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**Terms of Reference**

**Final Evaluation**

**(Adaptation to Covid-19)**

**NRC Humanitarian Mediation Initiative**

**Central African Republic, Mali, and the Democratic Republic of Congo**

# **Background information**

## **Basic information**

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| Project title: | NRC Humanitarian Mediation Initiative (HMI) |
| Organization | Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) |
| Donor | Sida |
| Geographic coverage: | DRC: North and South Kivu Provinces, Kasai Province, Bandundu Province (primary data collection from beneficiaries only in DRC) ;CAR: National coverage;Mali: National coverage |
| Project duration: | Three years (Nov 2017 – 31 Oct 2020) |
| Evaluation dates:  | 1 Oct 2020 – 31 March 2021 |
| Application deadline: | 24 Aug 2020 |

## **Project Context**

The NRC humanitarian mediation initiative stems from the idea that in situations of conflict and violence, the most fundamental need of vulnerable populations at local level is not only humanitarian assistance, but also security and meaningful protection. As a humanitarian organization, NRC has chosen to attempt to achieve this through developing a methodology to foster and encourage an in-depth understanding of situations of conflict and explore possibilities for dialogue amongst all parties to the conflict so that they can develop and agree upon their own solutions to the protection problems they face. The methodology, referred to as humanitarian mediation by NRC, is voluntary and inclusive. NRC’s Humanitarian Mediation Initiative is a pilot project that follows on from similar work carried out by other humanitarian organizations in CAR 2014-16. The humanitarian mediation approach demonstrated positive results during this period. NRC’s aim is to continue to develop humanitarian mediation in CAR, while exploring whether the methodology can be applied in other contexts, i.e. in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Mali, where vulnerable populations continue to suffer the effects of conflict.

**CAR[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Since its independence in 1960, CAR has seen continuous political crises of dictatorship, military coups and armed clashes. In December 2012, civil war broke out between the predominantly Muslim rebel group Seleka, from the marginalised northern areas, and the Christian and animist militia anti-Balaka. In 2014, hundreds of thousands of people were displaced after Seleka overthrew President Bozizé. Later that year, the armed groups agreed to a ceasefire. By then, almost one quarter of the population had been forced to flee. The 2016 elections were peaceful, but the government struggled to achieve lasting peace. After few months of stability, violence resumed.

A peace accord signed in February 2019 lead to a reduction in confrontations between armed groups, but violence and wide-scale human rights violations are still being committed by all parties in the conflict. More than half of the population require humanitarian assistance (2.6 million people) and roughly 40% of the population fear for their safety. Over 600,000 people are displaced within the country, while 1.6 million people face food insecurity. A further 600,000 are living as refugees in Cameroon, Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Democratic Republic of the Congo[[2]](#footnote-2)**

The population in DRC has had to endure political instability, ethnic rivalry and violent conflict for the past 20 years. There are few indications that the long-standing crisis will come to an end anytime soon. Conflict has expanded into Greater Kasai region as well as Tanganyika and Ituri since 2017. The humanitarian situation in DRC is also becoming a regional crisis. End of 2019, over 5 million people were displaced internally.

The emergence of Ebola in 2018 in conflict-affected North Kivu continues to negatively impact the humanitarian situation. Due to mass displacement and conflict spreading, food insecurity rates have spiked massively, and many people are not able to farm and sustain themselves. In December 2019, 15.6 million people were in need of assistance with 4.7 million people suffering from acute malnutrition.

**Mali[[3]](#footnote-3)**

In 2012, when Islamic militant groups took control of Mali’s northern regions, more than half a million Malians were displaced from their homes. Roughly 150,000 people escaped to neighbouring countries, and hundreds of thousands became displaced inside Mali.

In June 2015, a peace agreement was signed between the two major armed coalitions and the Malian government. Since then, authorities have gradually returned to the north, providing basic state services in the largest towns, but many remote areas still lack basic services. Additionally, the central regions are currently on the brink of collapsing into insecurity, or potentially full conflict.

While those who have stayed since the eruption of conflict face violence, poverty, and food insecurity, the number of internally displaced people continues to increase. 4.3 million people will require humanitarian assistance in 2020, with 1.1 million food insecure. 201 thousand people are internally displaced, primarily due to intercommunal clashes.

## **NRC’s activities and presence**

**CAR[[4]](#footnote-4)**

NRC has been present in CAR since 2014 and employs approximately 17 international staff and over 196 national staff. NRC covers a large geographic area with activities in spread across strategic locations throughout the territory. In 2018, NRC assisted 45.264 people in education, 5.550 in food security and livelihoods, 9.326 in shelter, 21.880 in NRC’s Counselling and Legal Advice service, as well as 18.650 though WASH programming.

**DRC[[5]](#footnote-5)**

NRC has been present in DRC since 2001 and employs approximately 23 international staff and 406 national staff. In 2018; 212.365 people benefited from NRC education programme; 565,464 from food security; 343,906 people from shelter, and 49,089 people benefited from NRC’s ICLA programme.

**Mali[[6]](#footnote-6)**

NRC has been present in Mali since 2013 and employs over 16 international staff and over 207 national staff. In 2018, 67,055 people benefited from NRC education programme; 10,378 from food security, 26.022,497 people benefited from the ICLA programme and 88.287 from the WASH programme.

## **NRC’s intervention specific to the evaluation**

The goal of the project is to contribute to improve protection of civilians in CAR, Mali and DRC through humanitarian mediation processes aiming at conflict prevention and mitigation. With this regional project, NRC also seeks to develop its global humanitarian mediation programming informed by the interventions and experiences in the three countries. The project has the following outcomes:

* Improving safety and security for civilians;
* Improving understanding between parties to the mediation in targeted areas;
* Improving participation of communities in NRC’s programming as well as accountability towards beneficiaries and thus preventing and mitigating conflicts between communities and NRC’s programmes (protection mainstreaming).

Woven into above is the recognition that meaningful inclusion of women and girls is essential. Although the project will not aim at specifically reducing violence against women and girls, but against civilians as a whole, it is expected that the overall violence reduction in a specific area will lead to a significant improvement of protection of women and girls. Women shall be represented in the mediation and dialogue process to voice the specific concerns facing women and girls and thus contribute to and ensure an acceptable and beneficial solution for all.

At a country level, the implementation adheres to the same goal and outcomes, though there are variations in implementation to account for context, for example the security environment, logistic and support capacity, experience and capacity of local staff, NRC operational footprint and the interaction with the country level programmes. However, the pilot project attempts to maintain a harmonised approach across the three countries.

# **Purpose and intended use**

## **Overarching purpose**

The primary purpose is to learn from the pilot project, in order to improve programming and define future direction for humanitarian mediation in NRC. The evaluation shall contribute to build the knowledge base in this field, and it shall be shared among relevant actors with an interest in dialogue-based protection programming. Further, the evaluation has accountability aspects, through transparency of the level of achievement of project objectives.

Figure 1: Project model for NRC Humanitarian Mediation Initiative



## **How will the evaluation be used and by whom?**

NRC programme management at global, regional and country office level shall use the evaluation for modifications and enhancements in design and implementation of future humanitarian mediation projects and programmes, as well as other dialogue-based protection initiatives. NRC will also use the evaluation to understand how humanitarian mediation fit within an integrated programme approach at country level.

The evaluation findings shall be shared with Sida Peace and Human Security Unit, to contribute to knowledge building in humanitarian mediation and other dialogue-based protection initiatives. Other INGOs and donors active in dialogue-based protection, e.g. Danish Red Cross, ICRC, ECHO and academic institutions such as the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, will use the findings to feed into building an evidence base for these types of initiatives.

# **Lines of inquiry**

The evaluation is based on the project model (figure 1) and the project logframe. It looks at the different processes, the results at various levels, as well as connections and relation between the same.

The evaluation shall focus on three criteria, and aim to answer to the following questions:

**Effectiveness**: To what extent did the project achieve its short-term, intermediate and longer-term outcomes for participants, and their communities? Are there any gender differences? Which factors hindered/ contributed to the achievements? How sustainable have the protection outcomes been over the project period? Were there positive or negative unintended outcomes as a consequence of the project?

**Efficiency**: How cost and time efficient were the HM activities? (a basic analysis only)

**Relevance**: How adequate were the activities for achieving the foreseen outcomes? How did they contribute to the objectives? To what extent were the activities conflict and gender sensitive?

**Coordination**: How effective was the coordination and interaction with internal and external stakeholders? Internally: regionally, NRC core competencies, protection, innovation, security, access etc.;

Externally: INGOs and NGOs working with dialogue-based protection activities/ UN agencies/ peacekeeping operations/ State and non-state actors, local civil society organisations active in dialogue based initiatives, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative.

In addition, in line with NRC’s mandatory organisation wide global learning question for 2020, the evaluation will explore how the Humanitarian Mediation programme was delivered effectively and appropriately for persons with disability. Guidance for this line of inquiry will be provided by NRC M&E. The evaluation shall also respond to the question: What are the possibilities for integrating Humanitarian Mediation into NRC’s core humanitarian programming?

# **Methodology**

The proposed design takes into account the available budget of 248.302 SEK (approx. $26.000) and it shall build on established theories. With the evolving situation of Covid-19 and travel restrictions, the evaluation shall have remote components led by an international consultant. The consultant is expected to liaise with a local consultancy company or equivalent for primary data collection. The design should include below, but NRC is open to additional suggestions:

1. A **desk review** shall be done in order to assess activities, processes and short-term results in the three countries, It shall be based on indicator data, outcome monitoring, complaints and adequate feedback mechanism reports, conflict analyses, regional workshop material, donor reports etc. It shall inform the fine tuning of the final questions for the primary data collection;
2. Face-to-face and/ or remote **key informant Interviews (KIIs)** with internal and external actors to feed into the evaluation questions, including the level of coordination and value add of the regional aspects of the project, as well as assessing the requirements for a potential integration of humanitarian mediation into NRC’s core business. Examples of external actors: local NGOs and INGOs active in the area of the mediation, local and customary authorities, and UN clusters. Examples of internal: Mediation Staff (country), Mediation Advisers (regional, global), Area Managers, Heads of Programme (country, regional), Country Directors, M&E staff (country, regional), ICLA specialists (country, global), Global Protection Advisor, and Head of Development Projects and Innovation.
3. An assessment of the mediation processes in DRC using **mixed methods**, including a population based **survey**, in order to understand the change that the projects contributed to for the participants and for the broader communities (including unintended change); Primary data collection shall include participants in mediation processes at community level (including women, youth, elderly) and it shall only in DRC because of budget restrictions.

By applying the design we aim to optimize the limited budget and maintain an overall regional perspective while ensuring an in-depth understanding of the effects of mediation processes in one country. Please note that all data shall be disaggregated by sex and displacement status, and that analyses shall be carried out with a gender lens.

# **Implementation**

## **Deliverables**

* An inception report of max 10 pages, with an evaluation matrix and data collection tools in annex. These shall be approved by NRC before data collection; Either English or French;
* Debrief with Steering Committee of initial findings (Skype);
* A draft evaluation report for review by NRC of maximum 30 pages excluding annexes; English or French;
* A Final Report (maximum 30 pages, excluding appendices) in English and French;
* A PowerPoint presentation of 20 slides representing the report incl. graphs and tables (one in French and one in English) ;
* Presentation of final report, approx. 1 hour (remote);
* Databases with the quantitative (Excel) and qualitative data (transcriptions) and analyses.

## **Time frame**

* Start date: 1 Oct 2020
* Inception report: 15 Oct 2020
* Final Report: 31 March 2021

## **Logistical support**

NRC will provide the following logistical and other support to the consultant team:

* Transmission of background materials (project proposal, meeting notes, etc.);
* Meeting arrangements with internal and external stakeholders if requested by the consultants;
* Support of NRC for introductions to key local stakeholders and translators;

The focal point at NRC is the Evaluation Manager, who is supported by the NRC Steering Committee. The national M&E focal point at each CO shall provide logistical support if required.

# **Evaluation consultant team**

NRC is looking for a consultant, or team of consultants, with the following experience and capacity:

* Senior humanitarian, peacebuilding or development professional – minimum 10 years’ experience;
* Demonstrated experience in conducting research and/or evaluations with quantitative and qualitative components;
* Advanced university degree in development, geography, sociology, social sciences, or related field of study;
* Expertise of protection programmes in Africa required – ideally with experience specific to Mali, CAR and DRC;
* Comfortable working across cultures and familiarity with language and translation issues;
* Strong analytical, synthesis, and report writing skills;
* Demonstrated ability to produce high quality data in challenging environments;
* Fluency or high technical proficiency in both English and French.

# **Application process and requirements**

## **Process**

Interested consultant teams are invited to apply by **24 Aug 2020** via NRC web site.

Applications should include:

* Technical offer detailing the methodology, work plan and the team, including alternatives depending on limitations due to Covid-19 (max 5 pages);
* Biography (CV) of the team members demonstrating relevant experience/ capacity (max 10 pages);
* Financial offer (bid) detailing the budget (in USD);
* Two references of organizations who can verify the quality of the consultant’s work and/or publicly available works or studies commissioned earlier.

## **Ethical Considerations**

Evaluator/s will comply with **NRC’s country specific regulations for Covid-19, government restrictions, WHO recommendations and NRC ethical guidelines** for data collection and data protection, as well as **NRC child safeguarding policy.** (S)he will e.g. make clear to all participating stakeholders that they are under no obligation to participate in the evaluation. All participants will be assured that there will be no negative consequences if they choose not to participate. Evaluator/s will obtain informed consent from the participants. In case if evaluation team does not understand participants’ first language, they will conduct sessions along with an interpreter/s.

Evaluation team will have to receive prior permission for taking and use of visual still/ moving images for specific purposes, i.e., ‘for evaluation report and presentations. Evaluator/s will assure the participants’ anonymity and confidentiality and will ensure the visual data is protected and used for agreed purpose only.

1. Humanitarian Response Plan 2020 – République Centreafricaine, [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. RD Congo: Apperçu des Besoins Humanitaires – Dec 2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Mali – Rapport de Situation, 28.01.2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. NRC web site March 2020 (https://www.nrc.no/countries/africa/car) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. NRC web site March 2020 (https://www.nrc.no/countries/africa/dr-congo) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. NRC web site March 2020 (https://www.nrc.no/countries/africa/mali) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)