

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS Policy Brief

Competition over resources at the border in coastal countries: How violent extremism exacerbates intercommunal tensions

Issuance date: 11 November 2024

Application Deadline and Instructions: Applications must be received by 1 December 2024. All applications must be submitted electronically to recapsecretariat@wanep.org with, in the subject line "PB-VE Natural resources".

1. Introduction

The Research and Action for Peace (RECAP) project, funded by the European Union, is implemented by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in 18 countries of West Africa and the Lake Chad Basin¹. The overall objective of the project is to strengthen the role of civil society, including regional, national, and community practitioners and researchers, in the promotion of effective peacebuilding, crisis management, and prevention of conflict and violent extremism in West Africa and the Lake Chad Basin to enable more informed decision making by policymakers. The present call is administrated jointly by WANEP, SIPRI, and DRC.

2. Rationale

The policy briefs aim to improve practices and policies to prevent conflict, violent extremism, and peacebuilding in West Africa and the Lake Chad Basin. Selected researcher(s) are expected to produce high-quality policy briefs based on desk research to identify and address, among others, the policy gaps and challenges on the chosen theme/topic with actionable recommendations to international, regional, and national policymakers.

WANEP, DRC and SIPRI are soliciting proposals for research from RECAP network members for the development of a policy brief in English or in French on **competition over resources at the border in coastal countries and how violent extremism exacerbates intercommunal tensions**.

For this policy brief, the author(s) are invited to **select a cross-border area** where the management of natural resources is a key concern (for ex. national parks such as Arly National Park in Burkina Faso, Pendjari National Park in Benin and Comoé National Park in Ivory Coast, except W National Park in Benin). Other cross-border areas are welcome.

3. Background

Coastal border regions in West Africa are endowed with significant natural resources, including fisheries, minerals, and arable land, making them key economic zones. However, resource abundance also fuels

¹ ECOWAS countries and Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Cameroon, Chad and Mauritania.

competition and can, under some circumstances, lead to intercommunal conflicts, particularly in regions where governance structures are weak and borders are porous.

In recent years, violent extremist groups have worsened these tensions by exploiting local grievances related to resource management. Non-state armed groups not only deepen existing tensions but also exploit economic vulnerabilities as a tool for recruitment and further destabilize border areas. The encroachment of violent extremist groups into key natural sites is also rising in West Africa. Recent research shows that militancy has expanded into Park W, a major conservation area located at the intersection of Benin, Burkina Faso, and Niger.² Using the park as an operational base, jihadist groups threaten biodiversity and have intensified tensions between local farmers and herders over land and water resources. Previous research also highlighted the case of Nigeria's Sambisa Forest where Boko Haram activities have led to environmental degradation.³

4. Objective of the consultancy

The overall aim of this study is to produce an evidence-based policy brief that examines how violent extremism exacerbates intercommunal tensions related to natural resource competition in coastal border areas in West Africa.

The paper will investigate the nature of resource competition in coastal border regions, focusing on how contested resources like fisheries, minerals, and land contribute to conflicts both between and within communities. Additionally, the research paper will analyze how violent extremism interacts with resource competition in coastal border regions, exploring case studies that illustrate the ways in which extremist groups fuel conflicts and the broader implications for regional security and development.

More specifically, the objectives of this policy brief are as follows:

- A context analysis to understand the specific context of the selected cross-border region and the implications of violent extremism in this context, both in terms of impact on community relations and the management of natural resources;
- A stakeholder analysis, including a focus on the non-state armed groups involved, the communities impacted, local/national/regional and international stakeholders engaged in the prevention and countering of violent extremism and the management of natural resources;
- An assessment of the achievements and challenges to preventing violent extremism, to conflict resolution and to environmental protection.

Finally, this study will provide actionable recommendations for the stakeholders concerned to curb the threat of violent extremism on community tensions and improve the management of natural resources to foster social cohesion between communities.

4. Scope of work

The researcher(s) will be responsible for the implementation of all stages of the study, from the design of the methodology to the drafting of the final report, including document review and data collection in the field. The researcher(s) will apply the highest standards of rigour, quality and professionalism.

To achieve the objectives, the researcher(s) will carry out the following tasks:

- Carry out a literature review based on existing documentation (scientific and academic literature, NGO reports) to provide a summary of current knowledge on the subject
- Conduct key informant interviews with the main stakeholders, especially regional and local

² International Crisis Group, (2023), [Containing Militancy in West Africa's Park W](#), Report N.310.

³ Olaniyan, A., (2018), "Once Upon a Game Reserve: Sambisa and the Tragedy of a Forested Landscape", *Arcadia* in International Crisis Group, (2023), [Containing Militancy in West Africa's Park W](#), Report N.310.

authorities, impacted communities, international/regional/national and local stakeholders engaged in the prevention and countering of violent extremism in West Africa, international/regional/national and local actors involved in environmental protection, etc.

- Drawing up a preliminary preparatory report highlighting: the definition of the subject of the study; the research and data collection methodology to be used in the field; the methodological approach to data processing and analysis adopted; the findings and conclusions of the literature review.
- Write the Policy brief based on the analysis of the desk review, including comments received from the REcAP Scientific Committee and EU FPI.
- Produce a high-quality policy brief as a resource or tool for advocacy and policy discourse.
- Produce a PPT presentation of the conclusions, which will be presented to the REcAP Network, the EU and interested stakeholders and partners.

4. Expected deliverables & timeline

The researcher(s) will be expected to deliver to the Project Secretariat:

- A policy brief on the selected topic in English or French.
- The policy brief should not exceed three thousand words (3,000), excluding the cover page, the executive summary, the table of content, and references (single spacing using Calibri 12).
- The researcher(s) will provide the deliverables by e-mail to the Project Secretariat (recapsecretariat@wanep.org).
- The researcher(s) might be invited to a virtual meeting with REcAP’s Scientific Committee to discuss the contents, including policy claims and positions, intellectual arguments, and any other issues.

Expected deliverables	Indicative description	Maximum expected timeframe
Draft Policy Brief	Desk research, work meetings and analysis. The draft Policy Brief embedded with in-depth situation analysis, key findings and action-oriented recommendations is presented to the REcAP Scientific Committee. The researcher might be invited to a virtual meeting with REcAP’s Scientific Committee and the EU FPI to discuss the findings.	15 working days
<i>Comments</i>	<i>Comments & feedback from the Scientific Committee and/or the EU FPI</i>	<i>7 working days</i>
Final Policy Brief	Final version taking into consideration comments & feedbacks from the Scientific Committee and/or the EU FPI	7 working days

5. Duration of Assignment and payment schedule

- The assignment is expected to last one month (20 working days) from the contract signature date.
- The payment will be made in one instalment upon approval by the Scientific Committee of the final version of the deliverable.
- The maximum budget available for a policy brief is two thousand euros (2,000 EUR).

6. Qualifications

Interested researcher(s) are expected to have the following qualifications:

- Be a member or an aspirant member of the REcAP Network. Members of the REcAP’s Scientific Committee cannot apply. However, other researchers from their respective organisations can

apply.

- Have a Master's degree or PhD in a relevant field.
- Have research experience in the selected themes/topics.
- Excellent command of French (spoken, read, and written) or English (spoken, read, and written). Working knowledge of the other one and knowledge of Portuguese are considered advantages.

7. Application

Interested researcher(s) should submit the following documents to the REcAP Project Secretariat (recapsecretariat@wanep.org) before **23:59 GMT on 1 December 2024**.

- One page statement of Interest presenting an interesting and innovative angle to approach the theme.
- A CV with an updated list of publications.
- Two examples of policy briefs or similar documents published.

Only the shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

8. Evaluation criteria for research proposals

The following criteria will be used by the Scientific committee to evaluate research proposals:

No.	Criteria	Max. Score
1	Education: Master's degree or PhD in a relevant field;	10
2	Languages: Excellent command of French (spoken, read, and written) or English (spoken, read, and written). Working knowledge of the other one. Knowledge of Portuguese is considered as an advantage.	10
3	Research Experience: At least 3 years of research. Familiarity and knowledge of the selected topic/theme as well as evidence of previous research experience in the selected theme/topic	20
4	Relevance technical narrative proposal: Does the research proposal address the objective of the research? Are the research objectives and research questions well-constructed and easily understood? Do they align with the research problem?	25
5	Methodology: Technical soundness and quality of the proposed methodology including understanding of the assignment and innovativeness of the approach to undertake it.	25
6	Overall quality of proposal: the degree to which the proposal complies with the application guidelines and is of high quality (table of contents, organization, pagination, margin and font size, ideas effectively presented, referencing, well prepared vitae etc.)	10