



CALL FOR CONSULTANCY

Regional research on political, social, and economic contributions and reimagining role of civil society organisations in West Africa

Type of contract	External research consultancy
Contractor	West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI)
Project Title	Contribution of Civil society Organisations in West Africa to the social, economic, and political development of the region
Published date	March 2022
Deadline for submission	18 April 2022
Start date of the project	April 2022
End of project	31 August 2022

About WACSI

WACSI is a civil society organisation established by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) in 2005 to reinforce the capacities of civil society in the sub-region towards a peaceful and prosperous West Africa where development is driven by its people. The Institute seeks to strengthen civil society in West Africa to be responsive, collaborative, representative, resilient and influential through knowledge sharing, learning, connecting and influencing. WACSI operates in the fifteen ECOWAS member states, including Cameroon, Mauritania, and Chad. The Institute has been at the forefront of championing the contribution of civil society organisations towards the region's development.

Summary of services required

WACSI wishes to hire a consultant to conduct regional research on the contribution of civil society organisations to the economic, social, and political development of West Africa. The research should further explore what innovative role(s) civil society can play to accelerate the social, economic and political development of the sub-region. Output from this research will be used for further regional engagements with civil society in the region to sharpen their strategic engagements in priority areas that require civil society's indispensable contributions.

Background

West Africa has undergone different development patterns, many driven by civil society organisations (CSOs) within and out of the region. With the increasing number of registered and unregistered CSOs, the region has witnessed improvements in conflict prevention and management, fiscal transparency, trade, elections, regional integration, humanitarian crisis management, disaster management, etc. These are key indicators for socio-political and economic development. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the world saw a bold move from

CSOs advocating, influencing policies and playing a frontline role in the fight against the deadly virus while keeping the government in check.¹

Although it is generally accepted that the West African region needs a sustainable development agenda and implementation plan, it is unsettled whether civil society is the appropriate vehicle to drive such development (Obadare, 2015). However, one may not blame the origin of this assertion since many CSOs are also characterised by corruption and sometimes used as a strategy for tax evasion, money laundering, syphoning of money, etc.

For these reasons and many more, CSOs' 'civility' and the effectiveness of their contribution to economic and political development in West Africa – and Africa at large – are often questioned (Makuwira, 2016). Often, there are no identifiable or clear-cut CSO-driven development initiatives that continuously impact while ensuring fairness and equity to beneficiaries. This is not to say that these CSOs do not exist. They exist, but there is no mechanism or framework to identify them and track their impacts.

CSOs play an important role in bridging the gap between the government and the citizenry while giving people the opportunity to participate in developing policies that affect them (Loada & Moderan, 2015). Undoubtedly, CSOs have an important value and contribution to development, although this might seemingly not be too evident. The reason for this is not farfetched. Many CSOs consist of social movements which are largely informal and often lack adequate financial resources to champion agendas of their own. Furthermore, some do not have robust systems and infrastructures in place to document and publicise their activities. There is also a gap in academic/market-based research that seeks to highlight the contributions of CSOs to development in the region. Although some toolkits,² reports,³ articles, etc., have been published on this topic by different institutions, many of these papers only state the retrospective role of CSOs in development in West Africa. As a result, there is limited definite or substantial documentation on the contribution of civil society in the region.

Against this backdrop, this research serves as a timely intervention for highlighting the added value of CSOs to the development landscape in West Africa. Specifically, the research will examine the extent of CSOs' socio-political and economic contribution to development in West Africa in recent years and their reimagining role.

Goal

This research aims to document the extent to which CSOs have influenced (contributed to) social, political and economic development in West Africa and the innovative roles they can uphold to realise such in West Africa.

Objectives

1. To identify the economic contributions of civil society organisations in West Africa
2. To identify the social and political contribution of civil society organisations in West Africa
3. To define and document the role the civil society sector in West Africa can play towards the sustainable development of the sub-region.

Methodology

The study envisions employing mixed research methods that include quantitative and qualitative approaches. This will entail: a review of the literature, a desk review of secondary data, a survey, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. The research will be conducted in English and French throughout West Africa. The study samples will be representative of the various types of civil society organisations in the sub-region.

Scope of work

The consultant will be required to lead on the following tasks in consultation with WACSI.

- Framing and understanding of the research scope.
- Developing research approach for approval by WACSI.
- Conducting literature review.
- Designing research instruments for approval by WACSI.
- Collecting data and analysing the data.
- Developing research report and submission of the initial draft for review and feedback.
- Presentation of initial findings from the research to WACSI.
- Reviewing and submitting the final research report.
- Leading an information session with a broad-based pool of development stakeholders in West Africa on the research findings. An appropriate date for this will be agreed upon by both the researchers and WACSI and could be organised on an agreed date after August 2022.

Deliverables

The consultant will deliver the following outputs

- Inception report
- Data collection tools
- Draft report
- PowerPoint presentation
- Final report
- Delivery of cleaned data sets (in SPSS or Excel, interview transcripts; and the Syntaxes in Word) from the administration of quantitative questionnaires
- Delivery of summarised qualitative data from administered qualitative interview protocols

Application process

- The consultant should submit a technical proposal and budget demonstrating understanding of the scope of work and detailed methodology for the study (maximum of five pages using Georgia font size 11 and single line spacing).
- The proposal should include timelines and the roles and capacity of the research team.
- The timeline should detail the workflow from the project start date to the end date.
- The proposal budget should have sufficient details to allow for the evaluation of elements of costs proposed. Budgets should be submitted in United States dollars and include the cost breakdown per deliverable. Applicants should also indicate the inclusion of a 7.5% VAT on the budget.
- Submit samples of previous research work conducted.
- Submit CVs of principal researchers.
- Full proposal document (technical proposal and budget) should be submitted to research@wacsi.org, cc jcfomunjong@wacsi.org, nkusi@wacsi.org by **11 April 2022**.

Composition and responsibilities of the consultant

The consultant will lead the study and will be supported by the programmes team at WACSI.

Qualification of the consultant

- The consultant should have a research team that includes the principal researcher and research assistants.
- The consultant must demonstrate ability and experience in conducting socio-economic surveys in West Africa.
- The consultant must have the required human and logistical (computers etc.) ability to undertake the exercise.
- Experience in qualitative and quantitative research methods.
- Excellent analytical and report writing skills.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, including the ability to facilitate FGDs, conduct expert interviews and work in a multidisciplinary team.
- Knowledgeable about the development landscape in West Africa particularly from civil society perspectives.
- Have an extensive understanding of the civil society sector in West Africa.

Selection of consultants

The selection committee will evaluate the application based on their written technical proposal and budget. In addition, the selection committee will grade the applications based on consultant and research team's demonstrated capabilities and technical experience in the following:

- Previous experience in conducting similar studies.
- Experience in qualitative and quantitative research methods.
- Knowledgeable in the civil society sector.
- Excellent analytical and report writing skills.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, including the ability to facilitate focus group discussions (FGDs), conduct expert interviews and work in a multidisciplinary team.
- Experience working in the anglophone and francophone West African context.
- Working knowledge in French is an advantage.