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ANNEX 2

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the 2021 Annual Action Plan in favour of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Action Document for the EU Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) Phase II

ANNUAL PLAN

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

1. SYNOPSIS

1.1. Action Summary Table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act	EU Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) Phase II CRIS number: NDICI AFRICA/2021/043-416 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)
2. Team Europe Initiative	No
3. Zone benefiting from the action	Africa, Nigeria
4. Programming document	Nigeria Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP) of the NDICI 2021-2027
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results	This Action intends to contribute to priority area 2 of the MIP on Governance, Peace and Migration, in its specific objective “1: Enhancing democracy, participatory governance and accountability (DAC Code 151)” and in particular to the following result: Increased accountability, transparency, inclusiveness (youth, women and persons with disabilities) and effectiveness of the democratic and governance system, including through improved electoral processes and strengthened involvement of Civil Society Organisations.
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Priority area 2: Governance, Peace and Migration Sector: Enhancing democracy and participatory governance
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG: 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) Other significant SDGs and where appropriate, targets: 5 (Gender Equality)
8 a) DAC code(s)	DAC Code 1 – 15150 – Democratic participation and civil society (7.5%) DAC Code 2 – 15151 – Elections (47.5%) DAC Code 3 – 15152 – Legislatures and Political Parties (11.3%) DAC Code 4 – 15153 – Media and free flow of Information (6.5%) DAC Code 5 – 15170 – Women’s equality organisations and institutions (12.5%)

8 b) Main Delivery Channel	Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society (20000) Private sector institutions (60000)			
9. Targets	<input checked="" 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"/>
	11. Internal markers and Tags:	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective
Digitalisation @ Tags: digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship job creation digital skills/literacy digital services		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Connectivity @ Tags: transport people2people energy digital connectivity		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

	Migration @ (methodology for tagging under development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	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: BGUE-B2021-14.020120-C1-INTPA Total estimated cost: EUR 39 000 000 Total amount of contribution EUR 39 000000			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
13. Type of financing	Direct management through: - Grants - Procurement			

1.2. Summary of the Action

Following the 1999 elections that returned the country to civilian rule, Nigeria has conducted five consecutive general elections in 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 with varied and mixed outcomes. While the 1999 and 2003 general elections were perceived as largely flawed by Nigerians and the international community, the 2007 general election was condemned for falling far short of basic international and regional standards for democratic elections. The 1999, 2003 and 2007 elections were also marred by violence.

On the other hand, the 2011 and 2015 elections showed strong improvement thanks in part to EU support in this area. The 2019 elections was widely acknowledged as a missed opportunity in consolidating the gains made in 2011 and 2015. Nevertheless, good progress has been made in the implementation of some of the 2019 EU Electoral Observation Mission (EoM) recommendations, and the trajectory for the 2023 and 2027 elections will depend on continued reform on a range of issues involving the three arms of government - executive, legislature, judiciary, as well as varied stakeholders such as the Electoral Management Body (EMB), political parties, and security agencies. The level of civic engagement of Nigerians and in particular of youth, women, persons with disabilities, the media and civil society organisations will also be crucial to consolidate democracy and to make progress on the reform process.

Following the 11th EDF 'Support Programme to Democratic Governance', this successor programme is proposed for the remaining period of the 2019 to 2023 electoral cycle, as well as for the 2023-2027 electoral cycle. The programme is the result of an extensive lessons learned and review effort. It is a priority and in the long-term interest of the EU in Nigeria to continue supporting the process of democratic and electoral reforms that will enhance the capacity of Nigeria's national institutions to discharge their statutory duties in an efficient, unbiased and non-partisan manner, improve representation and increase civic engagement in governance of youth, women and persons/groups living in vulnerable situations such as Internally Displaced Persons, refugees, minorities and persons with disabilities in particular.

The new programme 'EU Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) phase II' aims to promote democratic consolidation in Nigeria by contributing to the building of strong, inclusive, effective and legitimate democratic institutions. The programme will be implemented from 2022 to 2027, and will be anchored in the priorities of the Nigerian government, in the EU-Nigeria Joint Ministerial roadmap set in 2021 and in the recommendations of the EU Election Observation Mission on the 2019 General Elections and of the 2021 follow up mission to Nigeria set to take place in November 2021. It will focus on six thematic areas of support: i) the Electoral Management Body (EMB); ii) the National Assembly iii) the Political Parties; iv) Media, v) Participation of Women, Youth and Marginalized Citizens; vi) Civil Society Organisations and other Non-State Actors.

2. RATIONALE

2.1 Context

With an estimated population of 211 million in 2021, Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa and more than 60% of the population is under 25 years old. Nigeria is also one of Sub-Saharan Africa's two leading economies and a lower middle income country. Nigeria is a complex and heterogeneous country with tensions related to the diverse identity of Nigerians and inequalities. Since independence in 1960, the country has been confronted with a civil war and 33 years of a military government which ended in 1999 with the return to a civil administration and a fourth constitution. It has since held six general elections, which were broadly accepted but with varying degrees of quality, the most recent being in 2019. Today, Nigeria has witnessed 21 years of unbroken civil administration with a civilian to civilian transition between the two leading political parties in 2015. This inspired democratic development in the region and the broader continent. The country faces security and socio-economic difficulties, especially in the North, under-representation of youth, women and persons with disabilities in economic and political life, and challenges to democratic culture and human rights.

Nigeria's ability to be a positive regional and continental player on governance, security and stability is contingent upon the unity, representativeness and the health of its democracy as well as its ability to accommodate the needs and the aspirations of its youth. It will be crucial to improve governance structures, democratic institutions and the very limited participation of the majority of the population in governance and the decision making process, youth and women in particular.

Peace and security challenges are multiple with crises in the North-East (security and humanitarian crisis caused by the violent conflict between the non-state armed groups and Nigerian Armed Forces), the North-Central (violence over the access to resources and inter-communal clashes), the South-West (herders-farmers clashes, criminality and resource conflicts) the South-South (crime and unrest because of perceived marginalisation), the South-East (calls for secession) and the North-West (cross-border criminality, banditry, kidnapping and illegal mining) with multiple tensions simmering below the surface. In the North-East alone, three million people are estimated to be Internally Displaced and more than eight million are in need of humanitarian aid. There are also 324 000 Nigerian refugees in neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger. For The office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Nigeria is one of their 14 "emergency situations" in the world. This volatility, exacerbated by population growth (and high youth population) and environmental crisis occasioned in part by climate change, is likely to remain in the medium and long term and will require a strengthened capacity for conflict prevention and management by the federal and state authorities, as well as by communities themselves. Many of the tensions mentioned above illustrate a widespread perception of marginalisation and exclusion which can be partially addressed by building a more inclusive political and economic system.

The foregoing highlights the importance of democracy and civic participation as one of the most relevant and politically impactful areas for the EU to engage in. This is also underscored in the EU-Nigeria Joint Ministerial roadmap set in 2021, and was further stressed in extensive consultations with civil society organisations, youth and women groups during the programming process. The programme will combine far-reaching political engagement, technical support and a focus on critical issues that will contribute to the legitimacy of the political system... Supporting democratic governance and making it more inclusive is an investment for the long-term in order to make politics more inclusive, accountable and representative, therewith reducing the risk of conflict and irregular migration. By focusing on youth and women engagement, the EU will demonstrate that it supports future leaders and a long term vision for democracy in Nigeria.

The EU's long-term technical support has been largely successful in building capacity of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and key civil society actors. An important key challenge of voter access has been addressed, leading to an increase in the number of polling units from 119 973 to 176 846 thereby making voting more accessible in unserved and underserved areas of the country to cater for the growing voter population. A major milestone in youth participation was also achieved with the passage and enactment of the Youth Inclusion bill, which saw a reduction in the age requirement of candidates seeking elective office. Continued EU support will seek to create new entry points that will increase the scope and quality of the political engagement of youth, women and other marginalised groups, including internally displaced persons. There is a consensus amongst stakeholders, particularly the government, that youth inclusion is a prerequisite for sustainable development. This is because 51.1% of registered voters in the 2019 General Election are between the ages of 18 and 35 years.

The EU's successful support to democratic governance so far is based on an integrated approach designed to increase the political relevance and leverage of the EU and to take a leading role in the coordination of democracy support to Nigeria by the international community. It has also contributed to enhanced political engagement with, and dialogue between key stakeholders across the legislature, electoral bodies, political parties and civil society. The EU created and chairs a coordination architecture consisting of EU Heads of Mission (HoMs) and other "likeminded" HoMs and an "election core-group" comprising of international development partners in Nigeria. The EU also played a leading role in supporting the National Peace Committee (NPC) chaired by a former Head of State. The NPC played a critical role in preventing electoral related violence in the pre- and post-2015 and 2019 general elections. This engagement was crucial in facilitating a historic transfer of power between the two main political parties in 2015 (for the first time since 1999). The EU is currently supporting the NPC to include more youth and women as members. The deployment of EU Election Observation Missions (EoM) at each general election since 1999 has further solidified the EU's role and engagement in the process, and serves as a reference point for future cooperation with recommendations guiding long-term support to electoral stakeholders.

The action will contribute to progress on a number of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and consequent fulfilment of economic and social rights, and gender equality, in line with Nigeria's international human rights commitments. Moreover, the action contributes to the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP III), and particularly its thematic areas of engagement 1) Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women; AND 2) Promoting equal participation and leadership.

2.2 Problem Analysis

The objective of the action is to address a number of specific problems identified in the course of several years of engagement of the EU in this field in Nigeria.

The integrity of the electoral system is one of the major issues facing democratic governance in Nigeria. Turbulent pre electoral periods and elections have been a source of political crisis, and controversies surrounding elections and electoral outcomes have remained a serious threat to the legitimacy and stability of democracy. The 2019 General Election was significant as it was the sixth successive elections since Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999.

The 2019 elections were conducted in the context of progressive improvements in Nigeria's electoral administration and legal framework following the flawed elections in 2007. The 2019 elections contested by 91 political parties and 73 presidential candidates presented enormous challenges. Another challenge was the increase in the number of registered voters by 14.28 million, resulting in a total voting population of 84.04 million. It led to the postponement of the election by a week from 16 to 23 February 2019, just five hours before polling units were due to open, underscoring severe shortcomings on the part of INEC and key electoral stakeholders.

Apart from the key issues of operational and logistical shortcomings, other issues include inadequate training of ad-hoc staff and the security agencies; lack of clarification of the roles and responsibilities of security personnel on election duties, and in some cases, collusion with political agents; limited scope and latitude of information dissemination by INEC; and ineffective strategies to persuade political parties to recruit women, youth and persons with disabilities for executive and elective posts. The disenfranchisement of internally displaced persons from voting in all the elections is also a major concern. International observer groups identified late distribution of materials, late opening of polls, technical hitches with the Smart Card Readers and violence as major flaws. There were also weaknesses in the polling, counting and collation processes, coupled with a high volume of pre-election petitions that were left pending until after the elections due to lack of time limits for filing and adjudicating such cases, compromising the right to timely remedy. There were also problems around over crowded polling units. Although an attempt was made to address this by creating voting points and voting point settlements, this had implications on the transparency of results collation and transmission.

In addition to these difficulties, Nigerian elections have been marred with violence and manipulation, leading to distortion in their outcomes and public discontent about their quality and credibility. The reason for this phenomenon has been the deficient internal democracy in the political parties and their insufficient commitment to democracy and accountability, both within their own structures and in the manner they engage with the electoral process. The situation is further exacerbated by Nigeria's lack of legislated quota for women in decision-making structures such as the National Assembly (NASS) and the country's use of the First-Past-The-Post electoral system, which tends to be less conducive to the participation and representation of women, youth and other marginalised groups in politics.

It is important to note that major reforms have since been recorded in the legal and administrative framework governing the electoral process. Recent attempts by the electoral management body to promote electoral transparency and improve transparency in the result collation process by deploying technology through the result viewing portal has been most welcome. The introduction of a continuous voter registration system, where eligible citizens are able to register to vote throughout the electoral cycle, is also considered a positive step. A new legal framework is currently being considered by the National Assembly, although there have been attempts to step down one of its progressive elements on introducing new voting technologies which will significantly improve the result collation and transmission process, considered to be one of the weakest links in electoral administration in Nigeria. However, challenges remain, including a lack of adequate regulation for party primaries, inadequate legal enforcement to sanction non-compliance of political parties with campaign finance regulation and a lack of specific provision for organising voting for categories of voters including election duty staff, credited media and domestic observers and security personnel on election duty.

INEC organised two off-cycle governorship elections in Edo and Ondo States in September and October 2020 respectively which were adjudged to be fair and transparent by stakeholders and a huge improvement on the Bayelsa and Kogi governorship elections held in 2019, which were marred with violence and uncertainty. The 2020 elections were the first major elections organised by INEC within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. While there was some non-adherence to the COVID-19 protocols, it is important that INEC was able to conduct these elections to prevent a constitutional crisis. Effort should be sustained to ensure that the electoral processes are not undermined by the pandemic in the future.

The political personnel and political parties need to be supported to ensure democratic consolidation in Nigeria. They often do not have clear ideologies, are not inclusive enough (women, youth and persons with disabilities are largely underrepresented) and have limited internal democracy mechanisms in place. There is also a tendency to disregard party rules and electoral guidelines and regulations. Parties are often perceived as electoral machines to pursue personal ambitions and therefore do not aggregate politicians and members based on a well-articulated ideology or set of policies. As a result, party affiliations are often changing, with many politicians changing parties easily for political gain. This significantly erodes the opportunities for issue based politics and, in turn, higher voter turnout in elections and the involvement in politics of a wider part of the population interested in the general interest. The use of violence and intimidation to weaken opposition is common as well as vote buying and stealing of votes. Apart from the issues facing political parties in Nigeria, the country's electoral democracy itself remains work in progress and more capacity is required to strengthen a number of other democratic institutions – i.e. mainly the legislature, judiciary, civil society and the media – to engage effectively and meaningfully with the electoral process, thereby contributing to democratic consolidation in the country. The legislature, which was the first casualty of the military rule in Nigeria, can be strengthened in relation to the executive and the judiciary. The role of the legislature is critical for democratic development and consolidation. Although the judiciary in Nigeria has been widely criticized for lack of independence and slow adjudication of electoral disputes, it remained a bulwark for the enforcement of the rule of law.

Civic participation in the electoral process remains a major challenge, demonstrated in increased voter apathy and decrease in turnout with every successive general election. The large-scale youth protests against police brutality at the end of 2020, under the #EndSARS, also highlighted the risks of a growing schism between young people and decision makers. Yet, it equally demonstrated a strong appeal for democracy and security which represents an opportunity.

Of particular concern are the targeted attacks on offices and assets of INEC nationwide. The spate of attacks in the first half of 2021 has raised significant apprehensions on the ability of INEC to conduct the Anambra governorship election scheduled for November 2021 and the 2023 general election in the South-East region.

In order to strengthen electoral administration and build trust and confidence of all stakeholders in the political process, periodic revisions of the administrative and legal frameworks governing the conduct of elections are undertaken. A new round of electoral reform process was introduced by the National Assembly in 2020 but has not been concluded yet. As a result, there is a risk that INEC will not be ready to implement all the new - and positive - electoral provisions on time for the 2023 general elections.

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

1. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

INEC is an independent and autonomous Electoral Management Body (EMB) established by Section 153(1F) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It has a broad and exclusive mandate which includes the conduct of elections into all elective positions at federal and state levels, as well as in the Federal Capital Territory, registration, regulation and monitoring of political parties, registration of persons qualified to vote, voter and civic education and conduct of referendum. One major principle of the Commission is to carry out all its functions independently, free from any external interference in line with the provisions of Nigerian Constitution. The Electoral Management Body is independent from external resources to cover its electoral operations and most of the budget resources allocated to the elections is directly channelled from the federal budget, which is a significant step for the Commission's financial independence and autonomy.

However, INEC has always been confronted with funding gaps in certain areas of its operations which are critical to enhance electoral integrity. This explains why the Commission continues to seek the support of the International Development Partners in strengthening its work in some areas of urgent and/or unanticipated needs where there may be a budgetary shortfall or no budgetary provision. Furthermore, the 2019 general elections underscored weaknesses in the area of election management and logistics, internal and external communication, voter registration, prosecution of election offences and supervision of political parties. Aware of these lapses and against the background of the lessons learnt from the 2019 elections and the EOM recommendations, the EU Delegation has continued to collaborate with the Commission to identify key areas that require specific and urgent support to advance the electoral process. These key areas are the technical support to the Office of the Chairman, improvement in strategic planning, operational and training delivery capacity, enhanced internal communication mechanism and engagement with external stakeholders, support of the periodic continuous voter registration system and cleaning of the voter register, efficient liaison with the security agencies to secure the electoral operations and the establishment of a prosecution electoral offence unit and strengthened mechanism to oversee and monitor the activities of registered political parties. These areas have also been highlighted by various EU EOM recommendations.

2. Political parties

Political parties are the primary stakeholders in election contests. By provisions of the Nigerian constitution, they have the exclusive rights of fielding candidates for elections. Currently, there are 18 political parties in Nigeria with the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) and opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) being the most dominant. Only five of the parties won election into political offices in the 2019 general election and other elections.

The Uwais electoral reform committee report (2007) describes political parties as "crucial and yet least developed democratic institutions in the country". Nigerian political parties are largely characterized by observers as having not clear programmes and ideologies, limited internal democracy, not being inclusive enough, as well as having the tendency to disregard party and electoral rules with little or no consequence. As a result, they have often been unable to effectively mobilise and educate their members in particular and the public in general and party loyalty is limited. Members can easily switch party if it offers a greater chance of being elected. They have also been affected by internal crises and have remained purveyors of electoral violations. In some instances, they have resorted to vote trading and attempts to undermine the democratic process.

In these circumstances, most of the political parties, remain institutionally weak and prone to disintegration. Political parties are also not inclusive enough regarding certain socially disadvantaged groups. These include women, young people and persons with disability. For instance, only 7 women, representing about 6.4% of the total 109 membership of the Nigerian Senate were elected in the 2019 general elections. For the House of Representatives, the figure was 11 or 4% of the total 360 members. Although most political parties have specific provisions in their rules to ensure inclusion of these groups, in practice these provisions are not complied with.

Despite the aspiration of citizens and youth in particular for improved governance, the responsiveness of the political class remains by and large limited. Therefore, it is important to provide necessary support towards the management and administrative structure of political parties by strengthening policy dialogue, intra- and inter-party dialogue, promoting reforms and inclusiveness, and mainstreaming gender, the youth, and persons with disabilities in the political process.

3.The National Assembly (NASS)

The legislature in Nigeria operates at the levels of the three federating units. These include the National Assembly which is a bicameral legislature comprising the Senate and the House of Representatives. At the state level, State Houses of Assembly (SHAs)¹ operate a unicameral legislature, while the Local governments operate as a single chamber made up of Councillors from different wards. The main functions of the legislature are law making, representation and oversight. Through these roles, they are expected to contribute to democratic consolidation, improve state capability and promote inclusion. However, this process has experienced significant challenges since the return to democracy in 1999. This is attributable to a host of reasons including the high turnover of legislators, low capacity/skills of both elected officers and support staff and limited political will. All these have led to the erosion of trust by the citizens and inability of the legislature to effectively facilitate democratic consolidation. Specific challenges of legislation include a deficient bills processing system that sometimes allow bills to be passed into law without adequate scrutiny; a system of reconciling differences between chambers not performing well enough; undue delays in considering major legislations; introduction of a high number of bills coupled with a low rate of passage; and a public hearing system that is not robust enough to allow for input of public views into legislations.

There are 69 Standing Committees in the Senate and 105 Standing Committees in the House of Representatives of the Ninth Assembly (2019-2023), constituted along the lines of government Ministries, Agencies and Departments (MDAs). Many of the recommendations in the EU EOM report on the 2015 and 2019 general elections require primary legislation from NASS. The National Assembly requires technical support especially at the Committee level in order to improve the quality of its law-making and oversight responsibilities. It is also important to open up the activities of the National Assembly to public scrutiny and promote citizens' access and participation in the legislative process.

This need is especially critical at the Committee level to enable them use evidence from a wide range of sources to inform their reports and recommendations in order to improve the quality of law-making and oversight responsibilities. This programme aims to support the capacity of the NASS to better discharge its legislative functions in compliance with democratic principles and standards to engage in electoral reforms and strengthen governance. Such support will be channelled to the relevant Standing Committees of the National Assembly. Closely related to this is the need to strengthen the relationship between legislators and their constituents in order to deepen civic engagement. There has been a progressive decline of elected women and youth into eligible positions despite their demographic weight and activism. Therefore, women and youth political participation as well as inclusivity of marginalized groups in the political process would need to be addressed through legislation.

4. The Media

The 1999 Constitution guarantees the freedom of expression for the media, whilst the Freedom of Information Act of 2011 guarantees citizens' right to public information. However, the federal and state government control the media institutions through ownership and regulation and as a consequence, the media do not always provide fair and ethical coverage of the electoral processes. . For these reasons, the various EU EOM reports have highlighted the importance of support actions in addressing the loopholes in the media sector. This is to ensure that journalists are trained to provide conflict sensitive, fair and impartial electoral coverage and are informed to identify and prevent hate speeches that are capable of encouraging violence. A key lesson learnt from the previous electoral support programmes and various consultations with stakeholders is that the legal and operational environment governing media broadcast and access in Nigeria needs to be strengthened to ensure that the public and private service broadcast industry keeps to a professional code of conduct. Complementary to this is the capacity of the media regulatory body, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), to effectively discharge its mandatory function in terms of monitoring and imposition of sanctions on media organisations when necessary. It is important that the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has the required capacity, independence and autonomy to regulate the broadcast industry in a professional and non-partisan manner. The ongoing attempt at the re-organisation of the Commission provides a unique opportunity for the EU to engage in this process. Furthermore, the increasing use of the media, particularly new media for fake news and misinformation, capable of significantly disrupting the electoral process and undermining the political process underscores the importance of structured engagement with this stakeholder group.

¹ there are 36 states houses of assemblies across the country

5. Judiciary

The judiciary is Nigeria's third arm of government solely responsible for the administration of justice. The Supreme Court is the highest in the land and is the final court of arbitration. The constitution guarantees the independence of the judiciary. The Supreme Court comprises of 18 Justices and is presided over by the Chief Justice. It is the final appellate court with jurisdiction over disputes between the federal government and the states and between the states, particularly on issues relating to the allocation of funds or resources, and over disputes arising from elections. Ahead of any elections, the President of the Appeal Court is mandated to constitute an Election Petition Tribunal to adjudicate on contested electoral outcomes. The removal of the Chief Justice of the Federation on the eve of the 2019 General Election, created public suspicion about the integrity of the election adjudication process. Furthermore, the growing trend of conflicting judgements by courts of coordinate jurisdictions in electoral related matters and the seeming lack of understanding by judicial officials of INEC's regulations and guidelines on elections has highlighted the need to engage with this tier of government in institutionalizing practice directions that will guide the operations of election tribunals and electoral adjudications in Nigeria.

6. Security Agencies

The responsibility for the maintenance of law and order during elections, including prevention of electoral violence, rest with the security agencies and with the Nigerian Police Force as the lead agency. However, due to the difficult task of policing Nigeria's elections, the military is often called in to support maintaining peace and order. Although INEC has worked within the ambit of the Inter Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) to coordinate election security, the electoral environment is still plagued by tensions and fraud. In addition, there are concerns about the deployment of the adequate numbers of security personnel for electoral security and the coverage of remote and hard to reach areas, as well as the appropriation of required funds for the operational costs and welfare. Nevertheless, INEC has engaged with the security agencies to provide targeted election-specific training for their personnel to be deployed for election duties and produced a handbook on the code of conduct and rules of engagement for security personnel on election duties. The potential exists to build upon this partnership.

7. Civil Society Organisations

The engagement of non-state actors in the electoral cycle is a prerequisite to promote inclusive, peaceful and transparent elections. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Nigeria are vibrant and engaged in various key areas of intervention and advocacy on electoral reform, civic and voter education and in the participation of youth and women, persons with disabilities in the electoral process as well as in promoting transparency and accountability in electoral governance. However, many CSOs depend entirely on external resources to sustain their activities to support democracy and all along the electoral cycle. As with the predecessor programme, this programme will continue to promote and deepen the engagement of various civil society organisations in Nigeria in a bid to promote transparency and accountability in the electoral process. While a number of non-state actors and CSOs are skilled enough to engage in activities relating to domestic electoral observation, these actions are restricted to Election Day observation rather than the entire electoral process. This area of intervention is not traditionally funded by government and many CSOs lack adequate resources and are unable to bear the indirect cost to undertake required oversight activities along the electoral cycle. It was strongly recommended by the EU EOM report on the 2019 general elections that future elections programme should allocate resources directly to CSOs, particularly those operating at the grassroots to engender better deliveries. This is also in line with the NDICI regulations and the Civil Society Roadmap which underscores the need for more structured engagements with CSOs in promoting democratic consolidation.

8. The National Peace Committee (NPC)

The NPC is made up of a group of eminent Nigerians, working under the leadership of a former Head of State. Adopting a mixed methodology, the Committee works across party lines to resolve political tensions and facilitate peace accords both at national and subnational levels. The National Peace Committee (NPC) has contributed to peaceful coexistence in Nigeria. The pivotal role it played in the run up to the 2015 elections has been well documented, with a repeat of this intervention in the period leading to the 2019 elections and its immediate aftermath. The unique attribute the NPC possesses is its convening power, coupled with its ability to influence a wide range of leading political actors and stakeholders. While the Committee is not capable of solving all the conflicts in Nigeria, its track records has clearly demonstrated its ability to deliver results when the stakes are high during elections. The greatest challenge to the success already recorded by the Committee has to do with its composition, standard operating

procedures and the perceived partisanship of certain members. The programme will continue to support the Committee to review its membership, especially to include younger and women voices, standard operating procedures and strengthening the role of the Secretariat. This is required to strengthen the ability of the NPC to effectively address the various political challenges ahead, while sustaining a sense of national ownership.

9. Women, Youth and Persons with disabilities

Women, youth and vulnerable groups including persons with disabilities, minorities and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are poorly represented in political life at all levels, especially in state and local governments, and the most impacted by the current functioning of democratic institutions. This is because these institutions often place little priority on the experiences of women, youth and vulnerable groups and their meaningful participation in the political process. This in part explained growing grievances and protests by the youth population for a more inclusive, responsive and representative government.

The advocacy for women political participation has been long drawn but their representation remains in steady decline in spite of the very dynamic interventions by women groups and other key stakeholders. Of a combined total of 469 seats in the Senate and House of Representatives, women's representation was 4.7% in the eight National Assembly (2015-2019) and 4.5% in the current ninth Assembly (2019-2023). According to a research by the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), of the 1 487 elective positions in Nigeria, there are only 70 elected women, 4.71% of elected officials. No woman has been elected as Governor in the 22 years of democracy in Nigeria and the percentage of women appointed to political positions falls far short compared to men. Barriers to the participation of women in politics include patriarchy; violence against women; biased socialization processes; harmful traditional practices;; the restriction of roles for women in party structures; feminisation of poverty; monetization of politics; traditional values; discriminatory attitudes and practices; family and child care responsibilities; the high cost of seeking public office; a gender insensitive media; a low level of political consciousness, and the politics of invective.

Furthermore, while the youth inclusion act has resulted in an increase in the number of youth running for office, this has not translated in an increase in the number of youth in elective or appointive positions. This further underscores a need to engage with more youth led platforms including civil society organisations, groups and the ministry of youth to identify opportunities for better youth representation.

EU assistance will therefore seek to create new entry points that will increase the scope and quality of the political engagement of youth, women and other marginalised groups, including persons with disabilities, minorities and internally displaced persons.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The **overall objective** of the action is to foster a functioning pluralistic, inclusive, participatory and representative democracy in Nigeria.

The Objective (Outcomes) of this action is to:

SO1: Improve the quality of electoral administration in Nigeria

SO2: Strengthen capacities for legislative and judicial reform in compliance with democratic principles and standards

SO3 : Enhance Pluralism, internal democracy and equality of opportunity in the political parties and the political party system

SO4: Empower Media, including new media to promote fair and ethical coverage of the electoral process and combat hate speech and disinformation

SO5: Enhance participation of women, youth and other marginalized groups in the political process

SO6: Empower civil society organisations and relevant agencies to demand greater transparency and accountability in the electoral and decision making process, and promote greater citizens' participation.

Expected results (outputs) are as follows :

SO1: Improve the quality of electoral administration in Nigeria Electoral administration, strategic planning and operations are strengthened

- 1.1 Internal and external engagement with stakeholders enhanced
- 1.2 The Electoral Institute's (TEI) capacities are enhanced, and its research and training role reinforced
- 1.3 Gender-responsive technology innovations are incorporated, accepted, and in line with human rights and data protection safeguards and standards.

SO2 Strengthened capacities for legislative and judicial reform in compliance with democratic principles and standards

- 2.1 NASS and targeted NASS Committees supported to improve on legislative duties, election related legislations and oversight functions
- 2.2 Citizens' access to NASS and NASS engagement with their constituencies improved
- 2.3 Capacity of elected female, youths and persons with disabilities increased
- 2.4 Strengthened judiciary for the administration of electoral justice

SO3- Pluralism, internal democracy and equality of opportunity in the political parties and the political party system enhanced

- 3.1 Emergence of policy and issue-based political parties accountable to members
- 3.2 Enhanced capacities of political parties to constructively engage with the electoral process, INEC and stakeholders (including CSOs)
- 3.3 Enhanced internal mechanisms for promoting affirmative action and support to women, youth and persons with disabilities

SO4-Media, including new media empowered to promote fair and ethical coverage of the electoral process and combat hate speech and disinformation

- 4.1 Enhanced capacity for media practitioners on professional and conflict sensitive coverage of the electoral process both online and offline, including countering fake news and disinformation
- 4.2 Enhanced media engagements on delivery of extensive civic and voter education
- 4.3 Capacity of the media regulators (NBC & NPC) strengthened
- 4.4 Media engagement in promoting women, youths, persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups in politics is improved

SO5 - Enhanced Participation of women, youth and other marginalized groups in the political process

- 5.1 Legal reforms and other initiatives to promote inclusion of women, youth and marginalized groups, including minorities, in politics, political parties and in political leadership and decision-making positions strengthened.
- 5.2 Pool of women, youth and persons with disabilities aspirants for elective offices increased
- 5.3 Capacity of women, youth and persons with disabilities aspiring for and holding elected office enhanced
- 5.4 Enhanced policy framework for increased participation of internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the electoral process

SO6 - Civil Society Organisations and relevant agencies empowered to demand greater transparency and accountability in the electoral process and decision-making process and promote greater citizens' participation.

- 6.1 Strengthened platforms for CSO engagement with key stakeholders, including state and non-state actors
- 6.2 Civil Society engagement in democratic reforms and monitoring supported
- 6.3 Initiatives for peaceful and non-violent electoral process supported

In addition, Funds will be reserved for "Support to strategic initiatives" (call for proposals/direct grants/services/FWC) to allow the EU Delegation respond to unforeseen development and opportunities that could contribute further to the objectives of the action. This is based on lessons learned under the 10th EDF where additional 15million EUR had to be committed six months to the general elections following high level visits from HQ and requests from INEC. The funding allocation under this budget line under the 11th EDF was also fully disbursed before the 2019 elections to support CSO groups in the face of a highly volatile political environment. Possible activities to

be funded by this budget line include monitoring and preparations for unforeseen off cycle elections, strategic support to INEC with changing political situation, youth engagement initiatives or voter education related activities.

3.2 Indicative Activities

SO1- Improve the quality of electoral administration in Nigeria

Strengthening the managerial and operational capacities in the Office of the INEC Chairman; Strengthening the capacity of INEC's planning and monitoring Department and continuous development and mainstreaming of the Election Monitoring and Support Centre (EMSC) tools into INEC's daily operations; Supporting development and implementation of the 2022 – 2026 Strategic plan and Strategic Plan Implementation Programme of Action and the Election Project Plans for the 2023 and 2027 general elections; Support the integration of the voter register and polling units data to facilitate an interactive online platform where voters can locate their polling units, using Geographic Information System (GIS); Support voter education initiatives aiming at increased participation of women, youth, persons with disabilities, IDPs and other marginalised groups in the electoral process; Support to INEC dialogue and engagement with stakeholders (judiciary, political parties, persons with disabilities, women, youth, CSOs, IDPs); Develop a comprehensive electoral training curriculum and capacity building for The Electoral Institute (TEI) and INEC staff; Training and capacity building for INEC staff deployment of electoral technologies; Supporting INEC's data protection, data recovery and cyber-security strategies; Support the Forum of State Independent Electoral Commissions (FOSIECON's) and CSOs advocacy work on SIECs independence and financial autonomy; Facilitate development and adoption of model laws and improved legal framework among SIECs.

SO2 - Strengthen capacities for legislative and judicial reform in compliance with democratic principles and standards

Support to targeted NASS members to improve skills and knowledge on legislative practices, procedures, and Committee rules; Improving research and legislative analysis; and expanding citizen outreach; Core institutional support to clerks of select NASS Committees on legislative drafting; Support to strengthening engagement of NASS members with their constituents through the constituency offices (and public hearing at local level); Capacity development of elected female, youths and Persons with Disabilities; Support to target Committees to hold stakeholders consultations and collate inputs for inclusive electoral and constitutional review exercise; Support the recruitment of technical expert to build up the skills and knowledge of NASS to drive electoral reforms and aggregate views, strategies and proposals for reform; Support the development of practice directions for elections petition tribunals; Trainings and capacity building for Judges of the Election Petition Tribunals.

SO3 - Enhance pluralism, internal democracy and equality of opportunity in the political parties and the political party system

Training and capacity building to strengthen the leadership, organisational and operational capacities of political party officials; Strengthening of capacity of party officials to regulate, monitor and report party and campaign finance spending; Development of political party leadership programmes; Advocacy workshops for Political Parties to strengthen the participation of women, youths, persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups; Strengthening of networks of CSOs that bring women together to enable a gender- based perspective and response to political conflict and violence; Support measures to promote the participation of women and other marginalized groups in the political process; Support to strengthening the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC).

SO4 - Empower Media, including new media to promote fair and ethical coverage of the electoral process and combat hate speech and disinformation

Capacity Building and training of journalists, in best practices and professional reporting of the electoral process; Media monitoring of print and electronic media on the coverage of the electoral processes; Support to Inclusive media debates on electoral issues, voter and civic education programming, monitoring electoral bodies preparation, political party funding and registration, and balanced, trusted and detailed election day programming; Support on review and implementation of the NBC Act to insulate it from political interference; Capacity Building Workshops to promote gender responsive and inclusive reportage of elections.

SO5 - Enhance participation of Women, Youth and other Marginalized Groups in the Political Process

Legislative advocacy to promote an inclusive electoral legal framework; Capacity building and technical assistance to female, youth, persons with disabilities, IDPs legislators; Facilitate and support targeted legal reforms and affirmative action to increase women's participation in politics and decision-making working with the NASS and political parties; Support skills and capacity development for women, youth, persons with disabilities and IDPs as candidates and party leaders; Facilitate peer learning and mentoring of women, youth, Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and IDPs; Undertake skills and capacity development for women, youth, people with disabilities and IDPs elected to public office, through peer mentoring and coaching facilitated by selected 'role models' and 'change champions'; Strategic and targeted voter education initiatives for IDPs; support youth organizing labs to identify and mentor young political aspirants; Capacity building and mentorships for youth running for office; Support youth conferences that provide platforms for peer learning.

SO6 – Empower Civil Society Organisations and relevant agencies to demand greater transparency and accountability in the electoral and decision making process, and promote greater citizens' participation.

Capacity building and training of election observers, particularly youth led groups; Development, production and dissemination of election observation manuals and booklets; Improved logistics planning and data collection systems for Citizens' observer groups; Support the use of community-based mobilisation strategies for delivering electoral and political messages and themes geared towards advancing the issues of citizen participation and mitigation of electoral violence; Conduct campaign on civic and voter education campaigns, including through "civic technologies" and awareness creation on thematic aspects of the electoral process; support youth vote campaigns and civic education; Support to Peace Accords and public adoption of non-violence declaration by all political parties/candidates; Support to the institutionalisation of the National Peace Committee; Establishment of a platform to enhance collaboration between INEC, security agencies and CSOs to map out security hotspots and design response mechanisms; Capacity development and training for agencies responsible for oversight functions on the security personnel during elections; Establishment of a rapid complain mechanism situation room to deal with emergent security issues relating to elections.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming in AAP is very general and provided possibly before the mandatory analysis at action level are realised. This sections is based on the mainstreaming annex. We suggest to keep it.

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

Outcomes of the SEA screening (relevant for budget support and strategic-level interventions)

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening concluded that no further action was required.

Outcomes of the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) screening (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project)

The EIA (Environment Impact Assessment) screening classified the action as 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 Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening concluded that this action is no or low risk (no need for further assessment)

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that Gender equality is a significant objective of the programme.

Human Rights

Human rights, gender and conflict prevention are all fundamental issues that will be integrated throughout the programme cycle from design to implementation. Gender and disability rights are further included as specific results in order to improve the participation and non-discrimination of marginalised groups. Freedom of expression and association will also be promoted as well as the fundamental rights to political participation.

Disability

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 the programme.

Democracy

The promotion of democracy is the principal objective of the programme. Key democratic intuitions will be targeted for reform and a political framework for citizens to enhance political participation and hold government to account will also be supported

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

Conflict prevention will be integrated using political dialogue and through specific actions to ensure that the electoral competition does not lead to violence before, during and after the elections. Actions implemented under the programme will be conflict-sensitive, in line with the “do-no-harm principle” and to prevent politically motivated tensions and violence.

Disaster Risk Reduction

N/A

Other considerations if relevant

N/A

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Risk analysis and contingency plan

Category	Risks	Risk level (High/Medium/Low)	Mitigating measures
Risk category 1 – External environment	Security situation deteriorates in parts of the country, rendering election operations difficult or impossible.	High	A careful risk assessment will guide programme implementation. This would be undertaken in partnership with relevant civil society organisations with a view to systematically addressing drivers of conflict whilst building robust civil society led peace architecture and early warning systems. The programme will also continue to engage with the National Peace Committee (NPC) in driving political dialogue at the highest levels of government. It is assumed that the Nigerian government and the electoral management body remain receptive to sustained partnership in this area. EU will also support the police and other key security agencies for improvement in security provision.
Risk category 2 – Planning, processes and systems	The National Assembly loses the political will, commitment and competence to undertake required institutional reform and necessary constitutional and	Medium	Engage NASS to improve technical capacity and provision of required support to key Committees of NASS dealing with constitutional and legal framework for deepening

	legal framework for improving the electoral system		democracy and democratic governance.
Risk category 2 – Planning, processes and systems	INEC becomes resistant and hostile to pursuing and adopting institutional reform and organisational change.	Low	Continued efforts of EU SDGN to foster buy-in and engagement to INEC internal reforms.
Risk category 3 – People and organisation	INEC/SIECs lose the confidence of some or all stakeholders due to perceived lack of neutrality that in turn challenges coordination with others electoral stakeholders.	L	The programme will support INEC in deepening platforms of civic engagement aimed at building and sustaining mutual trust. Regarding SIECs, the programme will engage with the Governors’ forum and with the SIEC association at the political level to promote a greater autonomy of SIECs and a harmonised and conducive legal framework for free and fair elections at the local level.
Risk category 3 – People and organisation	Lack of Federal Government's political commitment to electoral reform beyond the 2023 general.	M	Increased political engagement with the Federal Government of Nigeria. Relevant provisions on political dialogue of the new Partnership agreement reached through post Cotonou negotiations can be invoked to facilitate political dialogue.
Risk Category 3 – People and organisation	Lack of continued cooperation from the political parties to support the scheduled electoral reforms and to be de facto accountable to INEC and SIECs as required by law	M	Reinforce the EUD political dialogue with political parties and facilitate high level dialogue between political parties and INEC.
	Assumptions		
The political situation remains fairly stable with the containment of the insecurity arising from conflict between non-state armed groups and Nigerian Armed Forces, emergent separatist tensions and other socio-economic and identity-based tensions and conflicts. The Government demonstrates its political willingness to participate in the project and various government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, CSOs, traditional and religious leaders are aligned with the government policy and converge in a coordinated manner towards common objectives and results. Required funds are made available by the Government to the main stakeholders, including INEC, the security agencies and public/civic enlightenment agencies. INEC remains largely neutral and impartial and benefits from the confidence of the stakeholders. Expertise is made available on time to build the capacity of the various stakeholders.			

Lessons Learnt:

One of the key lessons learnt is that while the electoral process is progressively being improved, and the Election Management Body in charge is on a steady path of enhancement, the remaining serious obstacles to a consolidated electoral environment, to inclusive, transparent, inclusive and peaceful elections and to greater civic engagement from youth, women and other marginalised groups are indirect factors and players. This includes political actors who pursue competitive electoral politics from a zero-sum game perspective with little consideration for the general interest. This is coupled with deepening adverse economic conditions, creating human development and security challenges for democracy and development in the country. Supporting democratic governance is an investment for the long-term in order to make politics more inclusive, accountable and representative. By focusing to a greater extent on youth and women engagement, the EU will demonstrate that it supports future leaders instead of focusing only on short-term gains.

More generally, a broader involvement of political actors and players within the Nigerian political landscape should be considered in this new action, given that the Nigeria's economic and political environment presents many challenges that can have consequences on the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of EU SDGN interventions. This will not only create synergy between development cooperation and political action, but will go a long way to ensure impactful actions and outcomes. On the same note, the prevalence of electoral violence and insecurity across the country, with violent incidents including those directly aimed at INEC offices and facilities, calls for a more direct engagement and involvement of security agencies.

The support to State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECS) was undermined by their institutional context and a lack of autonomy. A continuous support can be envisioned, but anchored in the creation of a network of CSOs with organizational capacity and presence at the state and local government levels to mount a strong and sustained advocacy and disseminating campaign for the autonomy of SIECs through an electoral legal framework that guarantees their administrative and financial autonomy.

EU's leadership and visibility has been acknowledged by several interlocutors, which helped position the EU as a key partner on democratic governance in Nigeria. This visibility policy and approach is definitely a positive take away and should be maintained.

Finally, the European Union Delegation (EUD) has been pointed out at by successfully bridging gaps through its political and diplomatic engagements with critical stakeholders in the Nigerian electoral system. This can leverage benefits of engagement in supporting elections, democracy, governance, and human rights activities in Nigeria. Coordination efforts in democracy and electoral assistance deserve continuation, by means of platforms such as the group of like-minded ambassadors (led by the Head of the Delegation of the EU) and the technical coordination group which the delegation co-chairs with the US and UK.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that:

IF INEC and SIECs, with the support of the Action and provided that they are independent and autonomous, deliver their mandate in a professional manner, with consolidated processes and sustainable effects, building their institutional memory and their capacities to proactively adjust to their environment;

AND IF key democratic institutions such as the National Assembly, political parties and media confirm their buy-in at the highest levels and discharge their responsibilities more effectively and efficiently because of more transparency and accountability, greater citizens' inclusion, improved internal democracy, party loyalty and better inter-party dialogue;

AND IF Security agencies are more effective in securing elections and preventing electoral violence and the judiciary is reinforced in its election-related mission delivery, helping guarantee that the process is legitimate and peaceful;

AND IF CSOs and the media contribute to ensure that the process is scrutinized and transparent and that electoral institutions and institutional stakeholders are kept accountable to the public because of a stronger media sector and an effective civil society both at national and local levels:

AND IF as well as the political participation and the civic engagement of women, youth, persons with disabilities and marginalized groups is promoted and increased;

AND IF an enabling environment for legitimate, inclusive and peaceful elections through support to reform of the legislative and policy framework is assured;

THEN this would contribute to the overall efficiency and transparency of the electoral process resulting in a contribution towards functioning pluralistic, inclusive, participatory and representative democracy in Nigeria.

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

At action level, the indicative log frame should have a maximum of 10 expected results (Impact/Outcome(s)/Output(s)). It constitutes the basis for the monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the intervention.

On the basis of this log frame matrix, a more detailed log frame (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 log frame (e.g. including baselines/targets).
- Progress reports should provide an updated log frame with current values for each indicator.
- The final report should enclose the log frame 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 log frame 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	Foster a functioning pluralistic, inclusive, participatory and representative democracy in Nigeria	1. Voice and Accountability Country score according to the Worldwide Governance Indicator (WGI) 2. Proportion of EU Electoral Observation Mission recommendations implemented before the 2023 general elections and between 2023 and 2027 (next general elections)* 3. Level of appreciation of the electoral process by EU EOM and other observers' groups	1. Voice and Accountability Score: 34.98 2. EU EOM and Observers' reports of the 2019 general elections 3. To be determined (TBD) - (2023) when recommendations are communicated following the elections in 2023	1. 50 2. 5 by 2023 3. TBD by 2027	1. World Bank World Governance Indicators (WGI) 2/3 Observers' reports 3. Afro barometer reports	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 1	SO1- Improve the quality of electoral administration in Nigeria	1.1 **Number of countries supported by the EU to conduct elections and/or	1.1 EMSC 2019	1.1 Complete integration of	1.1 Official results INEC	INEC, stakeholders

		<p>improve their electoral process (European Union Results Framework (EURF) 2.26)</p> <p>1.2 Number of business units monitored by the EMSC system</p> <p>1.3 Turnout on election day and Number of registered voters, disaggregated by sex, age and displacement status</p> <p>1.4 Percentage of polling units open on time</p> <p>1.5 Number of electoral offenses and number of sanctions</p> <p>1.6 Number of local elections conducted and percentage turnout during local elections</p> <p>1.7 Number of polling units open in each state where a local election took place</p>	<p>1.2 General elections 2019</p> <p>1.3 Number of local elections held in 2019</p>	<p>the EMSC by the 2023 elections</p> <p>1.2 98% opening of polling units at 8:00am on election day</p>	<p>1.2 EU EOM report and other observers' reports</p> <p>1.3 Justice and Courts reports</p> <p>1.4 SIECs official results reports</p> <p>1.5 Interviews and surveys with the beneficiaries</p>	<p>committed and ready to cooperate on the elections and electoral process</p> <p>The electoral Act, is through reform strategy/policy, is reviewed and updated</p>
Outcome 2	SO2- Strengthen capacities for legislative and judicial reform in compliance with democratic principles and standards	<p>2.1 Number of cases before the Electoral Offences Commission</p> <p>2.2 Number of legislative bills enacted, especially addressing issues and needs of marginalized groups</p> <p>2.3 Extent to which marginalized groups have access to law making opportunities</p> <p>2.4 Number of Committees with improved capacities in legislation, representation, oversight (scorecard)</p> <p>2.5 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</p>	<p>2.1 General Elections 2019 situation. Need to be elaborated at a later stage</p>	<p>% increase number of bills and motions passed by the 8th and 9th National Assembly in</p> <p>% increase in the number of pre-election cases concluded before the elections</p> <p>% increase in legislators' engagement with constituent even outside the electoral cycle</p>	<p>2.1 IPAC reports</p> <p>2.2 INEC reports</p> <p>2.3 Political parties' websites and platforms</p> <p>2.4 NASS reports</p> <p>2.5 Interviews and surveys with the beneficiaries</p>	<p>Institutional Stakeholders agree on the need for and continues strengthening the democratic governance platforms and attach importance to credible elections and inclusive participation of all in the political process</p> <p>Political stability</p> <p>Legislature and political support for adoption of</p>

						legal amendments and key bills is ensured
Outcome 3	SO3 - Enhance pluralism, internal democracy and equality of opportunity in the political parties and the political party system	<p>3.1 Number of cases of non-compliance with electoral rules</p> <p>3.2 Number of non-compliance cases with codes of conduct during the electoral campaign</p> <p>3.3 Number of incidents during intra-party electoral activities</p> <p>3.4 Extent to which political parties resort to alternative dispute mechanisms to settle their disputes</p> <p>3.5 Percentage increase in participation of women, youth and marginalized groups</p>	Situation at the General Elections 2019. Need to be elaborated at a later stage	<p>30% of political parties with leadership exhibiting accountability to party members before 2023 elections</p> <p>% increase in number of political parties' adhering to non-violence and conflict management, dialogue and consensus building, inclusion and tolerance before 2023 election</p> <p>% of political parties' adhering to non-violence and conflict management, dialogue and consensus building, inclusion and tolerance before 2027 election</p>	<p>3.1 CSOs reports</p> <p>3.2 registration, turn out and results numbers from official results INEC, SIECs</p> <p>3.3 Political party's lists of candidates</p> <p>3.4 interviews and surveys with the beneficiaries, participants and other stakeholders</p> <p>Baseline and endline survey conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention</p>	<p>Citizens maintain support for electoral process; CSOs and citizen engagement in the process</p> <p>Political stability</p>

Outcome 4	SO4- Empower Media, including new media to promote fair and ethical coverage of the electoral process and combat hate speech and disinformation	4.1 Percentage increase in the use of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act by journalists 4.2 Number of media specialized in covering the electoral process 4.3 Number of media houses with fact checking units 4.4 Number of media houses with in-house or joint training units 4.5 Extent to which local and national media portray positive images of women and girls in political and public life 4.6 Number of trained journalists specialized in covering the electoral process (disaggregated by sex)	The outcome of the monitoring of media coverage of 2019 elections showed that there was substantial non-compliance with the provisions of the 2019 Nigerian Media Code of Election Coverage, the Code of Ethics of Journalists in Nigeria and some other frameworks for election reporting EU EOM, 2019	By 2023, a code of conduct for the media in elections is adopted and being implemented by the print, broadcast and online media practitioners and stakeholders' groups as standards of reporting ensuring that elections reportage is fair, accurate and ethical	4.1 Baseline and endline survey conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention 4.2 Documented evidences of trends of reportage from IPC's media monitoring activity.	Media rights are recognised and freedom of speech protected Media houses and are committed to improve their capacities, performance and results
Outcome 5	SO5- Enhance participation of Women, Youth and other Marginalized Groups in the Political Process	5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments (SDG 5.5.1, 5.2 Percentage increase in the participation of women, youths and the PWDs and IDPs in elections and electoral process 5.3 Extent to which political parties are inclusive towards marginalized groups 5.4 Number of PWDs, IDPs, women and youth registered voters 5.5 Number of specific actions taken by partner country government (such as quota systems or other similar measures) to address discriminatory practices and improve women's representation in parliament and government institutions and decision-making positions, at regional, national and local level.	Situation at the General Elections of 2019. Need to be elaborated at a later stage	10% per cent increase in women, youth, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups registered as voters from 2019 values in targeted states/areas 10 per cent increase in women, youth, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable	electoral register/official voting statistics from INEC Online tracking report, Project activity reports, monitoring exercise reports, pictures, videos Media reports of the work of INEC and other electoral agencies	Key stakeholder, including Political parties and INEC remain reform minded

		5.6 Proportion of seats held by youth (people below 35 or 40 years old) in national parliaments and local governments)		groups turning out to vote from 2015 values in each state 30 000 persons with disabilities and persons with albinism registered as voters by Q1, 2023		
Outcome 6	SO 6- Empower Civil Society Organisations and relevant agencies to demand greater transparency and accountability in the electoral and decision making process, and promote greater citizens' participation.	6.1 Number of active CSOs on democracy and governance at the State level 6.2 **Number of government policies developed or revised with civil society organisation participation through EU support; (EURF 2.28)* 6.3 Number of sensitization campaigns on electoral and political participation 6.4 Number of sensitization campaigns on transparency and accountability of political institutions 6.5 Number of CSOs with mechanisms of countering hate speech Number of security agencies with active training schemes on electoral security 6.6 Extent to which women's rights organisations, feminist organisations and other CSOs , peacebuilders and women human rights defenders working for gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment and rights are able to work independently without fear of their safety and security 6.7 Extent of participation by women and by women's rights organisations in social dialogue	Situation at the General elections 2019. Need to be elaborated at a later stage	10% increase in the number of CSOs with EU funded grants	EU CSO database	Civil society organisations, particularly at the grass roots, remain committed to democratic consolidation

4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the partner country

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 **66 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.

4.4 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 measures².

4.4.1 Direct Management (Grants)

4.4.1.1 Grants: (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

Specific Objective 2: Strengthened capacities for legislative and Judicial reform in compliance with democratic principles and standards.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

NGOs and public bodies.

(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 Yiaga Africa and the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC) selected using operational and financial capacity as essential criteria and relevance of the proposed action to meet the objectives of the programme, design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and the ratio cost/effectiveness of the action as award criteria.

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 the organisations are in a factual monopoly situation (article 195(c) of the Financial Regulation) as they are the only two actors that work in the parliament on electoral related matters for the past three electoral cycles, albeit in two different niches, with PLAC involved with electoral reform and legislative strengthening and Yiaga Africa engaged with young parliamentarians and inclusive legislation, constituency engagement and participatory issues. They have the cooperation/support of the members of parliament, with various standing committees in the parliament approaching them for technical support as needed. The two organisations also led our work under the predecessor programme with good results and opportunities for further engagement. There is no other organisation with experience in providing such technical assistance to the Nigerian Parliament.

4.4.1.2 Grants: (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

Specific Objective 3: Pluralism, internal democracy and equality of opportunity of political parties and the political party system enhanced.

² www.sanctionsmap.eu. Please 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 between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

NGOs and public bodies.

(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 the Kukah Centre selected using operational and financial capacity as essential criteria and relevance of the proposed action to meet the objectives of the programme, design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and the ratio cost/effectiveness of the action as award criteria.

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 this is a significant specific objective with specific characteristics that require a particular type of body on account of its technical competence, its high degree of specialisation or its administrative power (article 195(f) of the Financial Regulation). The Kukah Centre has a specific mandate for political party engagement, a specialty and technical competence that is difficult to access due to the complex nature of political party operations in Nigeria. The Kukah centre has done a lot of work in establishing, facilitating and sustaining dialogue within political parties, and between political parties and the Electoral Management Body in Nigeria.

4.4.1.3 Grants: (direct management)**(a) Purpose of the grant(s)**

Specific Objective 4: Media, including new media empowered to promote fair and ethical coverage of the electoral process and fight hate speech and disinformation.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

NGOs and public bodies.

(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 the International Press Centre (IPC) and the Centre for Media and Society selected using operational and financial capacity as essential criteria and relevance of the proposed action to meet the objectives of the programme, design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and the ratio cost/effectiveness of the action as award criteria.

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 on account of the organisations' technical competence and high degree of specialisation (article 195(f) of the Financial Regulation). These two institutions are a coalition of several media organisations working on electoral reform and media pluralism in a bid to improve the democratic space. They are highly specialized and have specific competences – unique in this area of work – which are valued by authorities. Their memorandum containing recommendations on a new legal framework for the media in Nigeria, submitted during a public hearing at the Senate, has been endorsed by the Senate and by the Ministry of information, the supervising ministry for media operations in Nigeria, to help guide the reform process.

4.4.1.4 Grants: (direct management)**(a) Purpose of the grant(s)**

Specific Objective 5: Enhanced Participation of Women, Youth and other Marginalized Groups in the Political Process.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

NGOs and public bodies.

(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 the Nigerian Women Trust Fund, ElectHER, The Albino Foundation (TAF) and the Cedar Seed Foundation selected using operational and financial capacity as essential criteria and relevance of the proposed action to meet the objectives of the programme, design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and the ratio cost/effectiveness of the action as award criteria.

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 on account of the organisations' technical competence and high degree of specialisation (article 195(f) of the Financial Regulation).

To be successful, interventions for this specific objective require a strong outreach capacity towards the different stakeholders targeted, an in-depth understanding of the political and social dynamics at play, and a very specific expertise. In this respect, these four organisations have a unique positioning in the Nigerian context and technical competencies. The Nigerian Women Trust Fund is the only institution with a trust fund geared towards capacity building for women seeking office and for the overall promotion of women's political participation. It does this whilst providing a platform for collaboration between organisations working in the same space. ElectHer has an innovative methodology for women's political participation using digital tools (crowdfunding, digital campaigns and training, civic technologies). Their appeal to the youth population is unique and this serves our objective of promoting the political participation of young people. The Albino Foundation leads advocacy for the political participation of people with disability in Nigeria. They successfully led the People with disability (PWD) community in advocacy for the inclusion of PWD in the ongoing electoral reform process. The organisation's high technical competence has also been demonstrated in their positive advocacy and leadership of the PWD community on political participation and access to social services more generally. They also enjoy the confidence and collaboration of other international agencies and groups working on these issues in Nigeria. Cedar Seed works closely with the Albino Foundation on these issues and supporting this organisation would widen our reach to the PWD community.

Working with these organisations also enable to build on the successes of the predecessor programme in order to sustain momentum and ensure sustainability of our actions. The organisations are all well recognised and respected by multiple stakeholders and there is much value to be added on our engagement with them.

4.4.1.5 Grants: (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

Specific Objective 6: Empower Civil Society Organisations and relevant agencies to demand greater transparency and accountability in the electoral and decision making process, and promote greater citizens' participation.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

NGOs and public bodies.

(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 the Kukah Centre selected using operational and financial capacity as essential criteria and relevance of the proposed action to meet the objectives of the programme, design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and the ratio cost/effectiveness of the action as award criteria.

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 the organisation is in a factual monopoly situation (article 195(c) of the Financial Regulation), as the secretariat of the National Peace Committee which has an exclusive mandate to:

- Organise, observe and monitor compliance with Peace Accord by the political parties;
- Provide advice to the Government and the Electoral Management Body on resolution of political disputes and conflicts arising from issues of compliance with the Accords;
- To make itself available for national mediation and conciliation in the case of post – electoral disputes or crises.

Made up of eminent elder statesmen, the National Peace Committee is the only platform of engagement between the political parties and between them and relevant government agencies on many contentious issues in the electoral cycle. Although with no legal enforcement powers (yet), the Committee is the most credible and trusted body in the electoral process owing to its convening power and ability to mobilise high profile political leaders across the world.

4.4.1.6 Grants: (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

Specific Objective 6: Empower Civil Society Organisations and relevant agencies to demand greater transparency and accountability in the electoral and decision making process, and promote greater citizens' participation.

These calls for proposal will enable CSOs, independent political foundations, non-profit agencies, institutions and organisations and networks at local, national, regional and international level to proactively participate to the enhancement of the electoral process.

The expected results are less cases of violent incidents among political parties due to early warning mechanisms, more citizens' confidence in the credibility and transparency of INEC activities and operations and by the others stakeholders involved in the electoral process, as well as broad acceptance of election results thereby contributing to strengthening the legitimacy of elected representatives.

This call has been launched on 1 October, 2021 under a suspensive clause prior to the adoption of this Decision. This is justified to allow enough time for the selection of civil society organisations that will implement project in support of the February 2023 elections. It is important that the CSO organisations are contracted at least a year before the elections to ensure proper engagement on the objectives of the call and ensure value money.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

Non-Governmental organisations and private foundations.

4.4.2 Direct Management (Procurement)

A procurement process will be launched for the implementation of specific objective 1: Improve the quality of electoral administration in Nigeria. This call has been launched on 15 September, 2021 under a suspensive clause prior to the adoption of this Decision. This is justified because the process needs to be completed by June 2022, in order to avoid a gap between our ongoing programme and this phase II programme. This is also particularly important because the next general elections are scheduled to hold in February 2023, and a number of pre-election related activities will need to be concluded in the run up to this period.

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.

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 realization 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)
Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.3	
Specific Objective 1: Improve the quality of electoral administration in Nigeria composed of	19 000 000
Procurement (direct management) – cf section 4.4.2.	19 000 000
Specific Objective 2: Strengthen capacities for legislative and judicial reform in compliance with democratic principles and standards composed of	4 500 000
Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.4.1.1	4 500 000
Specific Objective 3: Enhance pluralism, internal democracy and equality of opportunity in the political parties and the political party system composed of	3 000 000
Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.4.1.2	3 000 000
Specific Objective 4: Empower Media, including new media to promote fair and ethical coverage of the electoral process and combat hate speech and disinformation composed of	3 000 000
Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.4.1.3	3 000 000
Specific Objective 5: Enhance participation of Women, Youth and other Marginalised Groups in the Political Process composed of	5 000 000
Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.4.1.4	5 000 000
Specific Objective 6: Empower Civil Society Organisations and relevant agencies to demand greater transparency and accountability in the electoral and decision making process, and promote greater citizens' participation composed of	3 400 000
Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.4.1.5 and 4.4.1.6	3 400 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2	600 000
Audit – cf. section 5.3	
Contingencies	500 000
Total	39 000 000
<i>Grants – total envelope under section 4.4.1: EUR 18 900 000</i>	
<i>Procurement – total envelope under section 4.4.2: EUR 19 000 000</i>	

4.7 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

A Project Steering Committee (PSC): will be responsible for the overall oversight and coordination of the programme at the highest level, providing policy and strategic orientation, including financial oversight and approval of funding allocation. The Committee will be co-chaired by the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, the Chair of the Electoral Management Body, and the EU Head of Delegation. High-level representatives of the programme's beneficiaries as well as the Heads of the implementing organizations will also attend. The PSC will meet twice a year. Further meetings can be organized whenever deemed necessary. This mechanism will ensure the overall relevance of the action to the general objective as well as its compliance with beneficiaries' requirements and needs.

A Project Technical Committee (PTC): will facilitate discussions on technical aspects of the Action's implementation. The technical committee will contribute to the exchange of experiences and information, guaranteeing that all activities are tailored to the identified needs and are relevant to the political and social context

of the country. The Technical Committee will meet at least once a month and will be chaired by the EU Delegation. It will comprise representatives of the EUD, Ministry of planning, all institutional beneficiaries and all heads of the 6 components of EU-SDGN II. The heads of components as well as project's experts will work in close collaboration with the technical committee in order to maximize information exchange as well as to enhance the collaboration with the project beneficiaries. This mechanism will allow the implementation an inclusive approach oriented toward greater ownership of results by the beneficiaries. The Project Technical Committee may decide to set up **sub-committees** upon request, to facilitate the coordination between partners and cross-component actions.

Within each of the components where more than one IP is involved, there will be intra-component coordination meetings, meeting at least once a month, to ensure that the implementation is following the right track and to allow for continuous coordination.

Gender equality, human rights and human rights based approach expertise will be ensured during the implementation of the intervention as possible. They will also be integrated in relevant technical assistance and capacity building activities and documents (i.e. Terms of Reference (ToRs) etc).

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:

Based on lessons learnt from EUSDGN I and the Evaluation results, the Action shall ensure that there is a systematic M&E system covering the overall project, as well as specific M&E systems to capture each component's own progress towards implementation. The development of these component-level M&E systems shall be done in close association between EUD and each component leader IP. Yearly M&E sessions shall be set up at the level of the project, including the institutional beneficiaries' representatives, and regular M&E documentation shall be provided by the IPs (bi-annually or quarterly) to ensure a comprehensive follow-up and assessment.

The identification of the baselines and the collection of data shall be the responsibility of each IP leader while the overall M&E indicators follow-up shall be done by the EUD, with dedicated funds and staff, working closely with the M&E staff from each of the implementers. M&E focal points should also be identified within each of the institutional beneficiaries, to facilitate data gathering and collection, and smoothen the overall process.

Monitoring and evaluation will assess gender equality results, an impact on rights of groups living in the most vulnerable situations and the implementation of the rights based approach working principles (applying all human rights for all; meaningful and inclusive participation and access to decision-making; non-discrimination and equality; accountability and rule of law for all; and transparency and access to information supported by disaggregated data). Monitoring and evaluation will be based on indicators that are disaggregated by sex, age, disability and group when applicable.

Human rights and gender equality competence is ensured in the monitoring and evaluation teams.

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the importance and nature 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.

A mid-term evaluation will be carried out for problem solving, learning purposes in particular with respect to post 2023 election activities and any future support.

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 innovative architecture of the action and the importance of the involvement of the EU in this field.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least three 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 shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination³. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

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.

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 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.

³ See best [practice of evaluation dissemination](#).