

INVITATION TO TENDER

CONSULTANCY TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

ASSESSMENT OF COLLABORATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (CDR) STRUCTURES IN NORTHEAST AND PLATEAU STATE OF NIGERIA

I. INTRODUCTION

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is an independent, humanitarian non-governmental organization that provides assistance, protection, and durable solutions to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) worldwide. NRC has been operational in Northeast Nigeria since 2015 and expanded its operations to Plateau State in North-Central Nigeria in 2022. The organization implements integrated core competencies, including Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Shelter, Education, Food Security, and Information, Counselling, and Legal Assistance (ICLA).

The ICLA programme aims to support Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), returnees, and host community members in claiming and exercising their Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) rights. This is achieved through the provision of information, counselling, and legal assistance, as well as the strengthening of institutional and community-level capacities to prevent and respond to HLP violations. HLP rights are central to achieving durable solutions and ensuring equitable access to land and housing for displacement-affected populations in Northeast Nigeria.

Since 2017, NRC has been providing capacity-building, technical, and material support to customary and traditional community dispute resolution structures in Nigeria. This support aims to empower trusted community leaders to resolve disputes in a sustainable manner, in alignment with human rights standards and the 'do no harm' principle.

II. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Access to HLP rights remains a significant challenge for displaced persons in Northeast Nigeria. Over 1.4 million people across the Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe (BAY) states require HLP support, as access to adequate housing, land, and property rights remains limited [HNO 2024].

Displacement-affected populations in BAY states face various HLP challenges, including precarious tenure arrangements, forced evictions, inadequate housing, forced relocations, destruction of property, encroachment on land, boundary disputes, and conflicting ownership claims. IDPs returnees often find that their land has been occupied or encroached upon by neighbours or family members. Without formal proof of ownership, they have limited options for reclaiming their land and property, weakening their security of tenure. Moreover, due to cultural norms and customary practices, women often face systemic disadvantages in accessing and

inheriting property. In many cases, inheritance rights favour male relatives leaving women particularly vulnerable to HLP violations during and after displacement.

Similarly, in Plateau State, North-Central Nigeria, tenure insecurity remains a significant challenge, particularly among renters and land users [NRC MSNA 2023]. An alarming 76% of individuals residing in rented houses or on rented land reported having no formal tenancy or lease agreements. This lack of documentation exposes a large segment of the population to increased risks of forced eviction, land disputes, and other violations of housing, land, and property (HLP) rights. The situation is equally concerning for those living in self-owned houses or on self-owned land, with 81% lacking any form of ownership documentation—representing the highest rate of undocumented ownership among the states assessed.

While both legal and community-based mechanisms for dispute resolution exist, they are often insufficient, inaccessible, or unaffordable for vulnerable populations. Statutory legal systems are particularly costly, and many customary and/ or traditional dispute resolution structures—although generally accepted and trusted—have been weakened by years of conflict and insecurity.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

To improve the quality and effectiveness of services, NRC and other stakeholders require a comprehensive understanding of existing Collaborative Dispute Resolution (CDR) structures in Northeast Nigeria and Plateau.

1. MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE CONSULTANCY

The primary objective of this consultancy is to map, assess, and analyse Collaborative dispute resolution mechanisms in Plateau and Northeast Nigeria. Specifically, it aims to understand their structure, functions, and effectiveness in facilitating access to justice for displacement-affected populations, with particular emphasis on Housing, Land, and Property rights.

2. SUB OBJECTIVES

The sub-objectives of the consultancy include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying the key drivers of land disputes related to displacement or affecting displaced populations in Plateau and Northeast Nigeria.
- Mapping the types and typologies of HLP disputes occurring in areas of displacement or return, with a focus on both urban and rural settings.
- Identifying and analysing formal HLP dispute resolution mechanisms across Plateau and Northeast Nigeria, including an assessment of their strengths and limitations.
- Mapping traditional, customary, religious, alternative, and collaborative dispute resolution mechanisms used by displacement-affected populations in the target

locations, specifically in relation to HLP. Highlight the strengths and weaknesses across these various channels.

- Assessing the legal status of customary and or the traditional dispute resolution structures and analysing the relevant legal and policy frameworks.
- Examining the roles of customary, religious, and traditional actors and how they interface with the formal justice system.
- Exploring displaced women's access to justice through customary or traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, including barriers and enablers.
- Evaluating the nature of work conducted by these actors and the extent to which their practices align with human rights standards and NRC's CDR minimum standards.
- Comparing the effectiveness and efficiency of collaborative dispute resolution structures with the formal justice system.
- Assessing the perceptions and trust levels of displacement-affected communities toward these structures.
- Identifying key challenges and institutional, social, or operational barriers faced by collaborative dispute resolution actors (i.e. customary, traditional or religious) in carrying out their roles.
- Providing clear guidance on how the NRC ICLA programme can effectively advance the rights of displaced persons—particularly women and other vulnerable groups—through its collaborative dispute resolution initiatives.

3. GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

The target locations for this consultancy are Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe (BAY) states in Northeast Nigeria, as well as Plateau State in North Central Nigeria. While NRC has operational presence in Borno, Adamawa, and Plateau states, we do not currently have a presence in Yobe. Therefore, data collection in Yobe can be conducted either remotely or through partner organisations.

4. METHODOLOGY

While the exact methodology will be finalized once the consultant is contracted, the following methods should be considered:

- Literature review and desk study of relevant documentation in relation to HLP and CDR
- Key informant interviews (KIIs) and stakeholder consultation with local authorities, community leaders, religious leaders, tribal chiefs, key humanitarian and development actors.
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): structured FGDs held with displacement affected and host communities to understand the practice, main trends and patterns, barriers, needs and gaps. Number, composition and structure of FGDs to be determined by the consultant and the ICLA team.
- Field visits including observation of case handling by dispute resolution authorities (where possible).

- Conduct a workshop with ICLA staff to review current practices and identify potential programmatic opportunities and areas for improvement.
- The consultant is expected to present initial findings to key stakeholders during the final week of the research.

5. ETHICS, CONSENT AND DATA PROTECTION

The consultant must ensure adherence to NRC's Code of Conduct, ethical research principles, and data protection protocols throughout the assignment. Informed consent must be obtained from all respondents, and sensitive information will be protected, particularly data concerning vulnerable groups.

6. DURATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The assignment is expected to last approximately 8 -10 weeks, of which four to five weeks will be spent in the field. However, this timeline may be adjusted based on the final agreed methodology.

7. EXPECTED RESULTS

The consultant is expected to deliver the following key outputs:

- **Inception Report:** Submit a comprehensive inception report that includes a review and analysis of relevant secondary data, detailed data collection methodology, tools, and a work plan outlining key milestones and timelines.
- **Field Engagement and Documentation:** Conduct field visits over a period of a few weeks to gather primary data. This should include documented accounts of focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs), and observation reports from the field.
- **Stakeholder Workshop:** Facilitate a validation workshop with relevant NRC Nigeria staff to present preliminary findings, validate insights, and brainstorm proposed interventions.
- **Final Report:** Submit a detailed final report (maximum 40 pages) that maps and analyses HLP-related collaborative dispute resolution (CDR) structures and mechanisms in the targeted locations. The report should address the objectives and sub-objectives outlined in the ToR and provide clear recommendations on how the ICLA programme can effectively engage with these structures to improve access to justice for displacement-affected populations.
 - **Summary presentation:** The consultant will prepare a clear, visually engaging PowerPoint presentation (maximum 20 slides) summarizing the key findings, analysis, and recommendations from the final report on HLP-related collaborative dispute resolution (CDR) structures and mechanisms in the targeted locations.
- **Policy brief:** Submit a targeted Policy Brief (maximum 5 pages) derived from the final report's analysis of HLP-related collaborative dispute resolution (CDR) structures and

mechanisms in the targeted locations. The Policy Brief will be aimed at policymakers, government authorities, humanitarian and development actors, and other relevant stakeholders involved in access to justice and durable solutions programming.

IV. MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

A reference group comprising the ICLA Specialist, Head of Programme, Area Manager(s), and ICLA Manager will oversee the consultancy. The ICLA Specialist will lead the overall coordination and management of the consultancy, working closely with the ICLA Area Leads. In addition, the ICLA Specialist will serve as the primary focal point for the consultant, offering technical support and ensuring alignment with NRC's ICLA objectives throughout the assignment.

V. QUALIFICATIONS

The consultant (individual or team) must demonstrate strong professional experience and relevant qualifications, including:

- A minimum of seven (7) years of proven experience conducting similar research (i.e. HLP and /or CDR) within emergency, humanitarian, or development contexts.
- Demonstrated experience in legal research, including an understanding of international and national legal frameworks, collating legal data, case information, and presenting comprehensive legal analyses.
- Proficiency in both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, with strong analytical skills. Proven ability to apply participatory and inclusive data collection methodologies.
- Technical expertise in assessing HLP dispute resolution mechanisms and the ability to draw clear, evidence-based conclusions and recommendations.
- Knowledge of the Nigerian legal system, especially as it relates to land, housing, and collaborative dispute resolution mechanisms.
- Fluency in written and spoken English is required for all team members.
- Demonstrated experience in applying conflict-sensitive approaches throughout data collection and analysis processes.
- Experience in mainstreaming cross-cutting issues such as age, gender, diversity, and protection into research and programming.
- Previous experience working with NRC and familiarity with the ICLA programme will be considered a distinct advantage.
- Consultants must declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest when submitting their application.

VI. SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Consultants who meet the above requirements are invited to submit an expression of interest, which should include the following:

1. **Cover letter:** A short (maximum 1 and ½ pages) letter addressing suitability for the assignment and current contact information and the dates of availability for the assignment.
2. **Consultant's Profile:** (maximum 5 pages) through a concise CV or resume
3. **Previous Experience:** an inception report containing a summary of how you expect to plan to conduct the research including expected challenges, a brief explanation about the consultant with particular emphasis on previous experience in this kind of work. Provide three samples of previous professional writing, demonstration of understanding of the TORs and the tasks to be accomplished and supporting evidence showing relevant experience.
4. **Financial Proposal :** A financial proposal for the consultancy fully explaining how the task will be accomplished

Please note: Local Tax law will be applicable for the proposed amount.

VII. Application Procedure

Attach your CAC, TCC, Company profile Including CV of staff and Evidence of similar experiences to your application.

All applications must be submitted to ng.tenders@nrc.no no later than **Monday, 7th July 2025, at 12:00 p.m.** Nigeria time.

Late submissions will not be considered.

The application should be titled: **"ITB 26/NRC-NAT/NG/2025-Assessment of CDR structures"** clearly stated in the subject line. in the e-mail subject.