

NFF Regional Board Meeting

ITRC and Review of First Call Process



1. PURPOSE AND ROUND 1 OVERVIEW

This note provides a concise overview of the Independent Technical Review Committee (ITRC) process that supports funding decisions of the NFF Regional Board. It outlines the committee’s role, how members are identified and appointed, the two-stage review process, and the indicative timeline, and begins with key figures from the first Call for Proposals (CfP) to ground the note in current data.

Round 1 – Call for Proposals

72 Total Submissions	71 Valid	40 To Technical Review	16 CSO-Only Submissions
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Round 1 – Call for Proposals submission 2025

Breakdown by Country

Country	Submissions	To Review
Cameroon	31	18
Chad	35	19
Cross-Border	5	3

2. PURPOSE AND ROLE OF THE ITRC

The Independent Technical Review Committee (ITRC) is a time-bound, independent body convened by the NFF Regional Secretariat to ensure transparent, objective, and high-quality technical assessment of funding applications.

The Committee is composed of seven experts representing humanitarian, development, and peace (HDP) expertise. Experts are identified through a consultative process led by the Secretariat, which includes the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), FONGA, and secondees deployed by ZiF to UNHCR and UNDP. Its design emphasizes regional representation, gender diversity, strong HDP expertise and strict conflict-of-interest (COI) protocols. Reviews rely on a standard review package: a clear scoring methodology, agreed parameters and common templates used by all evaluators. The ITRC composition remains anonymous throughout the process.

3. IDENTIFICATION AND RECRUITMENT OF EXPERTS

3.1 Identification of Potential Experts

The Secretariat compiles a list of qualified experts through consultations with Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs), the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), UN agencies, NGOs, and academic / research networks. Experts are selected based on a minimum of ten years of relevant experience, proven expertise in HDP Nexus programming, experience in proposal evaluation and pooled funds, and demonstrated regional knowledge of the Lake Chad Basin. Each candidate submits a detailed CV and an Expression of Interest confirming availability and independence.

3.2 Screening and Shortlisting

The Secretariat reviews candidates against eligibility criteria and produces a shortlist of typically six to eight candidates, ensuring balance across HDP sectors, gender and geographic diversity, and language coverage (English / French). At least one NGO expert and one protection-focused expert are systematically included to ensure thematic depth.

3.3 Conflict of Interest (COI) and Ethical Clearance

Before appointment, shortlisted candidates undergo strict vetting: their profiles are cross-checked against applicant organizations, and any real, potential, or perceived conflicts are identified. All selected experts must sign a Declaration of Independence and Conflict of Interest as well as a Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement. Any conflict leads to exclusion or reassignment of proposals.

3.4 Appointment and Onboarding

Selected experts are formally appointed and contracted. The Secretariat organizes an induction session covering NFF objectives and priorities, evaluation criteria and scoring tools, ethical and confidentiality requirements, and reporting expectations. This ensures consistency and transparency across all reviewers.

4. TWO-STAGE REVIEW PROCESS

The ITRC review is conducted in two sequential rounds, aligned with the Call for Proposals cycle: a first round focused on concept notes, followed by a second round dedicated to full proposals from shortlisted applicants.

4.1 Round 1 – Concept Note Review

Before ITRC review, the Secretariat conducts an initial eligibility screening to filter out proposals that clearly fail mandatory criteria. This screening is conducted exclusively by the Secretariat, and only compliant proposals are transmitted to the ITRC for full technical review.

Master File Project Evaluation Submission Stage 1 (Round 1 - 2025)

Submission Date	Consortium Lead	Evaluation Number	Completeness				CSD	For Review	Budget Amount	Meets Minimum Criteria	Comments (Why Not)
			Annex A	Annex B	Annex C						
20/10/2025	Consortia Names	CMR_2025_001	Yes	Yes	Yes		No			No consortia mentioned	
17/11/2025		CMR_2025_002	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No			l'Annexe A n'est pas fournie; le budget soumis est non conforme, car il n'utilise pas le template obligatoire du NFF et ne présente aucune ventilation des coûts par membre du consortium.	
20/11/2025		CMR_2025_003	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No			too small, too expensive - low impact	
20/11/2025		n/a_004	Yes	Yes						Out of bound application from Uganda	
20/11/2025		CHD_2025_005	No		Partial		No			Annex A missing, not right budget template	
20/11/2025		CHD_2025_006	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		looks good	
20/11/2025		CHD_2025_007	Partial	Yes	Partial	Yes	No			Annex A on from Lead, no budget template	
23/11/2025		INT_2025_008	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes	No			If missing, budget weak, impact questionable	
23/11/2026		CHD_2025_009	Yes	No	No	Yes	No			Only annex A received	
23/11/2025		CHD_2025_010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		Appear a little weak on H- only mentions durable solutions	
23/11/2025		CMR_2025_11	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No			Budget very limited and not helpful	
23/11/2025		CHAD_2025_12	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1M	Appears light on P	
23/11/2025		CMO_2025_13	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Tentative	150K	High cost, low impact, small budget	
23/11/2025		CMR_2025_14	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1.4M	Heavy staff and personnel costs	
23/11/2025		CHD_2025_15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	150K	light on the pillar	
23/11/2025		CMR_2025_16	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2.3M		
23/11/2025		CHD_2025_17	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2.5	Verify location (especially Bokoro)	
23/11/2025		CMR_2025_18	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1.1M	Check value for money	
23/11/2025		CMR_2025_19	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	475K	looks okay	
23/11/2025		CMR_2025_20	Yes	No	No	No	No	No		Only annex A received	
23/11/2025		CMR_2025_21	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1.3M	okay	
23/11/2025		CMR_2025_022	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.65K	Crossborder- looks good	
23/11/2025		CHD_2025_023	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1.8M	okay	
23/11/2025		CMR_2025_24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2M	Check value for money - seems a little off	
23/11/2025		CMR_2025_025	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1.9M	Crossborder / BIG check Value for Money (VfM) low target for impact	
23/11/2025		CHD_2025_026	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2.5M	CSDO budget listed for n500K (CSO nACT7). Consortia only 2 members	
23/11/2025		CHD_2025_027	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes	No		150	No consortia	
23/11/2025		CMR_2025_028	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1.6M	check value for money	
23/11/2025		CMR_2025_029	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1.3M	If CSD ceiling raised would look very equitable - Looks good	
23/11/2025		CMR_2025_030	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2.5M	looks good, possibly a little light on Peace	
23/11/2025		INT_2025_031	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No			budget missing, no consortia	
23/11/2025		CHD_2025_032	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		budget is broken (donor budget is too high 2.2 million / no margin to top)	
23/11/2025		CHD_2025_033	Tentative	Yes	Partial	Yes	No	n/a		CSO only consortia - missing Annexes A for the others, No budget	
23/11/2025		INT_2025_034	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2.5M	Crossborder, looks good, detailed budget	
23/11/2025		CMR_2025_035	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	n/a		No consortia mentioned	

Figure 1 – Secretariat pre-screening and eligibility filter.

Each ITRC member then reviews assigned concept notes independently, using standardized confidential scorecards. The assessment covers strategic alignment with national and regional priorities, relevance to the HDP Nexus, and overall coherence and feasibility. Scores and comments are submitted individually and are not shared among reviewers, in order to preserve independence.

Eliminated	Project Code	EVALUATOR 1										Total (100)	Comments
		Eliminatory Criteria (10)	Alignment & Relevance (8)	Health & Nutrition (10)	Design & Quality (10)	Partnership & Capacity (10)	Cross-Cutting Potential (10)	Climate & Environment (5)	Learning & Innovation (4)	Budget & Effectiveness (11)	Sustainability & Commitment (6)		
Cleared	12. CMR_2025_024	20	6.4	9.2	6.6	7.4	11.2	3	3.2	5.4	5.2	77.6	Overall, the proposal demonstrates
Cleared	35. CMR_2025_066												
Cleared	39. CHD_2025_055	20	8	7.6	7	8	9.8	3	2.4	9.6	5.2	80.6	Overall, the proposal is well aligned with the geographic and thematic
Cleared	37. CMR_2025_070												
Cleared	40. CHD_2025_006	20	8	8.4	8.4	8.8	11.2	4	2	4	5.2	80	with the geographic and thematic
Cleared	14. CHD_2025_026	20	4.8	8.4	9	10	11.6	4.6	4	10.2	6	88.6	Overall, the proposal demonstrates
Cleared	13. CMR_2025_064	20	6.4	8.4	8.4	8	11.2	3.6	2.8	10	5.2	84	Overall, the proposal is well aligned
Cleared	6. CMR_2025_016	18.6	6.4	7.2	7.2	6	8.4	3	2.4	9	4.4	72.6	Overall, the proposal is well aligned
Cleared	28. CHD_2025_057	19.6	6.4	8.4	8.8	6.6	11.2	4	2.8	7.2	5.2	80.2	Overall, the proposal is well aligned
Cleared	23. CMR_2025_041	20	8	9.2	6.2	9.4	9.4	3.6	2.8	7	4.4	80	Overall, the proposal is well aligned
Cleared	17. CMR_2025_030	20	4.8	9.2	8.8	6.6	11.2	4	3.2	9	5.2	82	Overall, the proposal is well aligned
Cleared	21. CHD_2025_038												
Cleared	26. CMR_2025_050												
Cleared	9. CMR_2025_019_CSO												
Cleared	16. CMR_2025_029												
Cleared	15. CMR_2025_028												
Cleared	11. CHD_2025_023												
Cleared	38. CHD_2025_071_CSO												
Cleared	18. CHD_2025_032												
Cleared	12. CHD_2025_039	17.2	8	8.8	7.8	7.4	11.2	4	3.2	6.8	5.2	79.6	Overall, the proposal is aligned with
Cleared	27. CHD_2025_056												
Cleared	4. CMR_2025_014												
Cleared	25. CHD_2025_049												
Eliminated	19. CHD_2025_059	20	6.4	9.2	7.8	8	10.8	3.6	2.4	9.2	5.2	82.6	Overall, the proposal is well aligned
Cleared	10. CMR_2025_021	15.2	4.8	5.6	5.4	4.8	6	3	1.6	2.8	2.8	52	Overall, the proposal is poorly
Cleared	24. CHD_2025_048	19.6	6.4	9.2	9.8	8	11.2	4	3.6	9.6	5.2	86.6	Overall, the proposal is well aligned
Eliminated	13. CMR_2025_025												
Eliminated	30. CMR_2025_060												
Cleared	20. CHD_2025_037	19.6	8	8.8	8.6	6	8	4	2.4	4.4	4.4		Overall, the proposal shows good
Cleared	1. CMR_2025_022_CSO	17.8	6.4	7.2	7.8	6	7.4	3	2.8	10.2	4.4	73	Overall, the proposal is well
Cleared	8. CMR_2025_018_CSO												

Figure 2 – Independent scoring of concept notes by ITRC members.

The Secretariat compiled all scores, identifies ranking patterns and points of convergence, and convenes a deliberation meeting to discuss borderline cases only and validate the final ranking – not to re-score proposals. The outcome is a ranked shortlist of proposals with summary justifications for each, submitted to the Regional Board for endorsement. Feedback to consortium members is consolidated and anonymized; ITRC members do not communicate directly with consortium members, all communication is centralized through the Secretariat, and only shortlisted consortia proceed to Round 2.

4.2 Round 2 – Full Proposal Review

The four best consortia from round 1 were then shortlisted and invited to submit full proposals, building on their concept notes and taking into account the recommendations provided by the ITRC. These full proposals include a detailed technical design, a results framework (logframe), a budget and financial breakdown, and a risk and implementation strategy. The ITRC then conducts a more detailed evaluation focused on technical quality and robustness, feasibility and operational realism, financial soundness and budget credibility, risk mitigation and sustainability, and alignment with Nexus principles. As in Round 1, reviews are independent and based on standardized scorecards.

The Secretariat consolidates results into a final evaluation report including a ranked list of proposals with average scores, clear funding recommendations, narrative justifications, and structured feedback for all applicants. This report is submitted to the Regional Board for final funding decisions. *Figure 3 – Consolidation of scores and ranked shortlist.*

NFF ROUND 2 – ITRC EVALUATION SCORECARD										
Nexus Funding Facility / Lake Chad Basin / April 2026 / 6 evaluators: Evaluator 1, Evaluator 2, Evaluator 3, Evaluator 4, Evaluator 5, Evaluator 6 (all complete)										
Rank	Consortium	Country	Title	Evaluator 1 /1000	Evaluator 2 /1000	Evaluator 3 /1000	Evaluator 4 /1000	Evaluator 5 /1000	Evaluator 6 /1000	AVG /1000
1st	CRS / ADRESCO	Chad	CRD_2025_016	870	800	743	721	895	691	755.5
2nd	CRS / ALMA / CDSCH	Cameroon	988321	830	743	706	875	700	623	746.17
3rd	CRS / Plan International / LOYOC	Cameroon	CRP_2025_024	604	621	818	765	821	709	724.83
4th	JRS Chad / JRS Cameroon / EFA Cameroon / ASD	Chad/Cam	CRD_2025_012	748	690	607	680	730	533	686.67

Figure 4 – Full proposal technical review.

NFF ROUND 2 – STATISTICAL ANALYSIS & RANKING ROBUSTNESS										
Comparative analysis of mean, median, trimmed mean, and standard deviation – with ranking sensitivity across methodologies										
SECTION 1 – RAW SCORE EVALUATOR 4TRIX (all 6 evaluators)										
Consortium	Country	Evaluator 1	Evaluator 2	Evaluator 3	Evaluator 4	Evaluator 5	Evaluator 6	Mean	Median	Trim. Mean
CRS / ADRESCO	Chad	870	800	743	721	895	691	755.5	734	739.8
CRS / ALMA / CDSCH	Cameroon	830	743	706	875	700	623	746.17	724.8	746.2
CRS / Plan / LOYOC	Cameroon	604	621	818	765	821	709	724.83	737	729.2
JRS / EFA / ASD	Chad/Cam	748	690	607	680	730	533	686.67	688.5	665

Outputs of Round 2

A ranked list of proposals with average scores, narrative justifications, clear funding recommendations, and consolidated feedback for every applicant – packaged as a single evaluation report to the Regional Board.

Figure 6 – Final ranking submitted to the Regional Board.

5. DECISION-MAKING, TIMELINE AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The ITRC operates independently and provides technical recommendations only; the Regional Board makes final funding decisions. Those decisions are informed by the ITRC ranking, strategic considerations, and available funding. Throughout the process, the Secretariat acts as facilitator, custodian of documentation, and interface between the ITRC and the Board. The separation of functions between the Secretariat (process management and eligibility screening) and the ITRC (independent technical assessment) is maintained throughout to ensure transparency, integrity, and impartiality.

5.1 Indicative Timeline

Stage	Indicative Duration
Round 1 – Concept Notes	Approximately 5 weeks
Round 2 – Full Proposals	Approximately 4 weeks

5.2 Post-Process Survey and Reviewer Reflections

At the close of this allocation cycle, the Secretariat conducted a structured survey with ITRC reviewers to capture reflections on how to further improve the process. Overall, reviewers confirmed the integrity and robustness of the approach. Looking ahead, they highlighted a few practical areas for improvement: allowing additional time for the technical review, particularly between the concept note and full proposal stages; introducing a standardized budget summary prepared by the Secretariat ahead of ITRC sessions, enabling reviewers to focus on technical assessment rather than reconciling figures; and applying a more stringent Secretariat triage at the outset of each round to filter out incomplete or out-of-scope applications before they reach the Committee. These recommendations will be integrated into updated scorecards, onboarding materials, and the proposed timeline for the next allocation round.