP) evaluation. This avoids duplicating a recent evaluation while ensuring the component is represented in the overall findings.
- **Strand C- External** Review of the Australian Civil Society Coalition for Women, Peace, and Security work, analysing the impact of the network including through conveying and publications and interviews with key informants.

- **Strand D - Meta-evaluation across the whole program.** An overarching synthesis, that draws together evidence from all three components (the PWMN sub-study, the Great Lakes review, and review of the WPS Coalition) to assess the program as a whole against the evaluation criteria and to surface cross-component learning about what has worked, what has not, and why.

4. Outputs against the Objectives

The evaluation covers the full implementation period and all three components, across Australia, Asia, Pacific and the Great Lakes region of Africa. Primary data collection will focus on the WPS Coalition and PWMN activities, while evidence on the Great Lakes component will be drawn primarily from the recent independent AWVP evaluation.

The consultant is expected to analyse the impact and outcomes of the project against its original design and MEL framework, review the management and coordination arrangements, assess the appropriate and cost-effective use of funds, and identify lessons and recommendations for the future. The key evaluation questions below are indicative and will be refined with the evaluation team at inception.

Relevance

- How relevant were the project's strategies to the needs and priorities of women peacebuilders in Asia, the Pacific and Great Lakes regions, and to the WPS policy context?
- How relevant and appropriate were the network and regional platform models?
- To what extent did the projects support Australia's National Action Plan commitments on WPS?

Effectiveness

- To what extent were the objectives and intended results achieved across each of the three components?
- How effective were the convening, capacity strengthening, advocacy, and events in strengthening women's participation, voice, and visibility?
- How effective was the PWMN component specifically, from the perspective of Pacific women mediators and peacebuilders?

Efficiency

- Were financial, human and time resources used efficiently across the components?
- How well did the coordination and auspicing arrangements between the WPS Coalition and ActionAid Australia support timely, quality delivery?

Impact

- What significant changes, intended or unintended, have occurred in the capabilities, agency, and influence of women peacebuilders as a result of the project?
- To what extent did external partners adapt / learn from the recommendations of the project?
- To what extent did the project influence policies, advocacy spaces, or norms at national, regional, and global levels?

Sustainability

- Are the networks, the regional platform and the relationships established likely to be sustained beyond the funding period, and what mechanisms support this?

GEDSI, localisation and partnership (cross-cutting)

- How well were gender equality, social and disability inclusion integrated across design, delivery, and participation?

- How effectively did the project support women-led and locally led organising, and how did the partnership and auspicing model support accountability and learning?

5. Deliverables

The evaluation team will produce the following deliverables:

1. Inception report, including the refined evaluation matrix, methodology, data collection tools, sampling, and work plan, including the proposed approach for the Pacific-led sub-study.
2. Data collection tools (key informant interview and focus group discussion guides and desk review framework).
3. PWMN sub-study output: a short standalone report of findings from the Pacific-led sub-study.
4. An external review of the Australian WPS Coalition's activities and learnings over the period.
5. Draft meta-evaluation report, integrating findings across the three components.
6. Validation process with key stakeholders across the three components.
7. Final evaluation report, including an executive summary, findings against each evaluation criterion and component, the partnership and coordination assessment, GEDSI analysis, lessons and best practice, and strategic recommendations for the future phase.

All deliverables are to be provided in English, in accessible formats, and are subject to review and approval by ActionAid Australia.

6. Schedule and Methodology

Methodology

The methodology will be defined by the consultant. All data collection must be gender-sensitive, and accessible, and must enable the participation of women with disabilities and other marginalised women.

Evaluation team

The evaluation will be delivered by an experienced team with strong gender expertise and an understanding of the Women, Peace, and Security context. It should include Pacific representation to lead on the Pacific sub-study

Qualifications and experience

- Advanced qualifications in gender studies, peace and conflict studies, development studies, or a related field.
- Demonstrated experience leading evaluations, ideally in WPS, gender equality, women's leadership, or peacebuilding.
- Experience with feminist and participatory approaches.
- Experience working with women-led and civil society organisations, and strong analytical and report-writing skills.

Ethics and safeguarding

The evaluation team must adhere to ActionAid's safeguarding and ethics policies throughout, including informed consent from all participants, confidentiality and anonymity and do-no-harm approach, and safeguarding standards for vulnerable persons. The consultant/s will be expected to adhere to ActionAid's safeguarding policies.

Indicative schedule

An indicative breakdown of days is provided in Section 7.

7. Evaluation timeline

The evaluation is indicatively estimated at around 36 working days across the team, to accommodate the three components, including a review of the recent Great Lakes (AWVP) evaluation, and the dedicated Pacific-led sub-study and external review of the WPS Coalition.

Activity	Indicative days
Contracting and inception meeting	1 day
Inception report, evaluation matrix, and data collection tools	3 days
Desk review of project documents and MEL data	2 days
PWMN sub-study (Pacific-led): data collection and analysis	5 days
Review of the existing Great Lakes (AWVP) evaluation and any supplementary interviews	2 days
Data collection: WPS Coalition (interviews and focus groups, in person and virtual)	4 days
Data analysis and meta-evaluation synthesis	5 days
Draft evaluation report	3 days
Validation process with the Coalition, partners, and PWMN	2 days
Final evaluation report	2 days
Indicative total	**approx. 27 days**

Indicative payment schedule: 25% on approval of the inception report; 35% on approval of the draft report; 40% on approval of the final report. To be confirmed based on the proposed schedule put forward by the consultants.