



P.O. Box 727 N'DJAMENA - CHAD
 Tel.: +235 22 52 41 45 / 22 52 40 29 Fax : +235 22 52 41 37
 E-mail: cab@cbt.org; cbt.lcbc@gmail.com

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF A GROUP OF
 CONSULTANTS OR A CONSULTING FIRM TO CONDUCT AN ANALYTICAL
 STUDY OF THE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF CIVIL
 SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOs) IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN COUNTRIES**

<p>Background and Rationale</p>	<p>The Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) was established on 22 May 1964 by the four countries that border Lake Chad: Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria and Chad. The mandates of the Commission include managing Lake Chad and its shared water resources, preserving ecosystems and promoting regional integration, peace, security and development in the Lake Chad region.</p> <p>Over the past decade, the four countries bordering the Lake Chad Basin - Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria - experienced crises on an unprecedented scale, worsened by repeated violence caused by the terrorist group Boko Haram. These crises worsened instability, slowed economic growth and led to severe regional humanitarian concerns.</p> <p>In response to the ongoing multidimensional crisis in the Lake Chad Basin, the Member States of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), with the support of the African Union and their partners, developed a Regional Strategy for Stabilisation, Recovery and Resilience (RS SRR) in 2018.</p> <p>This strategy aimed to enhance the military efforts of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) with coordinated interventions for stabilisation, humanitarian aid, and sustainable development in the affected regions.</p> <p>In light of the changing regional situation, the strategy was revised and officially adopted in February 2025 by the Governments of Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria, and Chad under the name RS SRR 2.0. This new version forms a comprehensive, integrated, and multi-level framework designed to enhance stabilisation, socio-economic recovery, and long-term resilience in the territories affected by the crisis.</p> <p>During its 70th session held in February 2025, the LCBC Council of Ministers, through Resolution No. 6, approved the implementation of RS SRR 2.0 and directed the Executive Secretariat to align the Territorial Action Plans as well as the results framework with this revised strategy, to ensure effective coordination and strict monitoring of its implementation.</p> <p>As part of implementing RS-SRR 2.0, the LCBC Member States reaffirmed the importance of an inclusive and multisectoral approach involving various actors engaged in stabilisation, recovery, and resilience processes within the Lake Chad Basin. This approach recognises that the sustainable consolidation of peace and the strengthening of</p>
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community resilience require the active involvement of local stakeholders, especially civil society organisations, community leaders, women’s and youth organisations, and humanitarian and development partners. In this context, the active participation of these actors is a vital lever for enhancing the legitimacy of interventions, encouraging local ownership of initiatives, and improving the coordination of actions conducted at the territorial level.

The RS SRR 2.0 explicitly recognises the strategic role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) as grassroots actors, facilitators of community dialogue, service providers, and intermediaries of local governance. To this end, LCBC facilitated the establishment of a Regional Platform of Civil Society Organisations, which serves as a structured mechanism for coordination, dialogue, and consultation, and acts as a key entry point for CSO engagement in the implementation of interventions related to RS SRR 2.0 in the Lake Chad Basin.

However, the effectiveness of CSOs largely relies on the legal, regulatory, and institutional environment in which they operate. National frameworks present significant variations in terms of:

- legal recognition of CSOs
- registration procedures
- monitoring and oversight mechanisms
- access to financing
- participation in public policy
- civic space and freedom of association

To improve regional coordination and enhance the involvement of Civil Society Organisations in implementing RS-SRR 2.0, a thorough comparative analysis of the legal and institutional frameworks governing CSOs in the Lake Chad Basin countries is essential. The outcomes of this analysis will also support the implementation of the DIMS II project (CSO Directory and Information Management System – Phase II), which aims to strengthen the capacities and coordination of CSOs in border areas affected by the crisis. By providing an in-depth understanding of the legal and institutional frameworks and the coordination mechanisms of CSOs, the study will contribute to informing the information management and CSO mapping tools developed under the DIMS initiative, as well as guiding capacity-building actions and the structuring of CSO networks engaged in stabilisation, resilience and local development efforts in the Lake Chad Basin. The results of this study will also help guide the enhancement of the Regional CSO Platform, inform the development and execution of the Territorial Action Plans (TAPs), and support the improvement of regional coordination mechanisms between the LCBC, Member States, and partners involved in the stabilisation, recovery, and resilience of territories affected by the crisis.

This study, therefore, aims to establish a solid evidence base to guide reforms, enhance civil society participation, and support the effective implementation of RS-SRR 2.0, as set out in these Terms of Reference.

<p>Objectives</p>	<p>General Objective</p> <p>The general objective of the study is to conduct a comprehensive and comparative analysis of the legal, regulatory, and institutional framework governing CSOs on the one hand, and the internal governance of existing CSO networks in the Lake Chad Basin countries on the other. The objective is to identify constraints, opportunities, and recommendations for creating an enabling environment for their activities.</p> <p>Specific Objectives</p> <p>The study will pursue the following specific objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Conduct a comprehensive analysis of the legal, regulatory, and policy frameworks governing CSOs in the relevant countries, particularly focusing on provisions related to their establishment, registration, operation, financing, reporting obligations, and dissolution procedures. 2) Analyse the institutional framework that regulates or supports CSOs, including the mandates of relevant public institutions, coordination mechanisms, and dialogue and collaboration frameworks between the State and civil society at both national and local levels. 3) Assess the internal governance of CSO networks and their accountability systems, including organisational structures and operational mechanisms, as well as the needs for institutional strengthening and organisational development. 4) Identify the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities affecting the sustainability of CSOs, including regulatory requirements, financial viability challenges, operational risks, and factors that enhance their resilience and effectiveness. 5) Formulate operational and strategic recommendations to improve CSOs' eligibility criteria for the DIMS, strengthen their capacities, and reinforce CSO networks and the Regional CSO Platform.
<p>Scope</p>	<p>The study will cover the following countries: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Niger, Nigeria and Chad. The analysis will cover both the legal and institutional frameworks at the national level, as well as regulatory and institutional dynamics at the subnational level, particularly in the territories concerned by the implementation of the Territorial Action Plans (TAPs) of the RS SRR 2.0, where the involvement of Civil Society Organisations constitutes a key lever for stabilisation, recovery and resilience efforts.</p> <p>Main themes to be covered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Legal & regulatory framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laws governing associations, NGOs and foundations; • Registration and renewal procedures; • Tax and administrative obligations; • Rules governing national and international funding; • Possible restrictions on activities; • Compliance with international commitments;

	<p>b) Institutional environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministries and agencies responsible for CSOs; • National coordination bodies; • State–CSO dialogue platforms; • Public consultation mechanisms; • Transparency and effectiveness of regulatory institutions; <p>c) Coordination, partnerships and networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networks, national and regional platforms; • Thematic coalitions; • Cross-border cooperation;
<p>Methodology</p>	<p>The service provider shall propose a thorough, participatory, and comparative methodological approach that combines desk reviews, multi-stakeholder consultations, and the progressive validation of findings. This methodology must ensure the reliability of the data, the representativeness of the stakeholders, and the relevance of the recommendations formulated.</p> <p>To this end, the assignment will include the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth desk review of legal and policy documents, • Comparative analysis of national frameworks, • Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, • Consultations with national and regional CSOs, • Conflict-sensitive and gender-responsive approach, • Regional validation workshop (preparation of the concept note, support to facilitation, and preparation of the workshop report). <p>Furthermore, intermediate technical validation mechanisms will be organised with the LCBC and key territorial stakeholders at various stages of the assignment. These exchanges will enable the presentation of preliminary findings, the gathering of observations from relevant actors, and the verification of the consistency of the comparative analysis. They will also help improve ownership of the study’s conclusions and refine the recommendations before finalising the country reports and the regional report.</p>
<p>Expected Deliverables</p>	<p>The group of consultants or consulting firm shall produce:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inception Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Detailed methodology ○ Detailed work plan ○ Data collection tools ○ List of stakeholders to be consulted 2. Draft Country Reports (5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legal and institutional analysis ○ Assessment of CSO capacities and governance of existing CSO networks ○ Strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Specific recommendations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Draft consolidated regional analytical report (1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cross-cutting comparative analysis (identification of convergences and divergences) ○ Analysis of good practices ○ Regional Recommendations 4. A concept note for the regional validation workshop, including a proposal of key stakeholders (by country and at the regional level) to be invited to the regional validation workshop; 5. Five (5) final country reports and one (1) validated consolidated regional report (including amendments from stakeholders following the validation workshop); 6. One (1) validation workshop report; 7. Presentation materials of the consolidated regional report in PowerPoint or Power BI for dissemination.
Mission Duration	<p>The estimated duration is 8 to 12 weeks, including desk research, fieldwork, analysis, and validation. Indicatively, the assignment will be structured as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1: Inception and methodological scoping (1–2 weeks) • Phase 2: Data collection and national consultations (3–4 weeks) • Phase 3: Comparative analysis and drafting of country reports and regional report (2–3 weeks) • Phase 4: Preparation of the validation workshop, feedback and validation of outcomes (1–2 weeks) • Phase 5: Finalisation and submission of the final reports (1 week)
Administrative Arrangements	<p>The Executive Secretariat of LCBC will manage all administrative matters. The consultant will work under the supervision of the LCBC Technical Director and in close collaboration with the RS SRR 2.0 coordination unit.</p>
Profile and Qualifications	<p>This consultancy is open to groups of consultants or consulting firms. However, the team to be mobilised shall be composed of the following members:</p> <p>a) <u>Lead Consultant / Team Leader and Head of Mission</u></p> <p>The Lead Consultant will oversee the technical and scientific coordination of the study, supervise the research team, and ensure the overall quality of the deliverables.</p> <p>The Lead Consultant shall meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Academic Qualifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced university degree (minimum Master’s) in law, political science, governance, international relations, development studies or any other relevant field. — Professional Experience

- At least 10 years of relevant professional experience, including significant experience analysing public policies, governance, or the legal frameworks of civil society organisations.
- Proven experience in conducting complex legal and institutional analyses, including the assessment of regulatory frameworks and public policies.
- Demonstrated experience in supervising or managing large-scale studies, preferably funded by international organisations or regional bodies.
- Proven experience in comparing regulatory frameworks for CSOs or civic space.

— **Regional and multi-country experience**

- Demonstrated experience in conducting multi-country comparative studies, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa,
- Experience working in fragile contexts affected by conflict or humanitarian crises will be a major asset.
- Good knowledge of the political, security and institutional dynamics of the Lake Chad Basin, or of similar regions, is highly desirable.

— **Leadership and Coordination**

- Strong skills in managing multidisciplinary and multicultural teams.
- Proven ability to coordinate national experts and engage with government institutions, civil society organisations, and international partners.
- Excellent communication, facilitation and high-level consultation skills.

— **Analytical and writing skills**

- Excellent strategic analysis and synthesis skills.
- Proven experience in producing high-quality analytical reports for public decision-makers and international partners.
- Ability to formulate operational and policy recommendations based on evidence.

— **Language Proficiency**

- Proficiency in French or English, both written and spoken.
- Knowledge of the other official language will be considered a significant asset.

— **Technical Skills**

- Proficiency in standard computer tools (MS Office).
- Ability to use qualitative research tools and document analysis methods.

b) Five National Experts (one per country)

Under the supervision of the Lead Consultant, the National Experts will be responsible for data collection, contextual analysis, and liaison with national-level stakeholders.

They shall meet the following criteria:

— **Academic Qualifications**

- Advanced university degree (at least Master's) in law, political science, public administration, sociology, development studies, international relations or a related field.

— **Professional Experience**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least five (5) years of relevant professional experience in fields related to civil society, governance, public policy or development, • Proven experience in conducting studies, research or evaluations at the national level. • Good knowledge of the legal and institutional framework governing CSOs in the concerned country. • Experience working with civil society organisations, public institutions or technical and financial partners. <p style="margin-left: 40px;">— Sectoral Expertise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of national procedures for registering, operating, and supervising CSOs. • Good understanding of civic space dynamics, citizen participation issues, and mechanisms of State–civil society dialogue. • Experience in fragile or crisis-affected contexts will be considered an asset. <p style="margin-left: 40px;">— Research and Data Collection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven experience in qualitative research (interviews, focus groups, document analysis). • Ability to mobilise key stakeholders and facilitate access to information at the national level. • Strong skills in drafting structured analytical reports. <p style="margin-left: 40px;">— Coordination and Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work in a team and coordinate with the Lead Consultant and other National Experts. • Ability to interact effectively with diverse stakeholders, including public authorities, CSOs, international partners and researchers. • Good organisational skills and respect for deadlines. <p style="margin-left: 40px;">— Language Proficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficiency in the official language of the country (French or English). • Knowledge of other local languages will be considered an asset. <p style="margin-left: 40px;">— Technical Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good command of standard computer tools (MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint). • Ability to use virtual communication tools for remote meetings.
<p>Ethical Considerations</p>	<p>The study will respect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed consent • Confidentiality of data and informants • Neutrality and impartiality • The “Do No Harm” principle • Conflict sensitivity

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An administrative file for consulting firms, including but not limited to a Trade Register certificate (RCCM) or equivalent, a Certificate of registration or incorporation, a Tax Identification Number (TIN) or any equivalent document, as well as a certificate of tax compliance or proof of good standing with tax authorities. • A detailed CV of the Lead Consultant and each National Consultant. • A methodological note detailing the understanding of the assignment and the proposed approach for executing the mission, including the analytical approach, data collection strategy, comparative methodology, and team organisation. • References and justification for similar assignments conducted over the past five (5) years (ideally at least three experiences). • A financial proposal; 															
Selection Criteria	Consultants will be evaluated based on their technical and financial offers by the selection method based on consultants' qualifications (CQ).															
Methods of payment	<p>Payments will be made for deliverables that are effectively produced, accepted, and validated, upon certification of satisfactory performance by the competent authority of the LCBC.</p> <p>Disbursements will be conducted according to the following schedule:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Payment Instalment</th> <th>Deliverables</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1st Instalment</td> <td>Inception Report including detailed methodology, work plan, timeline, data collection tools, and a list of stakeholders to be consulted.</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2nd Instalment</td> <td>Preliminary country reports and the initial version of the regional analytical report, including the situation analysis, initial findings, and key observations.</td> <td>50%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3rd Instalment</td> <td>Final country reports (5), consolidated regional report, and validation workshop report.</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td></td> <td>100%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Payment Instalment	Deliverables	Percentage	1st Instalment	Inception Report including detailed methodology, work plan, timeline, data collection tools, and a list of stakeholders to be consulted.	20%	2nd Instalment	Preliminary country reports and the initial version of the regional analytical report, including the situation analysis, initial findings, and key observations.	50%	3rd Instalment	Final country reports (5), consolidated regional report, and validation workshop report.	30%	Total		100%
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Submission of Applications	<p>The Candidate's file shall be sent to the following address: cblt.lcbc@gmail.com, cab@cblt.org, copy to RegionalStrategy@cblt.org or submitted directly at the headquarters of LCBC with acknowledgement of receipt no later than 10 April 2026 at 16:00 (UTC +1).</p> <p>The application file shall be labelled: "Application for RS SRR 2.0 – Study on CSOs in the countries of the Lake Chad Basin"</p>															

N'Djamena, 18 MARS 2026


IBRAHIM BABANI (Amb.)
 Executive Secretary
