



ANTI CORRUPTION COALITION UGANDA

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

POLICY ANALYSIS OF UGANDA'S ANTI-CORRUPTION MUTUAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE FRAMEWORK

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda (ACCU) was established in January 1999 and officially registered as an NGO in 2004. ACCU unites like-minded individuals and organizations dedicated to raising awareness, exposing, and advocating for the reduction of corruption in Uganda. Since its inception, ACCU has been committed to fostering an accountable and corruption-free society through diverse initiatives, often with support from various development partners. At the national level, ACCU collaborates with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) operating in the accountability sector while on the local front, ACCU works with and through Regional Anti- Corruption Coalitions (RACCs) distributed across the country, as well as grassroots member organizations.

2.0 BACKGROUND

To complement government efforts, ACCU is implementing the Civic Engagement for Accountability Project (CEAP), which aims at enhancing transparency and accountability among state and non-state actors. The project promotes citizen participation in anti-corruption efforts by building the capacity of local governments actors, civil society and communities to demand accountability, monitor public services and engage constructively with state institutions. The project supports improved governance in key service delivery sectors of health, education, justice, livelihoods and environment.

Uganda continues to face persistent corruption challenges that undermine national development despite existing legal, policy and institutional frameworks. The country loses an estimated UGX 9.14 trillion annually to corruption according to the Inspectorate of Government. Transparency International's 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index also ranked Uganda 140th out of 180 countries, with a stagnant score of 26%. These challenges are driven by weak citizen engagement in accountability processes, limited access to information, poor implementation of anti-corruption laws and limited political will to address high level corruption. This contributes to poor public service delivery, rising public debt and over-all under development, underscoring the need for stronger domestic and cross-border anti-corruption mechanisms.

Corruption in Uganda is increasingly syndicated and cross-border in nature, given the fact that the country lacks a comprehensive mutual legal assistance framework. Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) is a formal process through which states cooperate in criminal matters by providing assistance in investigations, prosecutions and judicial proceedings with cross-border elements, including the exchange of information

and evidence, tracing of assets and the freezing, confiscation and return of proceeds of crime. The concept emerged in response to the transnational nature of crime and the limitations of domestic legal systems in addressing offences involving multiple jurisdictions, particularly where illicit assets are concealed abroad.

At the international level, the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) provides the principal framework for MLA in corruption and asset recovery cases obliging States Parties to afford the widest possible cooperation and recognising asset recovery as a fundamental principle particularly Articles 46, 51, and 54 of the UNCAC, underscore the central role of MLA. The importance of effective MLA is further reinforced by accountability mechanisms such as the UNCAC, under which Uganda's implementation of international anti-corruption and rule-of-law obligations is periodically assessed. The 2021 CSO parallel report by ACCU identified persistent challenges in Uganda's MLA framework, including limited capacity and weak coordination.

In this context, MLA is a strategic pillar for Uganda's anti-corruption architecture and strengthening it is essential to addressing transnational corruption and illicit financial flows, particularly given ongoing constraints in recovering assets held abroad despite notable domestic recoveries. Without effective MLA, corruption cases risk delay or collapse due to evidentiary gaps and jurisdictional barriers. A functional MLA framework therefore strengthens the prospects of successful prosecutions and recoveries in cross-border corruption cases. MLA mechanisms are essential for facilitating information sharing, evidence gathering, asset tracing, freezing and confiscation across jurisdictions.

3.0 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ASSIGNMENT

Uganda is a State Party to both the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC) and the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), each of which imposes clear obligations on States to establish effective mutual legal assistance mechanisms. The AUCPCC requires States Parties to cooperate in the investigation and prosecution of corruption through the exchange of information, execution of judicial requests and facilitation of asset identification, seizure, and confiscation in cross-border cases. Similarly, UNCAC provides a comprehensive framework for mutual legal assistance, under Article 46, obliging States Parties to afford the widest measure of cooperation in criminal matters, while Articles 51 and 54, emphasise asset recovery through international cooperation, including asset tracing, freezing, confiscation, and return. Together, these frameworks underscore the central role of MLA in enabling cooperation necessary to effectively address corruption that transcends national borders.

While institutions such as the Office of the Directorate of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) and the Uganda Police Force (Interpol) have developed internal guidelines, including the ODPP's 2024 Mutual Legal Assistance Guidelines, and institutional practices to support cross-border corruption investigations, these efforts remain fragmented and insufficient without a coordinated national framework. Uganda has yet to enact a comprehensive mutual legal assistance law, despite limited provisions under Section 114 of the Anti-Money Laundering Act, this gap significantly weakens the ability to support, rely on, and respond to cross-border requests for investigations and prosecutions. The Inspectorate of Government (IG) has increased investigations and asset recovery, but reports highlight persistent challenges due to limited capacity and complex cross-border tracing. In the absence of formal legal mechanisms, Uganda relies on informal regional collaborations, such as the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for Eastern Africa, which remain insufficient for complex transnational cases.

This gap continues to undermine the effective investigation and prosecution of corruption cases particularly high-profile and transnational cases where successful outcomes increasingly depend on mutual legal assistance and cross-border cooperation. In the absence of adequate institutional and procedural frameworks for mutual legal assistance, corruption cases are frequently exposed to risks that discourage cooperation, particularly in matters requiring mutual legal assistance across multiple jurisdictions. These reduce and undermine the reliability and availability of information shared between states and limit the effective exchange of evidence through mutual legal assistance channels. As a result, Uganda's ability to effectively request, provide and utilize mutual legal assistance in corruption investigations and prosecutions is significantly constrained.

Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda therefore seeks services of a consultant to undertake a detailed policy analysis of Uganda's mutual assistance framework, with the aim of identifying gaps and proposing strategic reforms that strengthen the framework as a critical enabler of international cooperation in combating cross-border corruption.

4.0 GENERAL OBJECTIVE OF THE CONSULTANCY

The general objective of the consultancy is to engage the services of a competent firm/ individual to undertake assessment, analysis and evaluation of the mutual assistance framework of Uganda, to inform strategic engagements with key stakeholders.

4.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- 1) To ascertain and assess Uganda's current mutual legal assistance framework including mapping to key laws, policies and institutions.
- 2) To conduct a literature-based comparative analysis of Uganda's mutual legal assistance framework with selected countries.
- 3) To provide recommendations aimed at strengthening Uganda's mutual legal assistance framework.

5.0 NATURE AND SCOPE OF WORK

The Consultant is expected to develop a clear methodology detailing how the assignment will be accomplished. Specifically, the Consultant is expected to:

- Review the anti-corruption mutual legal assistance framework of Uganda and undertake analysis of key policy issues affecting the framework in Uganda.
- Identify policy issues and gaps in the mutual legal assistance framework of Uganda and advance recommendations to enhance its effectiveness.
- Interview subject experts from state and non-state institutions.
- Share findings and recommendations during the strategic advocacy engagements with various stakeholders.

- Use tools and any other agreed upon methodology that will deliver the assignment in a more efficient and effective manner.

6.0 PLACE OF PERFORMANCE

The assignment will be conducted at the national level in Kampala.

7.0 METHODOLOGY

Prospective consultants are encouraged to suggest the most suitable methodology that will factor in both qualitative and quantitative methods for this assignment. Consultants are required to illustrate an appropriate methodology with a clear sampling approach showing how they intend to collect and analyse data from different stakeholders. The choice of method must consider the capacities and needs of the different target groups and stakeholders. The methodology will be discussed and finalized in consultation with ACCU.

8.0 EXPECTED OUTPUTS

Prospective consultants are expected to provide a detailed technical and financial proposal detailing the consultant/s' understanding of the Terms of Reference, in respect to methodology, approach, tools, financial requirements and relevant CVs.

9.0 TIMEFRAME FOR THE CONSULTANCY

No.	Task	Days	Responsible Party
1.	Publication of the terms of reference	5 th February 2026	ACCU
2.	Delivery of Expression of Interest/Technical and Financial Proposals.	20 th February 2026	Consultants
3.	Conclusion of contractual process	27 th February 2026	Consultant
4.	Submission of inception report	3 rd March 2026	Consultant& ACCU
5.	Delivery of the first draft of the report	25th March 2026	ACCU & Consultant
6.	Validation of the report	15 th April 2026	ACCU & Consultant
7.	Submission of final report	20 th April 2026	Consultant

10.0 LEVEL OF EFFORT

This assignment is expected to take 15 days.

11.0 RELEVANT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

The Consultant is expected to possess:

- 1) A master's degree in Social Sciences, Development studies, Law, Public Policy and Governance or any other related qualifications, with demonstrated academic grounding in governance, justice, or international cooperation frameworks.
- 2) At least 5 years of progressive experience in conducting governance, accountability, anti-corruption, or justice-sector related studies (evidence of experience including referees should be

included in the technical proposal).

- 3) Demonstrated understanding of accountability and anti-corruption legal and institutional frameworks, with specific knowledge of cross-border cooperation mechanisms, asset recovery processes, and the role of Mutual Legal Assistance in combating corruption and other transnational crimes.
- 4) Proven knowledge and practical experience in policy and legal analysis is required.
- 5) Strong research skills including analytical and report writing skills (with the ability to produce concise, readable and analytical reports).

12.0 SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Consultants who meet the above requirements should submit their technical and financial proposals to the **Executive Director**, Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda on; info@accu.or.ug with a copy to; amarlon@accu.or.ug not later than 20th February 2026.