

## SUCCESS STORY

# Lake Chad inclusive economic & social recovery (RESILAC)



### EU Trust Fund for Africa – Sahel & Lake Chad

**EUTF PARTNER:**

Agence Française de Développement (AFD)



**COUNTRIES:** Chad,  
Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria



**BUDGET:**  
EUR 31.1M



From **12/2017**  
to **12/2022**

### Objective of the project

To contribute to the economic recovery, and strengthening of the resilience and social cohesion, of the territories most affected by the Lake Chad crisis and climate change.

### Key successes

- > 11,822 people received vocational training and functional literacy.
- > 2,533 MSMEs assisted in the start-up of micro-projects.
- > 8,000 people received psychological assistance, improving their sense of well-being.

### Some of the communities most affected by conflicts and climate change in the Lake Chad region now benefit from improved social cohesion.

These communities in Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, are affected by persistent conflicts and violence. Whether due to intercommunity / interreligious tensions, the presence of armed groups, or disputes related to access to natural resources, these conflicts generate high insecurity, affecting the daily lives of thousands of people already struggling with economic vulnerability. RESILAC<sup>1</sup> was a regional project implemented in these four countries between 2017 and 2022, with the aim of strengthening the resilience and social cohesion of these vulnerable communities.

*'Before the arrival of RESILAC, "social cohesion" did not exist. Social cohesion had completely collapsed (...)', said a Nigerian traditional community leader. 'RESILAC established a very strong social bond mechanism, the Conflict Response Network (CRN), which has remained in our communities ever since. Thanks to the project, our minor conflicts and even some major conflicts have been resolved, and we are cementing all our religious and ethnic differences.'* confirmed another.

Through RESILAC's support, beneficiaries now have spaces to gather, sit and discuss issues affecting their communities. This initiative, funded by the EUTF and implemented by the French Agency for Development (AFD), has not only improved social dialogue and cohesion, it has also contributed to the economic



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recovery and resilience of these populations by supporting youth and women in access to employment and by enhancing the governance capacities of local actors.

### How did the EUTF help?

The project carried out activities tailored to the specific needs of each country, including socio-cultural and sports activities, as well as dialogues and training sessions around living together. Despite a deteriorated security context, the targeted regions saw an improvement in communities' social cohesion. The project endline report<sup>2</sup> highlighted that the social capital score<sup>3</sup> of targeted communities increased by 16%<sup>4</sup>, from the project's inception to its end. Countries hosting the most activities observed the highest improvement rates.



**RESILAC improved the living conditions of communities, by supporting employment and agricultural production systems.** The project promoted innovative agricultural techniques based on updated traditional methods, which were adopted by 98% of the targeted beneficiaries. According to interviewed beneficiaries, this led to improved yields, production, and soil fertility, resulting in higher incomes. The project also supported 11,822<sup>5</sup> people with vocational training and functional literacy and 2,533<sup>6</sup> micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) with the start-up of micro-projects. Of the surveyed individuals, 89% who started income-generating activities through RESILAC reported significant improvements in their living conditions and those of their families. This was accompanied by feelings of greater autonomy, improved family relationships, and participation in community life.

**Local civil society organisations (CSOs) were efficiently supported to improve their internal organisation** and, in turn, to promote good governance, civic engagement, and natural resources management in Cameroon, Chad and Niger. Of the supported CSOs, 85% received trainings to facilitate their formalisation and autonomy, 40% were provided with equipment, and 19% benefitted from financial assistance. At the end of the project, 85% of the interviewed organisations had greater credibility within their respective communities, 100% had adopted internal rules, 98% had established a management board, and 90% had adopted a budget and an action plan. The endline report also observed that the participation of women in the decision-making of these organisations had increased on average from 16% in 2019 to 30% in 2022.

**The project adopted a holistic approach, adding mental health-related activities to its structural, social, and economic support.** Nearly all 8,000 individuals who received psychological assistance felt that it had improved their sense of well-being. The involvement of local partners and the training of voluntary first aid committees in the villages strongly enhanced the effectiveness of the action, facilitating easier communication with beneficiaries and ensuring a continuous presence to address needs beyond the project's intervention.

<sup>1</sup> *Redressement Economique et Social Inculsif du Lac Tchad (RESILAC).*

<sup>2</sup> RESILAC, « Rapport régional des résultats de l'enquête finale (Endline) dans la région du bassin du lac Tchad : Cameroun, Niger, Nigéria et Tchad. », September 2022.

<sup>3</sup> This score represents the 'communities' social capital' which reflects the perception of populations regarding the homogeneity, tensions, sociability, mutual aid, governance and commitment of their community.

<sup>4</sup> The score, calculated out of a total of 50 points, increased from 36 to 42.

<sup>5</sup> 58% in Cameroon, 18% in Niger, 14% in Nigeria and 10% in Chad.

<sup>6</sup> 33% in Niger, 30% in Nigeria, 26% in Cameroon and 11% in Chad.

<sup>7</sup> *Comités de Développement Communautaire (CDC).*

## Keys to success

**Territorial approach improving governance and bringing local stakeholders closer together:** The populations defined their own needs through community assessments. Based on these diagnoses, RESILAC strengthened the capacities of municipalities and decentralised state services and helped them create connections and country-tailored spaces for dialogue with communities. In Nigeria, where the decentralisation process is limited, Community Development Committees (CDC)<sup>7</sup> were created to bridge the gap between citizens and various administrative and security bodies. In Niger, the project funded 'peace caravans' where authorities met with the population. These contributions were key to strengthening the communication and link between authorities and citizens.

**Tailored supports:** In each country, the project provided diverse forms of support adapted to the specific needs and contexts. Based on an initial diagnosis, local organisations received technical, material and/or financial support. The education, training and professional integration programme also included various types of actions, depending on the needs of beneficiary trainees and businesses. At the country level, certain issues received particular attention. In Cameroon, the project emphasised the strengthening of intercommunity / interreligious dialogue. In Niger, it prioritised conflict resolution through improved natural resource management.

## Building on success

**Context-sensitive activities design:** RESILAC provided significant insights into the relevance and highly positive impact of designing and implementing context-sensitive activities. Based on RESILAC's results, a second phase was approved and jointly funded by the European Union (EU) and AFD, with the aim to consolidate achievements and scale up impactful actions.



**EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa**

### Disclaimer

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