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THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX 4

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

Action Document for Strengthening inclusive and accountable democracy in Liberia

ANNUAL PLAN

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

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

| | |
|---|--|
| 1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act | Strengthening inclusive and accountable democracy in Liberia OPSYS number: ACT-61481 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (<u>NDICI-Global Europe</u>) |
| 2. Team Europe Initiative | No |
| 3. Zone benefiting from the action | The action shall be carried out in the Republic of Liberia, in all the 15 counties. |
| 4. Programming document | Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2021-2027 for Liberia ¹ |
| 5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results | Priority Area 3: Improving financial and democratic governance 3.2) Promote a more inclusive and transparent democracy Expected results: R3.2.a) Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels of democracy; R3.2.b) Increase elected female representative in the legislature; R3.2.c) Increased voice and accountability. |
| PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION | |
| 6. Priority Area(s), sectors | Priority Area 3 – Improving financial and democratic governance Sectors: (151) Democratic participation (inclusive and transparent democracy, elections) (151) Women’s rights (gender equality, ending violence against women and girls) |

¹ Decision C(2021) 9061 Final of 14/12/21.

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|--|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) | Main SDG: SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and strong institutions. Other significant SDGs and where appropriate, targets: SDG 5 Gender equality – Target 5.5 – Indicator 5.5.1 SDG 17 Partnership for the Goals – Target 17.16 – Indicator 17.16.1 | | | |
| 8 a) DAC code(s) | DAC Code 1: Sector 151 – Government and Civil Society general – 15151 Elections DAC Code 2: Sector 151 – Government and Civil Society general – 15150 – Democratic participation and civil society DAC Code 3: Sector 151 – Government and Civil Society general – 15152 – Legislatures and political parties DAC Code 4: Sector 151 – Government and Civil Society general – 15152 – Women’s rights organisations and movements, and government institutions | | | |
| 8 b) Main Delivery Channel | Channel 1: UN entities 41100 – UNDP – 41114 The Action will be implemented under indirect management with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Channel 2: Specific activities will be implemented under direct management with the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD). | | | |
| 9. Targets | <input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" 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"/> |

| | Policy objectives | Not targeted | Significant objective | Principal objective |
|--|---|--|--|--------------------------|
| 11. Internal markers and Tags: | Digitalisation @ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship digital skills/literacy digital services | YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Connectivity @ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | digital connectivity energy transport health education and research | YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Migration @ (methodology for tagging under development) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Reduction of Inequalities @ (methodology for marker and tagging under development) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Covid-19 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | BUDGET INFORMATION | | | |
| 12. Amounts concerned | Budget line(s) (article, item): BGUE-B2021-14.020120-C1-INTPA | | | |
| Total estimated cost: EUR 15 000 000 | | | | |
| Total amount of EU budget contribution is EUR 15 000 000 | | | | |
| MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION | | | | |
| 13. Type of financing | Indirect management with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Direct management through grants. | | | |

1.2 Summary of the Action

Cognisant of the political and economic environment in Liberia, this Action re-affirms the support to the Government of Liberia to enhance and strengthen the quality of governance and democracy in the country. To offer support, this Action seeks to contribute to a participatory governance system and progress in a democratic process in view of Legislative and Presidential Elections in 2023 and the post-electoral period.

The Overall Objective of this Action is **to promote a more inclusive and transparent democracy in Liberia**. The Action will have three specific objectives:

- i. **Support the electoral cycle and sustain peace;**
- ii. **Enable the meaningful participation of women and inclusion of marginalised groups in political processes;**

iii. Increase the participation of citizens in the decision-making process and accountability (through increased legislative oversight).

This Action ties in with all areas of the MIP, improving the conditions for a peaceful and unified society as a base for sustainable development. It builds on the previous Support to the 2015-2018 Liberian Electoral Cycle, EU Electoral Observations Missions (2017 and Election Follow up – EFM 2021) recommendations, and it takes into consideration the recent European External Action Service Conflict Analysis Screening (CAS). The Action is also aligned with the relevant EU policies, other programmes and instruments including the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020-2024)² and the external aspects of the 2020 European Democracy Action Plan³.

The Action will contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with SDG 5 promoting gender equality; with SDG 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development; providing access to justice for all; building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and SDG 17 enhancing global partnership for sustainable development through multi-stakeholder partnership mobilising and sharing knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources to support the achievement of the SDGs.

The Action will be implemented based on the EU-UNDP partnership on electoral assistance and in full cooperation with EU Member States represented in Liberia, as well as in strong coordination with all other partners contributing to the governance process.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

Liberia is a least developed country in the Gulf of Guinea with a fragile economy and a weak governance structure. In the last 20 years, it has experienced a number of shocks (civil war, Ebola, COVID-19) which have further eroded the ability of the central Government to deliver services to its people. Poor governance is adding to the fragility of the central Government, which is battling to develop and implement policies among scarce resources. The economy is based on a limited number of commodities (iron, gold, rubber, palm oil) and therefore subject to extreme fluctuation on the international markets. The Government continues to be dependent on the support of Development Partners (DPs) and programmes funded by DPs often step in where the Government still is not completely able to deliver services to the population. This is a circumstance triggered by the destruction provoked by the civil war and cannot be abandoned in the short run without severe impact on the already precarious situation of the majority of the population and the social fabric of Liberia. The Government has identified ‘Sustaining the peace’ and ‘Governance and transparency’ as two, out of four, of the main pillars of its national development strategy, the Pro Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD). ‘Sustaining the peace’ is considered essential to the achievement of all other objectives of the PAPD. Under the Pillar ‘Governance and transparency’, Liberia aims to build a peaceful, stable, and inclusive nation that will ensure the participation of the entire citizenry in decision making and that empowers all groups, especially women, children, and people with special needs. Overall, Liberian democracy is improving but is not robust enough yet to offer the country the necessary stability to proceed with reforms toward a more developed and competitive nation. In terms of election cycles, the last one has been relatively peaceful, even if an increase in election-related incidents has been noted in the last 3 years and therefore the next presidential elections scheduled in October 2023 should be closely monitored. On this point the EU Delegation to Liberia deemed relevant the presence of an Election Observer Mission (EOM), timely requested, and whose importance and stabilising role has been recognised by the Government of Liberia.

The last EU Observer Mission was deployed during the past General and Presidential election (2017). Among the main recommendations it was underlined the need to improve: Election Dispute resolution (n.9); passive registration system (n.13); on appropriated National Elections Commission resources on campaign and political party finance (n.16); legislation modification and women participation (n.19); on improved access and opportunity to vote for people with disabilities (n.20). Some improvements, but limited, were underlined by the Election Follow up mission back in 2021. Women and youth constitute the largest portion of Liberia’s population, still there are significant gaps in their meaningful participation in political processes. Political parties, which are central actors

² JOIN(2020) 5 final.

³ COM(2020) 790 final.

in Liberia's democratic space and can serve as important vehicles for women and youth participation in political processes, continue to be weak. They are not institutionalised but strongly personalised and with limited internal capacities.

Political institutions in Liberia still remain with fragility and weaknesses. In particular, the bicameral National Legislature, which should play the oversight responsibility, faces extensive challenges from lack of support structures to limited capacity in specialised areas. Inadequate expertise at the Legislature's Secretariat limits oversight and rational law and policy formulation exacerbated by limited capacity at human, technical and financial resources. Accountability of the Legislature work is limited and not easily accessible by citizens and transparency towards civil society organisations (CSOs) and media should be increased. Because of these constraints and challenges the Legislature struggles to effectively conduct its three fundamental constitutional functions of legislating, oversight, and representation.

Even so, elections in Liberia largely comply with international standards, including secret ballot, and universal suffrage and they were globally positive assessed by EOM back in 2017. The National Election Commission (NEC) has been increasingly assuming national ownership of the electoral process and conducted generally peaceful presidential and legislative elections commended by international observers, but still struggles to gain confidence among citizens due to many factors including delays in allocating electoral funding, lack of public trust in the voter register, protracted electoral dispute resolution, inadequate representation of women, and challenges in NEC's internal and external communication. The role of the EU remains critical in the support to the democratic process and the EU-UNDP Partnership would work towards peaceful, transparent, credible, and inclusive elections and the stabilisation of the country and its democratisation process. Furthermore, in the regional context, it is important to underline the importance of Liberia as a State enjoying a positive democratic process and a key player in promoting democracy within the Economic Commission for West African States (ECOWAS), the Mano River Union and the African Union. The EU support to the election process is aligned to relevant EU policies, other programmes and instruments including the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020-2024) as well as the external aspects of the 2020 European Democracy Action Plan. It builds upon the recommendations issued by the EU Elections Observer Mission in 2017 and by the Elections Follow up Mission (EFM) in May 2021. It contributes to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies, as it is aligned to the EU GAP III⁴ and the Women, Peace and Security agenda⁵. Furthermore, it is aligned to the European Consensus for Development⁶.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Short problem analysis:

While strengthening inclusive, effective, transparent, and accountable governance in Liberia may take various forms, this Action will focus on three key identified problems during consultations with national stakeholders. These include (1) enhancing integrity of electoral institutions and processes; (2) addressing the participation of women and inclusion of marginalised groups in political processes; and (3) addressing key challenges faced by the National Legislature, especially the Secretariat, to enhance its role in legislative oversight. The Action therefore seeks to address the three interrelated problems as follows:

1. While elections in Liberia have become credible and legitimate, various shortcomings have been witnessed. The NEC has been supported by the EU during two previous election cycles via the UNDP Elections Programme. Many improvements have been acknowledged, but many challenges are still present. NEC still faces organisational, capacity, and sustainability challenges such as: planning and budgetary shortcoming relating to timely allocation of resources; weak asset and financial management systems even after the support received under previous UNDP project (EU contribution under the 11th EDF); weak internal and external communication; limited information, communication and technology (ICT) infrastructure; limited IT internal capacities and limited external technical assistance; limited infrastructure even if partially improved under the last EU intervention; limited legal expertise. Furthermore, the actual legal framework that sets election date during the heavy rainy season impacts seriously electoral preparations and logistics.

⁴ SWD(2020) 284 final.

⁵ EEAS(2019) 747.

⁶ OJ C 210 of 30.6.2017

Inclusiveness with regards to people with disabilities and marginalised groups (for examples: pre-trial detainees) is still limited. Architectural, physical, information, communications, and technology barriers are present and in need of improvements.

Gaps in the electoral dispute resolution system (EOM recommendation n.9) are often exploited by actors aiming at undermining the electoral process, and low literacy and civic rights information among the voters remains a challenge. The current voter registration system has been under scrutiny and criticism during the last two main elections and it is still in need of improvements, technically and legally (EOM recommendation n. 13). The work and dialogue with political parties (EOM recommendation n.16) needs to be fostered and improved.

Even though elections have largely been peaceful, cases of vote tampering, election violence, intimidation, and harassment of female candidates have been documented in reports of election observation missions. Consequently, technical and capacity building support to strengthen existing national mechanisms to early identify and respond to electoral violence support to institutional strengthening, and capacity development of NEC and electoral stakeholders remain critical for the consolidation of the fragile Liberian peace.

2. Women and youth are marginalised in the political life, with major gaps in their representation in political processes in Liberia, even though they constitute the largest part of the country's population. Youth represents the majority of the population in Liberia with close of one third ready to be engaged in the next election. Women, make up 51% of the country's population, their participation in governance and politics remains low even if Liberia recorded the first elected African female President. The last few years have marked an increase of Sexual and Gender base Violence (SGBV) cases to the point that in 2020 the President of Liberia declared it a national emergency. Recent by-elections showed few cases of extreme violence against women in politics somehow linked to traditional and heritage culture. In the last Mid-Term election (2020) only 2 women won Senatorial seats, out of 15 winning candidates, while the actual leading party did not present any female candidates. Successful steps have been taken afterwards by the political parties with: the signature of the Violence against Women in Elections and Politics protocol (VAWiE/P) at the beginning of 2022 and declarations of some of the main parties about a reserved quota for female candidates for the 2023 contest. NEC submitted to the Legislature amendment to the current new elections law including gender quota and, up to now, it has been successfully approved by the House of Representatives. This partially responds to the EOM Recommendation n.9, still the effective engagement of women and youth and marginalised groups among them into the political process is limited.

Political parties which should be a key vehicle in enhancing women's and youth's engagement in political processes, are generally weak, largely undemocratic, not institutionalised and often strongly personalised. As such, societal interests are often not prioritised, as well as inclusivity of citizens' interests especially youth, women remains wanting. This weakens democracy and undermines good governance and service delivery in Liberia. Collaboration and cooperation of political parties in pursuit of national, citizens and shared interests is hamstrung by partisan politics that are devoid of a willingness to look beyond narrow party interests.

3. The Liberian National Legislature's oversight responsibility faces enormous challenges. The Constitution of Liberia provides the Legislature with representational, law making and oversight functions. Theoretically, the Legislature is a strong and independent institution. However, there is consensus that the Legislature has largely been dysfunctional and not carrying out its responsibilities effectively. In particular, the oversight responsibility faces vast challenges including limited capacity in specialised areas as well as the limited capacity of the Secretariat. A five-year Joint Legislative Modernization Plan which remains, to this day, the sole reference document for modernisation of the Legislature, was formulated with donor assistance in 2009 around 5 pillars, pillar 4 focusing specifically on modernising the Secretariat. A Joint Legislative Modernization Committee (JLMC), and subsequently a Joint Legislative Modernization Secretariat was created to implement the Plan. However, implementation to this day has been very limited. The Secretariat faces significant hurdles of capacity constraints as well inadequate modern tools and skills to perform effectively and efficiently. Often, the Legislature does not represent the citizen's interests and CSOs as well as media face challenges in obtaining information about the Legislature's processes, which undermines accountability. The access to legislative information is limited. Decisions in committee rooms and/committee reports are not readily available to the press. There is a chronic lack of transparency with the voting system and inadequate record keeping.

There is no formal mechanism to engage with CSOs and interactions between the legislature with different actors as youth, women and people living with disabilities is absent. Supporting civil society and media to

understand, monitor and report on legislative, electoral, and other democratic processes and workings will provide an opportunity for citizens to dialogue with the Legislature and engage in political and democratic processes of the country. This will strengthen the oversight function enhance openness, contribute to transparency, and increase public confidence.

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

The direct beneficiaries of this Action will be **Liberian citizens**. The main stakeholders and target groups of this Action will be:

- a) **The Liberian National Legislature**, which exercises oversight responsibilities. Its secretariat will be a key stakeholder in this process.
- b) **Civil society organisations (CSO) and the media**. Supporting civil society and media to understand, monitor and report on legislative, electoral, and other democratic processes will provide an opportunity for citizens to advocate for their rights and choice, oversight on the work of the elected candidates, open a constructive dialogue with the Legislature and engage in political and democratic processes of the country. This will strengthen the oversight function in specific areas of Liberia democracy, enhance openness, contribute to transparency, and increase public confidence.
- c) **The National Elections Commission (NEC)** which has the responsibility to manage and supervise electoral processes and to ensure that elections in Liberia are conducted impartially, and in line with established laws.
- d) **Political parties** which are critical actors in Liberia governance and democratic spheres.
- e) **Youth and women actors, organisation, formations, and interest groups as well as persons living disabilities**.
- f) **Liberia Peacebuilding Office** (LPBO), an organ of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, working to promote peacebuilding and reconciliation, advise the Government, and develop policies, programmes and projects that focus on conflict prevention and transformation.
- g) **Liberia National Bar Association** (LNBA) and **Liberia Institute for Public Administration (LIPA)** that will play a role in institutionalising and sustaining long-term capacity development processes.
- h) **Liberian National Police** (LNP).

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The **overall objective** of this action is **‘to promote a more inclusive and transparent democracy in Liberia.’**

The specific objectives are:

- 1. Support the electoral cycle and sustain peace.**
- 2. Enable the meaningful participation of women and inclusion of marginalised groups in political processes.**
- 3. Increase the participation of citizens in the decision-making process and accountability (through increased legislative oversight).**

The Outputs to be delivered by this Action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objectives (Outcomes) are:

Contributing to Objective 1

Output 1.1: Enhanced participation, inclusion, and transparency of the electoral processes including electoral reform.

Output 1.2: Improved institutional capacity and accountability of the National Elections Commission (NEC) and electoral stakeholders.

Output 1.3: Strengthened conflict prevention and mitigation mechanisms to support peaceful conduct of elections.

Contributing to Objective 2

Output 2.1: Enhanced youth and women participation and inclusion in political decision-making.

Output 2.2: Strengthened inter-party collaboration and policy-based connections between parties, their MPs, and voters.

Contributing Objective 3:

Output 3.1: Improved capacity of the Secretariat in Legislative oversight.

Output 3.2: Increased capacity of CSOs and the media in furtherance of the oversight functions of the Legislature.

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1.1: Enhanced participation, inclusion, and transparency of the electoral processes including electoral reform.

- a. Strengthen NEC strategic approach to communication, external relations, and disinformation management including through digital solutions where it adds value.
- b. Promote participation of women, youth, CSOs and political parties in relevant NEC activities.
- c. Promote access and opportunity of the right to vote and inclusion of women and vulnerable groups in electoral processes.
- d. Support the NEC, civil society, and other actors to conduct civic and voter education.

Activities related to Output 1.2: Improved institutional capacity and accountability of the National Elections Commission (NEC) and electoral stakeholders

- a. Provide technical capacity and skills enhancement of NEC at all levels.
- b. Support sustainable electoral operations and infrastructure.
- c. Provide technical capacity support to electoral stakeholders towards greater accountability and electoral integrity.

Activities related to Output 1.3: Strengthened conflict prevention and mitigation mechanisms to support peaceful conduct of elections

- a. Provide technical and capacity building support to strengthen existing national mechanisms to early identify and respond to electoral violence.
- b. Undertake and support awareness-raising and mitigation measures to prevent violence against women in elections and politics.
- c. Strengthen the capacities of national institutions to deal with misinformation, disinformation and hate speech, while protecting the human rights of Liberian citizens.

Activities related to Output 2.1: Enhanced youth and women participation and inclusion in political decision-making

- a. Provide support to youth and women organisations and formations for greater political party representation and increased influence in decision-making.
- b. Provide support for youth and women candidates to be included in electoral lists.
- c. Advise and provide technical assistance to political parties to strengthen youth and women policies and practices and promote internal democracy in political parties.

- d. Develop and implement mentorship programme for women and youth and provide technical support to women and youth wings of political parties.

Activities related to Output 2.2: Strengthened inter-party collaboration and policy-based connections between parties, their MPs, and voters

- a. Support policy-based connections, collaboration and engagements between political parties, their MPs, and voters.
- b. Facilitate intra-party dialogues and engagement between political parties and the National Elections Commission through the Inter-Party Consultative Committee (IPCC).
- c. Provide support and training of political parties to comply with new rules and regulations.

Activities related to Output 3.1: Improved capacity of the Secretariat in Legislative oversight

- a. Provide technical support to the Secretariat, Bicameral departments and Joint Legislative Modernization Committee (JLMC) to undertake trainings, research, documentation, and capacity building for Secretariat staff.
- b. Provide technical and digital equipment for Legislative Secretariat and 4 bicameral support structures.
- c. Support policy and legal reforms in the Legislature that strengthen the role of the Secretariat.

Activities related to Output 3.2: Increased capacity of CSOs and the media in furtherance of the oversight functions of the Legislature

- a. Facilitate and develop partnerships between CSO, Media and National Legislature and individual Members of the Legislature to strengthen civic engagement with the Legislature.
- b. Conduct trainings, and capacity building for CSO, Media on how to engage and influence legislative decisions to impact their constituencies.
- c. Provide grant to CSOs and Media organisations to monitor, report and publish findings on the work of the national legislature.
- d. Establish quarterly CSO-Legislative dialogue to facilitate sustained interactions between the legislature and citizens (parliamentary monitoring organizations (PMOs), Media, and recognised youth and women organisations).

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

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).

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).

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

This Action is labelled as G1; Objective 2 is directly targeting women's empowerment, in particular in the context of political participation. In addition to the activities related to Objective 2, and in accordance with the EU Gender Action Plan III (GAP III), throughout the implementation of this Action the gender dimension will be addressed in all other identified objectives and output areas to ensure that there is a consistent gender lens. Furthermore, the Action will introduce a monitoring and evaluation system gender sensitive and, where significant, data will be disaggregated by sex. The implementation foresees active collaboration and coordination with the dedicated UN Agency UNWomen.

The Action contributes to the achievement of SDG 5.5 - Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life – in particular through the activities under Objective 2 as for the overall gender glass through all implementation.

Human Rights

The Action focuses on supporting Liberia in achieving a more inclusive and transparent democracy in Liberia and contributes to the overarching priorities of the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020-2024): protecting and empowering individuals; building resilient, inclusive, and democratic societies; promoting a global system for human rights and democracy; and harnessing the opportunities and addressing challenges of new technologies. The Action will support the actors and stakeholders to adhere to and promote international human rights standards. The Action thus adopts a human rights-based approach, leaving no-one behind by focusing on the most vulnerable and marginalised, being adaptable and flexible to cater to changing and unforeseen circumstances, addressing structural issues for lasting results, and ensuring sustainability. The Action seeks to mainstream diversity throughout its activities by working with women organisations, local communities, and Disabled People Organizations (DPOs). New technologies, where feasible, will be used to promote democracy and inclusion, for example with adequate solution for people with disabilities (PWDs) like tactile ballots. To guarantee freedom of expression and right to information, dedicated on-line platform to counteract misinformation and fake news during the electoral process may also be used.

Through close collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCHR), as subject-matter expert in human rights, the Action seeks to ensure human-rights-based proofing and where needed trainings in human rights for relevant interlocutors, counterparts, and Action staff.

Disability

PWDs face many challenges in Liberia as cultural approaches to disability remains largely negative. Persons living with disabilities are often excluded or not considered for employment and their specific needs are often not catered for. The Action will specifically focuses on inclusion and promotion of diversity through removal of barriers to equal participation to the electoral and political process. The Action will support logistics during election day to reduce or eliminate physical barriers. Through all the objectives the Action will promote participation to the political process for persons living with disabilities, rural population, and other marginalised groups.

Democracy

The Action contributes to democratic governance, accountability, transparency and to social and human development through a peaceful environment in accordance with the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020-2024). It will work in synergies with the National Elections Commission, the Legislature, civil society, and all main stakeholders of the country's governance mechanisms to promote a more inclusive and transparent democracy in Liberia.

The main SDG targeted is SDG 16 - Peace, Justice, and strong institutions. All the Action's objectives will contribute to this SDG. In particular, the Action will contribute to 16.6 - Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels; 16.A Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime, 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels and 16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.

A well-designed and executed knowledge management will be a critical driver for the implementation and delivery of the Action. The Action will place proactive knowledge management and strategic communication at the centre of its implementation. This approach will ensure that the Action remains nimble to the dynamic political narrative of democracy, good governance, inclusive participation of citizens and elections in Liberia.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

This Action is aligned with the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy⁷, which encourages an integrated approach to external conflicts and crises. The EU's integrated approach addresses all policy dimensions of conflict by bringing together a multi-dimensional, multi-phased, multi-lateral and multi-level approach. This approach works towards prevention, peacebuilding, crisis response and stabilisation to contribute to sustainable peace. Through this Action the EU and its partners build sustainable peace and resilience of democratic institutions and actors in Liberia. In particular, the Programming for Peace framework applied to this Action seeks solutions relating to the prevention of electoral and political violence and to support stakeholders in formulating conflict sensitive strategies. In recent years, a range of electoral conflict prevention activities have been developed and implemented in Liberia and those will be further amended and adapted to the challenges of the upcoming electoral

⁷ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf.

cycle. These activities can broadly be divided into (1) analysis and mapping; (2) monitoring and early response; (3) activity and training design. The analysis and mapping component ensure the development of conflict-sensitive and evidence-based prevention strategies. Monitoring and Early Response is key to guaranteeing accurate and publicly accessible information to inform response and mitigation strategies. Activity and Training Design encompasses a range of context-specific electoral conflict prevention activities based on the analysis and monitoring, foreseeing capacity building with trainings as a vital component. The Action will continue providing support and training to the Liberian National Police (LNP) to ensure security and respect for human rights and freedom of expression, particularly during electoral campaign periods and electoral operations, but it will also expand its outreach to other stakeholders concerned with election related violence. Building upon the existing mechanisms and institutional partnerships, in collaboration between governmental actors and civil society, the Action will aim to strengthen the response at provincial and local level.

Disaster Risk Reduction

Natural and man-made disasters have the potential to throw elections into chaos, destroying infrastructure, displacing populations, and potentially rendering the impacted system more vulnerable to security threats. While politicians are not responsible for natural disasters, they are often held accountable and anticipated to act. In line with Priority 1 of the EU Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027, the Action plans to support Business Continuity Plans, in particular for electoral bodies and the deployment of early warning and response system that may eventually go beyond mere focus of electoral violence (e.g. Election situation room is also equipped to monitor Covid-19 risks and can be expanded to disaster risk reduction if the need arises). The Action itself does not directly or indirectly increase risk of natural disaster.

Other considerations if relevant

In line with the EU Digital for Development (D4D) Strategy and the UNDP Digital Strategy 2022-2025, digital technologies will be mainstreamed throughout the implementation of the Action. Acknowledging the potential risks of digital technology, as well as the lack of basic infrastructure in Liberia in certain instances to drive digital technology, the Action will offer support stakeholders on a case-by-case basis to harness the transformative power of digital solutions for a more inclusive, and equitable utilisation of resources.

In addition, the Action seeks to strengthen sustainable planning and budgeting that goes hand-in-hand with sustainable procurement. Where applicable, the Action will also consider the environment in procurement actions, with an attempt of employing re-usable materials and support sustainable energy. The Action will consider environmental sustainability in its advice, where applicable.

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

| Category | Risks Title | Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low) | Impact (High/ Medium/ Low) | Mitigating measures |
|-----------|--|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| Political | Risk 1: The political will of the National Legislature to move forward with transformative changes not forthcoming or sustained. | High | High | Engage with the leadership of the National Legislature, through the Joint Legislative Modernization Committee (JLMC) and the Secretariat to ensure buy-in and support of this Action. |
| Political | Risk 2: Continued fragmentation and personalisation of political parties. | High | High | This is a major issue, but the Action has included trainings and workshops to address it. |
| Political | Risk 3: A non-transformative approach to electoral cycle and deepening democracy issues, leading to non- | Medium | High | UNDP supports NEC and CSO efforts to advocate for reforms on the legal framework or improvement of processes through adequate regulations. Comprehensive capacity strengthening programmes, engaging NEC, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure buy- |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|--|--------|--------|---|
| | completion of next electoral cycle legal framework. | | | in and adoption of a transformative approach to the electoral cycle. |
| Societal and cultural | Risk 4: Low citizens' confidence, or identification with the electoral process or its aspects, owing to the disenchantment of past elections and a negative perception of the Legislature. | Medium | High | Support NEC communication and voter education efforts to engage in raising awareness of citizens on the importance of participation in electoral processes. |
| Political | Risk 5: Political instability resulting from Government's incapacity or lack of political will to address the deep social disparities prevailing in Liberia. | Medium | High | Continuous engagement by development partners to support the Government medium term development agenda- the Liberia's Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development 2018–2023. |
| Economic | Risk 6: Lack of sufficient funding under the Liberian National Budget to proceed with the overall Electoral process. | High | High | Constant monitoring and active coordination with all partners involved through technical and political dialogue. |
| Political and economic | Risk 7: Delays in the ongoing Census, which has implications for boundary delineations for the elections. | High | Medium | Constant monitoring and active coordination with all partners involved through technical and political dialogue. |
| Technical | Risk 8: Limited capacities of implementing partners twinned by low availability of skilled resources. | Medium | High | Constant monitoring and active coordination with all partners involved through technical and political dialogue. |
| Societal | Risk 9: Perpetuation of gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms. Dissolution of the gender perspective during the implementation of the Action. | High | High | A gender mainstreaming and right-based approach and the principle of 'leave-no-one-behind' will be implemented in all phases of the Action. |

Lessons Learnt:

The EU supported the Liberian Election cycles under the 10th and 11th EDF via UNDP partnership with UNDP projects (UNDP direct management). Evaluations have been conducted at the end of the programmes. In particular, the last one conducted in 2020 recommended to continue support to NEC, support civic voter education as gender sensitive civic education curriculum, foster women's political participation and representation and mainstream gender policies, provide more training to political parties. All recommendations have been considered in the formulation of the Action. The coordination and cooperation of all different partners, national and international, engaged in the support to Elections cycle in Liberia and the timely availability of the financial resources (from Government of Liberia and Donor partners) remains fundamental.

All these lessons have been integrated to strengthen the design of the Action and improve its implementation to strengthen inclusive, effective, transparent, and accountable governance in Liberia. During the implementation of the Action knowledge, good practices, and lessons will be captured and documented regularly. The lessons will be integrated back into the Action to ensure effective delivery.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

Over 15 years since the end of the civil war, Liberia still faces challenges in establishing inclusive, effective, transparent, and accountable governance. This Action is based on the premise that the country needs to address its governance challenges to establish inclusive, effective, transparent, and accountable governance.

Thus, the underlying intervention logic for this action is that **promoting a more inclusive and transparent democracy in Liberia** will enhance good governance in the country. The logic assumes that:

IF support to the electoral cycle and sustaining peace is enhanced; **IF** meaningful participation of women and inclusion of marginalised groups in political processes is enabled; and **IF** participation of citizens in the decision-making process and accountability (through increased legislative oversight) is increased **THEN:**

- i) Electoral processes will be transformed and improved leading to enhanced inclusiveness, effectiveness, transparency, and accountability in democracy, governance, and peace in Liberia.
- ii) Participation of women and inclusion of marginalised groups in political processes will be realised leading to the enhancement of quality of democracy and governance in Liberia.
- iii) Oversight role of the National Legislature will be discharged effectively thereby leading to the enhancement of democratic values and good governance in Liberia.

This intervention logic assumes that the Government of Liberia and particularly the National Legislature, Political Parties, National Elections Commission, and other relevant actors will assume ownership of the Action and will be open to fostering inclusion, transparency, accountability, effectiveness in democratic and governance processes in Liberia.

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

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.

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

| 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 | A more inclusive and transparent democracy in Liberia. | 1.a Worldwide Governance Indicator: voice and accountability (percentile rank) (*GERF 1.21) 1.b WGI: rule of law (percentile rank) (*GERF 1.20) | 1.a.43,5 (2020) 1.b.16.3 (2020) | tbd | World Governance Indicators, WGI | |
| | | 2.a Ibrahim Index of African Governance: overall governance score 2.b IIAG rule of law score | 2.a 47.9 (2019) 2.b 54.9 (2019) | tbd | Ibrahim Index of African Governance, baseline | |
| | | 4. Voter Turnout of the Presidential Elections (MIP 2020-2027 – 3.2b) | 75% (2017) | tbd | Liberian National Elections Commission Report | |
| | | 4. SCORE Index rating for civic trust and coexistence, by county and sex (%) (MIP 2020-2027 – 3.1a) | 52% (2016) | 70% by 2027 | Official GoL Reports | |
| Outcome 1 | Enhanced support to the electoral cycle and sustaining peace | 1.1 Extent to which the electoral institutions improved their capacities in participation, transparency and inclusion processes 1.2. Number of women's rights organisations, peacebuilding organisations, feminist organisations, and women human rights defenders' organisations who participated in consultations around new policies and draft legislation with the regional, national and local government/state actors (GAP III). | tbd | tbd | Legislature Annual Reports and Action monitoring data | The political will of the National Legislature to move forward with transformative changes not forthcoming or sustained. Government of Liberia and particularly the National Legislature, Political Parties, National Elections Commission, and other relevant actors will assume ownership of the Action and will be open to fostering inclusion, transparency, accountability, effectiveness in democratic and governance processes in Liberia. |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| Outcome 2 | Enhanced meaningful participation of women and inclusion of marginalised groups in political processes | 2.1. Extend to which women and marginalised groups are part of the political process in political processes | 2.1 tbd | | Action monitoring data Inter-Parliamentary Union | Social entities and groups concerned still engage in political participation despite non transformative approach |
| | | 2.2 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (MIP 2020-2027 – 3.2b) 2.4 Proportion of women, youth and person with disabilities included as candidates on electoral lists. 2.5. Extent to which state entities and justice structures allocate resources for the prevention and elimination of all forms of gender-based violence (SI 2.2 amended) (GAP III). | 2.2. Lower Chamber: 8 women/73 seats or 11%, Upper Chamber: 1 woman/30 seats or 3.3%; (2021) 2.5.tbd | | | |
| Outcome 3 | Increased participation of citizens in the decision-making process and accountability (through increased legislative oversight). | 3.1 Number of reforms and specific measures taken by the national parliament and parliamentary committees to implement existing gender equality and women's empowerment policy commitments on women's participation in decision-making (GAP III). | 3.1 tbd | 3.1 tbd | Action monitoring data and progress reports | Social and legislatives entities concerned engage, despite low citizen confidence Interest from the legislative and the secretariat to engage in the intervention |
| | | 3.2 # Of policy and legal reforms approved in the Legislature that strengthen the role of the Secretariat 3.3 # Of government policies related to election developed or revised with civil society organisation participation through EU support (* GERF 2.29) 3.4 Extent to which the public have confidence in the Legislature relating to its control of elections 3.5 Total Number of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) benefitting from EU Support | a. tbd b. tbd c. tbd d. tbd | 3.2 tbd 3.3 tdb 3.4. tbd 3.5 tbd | | |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| Output 1 related to Outcome 1 | 1.1 Enhanced participation, inclusion, and transparency of the electoral processes | <p>1.1.1 Proportion of civic and voter materials available in local languages</p> <p>1.1.2 % Increase in participation and inclusion of CSOs, youth, women, and persons with disabilities in electoral processes through the NEC</p> <p>1.1.3 # Of grassroots civil society organisations benefitting from (or reached by) EU support</p> <p>1.1.4 # Of NEC, civil society and other actors trained in civic and voter education</p> | <p>1.1.1 tbd</p> <p>1.1.2 tbd</p> <p>1.1.3 tbd</p> | <p>1.1.1</p> <p>1.1.2</p> <p>1.1.3</p> | Action monitoring data and progress reports | GoL entities concerned engage, despite limited financial and human resources |
| Output 2 related to outcome 1 | 1.2 Improved institutional capacity and accountability of the National Elections Commission (NEC) and electoral stakeholders. | <p>1.2.1 # NEC staff and other electoral staff given technical capacity and skills enhancement workshops</p> <p>1.2.2 # Of electoral stakeholders given training and capacity building on ensuring greater accountability and electoral integrity</p> <p>1.2.3 #Extend to witch electoral operations and infrastructure improved NEC and electoral stakeholders capacities</p> | <p>1.2.1 tbd</p> <p>1.2.2 tbd</p> <p>1.2.3 tbd</p> | <p>1.2.1 tbd</p> <p>1.2.2 tbd</p> <p>1.2.3 tbd</p> | Action monitoring data and progress reports | GoL entities concerned engage, despite limited financial and human resources |
| Output 3 related outcome 1 | 1.3 Strengthened conflict prevention and mitigation mechanisms to support peaceful conduct of elections | <p>1.3.1 # Of NEC commissioners, magistrates, and electoral stakeholders trained in handling electoral disputes</p> <p>1.3.2 % of electoral complaints resolved in timely, transparent, and credible manner</p> <p>1.3.3 # Of awareness raising campaigns conducted to prevent violence against women in elections and politics</p> | <p>1.3.1 tbd</p> <p>1.3.2 tbd</p> <p>1.3.3 tbd</p> | <p>1.3.1 tbd</p> <p>1.3.2 tbd</p> <p>1.3.3 tbd</p> | Action monitoring data and progress reports | GoL entities concerned engage, despite limited financial and human resources |
| Output 1 related to outcome 2 | 2.1 Enhanced youth and women participation and inclusion in political decision-making | 2.1.1 Of women, youth and persons with disabilities trained in political participation | 2.1.1 tbd | <p>2.1.1 tbd</p> <p>2.1.2 tbd</p> | Action monitoring data | |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|-----------|-----------|---|---|
| | | 2.1.2 Extend to which technical assistance provided to political parties strengthened youth and women wing, policies, and influence | 2.1.2 tbd | 2.1.3 tbd | and progress reports | |
| | | 2.1.3 Extend to which a mentorship programme supports women and youth in political parties decision making and processes | 2.1.3 tbd | | | |
| Output 2 related to outcome 2 | 2.2. Strengthened inter-party collaboration and policy-based connections between parties, their MPs and voters | 2.2.1 # Of political party executives, women, youth wings collaborating by MOU and policy | 2.2.1 tbd | 2.2.1 tbd | Action monitoring data and progress reports | Political entities concerned engage, despite fragmentation and personalisation of political parties |
| | | 2.2.2 # Of intra-party dialogues and engagement promoted or facilitated between political parties and the National Elections Commission through the Inter-Party Consultative Committee | 2.2.2 tbd | 2.2.2 tbd | | |
| | | 2.2.3 Number of political parties staff provided with training on complying with new rules and regulations | 2.2.3 tbd | 2.2.3 tbd | | |
| Output 1 related to outcome 3 | 3.1 Improved capacity of the Secretariat in Legislative oversight | 3.1.1# Of secretariat staff members, bicameral departments and Joint Legislative Modernization Committee trained towards reform, modernization, and effective oversight. | 3.1.1 tbd | 3.1.1 tbd | Legislature Annual Reports ,Action monitoring data and progress reports | Interest from the legislative and political parties to engage in intervention |
| | | 3.1.2 Number of government policies developed or revised with CSO through EU support (EURF 37) | 3.1.2 tbd | | | |
| | | 3.1.3 # Of Research and knowledge products produced by the Secretariat to improve legislative oversight | 3.1.3 tbd | 3.1.2 tbd | | |
| | | 3.1.4 # Of digital equipment full operational for Legislative Secretariat and 4 bicameral support structures | 3.1.4 tbd | 3.1.3 tbd | | |
| | | | | 3.1.4 tbd | | |
| Output 2 related to | 3.2 Increased capacity of CSOs and the media in furtherance of the oversight functions of the Legislature | 3.2.1 # Of CSO network strengthened and CSO members trained in legislative oversight | 3.2.1 tbd | 3.2.1 tbd | Action monitoring data | Interest from citizen, CSO , media and networks to engage in intervention |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|--|---|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|--|
| outcome 3 | | 3.2.2 # Of media reporters trained in covering legislative activities. | 3.2.2.tbd | 3.2.2.tbd | and progress reports | |
| | | 3.2.3 # Of CSOs and Media organisations to monitor, report and publish findings on the work of the national legislature. | 3.2.3 tbd | 3.2.3 tbd | Legislature Annual Reports | |
| | | 3.2.4 # Of CSO-Legislative dialogues to facilitate sustained interactions between the legislature and citizens | 3.2.4 tbd | 3.2.4 tbd | | |
| | | 3.2.5. Number of capacity development initiatives funded under the Intervention that improve core Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) capacities | 3.2.5 tbd | 3.2.5 tbd | | |
| | | | | | | |

4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

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 60 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

NA

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 measures⁸.

4.4.1 Direct Management (Grant)

(a) Purpose of the grant

The grant will contribute to (i) enhance participation, inclusion, and transparency of the electoral processes including electoral reform and (ii) strengthen the inter-party collaboration and policy based connections between parties, their MPs, and voters.

(b) Type of applicant targeted

The envisaged entity has been selected using the following criteria:

- Ability to work in coordination and in a complementary manner to the work done by UNDP.
- Ability to contribute to the oversight of the electoral process throughout the cycle with analysis and ad-hoc recommendations for assisting the stakeholders to stay on track with the programme.
- Recognized political neutrality and broad worldwide expertise and experience in electoral and electoral issues,
- Technical, administrative and financial capacities;
- Capacity to deploy rapidly specialized technical expertise on critical issues related to the participation, inclusion and transparency of the electoral processes and the strengthening of inter-party collaboration and with specific expertise on specific legal or technical aspects of the elections.
- Satisfactory visibility of EU funding.

The grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to European Partnership for Democracy (EPD). This not-for-profit entity was selected because of its specific technical competence and according to the criteria mentioned above. EPD is also the only European Network which brings together a network of 18 organisations, from 13 states across Europe, specialising in the different parts of a democratic system.

⁸ 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.

The entity will contribute to the oversight of the electoral process throughout the cycle with analysis and ad-hoc recommendations for assisting the stakeholders to stay on track with the programme. It will also include rapid deployment of expertise on specific legal or technical aspects of the elections and enhance the visibility of the European support.

(c) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to a nongovernmental organisation, international organisation, an intergovernmental organisation, (international) public sector operator/organisation, selected using the following criteria:

The implementing partner has to be adapted to the specific challenges of Liberia's governance context (legislative largely dysfunctional with limited capacities in specialised areas, limited capacity of the Secretariat, inadequate modern tools, lack of transparency, lack of policy based connections and engagement between political parties).

As mentioned, the selected entity will be complementary to the work done by UNDP. This entity have the capacity to deploy rapidly (2013 is a presidential election year) specialised technical expertise on critical issues related specific activities contributing to the outputs (1.1 (a & b), Output 1.2 (a & c) and Output 2.2) related to the participation, inclusion and transparency of the electoral processes and the strengthening of inter-party collaboration.

The implementing partner counts with specific remit to support democracy with track record and capacity to bring together relevant European networks and expertise; and the capacity to marry the academic (knowledge and research), policy (advocacy) and practitioner (operations) aspects of work.

The decision on the mode of implementation takes into account the electoral calendar, as the next presidential election will take place in October 2023.

Both criteria call for a specific type of beneficiary on account of its **technical competence** (democracy and political reforms), its high degree of specialisation and its administrative/governance powers, creating a **factual monopoly situation** (recognised political neutrality and unique network of 18 organisations specialising in the different parts of a democratic system) – in accordance with Articles 195 (c) of the Financial Regulation.

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 because of the very specific and technical nature of the activities to be implemented.

The part of the action under the budgetary envelope reserved for grants may, partially or totally and including where an entity is designated for receiving a grant without a call for proposals, be implemented in indirect management with an entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the same criteria.

4.4.2 Indirect Management with an entrusted entity

This Action may be implemented in indirect management with UNDP Liberia. This implementation entails **almost all of the action and the achievements of all three specific objectives** and activities described in section 3 (Outputs 1.1, Output 1.2, Output 1.3 and Output 2.2). The envisaged entity has been selected using the following criteria:

- The implementing partner has to be adapted to the specific challenges of the country's governance context and be able to demonstrate a good and extensive local network and contacts, good experience of the Liberian context and relevant engagements with local authorities, government, electoral bodies and civil societies;
- A specific mandate to advance democracy worldwide;
- Recognised political neutrality;
- Broad worldwide expertise and experience in electoral issues and political reforms;
- Strong presence and specific experience in Liberia;

- Technical, administrative and financial capacities;
- Capacity to channel funding to civil society and media;
- Satisfactory visibility of EU funding;
- Operational capacities to work in an extended territory, with minimal infrastructures, where elections are held in the most unfavourable time of the year (rainy season) and where technical assistance, including international, is not easily available;
- Strong track record in working with government institutions and other international partners with demonstrated engagement with the democratic governance process;
- Demonstrated capacities to support legal, policy frameworks, systems strengthening, institutional capacity development, and the delivery of services to the people of Liberia, including enhanced social accountability, voice, and participation through civil society organisations;
- Capacities to implement higher level of coordination and cooperation with the different actors present in Liberia; locals (national observers organisations, CSOs and NGOs) as international (USAID, NDI, etc.) as well as UN organisations.

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

4.4.3 Changes from indirect to direct management mode (and vice versa) due to exceptional circumstances (one alternative second option)

From indirect to direct management:

If negotiations with UNDP entity fail, that part of this action may be implemented in direct management (Grants), through a call for proposals.

(a) Purpose of the grant

The grant is meant to contribute to: all the Outcomes of the Action, as that is also what is foreseen by the implementation by UNDP.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

The applicants targeted may be Member States' Agencies, International organisations and NGOs, (all of them possibly in partnership with local actors). All applicants must have the necessary expertise to respond to the criteria's and the capacity to deliver on the results of this action.

The envisaged entity will be selected using the following criteria: The entity is able to work in the difficult Liberian context, with the capacity and the logistics needed to implement activities at the national level. The entity has extensive experience in election support. The Entity has the necessary convening authority. The Entity has an extensive experience in Liberia. The Entity has a Strong experience in operating in highly political contexts.

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) | Third-party contribution, in currency identified |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.4 | | |
| Indirect management with an entrusted entity | 14 000 000 | n/a |
| Direct management | 750 000 | n/a |
| Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3 | 250 000 | n/a |
| | | n/a |
| Totals | 15 000 000 | |

4.7 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

A Steering Committee constituted by the Government of Liberia, UNDP, EU, Member States (Sweden, Ireland) and other partners contributing to the governance process - will offer strategic guidance and oversight to the implementation of the Action. The Steering Committee would meet four times a year to review and determine the following issues:

- Assessment of the status of implementation of the Action and monitoring the progress of the Action;
- Provide strategic guidance and recommendations, including on Action management and good governance;
- Validation of strategies and results; Approval of work plan.

A Technical Committee will be established to enhance dialogue and cooperation amongst the various stakeholders across the political, strategic and operational levels. The Technical Committee's membership would be broad, to be diverse, inclusive and gender-sensitive, and ideally entail all partners working on good governance, including development partners, with regular thematic meetings during the year.

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).

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring:

As part of the intervention, UNDP will conduct both the baseline and end-line surveys needed to inform the indicators. The baseline information will be entered into the Log frame no later than the first annual progress report, while the data collected in the end-line surveys will feature at the latest in the final report.

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the importance of the action, a mid-term and final evaluations will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission and/or by UNDP.

The mid-term evaluation will be carried out for problem solving and learning purposes, in particular with respect to determine progress being made toward the achievement of outcomes and will focus on effectiveness, efficiency, and timeliness and identify course corrective actions and adaptive learning if needed.

A final evaluation will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the efficiency and efficacy of the delivery of the Action's results in comparison with the initially planned action and eventual correction applied after the mid-term evaluation. It will also offer recommendations for follow-up of results including lessons learned for sustainability, replicability of the project's results (best practice, future referencing, and planning). Evaluations will be carried out in accordance with EU guidance, policies, and procedures. In case the evaluations will be carried out by the Commission, evaluation services may be contracted under a framework contract.

In that case the Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 2 months 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.

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.

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:

The present Action identifies as

| Contract level | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Single Contract 1 | Delegation agreement with an entrusted entity |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Single Contract 2 | Grant contract with an entity selected because of its specific technical competence and management capacity |