

# AN EVALUATION OF Nigeria Intersectional Setup





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## BACKGROUND

MSF has been present in Nigeria for decades, and the country forms part of MSF's founding story. By 2021, MSF was operating in more than 10 states and had over 3,000 national and international staff across six Operational Directorates (ODs). In response to growing requests from Nigerian government agencies for a single point of contact, MSF created the role of Nigeria Country Representative (CR) in 2021. The CR role focused on external representation while also addressing a range of day-to-day operational challenges for MSF.

After five years of the CR role's existence, this evaluation was commissioned by the Nigeria Interdesk to assess MSF's intersectional setup in Nigeria and the CR role. The objectives of this evaluation were to (1) describe and assess MSF Nigeria's intersectional setup and CR Office (CRO), (2) identify steps towards a more optimal setup for MSF in Nigeria, and (3) provide an evidence base to inform an agreement and common understanding of MSF's setup in the country.

## METHODOLOGY

-  Qualitative Approach
-  Desk review
-  Key informant interviews with 47 MSF staff across ODs in Nigeria and HQ
-  Observation

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### NIGERIA-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

**Formalise the intersectional setup** through an MoU clearly defining roles and responsibilities for the CR, Interdesk, HoM Platform, and Host OD. **Interdesk chairing** should shift from MSF International to the Host OD Head of Desk, this includes preparation of the agenda and tracking of actions. **Accountability for intersectional collaboration** must be strengthened to enable meaningful mutualisation.

The next revision of the **CR role** should prioritise strategic external representation, ensure the CR is a standing member of both the Interdesk and HoM Platform, reduce line management responsibilities and consider renaming the role to avoid confusion. **The HoM Platform** should continue meeting monthly (or as needed).

MSF should develop a 3-year plan to **reduce duplication** of offices and guest houses in Abuja. **Transit administration** should be fully mutualised and resourced in line with the previously agreed IATU plan.

### GLOBAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The MSF IB should commission a **review of global governance structures** to assess their fitness to deliver SPARC objectives while maintaining MSF core values. The RIOD, with the ExCom, should **clarify expectations for mutualisation** and set a global timetable for interoperability of key systems. It should also commission the development of a full-day leadership **training course to increase collaborative practices** across ODs.

The RIOD requires a clear mandate to **ensure governance and accountability for mutualisation** in intersectional missions, along with training in effective governance and a toolkit to enhance good governance of intersectional missions.

Whistleblowing policies should be established across all ODs, harmonised, and adequately resourced.

## MAIN FINDINGS

**The CR role has been effective** in representing MSF externally and remains justified as a single voice for engagement with government agencies and strategic priorities. However, the need for the CR to supervise other intersectional roles is less convincing, especially where this detracts from its primary role of external representation.

Between July 2025 and February 2026, the CR operated with unclear responsibilities and priorities, focusing on both consolidation of mutualised roles within the CRO and support on day-to-day interactions with government agencies. This dual focus reduced the CR's ability to deliver strategic external representation.

As an intersectional role, the CR sits at the centre of MSF's mutualisation agenda, which is strongly mandated at the movement level. Despite this, **mutualisation in Nigeria has largely stalled**. Governance has been ineffective at ensuring meaningful mutualization, staff commitment to mutualization is uneven and there is no agreed roles and responsibilities for the Interdesk, HoM Platform, CR and Host OD, creating uncertainty over who is responsible for driving the agenda.

This is important given the **duplication of resources** across six ODs in Abuja, e.g. separate offices, guest houses, and coordination structures, which is difficult to justify to donors. The only real combination of resources between ODs in Nigeria was the creation of an **Intersectional Admin Transit Unit (IATU)** which, for various reasons, has been significantly scaled back and is often described as ineffective, despite performing relatively well within constraints.

**Resistance to mutualisation** is driven largely by individual preferences among some OD staff to retain control over resources and decision-making. **Collaboration across ODs remains minimal**, with weak communication, limited coordination, and decisions easily undermined.

Overall, **insufficient accountability mechanisms and weak governance** hinder mutualisation. Under current conditions, further centralisation under the CR is not advisable. Strengthening strategic external representation should remain the priority until these gaps are addressed.