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ANNEX 3

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the annual action plan 2023 in favour of the Republic of Liberia

Action Document for ‘Youth Rising’: EU Support to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for Young People in Liberia (phase II)

ANNUAL PLAN

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and action plans within the meaning of Article 23(2) of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act	Youth Rising: EU Support to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for Young People in Liberia (phase II) OPSYS reference: ACT-61553 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (<u>NDICI-Global Europe</u>)/ Overseas Association Decision/European Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation Regulation
2. Team Europe Initiative	No
3. Zone benefiting from the action	West Africa, Liberia The action shall be carried out in selected TVET schools, located in 8 counties in Liberia.
4. Programming document	Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2021-2027 for Liberia
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results	Priority Area 2 – Promoting decent jobs and inclusive growth – Education This Action is contributing to MIP specific objective 2.1 : Enable youth to respond to economic growth opportunities that increase employability and entrepreneurship potential and expected results 2.1a) Increased access to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education and 2.1b) Strengthened capacities for employability in agriculture, fisheries and forestry businesses, focusing on youth and women
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Priority Area 2: Promoting decent jobs and inclusive growth DAC 11330 - Technical Vocational Education and Training
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth SDG 17: Partnership for the Goal - Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.
8 a) DAC code(s)	11330 – Technical Vocational Educational Training

8 b) Main Delivery Channel	41000 United Nations Agency, Fund or Commission: UNIDO and UNICEF			
9. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
10. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective @	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with disabilities @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Internal markers and Tags:	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Digitalisation @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital skills/literacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connectivity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
transport		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
people2people		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
energy		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
digital connectivity		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Migration @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	(methodology for tagging under development)			
	Reduction of Inequalities (methodology for marker and tagging under development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
12. Amounts concerned	Budget line (article, item): BGUE-B2023-14.020120-C1-INTPA Total estimated cost: EUR 28 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution is EUR 28 000 000			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
13. Type of financing	Indirect management through international organisations: United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Direct Management through grants			

1.2 Summary of the Action

Liberia’s population was estimated to be 5 million in 2020, with forecasts predicting 6.4 million in 2030. In 2020, 40% of the population was under the age of 15 and population growth is not projected to decrease. As a result, pressure on the education system and the labour market in Liberia are extremely high. The global commodity price crisis, and combined effects of the Ebola crisis and COVID-19 pandemic, have devastated the Liberian economy and worsened youth’s fragility problems.

Liberian youth suffer from high unemployment, underemployment and vulnerable employment rates. A socially and economically marginalised youth poses serious risks to national security, social cohesion and stability. Efforts to improve youth’s employability are constrained by a deficient Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector. Overall, the Liberian TVET sector faces serious shortcomings in terms of quality and relevance, access and equity, funding and governance, including outdated and limited equipment; lack of adequately trained and incentivised trainers and administrators; lack of an accreditation system and standardised curricula; weak linkages between TVET and the productive sectors of the economy; low management capacity and central and local levels; lack of gender sensitive measures; lack of coordination between TVET stakeholders; lack of defined pathways into and from TVET; and insufficient funding.

The proposed Action seeks to step up EU support to Liberian youth, to ensure they can acquire relevant skills and access decent and quality jobs through vocational and technical training. The proposed action builds on the results of EU’s ‘Youth Rising’ project, designed to strengthen the Liberian TVET sector in its capacity to deliver equitable and gender-balanced access to high quality and demand-driven TVET in seven counties (six supported by the EU and one by the Government of Sweden).

The second phase of the ‘Youth Rising’ project will replicate the action in the remaining 8 counties. The proposed intervention will complement capacity development support at the central and Vocational Training Centre levels and strengthen links with the private sector. In addition, the intervention will address equity and inclusiveness issues in hard-to-reach counties, with a focus on gender, vulnerable youth, youth with disabilities, and youth at risk. The intervention will improve access to TVET in all counties.

The proposed Action reflects the EU’s political objectives defined in the New European Consensus on Development¹. It will enhance youth’s employability and Vocational Education and Training (VET) alignment to private sector needs. The Action proposes measures to address gender equity in access to TVET and female paid employment, thus contributing to the 2021-2025 EU Gender Action Plan². It also promotes the engagement of young people as strategic partners, supporting their empowerment and participation to contribute to sustainable development, equality and peace. Which aligned with the Youth Action Plan in EU External Action (2022-2027)³.

¹ OJ C 210 of 30.6.2017.

² SWD(2020) 284 final.

³ JOIN(2022) 53 final.

The Action is aligned to the Government of Liberia’s priorities, as stated in the “Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD 2018-2024). ‘Power to the people’, the first pillar of the four-pronged PAPD strategy, focuses on the importance of developing a skilled workforce, with specific emphasis on the role of TVET.

In general, EU financed TVET support takes into account EU priorities in cooperation, for example forestry, digital, agriculture or education itself, including a focus on green and circular economy transition and creation of green jobs. Agriculture is one of the selected skills areas in all of our TVET intervention.

Also, the Action for “From productivity to product, linking peers to peers (P2P)” (current annual action plan (AAP)) makes reference to our holistic approach.

‘Youth Rising 2’ will contribute to an improved match between education offered and (private sector) job market demand in food value chains. In a similar vein, the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) financed Strengthening Integration through Vocational Education (STRIVE) project (EUR 10 800 000) will complement this Action through TVET in the market gardening and fish farming sub-sectors.

Finally, the Action is relevant to meeting specific targets of Sustainable Development Goals SDG #4 on quality education SDG #8 on productive employment and decent work⁴ and SDG #12 on responsible consumption and production.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

Liberia is in the low human development category, positioning 175 out of 189 countries and territories (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2020). According to the World Bank’s latest value (2016), 50.9% of the population lives below the poverty line. Poverty rates are expected to increase in the coming years, as the world economy shrinks, per capita income contracts and food prices rise.

Liberia’s economy suffers from demand and supply-side constraints. On the demand side, constraints include economic underdevelopment, job-poor growth, a non-conducive business environment, weak competitiveness, low labour productivity, pervasive informal economy and lack of wage employment and decent work opportunities. On the supply side, the problem is primarily one of poor human capital development.

Youth’s limited access to quality jobs remains a strong hindrance to the country’s productive transformation. Young Liberians generally lack employable skills and are ill-equipped to access labour opportunities in productive sectors; youth’s limited access to quality and relevant TVET is creating a bottleneck in the supply of skilled labour. According to the International Labour Organisation statistics (ILOSTAT) (2022), youth unemployment⁵ stands at 17.2%, with 16.8% for male youth and 18.7% for female youth⁶. The share of youth not in employment, education or training was estimated at 36.3% in 2017. Dropout rates are high. 2015 data indicates that 9.5% of young men completed TVET studies, while only 6.4% of female did. Research conducted within the EU Youth Rising project indicates that TVET pays off in terms of access to wage employment and a path out of subsistence farming.

Despite some advancements made by the Government of Liberia to support change in the TVET sector, notably with EU’s support through the Youth Rising project, **the Liberian TVET sector continues to suffer from a myriad of systemic and structural deficiencies**, including: insufficient funding, obsolete curriculum, no equipment and dilapidated infrastructure, understaffing and inadequately trained TVET instructors and Vocational and Training Centres (VTC) managers; fragmentation in TVET delivery and governance; incipient coordination mechanisms; lack of a national assessment system and regulatory body that ensures quality and streamline TVET governance.

“In this context, the actions of the Erasmus+ programme for Capacity Building in the fields of Higher Education and of Vocational Education and Training will be promoted to strengthen the capacities of the relevant education and training institutions and administrations through international cooperation.”

⁴ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

⁵ Referring to the share of the labour force ages 15-24 without work but available for and seeking employment, modeled ILO estimate.

⁶ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.FE.ZS>.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Priority areas for support / Needs analysis

Building on the EU's Youth Rising project achievements, the proposed Action identifies the following strategic areas for continued support: (i) TVET quality and relevance; (ii) TVET access and equity (iii) Governance of the TVET sector; (iv) Financing of the TVET sector. Identified priorities in each of the strategic areas are mutually reinforcing and closely aligned to the Government of Liberia's draft Education Sector Plan (2022) and draft national TVET policy (2022-2027), expected to be enacted soon.

(i) **Quality and relevance:**

Needs analysis: There is a sharp mismatch between TVET and labour market needs for skilled labour. Market oriented TVET programmes are scarce, particularly in hard-to-reach counties. Private sector is only minimally involved in TVET governance and delivery; very few Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) exist. VTCs are poorly equipped, with dilapidated infrastructure, inadequate access to basic facilities, including water, sanitation, and power, limited supply of teaching and learning material, and absence of guidance and career counselling services. The acute shortage of qualified instructors with practical work experience also contributes to low-learning outcomes. VTCs are generally staffed with ageing, unskilled, poorly compensated and demotivated instructors or rely on volunteers and contractors. There is an urgent need to expand the offer of demand-driven skills in Liberia, by scaling-up the Youth Rising project to the 8 counties which have not yet received EU/Sweden support.

Priority areas for support:

- Identification of emerging trades and skills needs in all counties, including enabling the workforce for a green transition;
- Consolidate a dedicated institution for capacity building of TVET management staff and instructors in the Booker Washington Institute and establish a comprehensive Human Resources Development (HRD) plan for the TVET sub-sector (building on Youth's Rising project's concept note to establish a Centre for Professional Training, Research and Innovation (TCPTRI));
- Train teachers on new competency-based curricula;
- Roll-out updated competency-based curriculum and learning materials;
- Improve links with the private sector, including in the informal economy, with a focus on guidance and career counselling services, the establishment of new partnerships and innovative actions to support school-to-work transition (e.g., through an Innovation fund to stimulate pursuit of the Self-Employed Entrepreneur career pathway; Career Club-based Production Units; out-of-school youth cooperative enterprises);

Enhance TVET staff performance, with a focus on support to entrepreneurship and innovation skills (e.g. adapt the Learning Manual for TVET management staff training on Entrepreneurship and Innovation skills development to needs of TVET instructors; pilot simulated Work Based Learning systems through TVET graduate and/or out-of-school youth Cooperative enterprises).

(ii) **Access and equity:**

Needs analysis: The spatial distribution of TVET students is highly uneven across the country: 43% of VTCs are concentrated in Montserrado (in and around the Capital Monrovia), followed by Nimba (23%) and Margibi (12%)⁷. An overwhelming majority (84%) of students are located in the same counties. Bong and Grand Bassa counties account for less than 1% of TVET students. Girl's education is negatively influenced by social norms and gender barriers, including low proportion of female teachers, and inadequate water and sanitation facilities in VTCs. According to the Ministry of Education, in 2019/2020, only 14,315 students were enrolled in TVET, of which only 31% were female. Young Liberian women have significantly higher unemployment rates than young men (41% versus 28%). The Youth Rising project has generated a lot of interest from young women in accessing TVET and employment opportunities in traditionally male-dominated trades. The vast majority of children with disabilities are not enrolled in any type of education, in great part because VTCs lack adequate infrastructure, teaching and learning materials for students with disabilities and at-risk and there is a general lack of awareness of disabilities

⁷ Due to the presence of the Booker Washington Institute.

and barriers to access TVET. Out-of-school children working in the informal sector and youth at risk (e.g., drug addicts, street children) also lack access to adapted TVET opportunities.

Priority areas for support: There is need to develop a responsive labour market, unified TVET governance, regulation, and service delivery system, with a focus on the development and adoption of a national-level common tools and/or standards for TVET curriculum and/or qualification descriptor development. In particular, there is a need to:

- address the geographical disparity in the supply of skills development opportunities in eight additional counties, through the rehabilitation of existing infrastructure, construction of new infrastructure, equipping of training facilities, in selected training institutions and priority sectors to match labour market skills requirements.
- ensure that TVET infrastructure and training programmes are more gender responsive and socially inclusive, with a focus on: gender; at-risk youth (e.g. Detoxification and rehabilitation programmes); children with disabilities; and out-of-school children (e.g., Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Assessments for knowledge, skills, attitudes and values acquired through on-the-job training systems).
- Develop and/or operationalise:
 - National framework led by the Ministry of Education (MoE) for accreditation of training providers and programmes to assure quality TVET delivery at the national level including RPL assessment;
 - National assessment system under the leadership of MoE that leads to uniform outcomes of TVET delivery;
 - National TVET Qualifications Framework (NTVETQF) led by the MoE, which brings all skills development in the formal, non-formal, informal sector, as well as basic and post-basic levels of education into a unified national qualification (draft already developed);
 - "TVET Curriculum and Qualification Descriptor development cycle" (cf. adopted during the national TVET stakeholder consultative workshop, facilitated by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), as a common tool and national standard for enabling the development and sustenance of a labour market-responsive unified TVET governance, regulatory and service delivery system for Liberia).

Currently UNIDO has rehabilitated 9 schools and built workshops in 6 counties. The new intervention will extend to the remaining 8 counties. One county is under Swedish development aid and coordinated closely by UNIDO.

(iii) **Coordination and Governance:**

Needs analysis: The delivery of TVET in Liberia is still fragmented. Public TVET provision falls under the responsibility of two ministries – the Ministry of Education (MoE), focused on formal vocational education at secondary level, and the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS), offering informal short-term vocational training. The proliferation of small, low quality, unregulated training companies offering unaccredited courses has also become part of the low-quality problem. There is no independent TVET authority in Liberia to guide, direct and oversee TVET provision and, at present, no legal framework for underpinning TVET or providing adequate mechanisms for coordinating activities between different Ministries, agencies and private providers. Although data quality and availability has improved in recent years, it remains deficient. In the absence of an independent TVET authority, in 2014, the President constituted an Inter-Ministerial Taskforce (IMTF) on TVET comprising all ministries to be superseded eventually by a TVET Commission. There is a need to support and operationalise the IMTF as an interim governance mechanism since the Liberia TVET Commission has not been constituted.

The lack of funding to support data collection and analysis remains a key problem in the Liberian Education Sector. Line Ministries' low capacity to monitor programme interventions, ensure efficient planning and management, including end-user monitoring of supplies and governing the teacher body are also a major challenge. Nevertheless, a coordination mechanism has been put in place by the MoE/MoYS with support from development partners supporting TVET in Liberia (i.e. EU, Sweden (Swedish International Development Agency - SIDA), Germany (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit - GIZ), France (Institut Européen de Coopération et de Développement - IECD), a non-governmental organisation (NGO) with funding from AFD), and UNIDO).

Priority areas for support: The National TVET policy foresees the creation of a TVET governance and

coordinating body, the Liberia TVET Commission (LiTCOM), to coordinate and oversee all aspects of TVET in Liberia. The draft legislation for implementing the national policy has been submitted for Cabinet approval. However, the current lack of budgetary allotment for LiTCOM amounts to another case of a missed opportunity - another commission without proper implementation. There is also need to consolidate and further improve the Educational Management Information System (EMIS), operated by the MoE (e.g., expand data on enrolment at national level; capture information on trainer qualifications, TVET financing, and labour market's skills needs and forecasting; increase funding to EMIS). Finally, there is a need to continue building the capacity of staff working in the TVET divisions (MoE and MoYS), to ensure that they are equipped to effectively perform their duties with regards to policy making and effective policy implementation.

(iv) **Financing of the TVET sector:**

Needs analysis: National education spending on TVET remains extremely low, fluctuating from 0% to a high of 3.2% of total expenditure over the past eight years⁸, with technical and vocational education's budget amounting to 10% of public recurrent expenditure in 2018/2019⁹ (up from 5% of overall education expenditure for the period 2012-2015). The lack of adequate, predictable and sustained financing for public VTCs and skills development in general, curtails the implementation of the national TVET policy. Private funding opportunities for TVET remain largely untapped because there are only limited incentives for PPPs. With the exception of the 9 TVET schools supported by the EU Youth Rising Project, all VTCs in Liberia have serious financial resource constraints. Public VTCs rely heavily on government funding, whilst private providers are financed through tuition fees, philanthropic donations, and production and sale of goods. The current centralised structure limits schools' financing autonomy. Public VTCs are often understaffed, and the management staff is poorly skilled, with low capacity in generating additional revenue and promoting local PPPs. Teacher salaries are very low, pushing instructors to work in multiple jobs or leaving the TVET sector for better paid opportunities.

Priority actions for support:

The action aligns with Government of Liberia priorities in skills development reforms, as identified by the draft National Policy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) 2022-27.

- **Improve governance and coordination of the TVET system.** This includes supporting the establishment of a coordinating body to regulate TVET delivery and developing the capacity of key staff in TVET divisions of line Ministries.
- **Redefine the architecture of TVET funding** with a focus on public sector budgetary efficiency, quality and relevance outcomes. Priority actions include: developing and implementing internally generated fund policies for sustainable skills development funding (e.g. replicating Booker Washington Institute (BWI) model in other VTCs); aligning development partners funding with Government of Liberia priorities; initiating the process for the formulation of skills development fund and/or training levy to be led by the Inter-Ministerial Task Force on TVET (commitment already made in 2015 but where limited progress was made).
- **Improve the quality of TVET programmes and delivery.** This includes making progress towards the development and implementation of: a national framework for accreditation of training providers and programmes; a national assessment system; and a TVET quality assurance framework.
- **Increase enrolment rates in skills development system** (incl. pre-tertiary, tertiary, formal, non-formal and informal training delivery), with a particular focus on gender and social inclusion issues, **and improving TVET's geographical spread** (beyond Montserrado),
- **Enhance the relevance of TVET delivery and supporting transition to employment/self-employment**, including by: improving linkages with private sector; formalising relationship and responsibilities between training providers and industry; and increasing entrepreneurship in curricula.

The first phase of the Youth Rising project (currently ongoing) has a strong focus on sustained policy dialogue for VTCs' financial autonomy and the strengthening of production units. Progress has been made in the current Youth Rising effort whereby an operational autonomy is supported by the line Ministries. This needs to be closely monitored and supported including coordination with the Ministry of Finance and the Liberian Auditing

⁸ Ministry of Education, draft Education sector plan (2022-27), draft May 2022.

⁹ Ministry of Education, draft Education sector plan (2022-27), draft May 2022.

Framework. The 9 TVET schools supported by the EU Youth Rising project and the Swedish supported school in the north are expected to boost their financial resources through their planned production units.

Identification of main stakeholders and corresponding institutional and/or organisational issues (mandates, potential roles, and capacities) to be covered by the action:

The **Ministry of Education (MoE)** offers vocational education at the senior high school level (Grades 10 to 12) alongside general education, with some high schools also offering TVET for out of school youths under the Accelerated Vocational Training Programme (AVTP). The Department for Instructions is responsible for developing and implementing TVET programmes. It's Bureau of Science, Technology, Vocational and Special Education, in particular, is responsible for implementing TVET programmes at the pre-tertiary level in the public-school systems. It also has a supervisory oversight responsibility of TVET in the private sector and the responsibility to ensure that national standards are met.

The **Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS)** operates vocational training centres offering short term training programmes. However, curricula and qualifications are currently not standardised. Typically, MoYS institutions target students who have dropped out of high school at or before Grade 10 for training at the basic skills level, while students who have completed at least Grade 10 qualify for training at the intermediate level.

Other ministries involved in relevant TVET policy aspects are the Ministries of Finance and Development Planning; Labour; Commerce; Gender; and Agriculture, which also run non-formal or informal TVET programmes.

The **Private Sector** is a key stakeholder in TVET, although at present it is not formally involved in TVET governance or TVET design and delivery. Some private enterprises have established their own internal training programmes and generally don't rely on public VTCs. There is a lack of a TVET specific market information system, leading to a weak alignment.

The main direct beneficiaries of the action are:

- Liberian youth and young adults enrolled in relevant TVET programmes with EU support, including young females, disabled youth, out-of-school youth, rural youth and at-risk youth.
- **Key ministerial staff, with a focus on** developing capacity of key staff in the line Ministries to ensure they are better equipped to implement the National TVET policy.
- **TVET instructors, administrators and principals**, with a particular focus on female instructors; on increasing exposure to modern and advanced TVET capabilities; on improving TVET administrators' capacity to build partnerships with the private sector and industry and trace graduates.
- Key personnel from EMIS Division of the Department of Planning, Research and Development of the MoE
- **Selected VTCs**, with a focus on rehabilitating infrastructure, modernising equipment, and providing adapted training material. Target institutions will be carefully selected, together with the Government of Liberia, based on a risk assessment and their potential to provide quality TVET for youth in urban and remote rural areas.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

1.1 Objectives and results

The Overall Objective:

To contribute to Liberian youth’s employability and entrepreneurship potential through market-driven TVET

Specific Objectives (SO):

Specific Objective 1: To improve equitable and gender-balanced access, quality and relevance of TVET

Specific Objective 2: To inform TVET/Education policies, decision-making and planning with improved evidence

Outputs for SO1:

- **Output 1.1:** Key Government of Liberia entities are endowed with a robust technical base to support the effective governance, planning, management, oversight and delivery of TVET.
- **Output 1.2:** Selected VTCs are staffed with instructors, administrators and principals with upgraded skills, and infrastructure, equipment and systems are modernised.
- **Output 1.3:** Private sector involvement in the Liberian TVET system is increased, including in curriculum development, TVET governance and delivery.
- **Output 1.4:** Measures to foster access, enrolment and retention of female youth, persons with disabilities, and at-risk youth are streamlined into TVET systems.
- **Output 1.5:** Sustained engagement, mentoring and guidance for EU supported TVET schools through the TVET Centre for Professional Training, Research and Innovation (TCPTRI).

Outputs for SO2:

- **Output 2.1:** Capacity for data collection, information analysis and decision making for the TVET/Education sector is strengthened.
- **Output 2.2:** Increased capacity of the Inter-Ministerial Taskforce (IMTF) to operate and convene all actors engaged in TVET and maintenance of TVET schools campus.

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1.1

Activity 1.1.1 Conduct assessments in the 8 targeted Counties¹⁰ (i.e. market needs, human resource capacity, infrastructure, technology needs, gender and inclusion etc.).

Activity 1.1.2 Provide Technical Assistance (TA) to the MoE and MoYS TVET bureau staff at national level.

Activity 1.1.3 Support evidence-based TVET policy and practice.

Activities related to Output 1.2

Activity 1.2.1 TA to the TCPTRI key managerial, administrative and technical staff.

Activity 1.2.2 Design and pilot a merit and/or need-based scholarship fund through the TCPTRI.

Activity 1.2.3 Recruit TVET teachers and applicants for TVET teacher training in all 8 target counties.

Activity 1.2.4 Upgrade the training facilities of ten (10) VTCs in the targeted counties.

Activity 1.2.5 Upgrade the infrastructure of TCPTRI (BWI in Kakata, Margibi County).

Activity 1.2.6 Analyse and develop school career guidance and counselling programme to support students.

Activity 1.2.7 Upgrade infrastructure and equip a TVET facility to provide training for at-risk youth.

Activities related to Output 1.3

Activity 1.3.1 Establish PPPs between target VTCs and private/industry sectors to expand cooperation.

¹⁰ Gbarpolu, Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Rivercess, Grand Kru, and River Gee.

Activities related to Output 1.4
Activity 1.4.1 Ensure instructors acquire appropriate pedagogy to deliver on principals of inclusive education. Activity 1.4.2 Develop a communication strategy and requirements tailored to the needs of youth. Activity 1.4.3 Identify and prioritise training needs for out-of-school/at-risk youth and plan interventions.
1.5 Sustained engagement, mentoring and guidance for EU supported TVET schools through the TVET Centre for Professional Training, Research and Innovation (TCPTRI)
Activities related to Output 2.1
Activity 2.1.1 Design and deliver training and methods on data design, collection, analysis and reporting. Activity 2.1.2 Undertake activities with the legislature to advance key policy issues and commitments that will require changes to the law and / or appropriating additional funding for TVET. Activity 2.1.3 Convene policy level discussions to support financial autonomy of VTC supported using BWI as a reference model outlined in the TVET National Policy draft 2022-2027. Activity 2.1.4 Undertake maintenance on Youth Rising TVET schools in six counties.
Activities related to Output 2.2
Activity 2.2.1 Support the IMTF to effectively manage, monitor and engage the TVET sector.

3.3 Mainstreaming

<p>Environmental Protection & Climate Change</p> <p>Outcomes of the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) screening (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project): The EIA screening classified the action Category C (no need for further assessment).</p> <p>Outcome of the CRA (Climate Risk Assessment) screening (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project): The CRA screening concluded that this action is no or low risk (no need for further assessment).</p> <p>The Action will promote imbedding the ‘greening’ elements into TVET through supporting development of corresponding standards and curricula, and introducing TVET professions related to green and circular economy, including Climate Smart Agriculture and/or renewable energy sources.</p> <p>Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls</p> <p>As per the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that gender equality is a significant objective. The action will promote gender-equitable access to TVET by ensuring that gender concerns are an integral part of all planning and decision-making processes in compliance with the Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Action 2021-2025 (GAP III)¹¹. A minimum of 30% of female vocational instructors will benefit from the programme. In addition, the programme will seek a minimum of between 15% and 30% enrolment for female learners depending on the sectors. A TVET gender analysis undertaken in 2017 will inform the project design.</p> <p>Human rights:</p> <p>The action aims to provide equal access to TVET education opportunities to all Liberian youth, regardless of their residence, hence addressing the very unequal distribution of TVET opportunities across the country. In particular, rural youth’s mobility is largely affected by the rainy season.</p> <p>Disability</p> <p>As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. This implies that disability is a significant objective of this action. Inclusion in TVET is new in Liberia. The proposed Action will seek the active involvement of the National Union of Organisations of the Disabled, the Division of Special and Inclusive Education of the MoE, County Education Officers and the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The action will seek to raise awareness of decision and policy makers, instructors, TVET managers and principles and communities on barriers affecting persons with disabilities (PWDs) and will develop new pathways for PWDs to</p>

¹¹ SWD(2020) 284 final.

TVET, including by adapting training methods, and building capacity of teachers to work with PWDs. The availability of data on persons with disabilities is very limited. Under SO2, support to EMIS will include data collection on inclusion to give the Ministry of Education and its Division of Special and Inclusive Education better visibility on students with disabilities enrolled in TVET. This will inform decision making to orient teaching capacity and resources towards Counties that are catering to a larger proportion of students who are disabled.

Democracy

N/A to this action.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

The present project is highly relevant for conflict prevention, peace and resilience in Liberia. Liberia has one of the youngest populations in the world. They grow up in an environment shaped by decades of conflict that resulted in structural violence and poverty. Population growth will put enormous pressure on the skills development and labour market systems to match labour supply and demand. Liberian youth suffer from unemployment and underemployment, mainly because the skills they possess do not correspond to the needs of the labour market. A socially and economically constrained young population poses serious risks to national security and social cohesion. As a result of relevant and modern training it is expected that most graduates will improve their livelihoods and transition to a productive economic activity (formal or informal). Youth benefiting from the programme will be able to support extended families during times of hardship and play a leadership role in their communities. Another major emerging issue that has a long-term impact on Liberia's society is the rapid acceleration of young people towards drugs, drug addiction and criminality to survive. As these groups become an outcast to society they gravitate to the ghettos where they are nurtured and makes it extremely difficult to break this cycle, which requires detoxification, rehabilitation and reintegration into society. TVET can play a role to provide the necessary life and employable skills necessary to help at-risk you in this transition following they receive the necessary health / medical support required to break this cycle.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DDR)

Some of the skills developed under the action may be relevant to respond to DRR and preparedness (e.g. operation and maintenance of heavy duty equipment). Entities responsible for DRR will be consulted during the process of market analysis, and curriculum developed accordingly, in conjunction with the Health and Safety Centre established under the first phase of the Youth Rising project. This includes first aid training and basic firefighting skills.

There will also be training skills under the action to support and empower youth in the production of own food in Liberia.

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/Medium/Low)	Impact (High/Medium/Low)	Mitigating measures
The Government of Liberia political commitment to TVET and leadership against agreed targets and timeframe can be reinforced	1	Medium	Medium	Regular policy dialogue between the EU and the Government of Liberia will continue and will be informed by evidence generated by the project. Efforts will be deployed to strengthen the technical, administrative and management capacities of key staff in the MoE and the MoYS to implement TVET sector reform at county and national levels. Development Partners coordination and dialogue with Government of Liberia is reinforced.
Inter-ministerial collaboration in TVET is limited and can be improved	2	Low	Low	The intervention will support Government of Liberia priorities to strengthen TVET governance in line with the (draft) national TVET policy and the Education Sector Plan (ESP). Each Ministry will designate focal points for the Action. The Youth Rising Project Steering Committee involves all relevant stakeholders and will continue to operate.
Limited financing capacity by the Government of Liberia	3	Medium	High	EU and other donors will systematically raise the TVET financing issue in policy dialogue with Government of Liberia. In addition, ancillary measures to attract and retain teachers, and improve VTCs financing autonomy will continue to be implemented. Public Financial Management (PFM) reform support, reinforced and more inclusive budgetary process, improved domestic revenue generation.
Private sector engagement with the TVET sector is limited	5	Medium	High	Private sector will be systematically engaged in curricula development activities and TVET delivery. In addition, a study on private-sector incentives to engage in TVET will be conducted, and incentives piloted to build partnerships between VTCs and the private sector/industry. Lessons from the EU funded 'Technical vocational education and training by the private sector in Liberia' project implemented by GIZ in partnership with the Association of Liberian Construction Contractors (ALCC) will inform the Action.
New graduates from target VTCs are not absorbed at the expected rates because economic growth is slower and offers fewer labour market opportunities than expected	6	Medium	Medium	Project activities are aligned to the needs of the labour market. A labour market needs assessment will be conducted in each County, and a methodology for forecasting skill demands will be devised. The training programmes will equip graduates with skills in demand from potential employers, as well as

				with skills necessary to run small business and service delivery activities.
Learners, particularly girls, suffer from exploitation by teachers	7	Medium	Medium	TVET Centre for Professional Training, Research and Innovation will include training on the Code of Conduct for Teachers and School Administrators and raise awareness of the sanctions foreseen. It has been agreed with the MoE and the MoYS that if non-addressed sexual and gender-based violence arise in any of the targeted schools, the programme will be terminated. Information will be made easily available to school communities.
High investment cost in training assets, infrastructure and curriculum development jeopardises long-term sustainability.	8	Medium	Medium	A budgeting exercise will be completed to ensure the central ministries plan for recurrent and investment expenditures over a minimum 3-5 year period. Production units will be established in an accountable and transparent way to generate additional income for the VTCs. Partnerships with international and local private sector partners will be established to promote long-term engagement of the private sector in TVET. Coordination and information sharing with other donors will also contribute to avoiding duplication, ensuring synergies during phase out strategies, consolidating outcomes, and ensuring long-term impact.

Lessons Learnt

Below are lessons learnt from the TVET Youth Rising 1 that is currently being implemented in 6 counties:

- Inter-ministerial collaboration in TVET is limited.
- Inadequate and unpredictable financing by the Government of Liberia may lead to low retention of TVET teachers and instructors, and poor delivery of TVET.
- Private sector is insufficiently engaged with the TVET sector.
- New graduates from target VTCs may not be absorbed at the expected rates because economic growth is slower and offers fewer labour market opportunities than expected.
- Learners, particularly girls, may suffer from exploitation by teachers (cf. sex for grades, money for grades, work for grades)¹².
- High investment cost in training assets, infrastructure and curriculum development may jeopardises long-term sustainability.
- The mainstreaming of e-learning practice into TVET delivery triggered by the COVID-19 situation will remain a permanent feature of TVET instruction, learner experience, as well as institutional management and administration.
- A basic information, communication and technology (ICT) skills training for TVET teachers is necessary to ensure effective participation in e-learning.
- Prioritising recruitment of teachers from serving and volunteer teachers is more time-consuming but more sustainable in terms of TVET teacher retention.

¹² IBIS, Concern Worldwide, Norwegian refugee Council and Save the Children (2014), *Passing the Test – the real cost of being a student*.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

Theory of change: If VTCs are staffed with instructors, administrators and principals with upgraded skills, modernised infrastructure, equipment and systems, they will deliver better learning outcomes. If key Government of Liberia entities are endowed with a robust technical base to support the effective governance, planning, management, oversight and delivery of TVET, they will be better able to deliver on national TVET policy objectives. As EMIS is strengthened, the Government of Liberia will be better able to anticipate education needs and generate quality information that informs TVET policy. As TVET is increasingly aligned to labour market needs, private sector will have more incentives to engage in TVET governance, funding and delivery; this will further improve TVET quality and relevance. As the offer of demand-driven skills training progressively increases throughout the national territory in all Counties, TVET access and equity will improve. As Liberian youth access quality, inclusive and gender-sensitive TVET, they will acquire the technical skills necessary to access a wider range of employment and self-employment opportunities. As more youth enter productive sectors (formal or informal), youth, their families and their communities will see their livelihoods improve. As VTCs are able to generate additional income and top-up teachers' salaries, retention rates will improve, equipment will be maintained and materials will be available for learning. A trained and skilled young workforce will also decrease poaching of instructors, and will increase the productivity of private and industrial sectors. These trends combined will contribute to increasing local incomes, to reducing poverty and to promoting inclusive growth. Addressing the spatial, gender-bias gap and equity issues in TVET access (e.g., rural, vulnerable disabled youth, and at-risk youth) will improve social cohesion at community and national levels.

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

PROJECT MODALITY (3 levels of results / indicators / Source of Data / Assumptions - no activities)

This indicative logframe constitutes the basis for the monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the intervention.

On the basis of this logframe matrix, a more detailed logframe (or several) may be developed at contracting stage. In case baselines and targets are not available for the action, they should be informed for each indicator at signature of the contract(s) linked to this AD, or in the first progress report at the latest. New columns may be added to set intermediary targets (milestones) for the Output and Outcome indicators whenever it is relevant.

- At inception, the first progress report should include the complete logframe (e.g. including baselines/targets).
- Progress reports should provide an updated logframe with current values for each indicator.
- The final report should enclose the logframe with baseline and final values for each indicator.

The indicative logical framework matrix may evolve during the lifetime of the action depending on the different implementation modalities of this action.

The activities, the expected Outputs and related indicators, targets and baselines included in the logframe matrix may be updated during the implementation of the action, no amendment being required to the Financing Decision.

Results	Results chain (@): Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (@): (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	Liberian youth's employability and entrepreneurship potential is strengthened	<p>1. Proportion of youth (aged 15- 24 years) not in education, employment or training (*GERF 1.12)</p> <p>2. Percentage of jobseekers who found formal employment within 6 months after participating in a EU-funded intervention, disaggregated by sex, population group, disability status, age</p> <p>Number of TVET graduates achieving gainful employment or self-employment disaggregated by formal, informal, age, sex and vulnerability status</p>	Unavailable		<i>National survey report</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 1	To improve equitable and gender-balanced access, quality and relevance of TVET	<p>1.1 No. of positive quality audits carried out by national TVET body in the 10 target VTCs supported by the project</p> <p>1.2 % of graduates followed by job placement/career guidance units 12 months after completion of their studies from the 10 target VTCs supported by the project, disaggregated by age, sex, vulnerability status, urban/rural</p> <p>1.3 % of running costs covered by additional income generated by VTCs production units and/or private funding in each of the target 10 VTCs supported by the project</p> <p>1.4 Completion rates of female students enrolled in the 10 target VTCs, disaggregated by age and trade</p> <p>1.5 Completion rates of vulnerable students enrolled in selected technical trades in 10 target VTC, disaggregated by sex, age,</p>	tbd	tbd	<p>Project survey report</p> <p>Audit Reports</p> <p>TVET annual report</p>	<p><i>The Government of Liberia increase the level of political commitment to TVET agreed targets, financial resources and timeframe.</i></p> <p><i>Inter-ministerial collaboration between MoE and MoYS in TVET programming improve, in the absence of an independent TVET authority</i></p> <p><i>Quality Assurance bodies report on the satisfactory implementation of TVET quality services delivered.</i></p> <p><i>TVET Legislative framework adjusted without long delays.</i></p>

		vulnerability status (out-of-school, disabled, at-risk), rural/urban 1.6 Number of people who have benefited from institution or workplace based VET/skills development interventions supported by the EU (*GERF 2.14a and MIP 2.1a)				
Outcome 2	To inform TVET/Education policies, decision-making and planning with improved evidence	2.1 TVET enrolment data available for all Counties 2.1 Labour market's skills needs and forecasting information captured by EMIS.	tbd	tbd	MoE/EMIS Project monitoring	
Output 1 related to Outcome 1	1.1 Key oL entities are endowed with a robust technical base to support the effective governance, planning, management, oversight and delivery of TVET	1.1.1 No. of studies produced with EU support and used to inform TVET policy decisions and/or policy dialogue 1.1.2 No. of MoYS/MoE technical and TVET Administration staff trained on selected key competencies with project support, disaggregated by age and sex 1.1.3 No. of scholarships for MoYS/MoE technical staff with overseas study visit supported by the project, disaggregated by age and sex 1.1.4 No. of TVET governance structures supported by the Action, disaggregated by type of support provided by the action (strategic guidance, technical support, mentoring, etc.)	tbd	tbd	Training Report Project Quarterly Report	<i>MoE/MoYS staff trained continue to serve in current/ similar position in the TVET subsector.</i> <i>Administrative TVET staff is appointed using a merit-based management approach.</i> <i>MoE/MoYS enable VTCs to keep the funds generated through production of workshop activities.</i>
Output 2 related to Outcome 1	1.2 Selected VTCs are staffed with instructors, administrators and principals with upgraded skills, and infrastructure, equipment and systems are modernised	1.2.1 No. of VTC staff trained at the TVET Centre for Professional Training, Research and Innovation (TCPTRI) with EU support, disaggregated by age, sex, and County 1.2.3 No. of Internal Quality Assurance Systems established in 10 target VTCs with the support of the project	tbd	tbd	Teacher training attendance records Certificate of completion issued VTC/Career Guidance units' annual reports	<i>VTCs are capable to generate enough funds to maintain/renovate their equipment and purchase running inputs for TVET workshops</i>

		<p>1.2.4 No. of VTCs rehabilitated and equipped with the support of the project incl. a TVET facility for at-risk youth</p> <p>1.2.5 No. of competency-based modular curricula (incl. gender, disability and green aspects) developed and validated in collaboration with private sector in the 10 target VTCs supported by the project</p>			<p>Acceptance certificate work renovation + Acceptance equipment</p> <p>Validation Report from TVET working group Financial TVET Annual Report</p>	
<p>Output 3 related to Outcome 1</p>	<p>1.3 Private sector involvement in the Liberian TVET system is increased, including in curriculum development, TVET governance and delivery</p>	<p>1.3.1 No. of curricula developed in collaboration with private sector in key trades identified by skills needs assessment at County level</p> <p>1.3.2 No. of private actors signing partnership agreements with 10 target VTCs and engaging in practical training activities, disaggregated by type of private actor and trainee profile (teacher/graduate; age, sex, urban/rural)</p> <p>1.3.3 No. of direct beneficiaries of the Innovation Fund, disaggregated by age, sex, vulnerability status, urban/rural</p> <p>1.3.4 No. of private sector actors engaged by the Action (e.g., workshops, coordination meetings, training activities, outreach etc.), disaggregated by type of private actor (e.g., international firms, national firms, trade unions, master craft person), trade and County</p>	tbd	tbd	<p>Internship Report from VTC</p> <p>Project Quarterly Report</p>	<p><i>Industry fully engaged in supporting a relevant skills development</i></p> <p><i>Trust will be built amongst parties involved (particularly between PS, VTCs and MoE/MoYS) VTCs are motivated and / or instructed to be involved in the governance and curricula matters accepting a real assessment of their performance</i></p> <p><i>VTCs include/establish the maintenance and depreciation of the facilities and equipment into the annual financial plans</i></p>
<p>Output 4 related to Outcome 1</p>	<p>1.4 Measures to foster enrolment and retention of female youth, disabled youth, and youth at risk are streamlined into TVET systems</p>	<p>1.4.1 % of TVET staff trained in inclusive education principles including prevention of GBV in the 10 target VTC with project support</p> <p>1.4.2 Number of youths out of school or at risk trained</p>	tbd	tbd	<p>VTC annual report</p> <p>Training Report</p>	<p><i>Female are motivated to enrol and remain in VTCs that have been supported by the project.</i></p> <p><i>Industry willingness and readiness to engage female trainees in safe working conditions in line with</i></p>

						<i>gender policy and good practices.</i>
Output 1 related to Outcome 2	1.5 Sustained engagement, mentoring and guidance for EU supported TVET schools through the TVET Centre for Professional Training, Research and Innovation TCPTRI	1.5.1 No. of schools supported with mentoring and monitoring support 1.5.2 No. of teachers supported through the TCPTRI 1.5.3 No. of equipment verifications completed incl. maintenance assessments 1.5.4 % of TVET schools operating with minimal support	tbd	tbd	Monitoring reports	<i>Management changes at the VTC level. Schools not committed to efforts and investments made by the action.</i>
Output 2 related to Outcome 2	2.1 Capacity for data collection, information analysis and decision making for the TVET/Education sector is increased	2.1.1 No. of EMIS staff trained with EU support, disaggregated by age, sex and location 2.1.2 No. of new EMIS data collection and analysis systems established with EU support 2.1.3 No. of quality and monitoring audits completed for VTC / TVET schools supported by the action 2.1.4 No. of education officers in the counties and school levels training on data collection 2.1.5 No. of digital tools applied in data collection to strengthen accuracy and accountability of data collected	tbd	tbd	Data analysis and reports Policy documents	<i>School and county education officers willing to participate and to discharge their duties. EMIS personnel willing and committed to build a robust data collection and analysis framework.</i>
Output 2 related to Outcome 2	2.2 Capacity of the Inter-Ministerial Taskforce (IMTF) is improved so that it can operate and convene all actors engaged in TVET and the maintenance of TVET schools campuses.	2.2.1 No of TVET actors participating in the IMTF meetings/activities 2.2.2 No of Activities and involve of TVET stake holders 2.2.3 number of TVET schools maintain Please provide indicators etc				

4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the Republic of Liberia.

4.2 Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 72 months from the date of entry into force of the financing agreement.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer by amending this Financing Decision and the relevant contracts and agreements.

4.3 Implementation of the Budget Support Component

N/A

4.4 Implementation modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures¹³.

4.4.1 Direct Management (Grants)

(a) Purpose of the grant

Support to the Ministries of Education and Youth and Sport of Youth Rising TVET schools. This grant will contribute to support the operations and convening capacity of the Inter-Ministerial Task Force (IMTF) on TVET.

(b) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, a grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth & Sports (Government entity), selected using the following criteria:

- National mandate on education and vocational training;
- Mission to provide quality education, curricula development and skills training for Liberian youth and provide life-long learning opportunities;
- Institution championing the empowerment and provision of youth opportunity programmes.

The objective of this award is to provide operational support to the work of the line ministries to build their capacity to handle day-to-day operations that will permit them to discharge their duties effectively, do unfinished works on school buildings, monitor progress and strengthen their governance reach to the VTCs supported by the action. This will include taking ownership over basic maintenance requirements required to support the VTC towards sustainable operations and management.

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified in article 195(c) of the Financial Regulation; exception to calls

¹³ www.sanctionsmap.eu. Note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy, the OJ prevails.

for proposal. This grant may be awarded without call for proposal to bodies with a de jure or de facto monopoly or to bodies designated by Member States, under their responsibility, where those Member States are in a de jure or de facto monopoly situation. The two entities identified above are the sole proprietors of the TVET and EMIS mandate in Liberia. This will enable the Inter Ministerial Task Force on TVET to operate smoothly.

4.4.2 Indirect Management with an entrusted entity

4.4.2.1 UNIDO

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with UNIDO. The implementation by this entity entails improving equitable and gender-balanced access, quality and relevance of TVET by strengthening links with the private sector and by improving management and delivery capacity at governmental and TVET provider levels as in specific objective one and output in section 3.

The envisaged entity has been selected using the following criteria: The Organization should have a experience in working on TVET in the specific Liberian context. It should be able to demonstrated that it can help to deliver sustainable quality results in TVET. It should have a track record and be able to rely on in-house expertise on engaging the private sector in efforts to modernise the TVET sector and to ensure that market-relevant skills training improves the employability of TVET graduates. Preferably, it should have experience with South-South Cooperation whereby it is to be noted that the current action brings on-board experience from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and East African Community (EAC) countries.

It should have the full confidence of the Liberian Government.

In case the envisaged entity would need to be replaced, the Commission's services may select a replacement entity using the same criteria. If the entity is replaced, the decision to replace it needs to be justified.

4.4.2.2 UNICEF

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The implementation by this entity entails, informing TVET/Education policies and decision-making with improved evidence by strengthening capacity of the Education Management and Information System (EMIS) through data collection and analysis as indicated in specific objective 2 of section 3

The envisaged entity has been selected using the following criteria: The international organization has the full confidence of the Government of Liberia. The IO has profound knowledge of and experience with the Liberian education sector. The IO has profound knowledge of and experience with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). The IO has proven experience with data collection and capacity building, the IO has knowledge of the EMIS and it's objective in Liberia.

In case the envisaged entity would need to be replaced, the Commission's services may select a replacement entity using the same criteria. If the entity is replaced, the decision to replace it needs to be justified.

4.5 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply subject to the following provisions.

The Commission's authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of services in the markets of the countries or territories concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where application of the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult (Article 28(10) NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

4.6 Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
Indirect management with UNIDO and UNICEF - cf. sections 4.4.2 SO1: Expand access to quality, inclusive and gender-sensitive TVET relevant to labour market needs and strengthen TVET governance and delivery at governmental and VTC levels - (UNIDO) SO2: Output 2.1 - Strengthen capacity of the Education Management and Information System (EMIS) Department at the Ministry of Education in getting data linked to TVET/Education sector in the country (UNICEF)	27 300 000 25 300 000 2 000 000
Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.4.1 SO2 Output 2.2: Increased capacity of the Inter-Ministerial Taskforce (IMTF) to operate and convene all actors engaged in TVET.	500 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	200 000
Totals	28 000 000

4.7 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The implementing partner will establish the project steering committee with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth and Sports chairing on a rotational basis along with the Aid Management Unit of the Ministry of Finance Development Planning. The EU Delegation will participate in all project steering committees and will include, when relevant, principals of schools, representatives of private sector, other line ministries whereby a commitment is needed to be secured. In addition, other implementing partners involved in TVET will be invited for knowledge sharing (i.e. GIZ for private sector TVET action in the road / transport sector, SIDA Project and IECD implementing the AFD funded TVET project in Liberia). This will assure coordination amongst all key TVET stakeholders. A technical working group will be established for coordination of technical matters with the operational / assistant Ministers of the TVET bureaus in each respective line Ministry. The frequency will include 2 PSC meetings per year and 2 technical working group meetings per year. As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the Commission may participate in the above governance structures set up for governing the implementation of the action.

5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1 Monitoring and Reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (Outputs and direct Outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix. The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews). The final report, narrative and financial, will cover the entire period of the action implementation. There will also be additional monitoring and surveys.

5.2 Evaluation

Due the importance of the action, a mid-term and final evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants through a joint mission contracted by the Commission via an implementing partner. The mid-term evaluation will be carried out for problem solving and learning purposes, in particular with respect to adapting the project to a changing context and making corrections to the project based on the lessons of the first phase of implementation. Both a final evaluation and an ex-post evaluation will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels, including for policy revision, taking into account in particular the fact that this project pioneers the building of a demand-driven TVET system in Liberia. The evaluation of this action may be performed individually or through a joint strategic evaluation of budget support operations carried out with the partner country, other budget support providers and relevant stakeholders.

In case an evaluation is not planned, the Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner. The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 30 days in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities. The evaluation reports may be shared with the partners and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, apply the necessary adjustments. Evaluation services may be contracted under a framework contract.

5.3 Audit and Verifications

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audit or verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements. Indicatively, three contracts for audit services shall be concluded under a framework contract in the 2nd trimester 2024, 2nd trimester 2026 and 2nd trimester 2028.

6 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The 2021-2027 programming cycle will adopt a new approach to pooling, programming and deploying strategic communication and public diplomacy resources.

It will remain a contractual obligation for all entities implementing EU-funded external actions to inform the relevant audiences of the Union's support for their work by displaying the EU emblem and a short funding statement as appropriate on all communication materials related to the actions concerned. This obligation will continue to apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, partner countries, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU member states.

However, action documents for specific sector programmes are in principle no longer required to include a provision for communication and visibility actions promoting the programmes concerned. These resources will instead be consolidated in Cooperation Facilities established by support measure action documents, allowing Delegations to plan and execute multiannual strategic communication and public diplomacy actions with sufficient critical mass to be effective on a national scale.

Appendix 1 REPORTING IN OPSYS

An intervention (also generally called project/programme) is the operational entity associated to a coherent set of activities and results structured in a logical framework aiming at delivering development change or progress. Interventions are the most effective (hence optimal) entities for the operational follow-up by the Commission of its external development operations. As such, Interventions constitute the base unit for managing operational implementations, assessing performance, monitoring, evaluation, internal and external communication, reporting and aggregation.

Primary Interventions are those contracts or groups of contracts bearing reportable results and respecting the following business rule: ‘a given contract can only contribute to one primary intervention and not more than one’. An individual contract that does not produce direct reportable results and cannot be logically grouped with other result reportable contracts is considered a ‘support entities’. The addition of all primary interventions and support entities is equivalent to the full development portfolio of the Institution.

The present Action identifies as

Action level		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single action	Present action: all contracts in the present action The Overall Objective: Liberian youth’s employability and entrepreneurship potential is strengthened through market-driven TVET The Specific Objectives (Outcomes) of this Action are to:
Contract level		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	Improve equitable and gender-balanced access, quality and relevance of TVET by strengthening links with the private sector and by improving management and delivery capacity at governmental and TVET provider levels.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 2	To inform TVET/Education policies and decision-making with improved evidence by strengthening capacity of the Education Management and Information System (EMIS) Division of the Department of Planning, Research and Development of the MoE.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 3	Operating Grant Ministry of Youth & Sport and the Ministry of Education