**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Stabilisation initiatives in the Lake Chad Basin – the case of northeastern Nigeria**

1. **Context and problem**

Since 2009, the Boko Haram insurgency – and the following iterations and fragmentation of this non-state armed group (NSAG) - and the government’s military response have displaced millions and made thousands of victims across the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) region, expanding across Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. Building on the gains of a number of major military campaigns between 2015-6, since early 2017 these has been a flurrying of stabilisation programs and initiatives. As in many contexts, most stabilisation programs were crafted under the assumption that the security situation in northeastern Nigeria would continue to improve, thereby facilitating the gradual return of displaced populations and local government.

At the international level, the [*Oslo Consultative Group on the Prevention and Stabilization in the Lake Chad Region*](https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/stabilisation-in-the-lake-chad-basin/2018-briefing-note_stabilisation-in-the-lake-chad-basin.pdf) initially coordinated the response. Moreover, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the African Union Commission adopted a regional stabilization strategy in 2018, which highlights short, medium, and long-term stabilisation, resilience, and recovery goals. These policy efforts spurred even further international initiatives aimed at bringing about immediate stabilisation in communities of northeastern Nigeria.

According to a UNDP presentation speaking on the [Regional Stabilization Facility](https://www.ng.undp.org/content/nigeria/en/home/library/human_development/undp-nigeria-stabilization-facility-annual-report-2020.html) (RSF) that started in 2019, the goal wasto “achieve immediate stabilisation in the Boko Haram-affected states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe in the country’s north-east region through a time bound, localized (area–based), integrated civilian programme of activities delivered as a rapid response package”. However, there is a risk that stabilisation operations conflated with counterinsurgency efforts blur the line between military and civilian activities and, ultimately, fail to address other causes of instability beyond the presence of insurgencies.

Even when stabilisation is not the immediate outcome desired, it is the long-term objective of many donors. For instance, the World Bank [*Multi-Sectoral Crisis Recovery Project*](https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2020/11/10/strengthening-recovery-and-peacebuilding-in-north-east-nigeria)(MSCRP) works to “rehabilitate and improve critical service delivery infrastructure, enhance livelihood opportunities for conflict-affected and displaced communities, and strengthen social cohesion in North-East”, but at the same time “these projects should be seen as a single program, aiming to strengthen regional stability”.

Whereas many of these stabilisation initiatives are still ongoing, and as such their degree of success still to be proven, the idea of bringing stability in ongoing conflict areas has expanded to cover the Sahel region. Here, a number of donors, Western governments and UN agencies have already undertaken concrete steps to transpose their vision for the LCB to the Sahel. [*The Emergency Programme for the Stabilisation of G5 Sahel Border Areas*](https://www.alliance-sahel.org/en/projets-pdu/emergency-programme-for-the-stabilisation-of-g5-sahel-border-areas/) crafted by the Alliance Sahel, and the [*Stabilisation Facility Project for the Liptako-Gourma*](https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/R12/Pilot_Stabilisation_Liptako-Gourma_Final_English_13_Oct_2020.docx.pdf) led by the UNDP are just two of the many efforts deployed in order to cast stability over areas where conflict is active as ever before.

This research project aims to take stock of the experience of stabilisation initiatives in the LCB, and specifically in northeastern Nigeria, in order to inform decision-makers of the potential risks and opportunities associated with this approach, as outlined in the objectives here below.

1. **Objectives**

*Objective 1:*

To identify the concrete impact of stabilisation approaches on the populations within the zones and near the zones having benefitted from such projects based on field visits, testimonies of the populations and key actors present in these zones.

MISSING FROM OBJECTIVE ONE:

Mapping of stabilization initiatives (including the LCD programme and the newly created Delivery Support Unit), analysis of objectives (multiple criteria that are less/highly political), timelines, approaches, (less/high government and donor involvement, civ-mil cooperation etc.), political and conflict sensitivity risks, requirements of specific funding opportunities.

The particular focus should be on the:

* evolution of people’s access (impartiality) to basic services and livelihoods for populations within and outside the zones;
* impact on access of and to humanitarian assistance;
* impact on the protection of populations within and outside the zone;
* impact on conflict dynamics and social cohesion;
* sustainability and exit strategies of such approaches.
* do no harm implications.

*Objective 2:*

To propose concrete and workable alternatives and safeguards to current approaches to effective return of essential services and more secure and impartial access to essential services, livelihoods and assistance for conflict-affected populations.

These alternatives should be translated into concrete operational tools such as checklists to guide stabilisation partners to prioritise approaches based on the *do no harm* principle and mitigate the negative impact of such approaches.

ADDITION: To propose a conflict sensitivity approach to inform decision makers/making on engagement with stabilisation actors and inititiatives: using a do no harm framework to understand potential risks of harm to humanitarian agencies, partners, and project participants and to adapt risk mitigating measures.

*Objective 3:*

Problematise the risks of causing harm of stabilisation efforts, bring them at the forefront of the debate on the Sahel and the LCB and put them on the agenda of decision-makers to allow discussion between development and humanitarian actors bearing in mind conflict sensitivity and the protection of civilians.

1. **Intended public**

- G5 Sahel, the African Union, ECOWAS and governments of the Sahel;

- UN agencies (UNDP, OCHA, UNOWAS) and UN integrated missions (MINUSMA);

- European Union Commission and its missions in the Sahel (EUTM, EUCAP, RACC);

- international donors invested in the Sahel (FCDO, AFD, USAID), including Ministries of Foreign Affairs of EU states and international institutions (World Bank);

- Humanitarian, development and peace actors in the region and country-level;

1. **Scope of the Assessment**

To achieve the above objectives, the Consultant(s) will conduct the activities within the following bounds:

• The geographic area of northeastern Nigeria, namely the states Borno, Adamawa and Yobe;

• The given historical period between 2017 to 2021.

1. **NRC’s Roles and Responsibilities**
* Offer the Consultant(s) relevant sources of data from within NRC, such as hard to reach assessments, access indicators etc.
* Provide timely feedback at every stage of the consultancy
* Provide support in liaising with potential data sources and actors across the region and broadening buy in for the project
* Facilitate the creation of alliances with public and academic institutions to expand availability of datasets
* Organise brainstorming with NRC`s access experts to gather input and feedback to facilitate the Consultant(s) understanding of substantive matters
* Make payment to the Consultant(s) in line with the contract and upon receipt of the agreed, high quality, deliverables
* NRC will not provide logistical support.
1. **Responsibilities of the Consultant(s)**
* Respect NRC’s policies and fully adhere to the NRC code of Conduct and consultancy service procurement guidelines
* Make available both soft and hard copy documents and datasets related to the study as well as the list of interviews (and their transcription), sources, and partners consulted or used for the research
* Finalise the research based on the agreed time frame
* Respect reporting requirements and provide high-quality deliverables in a timely manner
1. **Deliverables**
* *Work plan*

The Consultant(s) is expected to submit a high quality and detailed working plan within the first week after the start of the contract which includes the various activities foreseen, delays for the deliverables and person in charge of each activity.

* *Methodology*

Before starting the activities, the Consultant(s) has to submit a methodology (to be annexed to the final report as well) including method of research, types and location of interviews and method of data analysis.

* A draft of the report

Once the data is collected (interviews, focus groups etc) and integrated, the Consultant(s) has to deliver a comprehensive first draft report for NRC’s feedback.

* A final version of the report

The Consultant(s) will have to produce a final version of the report within the timeline of the project, integrating NRC’s feedback.

1. **Terms and conditions**

NRC ROCWA will manage the contract. The consultancy can be carried out from the home / duty station of the Consultant(s). The Consultant(s) must have their own equipment necessary for the assignment (computer, phone, etc.) and software required to perform the activities. NRC will not cover travel expenses, insurances and other expense allowances.

1. **Duration of assignment**

The Consultant(s) is requested to propose an estimated timeframe in their proposal for consideration. This will be considered as estimation and will be revised based on the finalization of the deliverables. The Consultant(s) should finalize the work with a maximum of 4 months from the start of the consultancy contract.

1. **Reporting**

In all matters relating to consultancy, the Consultant(s) will communicate with the Regional Conflict and Access Analyst to discuss the progress made at every stage as well as challenges, if any. In absence of the Analyst, the Head of Advocacy will act as interim interface. Both parties must communicate any changes to this consultancy in writing.

1. **Required skills and experience**
* An academic background in conflict studies, international relations, research methodology or development studies
* Proven track record of successfully completed projects including on Nigeria and the LCB context on conflict analysis, political economy analysis
* Extensive knowledge of the context and conflict trends across the LCB and preferably of the Sahel
* Proven track record of research conducted with and for international organizations, including in the humanitarian and development sector
* Ability to travel across northeastern Nigeria for research purposes
* Exceptional organizational skills, ability to work independently in order to meet deadlines
* Excellent English drafting and communication skills
1. **Application and Required Documents**

This is an international bid open to qualified applicants. Requirements for application are:

1. *Narrative proposal*
* A cover letter with a brief presentation of your consultancy experience and explaining your suitability for the work, including previous pertinent projects and how they are linked to this project;
* An in-depth methodology on how you will undertake work and achieve outputs set out in the terms of reference;
* Proposed timeline and expected delivery for each deliverable;
* Team composition and quality assurance approach.
1. *Financial Proposal*
* Detailed cost breakdown to be included in financial proposal
1. *Previous work examples*
* Applicant should share three previous examples of final work products from recent completed consultancies.
1. *Resume*
* The resume of key staffs must be annexed to the application documents in French or English.
1. *Submission of BID documents and Deadline for submission*
* Documents must be submitted based on the deadline set on the bid advert.