



DEVELOPING A NEW 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN (2026-2030)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

Grounded in the goal of equality COACT is a national level NGO that envisions a peaceful world where women realize their full potential, and exists to inspire women's leadership, amplify their voices, coordinate civil society action to prevent and resolve conflict, and significantly contribute to building sustainable peace.

COACT coordinates an alliance of 50 women and youth peacebuilding organizations working in Uganda to promote gender equality and women empowerment, with a specific focus on effective implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda (WPS) that is founded in UN Security Council Resolution 1325, of October 2000, and the Youth Peace and Security agenda (YPS) founded in the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 of 2015. We partner with the Ministry of Gender Labor and Social Development to ensure the design and implementation of Uganda's National Action Plan on WPS is inclusive and effective.

COACT implements the following core programmes:

1. **Localizing the Implementation of the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325.** This programme involves orienting District Local Governments and particularly the District Technical Planning Committees and District Councils on the NAP, supporting the development of district-specific WPS Local Action Plans (LAPs), and working with local peace committees to ensure that gender perspectives are integrated into conflict resolution processes and initiatives that build and sustain peace at community level.
2. **Women's Leadership for Peace and Security.** We strengthen and promote women's meaningful leadership and meaningful participation in decision-making processes, in conflict prevention and resolution, and peacebuilding including prevention and response to GBV. The programme facilitates formation and growth of grassroots women's rights organisations including women mediators networks to engage in conflict early warning and early response, and to implement peace building initiatives at community level and mediate family level conflicts.
3. **Youth Action for Peace Programme.** Targeting the young women and men aged 15-29, this program strives to increase the meaningful participation of youth in leadership, governance, and peacebuilding processes. We recognize the critical intersection between the youth peace and security agenda founded in UNSCR Resolution 2250 and the women, peace and security agenda.
4. **Gender in Humanitarian Response and Action.** This program is designed to provide protection, safety, and psychosocial support to refugee women and girls, asylum seekers and those living in internally displaced camps.
5. **Institutional Development and Organizational Strengthening.** This programme is designed to enhance COACT's overall effectiveness, sustainability, and impact. At its core, the programme

seeks to build a strong institutional foundation that supports the organization in achieving its mission and responding to the needs of its stakeholders.

The current strategic plan 2020-2025 is being implemented in 22 districts of Uganda, including 15 hosting in humanitarian setting.

Assignment Justification

COACT's current strategic plan expires at the end of 2025, and the organisation needs a new strategic plan for the period 2026-2030. It is therefore essential to conduct a review of the organization's programs to assess the effectiveness, relevance, and impact of its past current interventions, identify what has worked well, emerging issues, and how its efforts have contributed to its mission.

The review will ensure that future planning is grounded in evidence and enable COACT to adapt to changes in the current operating environment, aligning the new strategic plan with current realities, emerging opportunities, and stakeholder expectations. The review will also further strengthen the legitimacy and relevance of the new strategy, building shared ownership for the way forward.

Scope of the Assignment

1. **Document review and Inception meeting:** The consultant will review key documents such as COACT's strategic plan, annual reports, and relevant literature. He/she will participate in the inception meeting and develop an inception report.
2. **Data Collection.** The consultant will conduct consultations and collect data from various respondents including COACT Board, staff, coalition members, Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development, district leaders, and COACT's program beneficiaries. The consultant will collect data in the districts of Isingiro, Kyegegwa, Lira and Amuria. The review will seek to solicit answers to the following questions: What is the impact of COACT programs? What has worked, and what has not? What needs strengthening? What needs to change? The consultant will submit a report of the findings with recommendations.
3. **Theory of Change (TOC) Workshop:** The consultant will use the findings from the program review to draft a draft Theory of Change articulating the change(results) to pursue and the pathway to the desired changed. The consultant will facilitate a 1-day workshop of COACT board members, staff and selected members and partners to present and cocreate the TOC for the next 5 years.
4. **Drafting the Strategic Plan:** The Consultant will integrate comments of the workshop and finalise the TOC that will be the foundation for drafting the strategic plan for the period 2026-2030.
5. **Validation of the draft Strategic Plan:** The Consultant will present the draft strategic plan in a half day workshop. The consultant will share the draft strategic plan with COACT at least 5 days before the validation workshop.
6. **Submission of the final Strategic Plan:** The Consultant will finalize the strategic plan and submit a soft copy to the Chairperson of the Board and copied to all Board members and management of COACT.

Key Deliverables

The consultant will achieve the following deliverables during the assignment:

1. **Inception report:** An inception report detailing the approach and methodology that will lead to COACT's strategic plan 2026-2030.
2. **Programme Review Report** outlining what has worked well, areas that need strengthening, emerging issues and recommendations for future programming. This must not exceed 25 pages
3. **Draft Theory of Change** in form of a diagram or flow chart clearly showing the desired change in the next 5 years, and how the change will be realized.

4. **A 2-day Theory of Change (TOC) workshop** to co-create the final theory of change, and gain clarity on the new strategic direction.
5. **Draft strategic plan** reflecting insights from the Theory of Change (TOC) workshop. The draft strategic plan will be in the agreed layout.
6. **A one-day validation workshop** to confirm the draft strategic plan is standard and addresses strategic issues highlighted during the strategic planning process. The consultant will also receive additional feedback (if any) during this workshop.
7. **Final strategic plan document:** The final strategic plan document not exceeding 25 pages including annexes.

Duration of Assignment

The assignment is expected to start on October 24, 2025, and be completed by March 2026. The tentative roadmap for the assignment is as follows:

Activity	Tentative Date
1. Deadline for receiving applications	October 10, 2025
2. Contracting the Consultant, and inception report	October 24, 2025
3. Program Review (Data collection, analysis, and draft 1 of the TOC	November 07, 2025
4. Theory of Change (TOC) co-creation Workshop	November 13, 2025
5. Submission of draft strategic plan	November 20, 2025,
6. Presentation of draft Strategic plan to Board of Directors and Staff	November 27 2025
7. Strategic Plan validation workshop	December 11, 2025
8. Finalization, designing and printing	February 28, 2026
9. Launch of the new strategic plan during the women's week	March 05, 2026

Desired Competencies

1. Educational qualifications

A minimum of Masters' Degree in Monitoring and Evaluation, Gender studies, Peace and Conflict Studies.

2. Technical and Strategic Expertise

- **Strategic Planning:** Proven ability to lead strategic planning processes, including visioning, setting priorities, formulating objectives, and defining implementation frameworks.
- **Program Evaluation and Review:** Strong skills in conducting organizational and program reviews, including using participatory tools and qualitative and quantitative methods.
- **Peacebuilding and WPS Knowledge:** Deep understanding of the peacebuilding field, UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions, gender mainstreaming in conflict and post-conflict settings, and regional WPS frameworks (e.g., IGAD, ICGLR, AU).
- **Global, Regional and National Frameworks:** Knowledge of the international, regional and national frameworks for the women, peace and security agenda.

3. Contextual and Organizational Understanding

- **Regional and National Context:** Deep understanding of Uganda's socio-political landscape, particularly persistent gender issues and some of the best practices to achieve gender equality, political and conflict dynamics and civic space.
- **CSO Sector Knowledge:** Understanding of how civil society coalitions and alliances operate, including coordination and funding challenges, stakeholder dynamics, and donor relations.
- **Experience with Similar Assignments:** Experience working with or consulting for women-led peacebuilding NGOs, coalitions, or community-based organizations in similar contexts.

4. Process Facilitation and Interpersonal Skills

- Participation and inclusion: Ability to effectively engage diverse stakeholders (members, staff, board, beneficiaries including refugees and host communities, partners, donors).
- Good Communication: Strong verbal and written communication skills to synthesize input and produce coherent, actionable strategic documents.
- Gender Sensitivity: The desired consultant will demonstrate cultural and gender awareness and sensibilities, as well as the ability to navigate power relations in group settings respectfully and effectively.
- Commitment to the Do No Harm principle.

5. Deliverable-Oriented Assignment Execution

- Work Planning and Timeliness: Ability to design a realistic, time-bound work plan and manage the process to deliver high-quality outputs within agreed timelines.
- Report Writing: Capacity to produce clear, concise, and well-structured strategic plans, with practical recommendations, aligned with best practices in NGO governance and programming.

5. Desirable Additional Competencies

- Ability to integrate MEL frameworks into the strategic plan.
- Demonstrated commitment to ethical approaches that uphold the dignity, safety, and agency of communities and stakeholders

Application Process

Interested candidates should submit applications addressed to the Board Chairperson, COACT. They should include the following attachments:

1. A cover letter addressed to the Chairperson of the Board of COACT. It must indicate the Tax Identification Number of the Consultant or a copy of the National ID.
2. A Technical Proposal responding to the Terms of Reference and including a schedule of activities and timelines for submission of deliverables should not exceed 5 pages
3. A budget in an Excel file
4. Proposed structure of executive summary, and layout of the new strategic plan.
5. A detailed CV of the Consultant specifying relevant assignments completed during the last 3 years.

All applications should be submitted by 3:00 pm Uganda Time on Friday, October 10, 2025. to coact@coact1325.org with a copy to chrisheara@coact1325.org; with the subject title **COACT Strategic Plan 2026-2030.** Late applications will not be considered.