

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS WORKING PAPER

Prevention of violent extremism and perceptions of security in coastal countries: a comparative study of the strategies of Côte d'Ivoire and Benin to counter the spread of violent extremism

Issuance date: 4 february 2025

Application Deadline and Instructions:

Applications must be received by 3 March 2025

All applications must be submitted electronically to pauline.poupart@sipri.org and marie.rigquier@sipri.org with, in the subject line "WP – PVE".

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

WANEP, DRC and SIPRI are soliciting proposals for research from RECAP network members for the development of a working paper on **Prevention of Violent Extremism and perceptions of security in coastal countries: a comparative study of the strategies of Côte d'Ivoire and Benin to counter the spread of violent extremism**.

In this context, the study will assess the effectiveness of past and current Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) programs in Côte d'Ivoire and Benin, while taking into consideration the different context of the two countries. The working paper will also identify the stakeholders involved in past and current PVE programs, as well as challenges that the military coup in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger might entail for them. This work will provide a comparison between the two countries in order to identify best practices, and where appropriate, note the gaps in previous PVE implementation and pitfalls to be avoided.

2.1 Background

The southward advance of violent extremist groups present in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger (JNIM, ISGS-ISSP, ISWAP)² is a growing issue in the coastal countries of West Africa. Côte d'Ivoire and Benin have already

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

² Namely *Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin* associated with Al Qaida; the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara that evolved in the Islamic State-Sahel Province; and the Islamic State's West Africa Province.

suffered attacks claimed by these groups, including the Grand Bassam attack on 13 March 2016³ and the June 2020 attack on a joint gendarmerie and army post in Kofolo⁴ in Côte d'Ivoire, and the attacks on 24 and 25 July 2024 in Benin's Parc W⁵, which resulted in the deaths of 5 forest rangers and 7 Beninese soldiers. These events highlighted the vulnerability of these countries to terrorist groups present in neighbouring countries and the need for coastal states to react in terms of prevention.

Côte d'Ivoire and Benin have two very different contexts which have a big impact on their PVE strategy and their efficiency. In the past ten years Côte d'Ivoire had succeeded in stemming the risk of expansion of terrorist groups in the North of the country, notably by developing cross-border cooperation with Burkina Faso⁶. Aware of the importance of social cohesion for the PVE, the government has also invested in economic support programmes and the renovation of roads, water and electricity services, in parallel with the restructuring of the army. However, certain territories remain poorly controlled by the government and illegal gold-panning activities in the North are regularly documented in the national and international press.⁷ In Benin the government has invested in the reinforcement of his military forces at the boarder while creating l'Agence Béninoise de Gestion Intégrée des Espaces Frontaliers⁸ to implement a multidimensional strategy including security, prevention and development for the communities living close to the border.

While the situation in Côte d'Ivoire has improved, the country remains vulnerable to the spread of violent extremism due to its porous border in Comoé Park, the presence of unresolved conflicts between farmers and herders, and the vulnerability of populations living close to the border. In Benin, the situation continues to deteriorate, raising questions about the effectiveness of the policies put in place by the government.

2.2 Objective of the consultancy

WANEP, DRC and SIPRI are soliciting applications from Members of the REcAP Network to produce a working paper on **PVE and perceptions of security in coastal countries: a comparative study of the strategies of Côte d'Ivoire and Benin to counter the spread of violent extremism.**

The overall aim of this study is to produce an evidence-based working paper that will serve as a tool for influencing policy and practice with a view to improving PVE programs and general security in the coastal countries of West Africa. The study should propose practical recommendations that can be applied by the stakeholders concerned.

In this context, the study will thoroughly assess the state of the PVE Côte d'Ivoire and Benin, particularly it will analyse and compare their effectiveness, challenges and gaps in order to inform future policies in the country and the Sahel.

More specifically, the objectives of this working paper are as follows:

- An assessment of the PVE policies and programming framework to examine their effectiveness in order to determine gaps and identify potential better practices;

³ France 24, 31 mars 2023, Seven years on, Ivorian beach resort of Grand-Bassam still scarred by deadly attack, <https://www.france24.com/en/tv-shows/revisited/20230331-seven-years-on-ivorian-beach-resort-of-grand-bassam-still-scarred-by-deadly-attack>

⁴ RFI, 11 juin 2020, Côte d'Ivoire: une attaque attribuée à des jihadistes vise des militaires dans le Nord <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20200611-c%C3%B4te-divoire-une-attaque-attribu%C3%A9e-%C3%A0-jihadistes-vise-militaires-le-nord>

⁵ Africa News, 13 aout 2024, 7 security forces and 5 rangers killed in Benin national park as jihadi violence takes root, <https://www.africanews.com/2024/07/29/7-security-forces-and-5-rangers-killed-in-benin-national-park-as-jihadi-violence-takes-root/>

⁶ IOM, 21 décembre 2018, Côte d'Ivoire inaugurates a new border post at the border with Burkina, <https://rodakar.iom.int/news/cote-divoire-inaugurates-new-border-post-border-burkina>

⁷ ISS, aout 2024, Liens entre extrémisme violent et activités illicites en Côte d'Ivoire, <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/war-44-fr.pdf>

⁸ L' ABeGIEF a été créé en 2012 par le décret N°2012-503 afin d'apporter une amélioration aux conditions de vie des populations dans les Espaces frontaliers. <https://www.abegief.bj/>

- A problem analysis containing
 - o A stakeholder analysis, including identification and analysis of the needs and challenges of key stakeholders (national governments, ECOWAS, EU, UN, CSOs, etc.);
 - o An assessment of the role of PVE failure in the most recent attacks, if any;
 - o An assessment of the current state of PVE in the two countries;
- A comparison of PVE in the two countries in terms of past experiences and the evolution of the process since the first attacks by violent groups on their territory;
- An Identification of best practices and recommendations to improve their national policies and guide future international support on PVE in these countries.

The working paper's findings and recommendations should contribute to understanding the shortcomings and provide concrete and evidence-based recommendations to stakeholders to address the highlighted challenges.

This working paper will be presented by its author and discussed during a REcAP Network online research "Meet Up" with fellow authors, members of the REcAP network, the EU and interested stakeholders and partners.

3. Scope of work and methodology

The researcher(s) or institution should clarify their research question, methodology, geographical scope and work plan in their proposal, indicating how the objectives of the research and working paper will be achieved.

The study should cover the two countries previously mentioned: Benin and Côte d'Ivoire.

The researcher(s) will be responsible for implementing 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 rigour, quality and professionalism standards.

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.
- Drawing up a **preliminary preparatory report** (inception 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. It will be validated together with the Scientific Committee as part of the Inception report.
- Conduct **key informant interviews with main stakeholders**, especially representatives of local organisations in contact with impacted populations, representatives of national institutions involved in PVE programs and interventions, and regional and international institutions and organisations supporting these programs.
- **Write the first draft of the working paper based** on the analysis of the desk review.
- **Write the final draft of the working paper** including comments received from the REcAP Scientific Committee and EU FPI.

- Produce a high-quality working paper as a **resource or tool for advocacy and policy discourse**.
- **Produce a PPT presentation** of the conclusions, which will be presented during research “Meet Up” to the REcAP Network, the EU and interested stakeholders and partners.

If travel is required, the researcher(s) or institution will be responsible to arrange transportation, accommodation, insurance, securing proper visas and research authorizations for their research activities and to make adequate provision in the Financial Proposal. The researcher(s) or institution is also responsible for any staff or sub-consultant they may engage as part of this mission. The final research product is subject to REcAP’s internal review and editing process, and the researcher(s) or institution will resolve all necessary revisions within the scope of the contract.

Based on a request from the REcAP Project Secretariat, and conditional on the final product not revealing information that can put anyone or an organization in danger, the researcher(s) or institution might present a briefing of the findings for the public with a focus on targeting practitioners in the field, policymakers, and financial and technical partners.

4. Expected deliverables & timeline

The Researcher(s) or institution will submit the following deliverables as mentioned below and according to the proposed timeline:

- A working paper in **French**.

The working paper should be approximately thirty (30) pages, excluding the cover page, the executive summary in French and English (no more than one page each) , the table of contents, the list of abbreviations and acronyms, the list of references (single spacing using Calibri 12) and the appendices. Appendices should include at least the list of people met/interviewed and any other tool or element required to assess the methodology used for the study.

- The researcher(s) will provide the deliverables by e-mail to the Project Secretariat: marie.riquier@sipri.org and pauline.poupart@sipri.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 other issues.

Expected deliverables	Indicative description	Maximum expected timeframe
Inception report	Inception meeting with project secretariat and/or Scientific Committee to clarify ToRs. The contents will include methods, approaches, research tools, calendar, detailed research questions as well as approaches to be adopted to supervise and support countries experts.	5 working days after signing the contract
<i>Comments</i>	<i>Comments & Feedback from the project secretariat or Scientific Committee</i>	2 working days
Draft working paper	Desk research, work meetings and analysis. The draft working paper 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.	20 working days
<i>Comments</i>	<i>Comments & feedback from the Scientific Committee and/or the EU FPI</i>	7 working days
Final working paper	Final version taking into consideration comments & feedback 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 for 32 working days throughout a maximum of two (2) months from the contract signature date.
- The maximum budget available per working paper is six thousand euros (6,000 EUR).
- The payment schedule will be as follows:

Instalments	Indicative description	%
First instalment	Upon approval of the Inception report	30%
Last instalment	Upon approval of the Final version	70%

6. Qualifications

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

- Be a member or a prospective 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.
- At least 3 years of research experience in the field of Security Sector Reform and/or Security Sector Governance
- Proficient French (spoken, read, and written)
- Excellent command of English (spoken, read and written)
- Female researchers are strongly encouraged to apply.

7. Application

Interested researcher(s) should submit the following documents to the REcAP Project Secretariat (pauline.poupart@sipri.org and marie.riquier@sipri.org) before **23:59 GMT on 3 March 2025**.

- a **technical narrative proposal** demonstrating the technical and operational capacity of the researcher(s) or institution and his/her team to carry out the assignment within the given timeframe, with an updated curricula vitae of the lead expert and the overall approach and methodology with proposed timeline. If you plan to work with additional colleagues, describe their role, their level of knowledge, and how their experience is related and beneficial. Describe the overall staffing plan for the project.
- a **financial proposal** detailing the estimated number of working days and fee rate per expert mobilised, transport and subsistence costs (in case of missions) and other reimbursable costs required to fulfil the assignment. The amount of VAT/indirect tax, if applicable, must be indicated separately. Purchase of mobile phones or computers is not eligible. As the project financing this research is funded by the European Union, the financial proposal must be in Euros (EUR).

Only those shortlisted 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). Proficient in English (spoken, read, and written).	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