



**Search for
Common Ground**
Trust, Collaboration, Breakthroughs



FINAL EVALUATION

Making Trade Work for Women in East Africa “Mupaka Uboresha Maisha”

DECEMBER 2022

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Abbreviations

ANR	Agence Nationale de Renseignement(National Intelligence Agency)
BIC	Bureau d'information sur le commerce (Business Information Desk)
CBT	Cross-border trade
CBTA	Cross-Border Trade Association
CECI	Internal Savings and Credit Community(Communauté d'épargne et crédit interne)
CEPGL	Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries-Communauté Économique des Pays des Grands Lacs
CLFCT	Local Committee for the Facilitation of Cross-Border Trade
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DGDA	Directorate General of Customs and Excise-Direction Générale des Douanes et Accises
DGM	Migration Directorate General-Direction Générale de Migration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
EWC	Early Warning Committee
FC	Congolese Francs
FEC	Federation of Enterprises of Congo- Fédération des Entreprises du Congo
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
MERL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCC	Office Congolais de Contrôle
PAP	Provincial Action Plan
PCBTA	Platform of Cross-border trade Associations
PFCGL	Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project
PNHF	National Border Hygiene Programme
PVH	Person living with disability
Search	Search for Common Ground
SMICO	Congolese Micro Credit Company
SQAH	Animal and Fisheries Quarantine Service
SQAV	Animal and Plant Quarantine Service
STR	Simplified Trade Regime
SYDONIA	Computerised Customs Management System
TMEA	TradeMark East Africa
USD	US Dollar
VSLA	Village Saving and Loan Association

Executive Summary

Search for Common Ground (Search), with funding from TradeMark East Africa (TMEA), has implemented the “*Making Trade Work for Women*” project in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for 24 months (December 2020-December 2022). This project aimed to contribute to the greater inclusion of women in trade as one of the pathways to increased business competitiveness and increased trade in the EAC. The project outcomes are as follows:

1. Improved environment (policy/regulation/institutional reforms) facilitating women's trade in East Africa
2. Increased formalisation and value of goods traded by targeted women in East Africa
3. Improved prevention and response to gender-based violence and harassment by targeted women traders in East Africa

This report presents the results of the final evaluation conducted in December 2022 by the Search MERL team with 464 informants (372 in the survey, 56 in focus groups and 19 key informants) consisting of 81% women and 19% men (in the survey) in the project implementation areas of Goma, Bukavu, Kamanyola and Uvira. The evaluation had three objectives: to assess the achievement of expected results and measure project performance indicators, to analyse the sustainability of the initiatives undertaken and to collect lessons learned and good practices for future initiatives targeting cross-border small traders.

The results described in this report reflect the perception of cross border traders on the changes after the implementation of the project in the cross-border areas of Eastern DRC, Burundi and Rwanda, and how these changes contribute to the specific objectives of the programme in East Africa.

Improved environment (policy/regulatory/institutional reforms) for facilitating women's trade in East Africa

The project supported six (6) trade facilitation measures that were taken into account by the authorities. These include the implementation of the **one-stop centre in Uvira** to combat border harassment, a **provincial decree** on the creation, composition and functioning of a framework for consultation and coordination of interventions by partners in small-scale cross-border trade, the **tax measure that reduces the tax rate on food products to 0%** during customs clearance, the implementation of a **five-year provincial strategy** for cross-border trade in South Kivu, the effective implementation of **the law regulating the small scale trade**, and the reintroduction by the Directorate General of Migration of the “Token” (*jeton*) as a travel document when crossing the border. Among the cross border traders surveyed, **60% believe that the authorities and customs officials respect and apply** the laws, norms and regulations governing cross-border trade in their favour, compared to 12 months ago. Regarding the implementation of the laws and regulations, the facilities, provided to improve the inclusion of women in trade, is estimated at 63%. The installation of One Stop Centre at all posts, the respect of the zero rate on certain products and the signature of the provincial decree on the creation, composition and functioning of a framework for consultation and coordination of partners' interventions are slow to be applied.

Increased formalisation and value of goods traded by the targeted women in East Africa

According to the data collected, 57% of the small traders surveyed claim to have perceived an increase in their commercial value, materialised by the increase in capital, investment in other businesses, etc. The project enabled 30 of the 40 beneficiary small traders' associations to access opportunities external to the project such as access to credit (75%), participation in regional or provincial meetings, capacity building sessions organised by other NGOs or government for the benefit of small traders.

For the 40 beneficiary small scale Cross-Border Trade Associations (CBTAs) and their members, the project **increased the number of formal trading** through the associations by 30%, from 52% (baseline study) to 82% (current result). The total number of beneficiaries reached by the project is 21,467, with 15,924 women (74%). This formalisation is accompanied by an increased inclusion of women members of CBTAs who have influence on and are in the decision-making bodies of the associations. Overall, 35% of the surveyed cross border traders feel that they have regular or very regular access to information on new or revised laws and regulations governing cross-border trade, an increase of 17% since the baseline.

Improved prevention of and response to gender-based violence and harassment by targeted women traders in East Africa

The project has contributed to the decrease in cases of gender-based violence observed in CBT. According to the results of the project's final evaluation, **75% of women feel that gender-based violence and physical violence have decreased**. The cases recorded through visits and suggestion boxes by the Resource Centres since their creation show that there has been an **85% reduction in cases**. The project has empowered the cross border traders to use the reporting mechanisms. **78% of the cross border traders surveyed said they knew of a mechanism or focal point** to which/whom they could turn **(+43% since the baseline)**, while **80% said they could confidently report** any form of harassment. The project has enabled the mechanisms to be functional and effective. Indeed, 54% of cross border traders believe that the mechanisms put in place are effective (+44% from baseline). These mechanisms have provided assistance to 47% of complainants (+28% since baseline), either through compensation, police intervention, out-of-court settlement, or psycho-social assistance (through other actors), etc. In 68% of cases, the beneficiaries of the assistance stated that the assistance received was satisfactory for their needs.

Some of the project's actions, such as the resource centres, are considered sustainable because they are built on perennial autonomous structures (associations and platforms of small scale cross border traders), cooperate with state structures, and benefit from self-financing mechanisms. Also, the adoption of certain attitudes (customs conduct, mutual respect between cross border traders and officials) can be sustainable. Finally, the project has strengthened the capacities of the cross border traders in areas that increase the chances of their businesses being profitable and therefore sustainable.

Lessons and good practices identified that could be recommended to others include the approach to identifying beneficiaries (selecting more women, and including categories such as people living with disabilities), initiating outreach activities between cross border traders from different countries to dispel the effects of external factors (such as the Rwanda-DRC conflict) and dialogue between cross border traders and officials to accelerate the adoption of attitudes based on common interests. Finally, the integration of an income-generating activity (such as the tricycles donated to the CBTAs) helps to cover some of the resource centres' operating costs.

The following are recommendations for future action:

To Search:

- Reflect on the post-project monitoring of resource centre initiatives, in order to capture all of their effects, especially for the support provided towards the end of the project.
- Support advocacy initiatives at the national level to impact the institutional level beyond border posts, municipality and province administration.
- Provide institutional support to the resource centres while also involving the structures that support them, such as the foreign trade division, the CBTA platforms, etc.
- Strengthen the follow-up for cases reported to the Resource Centres using the existing referral circuit (legal aid, medical or psychosocial care, police, etc.).

To the donor TMEA:

- Target beneficiaries on both sides of the borders for the countries concerned.

1. Background

The “*Making Trade Work for Women in East Africa*” project, known in Swahili as “*Mupaka Uboresha Maisha*,” was funded directly by TradeMark East Africa (TMEA) with financial support from the Government of Canada. It was implemented for a period of 24 months, from December 2020 to December 2022 and aimed to **improve the social and economic empowerment of women traders in East Africa**.

It was built on the following chain of results/logic:

Impact

Improving the social and economic empowerment of women traders in East Africa.

Outcomes

- Improved environment (policy/regulation/institutional reforms) facilitating women's trade in East Africa;
- Increased formalisation and value of goods traded by targeted women in East Africa;
- Improved prevention of and response to gender-based violence and harassment by targeted women traders in East Africa.

To achieve these results, Search in collaboration with TMEA, targeted small-scale cross-border traders,¹ members of Cross-border Trade Associations and Cooperatives (CBTAs), officials at border posts, and administrative authorities.

Project implementation areas: four targeted border crossings:

- Goma (DRC) and Rubavu District (Rwanda): borders of Petite Barrière and Grande Barrière
- Bukavu (DRC) and Rusizi District (Rwanda): Rusizi I and II borders
- Kamanyola (DRC) and Bugarama (Rwanda): Kamanyola border
- Uvira (DRC) and Gatumba (Burundi): Kavimvira border.

Activities implemented by the project: (i) capacity building sessions for small-scale cross-border traders on various topics (*gender-based violence, rights and duties of small-scale cross-border traders, advocacy*)

¹ According to the Simplified Trade Regime (STR), a small cross-border trader is any natural or legal person or small business engaged in retail trade on a regular basis, recognised as such by the Association of Small Cross-Border Traders - CBTA. And any person transporting goods for the purpose of trading across the border, regardless of where the transaction takes place," adds PFCGL.

techniques, customs regulations, financial education, conflict sensitivity, association management); (ii) Awareness campaigns (production and broadcasting of radio spots and programmes) on CBT related issues and GBV, rights and duties of cross border traders ; (iii) Dialogue activities between cross border traders and border officials, such as meetings to support advocacy activities and Town hall meetings ; (iv) Experience sharing forums and the provincial consultation framework for dialogue between cross-border trade actors; (v) setting up a system for reporting incidents of harassment, gender-based violence, etc.

A baseline study was conducted in March 2021 to gain an understanding of the cross-border trade context, and to inform the performance indicators baseline values. During the closing phase of the project, in December 2022, Search measured the results of these same performance indicators to show the changes that have occurred as a result of the actions taken throughout the implementation of the activities on the ground and to measure their sustainability. The study also collected lessons and good practices related to the implementation of this intervention.

2. Methodology

Objectives and research questions

This final evaluation aims to measure the level of change influenced by the implementation of the project in the cities of Bukavu, Goma, Uvira and Kamanyola. Specifically, it aims to:

Objective 1: Assess the changes that have occurred as a result of the project

- To what extent have the expected changes (e.g. the level of inclusion of women in cross-border trade) been achieved?
- What are the final values of the performance indicators compared to those reported in the baseline assessment?

Objective 2: Analyse the sustainability of the actions carried out within this project

- What is the level of ownership of the project by small-scale cross-border traders and is it likely to continue after the end of implementation?
- To what extent will the project influence the way cross border traders act to improve their socio-economic conditions?

Objective 3: Identify lessons learned (good practices) and recommendations from the implementation of the project

- What are the lessons learned for future projects? What worked well and what didn't?

Geographical areas of the study

This study was conducted in the provinces of South Kivu (City of Bukavu, City of Uvira and the town of Kamanyola), and North Kivu (City of Goma).

Data Collection and Analysis

The study was conducted by Search's Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) team, with the support of local consultants (enumerators and supervisors)

- **Quantitative data:** Survey questionnaire administered to 389 respondents, all cross border traders. Women represented the majority with 317 respondents (81%) while 72 were men (19%)². The

² See Annex 2. Graph number 1).

sample size was defined for each zone according to the total number of members registered in the 40 beneficiary CBTAs. Respondents were from Bukavu (92), Goma (186), Uvira (89) and Kamanyola (22).

- **Qualitative data:** 7 focus group discussions were conducted, involving 16 young women, 8 young men, 16 leaders of CBT associations, and 8 cross border traders living with disabilities. In addition, 19 key informant interviews were conducted, including 5 with the heads of the CBTA platforms, 7 with officials from the services working at the four border posts³, and two project assistants (those who supported the cross border traders in Bukavu, Uvira and Kamanyola).

The data analysis consisted of calculation of basic statistical indicators (percentage, proportion), as well as the content analysis of information from the discussions with various informants and documents related to the project.

Limitations of the methodology

- The inability to make comparisons for indicators whose baseline values had not been established;
- The lack of disaggregation in the data provided by small traders' associations and platforms to deduce the level of inclusion of women in accessing the commercial and financial opportunities offered by these structures.

3. Results

The results of this analysis are grouped by study objectives. The first describes the changes produced by the actions carried out within the framework of the project in relation to the expected results (outcomes and impact) in addition to the estimation of the final values of the project indicators, the second analyses the sustainability and appropriation of the actions and initiatives implemented, and the third identifies the lessons learned (good practices) and recommendations from the implementation of the project.

3.1. Results and proven changes in the project

The results and changes produced by the actions carried out by the project are presented according to three expected objectives (3 outcomes), which contribute to the main result of the project (impact).

3.1.1. Contribution to the expected impact of the project

The project is expected to contribute to the improvement of women's economic and social empowerment in East Africa. Figure 1. shows the perception of the changes observed as a result of the project on the beneficiaries of the activities.

³ Border Hygiene Programme (PNHF), Directorate General of Customs and Excise (DGDA), Office Congolais de Contrôle (OCC), Directorate General of Migration (DGM), Service de Quarantaine animal et végétal (SQAV), Border Police, SQAH, Foreign Trade Division

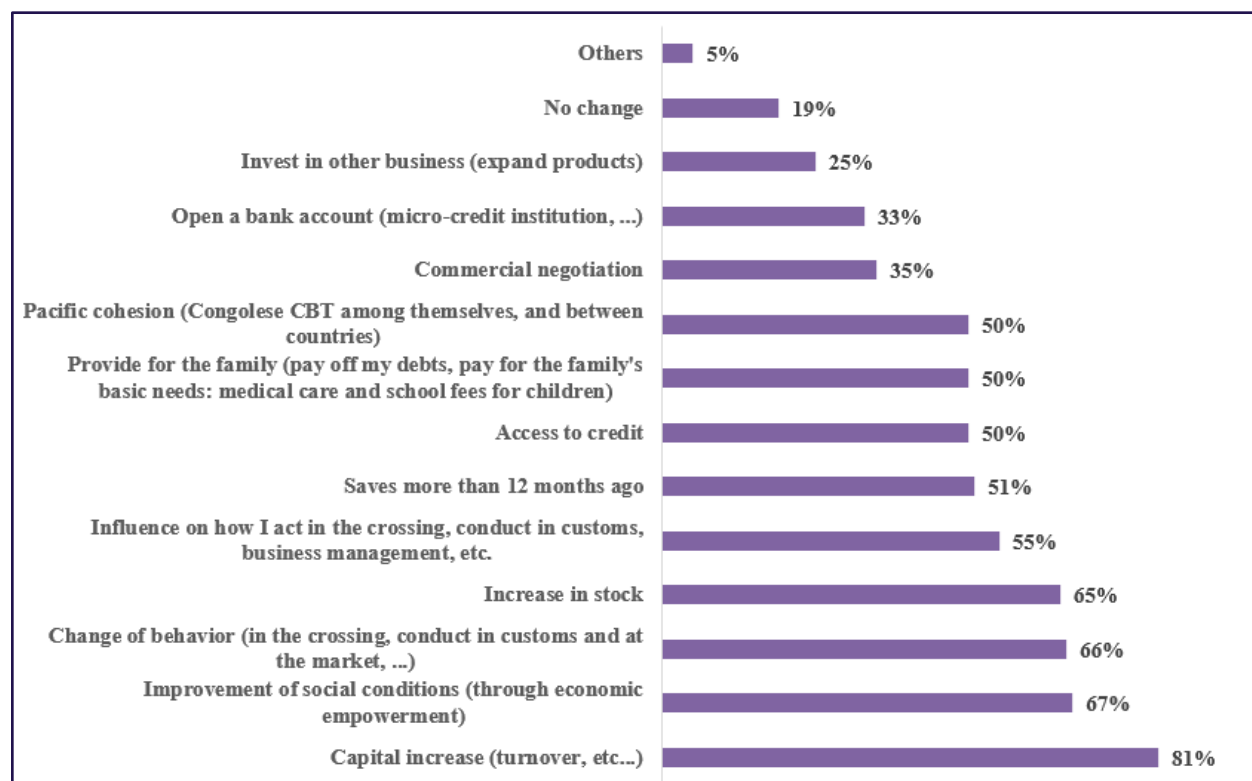


Figure 1: Changes in the social and economic life of small traders influenced by project activities

81% of the small traders targeted by the survey reported an improvement in their social and economic autonomy (capital, behaviour, attitude, business environment, etc).

Taken individually, markers of autonomy include improved social conditions in general (reported by 67%), increased capacity to cover family needs and other social obligations such as repayment of debts (reported by 50%), change in behaviour while crossing (using official routes, order, etc.) and interactions with officials or at markets (reported by 66%). Socially, too, there is a perception of peaceful cohabitation between Congolese traders themselves and between Congolese and those from neighbouring countries (reported by 50%).

At the commercial level, the practice of formal trade is mentioned⁴ (reported by 55%), the increase of stocks of products sold (reported by 65%), the acquisition of a series of attitudes linked to financial education, notably the increase of savings (51%), access to credit (55%), financial inclusion through banking (33%), acquisition of commercial negotiation skills (35%) and finally the expansion of activities by investing in other activities or increasing the range of products sold (25%).

The following sections speak to the six important areas for perceived impact of activities on beneficiaries:

Perceived increase in income

57% of the targeted women traders perceive a significant increase in their income, in all project implementation areas. Thanks to the financial management knowledge acquired, women traders were able

⁴ By being a member of an association/cooperative

to make more informed decisions regarding their finances, which led to better investments in their businesses and increased access to credit from financial institutions and/or savings and credit associations (commonly known in DRC as AVEC⁵). The training enabled some women traders to develop new skills (financial management, commercial negotiation, etc.) and to diversify their commercial activities, thus contributing to an increase in their income and capital.

Increase in knowledge

52% of the people surveyed believe they have sufficient knowledge⁶ to confidently defend their rights in the case of GBV or any other form of harassment. A significant number of women traders have been trained under the project, acquiring essential skills to run their businesses effectively. The trainings covered topics such as association management, financial education, cross border trade regulations and gender based violence.

When faced with problems with customs officials, some respondents among small cross-border traders claim to be able to assert their rights by using their knowledge of trade laws and regulations, explaining the legal steps to be taken. For example, they refer to the use of the simplified trade regime (STR)⁷ when they encounter hassles when crossing or declaring goods. Similarly, they mention the use of the Policy for the Respect of the Dignity of Women Small-scale Cross-border Traders in case of insults or gender-based violence in the markets and at the border.

Change in behaviour and attitude

66% of respondents said they had changed their behaviour and attitude towards customs officials (compliance with formalities, crossing through recognised channels, orderliness, less bickering, less corruption, etc). Membership of associations came out on top, with 82% of respondents (compared to 52% in the baseline study) saying that they had joined the associations of cross-border traders (CBTA) so that they would no longer be vulnerable to the problems of crossing and other forms of violence, as corroborated by this quotation:

“I have been a victim of harassment several times at the border and this has pushed me to do fraud. I used to sell my goods informally just to support my family but since Search came to our place in Kamanyola, I have received several trainings on customs legislation, how to declare my goods without conflict or insulting the agents, today there is even a change in the way I address them, even behave. I am starting to use the formal route to cross; and if there is a cross border trader friend of mine who has a problem, I plead for him.”

(Kamanyola, FG with Women Leaders of CBTA)

Positive impact on the business environment or inter-country trade.

60% of respondents⁸ attest that border officials have complied with policies and regulations compared to 12 months ago. For example, some respondents report an improvement in the collaboration between small traders and customs officials due to the implementation of existing policies. Cases of violence

⁵ AVEC stands for Association villageoise d’Epargne et de crédit- Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA)

⁶ See Annex 2. Graph number 2)

⁷ COMESA initiative to facilitate trade between member countries

⁸ See Annex 2 Graph number 4

observed in small-scale trade have drastically decreased by 85% between 2021 and 2022.

Implementation of recommendations made by small cross-border traders to improve their trading environment and make it easier for them to do business

Implementation of the **one-stop centre** in Uvira and the **groupage system** in Kamanyola and Bukavu countered the hassles observed at customs and reinforced formalisation when crossing. The implementation of the **Prime Minister's instruction to reduce taxes on raw products to zero** (products coming directly from the fields) when declaring or clearing customs was also beneficial. The latter is another measure taken by the authorities that benefits small traders.

Improving access to cross-border infrastructure

54% of the cross border traders surveyed said they felt safe⁹ while using the border infrastructure. The situation has improved significantly for small-scale traders in different regions. In Kamanyola, 91% of the small traders surveyed noted a positive change in the behaviour and attitude of officials towards them. The authorities actively collaborated with traders, engaged in dialogue with them when decisions were made and committed to accompanying them, notably by facilitating their crossing. In Bukavu, 71% of traders have benefited from the implementation of the regulation on the groupage system, which has saved them from various problems they faced before the COVID-19 pandemic, such as jostling, gender-based violence, fraud and corruption. In Uvira, although cases of harassment have become less frequent thanks to the implementation of the one-stop centre, small traders complained about the poor condition and poor access to infrastructure, including paying toilets, water, electricity and chairs. In contrast, in Goma, only 38% of small traders expressed dissatisfaction with the accessibility of customs infrastructure, including male and female toilets.

Overall, small traders acknowledged a positive change in the behaviour of officials, who are more involved in solving their problems. Members of the customs administration in Bukavu, Kamanyola, Uvira and Goma welcome this change as they find that small traders quickly understand the guidance given, which efficiently facilitates their work. These improvements are attributed to small traders' increased knowledge of customs nomenclature and their customs rights and duties, according to officials interviewed in one-on-one interviews. The following quotation illustrates this change in perception:

“Before the various training organised by Search for women cross-border traders, they did not know how to organise themselves to access trade-related services and information. As they felt embarrassed, they were afraid to express themselves or to advocate for their goods. But for the moment, this has changed, because they now know their rights and what the law says about their work (regulations for payment or export of products, etc.), they are no longer shy and can enter our offices to advocate without any problem.”

KII officials

⁹ See Annex 2 Graph number 3

3.1.2 Contribution to specific objectives (outcome)

3.1.2.1. Improving the environment (policy/regulation/institutional reforms) facilitating women's participation in trade in East Africa

In order to improve the working conditions of cross border traders, reforms have been supported and their application in the decision-making process assessed as shown in the following table:

Table 1. Informants' perception of the project's achievements (cross border traders /officials)

Number of existing laws, policies, standards and regulations facilitating women traders supported for implementation	6
Estimated % of existing laws/regulations in favour of cross border traders are enforced	63%
% of cross border traders who think that laws/regulations are correctly applied in the decision-making process by officials	60%
% of cross border traders who think that information on laws/regulations is available to cross border traders	35%

The project contributed to improving the business environment for small traders by supporting 6 initiatives governing CBT and facilitating small traders in inter-country trade. These are:

- Assessing the five-year action plan of 2017-2021 with different stakeholders in cross-border trade, and putting in place another provincial action plan for the promotion and facilitation of small-scale cross-border trade in South Kivu 2022-2026.
- Elaboration of a provincial decree related to the organisation, structure and attribution of a provincial framework for stakeholders involved in cross border trade facilitation. The decree was elaborated during the provincial consultation framework organised by Search for Common Ground in collaboration with the Provincial Division of Foreign Trade and the Bukavu City Council.
- Thanks to the advocacy sessions conducted by the project, the implementation of the one-stop-Centre was introduced in Uvira to reduce cases of harassment and fight against customs smuggling.
- The project has influenced the effective implementation of the law regulating small-scale trade, which allows cross border traders to source and ship products to their country of residence for retail sale.
- Thanks to the project's advocacy work, **the Prime Minister published an official communique to extend the suspension of the collection of tax on products of primary need.** The project raised awareness among officials and cross border traders on **compliance with the STR (Simplified Commercial Regime) Order for the respect of zero rates for the taxation of raw food products.** It has influenced stakeholders (officials, authorities, cross border traders, and NGOs) to review the list of exempted products described in this nomenclature (from 227 to 106 products that can benefit from a zero rate of tax).
- As a result of many complaints from small scale cross border traders over the high cost of travel documents (CEPGL and Laisser-passer documents), the General Directorate of Migration reintroduced the use of the "Jeton" travel document to facilitate border crossing. However, the Rwandan Directorate of Migration had not yet adhered to it by the reporting period.

There are other regulations and policies that are currently respected and implemented after the project intervention. Among others, this is the case for the **check-place or search for women different from men, separate male-female toilets at the border (but not observed in Goma and remains a problem for cross border traders)**.

According to border officials and managers of small cross-border traders' platforms, the level of implementation of the various policies is not yet effective, at an **average of 63%**, due for example, that there are varying applications of the 0% tax rate at different borders, the one-stop centre have not yet been established on other border posts other than Uvira, and the multi stakeholder framework is not yet established.

However, **60% of cross border traders believe that local authorities and officials are complying with laws, standards and regulations** governing cross-border trade in the implementation areas compared to 12 months ago. This percentage combines those who think that laws/standards are fully complied with plus those who think they are moderately complied with. According to the qualitative data, this is observed through the active collaboration between cross border traders and border officials. There is the involvement and support of officials in resolving complaints from cross border traders, in the case of harassment by other services, in accessing information on customs regulations, respect for women's dignity compared to the last 12 months (*women cross border traders observe a decrease in insults, forceful pushing and shoving when declaring or crossing, a decrease in cases of violence and harassment against women, etc.*). Cross border traders acknowledge that despite the non-implementation of STR, they are no longer mistreated or neglected as they were before or during the COVID-19 period. There is increasing cooperation and communication between cross border traders and border officials.

As for access to laws/regulations, **35% of the cross border traders surveyed feel that they have regular or very regular access to information**¹⁰ on new or revised laws and regulations governing small-scale cross-border trade. If we try to compare this with the results of the baseline study, where only 18% of respondents said this, an increase of 17% is evident. The level of accessibility by zone remains low, except in the Uvira zone where more than the average 55% of cross border traders reported having regular or very regular access to trade information.

The majority of cross border traders access the information through their associations (46%), others use their platforms of associations of small cross-border traders (29%) and the border police (22%). Only 13% of respondents access it through the Resource centres set up by the project, while others access it through the organisations that accompany them.

3.1.2.2. Increased formalisation and value of goods traded by targeted women in East Africa.

Formalisation for a small-scale cross-border trader comes down to the compliance with migratory and trade policies allowing them to engage in cross border trade. This is the case with the keeping of migration documents (such as the CEPGL, the passport, the laissez passer), compliance with the laws governing the crossing, compliance with customs regulations, and membership of an association affiliated to a platform of small scale cross-border trade associations. This step is crucial, as this account corroborates:

¹⁰ See Annex 2 Graph number 5)

“We find this organisation of the women with the groupage system a good initiative because it saves us from untimely altercations with them at the border. It is really something very positive, because it allows the women to cross quietly without accusing us of harassment and even on our side, decreases the queuing time and allows us to process their files quickly: this was observed from the beginning of this project, Mupaka Uboresha Maisha.” **Officials, KII**

Women's participation in formal trade and access to opportunities

Table 2. Reporting their involvement in trade according to surveyed cross border traders

% of surveyed cross border traders involved in formal trade through associations or cooperatives	82%
% of women participating in formal trade	81%
% of cross border traders who think that women affiliated to the Associations have more advantages over non-members	90%
% of small traders who feel that the opportunities available are accessible	61%
% of women benefiting from opportunities in trade	71%
% of small traders who received funding for their small business	75%

82% of the respondents trade through associations or cooperatives, and among women specifically, this percentage is 81%. Women represent the majority in the CBT sector, according to the heads of the platforms of small scale Cross-Border Trade Associations. They represent 80% of the members of the associations and cooperatives registered with the various small Cross-Border Trade Associations of (CBTA). If we compare with the results of the baseline study, there is a total increase of 32%¹¹ in the membership of cross border traders in the associations¹² of which 40% are new female members and 7% male members. Women also occupy decision-making positions, with 71% of the 118 existing CBTA being led by women. Small traders who think that women members of associations have more advantages than non-members (90% of total respondents), as NGOs that support cross border traders prefer working with associations, especially those with women members. Also, women leaders of CBTA are better positioned to access potential opportunities.

The most cited advantages of belonging to the CBTA are access to goods thanks to the groupage system and to other various opportunities (commercial, financing, benefiting from various training, creating relationships, resolving conflicts, access to credit by organising themselves into a Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA), mutual support in case of need, support from the platform or the CBTA or from a member. It should be noted, however, that the response to COVID-19, which had encouraged cross border

¹¹ 15001 CBTA members registered in the final evaluation compared to 11383 CBTA members registered in the baseline study

¹² According to the report of the associations affiliated to the platforms, the average participation rate of women small-scale cross-border traders is 74%. But if we try to analyse specifically by association, women's participation varies according to the common commodities sold (*out of 100 cross border traders affiliated to an CBTA, there are 75 to 80 affiliated FCBTAs*).

traders to join Associations to make the groupage system orders effective, also contributed to the increase in CBTA membership.

Non-members of the associations (18%) have different reasons for not adhering to Associations. Some think that it is because they do not sell the same products (17%) as members of Associations, others say that they have a small capital compared to other members (17%), there are those who miss the opportunity to access it (17%), others accuse the poor management and lack of transparency in the management of the associations (*embezzlement of funds, discrimination of members, internal conflicts, repeated disputes, etc.*). There are also membership and subscription fees that discourage some cross border traders from joining, as cited by one head of a traders platform.

As for access to opportunities offered by the CBTAs, **61% of small-scale traders report that existing opportunities within the CBTAs or platforms** are either moderately or very accessible to them, whereas only 24% in the baseline study considered them accessible. However, almost half of the respondents in Bukavu stated that they do not have access to existing opportunities (41%). Small-scale traders find that these opportunities are fair and accessible to all without discrimination based on gender or physical appearance. However, opportunities related to finance are less accessible and less equitable within large institutions such as banks and some microfinance institutions (either because they are limited by their capital or because they are not the clients). The level of accessibility to finance still needs to be strengthened at the level of microfinance institutions for a wide opening of financial opportunities.

Access to finance for cross border traders is relatively good. Around 75% of the cross border traders report having received funding (or more) for their business from their associations or family, compared to the baseline study where it was still at 44%, this is an increase of 31%. Note that 81% of women reported receiving funding compared to 19% of men. Women have better access to funding opportunities than men.

According to the qualitative data from the interviews, some associations members of the platforms and beneficiaries of the project had access to various financial, material or training opportunities in 2022. This is the case for 40 associations out of 118 CBTAs affiliated to the five P-CBTAs (i.e. 34% of the total CBTAs) which were supported by the project through the various training sessions on different themes related to small-scale trade, support in equipment (distribution of tricycles to beneficiary CBTAs as a means of transport) which generate income and from which the cross border traders benefit through the revolving credits within their respective Associations.

In addition to this, the Associations capitalise on the different opportunities existing in the associations to promote women. This allows them to take part in decision-making initiatives organised at city and provincial level (sessions bringing together authorities, officials and small cross-border traders), even at the regional level.

Increased value of goods traded by small traders and improved collaboration between small traders across borders

Table 3. Perception of capital increase in surveyed cross border traders

% capital increase and stock of women small traders					
	Tripling	Double	Slightly	No increase	Don't know
	12%	15%	30%	20%	23%

The project contributed to increasing the commercial value of the women small traders targeted by the project. According to quantitative data on the change observed in trade since the project intervention, on average, **57% of the cross border traders surveyed perceive that they have increased their trade value** across the project implementation areas, compared to the 15% expected by the project. This is due to a number of changes, such as the perceived increase in capital and stock, which was slight for some cross border traders (30%), double (15%) and triple for others (12%). Other small traders who strengthen their businesses by investing in other businesses. Some stories have illustrated the business ventures of women traders:

“I only had \$400 before I attended Search activities. But since then I have put in place the financial plan to track my daily expenses and income, today I have \$500.”

Cross border trader, Goma

3.1.2.3. Improved prevention and response to gender based violence and harassment by targeted women in East Africa

The exercise of trade, in the cross-border context, is fraught with risks involving harassment, different forms of violence (physical, verbal, etc.) as in this example:

“One day a drunken policeman touched me on the buttocks, and afterwards I went to their line commander to denounce this act. Later, he called the policeman to order and he was punished. I felt relieved.”

Anonymous, Goma

The following table summarises the outcome indicators on prevention and response to violence:

Table 4. Surveyed cross border traders' perception of GBV

% of small-scale traders surveyed report having received awareness on the use of early warning committees (EWC)/resource centres and on GBV	61%
% of women cross border traders who feel they can report GBV with confidence	80%
% reduction in GBV cases reported to resource centres	85%

% of cross border traders surveyed who report having heard of a resource centre or suggestion box	78%
% of cross border traders surveyed reporting having ever used the resource centre or suggestion box to report women's rights violations or CBT issues	51%
% of cross border traders who think that the resource centre and suggestion box are effective in preventing or reporting violations of women's rights	54%
% of surveyed cross border traders who report having received assistance or reparation when they were victims of GBV, rights abuse, harassment, conflict and others	47%
% of cross border traders satisfied with the assistance they received when using the resource centres	68%

According to the quantitative data, **61% of the cross border traders surveyed declared that they had received some form of awareness** on how to report cases of GBV or human rights violations or any other problem they may encounter in their business environment. Indeed, **80% of the women surveyed believe that they can confidently report any form of violence, aggression, abuse, or harassment.** According to them, this is because they now know their rights and no one can play games with them with impunity, because if this is the case, they already know where to go to report. According to the participants in the focus groups, **perpetrators of GBV observed in cross-border trade** are often the military (at the markets or in the informal borders entry points), customs officials, border police officers, ANR agents and small cross-border traders themselves. Capacity building sessions on gender-based violence in the conflict management helped small traders to build trust between themselves and border officials, and thus to collaborate together in the prevention.

The analysis of the complaints register kept by the resource centres in the four implementation zones shows **an 85% reduction in the number of cases related to GBV and harassment** since the implementation of the program. Out of 1004 complaints collected by the resource centres through visits and suggestion boxes, there were only 22 cases of violence (15 physical violence and 7 harassment), which represent 2% of the total number of cases recorded. However, the number of harassment cases remains high (6/10 cases recorded quarterly in Goma, Bukavu, Uvira and Kamanyola). This is corroborated by the survey data, for which violence **has decreased according to the opinion of 75% of the women** interviewed.

According to the survey, **51% of cross border traders have already used one of the existing structures to report cases of GBV or** human rights violations or other complaints encountered by cross border traders in cross-border trade, and **78%** have heard of the Resource Centres and suggestion boxes.

Qualitative data from all zones (Focus Groups and Key Informants Interviews) show that there are women who resist reporting for fear of repression by the border officials or for fear of not getting satisfactory responses. Others say it is because they do not have time to go to the resource centres or use another reporting channel, and others say they have not yet taken the opportunity to report despite being able to do

so, and a small proportion say they do not know where to go to report.¹³ This prevention system still needs to be strengthened, although there is a significant reduction in reported cases.

Most of the cases reported by small traders are related to overcharging and harassment, followed by cases of harassment that are observed through the payment of illegal taxes, and payment to the various agents working at the border without giving a receipt as a proof of payment. These cases of harassment are observed in all the implementation zones, although in Kamanyola, the frequency is greater than in any other zone, followed by Uvira. In Goma, cases of theft and loss of goods in the groupage system, conflicts between small traders are reported.

Performance of the reporting mechanisms initiated by the project

Around 54% of cross border traders find the activities or initiatives of the Resource Centres effective (moderately and very effective). This is evidenced by the commitment of small-scale cross-border traders in collecting, processing and responding to complaints. According to the women cross border traders who spoke about this in the focus groups, there have been changes resulting from the establishment of the Resource Centres which advocate for their cause, their recommendations are taken into consideration and they believe that this structure contributes to reducing cases of violations of women's rights at border and market level. Stories like this one corroborate the involvement of the resource centres in solving the problems of cross border traders.

“The members of the Resource Centre intervene in the complaints that concern us, and look for solutions to remedy them. For example, before we were mistreated and not respected by the authorities and officials simply because we are small traders. But now, even the authorities have changed, they don't treat us badly like they used to; on the contrary, they accompany us in case of problems until a solution or a compromise is found”. **Testimony of CBT women, Goma**

For those who were able to use the Resource Centres, 47% of the cross border traders surveyed said they had received some kind of assistance or redress following the complaint. Most of the assistance received by small traders was the intervention of the police, reported by almost half of the small traders surveyed (47%). This assistance is most often observed in the case of human rights violations, fights, theft, etc. It is followed by compensation from the perpetrator of the incident (more reported in Uvira, 64%) if the incident led to the loss of cross border traders' goods. In addition, those who reported receiving assistance from NGOs (half of the cross border traders surveyed in Kamanyola said this, i.e., 50%) and assistance from psychosocial services (more than half of the cross border traders surveyed in Uvira said this) in cases of GBV, rape or other traumatic events.

In addition to referrals, other cases such as conflicts between cross border traders and loss of goods are settled out of court under mediation by the Resource Centres. According to the small traders in the focus groups held in Bukavu, Goma and Uvira, this way of using the Resource Centres to resolve the problems of small traders has considerably reduced the number of cases to the courts and physical violence.

¹³ The four resource centres have recorded a total of 493 complaints from 1170 visits (823 women and 347 men) since their establishment, and 69% of these complaints have been resolved (338 out of 493 complaints received).

In terms of satisfaction, 68% of cross border traders stated that they were satisfied (excellent, good and average) with the assistance or response received from the reporting structures used, including the Resource Centre, PCBTA, Border Services Officers, etc. During the focus groups, small-scale cross-border traders stated that the initiatives of the Resource Centres are very relevant to them, as they meet their expectations (facilitation in accessing information governing cross-border trade, opportunities, access to existing infrastructure in the trading environment, etc.), and help them solve their problems (*in case of conflicts between the Congolese and Rwandan cross border traders, in case of loss of goods, physical violence, etc.*) This motivates them more to use these reporting mechanisms.

3.1.3 Project Indicators

The following table summarises the different expected and achieved results during the implementation of the project.

Table 5: Progress against indicators for the initial and final phases of the project

Impact: Improved economic empowerment of women traders in East Africa
<p>Ind. % increase in commercial income of targeted women traders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: NA Target Endline: 57%. • Comments: This is an estimated contribution, no set target
<p>Ind. % of targeted women traders report an improvement in their social and economic autonomy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: N/A Target: N/A Endline: 81%. • Comments: 81% of respondents reported an improvement in their capital, and observed positive changes in their social, environmental and business life. No target set.
Intermediate Results
Specific Objective 1: 1100 Improved environment (policy/regulatory/institutional reforms) facilitating women's participation in trade in East Africa.
<p>Ind. 1100a. Number of new or revised policies, laws, regulations and standards that support women in trade in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: N/A Target: 4 Endline: 6 • Comments: Target achieved. The project supported the establishment of the Provincial Action Plan (PAP) for the promotion and facilitation of small-scale cross-border trade - Provincial decree establishing, and guiding the composition and functioning of a framework for consultation and coordination of partners' interventions in the small-scale cross-border trade sector, - Implementation of the one-stop shop for small-scale traders in Uvira, and application of the STR mechanisms, application of the ordinance regulating small-scale trade, advocacy for the reintroduction of "tokens".
<p>Ind. 1100b. Level of implementation of policies/laws/regulations that facilitate women's work in trade.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: N/A Target: N/A Endline: 63 • Comments: <i>No target value, partially achieved.</i> Although there are laws that facilitate and protect women in trade that are respected such as the one-stop shop in Uvira to fight against harassment, there are some norms that are not respected, such as the respect of the zero rate, and the decree establishing the coordination framework that is not yet in force
<p>Ind. 1100c (Search) Increase in % of cross border traders who think that state officials respect DRC laws and regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 15% Target: 45% Endline: 60%.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments: <i>Target value exceeded by 15% achieved.</i> 60% cross border traders believe that local authorities and officials respect laws, standards and regulations governing cross-border trade compared to 12 months ago, through positive changes in their behaviour and attitude towards them.
<p>Outcome: 1110 Capacity of women traders' associations/platforms in advocacy, representation and influence, and business support in East Africa strengthened.</p>
<p>Ind. 1110a. Number of new recommendations/proposals submitted by women traders' associations that are adopted/implemented by policy makers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: N/A Target: N/A Endline: 588 • Comments: 588 in total, of which 584 (resource centre) and 4 through support to advocacy activities with CBTAs. 584 of the 1004 complaints registered by the four resource centres were taken into account and solutions found (58%). Apart from that, out of 10 advocacy notes elaborated with CBTA representatives, only 4 have found solutions (36%)
<p>Result: 1120 Gender-sensitive trade reform (policies, institutions, administration, regulation) in place.</p>
<p>Ind. 1120a. Number of gender-sensitive reforms implemented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 0 Target: 2 Endline: 0 • Comments: No gender-sensitive reforms have been implemented or developed
<p>Specific Objective 2: 1200 Increased formalisation and value of goods traded by targeted women in East Africa.</p>
<p>Ind 1200b. Increase in value of trade by targeted women traders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: N/A Target: 15% Endline: 57 • Comments: Target surpassed by 42% in the rate of increase in the value of the business by the female cross border traders surveyed (capital increase, social change, investment in other businesses, etc.)
<p>Ind. 1200a. Number of companies and traders linked to new markets and business opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 0 Target: 20000 Endline: 15001 • Comments: Difference of -4999 cross border traders. 15001 cross border traders (12071 women and 2930 men)¹⁴ members of 40 CBTAs beneficiaries¹⁵ of the project. 30 out of 40 CBTAs benefited from other external opportunities (access to credit, participation in regional or provincial meetings, capacity building sessions organised by other parties, NGO or government for the benefit of small traders, etc.)
<p>Ind. 1200c. Number of women traders supported in their transition/participation in formal trade through membership of an association or cooperative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 0 Target: 20000 Endline: 15,924 • Comments: 15924 women traders reached out of 20,000 expected, a gap of -4076. Out of 21,467¹⁶ small cross-border traders supported during the implementation of the project, 15,924 women small traders supported (74% of total beneficiaries) and 5,749 men small traders (26% of total beneficiaries)
<p>Ind. 1200d (SEARCH) Increase in % of respondents who report having regular or very regular access to up-to-date information on laws, regulations and standards governing small-scale cross-border trade</p>

¹⁴ List of CBTA members benefiting from the project (2022).

¹⁵ Opportunities such as access to credit from other organisations involved in cross-border trade, taking part in different provincial, national or regional spaces organised for the benefit of small traders or in the framework of improving trade between countries, etc).

¹⁶ A total of 21,722 people out of 20,000 planned by the project (109%) were reached by the actions carried out during the implementation of the project activities, including 21,467 small traders (99%) and 255 local officials/authorities (1%).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 18% Target: 60% Endline: 35 % • Comments: Target not met (-25% gap), but there has been a 17% increase from the baseline study results. Although progress has been made, there is still a need for access to information. Overall, 35% of the cross border traders surveyed feel that they have regular or very regular access to information on new or revised laws and regulations governing small-scale cross-border trade (Uvira 55%, Kamanyola 36%, Goma 26%, and Bukavu 31%)
<p>Outcome: 1210 Improved capacity of women's cooperatives/associations/platforms to facilitate their members' trade (through services such as business development, price negotiation, market linkages) in East Africa.</p>
<p>Ind. 1210a. Number of women trading through cooperatives/trade associations supported.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 0 Target: N/A Endline: 12071 • Comments: Out of 15,001 cross border traders affiliated to the CBTAs, there are 12071 female cross border traders affiliated to the CBTAs (80%) with an increase in membership of 33% since the beginning of 2022.
<p>Ind. 1210b (SEARCH) % increase in number of cross border traders affiliated to CBTAs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 0 Target: N/A Endline: 42% • Comments: 42% increase in CBT membership in CBTAs in the year 2022 compared to the start of the project
<p>Ind. 1210c. (SEARCH) % of CBTA-affiliated cross border traders who were able to access funding through their cooperative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 0 Target: N/A Endline: 75 • Comments: 75% (i.e. 291 out of 389 cross border traders surveyed)
<p>Outcome: 1220 Increased knowledge and understanding of EAC business requirements by targeted women traders.</p>
<p>Ind.1220a. of targeted women traders reporting improved knowledge of EAC business requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: N/A Target: 70% Endline: 85% • Comments: Target surpassed
<p>Outcome: 1230 Improved access to market and trade information for women traders in the EAC.</p>
<p>Ind. 1230a. Number of women with access to information through a) resource centres, b) digital platform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: N/A Target: 1000 Endline: 823 • Comments: 82% of target achieved. 823 women registered at the resource centre out of 1170, i.e. 70%.
<p>Specific Objective 3: 1300 Improved prevention of and response to gender-based violence and harassment by targeted women traders in East Africa.</p>
<p>Ind.1300a. Reduction in the number of cases of violence and harassment reported to border authorities and traders' associations by targeted women traders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: N/A Target: 51% Endline: 85 • Comments: Out of 1004 cases reported to the resource centre, 22 cases of physical violence were reported (2%), but cases of harassment and conflict are increasing, accounting for 60% of cases reported each quarter (6/10 cases)
<p>Ind. 1300b. Percentage of female traders surveyed who say they can confidently report any form of violence or harassment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: N/A Target: 80% Endline: 80%

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments: Some awareness-raising tools produced and distributed to cross border traders and officials on the Compendium of rights and duties of small-scale cross-border traders vis-à-vis border services, brochures on gender-based violence (Swahili and French)
<p>Ind.1300c. (Search) Increase in the % of cross border traders who know of a protection platform or focal point they can turn to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 35% Target: 70% Endline: 78 • Comments: Target surpassed
<p>Ind. 1300d (Search) Increase in % of cross border traders who think these platforms are effective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 10% Target: 70% Endline: 54 • Comments: Target not met, but compared to baseline results there has been a 44% increase
<p>1300e. (Search) Increase in % of cross border traders using protection services and receiving assistance or repair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 19% Target: 70% Endline: 47 • Comments: Target not surpassed, but this increase is 28% higher than in the baseline study. 51% of the cross border traders surveyed said they used the Resource Centre and the suggestion box to report GBV and other problems. 47% said they received social assistance and 68% of them appreciated the assistance and found it satisfactory.
<p>Result: 1310 Increased awareness of rights and obligations, violence against women by border officials, traders and other stakeholders in East Africa.</p>
<p>1310a. of female traders and officials surveyed who report being aware of women's rights and violence against women issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: N/A Target: 80% Endline: 61% • Comments: The target was not reached at 100%. Only 61% of the cross border traders surveyed and 100% of the officials interviewed stated that they had been made aware of GBV and the rights and duties of cross border traders, STR
<p>Outcome: 1320 Increased security for women traders through more gender-sensitive border infrastructure.</p>
<p>1320a. Percentage of women traders surveyed who report feeling safe and comfortable using border infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: N/A Target: N/A Endline: 48% and 54% for all cross border traders • Comments: Out of 389 total cross border traders surveyed, just 211 cross border traders said they felt comfortable using the border infrastructure, i.e. 54%, but 166 out of 317 women cross border traders surveyed (i.e. 52%) said they felt uncomfortable. (Uvira 63%, Kamanyola 91%, Goma 38%, and Bukavu 71%).
<p>Output</p>
<p>Output 1111: Technical support to women's business associations on sustainability, dialogue and advocacy (NEW). Number of CBTA women supported in advocacy activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 0 Target: 1000 Endline: 1168 • Comments: Target exceeded. 1168 cross border traders supported in advocacy activities (816 women and 352 men)
<p>1111b. Number of project staff in place to support the women's association</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: 0 Target: 5 Endline: 5 • Comments: 100% of target achieved
<p>Number of capacity building plans for associations/cooperatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • baseline: 0 Target: 0 Endline: 0 • Comments: No capacity building plan for associations is in place but the team has trained small traders based on their recommendations, such as training on association management, conflict sensitivity and financial management.
<p>Output 1112: Women traders are represented in trade facilitation platforms, including Joint Border Management Committees.</p>

<p>Number of women represented in decision making (i) at borders - JBC (Joint Border Committee) (ii) at national level - NMC (National Monitoring Committee) / regional platforms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baseline: 0 Target: N/A Endline: 15 ● Comments: 15 dynamic small-scale cross-border traders and presidents of the project's beneficiary CBTA's participate in the various national meetings of the trade facilitation committee organised at provincial and border level (7 in Bukavu, 2 in Kamanyola, 3 in Uvira and 3 in Goma)
<p>1121 Production of evidence (thematic analytical studies/data/reports) on women and trade to inform policy, programming and dialogue on women and trade issues</p>
<p>1121a. Number of pieces of evidence generated, including reports, policy positions or documentaries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baseline: 0 Target: 2 Endline: 2 ● Comments: 1 Baseline study and 1 final project study
<p>1122 representatives of women's platforms/associations trained in evidence-based advocacy and effective dialogue</p>
<p>1122a. Number of women representatives of associations trained, broken down by association</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baseline: 0 Target: 400 Endline: 314 ● Comments: 314 CBTA representatives trained, of which 191 were women (61%) and 154 men (49%)
<p>Output 1123 Implementation of advocacy campaigns on women's issues in trade</p>
<p>1123a. Number of lobbying and dialogue meetings held between public agencies/authorities and traders' representatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baseline: 0 Target: 4 Endline: 11 ● Comments: Target exceeded. 11 Public dialogue meetings between cross border traders (1106 of which 297 men and 809 women) and officials (61 of which 48 men and 13 women)
<p>1123b. Number of participants in lobbying and dialogue meetings organised between public agencies/authorities and traders' representatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baseline: 0 Target: 1500 Endline: 1167 ● Comments: Not 100% of target achieved. 1167 Participants of which 822 women (70%) and 345 (30%)
<p>1123c (SEARCH) Number of women participating in organised trader exchanges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baseline: 0 Target: 300 Endline: 168 ● Comments. Target not 100% achieved as exchange of experience activities were suspended during implementation to focus on capacity building activities. Out of 233 cross border traders in total, 168 female cross border traders took part (72%) and 65 male cross border traders (28%)
<p>Output 1210: Cooperatives established as market access platforms for women traders in East Africa and capacity building plans developed</p>
<p>1211a. Number of new cooperatives established and capacity building plans in place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baseline: 0 Target: 40 Endline: 40 ● Comments: 100% of target achieved
<p>Output 1212 Cooperative representatives trained in business management, governance, negotiations, quality and standards.</p>
<p>1212a. Number of trained cooperative representatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baseline: 0 Target: 3000 Endline: 5201 ● Comments: Target exceeded (173%). 5201 representatives (4236 Women cross border traders, i.e. 81% and 965 Men cross border traders, i.e. 19%) of 40 Associations trained on customs regulations, financial management and association management
<p>1213 (Search) Social cohesion among traders is strengthened</p>

<p>1213a. (Search)% of traders who confirm that social cohesion is strengthened among cross-border traders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baseline: 0 Target: N/A Endline: 63 ● Comments: N/A
<p>1213b (New) Number of traders who participated in matching activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baseline: 0 Target: 600 Endline: 308 ● Comments: Target not 100% achieved. Reconciliation activities were suspended during implementation (not carried out in Goma and Kamanyola due to a change in implementation approach. 308 traders (238 women cross border traders, or 77%, and 70 male cross border traders, or 23%) took part in the reconciliation activities that took place in Bukavu and Uvira
<p>Produced 1221 women traders trained/sensitised on EAC business requirements and violence and rights issues.</p>
<p>Number of traders who receive information, education and communication (IEC) materials on trade procedures, regulations and rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baseline: 0 Target: 1500 Endline: 0 ● Comments: Target not achieved, the implementation team did not take into account the EAC requirements, but on the other hand it sensitised and trained 2811 small cross-border traders on COMESA STR, on customs procedures (declaration of goods, crossing and conduct in customs), informed on their rights and duties as well
<p>Number of business documents simplified and translated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● baseline: 0 Target: 2 Endline: 1 ● Comments: Summary of rights and duties produced in Swahili and French¹⁷
<p>Output 1222 Women traders are trained/aware of EAC business requirements and issues of violence and rights.</p>
<p>1221a. Number of women traders sensitised to CAE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baseline: 0 Target: 1500 Endline: 0 ● Comments: Not achieved
<p>Output 1231 Resource and information centres for women traders in place at some borders</p>
<p>1231a. Number of resource centres established and operational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baseline: 0 Target: 4 Endline: 4 ● Comments: 100% of target achieved. 4 resource centres set up, including 1 per zone with 10 members representing 10 CBTAs benefiting from the project, supported with materials and computer equipment, assisted in referring cases to decision-makers
<p>1231b. Number of visitors to the resource centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● baseline: 0 Target: N/A Endline: 1170 ● Comments: 1170 visitors (823 women and 347 men) registered at the 4 resource centres (Kamanyola: 459, Goma: 297, Bukavu: 284 and Uvira: 130)
<p>Output 1311 Mechanisms in place to report and resolve cases of GBV and harassment.</p>

¹⁷ The implementation team drew on the rights and duties produced by PFCG and had produced a more simplified document.

1311a. # Mechanisms in place to report and resolve GBV and harassment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● baseline: 0 Target: 4 Endline: 4 ● Comments: 4 resource centres, 1 per zone, and 8 suggestion boxes installed in the 4 zones, 2 per zone (at markets and border posts)
of the women traders surveyed who report a reduction in cases of GBV on the borders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baseline: 0 Target: 50% Endline: 75 ● Comments: Target exceeded by 25%
1311b (SEARCH) Number of officials trained in GBV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● baseline: 0 Target: 80 Endline: 78 ● Comments: 98% of the target was reached. 78 officials trained on GBV and the rights and duties of cross border traders (1 session per zone)
1311c (SEARCH) Number of women who have been sensitised
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● baseline: 0 Target: 10000 Endline: 7529 ● Comments: Target not reached Only 7,529 women (68%) were sensitised among the 11,124 cross border traders sensitised on GBV and the reporting mechanism

3.2. Analysis of the sustainability of the actions carried out by this project

To ensure the sustainability of the actions, the project integrated the interventions into autonomous and sustainable structures, especially the associations and platforms of the CBTAs, which allowed the ownership of the project initiatives by the target beneficiaries. It also connected them and strengthened their collaboration with government structures/institutions such as the complaints management mechanism (MGP) of the municipality and the border authorities, and proceeded with capacity building for the acquisition and adoption of new attitudes (customs conduct, formalisation, etc.) and finally targeted support to make the commercial activities of cross border traders economically viable.

- Continuity of the resource centres through their **integration as a regular activity of the CBTAs and CBTA platforms**. Their functioning is guaranteed through the voluntary work of the committees, the sharing of resources (furniture and office space), and the transfer of funds from CBTA/platforms membership fees and tricycle revenues (8-10% of revenues) to the centres
- Replication of project activities in CBTA initiatives. The **usual activities of the associations, such as the Solidarity initiatives (Salongo), are capitalised on to replicate** the project's activities, such as raising awareness on the use of the resource centre and suggestion box as means of reporting. They enable the training sessions (Goma and Kamanyola) to be passed on to other members who have not had the opportunity to take part in certain training sessions.
- Collaboration and relationship with government structures: For the sustainability of the complaints processing circuit and advocacy activities, the resource centre **works jointly with the CBTA platforms and the existing complaints management mechanism at the Municipality**, known as the 'MGP', which supports them in the management, collection and processing of complaints. The success of the actions carried out by the resource centres is guaranteed by the collaboration and involvement of officials from the border posts (Bukavu, Goma, Kamanyola and Uvira) including the DGM, DGDA, OCC, etc.
- The **viability/profitability of the cross border traders' commercial activities**: the increase in the knowledge of small traders on financial education, customs regulations, as well as the financial support given to the project's beneficiary associations, have contributed to increasing the commercial value of the small traders targeted by the project. Some cross border traders have seen their capital and stock increase slightly, double or triple, making their business viable and sustainable.

- New attitudes and behaviours adopted: awareness raising messages and capacity building have **led to the adoption and maintenance of trade friendly attitudes at the level of cross border traders and officials** such as formalisation, customs conduct by cross border traders, and listening and respect for cross border traders by officials. As long as both parties benefit, these attitudes are likely to be sustainable.

3.3 Identification of lessons learned on project implementation

3.3.1. Best practices from the project

- The resource centres are a good approach to handling complaints and preventing cases of GBV, harassment, etc. The risk of their activities becoming detached from those of the CBTAs/PCBTAs and becoming parallel and rival structures was mitigated by the fact that they depend on the CBTAs/PCBTAs for the transfer of revenues from tricycle activities.
- The experience-sharing activities strengthened social cohesion between Congolese and cross border traders from other countries and helped to mitigate the effects of conflicts between small scale cross border traders from the different countries.
- The approach that aims to train (on GBV, financial education, customs legislation, etc.) more women small traders (80%) is to be capitalised on in the context where they form the majority of cross border traders .
- Organise activities that strengthen the dialogue between cross border traders and officials on the difficulties encountered (*experiences sharing meetings, Town Hall forum, advocacy meetings, solidarity activities, etc.*) with the use of the common ground approach, which has had a positive impact on the way small traders and officials act (cooperative attitudes) for the benefit of trade.
- The intentionally inclusive selection of participants by including youth, adults, persons living with disabilities, etc. allows for coverage of beneficiaries that are ignored by other projects.
- Supporting an income-generating activity, such as the tricycle motorbikes provided to the CBTAs, generates revenue that is distributed as a percentage to the CBTAs, the resource centres and the CBTAs platforms. The revenues complement their membership fees and enable the structures to function and the members to access loans through a revolving credit scheme.
- The implementation of the groupage system simplifies procedures and is even required by officials for the passage of goods because it speeds up the adoption of good attitudes (orderliness, etc.)
- The implementation of the one stop centre at the Kavimvira-Gatumba border post (Uvira) has had a positive impact on the reduction of cases of harassment. Women cross border traders are organising themselves into associations, in which they defend their rights and deal with the various forms of harassment.
- There is ownership of the resource centre by the project targets (cross border traders, PCBTAs, and officials). However, initiatives in terms of advocacy organised by the resource centre at provincial

and national level are still weak. There is a need to broaden advocacy actions towards actors at the national level who have oversight over the provinces and cities.

3.3.2. Learning from project implementation

- The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted trade, with Congolese buyers unable to go and check the quality of their orders, and cross border traders from other countries unable to cross and claim their payments. Losses for small traders were reported on both sides. On the positive side, it has enabled the implementation of the groupage system, which prevents cases of harassment for cross border traders and allows them to achieve economies of scale by jointly bearing the cost of transport, customs clearance, migration documents (CEPGL, patent, etc.).
- Some support (office equipment, financial support/tricycles to CBTAs) was granted towards the end of the project, making it difficult to follow up on them over time. It would be preferable next time to provide materials and financial support early enough to allow time for the team to identify and deal with the needs and skills required for the beneficiaries in order to use and monitor the support received.

4. Recommendations

Based on the above findings and lessons learned, the recommendations for future project design and implementation are as follows:

(i) To Search

For the implementation and sustainability of the activities on the ground, **Search will need to reflect on an approach for close monitoring of the direct beneficiaries of the project, by organising regular monitoring visits to the implementation areas.** This strategy would help the team to measure the level of impact of the actions carried out in terms of performance vis-à-vis the beneficiaries even after the project. This is the case of the financial support given towards the end of the project to small traders' associations for socio-economic empowerment.

Search, PCBTAs, CBTAs, resource centres need to increase advocacy efforts, targeting more the provincial, national and even regional level. Intensify engagement with higher levels of decision-making and a wider range of stakeholders, to aim for institutional impact beyond cooperation with state structures working at border crossings.

Search should use existing referral circuits to provide an appropriate response to cases reported to the resource centres. Search should work in partnership with other actors with specialisations in legal aid, medical care, psychosocial support, etc. The first step would be to strengthen coordination between the resource centres and the MGP of the Municipality . This is an opportunity for collaboration between the targets and the local authorities in order to make the resource centre initiatives sustainable.

Strengthen institutional support based on the mapping of actors: Resource centres, platforms, foreign trade divisions, Trade Information Bureau, Associations of small cross-border traders. This would enable access to information on standards, or regulations governing cross-border trade and that facilitate women in this work. It would also open avenues to the different business opportunities available in trade and would strengthen coordination in handling complaints from small traders. This would help them to strengthen their financial means and increase their motivation in their initiatives for more visibility on the ground.

(ii) To the donor TMEA :

For projects working in cross-border trade, it would be better if Search, with the endorsement of the donor, aims to reach both countries (DRC-Rwanda or DRC-Burundi) as beneficiary areas for the promotion and inclusion of women cross border traders from both countries.

5. Conclusions

The project has positively influenced the behaviours, attitudes and actions of its targets in terms of decision-making for officials who now cooperate and involve small traders more in the initiatives organised to improve customs clearance and conduct. It has also positively influenced the attitudes of the cross border traders (formalisation, customs clearance, influencing decisions, etc.) and has increased the commercial value of women small traders in particular, making them more economically and socially empowered.

In terms of the cross-border trade environment, the project has been able to support important reforms to improve the working conditions of cross border traders. The project supported the revision of important documents (provincial action plan,), initiated the draft decree for better coordination of stakeholders and influenced the implementation of work-simplifying measures such as groupings and the one stop centre in Uvira. The project has to a certain extent enabled the interests of cross border traders to be taken into account in the decision-making process of the border and customs authorities, although the application of all provisions granting facilities to cross border traders is not always fully effective.

As part of the sustainability of the initiatives put in place by the project, Search has revitalised the framework for dialogue at local and provincial level between the actors who accompany small-scale cross-border traders (local authorities, customs officials, NGOs, etc.), with a view to maintaining coordination of all the actors at local and provincial level and facilitating access to the opportunities available in trade by the cross border traders through their Associations and platforms.

A major step was supported, which is the formalisation of businesses via the integration of small traders' associations and the crossing at official routes using official migration documents. This formalisation has been a boon for women in particular in terms of access to funding opportunities, networking, collaboration with the authorities, capacity building and advocacy.

The project has also strengthened collaboration between small-scale cross-border traders in the DRC (in the implementation areas) among themselves and among cross border traders from neighbouring countries (Rwanda and Burundi), and between them and local officials and authorities, around the recognition,

prevention, treatment and reporting of cases of gender-based violence, rights violations, harassment, smuggling and corruption.

The project has strengthened the collaboration between small cross-border traders and border officials by creating new opportunities for collaboration, and positively influenced the authorities' commitment in dealing with complaints from small cross-border traders through the resource centre, which was set up within the framework of the project to prevent GBV cases and improve access to information. This was the case as their recommendations were taken into account as possible solutions (*setting up a one-stop centre in Uvira and a grouping system to fight against harassment and encourage formal trade, etc.*). The Resource Centres continue to carry out their own initiatives despite the end of the project. However, this collaborative linkage will need to be further strengthened, as there is a risk of authorities and officials becoming detached if they are transferred to other non-project border posts or new staff arrive in the target areas.

6. Appendices

Annex 1: Additional analysis of indicators and output information

a) Other output indicators

(NEW). Number of CBTA women supported in advocacy activities					
Zone	Activity description	Number of sessions	Total Men	Total Women	Total
Goma	Meeting to support cross border traders' advocacy activities with officials and authorities (Advocacy campaign)	2	88	168	256
Bukavu		2	82	218	300
Kamanyola		2	91	214	305
Uvira		2	91	216	307
Total		8	352	816	1168

1122a. Number of association representatives trained on advocacy, broken down by area					
Zone	Activity description	Number of sessions	Total Men	Total Women	Total
Uvira	Training on advocacy techniques	2	29	66	95
Goma		2	65	33	98
Bukavu		2	25	72	97
Kamanyola		2	35	67	102
Total	8 sessions	8	154	238	392

Dialogue sessions organised between cross border traders and local officials and authorities					
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Zone	Activity description	Number of sessions	Total Men	Total Women	Total
Uvira	Meeting to identify problems Tribune d'Expression Populaire between cross border traders and border post officials	3	117	248	365
Goma		3	83	166	249
Bukavu		3	80	269	349
Kamanyola		2	65	139	204
Total		11	345	822	1167

1123c (SEARCH) Number of women participating in organised trader exchanges				
Zone	Activity description	Total Men	Total Women	Total
Goma	Experience sharing meeting between cross border traders of North and South Kivu	12	19	31
Uvira	Experience sharing meeting between Congolese and Burundian cross border traders	13	40	53
Bukavu	Experience sharing meeting between the cross border traders of Rwanda and the DRC	14	38	52
Bukavu	Experience sharing meeting between the cross border traders of Rwanda and the DRC	12	36	48
Goma	Experience sharing meeting between DRC and Rwandan cross border traders	14	35	49
Total	5 sessions	65	168	233

Output 1212 Cooperative representatives trained on business management, governance, negotiations, quality and standards (Number of CBT representative trained)					
Zone	Activity description	Number of sessions	Total Men	Total Women	Total
Goma	Training on cross-border regulation with leaders of small traders in Goma	5	181	532	713
Bukavu		5	74	542	616
Kamanyola		4	134	595	729
Uvira		3	120	403	523
Kamanyola	Financial management training	3	99	516	188
Bukavu		3	94	542	636
Goma		3	100	531	631

Uvira		3	127	495	622
Uvira	Training of CBTA managers on the management of Associations	1	14	26	40
Bukavu		1	6	44	50
Goma		1	16	24	40
Total		32	965	4 236	5 201

1213b (New) Number of traders who participated in solidarity activities.				
Zone	Activity description	Total Men	Total Women	Total
Bukavu	Salongo" solidarity activities to strengthen collaboration between small traders in Rwanda and DR Congo	25	128	153
Uvira	Solidarity activity between the Congolese and Burundian cross border traders	45	110	155
Total	2 sessions	70	238	308

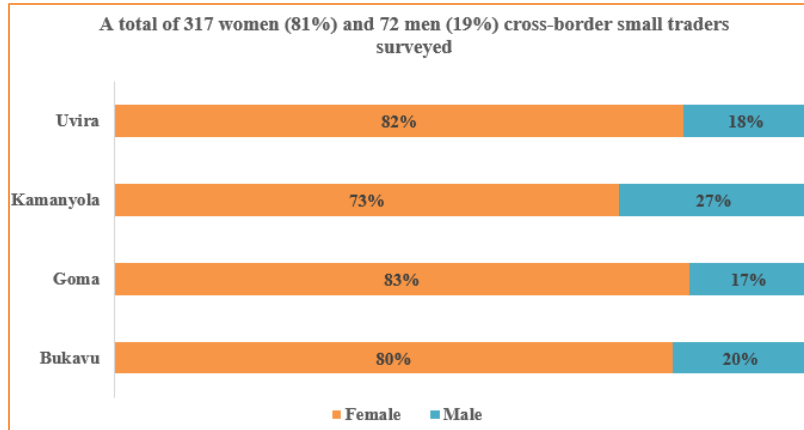
Number of traders who receive information, education and communication (IEC) materials on trade procedures, regulations and rights.				
Zone	Activity description	Total Men	Total Women	Total
Bukavu	STR implementation workshop	14	11	25
Goma		18	15	33
Goma	Workshop with local officials and authorities on the development of the charter of rights and duties of cross border traders	13	7	20
Total	3 sessions	45	33	78

1311b (SEARCH) Number of officials trained in GBV				
Zone	Activity description	Total Men	Total Women	Total
Goma	Officials' workshop on GBV, rights and duties of cross border traders	12	7	19
Bukavu		18	2	20
Uvira		14	5	19
Kamanyola		16	4	20
Total	4 sessions	60	18	78

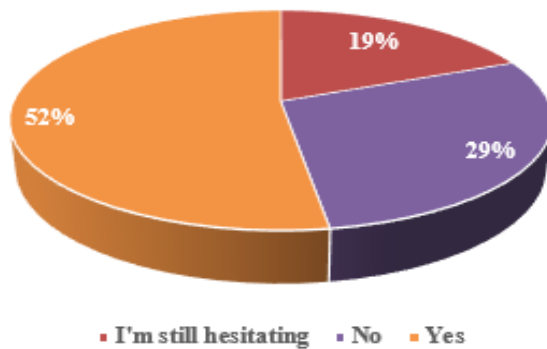
1311c (SEARCH) Number of women who have been educated about GBV and the resource centre					
Zone	Activity description	Number of campaigns	Total Men	Total Women	Total
Kamanyola	Raising awareness about GBV and the resource centre	3	948	2382	3330
BUKAVU		3	993	1591	2584
Goma		3	408	799	1207
Uvira		3	1246	1757	3003
Total		12	3595	7529	11124

Appendix 2. Data from the survey and qualitative collections

1) Distribution of survey participants by study area and gender

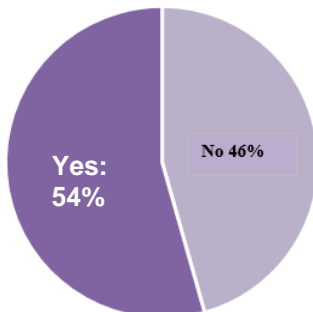


2) Estimated knowledge and capacity to face harassment

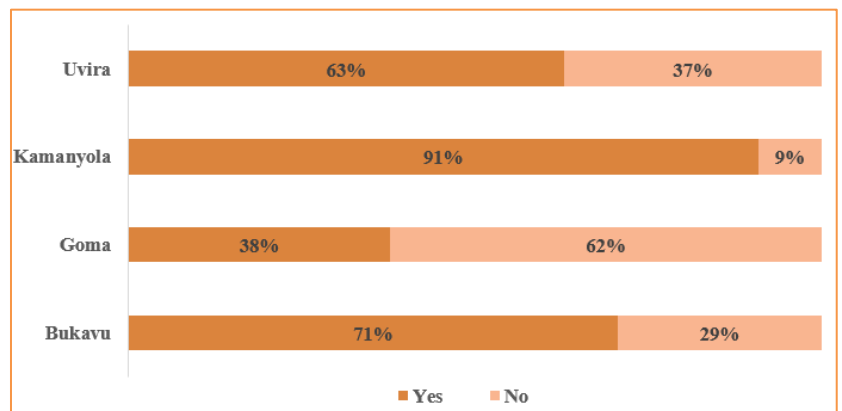


Graph 3: % of CBT feel they have enough knowledge to defend their rights with confidence

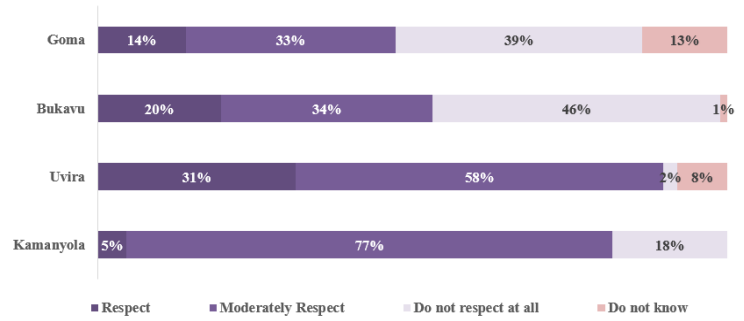
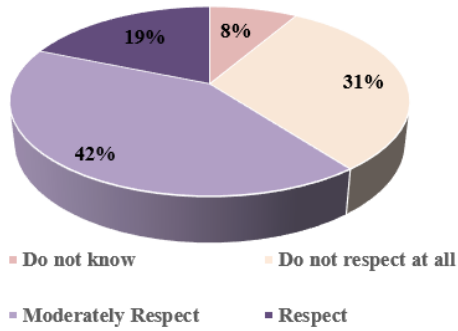
3) Small traders who say they feel confident in using the infrastructure



Graph 4: % of CBT report feeling comfortable using border infrastructure compared to 12 months ago

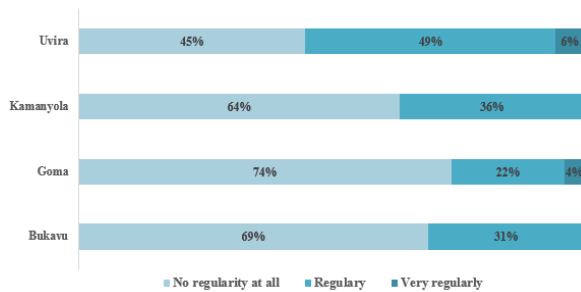


4) Compliance with standards, laws and regulations

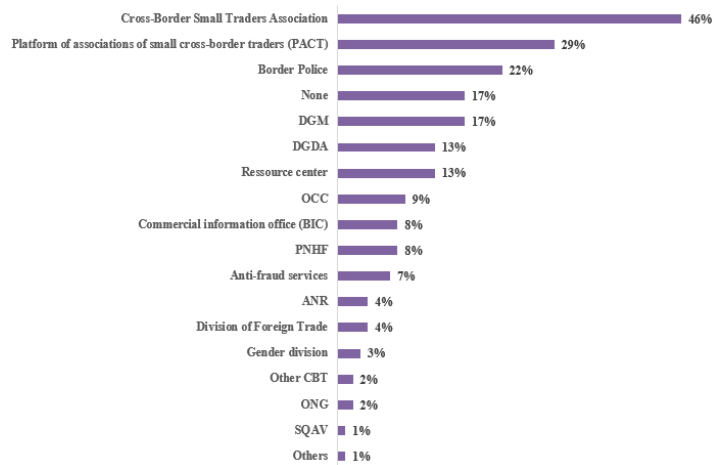


Graph 5: % of CBT who think that local authorities and officials respect the laws, standards and regulations governing cross-border trade compared to 12 months ago, disaggregated by area

5) Level of accessibility to laws and regulations



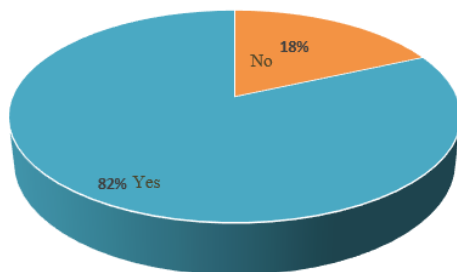
Graph 6: Do you consider that you have regular or very regular access to up-to-date information on laws, regulations and standards regarding small cross-border trade?



Graph 7: Existing structures where cross border traders access information on laws or standards governing cross-border trade

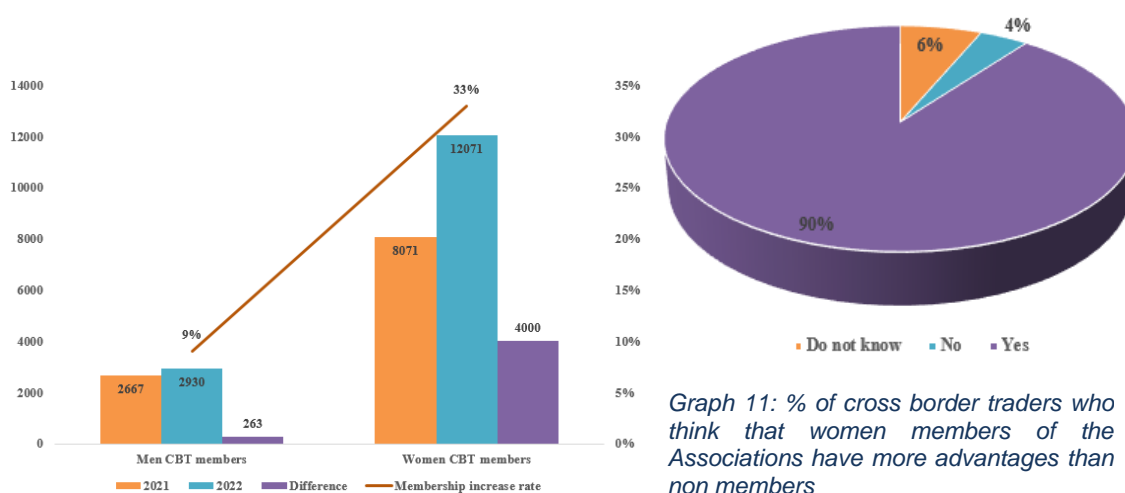
6) Participation in trade through associations

318 out of 389 PCTs surveyed (82%) CBTA membership



Graph 8: % of surveyed CBT participating in formal trade through associations or cooperatives

7) Variation of membership in Associations

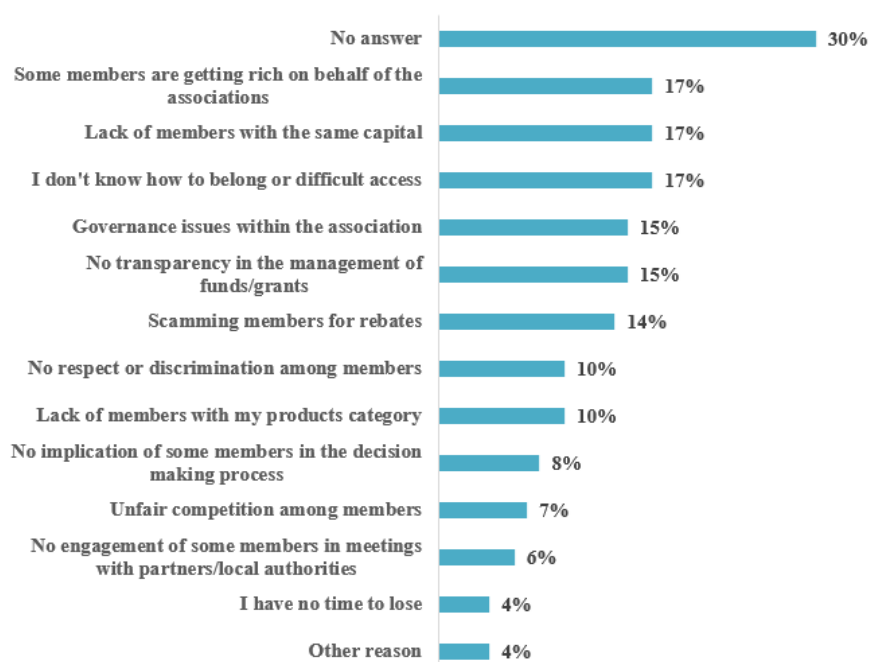


Graph 10: Rate of adherence of women in CBTA and CBTA in platforms

8) The benefits of belonging to an Association

Benefits	Bukavu	Goma	Kamanyola	Uvira	Grand total
Access to credit	51%	63%	32%	56%	57%
Social assistance (in case of illness, childbirth, death, imprisonment)	61%	45%	79%	54%	52%
Social cohesion and friendships	63%	52%	11%	43%	50%
Defending common interests	77%	38%	5%	56%	48%
Access to training (NGOs and others)	71%	19%	84%	63%	44%
Access to information (BIC)	41%	16%	63%	38%	29%
Investing in other businesses	29%	32%	26%	13%	26%
Saving GBV and hassle	31%	17%	58%	24%	24%
Political influence and advocacy	23%	15%	11%	9%	15%
Other benefits	4%	3%	0%	11%	5%
No	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Don't know	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%

9) Reasons for reluctance to join Associations

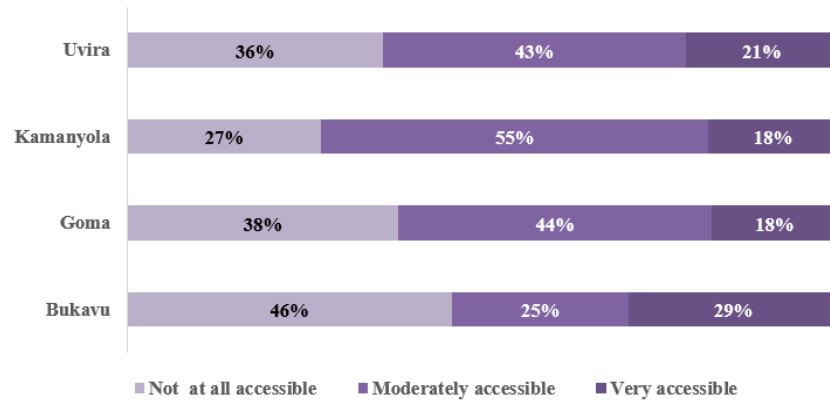


Graph 12: Reasons why some cross border traders do not join an association of small traders and prefer to cross informally

10) Number of cross border traders surveyed who received funding

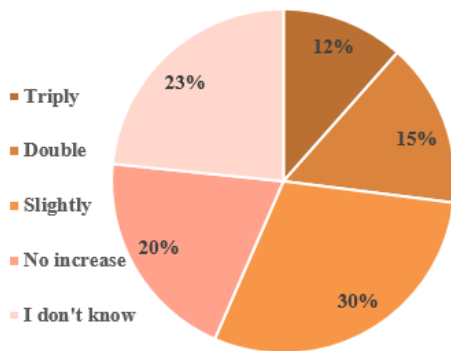
Labels	Bukavu	Goma	Kamanyola	Uvira	Grand total
No	21	35	8	34	98
Yes, through my cooperative / association	45	101	1	42	189
Yes, on my own behalf	26	50	13	13	102
Grand total	92	186	22	89	389

11) Estimating the accessibility of opportunities within the CBTAs



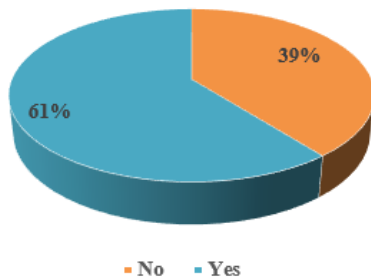
Graph 13: Level of appreciation in relation to existing financing opportunities around cross-border trade

12) Estimated increase of the commercial value of women cross border traders

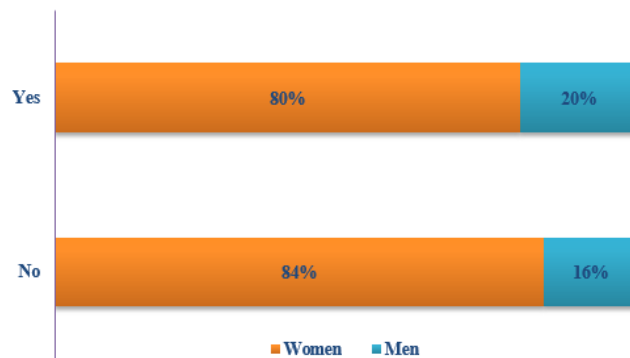


Graph 14: 57% increase in capital and stock of women small traders

13) GBV awareness and reporting capacity

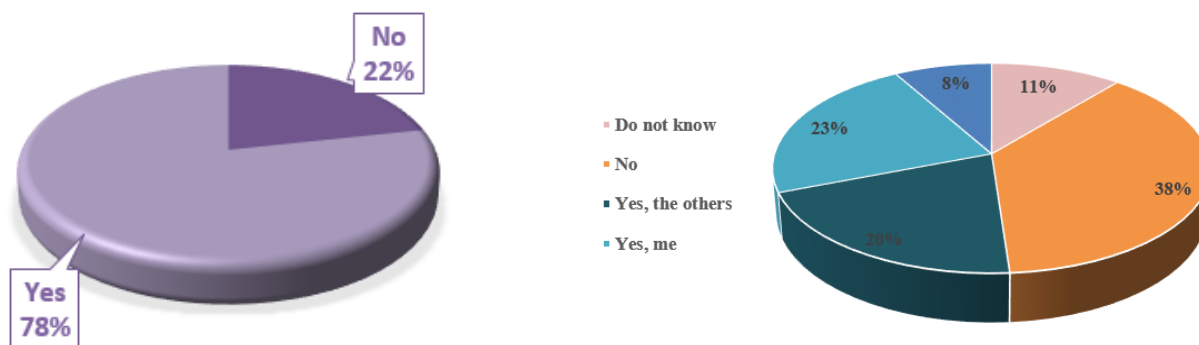


Graph 15: % of small traders surveyed who reported having received awareness sessions on the use of resource center and on GBV



Graph 16: % of small businesswomen who believe they can confidently report any case of GBV

14) Knowledge and use of the resource centre and suggestion box



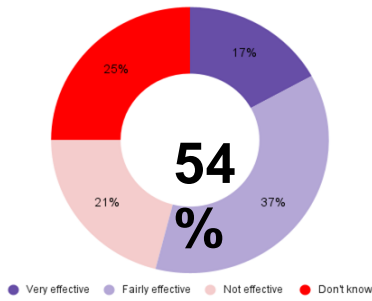
Graph 17: % of cross border traders reporting having been informed of a resource centre or a suggestion box to prevent GBV cases

Graph 18: % of cross-border traders report having used the resource centre or suggestion box to report GBV cases or women's rights violations or other issues

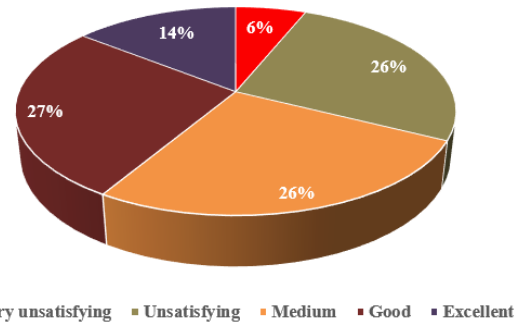
15) The types of complaints most reported by the resource centres

Type des plaintes	Bukavu	Goma	Kamanyola	Uvira
Surtaxation	20%	33%	9%	33%
hassle (paying illegal taxes, without any receipt, paying taxes to unauthorized services, ...)	20%	21%	45%	36%
Loss of the goods	8%	31%	18%	22%
Steal	11%	32%	27%	4%
Conflict with another small cross-border trader	18%	26%	5%	4%
Violation of human rights (physical or moral aggression, intimidation, rejection of the person to	16%	12%	27%	20%
Conflict with a border agent	8%	12%	32%	6%
Fraud and corruption	3%	11%	14%	20%
Gender-based violence (sexual harassment, ...)	2%	10%	18%	3%
Insults	3%	6%	14%	3%
Others	1%	1%	0%	2%

16) Effectiveness of prevention/reporting initiatives and level of satisfaction

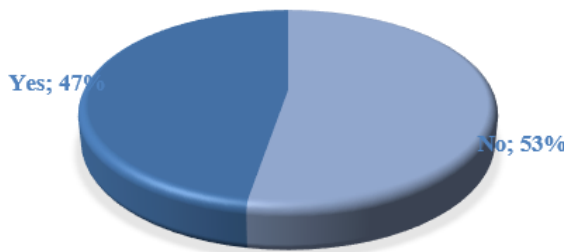


Graph 19: Level of assessment of the effectiveness of the resource center and suggestion box in preventing or reporting cases of violation of women's rights



Graph 20: Satisfaction level of the assistance received by cross border traders

17) Responses and types of repairs obtained



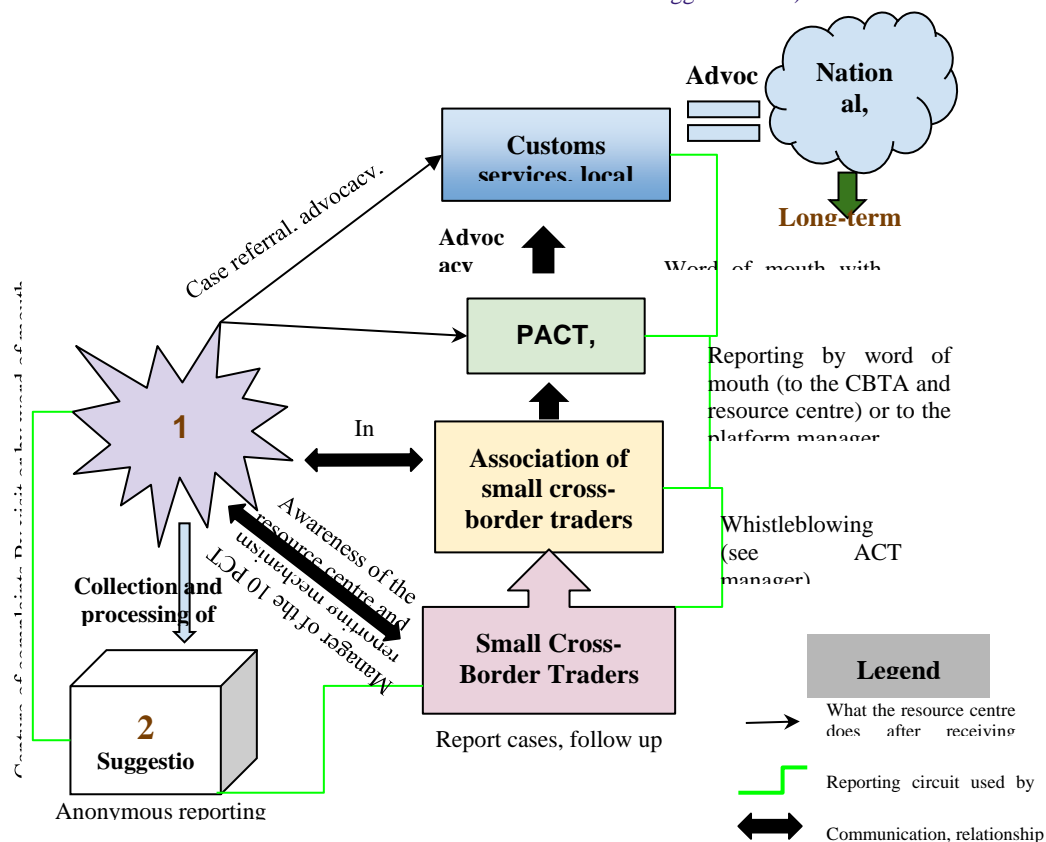
Graph 21: % of surveyed cross border traders who reported having received assistance or reparation when they were victims of GBV, Human rights violations, harassment, conflicts and others

Table 6: Type of Assistance or Repair after CBT Reporting

Nature of assistance received after reporting					
Assistance type	Bukavu	Goma	Kamanyola	Uvira	Total
Police intervention	49%	56%	17%	43%	47%
Compensation of damages by the author	37%	36%	39%	64%	43%
Assistance of a psycho-social service	22%	5%	28%	53%	23%
Assistance to NGOs working in protection	7%	10%	50%	11%	14%
Legal assistance	5%	12%	28%	13%	12%
Settlement of accounts amicably	2%	12%			5%
CBTA Intervention		8%	11%		4%
Others		1%	6%	2%	2%

18) Scheme of operation of the reporting mechanisms

Imag 1: The functioning of the reporting and prevention mechanism for GBV and human rights violations implemented by the project (resource centre and suggestion box)



19) Types of training and skills targeted

Training and activities	Influenced change
Training of cross border traders on financial management and association management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital increase and stocks • Saving more • Accessing credit through associations • Investing in other businesses (expanding the market) • Providing for family needs (paying for children's education, primary health care, food rations, buying plots, etc.) • Repayment of debts and supply of products in cash • Good business management (stock, expense management, ...) • Improving knowledge in negotiation • Becoming autonomous and economically independent
CBT training on conflict sensitivity (mediation, social cohesion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peaceful cohabitation between Congolese cross border traders, and between countries • Improved relations between cross border traders themselves, between cross border traders and Officials

Training of cross border traders on customs regulations (customs clearance, crossing and declaration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To know the rights and defend them in case of harassment, theft, rape, assault, etc. ● Pay less border taxes when declaring goods ● Positive change in behaviour in customs and crossing
Training of cross border traders on advocacy techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advocate for cross border traders (in case of raiding of goods, overcharging or imposing payment of illegal taxes, imposing payment to visit the CEPGL before crossing (case of Goma), etc. ● Reconciliation between cross border traders and Officials ● Involvement of Officials in dealing with complaints and other problems in small-scale trade
Training of cross border traders and officials on gender-based violence, rights and duties of MDTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acquisition of sufficient knowledge to defend one's rights ● Collaboration between cross border traders and officials
Outreach activity, exchange of experience between cross border traders, forum for popular expression, advocacy meeting and awareness raising on the resource centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participation in formal trade through membership in an CBTA ● Know the reporting structures for GBV and other problems in the small business environment ● Improved collaboration between inter-country cross border traders and between cross border traders and Border Officials

19) Case Study of change according to the testimonies of the small traders surveyed

Case 1: Customs hassles:

1°) "When I crossed the small barrier, there were women who wanted to confiscate my goods, saying that I should pay them, and yet I already had my receipt showing that I had already paid, I refused to pay, telling them that if they continued to confuse me, we would go to the CBTA office, and when they heard this, they let me pass." (Survey, Bukavu)

2°) "Here recently for the case of my C.E.P.G.L, I refused to pay money to an official before aiming that. He insisted but I told him that I would go to the chief and he took the shot quickly without discussion." (Interviewee Petite Barrière, Goma)

Case 2: Advocacy for another CBT:

1°) "I had seen a CBT arrested by the National Intelligence Agency (ANR) at the border, on the grounds that he had not paid them. I told him that he had to pay at the one-stop shop. They finally released him and he went to pay at the one-stop shop. Thanks to the training we received from Search, we showed them that we should not pay there." (A survey in Uvira)

2°) "I bought the licence for small cross-border traders twice a year when I should have paid it just once. But as I didn't know that, I had submitted. But just after I received the training on the documents that allow a CBT to cross, I went to them to claim, and they refunded me the last licence." (A respondent from Kamanyola)

Case 3: Use of knowledge gained in business life and added value (increase in stock and capital) :

1°) A respondent from Bukavu said that the training she received from Search as part of the project helped her raise her capital: "I was only a transporter at the border, but when I received the training, I saved up to \$22 on myself, I bought a bag of rice that I sold in retail. I was no longer just a transporter, but also a rice seller. With two jobs

(transporter and rice seller), I started to save little by little, because in one bag of rice I made a profit of \$3. At present, with my savings I am starting to buy a 50kg bag of ordinary maize flour and a 25kg bag of rice.”

Case 4: Positive influence in changing the behaviour and attitude of cross border traders and Officials when crossing and driving through customs:

1°) Women whose behaviour with regard to crossing has changed: "In the old days we were so afraid to approach the officials that they used to take the 11 lines (term used by the cross border traders to talk about the illegal routes used when swimming across the Ruzizi River), but today we cross by going through the border without any problem. We just need to have documents (CEPGL, Patent, etc.).” (FCBT Kamanyola in the focus group)

2°) "When I was trained, I realised that I was paying a lot of tax to declare my goods at customs (by giving several services working at customs something (either 1000fc or 2000fc), whereas there is a service to which I have to declare and pay (DGDA), so I don't give anything more. And instead of paying these illegal taxes, I keep this money, I save it.” (Bukavu FG, male CBTA members)

3°) "I know that if you want to cross the border rudely, you are exposed to problems of harassment and insults." Goma (FG with FCBT PVH).

Case 5: Contribution of the resource centre to the business environment:

1°) "There were fewer complaints before this project because the victims did not want to denounce the cases of harassment of which they were victims, either out of fear for some, or out of ignorance of the services empowered to collect the taxes or of the products that do not have to pay the taxes for others, or not to waste their time. Search organised several activities including popular forums where issues affecting the small trader were discussed with local authorities, customs officials and all other actors involved in cross-border trade. Denunciations and complaints have been made and lodged with the appropriate authorities, in some cases the authorities have responded directly and others are ongoing.

20) Contribution of the project to improving the environment for cross-border trade

1°) Elaboration of a provincial action plan for the promotion and facilitation of small-scale cross-border trade in South Kivu 2022-2026 within the framework of the project A plan resulting from the five-year action plan of 2017-2021 elaborated by different stakeholders¹⁸ of the trade in 2016, this action plan has the interest of resuming the appropriation of the small-scale cross-border trade issue by the beneficiaries, The present Action Plan has the interest to resume the appropriation of the issue of small cross-border trade by the beneficiaries, public and private sector actors, etc., and will contribute to the promotion and facilitation of small cross-border trade in the DRC, presenting an important contribution to better achieve the actions promoting economic growth and employment, as well as peace building. It will also contribute to the improvement of relations between countries, strengthening the rights of small-scale cross-border traders with particular emphasis on their participation in the life of the country in all its aspects.

It spreads its objectives through seven (07) strategic axes in particular:

- **The adaptation of the legislation on cross-border trade** to adapt the legislation to the specificity of ten thousand small cross-border traders operating in the post;
- **Respect for small-scale cross-border traders with a** view to improving the treatment of women small-scale traders at border posts;

¹⁸ These include ministries, INGOs, state institutions, regional organisations such as CEPGL, COMESA, civil society, etc.

- **Implementation of regional trade agreements** in the context of accelerating the implementation of ratified agreements such as the East African Community (EAC) signed and granted by various member countries (Uganda, Rwanda, DRC, Burundi, Kenya, ...; the COMESA Simplified Trade Regime (STR)
- **Information and transparency on the applicable legislation** in order to ensure information on taxable and non-taxable products through public displays and the media (including the establishment of a One-Stop Shop);
- **Authorised services and applicable charges** aimed at removing tariff and non-tariff barriers through the strict application of the inter-ministerial order on STR;
- **Insufficient modern infrastructure and trade base at the borders in order to** improve border infrastructure and trade base (equipment, value chain, ...)
- **Monitoring and evaluation of the action plan** aims to ensure the implementation of the provincial action plan 2022-2026

This provincial action plan (PAP) has been put in place and distributed to the various stakeholders for implementation. But it will be necessary to strengthen the follow-up with the actors or users for its implementation.

2°) Elaboration of a provincial decree during the provincial consultation framework organised in March 2022 by Search for Common Ground in collaboration with the Provincial Division of Foreign Trade and the Bukavu City Council. This decree concerns the creation, composition and functioning of a framework for consultation and coordination of partners' interventions in the small-scale cross-border trade sector in South Kivu province. This decree was put in place in order to perpetuate the activity of the consultation framework, which is a framework for dialogue between the various stakeholders involved in cross-border trade under the responsibility of the provincial Ministry of Foreign Trade after the end of the project. However, this document has not yet been finalised at provincial government level (not signed) for implementation.

3°) The regulation of setting up a single window at border posts to avoid hassles and fight against fraud is a system that exists and is recognised by the law, but is not implemented. The law provides that only the Directorate General of Customs and Excise (DGDA) is authorised to collect customs taxes. This is not yet in force as other services such as the Office Congolais de Contrôle (OCC), the SQAV, etc. are also involved in the collection of taxes, which is at the root of the multiplicity of taxes, cases of harassment, as well as delays during the crossing. At the customs level, this system is functional but only applied to large traders. Thanks to the advocacy sessions conducted by the project, this one-stop shop system¹⁹ has been introduced in Uvira to limit customs harassment according to Uvira officials during the interview. Officials at the border post have opened an office that only deals with the taxation of small traders' products, but in other cross-border areas targeted by the project (Goma, Bukavu and Kamanyola), the problem persists and this creates a paradox in the trading environment.

4°) Advocacy for the implementation of the ordinance-law regulating small-scale trade. This ordinance has been in place by the Congolese government since 2013, but was not respected at the border. The instructions of this law were often mentioned in the recommendations of small-scale cross-border traders at the beginning of the project.²⁰ It allows cross border traders to supply and transport products to their country of residence for retail sale, and stipulates that the exercise of small-scale trade is only subject to the possession of a patent²¹ and this only concerns Congolese and only small-scale farmers and stock breeders who are exempt from this.

With the support of the project through advocacy, compliance with this law is cited in the survey, in some areas, such as Kamanyola where customs officials in collaboration with CBTAs have been involved in banning any Rwandan

¹⁹ *the State has adopted and implemented the one-stop-shop system to allow cross border traders to pay only once and are thus exempted from the hassles of the different services*

²⁰ KII with the staff implementing the project activities

²¹ A patent is an annual administrative authorisation to carry out small-scale trade (see Ordinance-law n°002/2012 of 21 September 2012 amending and supplementing certain provisions of Ordinance-law n°90-046 of 08 August 1990 on the regulation of small-scale trade).

CBT from retailing, but the need is seen in other areas. For example, an annual licence for cross border traders has been reduced from USD 12 to USD 6 (which is advantageous for cross border traders). On the other hand, the cross border traders surveyed complained more about the retailing done by Rwandan cross border traders in Goma, Bukavu, and Burundians in Uvira, which they considered a threat to their environment (*the cross border traders in the focus group accused Rwandan and Burundian cross border traders of retailing on the DRC side, at the same price as they sell to them as suppliers, they considered this to be unfair competition to them*)

5°) **Awareness raising on the implementation of the STR (Simplified Commercial Regime) for the respect of zero rates for raw materials:** The STR was put in place by COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa) in the framework of facilitating cross-border trade in COMESA member countries²² in order to facilitate the procedures of customs clearance of goods and to allow small cross-border traders to benefit from exemptions from customs duties for goods on common lists harmonised between member countries.

21) List of advocacy proposals given to decision makers (customs officials)

Zone	Advocacy notes	Priority topics selected by the cross border traders	Solution
Bukavu	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Request for a counter to reduce the problem of harassment at borders - Implementation of the STR (Simplified Commercial Regime) system, exempting the payment of taxes on raw products - Respect for the grouping system of cross border traders in order to reduce harassment, congestion at borders, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocacy in process - Need for advocacy at national level - In process
Goma	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of the STR system: Taxation of VAT on raw materials - Multi-taxation and double taxation - Failure to effectively implement local market protection policies in the context of small-scale cross-border trade 	Need for advocacy at national level (Ministry of Finance, President of the Republic, DGDA)
Kamanyola	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application for a One-Stop-Shop at the borders - Decrease the amount of migration logos on the CPGL to allow cross border traders to cross at least two to three times a day. 	Need to advocate at national level (DGDA)
Uvira	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiplicity of taxes from services at the border to markets; - Demand for the Central Market in Uvira 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not effective: Collection fees for goods (product by product), but the City Council has prohibited this from a Circular note to the market - Not effective: cross border traders and FEC should get together to address this issue and see how they will divide the tasks

10 advocacy notes developed by cross border traders and presented to officials

²² <https://www.comesa.int/comesa-members-states/>

Annex 3: Documents Consulted and Used

- 1) Order STR of the Ministry of Foreign Trade (*inter-ministerial order n°012/CAB/MIN.COM/2016 and 098/CAB/MIN.FINANCES/2016 on the implementation of the COMESA simplified trade regime, "STR" in acronym*), 2016, DRC
- 2) Provincial decree n°19/035/GP/SK of 10/08/2019 instituting the local committee for the facilitation of cross-border trade (CLFCT) within the framework of the bilateral agreements between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Republic of Rwanda, Gouvernorat, South Kivu, 2019
- 3) The COMESA Simplified Trade Regime "STR": Facilitating Cross-Border Trade in the Great Lakes Region, PFCGL, Zambia
- 4) Law on sexual violence (*Official Gazette of the DRC of 1st August 2006 of the law n°06/018 of 20 July 2006 modifying the Decree of 30 January 1940 on the Congolese Penal Code*), Search for Common Ground, UNDP DRC-Rwanda cross-border project, DRC, 2022
- 5) Charte de traitement du petit commerçant, Ministry of Foreign Trade, North Kivu Provincial Coordination, PFCGL, ed. 2019.
- 6) Ordinance law n°002/2012 of 21 September 2012 amending and supplementing certain provisions of ordinance-law n°90-046 of 08 August 1990 on the regulation of small trade, DRC, 2012
- 7) International Trade Organization (IOM) report, [Women and Trade](#): The Role of Trade in Promoting Gender Equality, World Bank 2021

Annex 4: Other project documents consulted

- 1) Complaints register of the resource centres of Bukavu, Kamanyola, Uvira and Goma, 2021-2022
- 2) List of Associations of small cross-border traders, PCBTA 2021 and 2022 (Goma, Bukavu, Uvira and Kamanyola)
- 3) Database of project activities, MEL Department, Search
- 4) Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, Project Logical Framework
- 5) Brochure on gender-based violence, Search for Common Ground, Bukavu DRC, 2022
- 6) Provincial Action Plan for the promotion and facilitation of small-scale cross-border trade in South Kivu 2022-2026, Search for Common Ground, DRC, 2022
- 7) Summary of the rights and duties of small cross-border traders vis-à-vis the border services
- 8) Arrête provincial du Sud-Kivu portant création, composition et fonctionnement d'un cadre de concertation et de coordination des interventions des partenaires dans le secteur du petit commerce transfrontalier en province du Sud-Kivu, Search for Common Ground, 2022.

Annex 5: Collection tools

- 1) [Quantitative](#) and qualitative data collection tools (with [implementation](#) team, [resource centre](#), [PCBTA](#), [Officials](#), [focus group](#)).