



Mid-Term Evaluation of the Support to Civil Society and Local Authorities for Local Development in Sierra Leone Programme

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Final Evaluation Report

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CS	Civil Society
CSO/s	Civil Society Organisation(s)
DA	Development Assistance
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DG	Director General
DP	Development Partners
EDF	European Development Fund
EQ	Evaluation Question
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
FA	Financial Agreement
FR	Functional Review
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LA/s	Local Authority/ies
LDP	Local Development Plans
LGSC	Local Government Service Commission
LFA	Logical framework, log frame
LoCASL	Local Councils Association of Sierra Leone
MoAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MoRW	Ministry of Rural Water
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MDAs	Ministries, Government, Agencies
MLGRD	The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NEW	National Elections Watch
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIP	National Indicative Programme
OD	Organizational Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicators
PA	Partnership Agreement (EU- Sierra Leone)
PFM	Public Financial Management
PRAG	Procurement and Grants for European Union External Actions, Practical Guide
QAG	Quality Assessment Grid
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SLE	Sierra Leone
TA	Technical Assistance
TAT	Technical Assistance Team
ToC	Theory of Change
ToRs	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1. Introduction

1.1 Context

The overall strategy and objectives of the “Support to Civil Society and Local Authorities for Local Development in Sierra Leone” Programme are defined by the act of the **11th European Development Fund**: On 25 June 2018, the ACP/EU Partnership Agreement was signed, establishing the financing agreement FED/2017/039-030.

The document directs the **CSO-LA Programme** to the overall objective:

to contribute towards the country’s long-term stability, equitable growth, poverty reduction, democratisation, and the rule of law, and to foster an integrated local development approach.... This will be done through strengthening the capacities of relevant actors involved with a view to achieving integrated development strategies and initiatives.

1.2 Programme Objectives

The Programme envisages two main specific objectives (SO, outcomes)

S.O. 1: To empower LA to fulfil their mandate as per the decentralisation process and implement priority actions consistent with Local Development Plans (LDPs),

S.O. 2: To provide gender and youth-sensitive support to civil society actors so that they can positively contribute to public policy making and service provision, in local rural areas.

The Programme provides a combination of grants **funding, technical assistance, and policy dialogue**. These inputs are channelled via several mechanisms and delivery paths. Two are the main *foci*:

Encouraging effective decentralisation to local governments, achieved through capacity strengthening of local councils in development and budget planning, monitoring, and reporting, personnel management, and performance assessment; and

Supporting rural civil society initiatives through a bottom-up approach to support CSOs/CBOs in the target districts. These initiatives are aimed at increasing capacities of CS in management skills and should address gender and youth issues.

For its clear intention to boost effective decentralisation in Sierra Leone, the Programme is known as “the EU Decentralisation Programme”.

2. Main Findings

The report is structured in accordance with the OECD-DAC requirements for evaluations.

In Section 3.1, we discuss the programme’s design and its relevance to national priorities and EU country priorities and strategies. Section 3.2 discusses the programme’s coherence with other development interventions. Section 3.3 analyses the Programme’s effectiveness, in particular the contribution of the results achieved to achieving the immediate objective (outcome). Section 3.4 follows with a discussion of efficiency, including the conversion of resources (financial and human) into results. Section 3.5 and 3.6 discuss the programme’s impact (the likelihood of achieving the objective) and sustainability over time. Finally, Sections 3.7 and 3.8 focus on the crosscutting themes of gender equality and empowerment (GEWE) and environment – climate change related issues. This is followed by a discussion of the main lessons learnt and a recapitulation of conclusions and recommendations emerging from the Programme experience.

2.1 Relevance and Design

EQ1- To what extent the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone programme respond to the evolving needs of the CSOs and LAs to operate in their respective roles and areas of engagement and to build reciprocal trust?

Overall, the CSO-LA Programme (hereafter “the Programme”) was found to be relevant. It aimed to respond to Sierra Leone’s complex and changing context, which was reflected in the EU – Sierra Leone strategies and plans. Moreover, the Programme has been highly instrumental in creating trust among CSOs and LAs.

2.1.1 Strategic relevance

Overall, the Programme was found to be relevant for Sierra Leone socio-economic context. Support to decentralisation and cooperation between Local Authorities (LAs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) is one of the EU flagships as we will see in the next sections. On the other hand, decentralisation is being studied since long time in their potential to effectively contribute to post-conflict state building:

Decentralisation policies have made a significant, if varied, contribution to community cohesion, reconciliation, and state legitimacy in each country. In Sierra Leone, decentralisation has had a more developmental rationale. Greater equity in basic local service provision and more inclusive local governance have supported community cohesion and reconciliation, though there are capacity gaps and coordination issues with central government agencies. There is evidence decentralisation has contributed to peace¹.

The political economy of the country duly reflects the need for a participatory approach to state building. The reestablishment of local governments, through the Local Government Act of 2004, was an important initiative in this direction. The legislative framework provided by the act and the associated regulations for political, fiscal, and administrative decentralization paved the way for the establishment of decentralization through devolution of key functions from the central government to local councils. They also provided - at least on paper - a relatively simple system for intergovernmental transfers.

There is a wide and recognised need to support local authorities in the path to decentralisation. Local councils are on paper free to operate but suffer from a series of constraints: the persistence of traditional chiefdoms, which hold considerable power in the countryside² and are in most cases more able to influence communities and collect revenues, being at the same time scarcely accountable³. On the other hand, allocations to local governments through state budget funds at central level are reportedly⁴ barely sufficient and mainly not disbursed on time (as an example, funds expected in November 2021 were not disbursed at the time of the country mission).

¹ Gareth J. Wall, *Decentralisation as a post-conflict state-building strategy in Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone and Rwanda, 2014.*

² For a detailed explanation of historical and socio-economic context of chiefdoms, see the study of Peter Albrecht *The Hybrid Authority of Sierra Leone’s Chiefs, Journal of African Studies, 2017.*

³ There are many scholarly articles and literature putting in evidence this peculiar feature. An example: *Rather than constituting a centrally governed state, Sierra Leone throughout the colonial and postcolonial eras became and remains a multcentred system of governance in which assemblages cluster around and are expressed through the figures of paramount and lesser chiefs. In turn, these figures draw significant authority to act from a centrally governed state, including the legislation passed by the state, and they have played a key role in how the state system emerged—and collapsed—in Sierra Leone. At the same time, paramount and lesser chiefs invoke sacred and other customary powers at the local level that revolve around kinship, autochthon status, and secret society membership. The chiefs are thus in a position to incorporate seemingly contradictory and complementary discourses and practices into their register of authority, and it is this capacity that lies at the foundation of their hybrid authority.* (IBIDEM).

⁴ According to several meetings with LCs.

It is therefore of paramount importance to positively develop and transform the collaboration between Local Governments (District Councils, DCs) and Chiefdoms' Authorities. If any effort is needed to support Chiefdoms Councils in becoming better accountable especially to the population at local level, it shall be the DC through the DPO, PO and M&E Officers to reinforce and accompany traditional administrative units in the Districts' administrative areas to the path of accountability and transparency. The relevant ministries – including probably the Ministry of Finance (MoF) - should prioritize the reinforcement of capacities of the DC Officers in this sense.

Of the four areas of fiscal decentralisation (1. Expenditure Responsibilities, 2. Revenue Assignment, 3. Inter-government fiscal transfers 4. Borrowing) Central government is still the primary manager due in part to insufficient capacity at the Local Council level.

To confirm the importance and relevance of the EU Action it is noteworthy: that though the EU program was designed and conceptualized under a previous government administration (in 2017) however, it was signed with the current government in 2018 without any modification; that the competing political class collectively affirm the need to address the salient issues of decentralization was of high priority.

This EU “Decentralization Programme” went to the heart of the issue of the inability to use the Local Councils as a pillar for development mainly due to their lack of capacity. The program's design with a focus on capacity-building for the Local Councils and Civil Society working in tandem was also a novelty.

Finally, widespread poverty in most of the rural communities make it difficult the collection of revenues even in the case that fiscal decentralisation will be implemented. Focus on local authorities is therefore of paramount importance to effectively carry out the agenda of a more participatory type of governance.

A sensitive aspect of the positioning of LAs in the institutional framework of the country is related to the implementation of decentralisation measures. Although the Local Government Act (LGA) was promulgated in 2004, a national decentralisation policy was not launched until February 2011, spelling out the relationship between local councils and chiefdom and traditional administrations. An implementation strategy for the LGA was developed in 2014 but was only partially rolled out.

One of the biggest merits of the Programme is in fact the policy component, aimed at producing a new Decentralisation Strategy after the stalling of the previous one. This was conducted under SO 3 of the Programme (*Horizontal policy, coordination, and capitalization; the environment for effective decentralisation and local governance is improved by capitalising on achievements in four selected districts and by addressing policy and institutional challenges at all levels.*)

This work was conducted through a patient and continuous collaboration with the MLGRD. The first Interim Report produced by the TA (December 2020 - May 2021) observes:

The PMU supported the development of a national decentralisation policy which was approved by the Cabinet. It continues to support the process leading to the drafting of a new local government act which takes into consideration new policy positions of the government.

It is widely recognised that Civil Society in Sierra Leone has played a critical role to support the country peaceful post conflict transition. The CSOs continue to contribute the country democratic governance and development in providing basic service delivery to communities, especially in areas with limited and/or weak presence of government. They provide a wide range of goods and services in a variety of sectors, including health, education, social protection, water, energy, and the environment.

Civil society is an important actor and is actively part of the democratic dialogue with the Government on governance and development issues. Challenges however persist. In the latest EU Road Map for Sierra Leone, it is noted that: *participation of Civil Society in public space is relatively limited, hindered by institutional and capacity constraints on both part of the State and Non-State parties...The institutional framework for multi-stakeholder's dialogue and monitoring established under the Mid-Term National Development Plan 2018-2023 is largely ineffective and Government efforts to institutionalise engagement with civil society have not been meaningful nor comprehensive. ...It is meanwhile to be noted that many CSOs also play into the divisive political environment with little transparency over their constituent basis⁵.*

⁵ EU Roadmap for engagement with Civil Society in Sierra Leone 2021-2024.

The Programme component on civil society was to some extent relevant, although in practical terms it did not differ very much from the usual CSOs' *modus operandi* (small and medium scale grants to develop community level initiatives, with a view to strengthen service delivery). The choice of bottom-up approach has had positive implications in terms of participation and focus on identified needs, but perhaps did not allow for forward looking solutions that imply innovative decisions based for example on good practices implemented in other countries.

In the formulation of the CfP, the EU Delegation put considerable efforts in consulting Civil Society and Local Authorities in the selected Districts to set together the priorities of the Programme. These inputs were then absorbed by the CfP, that was divided in specific lots referring to specific contextualised priorities..

Yet, the EU Multiannual Indicative Programme for the Thematic Programme "Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities" for the period 2014-2020 highlights the potentially strategic role of CSOs

to hold public authorities to account at all administrative levels, with a view to ultimately empower citizens....(and) pursue the objective of improving governance and accountability through inclusive policy-making...In fact, it will focus on the promotion of innovative forms of interactions between CSOs and LAs in the local public policy-making, aiming at the coproduction of good governance and development outcomes.

The MIP lists a series of areas where EU will provide support, namely:

I. Enhance CSOs' contributions to governance and development processes as:

- a. Actors in governance and accountability;*
- b. Partners in fostering social development;*
- c. Key stakeholders in promoting inclusive and sustainable growth.*

II. Enhance LAs' contributions to governance and development processes as:

- a. Actors of enhanced local governance;*
- b. Welfare providers (public basic services, according to their institutional mandate) and promoters of inclusive and sustainable growth at the local level.*

III. Test pilot actions promoting local development through a territorial approach.

What is interesting in this document is the recognition of CSOs as accompanying partner of LAs on themes of good governance. This does not merely imply provision of services in deprived areas, but adds the importance of monitoring performances and accountability of local governments – a much more strategic role, which emphasizes CSOs comparative advantages based on deep knowledge of grassroots level and needs of citizens.

A solution might be to identify districts at risk due to district-specific issues and design district-tailored components in the CfP. As an example, in Kono child labour in mines is widespread and heavily impacts on demographic and health data: the new CfP might include, for Kono district, actions addressing child labour issues.

On environmental and climate change related issues, a study conducted in 2011⁶ on the potential for "high end" climate change (more than 4°C this century) to affect resources and society in ways that might trigger migration and displacement⁷. They find that five West African countries (Senegal, Guinea, The Gambia, Sierra Leone, and Mauritania) are at risk of multiple impacts affecting water supplies, agriculture, and coastal zones (because of sea level rise), which place them in the top 30 of such countries around the world. Although consequence are not directly visible in Sierra Leone nowadays, this could significantly add climate migration to the numerous challenges affecting the country,. Environmental migration might be one of the priorities for the next Programme. It must be considered that, if focus must be on specific priorities, a precise quota should be introduced for each priority. A recommendation might be to first identify district most stringent challenges then introduce a quota for those priorities at district level.

⁶ Quote from World Bank, GROUNDSWELL AFRICA INTERNAL CLIMATE MIGRATION IN WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES, 2021.

⁷ Ibidem.

EQ2-To what extent the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme is using the best combination of approaches to maximize its support?

The EU has a robust history of programmes aimed at enhancing participatory governance through strategic engagement with civil society and local authorities.

In the mid-1970s, the European Commission was among the first development cooperation agencies to create a dedicated funding line for supporting development projects implemented by European NGOs. During the following four decades, the EU's support to and through NGOs was a key feature of its international development policy and grew in financial volume, as new member states joining the expanding Union brought their own NGOs into the mix.

Later, EU expanded its area of support to local authorities. The European Commission's *Communication on Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes*, adopted in May 2013, identifies a wide range of proposals to implement the decentralisation agenda, including the promotion of local development through a territorial approach.

2.1.2 Design: Intervention Modality

The EU utilises essentially two typologies of interventions to this aim. The first one is through thematic programmes. Thematic Programme "*Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development*" (NSA- LA) entered into force on 1 January 2007 and was re-launched for the period from 2014 to 2020. These programmes are launched at global level, are managed by EUDs and consist of direct funding to CSOs and LAs through grants; they do not foresee any structure to manage and monitor activities and results.

The second approach – used for this programme – is based on the classical bilateral project scheme. It includes a Project Management Unit (PMU) in charge of support to procurement with trainings and counselling and overall coordination.

2.1.3 Design: Role of the Technical Assistance

The Financing Agreement (FA) says: *The programme management unit (PMU) will be established through a technical assistance service contract in Freetown to coordinate implementing partners and all district level project activities and advise the project Steering Committee, the NAO and the EU Delegation. ... The PMU will carry out the initial mapping survey and strategic baseline assessment of each district and specify criteria for selecting the four pilot rural districts for this programme, as well as indicators for monitoring progress. It will also provide centrally coordinated support to CSOs and LAs as foreseen in the activities will support the Local Authorities in preparing proposals for the award of direct grants in line with EU rules, for consideration by the EU Delegation.*

The choice of including a TA component was adequate and appropriate to the country context. The third specific objective (SO) of the Programme is in fact *to coordinate and capitalise on the achievements arising from the above two areas* (support to LAs and CSOs), *one programme component will ensure horizontally that the environment for effective decentralisation and local governance is improved in the four pilot districts and by addressing policy and institutional challenges at all levels.* This SO is appropriately based on the acknowledgement that the path to decentralisation is complex and needs continuous involvement, interaction, and coordination between central and local power levels, as discussed and evidence by copious research⁸.

⁸ An example is *The multi-scalar nature of local development (requiring effective mechanisms of dialogue, negotiation and collaboration of different actors at different levels)* - Rodríguez, J. 2015. EU's new thinking on decentralisation and territorial development. GREAT insights Magazine, Volume 4, Issue 4. June/July 2015.

2.1.4 Design: Repartition of grants to CSOs and LAs

The total amount of funds (€ 25,083,247.00) allocated to LAs and CSOs was well thought, as it avoided potential competition between the two stakeholders. The field mission evidenced that at district level CSOs and LAs know the exact amount of funds allocated to each of them; in commenting, both parties expressed satisfaction about the transparency and equity of fund distribution. This favoured a positive perception about EU impartiality and ethical principles and allowed for increased cooperation and trust among the two parties.

EQ 3 - To what extent this combination of approaches will still be relevant?

The grant beneficiaries selected through the call for proposals will award sub-grants in each of the four originally selected pilot districts (and two that were added during the process) and will facilitate networking at the local level. Their support to local CSOs/CBOs will take the form of a bottom-up approach as concerns the putting forward of proposals for sub-grants⁹.

Although in the EU financing documents of the Programme there are no clear provisions aimed at addressing the need for consistency and coherence between the actions implemented at local level by the two main stakeholders, in the Call for Proposals it is specified that *actions (of CSOs) are expected to contribute to the implementation of the local development plans, addressing the key issue of socio-economic sustainability of the services provided.*

The field mission evidenced that no substantial discrepancies are to be reported between investment projects of Councils and interventions implemented by CSOs.

The district structures should also seek synergies in approaches at both central and decentralised levels under the coordination of the PMU and by collaborating with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development Resident Technical Advisors who operate within every local council¹⁰.

The rationale of the third SO of the Programme is well although synthetically explained in this section of the FA, as detailed under 3.1.3. The emphasis given to coordination is appropriate, as continuous cooperation with and across central levels is key in achieving decentralisation objectives:

decentralization is a complex, medium-to-long term process that needs legal and constitutional reforms, cuts across sector ministries, involves numbers of stakeholders, entails political and technical inputs and requires strengthening of subnational government capacity¹¹.

This approach, combined with the new boost to the decentralisation process in Sierra Leone enshrined in the 2021 adopted National Decentralisation Policy, is vital to ensure that the long-term objectives of the Programme are achieved.

In a potential continuation of the Programme, it might be recommended that the next action explicitly put Local Councils as the focus of the programme, with CSOs consistently aligned with local plans. Councils - which should be the engine of local development and enshrine good governance principles at local level – are still vulnerable and not sufficiently rooted in the institutional context of Sierra Leone. First, the 2004 Local Government Act was not clear in the attribution of roles to the local government and chiefdom and traditional administration. This brought about overlaps and ambiguities. Although local councils set tax rates, in some instances taxes are collected by chiefs who are then supposed to share these funds with the local councils – contributing to the tension between the two. Moreover, chiefs also retain functions of security provision, maintain law and order and hold land in trust, among other functions.¹² Additionally, chiefs are represented in local councils as well as ward committees and so maintain a strong presence in both forms of governance. The adopted National Decentralisation Policy places Local Councils at the helm of local development with a coordinating role on other actors at the local level. More

⁹ FA. The final number of districts engaged in the action is 6.

¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹ Gerardo Berthin, *The Role of Donors in Strengthening Local Governments and Decentralization: Lessons from Colombia and Peru*, 2018.

¹² Government of Sierra Leone. 2016. *Status Report on the Implementation of Sierra Leone's Decentralisation Programme*, quote.

importantly, the policy rationalises and amplifies collection of taxes as the sole responsibility of the Local Councils. However, the lack of a robust fiscal decentralisation policy makes harmonisation of sharing of taxes between the Councils and Chiefdoms to be based on negotiations and power relations.

Another constraint has been the level of devolution in practice especially in terms of increasing local council control over finances and Ministries, Government, Agencies (MDA) personnel. Over 80 percent of central government line ministries for example have been slow to release control over functions that are to be devolved and a report in 2010 showed that only 46 out of 80 functions had been devolved.

In addition, lack of payroll devolution has hampered coordination between elected councillors and technical staff, with some of the latter seeing the councils as little more than funding agencies. Moreover, despite slow increases in the share of transfers from local government, overall revenue allocation remains low. A service delivery index conducted in 2015 noted that only 11.6 percent of total domestic revenue was spent on the Health and Sanitation, Water and Education sectors in 2013, and only 3.1 percent of these funds were transferred to local councils. Not only are funds allocated for service delivery incommensurate with demand, of funds received, funds allocated to administrative or non-service delivery activities remain high contributing to overall poor levels of service delivery across the country¹³.

Focus on strengthening authority, skills and consensus of local governments would greatly increase their credibility and public recognition of their role of main players in local development issues in Sierra Leone: a role that is well deserved and that has not been played to date. It is hoped that the new Strategy and related constitutional changes and fiscal decentralisation will give a significant boost to local councils.

2.1.5 Focus on Service Delivery – locally vs. centrally led

The results of the fragility assessment undertaken in July 2012 showed that the most fragile area currently is service delivery. Surveys undertaken over the years also confirm a high level of poverty and social vulnerability¹⁴.

Long-term development interventions at local level are mainly oriented to provide essential services to deprived and vulnerable communities. Although years have passed, the need is still important, partially because of governments' (and probably donors' community) challenges in providing countries with adequate infrastructures, such as transport, roads, education, health services.

Service delivery at local level is essential to promote an approach to development really focused on needs expressed by the population, according to participatory and democratic governance principles.

It has to be noted, however, that the project-based approach, if not accompanied by larger scale measures, risks to be mainly short-term oriented and to disperse resources across a variety of small actions, not necessarily coordinated and easily subject to non-durable results with negative consequences on impact and sustainability.

To make an example, Falaba district – one of the target districts of the Programme - presents highly problematic issues with transport infrastructures: most roads are not asphalted and even not paved with bituminous treatment. This is a common problem in Sierra Leone, which has approximately 11,300 kilometres of roads, of which only 904 km are paved – about 8 per cent: *roads are often non-existent or in poor condition. Potholes and cracks in the road are a common sight if roads are even paved in the first place. More often, dirt roads are the common feature of the rural transportation network¹⁵*. Kambia districts hosts a rather locally important international market, with traders arriving from Mali and Senegal. Local markets are an important source of revenue for local traders and farmers; however, current transport infrastructure conditions hinder trade (not talking about difficult access of communities to health and education services).

Access to and provision of safe water is another utterly important matter which should be addressed at national level, through large scale interventions. According to UNICEF, less than 1% of the

¹³ Data from Institute for Governance Reform, *Local power structures and decentralised service delivery systems in Sierra Leone*, 2017.

¹⁴ EU – Sierra Leone National Indicative Programme 2014-2020.

¹⁵ Abdulai Salia Brima, *Infrastructure in Sierra Leone: fixing the road to nowhere*, August 2019.

country's 8 million residents have piped water inside their homes. Most families get their water each day from communal taps, neighbourhood wells or local springs and streams. In total, only 16% of the population of Sierra Leone has easy access to safe water. According to other sources, only 2% of the population in Sierra Leone has access to clean, readily available drinking water¹⁶.

The Local Government Act (2004) devolves water supply functions to local councils, but effects are uneven. As an example, the Programme involved CSOs in addressing water issues. In some districts projects by CSOs included activities to provide disposals for purification of water at village level; however its implementation is slow, the sustainability of the action is not obvious and in any case such projects – if not properly sustained and disseminated - can only have very limited impact even at village level.

2.1.6 The role of the private sector

An interesting reference in the Programme document is given to the private sector, whose role is increasingly being recognised by the international development community as fundamental for local socio-economic growth. This is reflected for example in the EU 2012 Communication *"The Roots of Democracy and Sustainable Development: Europe's Engagement with Civil Society in External Relations"* and the related Council Conclusions, which notes:

Ensuring effective social services - including health, education, and social protection - is the responsibility of governments, whether on central or local level, depending on the institutional framework of the country. The overarching objective of the EU in the realm of social services is to support the capacity of public authorities to build sustainable and quality systems for the benefit of population... This is relevant also in relation to the emerging role of the private sector in this field.

Cooperation with the private sector, be it at national or local level, is certainly key in an international context where resources for development aid are at risk of decrease. However, involving private investors requires prior solid investments in basic infrastructures – roads, transport, water, electricity – which in Sierra Leone are still a heavy challenge in rural areas. The risk otherwise is that only small-scale business is put in place in target districts, with very limited impact on sustainability and economic growth of vulnerable areas.

As a conclusion, to boost local development, it is important to strengthen synergies between local and central levels of government and continue involving the donors' community for large scale infrastructural plans.

At Programme level, it is important to ensure that results obtained through grants be not dispersed. What might be done is a combination of dissemination of best feasible practices identified at local level in the context of the Programme and more robust interventions, jointly funded by the government and the international donors' community already active in this sector¹⁷.

In this framework, the cooperation between local districts and government offices at district level should be further boosted, especially in sectors such as education, health and transport, to ensure consistency of LDPs with national development objectives and projects.

EQ4 - To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme helped to achieve the EU development cooperation objectives?

Regarding support to civil society, the Programme is coherent with the adopted EU 2012 Communication *the Roots of Democracy and Sustainable Development: Europe's Engagement with Civil Society in External Relations* and the related Council Conclusions. The Communication put forward three priorities for EU cooperation with the civil society:

- *To enhance efforts to promote a conducive environment for CSOs in partner countries.*
- *To promote a meaningful and structured participation of CSOs in domestic policies of partner countries, in the EU programming cycle and in international processes.*

¹⁶ Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, *Strengthening Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Workforce in Sierra Leone*. See also https://www.sdg6data.org/country-or-area/sierra%20leone#anchor_6.1.1

¹⁷ UN as an example is rather active on locally based development interventions.

- *To increase local CSOs' capacity to perform their roles as independent development actors more effectively.*

The Communication outlines an enhanced and more strategic approach of the EU's engagement with civil society, aimed at strengthening Civil Society Organisations as actors of governance rather than as mere providers of aid.

Regarding Local Authorities, the *Structured Dialogue on the involvement of Civil Society and Local Authorities in EC cooperation – initiated in 2009* - aims at exchanging views concerning the involvement of CSOs and LAs in EU external cooperation and subsequently build consensus and find ways to improve practices providing decision-makers with relevant & realistic recommendations.

In 2011, the EU issued its *Agenda for Change* which aims to work more closely with the private sector, foundations, civil society, and local and regional authorities as their role in development was considered growing.

The subsequent EU Communication *Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes* (2013) is to same extent the logical following of the above. It recognises the development potential of Local Authorities in achieving development objectives and aims at actively involving LAs by proposing a more strategic engagement for their empowerment.

In 2017, together with its member countries, the EU adopted the *European Consensus on Development*, as part of its response to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (2015). The consensus reaffirms poverty eradication as EU's primary development objective, but it also integrates the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and underlines the links between development and other European policies, including peace and security and humanitarian aid.

The Consensus is structured around the '5 Ps' framing the 2030 Agenda: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership. The document highlights important crosscutting elements, such as youth, gender equality, mobility and migration, sustainable energy and climate change, investment and trade, good governance, democracy, the rule of law and human rights, innovative engagement with more advanced developing countries, and mobilising domestic resources, among others through greater involvement of the private sector.

In turn, the Consensus and the Agenda for Change provide the general policy framework to guide the programming and implementation of the 11th European Development Fund (EDF), of which the Programme is part. EDF funds cooperation activities based on the terms of the Cotonou Agreement and its primary objective is the reduction and eventual eradication of poverty. Among EDF priorities ii can be found: fostering sustainable and inclusive economic, social and environmental development; consolidating and supporting democracy, the rule of law, good governance, human rights and the relevant principles of international law; implementing a rights-based approach encompassing all human rights.

Against this rich policy and strategy framework, the EU – Sierra Leone NIP 2014- 2020 adequately reflects the EU's views by attributing a primary role to civil society and local authorities as key actors of the country's democratic process:

The primary strategic objective of the EU's relationship with Sierra Leone is to support the transition from a post conflict situation characterised by critical structural poverty and governance challenges towards a sustainable and inclusive development path favouring the participation of key actors including civil society and the private sector, in line with the EU's Agenda for Change and the European Consensus on Development... Such a strategy should focus on promoting governance and public sector reform including effective revenue generation, strengthening programmes to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, even after 2015, and promoting greater economic diversification and contributing to Sierra Leone's transition to a green economy¹⁸.

¹⁸ NIP EU – Sierra Leone 2014-2020

2.2 Coherence

Local and global CSOs and LAs have a pivotal role in linking local concerns and tackle local, regional, and international challenges. The EU supports them in sustainable territorial development issues, including in urban contexts, to foster local development and social cohesion, and promote an enabling environment for CSOs and LAs - in its legal, regulatory, and operational dimensions. The EU aims at strengthening them to enhance their contributions to development, especially in the Development of the 2030 Agenda and Leave No One Behind. The *Support to Civil Society and Local Authorities for Local Development in Sierra Leone Programme*, tackles the following goals:

SDG Goal(s) 1- End poverty in all forms everywhere; Goal 5- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; and Goal 16- Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.

The basis of the subsidiarity principle, *the Communication on Local Authorities* defines the strategic priorities for the EU to support LAs in partner countries to unlock their development potential. This becomes even more relevant in Sierra Leone due to the public sector reform towards the decentralization of power, responsibilities, and resources¹⁹.

EQ5- To what extent is the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme complementary and coherent with other development interventions which have similar objectives and what is its added value? In particular, with other EU Programmes and Instruments supporting Civil Society and/or Local Authorities and with interventions of EU Member States?.

2.2.1 Coherence with EU Programming Framework

To a very large extent the Programme is complementary and coherent to other development interventions with similar objectives. This statement is evidenced and supported by national strategic documents acceded to by Sierra Leone. At the time of signing the financing Agreement, the Programme was fully consistent with EU country objectives, as stated in the FA:

The Republic of Sierra Leone – European Community Country Strategy Paper and the National Indicative Programme 2014 – 2020²⁰, under the Focal Sector 1 – Governance (179 million representing the 47% of the overall budget allocated to Sierra Leone in programmable funds): supporting the overall improvement of public sector management both in terms of finance management including revenue generation, and improved capacity to deliver key basic services.

The Republic of Sierra Leone – Multi annual Indicative Programme 2021 – 2027²¹, under the Priority area 3 - Governance for an inclusive and safe society (36,75 Million, representing 15% of the overall budget allocated to Sierra Leone in programmable funds):

- Democratic institutions, voice and accountability, and checks and balances will be strengthened to deepen democracy, peace and social cohesion;
- Better government effectiveness and public service delivery at national and local level shall leave no one behind;

¹⁹ Decentralisation is the aspect of public sector reforms that occurs at local level; it has three dimensions: (i) Political decentralization transfers policy and legislative powers from central government to autonomous, lower-level assemblies and local councils; (ii) Administrative decentralization places planning and implementation under the responsibility of locally situated civil servants, which are under the jurisdiction of local representative bodies; (iii) Fiscal decentralization accords substantial revenue and expenditure authority to LAs. This point is very relevant as LAs can only deliver services efficiently if they have sufficient resources. Reference: European Commission (2007), Supporting Decentralization and Local Governance in Third Countries; http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/governance/documents/decentralisation_local_governance_refdoc_final_en.pdf.

²⁰ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/sierra_leone_-_european_union_multi_annual_indicative_programme_2021_-2027.pdf

²¹ https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/mip-2021-c2021-9054-sierra-leone-annex_en.pdf

- Enhanced economic governance will underpin sustainable economic and social policies; strengthen public finance management, transparency, and domestic resources mobilization; and improve the business climate.

The EU is also committed to join forces with EU Member States under the **Team Europe Initiative “Green Pact with Sierra Leone”**, which will foster on: Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for jobs and growth; Sustainable agriculture and seafood systems for employment, health, and nutrition; Restoring, managing, and protecting terrestrial and marine biodiversity and ecosystems.

The programme’s coherence is evidenced by the consistency in supporting CSOs and LCs of activities that are aligned with the government’s medium term development plan. The complementarity of the programme is evidenced by the conscious effort that all selected interventions should take their basis the respective District Development Plans and not be duplicitous of government actions in the selected Programme Districts.....The conscious effort to maintain and ensure the coherence and complementarity of the decentralisation process is evidenced by the change in timing of local elections to be aligned in June 2023 to be concurrent for mayors, MPs and President. The commitment to decentralization was telegraphed in the manifesto promise of the current government which mentioned it the lack of decentralization among the root causes of the civil war.

2.2.2 Coherence with other EU initiatives

The EU intervention broadens the approach taken in EU projects of other sectors that intervene at local level in rural areas. It also complements the focal sector dedicated to governance in the 11th EDF programme.

The EU project on Renewable Energy Services for Social Development implemented by a consortium led by Welthungerhilfe works in six districts in the east and the north of Sierra Leone. The overall objective is poverty alleviation through renewable energy services while promoting low carbon development. The project has successfully tested and proven absorption capacity in rural areas.

Another EU project under the PRO-ACT 2015 budget line contributed to improving the food and nutrition security situation of vulnerable population groups in the north and east. Specifically, civil society is called upon to organise the production & commercialisation of three agroforestry cash crops: cocoa, coffee, and cashew, in the north and the east of the country.

The EU Delegation started education projects financed under the CSO/LA budget line in five districts. For two of them, local authorities are implementing partners. The 11th EDF *Boosting Agriculture and Food Security Programme* aimed to reduce poverty and food insecurity in Sierra Leone through better governance and increased agricultural productivity and diversification. A specific area of potential future synergy arises from Result 3.2 of the programme which foresees that Non-State Actors, together with Local Authorities build economically viable agribusinesses along with the private sector assuring Added Value Chain (AVC) covering the whole AVC from input to marketing.

2.2.3 Other Donors’ Initiatives

Donor coordination in Sierra Leone takes place primarily through the official forum for discussion with the government, the Development Partners Committee. Regularly convened donor groups exist in some areas (e.g. education and governance area) but there is no coordination mechanism respect to civil society and decentralisation. The community of international donors in Sierra Leone, however, cooperate closely on civil society and local government project selection and delivery and related issues such as the review of the NGO policy²².

²² Action Document for Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone.

The UK Department for International Development (DfID) programme supported CSOs to provide social accountability mechanisms at the local level, as a tool to encourage providers to better delivering services to the communities. With the World Bank’s Decentralized Service Delivery Program ending in late 2016, further assistance is needed to encourage organised joint activities that pursue sustainability.

The ongoing initiatives²³ of the other donors mainly cover the following topic:

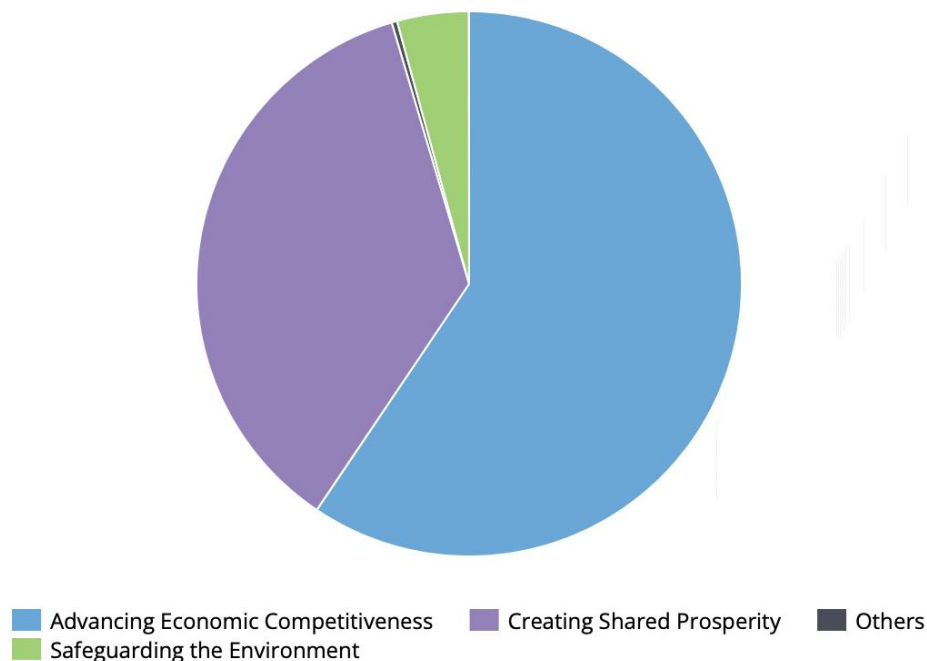
- Advancing Economic Competitiveness
- Creating Shared Prosperity
- Safeguarding the Environment

The World Bank is currently supporting two projects, namely:

1. A 50 million US Dollar Resilient Urban Sierra Leone Project (RUSLP) COVID-19 Specific Preventive & Response Plan, Feb 2022
2. A \$40 Million Grant to Support Accountable Governance and Effective Service Delivery in Sierra Leone of which 17 million dollars is earmarked for district councils while the rest is devoted to public financial management at central and local level.

Implementation by Thematic Priority

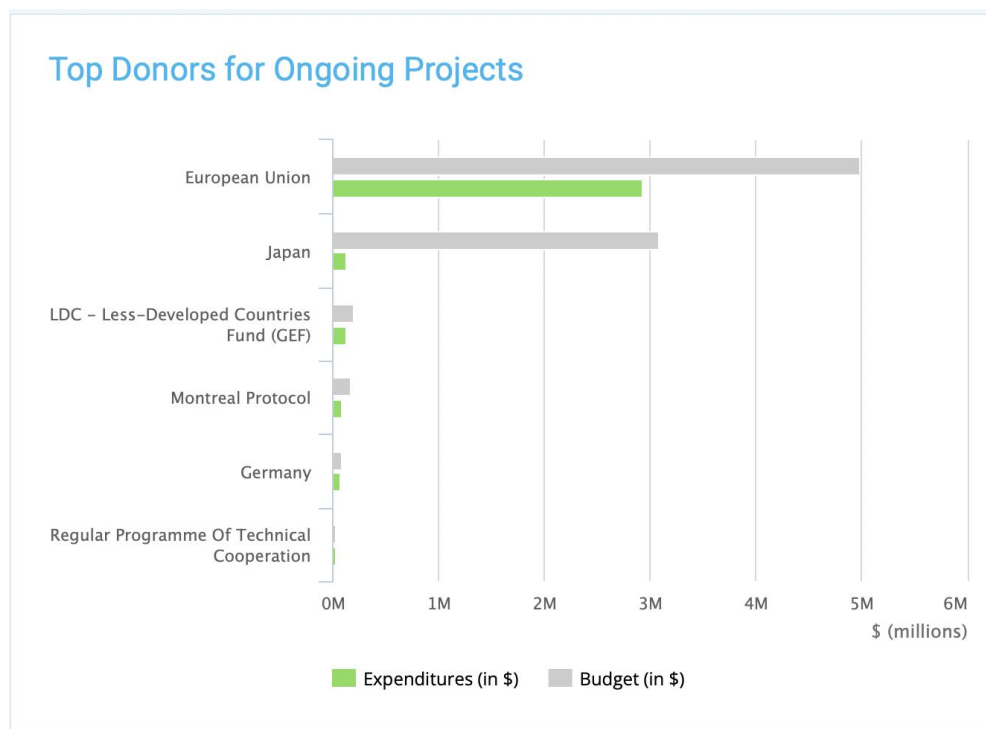
based on total budget of ongoing projects in 2022



Source: UNIDO, Open Data Platform

²³ <https://open.unido.org/projects/SL/donors/400390>

Considering the overview of all the internal donors in Sierra Leone, the EU is the major donor and the only donor that sets the basis of the subsidiarity principle as a strategic priority for the EU to support LAs to unlock their development potential.



Source: UNIDO, Open Data Platform

2.2.4 Evolution of the decentralization process

Local councils came into existence in 2004 following the enactment of the Local Government Act and they represent the new face of democratic governance, following the end of the civil war²⁴. There are now local councils in all 22 localities in our country – 15 Districts Council and 7 City Council²⁵ - , each with their own financial, administrative, and political systems and structures. Under the LGA 2004, a Decentralization Secretariat in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) has been granted responsibility for implementing decentralization reforms. The Local Government Service Commission (LGSC) was also established as a separate body in charge of supporting local governments with human resources. A Local Government Finance Department was created within the Ministry of Finance to manage transfers and accountability. Lastly, an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on Decentralization has been formally established as the highest national political body in this domain, chaired by the vice-president of Sierra Leone and including four representatives of local councils (usually mayors. The LGA 2004 also reactivated the Provincial Coordination Committees. This body is responsible for coordinating the activities of local councils in each province.

The Local Government Act aims at improving capacity of local governance structures to deliver appropriate services to local communities. Sixteen years into the practice of decentralization has provided enough time, experience for the Government, and people to review the benefits to date and to analyze the ongoing challenges with a view of strengthening decentralization and local governance. The Local Council system has provided the basis for local articulation, deliberative politics, political participation, accountability, and service delivery (education, health, agricultural development, water and sanitation and social welfare)²⁶.

²⁴ The centralization of power contributed enormously to the collapse of the State in the 1990s and to the prolongation of the civil war that lasted for eleven years (1991 - 2002).

²⁵ <https://www.sng-wofi.org/country-profiles/Fiche%20SIERRA%20LEONE.pdf>.

²⁶ National decentralization policy, July 2021.

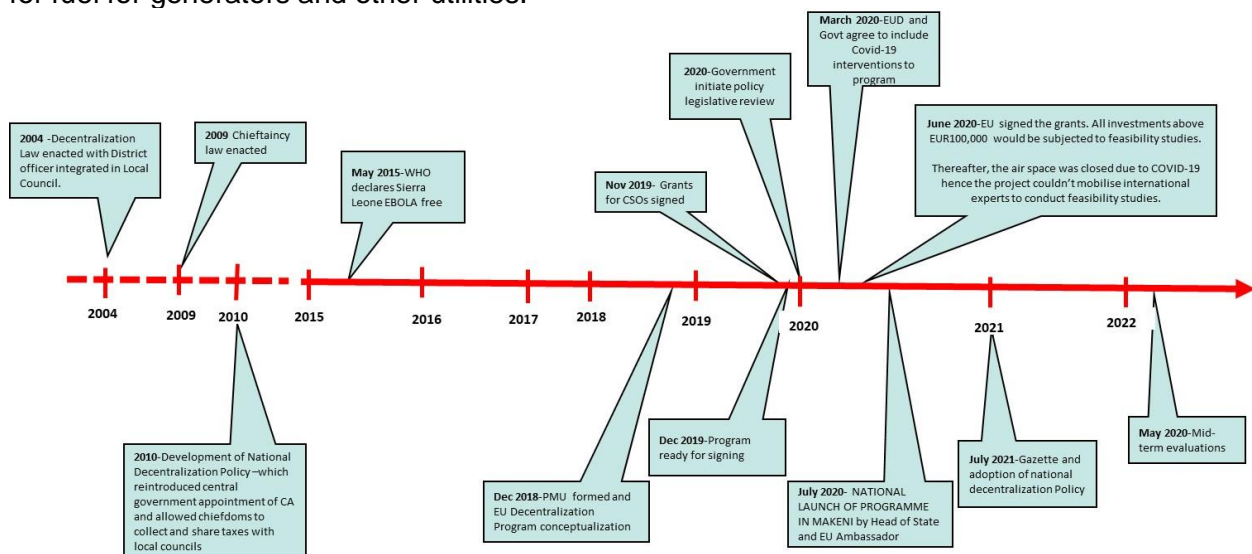
The Local Government Act 2004 and the Decentralisation Policy 2010 have been guiding the decentralisation process and both documents have provided the mandate for councils and their activities. According to the World Bank, the total amount of transfers to local government has increased in the period of devolution (2005-2009) but they remained underfunded. In 2010, the National Decentralization Policy set to December 2016 a deadline for full devolution of functional responsibilities and management of local human resources. Under this devolution framework, responsibility for many basic social services has been transferred to local councils. The Chiefdom councils²⁷ can collect revenue on behalf of the national government but have no functional responsibility (2009 Chieftaincy Act). The recent Ebola epidemic (2014-2016), however, disrupted the process at all levels. Priorities shifted towards containment. The 2017 budget allocates the equivalent of EUR 16.3 million to local government²⁸.

However, it is evident there is still a need for significant improvement. This conclusion was reinforced following the launch of the recent review process, which consulted thousands of Sierra Leoneans across the country²⁹. The need to review and revise both documents has been a matter of urgency. Decentralisation also aims to establish a conducive environment for civil society to operate within local communities³⁰. CSOs should contribute at local levels to set priority areas of intervention together with local authorities and to deliver on transparency and accountability.

2.3 Effectiveness

In terms of management, the PMU has been very effective in driving the implementation of the Programme. Not only are they active participants, but close monitoring by the PMU/DAI has also heavily contributed to the smooth implementation of activities.

Due to circumstances (CoVID-19 pandemic, closure of airspace, lockdowns) beyond the control of all stakeholders, an almost one-year delay in a few activities to be done by the local councils caused asymmetries in the timeline of the CSOs and the LCs. Lack of regular access to electricity (i.e. Falaba and Karene) also hampered a lot of the districts in retaining revenue, since it went into cost for fuel for generators and other utilities.



²⁷ The number of chiefdoms in Sierra Leone: 190.

²⁸ Action Document for Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone.

²⁹ National decentralization policy, July 2021.

³⁰ The civil society landscape in Sierra Leone has played a critical role in the country's transition from conflict to peace and democracy.

EQ6- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme contributed to increase, in a sustainable way, the quantity and quality of consultation and policy contributions of CSOs and LAs at local, district and national level?

The Programme is midway through its implementation with the Local Councils while it's at the tail end with the Civil Society Organisations. Regarding how effective the activities implemented in the program has had the desired effect one cannot be conclusive. However, the indications of some are quite evident.

Regarding it to the quantity and quality of consultations and policy contribution of CSOs at multiple levels of government the project design has activated responsive civil society organisations to be more consultative with the local authorities. This is evident in their participation in the DDCC meetings which is a coordination forum, it also serves as a forum to escalate concerns and or needs of CSOs to the higher echelons (district and national) of government. The programme has enhanced and improved on stakeholder relationships through intense consultative approach to development in the districts both on the LCs side and CSOs as well as with the government and chiefdoms.

The local councils through their activities of sensitization on the need for the communities to pay their local taxes as well as the Local Councils signing of MoUs with the chiefdoms and private parties in PPP arrangements have vastly expanded the scope of consultations as well as the consistency. Regular monthly DDCC meetings hosted by the Local Councils have become the formal forum for these engagements. Notwithstanding the newfound capacity of the Local Councils is reflected in its provision of services to the community. Therefore, making it a more credible entity to consult with on district development activities. This is corroborated by other development actors such as UNICEF, UNDP and World Bank now seeking the local councils for consultations on community development initiatives.

EQ7- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme contributed to the empowerment of CSOs and LAs as development actors?

The Programme to a large extent has empowered CSOs to be seen as development actors within the community. This has been achieved through the capacity building given to CSOs by the Programme as well as the mentorship they have received in the partnering of international NGOs. CSOs that took part of programme attest to reinforced confidence they have developed due to the increased legitimacy, and credibility they have gained in the community. This is exemplified by CSOs such as AADSL who have gained from association with other international NGO partners. Where the Programme has had the most success and effect is the empowerment of the Local Councils as key development actors. The hard activities of the Local Councils have been very visible in the community. These are physical infrastructure and equipment. Local Councils have been enhanced in terms of hard infrastructure this include equipment-laptops, computers, furniture, rehabilitated offices, and provision of vehicles, motorcycles. Though LCs have been empowered by the project structural issues exist that need to be addressed to consolidate the gains of the LCs. Currently there are only 14 officers of the LCs which are the basic number with no career progression. There is Human Resource Gap in the Councils in terms of quantity and quality and issues of assimilation of District officers.

EQ8- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme helped to ameliorate democratic governance through inclusive policy-making?

So far the program has done more to bring to the fore the Local Authorities role in governance fostering inclusive policy-making. Through the Local councils and Civil Society partners of the program mass sensitization exercises were implemented. These activities were aimed at address the findings of research study which reveals that District Council has not been able to offer effective social service delivery to the people of the district not only because of lack of funds but also because of limited capacity, including limited understanding of their responsibility of the social contract between them and their citizens and its implications of social accountability.

the District Development Coordination Committee regular meetings which is hosted by the Local Councils and includes Chiefdom representatives in the district as well as Civil Society organisation-including Faith-based and community based organisations has been energised by the multiple activities being implemented by members and affecting stakeholders. This has engendered inclusiveness in decision-making and the bottom-up approach ensures that these issues, concerns, and decision inform policy making.

EQ9- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone programme promoted local development through a territorial approach?

The EU program consciously adopted a territorial approach to local development in its programme design which subscribed to the four tenets of territorial approaches i.e.: namely Endogenous, Integrated, Multi-scalar, and Incremental.

The 'Endogenous' nature is evidenced by local authorities and civil society actors being the focus of the programme, to improve their capacity to enable them to act more autonomously and to reach out to a range of other local actors such as the chiefdoms and the private sector to make the most of existing political and institutional resources.

It is 'Integrated', in that there is a compulsion for the coordination of the work of state agencies, civil society and the private sector in each District (thus avoiding sectoral fragmentation of development interventions). This is seen through the consultations at the Village Development Committees, Ward Development Committees, Council Development Committees and District Development Coordination Committees.

It is multi-scalar' in that there are mechanisms such as the Decentralisation Secretariat, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Ministry of Planning, National Authorizing Office among others to allow for cooperation between those implementing national and local policies.

Lastly the 'Incremental' nature is evidenced by the choice of six districts to serve as a proof-of -concept which when proven successful can attract other funding to scale it to other districts.

It can be said that it also subscribed a territorial to achieving the 17 SDG in its recognition that that cities and regions play a critical role in this paradigm shift and need to embrace the full potential of the SDGs as a policy tool to improve people's lives. This is exemplified by the selection of key District capital cities (Kenema, Pujehun, Kambia, Bombali, Falaba and Karene) as the development poles for the EU program intervention.

EQ10 – To what extent and how have CSO and LA alongside the private sector proven to be effective actors to implement the EU development strategy?

CSO and LA have to a larger extent proven to be effective actors in the implementation of the EU development Strategy. In the Program they are the key actors in terms of being responsible for activities.

The private sector on the other hand has to a lesser extent has not been deeply involved. Currently they are mainly visible as vendors or partners in Public Private partnerships with the Local Authorities. The latent capacity of the private sector as an agent for development has not been unleashed to implement the EU development strategy.

EQ11- To what extent and how have the achievements of the programme contributed to CSOs strengthening, in terms of: a. CSOs work effectiveness, b. CSOs institutional capacity, c. CSOs operational capacity including policy monitoring, d. outreach capacity of smaller CSOs

The scorecard on the extent to which the programme has contributed to CSO Strengthening is patchy. Assessing the programme’s contribution using the criteria of: work effectiveness, institutional capacity as well as outreach of smaller CSOs the programme performance so far has performed well in building the CSOs to work more effectively, increased their potential to attract and utilise donor fund. However, in more work could have been done on its operational capacity specifically on policy monitoring.

CRITERIA	PROGRAMME’S CONTRIBUTION TO CSOs STRENGTHENING
a. CSOs work effectiveness	The program has improved the capacity of local CSOs by providing them tool kits which act as a step-by-step guide for CSOs, CBOs and VDCs on how to facilitate dialogues and sensitisation and awareness raising sessions within the communities on various issues relating to local democratic governance. These sessions will also focus on participatory planning, how to promote and demand transparency and mutual accountability in implementing community development initiatives, civic rights and responsibilities of citizens as enshrined in the National Constitution and Local Government Act 2004 of Sierra Leone. Through sensitisations the CSOs effectiveness has improved in addressing community service delivery not only because of lack of funds but also because of limited capacity, including limited understanding of their responsibility of the social contract between them and their citizens and its implications of social accountability
b. CSOs institutional capacity	Trainings provided to staff of CSOs by PMU and other in management (financial & human resources), governance (strategic planning) and technical aspects in all project CSOs acknowledged the training as having enhanced their knowledge in basic financial management, donor requirements and financial reporting, human resources management, organizational strategic planning development, overall project implementation strategies. In particular, CSOs were grateful that they requested overwhelmingly for this training, which they found to be very important in the management of their organizations.
c. CSOs operational capacity including policy monitoring	CSOs operational capacity has been strengthened by way of tools and personnel individual capacity as well as equipment and infrastructure. Specific interventions on policy monitoring were to a lesser extent addressed. The CSOs have been more pedantic but not so much reflective on the policy implications of their actions.
d. outreach capacity of smaller CSOs	Partnership of smaller CSOs with their international counterparts has exposed local CSOs to some best practices and broadened their scope. It has also improved their credibility and built in their confidence to partake in bigger interventions. The experience being gained from working on big budget EU project as implementers is an advantage for local CSOs increasing their confidence and ability to partner big organisations.

2.4 Efficiency

The provision of EU financial assistance to local councils and civil society provided incentives for building the capacity of local actors (notably in financial management), as well as avenues for engaging in policy dialogue with local and central authorities concerning institutional and policy matters to promote a participatory culture and methodology consistent with local governance objectives and needs. The programme is consistent with the EU gender action plan 2016-2020 and it adheres to the EU interventions' aim of increasing the promotion of women's empowerment. Indeed, it had a paramount importance in promoting the participation in local and civil society affairs, preferably in leadership positions, where they demonstrate their role as actors of change in society.

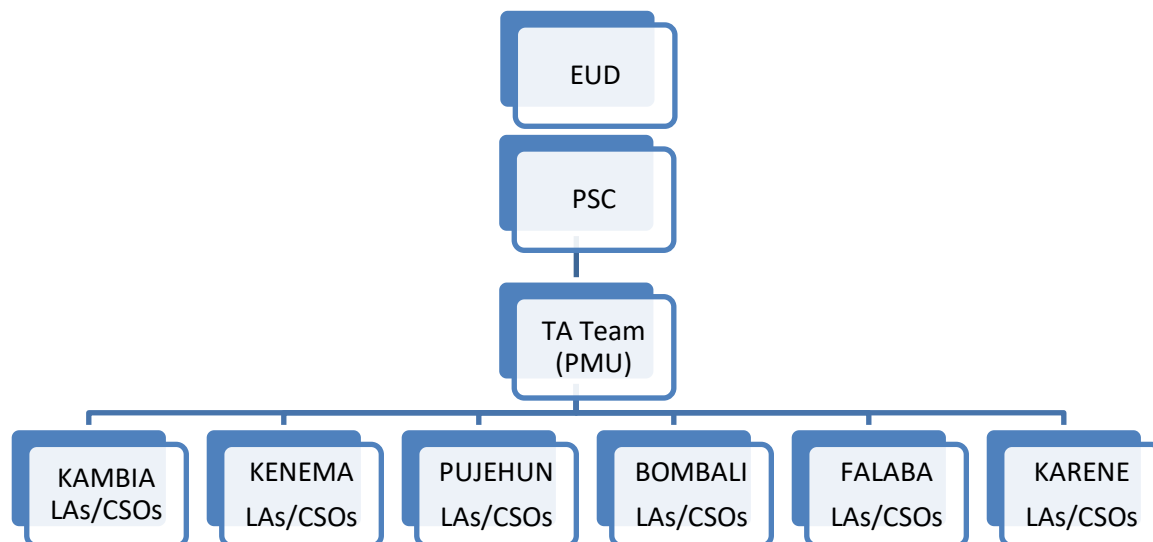
*EQ12 – Was management adequate to the planning and execution requirements?
(Management Arrangements, Work Planning, Finance and co-finance, value for money,
timing and delays, M&E Stakeholder Engagement, Reporting, Communications)*

2.4.1 Management arrangements

The Management arrangements consisted of the EUD Program Team with Valentina Favero as the Lead Program Officer they oversaw the Project steering committees. The PSC is composed of the following members or their representatives:

- The Ambassador of the Delegation of the European Union (EUD) to Sierra Leone (Co-chair);
- The Minister of Planning and Economic Development, NAO for the EDF (Co-Chair);
- The Minister of Local Government and Rural Development;
- The Minister of Finance;
- The State House Governance Advisor;
- The Head of Civil Service (Cabinet Secretariat);
- The President of the Local Councils Association of Sierra Leone (LoCASL);
- The Chairpersons of the targeted District Councils;
- Development Partners (Embassy of Ireland, UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, UNDP, World Bank, others) as observers;
- Co-chairpersons of the Technical Committee for the programme;
- Team Leader of the Programme Management Unit (PMU) as co-opted member (secretary).

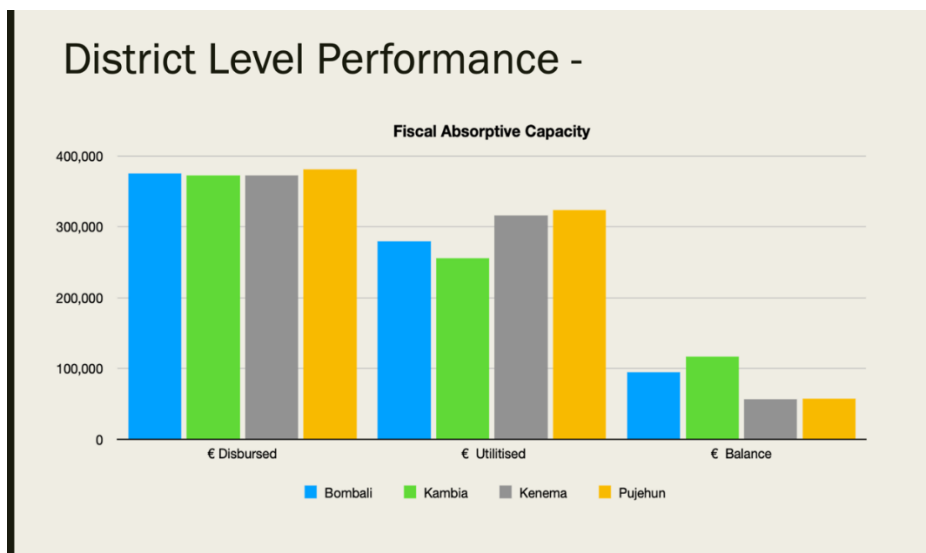
The EUD recruited the technical assistance team after a competitive process which was won by DAI. The Technical assistance team then formed the Project Management Unit made of international/national experts. At the time of evaluation, it was headed by Mr Julius Munthali. They oversaw the implementation of the 17 financial agreements with local authorities and civil society actors in the six Districts.



The Financing Agreement dedicated 4.00.000 euro (16% of the total budget) to the programme management structure in 2018. The EUD recruited the TA management through an international competitive tender. Providing policy direction for the programme was the responsibility of the Programme Steering Committee (PSC) whilst the PMU provided the needed technical assistance to develop the skills of Local Government and CSOs. The PMU undertook an extensive series of consultations and interactions with several institutions and conducted the hard work needed to mitigate consequences of late delivery of grants to LAs, through continuous dialogue and support to District Councils.

This is evidenced by the last progress report of DAI which stated the considerable expansion of the role of the PMU which deepened its policy coordination efforts through closer relationship and support to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD), other ministries, departments and agencies and non-governmental organizations. The PMU's support witnessed improvements in the convening capacity of the MLGRD to coordinate policy development including supporting the strengthening of the decentralization policy, and coordinating engagements with Parliament, the Local Council Association Sierra Leone (LOCASL) and civil society organizations. Through this engagement, the PMU helped to secure the adoption of the decentralization policy by the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) chaired by the Vice President and submission of the policy to the Cabinet sub-Committee where it also received a thumping approval. This period also witnessed a revision of the service contract extending the role and activities of the PMU as well as adding two more councils of Falaba and Karene to its programme portfolio.

The approach of the PMU changed from more conservative engagement to more proactive with the MLGRD. The commitment of the Minister and deputy of the MLGRD, coupled with the excellent insights and guidance of the European Union Delegation team has been particularly useful in shaping the successes of the programme during this period. At the time of evaluation, the PSC had only met once in December 2020 at a meeting held in the NAO. The meeting was held to share the preliminary achievement and results in the several component and area covered by the program, to review progress achievements and identified challenges, map out strategic policy issues affecting the programme, and the next six months priorities.



Source: PPT – Programme Steering Committee, December 2020.

2.4.2 Work planning

In terms of work planning except for a few adaptations which were either due to direct appeals from government or as part of a mitigation measure to the best of their ability the Programme the planning had no significant omission. Due to the Programme using a direct EU execution modality required the EU Delegation to preselect four districts as per the original programme agreed with government however on appeal from the Government two additional Districts were included. The selection of initial four districts was done based on a scoping assessment of needs and opportunities that was prepared by a team of consultants in late 2017 and subsequently shared with MLGRD. The following selection criteria were used by the EU Delegation³¹:

- Geographical balance: one district per region (excluding the Western Area);
- Good existing collaboration between CSOs and LCs: minimum condition for preselection (as the programme funds jointly agreed initiatives);
- Good socio-economic and institutional potential: minimum condition for preselection (as the programme seeks impact on economy and service delivery);
- Seeking complementarity with other focal sectors of EU cooperation in Sierra Leone: this focuses especially on the education sector, as a paramount political priority of the Government of Sierra Leone; education has also emerged as a priority in our exchanges with local CSOs and LAs;
- Deprioritising districts where other donors have presence with similar projects;
- Deprioritising districts where EU is active with similar or related projects.
- Balanced financing to allow for reduced operational risks and comparability of approaches: one strong, one weak district per combined regions based on LCs' performance;

³¹ District Pre-selection Methodology Document.

An independent evaluation committee considered all grants' applications. The Evaluation team analysed a set of documentation³² with government observers present. Files include:

- Call of proposal;
- Email exchange for clarifications (no later than 21 days before the deadline for the submission of applications);
- Concept notes received;
- Full applications received;
- Checklists with evaluation grid;
- Declarations of no conflict of interest;

Documentation also includes mail receipts, award letters, final eligibility check after which the EUD endorsed funding of the full applications. Lead applicants received a letter indicating the reference number of their application and the respective results. Eligibility was correctly checked with applicants by requesting supporting documents.

In conclusion, the evaluation process of grant funds applications was carried out efficiently, in full compliance with EU administrative requirements.

2.4.3 Finance

The table below provides the EU budget contribution as set out at the completion of the programme's design. The Financial Agreement signed with the EU Commission and the Republic of Sierra Leone was signed and entered in force in October 2017.

The budget addendum (see the table below) signed in December 2020 is related to: COVID-19 global health pandemic for mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 on the rural population, in line with the national QAERP especially to health, water and sanitation, market management, rural and food security.

Despite the EU Program promptly tried to modify the budget to tackle new challenges, the additional budget allocation could not contain the *force majeure* with the subsequent disruption in global supply chains that rendered all estimates outdated.

Inclusion of the two additional districts (Falaba and Karene received 2.100.00 euro)³³ resulted in the program extension of two additional years to allow sufficient time to implement the action in the new districts. The purpose of this is to extend the EU contributions in implementing the geographical scope of the EU program and respond to emerging needs engendered by the COVID-19 crisis.

In December 2020 approx. 1.200.000 EUR was allocated to NGOs to support implementation of local development plans and mitigate the socio-economic impact of COVID19 in the Districts of Bombali, Karene, Falaba.

	Initial Budget	Modification Addendum No 1	Budget after Addendum No 1
2.1.1 Grants: call for proposals (direct management): "Support to Civil Society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone"	8 000 000	(+) 100 000	8 100 000
2.1.2 Grants: direct award (direct management); "Priority investments in six Districts in line with local development plans"	10 000 000	(+) 2 100 000	12 100 000

³² LCF 02/09 CAP Imp.

³³ Financial Agreement FED/2017/039-030

2.1.3 Procurement (direct management): technical assistance and PMU at national level	4 000 000	(+) 483 247	4 483 247
2.6 Evaluation, 2.7 – Audit	400 000	(-) 100 000	300 000
2.8 Communication and visibility	100 000		100 000
Contingencies & reserve	500 000	(-) 500 000	0
Total	23 000 000	2 083 247	25 083 247

2.4.4 Utilisation of resources

Referencing the last financial agreement (FED/2017/039-030), the funding was provided in three phases:

2018: Procurement (technical assistance and PMU)

2019: Call of proposals and awarded grants.

8 million euro were contracted in November 2019 through a competitive process “Call for proposals” with NGOs supporting the implementation of local development plans in partnership with DCs and 10 million euro contracted in July 2020 by means of direct awarded grant to the 4 pilot DCs which had been identified by the EU in agreement with National Authorities.

2020: Inclusion of 2 additional pilot districts and COVID-19 funds.

As we can see in the table below, to reply to the COVID-19 challenges the initial four pilot Districts received additional funds while the two additional pilot Districts (which were included in the EU program in December 2020) did not receive funds for tackle the COVID-19 global health emergency.

Table: Details of District COVID-19 Activities

District	Activities	Estimated Cost (EUR)
KENEMA	Registering and maintaining data on suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases; Surveillance and Contact tracing; Conducting risk assessment on COVID-19 at all levels of healthcare facilities; Holding radio and other community level discussions on COVID-19; Providing hygiene resources; Conducting Information and behaviour change communication campaigns; Training of health staff and volunteers on case management; Distribution of IPC materials; Provision of diagnostics test kits and other PPE to health and other workers at the quarantine centres; Provide SMS/MMS messages on COVID-19 to citizens; Provision of WASH facilities in communities; Provision of ventilated Isolation and treatment centres; Cleaning and disinfecting markets, lorry parks and other public places; and Provision of food and water at COVID-19 Quarantine centres	247,643
PUJEHUN	Strengthening surveillance for early detection of COVID-19 cases, Supporting the operations of District COVID-19 Response Committee; Procurement and distribution of COVID-19 testing equipment, drugs and other medical supplies; Provision of PPE and incentives to health and other workers; Training of health workers and community mobilisers do door to door sensitization and manage cases; Community level information education and behavior change communication; Reaching communities with SMS messages on COVID-19; Provision of hygiene resources; Advocacy meetings with paramount chiefs and other stakeholders; Distribution of IPC materials; Provision of Quarantine, Isolation and Treatment centres; Provision of food	526,000

	and water at Quarantine centres; Cleaning and disinfecting markets, lorry parks and other public places;	
BOMBALI	Engaging and training community mobilisers and Community health workers to do door to door sensitization on COVID-19 in communities; Holding radio and community level discussions on COVID-19; Advocacy meetings with Paramount Chiefs and Community leaders on COVID-19 preventive measures in Chiefdoms; Information and behaviour change communication.	522,777
KAMBIA	Training and support to District COVID-19 Response Coordinating Committee; Engagement and training of community mobilisers/volunteers and health workers to do door to door sensitization; Training of 70 frontline health workers and volunteers on case management; Surveillance and patrol along the district borders; Consultations with Paramount Chiefs and Community leaders on COVID-19 preventive measures; Radio and community level discussions programs on COVID-19; Printing and distribution of Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) materials on COVID-19 to communities; Partnership with telecom companies to provide SMS/MMS messages on COVID-19 to citizens; Disinfecting and cleaning markets, lorry parks and other public places; Provision of PPE and incentives to health and other workers at the Quarantine, Isolation and Treatment centres; Procurement and distribution of hand washing materials; Procurement and supply of COVID-19 testing equipment, drugs and other medical supplies to Isolation, treatment and other health centres; Provision of food and water at the COVID-19 Quarantine centres; Construction of two isolation centres and rehabilitation of one treatment centre.	258,815
TOTAL BUDGET (EUR) for COVID 19 related activities in 4 Districts		1,555,235

At the current stage of implementation, the evaluation team believes that the commitment of around 50% of allocated resources in awarded grants represents efficiency in fostering Decentralisation. It empowers local authorities (LAs) as well as local/rural civil society organizations (CSOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) to fund and implement jointly agreed initiatives that respond to the priority needs of communities sustainably. The EU program witnesses an expansive series of consultations and interactions with several institutions.

2.4.5 Value for money

Inputs for the programme include the Technical Assistance Team and the resources and systems provided for programme implementation. In terms of budgeting pre-Covid -19, there were incidences where the variance between budget and actual was significant e.g the cost of solar panels exemplifies this; however, these incidences were minor. In summary most of the activities regarding the CSOs have been implemented; those with the LAs are a work in progress. The completed activities have for the most part resulted in the desired outcome. Had the Programme not experienced a force majeure incident, i.e. Covid-19 in March of 2020, a few months after the Programme kick-off, we could have made a more conclusive statement about the value for money.

The subsequent effect of Covid 19 with disruption in global supply chains, lockdowns, closure of air spaces, restriction of movement, proscribed group meetings, and new health protocols for contact with people made the question of value for money redundant. Since substantial price increases could

not have been foreseen, all cost estimates were outdated. These identified challenges caused time slippages and cost overruns due to forces beyond the control of all actors.

2.4.6 Timing and delays

As mentioned there in the value for money sections, the onset of Covid 19 in March 2020 and its subsequent ramifications, such as the closure of national airspaces, the disruption of global logistics supply chains, the implementation of lockdowns which r, the clampdown on public events, and the need to limit activities that would bring you in contact with two or more people—caused a massive slippage in time for the achievement of specific activities promptly. These delays have warranted the programme's extension to its current end date in 2023.

2.4.7 M&E Stakeholder Engagement

The PMU has driven regular information and experiential sharing workshops for project participants, which has also served to monitor and evaluate the activities of project implementers.

2.4.8 Reporting

Programme stakeholders have been diligent in their report requirements (progress report, activity reports, audit reports etc) from the PMU as well as from Sierra Leone Government. Due in large part to the capacity building of the local authorities almost all of them are within the top 10 in terms of Districts with the best performance and strong accountability systems according to the ranking of the CLOPAST and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) assessment respectively.

2.4.9 Communications

Save for some miscommunication regarding the causative factors which resulted in delays for some key project infrastructural activities internal communication among project stakeholders has been creditable. The consultative and participatory approach that has been championed by the PMU has resulted in generally good lines of communication.

2.5 Impact

The overall goal of the project: “*Support to Civil Society and Local Authorities for Local Development in Sierra Leone*” is to ensure that Citizens in the pilot districts³⁴, including People Living with Disability (PLWD) and women, have equal access to services of improved quality in sectors prioritized in the local development plans.

EQ 13 - What are the impact prospects of the Programme?

Taking cognisance that the programme is midway in implementation especially with activities concerning the Local Councils. Therefore, in assessing impact as this point in time is important to understand how the programme is responsive to the local community's needs and findings are more indicative of impact rather than conclusive. The EU grants have ensured that local grantees have strategies and clear paths for their implementation in place.

The overall goal, mentioned above, concerns two strategic objectives:

SO1: Implementation of prioritized gender-sensitive development actions with relevant stakeholders made effective.

SO2: Revenue base of District Councils enhanced through enhanced revenue collection, effective resource management to enhanced service delivery.

The programme is organised according to two main areas of intervention to generate long-lasting impact in line with the development plans:

Encouraging decentralisation to local government: The aim of strengthen the capacity of local councils is to deliver the key mandate they have in social sectors and agriculture. Their capacity to development and budget planning, monitoring, and reporting, and personnel management and

³⁴ The pilot districts, one in each four regions of Sierra Leone, have been selected during the inception phase of the programme based on a comprehensive national level assessment.

performance assessment represent the starting point for the next EU actions on decentralisation. Due to the scope and size of the programme and the fact that it also supports human development and structural capacities of Local Authorities (LAs) to operate better and improve service delivery, the programme represents a multiplier effect for the future years on the overall development of the councils - e.g. revenue collection at local level³⁵. In this sense, the local governments need to consolidate the engagement with local civil society regarding accountability issues, to foster their participation in local development (e.g. the Kambia District Council recently built a perimeter fence, funded through market fees, property taxes, fees and some charity. It brought about increased confidence and trust in the local government).

Regarding citizens' participation in local government structures - Chiefdom Development Councils (CDCs), Ward Development Councils (WDCs), and Village Development Councils (VDCs), the data shows that in target areas about one third of the respondents are members of local government structures.

Out of the female respondents who confirmed being members of local committees, 44.5% of them are in leadership positions.

Table: Type of taxes paid

Table 25: Type of taxes paid

Type of taxes paid ^a	Local Taxes	% in district	District							Total
			Bombali	Falaba	Kambia	Karene	Kenema	Moyamba	Port Loko	
	Property Rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	97,3%	99,7%	99,4%	100,0%	
	Licences	10.3%	0.5%	0%	0.3%	3.0%	0.6%	0.8%	2.4%	
	Fees_charges	3.1%	0.5%	0.3%	1.3%	1.5%	5.9%	0.8%	7.1%	
	Interests_dividends	0.6%	0.3%	0%	0.3%	1.2%	2.0%	0%	0.8%	
	Any other revenue due to government to local councils	0%	0.3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
		0%	0.8%	0%	0%	2.7%	0.3%	1.1%	0.0%	

Source: DAI Baseline Study, Final Report 16.03.2022

Local Councils have also gained a level of autonomy and confidence as a provider of services in line with the local development plans improving the national audit rankings, thanks to the knowledge enhancement of the EU grants management and the related increase of monitoring activities (e.g. purchase of motorbike through the programme funds for increase the monitoring of the territories).

³⁵ DAI Baseline Study, Final Report 16.03.2022.

Knowledge of EU- Funded Project

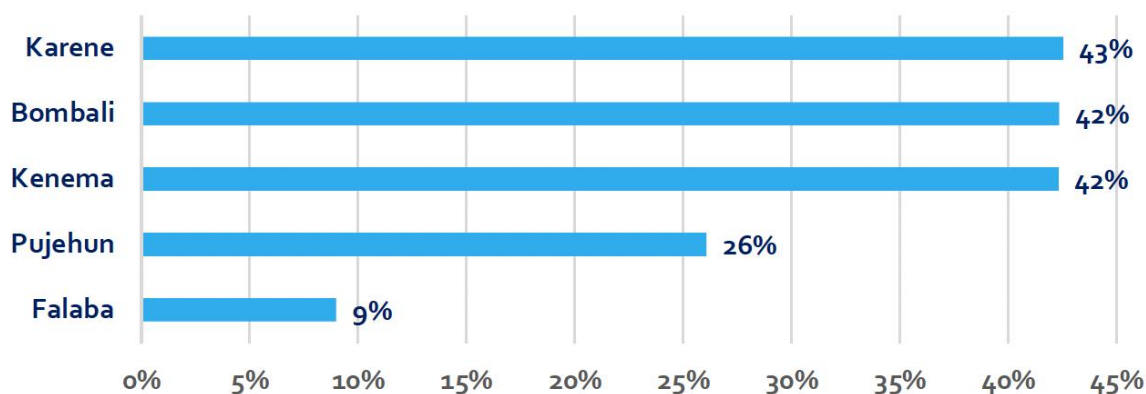


Figure 6: Knowledge of EU Funded Projects

Source: DAI Baseline Study, Final Report 16.03.2022

Supporting rural civil society initiatives: The programme intends to encourage a bottom-up holistic approach to support CSOs/CBOs in the pilot districts. To avoid dispersion of efforts, it encourages and coaches the emergence of coordinated citizen-driven initiatives in consensual priority areas - e.g. gender-sensitive development actions, see the table below³⁶.

Table: Extension service responsiveness to needs by gender (respondents gave a rate from 1 – severely inadequate, first column on the left, to 5 – very good, second-to-last column on the right)

Gender	Female						
	% in Gender	1.5%	18.5%	33.8%	43.1%	3.1%	100%
	Male						
	% in Gender	8.1%	24.3%	21.6%	39.2%	6.8%	100%
Total							
	% in Gender	5.0%	21.6%	27.3%	41.0%	5.0%	100%

Source: DAI Baseline Study, Final Report 16.03.2022

This develops the capacity and accountability of local civil society actors with training in soft and technical skills as well as with direct funding for projects. However, the accountability of the CSOs in the Districts should be increased to be considered strongly reliable by the local communities.

One of the core priorities of the local development is the agricultural sector. The CSOs and District Councils implemented activities aimed to improve agricultural services offered to farmers. These include the provision of training on traditional and innovative agricultural techniques, distributing improved seeds supply to enhance farmers productivity, the construction of new market structures and rehabilitation of existing market structures, improving quality of processing and storage facilities and distribution of mechanized farming machines.

³⁶ DAI Baseline Study, Final Report 16.03.2022.

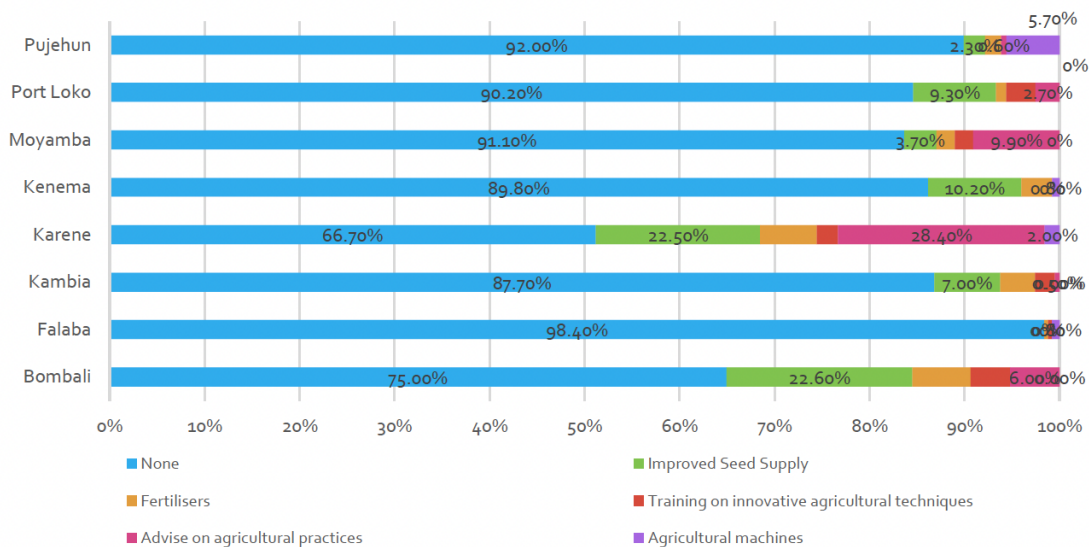


Figure 9: Access to Extension Services

Source: DAI Baseline Study, Final Report 16.03.2022.

It is the view of the evaluators that what CSOs are doing is at high risk of sustained impact to the community and that with the LCs, sustained impact can be assured only if EUD continues supporting them on policies, coordination with major investment projects at national level, and support full devolution of fiscal decentralisation. To capitalise the achievements arising from the above two areas, the expected long-lasting impact should be ensured by reinforcing the environment for effective decentralisation and local governance addressing policy and institutional challenges at all levels.

Among the expected results of the programme is the improvement in Horizontal policy, coordination, and capitalisation component. So far, the prospect for impact on this result appears weak unless pressing issues below are addressed.

A central body to consciously take the mantle and duty as a coordinator of development (donor coordination).

Urgent need to clarify role of council and District officers to enhance coherence in the promotion of development of the state in the districts.

2.5.1 Learning and Networking

The programme contribution to impact in this regard is reflected in the actions at local level (e.g administrative and financial assistance) and in the high policy level dialogue at institutional level³⁷ on decentralization that highlights the urgent need to clarify the role of council and District Officers to enhance coherence in the promotion of development of the state in the districts.

2.6 Sustainability

EQ 14 - Which institutional arrangements allow for maintaining the benefits achieved?

This being a mid-term evaluation it is obvious that activities are still ongoing, so no conclusive statement can be made on the prospects of sustainability of outcomes sought by the project. However, there are indicators of what is being effective and likely to be sustainable as well as points of weaknesses which still need support. Local government act is a challenge in making LCs responsible for markets; Chiefdom and District officers are contesting this. More strengthening of the Local Councils is critical to making them the key fulcrum of development in the community. This

³⁷ National decentralization Policy, July 2021.

formal authority is still in competition against the informal traditional authority exerted by the Chiefdoms. The need to consolidate the gains of the program requires focused support to the Local Authorities.

Chiefdoms - though traditional - still exert authority in the communities; Unlike the Local Councils, their mandate is not subject to deadlines, nor are they duty bound to be agents of development, with consequent, and risks in terms of financial accountability. Ascendency to the chief is by lineage, and not merit-based.

There is need for sustained assistance to the LCs to be able to gather and generate credible consistent data from its operations and the ability to have an easily retrievable repository of such data to inform decision-making. To move away from politically driven decisions to data driven.

EQ 15 - What is the policy sustainability of the Programme?

In September 2020, civil society leaders from across the country discussed the draft Decentralization Policy and presented a Position Paper to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, the draft policy as “progressive” and that it “provides citizens the opportunity to reflect on the experiences of the past 16 years of decentralization” in the country.

However, several critical issues (i.e National Elections Watch - NEW) have been raised relating to the draft policy; they include: the absence of constitutional provision for local governance; the continuous redrawing of territorial boundaries without taking into consideration historical, cultural, ethnic, and social factors; conduct of local council elections on non-partisan basis; and MPs sitting in local council meetings.

NEW strongly emphasized the need for the government to finalize the Constitutional Review process, as the implementation of this progressive policy will be hampered by the failure to finalize the 1991 constitutional review process.

There is a need for future budget support programmes to Sierra Leone to target the strengthening of Government institutions, consolidating the gains in public sector reform and sustaining efforts on Public Financial Management (PFM). These efforts should also target the local level, to ensure that increased revenues lead to greater expenditure that can bring about increased basic service delivery through reformed and more efficient public institutions.

2.7 EU Added Value

EQ 16 - What has been the advantage of having EU as a partner in the governance and CSO development sector, compared to other initiatives from other donors?

From the mid-1980s onwards, a wave of decentralisation reforms swept across the developing world. A wide range of governments embarked on state reform processes aimed at transferring responsibilities, resources, and authority from higher to lower levels of government.

The importance of governance and local civil society and socio-economic development is set out in the Eleventh European Development Fund (EDF) for Sierra Leone 2014-2020, which provides the highest allocation of fund to this sector:

Focal Sector 1: Governance and Civil Society	€ 179 million	47 %
Focal Sector 2: Education	€ 80 million	21 %
Focal sector 3: Agriculture	€ 60 million	16 %
Ad-hoc: Liberia Road	€ 43 million	12 %
Cross-cutting: Support measures	€ 14 million	4 %
Total	€ 376 million	100%

The EU has a long-standing tradition of intervening in local development. Over the past three decades, EU involvement in matters of decentralisation and local development has gone through

a cycle of experimentation and learning by doing. Building on this, a coherent policy framework has gradually developed and is still being forged.

EU strategies and approaches to decentralisation in developing countries are effectively summarized in the box below³⁸.

THE EU LEARNING CURVE ON DECENTRALISATION, LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Phase 1: Development projects at the local level (1980 to mid-1990s). These included several generations of community-driven micro-project schemes, mainly aimed at fostering rural development and providing basic infrastructure. Following the new wave of decentralisation reforms of the early 1990s, LAs emerged as a new actor in the local arena. It took some time before they could establish a basic institutional existence and claim space. However, as they became more visible, the EU began to explore ways and means by which to involve this new institutional player in its cooperation. This led to a new generation of micro-projects embedded in a wider approach to local development, propelled by joint action between communities and LAs. Initially, there was no defined policy framework to guide EU interventions, which were generally confined to the local level and lacked a clear political/institutional and systemic vision. This lack was compounded by a strong donor preference to work mainly with central governments on policy matters and with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) at the local level to implement projects. This context explains why, for a long time, LAs remained a rather marginalised actor in development and EU development cooperation, both as a dialogue partner and a recipient of funds.

Phase 2: Evolution towards actor-based approaches and systems thinking (mid-1990s to 2010). As LAs started to acquire more legitimacy and credibility, there was a growing interest on the part of the EU to provide more tailored forms of support. A first generation of projects targeting LAs as a distinct actor appeared, both at the country level (e.g. municipal development projects) and at the regional level (in Latin America and Asia). Over time, these projects helped enhance the capacity of LAs in addressing issues such as social cohesion, local economic development, environmental sustainability, and internally displaced persons. They also supported organisational strengthening and good governance at the local level. These efforts were complemented by a variety of decentralised cooperation schemes driven by municipalities in European countries. Following the new wave of decentralisation reforms of the early 1990s, LAs emerged as a new actor in the local arena. As they became more visible, the EU began to explore ways and means by which to involve this new institutional player in its cooperation. This led to a new generation of micro-projects embedded in a wider approach to local development, propelled by joint action between communities and LAs.

Phase 3: Recognition and mainstreaming of LAs in the EU cooperation (2005 onwards). The growing international recognition of LAs as development actors — propelled by vocal LA associations at various levels — led to the EU's gradually integrating LAs into its cooperation processes. From 2005 onwards, the following steps were taken to this end:

- incorporation of specific provisions regarding LAs in the revised 2005 Cotonou Agreement;
- creation in 2006 of a new thematic EU financial instrument for both non-state actors and LAs;
- formulation of the first dedicated EU communication on LAs in 2008 (Commission of the European Communities, 2008);
- full-fledged involvement of LAs in the 2010–2011 structured dialogue process aimed at rethinking partnership approaches;
- elaboration of the landmark European Commission (EC) communication of 2013, 'Empowering local authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes', which invites the EU to contribute to the empowerment of LAs as catalysts of local/territorial development;
- launch of a new strengthened thematic programme dedicated to civil society organisations (CSOs) and LAs for the period 2014–2020;
- increased efforts to mainstream the participation of LAs in-policy dialogue processes at various levels as well as in geographic instruments, including budget support operations;

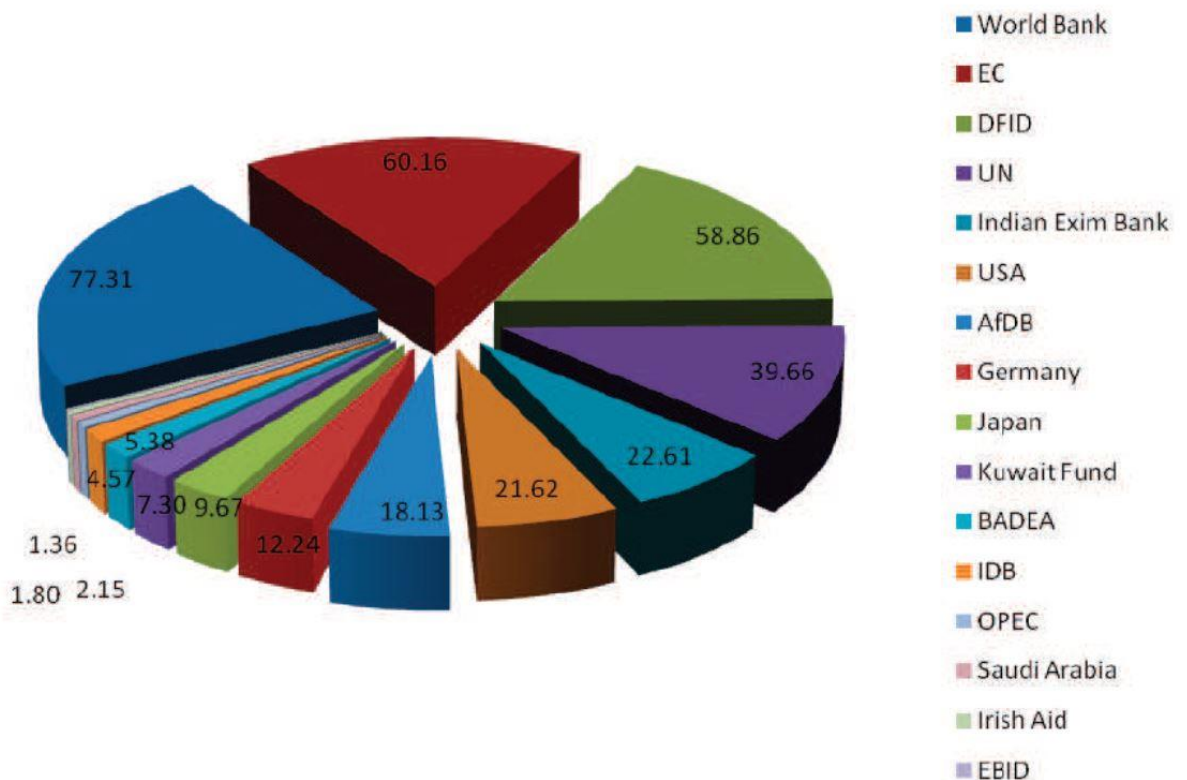
³⁸ Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation, *Supporting decentralisation, local governance and local development through a territorial approach*, 2016

- establishment in 2015 of framework partnership agreements with five LA associations acting at the global and regional levels, thereby formalising new EU policies regarding LAs at the highest political level;
- adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the international community and the related challenge to localise implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals through active involvement of LAs.

Phase 4: Reconnecting decentralisation and development through territorial approaches (2013 and beyond). The above-mentioned 2013 EC communication provides an opportunity to make a qualitative leap forward in how the EU deals with decentralisation, local development and LAs. It may lead to the elaboration of a more coherent EU response strategy which overcomes the limitations of the forms of engagement used in the previous phases.

The new policy framework of the 2013 communication has its focus on empowered LAs and on territorial approaches. This vision surely holds the potential to re-establish the link between decentralization and development by combining the bottom-up approach to development, enriched by a broader territorial perspective, with the elaboration of supportive national decentralization policies and institutional changes that help to create the conditions for genuine territorial dynamics. This is one of the positive features of the Programme and explains the key role of the PMU as operational and sometimes advisory support to the national levels.

On the other hand, new challenges emerge. One is the changing development assistance (DA) panorama in Sierra Leone. At the time of the FA, the EU was the second biggest donor supporting the country with development assistance, as this table (extracted from NIP) summarizes.



This picture has however considerably changed in the following years. A recent OECD publication shows that the main DA aid providers in the years 2018 -2019 in Sierra Leone were the UK and USA, with UK contributing with a robust 35% more than the EU. The table follows.

Recipient country

Sierra Leone

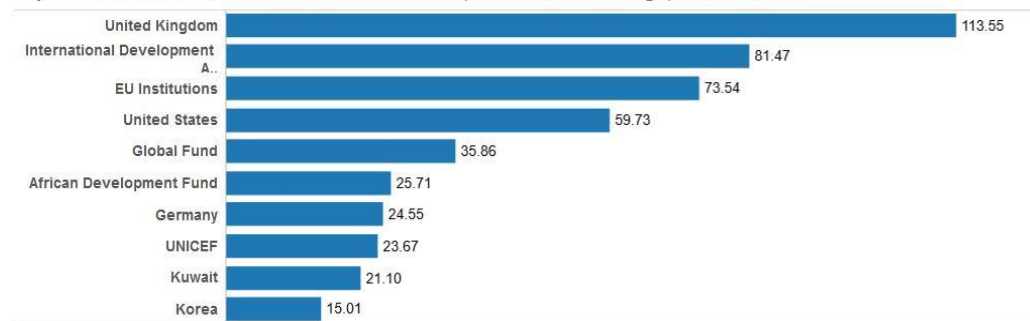
Receipts for Sierra Leone

	2017	2018	2019
Net ODA (USD million)	541.2	508.0	594.6
Net ODA/GNI (%)	14.9	13.4	16.2
Gross ODA (USD million)	582.7	549.1	626.5
Bilateral share (gross ODA) (%)	52.3	56.8	43.4
Total net receipts (USD million)	731.2	520.7	759.6

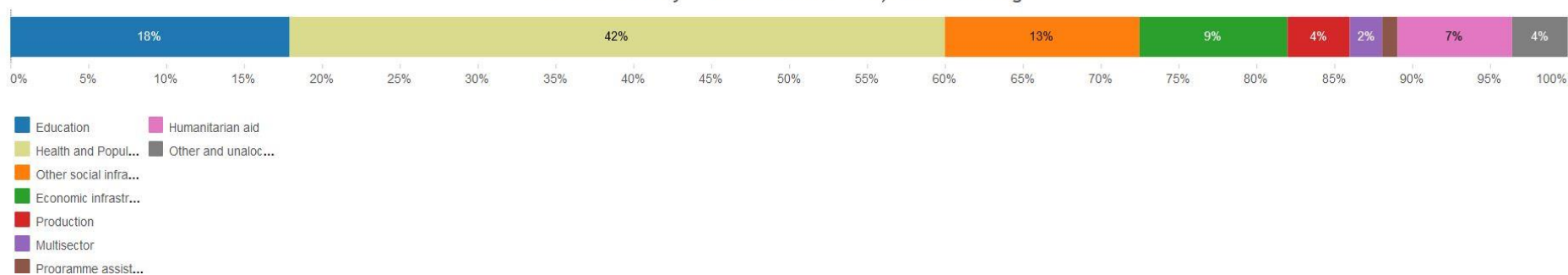
For reference

	2017	2018	2019
Population (million)	7.5	7.7	7.8
GNI per capita (Atlas USD)	520.0	490.0	500.0

Top Ten Donors of Gross ODA for Sierra Leone, 2018-2019 average, USD million



Bilateral ODA by Sector for Sierra Leone, 2018-19 average



In this framework, EU interventions in the governance sector in Sierra Leone need to be attentively reconsidered. There might be competition in the area, and the risk for EU actions is to be overshadowed or – worse – contradicted by other donors’ interventions bringing different approaches into the governance arena.

Another risk is that the structure of EU programs on CSOs and LAs is based on very democratic. It is based on community needs and participation, continuous dialogue with all levels of government. It is not a top down but a bottom-up approach, which engages everybody in policy formulation, from rural villages to the Presidency. It is surely the best approach but is ‘weak’ in terms of internal governance and requires continuous efforts and monitoring to start seeing durable results.

The grant approach is also risky in comparison with other donors, in the sense that most results are small in scale, sometimes not reproducible, and are visible only to a limited range of stakeholders, thus decreasing the impact of EU actions in the country. This observation may look superficial, but having a stronger image is a major factor of success, sometimes even impact. Is EU adequately recognized in Sierra Leone? In many countries visited by the team, EU does not have a strong brand. It is often perceived as an impersonal entity, better known for its unbearably long and heavy procedures, its attention to financial and procurement details, and much less for its deep work to build more equitable societies. In this sense other major donors are much more skilled to market their activities and projects. If this cannot be addressed at EUD level, a reflection should be made at EU Headquarters to increase visibility and impact power of its external actions.

2.8 Gender equality and women’s empowerment

EQ 17 - To what extent and how were gender issues and marginalized categories taken into account in the programme strategy and implementation?

Gender equality and women's empowerment is central to the achievement of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), SDG 5, to “Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls”. Gender equality is also a precondition for advancing development and reducing poverty.

In Sierra Leone, progress has been made in expanding opportunities for women and girls to promote gender equality and empowerment of women. To reflect the commitment of the Government in meeting global obligations, legislative reforms in the following critical areas - as required by the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) – have been enacted: Domestic Violence Act 2007, Devolution of Estates Act 2007, Registration of Customary, Marriage and Divorce Act 2009, Child Rights Act 2007, and the Sexual Offences Act 2012. A functional National Committee on Gender-Based Violence comprising partner organisations working on the prevention and response to issues of gender-based violence across the country.

The first Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy 2020 for Sierra Leone was launched in November 2020. The overall goal of the GEWE policy is to create a framework that promotes equal rights for women and men in Sierra Leone and aims at ensuring that gender equality is mainstreamed and promoted as a pertinent element to sustainable economic development.

The priority areas of the GEWE policy for Sierra Leone are as follow: Gender, education and training; Gender, rural development and social protection; Gender-based violence; Gender, decision-making and political leadership; Gender, health, cancer, sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS; Gender, trade, employment and economic development; Gender, the

environment and disaster management; Gender, media and access to information, communication technology and innovation; Gender, disabilities and other forms of social inequities; Gender, legal justice and human rights; Gender, Culture and Family; Gender, peace-building and conflict resolution and Gender responsive budgeting.

To a certain extent, the Programme envisages an important part of its support to actions dedicated to GEWE themes. This is stated in the text of the FA (*Consistent with the EU gender action plan 2016-2020, EU interventions shall promote women's empowerment namely by participation in local public and civil society affairs, preferably in leadership positions, to demonstrate their role as actors of change in society*) and is further detailed in the Programme Logframe and in its expected results (ER) 1 and 2:

E.R. 1: Decentralised local government component: local councils' capacity to deliver services for which they are responsible are improved in 4 pilot rural districts: well managed priority gender-sensitive development actions, consistent with updated existing local development plans, are implemented with EU funding and in cooperation with Civil Society actors.

E.R. 2: Rural civil society initiatives component: Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the pilot districts demonstrate strengthened capacity to operate as credible actors of local governance and implement EU funded gender-sensitive initiatives aimed at improving inclusive social and economic service delivery to population at the local level.

Going into the actions funded by the Programme, the assessment will use the OECD Gender Policy Marker³⁹. The gender equality policy marker is based on a three-point scoring system:

Not targeted (marked 0) means that the project/programme has been screened against the gender marker but has not been found to target gender equality.

Significant (marked 1) means that gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the project/programme.

Principal (marked 2) means that gender equality is the main objective of the project/programme and is fundamental in its design and expected result. The project/programme would not have been undertaken without this objective.

District	District Council Action	Gender Marker	CSO Action	Gender Marker
Bombali	Empowered Bombali District Council for Efficient Service Delivery to the Citizens	0	Scaling up of basic services in rural areas of Bombali and Karene districts during COVID-19 pandemic (Interaide)	1
			Governance Accountability Under Gender Empowered Development by Civil Society (GAUGED Civil) - ACTION FOR ADVOCACY AND DEVELOPMENT	2
Falaba	Empowered Falaba District Council for Efficient Service Delivery to the Citizens	0	#EUStandsWithSalone: Strengthening Inclusion of Women and People with Disability (PWD) in Service Delivery in Falaba District - FALABA DISTRICT WOMEN'S NETWORK	2
Kambia	Empowered Kambia District Council for Efficient Service Delivery to the Citizens	1	Action for inclusive social and Economic Service Delivery in Kambia District (ActionAid International SL)	1
			Empowered Kambia Civil Society, Women, and Youth Influence Agricultural Production and Sustainable Income Development (KADDRO)	2

³⁹ <http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/dac-gender-equality-marker.htm>

Kenema	Empowered Kenema District Council for Efficient Service Delivery to the Citizens	0	Empowering Local Communities in Sierra Leone (Movement for Assistance in Promotion of Rural Communities) Strengthening the Capacity of Local Authorities for Advancing Integrated Local Development Initiative with focus on WASH and Agriculture in Kenema District - DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE PROGRAMME	1
Kerene	Empowered Kerene District Council for Efficient Service Delivery to the Citizens	0	Scaling up of basic services in rural areas of Bombali and Karene districts during COVID-19 pandemic (Interaide)	1
Pujehun	Empowered Pujehun District Council for Efficient Service Delivery to the Citizens	0	Empowering Local Communities in Sierra Leone (Movement for Assistance and Promotion of Rural Communities in Sierra Leone)	1
			Supporting Participation, Accountability and Civil Society Empowerment in Pujehun District - PARTNERSHIP ACTION COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT	1
			Empowering Local Communities in Sierra Leone - MOUVEMENT FOR ASSISTANCE IN PROMOTION OF RURAL COMMUNITIES	1

Among the most significant actions on GEWE themes, the team visited Kambia District where a project is implemented in 40 communities (8 in each chiefdom) from 5 chiefdoms and 13 wards aimed at, providing village services and loans for 1000 women. Reflection Action Groups were also established for 600 women. One of the effects of the project was an increased participation and leadership of women, supported by the CSO (Action Aid) through innovative initiatives. It is reported that women and not men are more willing to pay taxes if they see benefits for their communities.

In Bombali and Karene, the Action Aid project targets – among others – an association called Good Heart Farmers (GHF), that with its 300 members gathers a very large majority of women producers. Most of them are motivated by the idea of playing a role in the vegetables production sector, but their level of organization weakens this goal.

Women take advantage of the dry season to significantly supplement their income and improve their diet. The main goal of the project in Karene District is the development of vegetables productions in dry season (onions, cucumber, watermelon, okra, eggplant, big pepper, lettuce, and carrot).

In Karene, AADSL is implementing a project aimed at boosting local agriculture (increase entrepreneurship activities in the council, WASH component and women empowerment. Particular attention is given to the gender guidelines to make women aware of their rights.

This is evidenced by the consortium of AADSL, WOFHRAD and DESAL training women and youth through 4 modules: group dynamics, needs and rights and 3 gender justice laws.⁴⁰The MTR reveals that 1,250 (250 men, and 1,000 women) have been trained in decision-making processes within their communities and that 20-community level awareness raising campaigns on National Land Policy, VGGT and Community byelaws on women access to, control and

⁴⁰ GAUGED Project Mid-Term Review Report reference: EuropeAid/164196/DD/ACT/SL

ownership of land had been held in four chiefdoms across the 50 communities 28 (16 community level; 12 chiefdom level) awareness sessions.

An achievement of the project is in fact related to the support provided to women farmers in ensuring them free access and ownership of their own land at community level. AADSL collaborates with the District Council to obtain official certificates to prove land ownership of women farmers.

In Pujehun, the consortium of CSOs utilised the funds mainly to support agricultural interventions for the vulnerable, Inland Swamp Rehabilitation, and gender empowerment social interventions. Key achievements on gender related aspects were training on agricultural, entrepreneurial, and vocational skills provided to 400 girls of school-going age, who have had babies prior or during schooling. Start-up capital was also provided in terms of livestock, tools, and seeds.

Some of the **investment projects at District level** are also - directly or indirectly - addressing women's needs. In Kambia, a transit facility will be constructed, where market traders coming from far away locations can rest and have access to basic services (food, phone, dormitory, Internet) at cheap rates. Traders are in most cases women, who to date face difficulties to find affordable and safe places for their overnight stays.

In Pujehun, some of the activities with the local Council focused on issues related to improvement of women's conditions, such as the rehabilitation of the market with new roofing and constructing permanent table for market women. It is noteworthy observing that the District Council has proved to be a good forum for information-sharing, coordination and resolution of issues between multiple authorities (the local Council, the Chiefdom) and actors (CSOs, and women associations) in the district. The issues raised at these *fora* also percolate to the policy level decision influencers and makers. The minutes of these meetings with the key issues raised are collated and submitted to the Local Councils, which transmits them to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and to the central government.

2.8.1 GEWE: the way forward

Gender inequality and denial of women's rights are still prevalent at all levels in Sierra Leone. Despite the significant strides made, many women continue to suffer marginalisation and discrimination, particularly in the areas of education, employment, political participation, and social justice.

Women account for 52 percent of the total population in Sierra Leone yet occupy less than 20 percent of elected positions. Their voice, visibility, participation, and representation in elective and appointment positions remain very low compared to men. Some of these challenges include lack of economic independence, high illiteracy and entrenched customs and traditions, political violence and reprisals, the absence of progressive laws that protect and promote participation for women, and the lack of confidence to vie for public positions⁴¹.

Issues of unequal opportunities for boys and girls continue to be exacerbated by factors such as early marriage for girls, teenage pregnancies, and harmful practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Gender-based violence perpetrated against women and girls continues to be one of the most prevalent and pervasive problems in post-conflict Sierra Leone.

In a Programme perspective, it is still possible to envisage activities directed at consolidation and dissemination of results: The virtuous target Districts could for example share their best practices to improve gender agenda in the vulnerable ones; best practices might be shared with the media and with the central government, especially departments in charge of GEWE;

⁴¹ USAID, 2022.

innovative practices might be presented to other donors for further funding. This would ensure a consolidation of best practices and further sustainability of actions carried out.

EQ 18 - Did the Programme positively affect the environment and climate change issues currently identified in Sierra Leone?

Although the FA does not mention any specific provisions for actions targeting this area, the Guidelines of the CfP generically suggest gender and environmental sensitivity as award criteria. In reality, a very limited number of activities have been carried out on these themes. It is worth mentioning the training on Agro-ecological agriculture conducted in Makeni (Bombali) by Trócaire with AAD-SL and WOFHRAD. In Pujehun and other locations (Bombali), solar kiosks have been built awaiting installation of charging facilities. Again in Bombali, AAD-SL (an international CSO with a branch in Sierra Leone) supported communities and leaders in advocacy on environmental protection and reforestation for woodlots, and sustainable crop production, nutrition and food preservation skills. In all these cases, activities in this area are never a core aspect of the grant, and the budget allocated to them is extremely modest.

The civil society panorama of the country seems poor on environmental matters. In its Roadmap, the EU itself observes:

in Sierra Leone CSOs presence and capacity seems to be also very weak in the environmental sector. In a country characterised by rapid population growth and urbanisation, adverse impact of climate change, poor governance, and fast depletion of natural resources (deforestation, rapid loss of mangrove and marine eco-systems, wildlife, and biodiversity), it is highly regrettable to note the quasi-total absence of specialised CSOs and environmental activism.

⁴²This comment is probably applicable to the Programme, where number, size and funding allocations of actions addressing environmental concerns are very limited. In Pujehun and Kenema, solar kiosks have been constructed; however, in Pujehun obtaining solar panels is still under discussion. In Kenema, some of the items for construction of solar kiosks were under costed.

As grant modalities are based on a bottom-up approach, it results that for the civil society and to some extent for local authorities' environmental matters are not yet a priority, in the complex development agenda of the country. This is understandable; yet, Sierra Leone has experienced significant human, environmental, and economic hardships from climate change over the past decade. Floods, landslides, and extreme weather events are expected to increase in the next years⁴³. Sierra Leone's economy is highly dependent on natural resources and fragile ecosystems and is already experiencing erratic rainfall patterns and rising temperatures leading to seasonal and flash floods, water shortages, low crop yield, and mudslides. This will continue to have adverse impacts on sustainable livelihoods and assets of vulnerable communities.

⁴⁴On the other hand, other donors are active in this area. What the EU might implement in the future is a small number of innovative projects, which might be submitted by specialised international CSOs with the necessary support of local CSOs, in a knowledge sharing and capacity building perspective.

In any case, to avoid fragmentation and dispersion of funds, these initiatives should involve an exit strategy, for example dissemination of results or linkages with other non-EU or also EU MSs programmes addressing environment and climate change in target districts.

Another option can be direct contributions to other International Organisations (IOs) on environmental and climate change matters. UNIDO strategy, as an example, is based on the acknowledgement that Sierra Leone is home to an innovative and entrepreneurial network of

⁴² EU Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society in Sierra Leone 2021-2023,

⁴³ UNIDO, *Fostering climate adaptation through entrepreneurship in Sierra Leone*, 2021.

⁴⁴ UNDP Sierra Leone, *National Adaptation Plan 2021*.

small businesses, many of whom see opportunity in creating and distributing products and services that can help families and communities cope and respond to a changing climate: *Small and medium-sized enterprises employ 70% of Sierra Leone's population and are often a lifeline for isolated communities who would otherwise lack access to technologies, products, and services that can help them guard against and recover from natural disasters. UNIDO, together with the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), has established an initiative to work with innovators and entrepreneurs to bolster Sierra Leone's ability to adapt to climate change and build a more resilient future for its water, agricultural and energy sectors*⁴⁵.

2.9 Conclusions on GEWE and Environment – Climate Change issues

Although in the Call for Proposals themes such as Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE) and environmental – climate change issues were included as priorities, they were not sufficiently clearly highlighted. This is more valid for the area of climate change and environment, where references in the Call are rather vague and not focused.

In a country presenting a wide range of stringent needs and challenges, cross-cutting issues risk not to be perceived as a priority. This is more than understandable. On GEWE, this risk is lesser: the recent introduction of a country gender policy is making a difference. During the field mission, President Maada Bio in his speech at the opening of final session of Parliament highlighted Sierra Leone's positive increase in number of girls enrolled at all levels of education and reiterated the importance of education for young women⁴⁶.

Concerning environment and climate change, there might still be a trade-off between sustainable and green agricultural development (which might be less profitable, given higher costs) and the need for granting a decent subsistence level to rural communities. Technology and innovation will probably play a key role in mitigating this dilemma.

In all cases, if it is intended to pay attention to crosscutting issues in the Programme, a quota should be introduced in the CfP to ensure that actions in those areas are appropriately funded.

3. Lessons Learnt

The Programme structure and design are well conceived, and the three components are well balanced in terms of budget and objectives.

The role of the PMU has been strategic in its support to decentralisation policies, as the multi-scalar nature of local development requires effective mechanisms of dialogue, negotiation, and collaboration of different actors at different levels.

The effect of the Grants to Local Councils contributed to increase skills of personnel and had a great effect on the perception of the local Councils, improving their credibility as important developmental actors at local level;

On hindsight, better communication in terms of a structured mechanism/format and degree of consistency among the key stakeholders (EUD, PMU, GoSL, LC's etc.) could be an antidote to unforeseen factors such as delays in feasibility studies which brought about some level of friction among programme stakeholders.

The structural misalignment existing among some institutions resulting in parallel lines of authority/reporting in the local communities etc. should be urgently addressed as part of the

⁴⁵ UNIDO, see above.

⁴⁶ *Awareness Times*, 10th May 2022.

programming, to enhance the programmes effectiveness as well as better position for programme sustainability.

Grants to CSOs follow a substantially traditional model focused on small-scale service delivery, with risks of low impact. The Programme succeeded, through some projects, in improving service delivery and local economic development, especially for reaching remote, vulnerable, and marginalised groups; however, in most cases the results are localised; not scaled up; and their sustainability is in question⁴⁷.

Both LCs and CSOs projects risk isolation if not accompanied by a balanced set of intergovernmental arrangements, linking up projects with infrastructure programmes and larger scale investments⁴⁸.

Partly due to the fragmentary features of grants and investment projects, the EU potential added value in its three (3) decades experience in local development risks to be hindered and overshadowed by emerging donors, or donors with greater visibility and image impact. More focus should be given to strategic and policy objectives in future EU actions.

The holistic intervention of the EU program on target areas increased the accountability of CSOs, local and national public bodies bringing practical results already in the short-medium term (es. the market in Kambia).

4. Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

The table below provides a concise recapitulation of the answers to evaluation questions.

Table – Answers to Evaluation Questions

Criterion	Low			High
Relevance				
Coherence				
Effectiveness				
Efficiency				
Impact				
Sustainability				

⁴⁷ These aspects were already noted in the EU FINAL EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME "NON STATE ACTORS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES", 2012: *The programme improved governance, planning, budgeting, and service delivery in targeted local authorities, but interventions were mostly localised, lacking both sustainability beyond the project duration and pathways for upscaling of results... The calls for proposals were well managed, but even with innovation and good management they could not overcome the limits of the project approach. There was a tendency to support short-duration projects with little scope to create change, be sustainable, and be scaled up in case of success. Many civil society organisations found the EU procedures to be overly complex, compared to other donors, and a barrier for achieving results.*

⁴⁸ Rodríguez, J. 2015. *EU's new thinking on decentralisation and territorial development*. GREAT insights Magazine, Volume 4, Issue 4. June/July 2015.

EU Added Value		
GEWE		
Environment and Climate Change		

4.1 Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions and recommendations are provided for each of the evaluation criteria utilized in this exercise.

Criterion	Conclusion	Recommendations	Priority	To whom?	Resource Implications
Relevance	The Programme was relevant for both Sierra Leone and EU priorities and strategies				
	Local Councils seem to be the weak ring of the decentralisation picture in Sierra Leone	More focus on support to local councils would be beneficial to consolidate their role and credibility in the articulated country context	High	EUD	
	The inclusion of a PMU for overall coordination is relevant and suitable to the context, and adds strategic dimensions to the Programme	Continue the work of PMU	High	EUD	
	The component of, and the approach to, Grants (allocated to small scale projects) pose sustainability, visibility and impact challenges and risk isolation of results	Link projects implemented under the CfP to other sectoral initiatives, or to other government actions per each sector, to ensure sustainability	Medium	EUD	
CSOs might focus on monitoring of local needs and services vis-à-vis not only LCs, but local offices of Government ministries to include districts in national investment plans		Medium to LT objective	EUD, LCs, CSOs		

Criterion	Conclusion	Recommendations	Priority	To whom?	Resource Implications
		Best practices emerged from projects might be not only disseminated, but replicated on a larger scale across the country	High	EUD, PMU, Government	
	The inputs of the private sector are almost unnoticeable	Link local investments to national infrastructure investment (road, water, electricity) to increase districts' opportunities to attract the private sector	High-Medium	EUD, PMU, Government	
Coherence	To a very large extent the Programme is complementary and coherent to other development interventions with similar objectives.	Future interventions should focus their efforts on targeted communities to encourage synergies, with key EDF focal areas	High	EUD, National and local bodies	
Effectiveness	To a large extent the program has been implemented effectively and the activities conducted appears to a greater part to achieve its intended objectives.	Going forward, emphasis must be put on improving communication amongst the key project stakeholders and the parties involved committing There should also be better management of information among stakeholders especially when there there are changes to scope, plan or timing.	High	EUD and Government	
Efficiency	It is important to support both the local authorities and the local civil society to consolidate the institutions, strengthen local CSOs and further general participation in the local democracy.	The need to leverage on the successes and results achieved to serve as proof that it works and can be replicated in other communities should be encouraged.	High	Beneficiaries	

Criterion	Conclusion	Recommendations	Priority	To whom?	Resource Implications
Impact	It is essential to tackle the priorities both at local level (with the local authorities and CSOs) and at national level for avoiding the overlap of the interventions	Pursue the multi level-governance with a bottom up approach	Medium	LAs, National Bodies	
EU Added Value	The design of the grant scheme for CSOs is not really innovative, although good examples of projects with high positive impact on communities were found	1.Devise specific and well targeted objectives of grants (i.e. focus on one theme in a given district: it might be child labour in Kono) 2. Communicate good results to a wider audience and envisage links with other donor-funded initiatives in the target districts with a focus on sustainability	High - medium	EUD, PMU, Government	
	Emerging donors (i.e USA, UK), and donors with increasing funds being allocated to the country, risk to overshadow EU approaches to decentralisation	Focus on institutional support to MLGRD and LCs to further strengthen the policy and operational support to key decentralisation actors	High	EUD, PMU, Government	
GEWE	GEWE is a crosscutting element in the Programme and Call, but the approach is not specific	Introduce a quota for grants specifically and in practical terms addressing gender issues (GBV, land ownership, etc.)	High	EUD, PMU	n.a.
	Grants with a gender component are more oriented to better provision of services	More initiatives should be focused on addressing gender disparities (education, jobs, even political participation and leadership) to stimulate women's self-confidence and proactiveness	High	EUD, PMU	n.a.
Environment and Climate Change	The Programme shows scarce evidence of sustainable results in this sector	If it is intended to address this area, focus on areas where EU is stronger i.e. climate change adaptation or put	High - medium	EUD, PMU, LCs	

Criterion	Conclusion	Recommendations	Priority	To whom?	Resource Implications
		emphasis on innovative, reproducible initiatives			

5. Annexes

Annex 5.1. Terms of Reference

Annex 5.2. Names and résumés of evaluators

Annex 5.3. Evaluation Methodology

Annex 5.4. Evaluation Matrix

Annex 5.5 Theory of Change

Annex 5.6. Evaluation Questions

Annex 5.7. Revised Workplan

Annex 5.8. Literature and documentation consulted

Annex 5.9. List of persons or organizations interviewed

Annex 5.10. Details of projects evaluated

Annex 5.1. Terms of Reference

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATION ASSIGNMENT

Type of evaluation	Mid-Term
Coverage	Action in its entirety (All contracts under the Decision)
Geographic scope	Sierra Leone: Freetown and the districts of Kenema, Pujehun, Kambia, Bombali, Karene and Falaba.
Period to be evaluated	From entry into force of the Financing Agreement until deployment of the evaluation mission (June 2018 to February 2022)

2.1 Objectives of the evaluation and evaluation criteria

Systematic and timely evaluation of its programmes and activities is an established priority⁴⁹ of the European Commission⁵⁰. The focus of evaluations is on the assessment of achievements, the **quality** and the **results**⁵¹ of interventions in the context of an evolving cooperation policy, with an increasing emphasis on **result-oriented approaches and the contribution towards the implementation of the SDGs**⁵².

From this perspective, evaluations should **look for evidence of why, whether and how the EU intervention(s) has/have contributed to the achievement of these results** and seek to **identify the factors driving or hindering progress**.

The main objectives of this evaluation are to provide the relevant services of the European Union, the interested stakeholders and the wider public with:

an overall independent assessment of the performance of the Support to Civil Society and Local Authorities for local development in Sierra Leone (FED/2017/39030), paying particular attention to its different levels of results measured against its expected objectives; and the reasons underpinning such results; key lessons learned, conclusions and related recommendations in order to improve current and future interventions.

In particular, this evaluation will serve to understand the performance of the Action, its enabling factors and those hampering a proper delivery of results in order to adjust its design or implementing modalities.

The results of this evaluation will also serve as inputs to understand the performance of the intervention and the reasons behind it in order to inform the planning of the future EU interventions in the same sector.

⁴⁹ COM(2013) 686 final "Strengthening the foundations of Smart Regulation – improving evaluation" - http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/docs/com_2013_686_en.pdf; EU Financial regulation (art 27); Regulation (EC) No 1905/2006; Regulation (EC) No 1889/2006; Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006; Regulation (EC) No 1717/2006; Council Regulation (EC) No 215/2008

⁵⁰ SEC (2007)213 "Responding to Strategic Needs: Reinforcing the use of evaluation", http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/evaluation/docs/eval_comm_sec_2007_213_en.pdf; SWD (2015)111 "Better Regulation Guidelines", http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/docs/swd_br_guidelines_en.pdf; COM(2017) 651 final "Completing the Better Regulation Agenda: Better solutions for better results", https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/completing-the-better-regulation-agenda-better-solutions-for-better-results_en.pdf

⁵¹ Reference is made to the entire results chain, covering outputs, outcomes and impacts. Cfr. Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 "Laying down common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action" - https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/financial_assistance/ipa/2014/236-2014_cir.pdf.

⁵² The New European Consensus on Development 'Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future', Official Journal 30th of June 2017. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:C:2017:210:TOC>

The main users of this evaluation will be staff of the EU Delegation to Sierra Leone, EU Member States (EUMS) and other donors, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Ministry of Development and Economic Planning. Beneficiaries and implementing partners of the EU's various forms of engagement with CSOs and LAs will use the results of the evaluation. The evaluation will also be of interest to the wider international development community, the private sector and the general public.

The evaluation will assess the intervention(s) using the **six standard DAC evaluation criteria**, namely: **relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability** and early signs of **impact**. In addition, the evaluation will assess the intervention(s) through an **EU specific evaluation criterion**, which is the **EU added value**. The **definition** of the 6 DAC + 1 EU **evaluation criteria** is contained for reference in **Annex II**.

Furthermore, the evaluation team should consider whether **gender equality and women's empowerment**¹⁸, **environment** and **adaptation to climate change** were mainstreamed; the relevant **SDGs and their interlinkages** were identified; the principle of **Leave No One Behind** and the **rights-based approach methodology** was followed in the identification/formulation documents and the extent to which they have been reflected in the implementation of the intervention, its governance and monitoring.

2.2 Indicative Evaluation Questions

The specific EQs, as formulated below, are indicative. Following initial consultations and document analysis, and further to the finalisation/reconstruction of the Intervention Logic of the intervention(s) to be evaluated, the evaluation team will discuss these with the Evaluation Manager⁵³ and Reference Group, and propose in their Inception Report a complete and finalised set of Evaluation Questions. This will include an indication of specific judgement criteria and indicators, as well as the relevant data collection sources and tools.

Once agreed through the approval of the Inception Report, the Evaluation Questions will become contractually binding.

The evaluation questions will assess progress (what and how) at district and country level in terms of contribution to the following evaluation outcomes:

Capacity – one of the major outcomes of the support, the capacity of the CSOs and LAs and of their respective associations is increased and used in practice in order to contribute to policy-making and policy implementation process.

Policies/institutional frameworks – as outcomes of the support, policies/institutional frameworks at local/national level are made more relevant, credible and inclusive allowing the voicing and structuring of citizens' collective demands.

Governance and accountability – as outcomes of the support, the incentive environment motivates LAs and CSOs to strive towards increased accountability

⁵³ The Evaluation Manager is the staff member of the Contracting Authority managing the evaluation contract. In most cases this person will be the Operational Manager of the Action(s) under evaluation.

Read more on Evaluation with gender as a cross-cutting dimension by following this link: [new link to C4D to be publish](#)

contributing to better governance.

Service delivery (social and economic) – as outcomes of the support, improved interactions leads to improved services/opportunities for vulnerable groups and, when public failures are demonstrated, the programme will provide direct services to these groups.

Citizen's awareness – as outcomes of the support, increased awareness of national interdependencies and the role of EU development cooperation.

EQ1- To what extent the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone programme respond to the evolving needs of the CSOs and LAs to operate in their respective roles and areas of engagement?

EQ2- To what extent is the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme complementary and coherent with other development interventions which have similar objectives and what is its added value? In particular, with other EU Programmes and Instruments supporting Civil Society and/or Local Authorities and with interventions of EU Member States.

EQ3- To what extent the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme is using the best combination of approaches to maximize its support?

EQ4- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme contributed to increase, in a sustainable way, the quantity and quality of consultation and policy contributions of CSOs and LAs at local, district and national level?

EQ5- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme contributed to the empowerment of CSOs and LAs as development actors?

EQ6- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme helped to ameliorate democratic governance through inclusive policy-making?

EQ7- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone programme promoted local development through a territorial approach?

EQ8 – To what extent and how have CSO and LA alongside the private sector proven to be effective actors to implement the EU development strategy?

EQ9- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme helped to achieve the EU development cooperation objectives?

EQ10- To what extent and how have the achievements of the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone programme (both intended and

unintended) all along the result chain of the action, in particular in relation-but not limited- to the following aspects:

The maximisation of the effectiveness of the work of CSO organisations to become actors of governance in their own rights and contributors to policy-making on development related topics at local, district and national level.

The institutional capacity of CSO organisations and LAs (i.e. improved governance structures, improved planning and budgeting methods).

The operational capacities of CSO organisations. That is, the capacity of CSO organisations to influence decisions and policies of international organisations (both with local and national scope) and other relevant stakeholders (i.e. government authorities, private sector), as well as their capacity to contribute to the monitoring of policies and agreements implementation.

The outreach capacity of smaller CSOs. In other words, the evaluation should assess whether Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone have contributed to the efforts made by smaller CSOs to make their voices heard and have some influence in policy-making.

The maximisation of the effectiveness of the work of CSO organisations to become actors of governance in their own rights and contributors to policy-making on development related topics at local, district and national level.

The institutional capacity of CSO organisations and LAs (i.e. improved governance structures, improved planning and budgeting methods).

The operational capacities of CSO organisations. That is, the capacity of CSO organisations to influence decisions and policies of international organisations (both with local and national scope) and other relevant stakeholders (i.e. government authorities, private sector), as well as their capacity to contribute to the monitoring of policies and agreements implementation.

The outreach capacity of smaller CSOs. In other words, the evaluation should assess whether Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone have contributed to the efforts made by smaller CSOs to make their voices heard and have some influence in policy-making.

2.3 Structuring of the evaluation and outputs

The evaluation process will be carried out in four phases and 41 activities:

The outputs of each phase are to be submitted at the end of the corresponding phases as specified in the synoptic table in section 2.3.1.

Inception phase

Interim phase

Desk activities

Field activities

Synthesis phase

Dissemination phase

Throughout the evaluation and following the approval of the Inception Report, if any significant deviation from the work plan could compromise the quality of the evaluation or jeopardise the completion of the specific contract within the contractual timeframe,

these elements are to be immediately discussed with the Evaluation Manager and, regarding the validity of the contract, corrective measures undertaken.

2.3.1 Inception Phase

Objectives of the phase: to structure the evaluation and clarify the key issues to be addressed.

Main activities of evaluators during the Inception Phase

Initial review of background documents (see Annex IV).

Face-to-face kick-off session at the EU Delegation between the Governance and Civil Society Team and the evaluators. Objectives of the meeting: i) to arrive at a clear and shared understanding of the scope of the evaluation, its limitations and feasibility; ii) to clarify expectations of the evaluation; iii) to illustrate the tentative methodology to be used; iv) any other relevant objectives.

Initial interviews with key stakeholders.

Finalisation or reconstruction of the description of the Intervention Logic/Theory of Change and its underlying assumptions. This requires an assessment of the evidence (between the hierarchy of results e.g. outputs, outcomes and impact) and the assumptions necessary for the intervention to work or prevent change from happening.

Graphic representation of the reconstructed/54inalized Intervention Logic/Theory of Change.

Finalisation of the Evaluation Questions, based on the indicative questions contained in the Terms of Reference and on the reconstructed Intervention Logic.

Finalisation of the evaluation methodology, including the definition of judgement criteria and indicators per Evaluation Question, the selection of data collection tools and sources. The methodology should be gender sensitive, contemplate the use of sex- and age-disaggregated data and assess if and how interventions have contributed to progress on gender equality.

The methodology will include the proposed representative sample of interventions to be analysed in greater detail to inform the assessment of performance and results/sustainability. The selection of this sample should be underpinned by a clear methodology (incl. selection criteria used).

Representation of the methodological approach in an Evaluation Matrix (see Annex IV).

Workplan of subsequent phases.

Identification of the expected risks and limitations of the methodology, and of the envisaged mitigation measures.

Preparation of the Inception Report; its content is described in Annex V.

Face-to-face presentation of the Inception Report at the EU Delegation to the Reference Group, supported by a slide presentation.

Revision of the report (as relevant) following receipt of comments.

2.3.2 Interim Phase

This phase is entirely devoted to gathering and analysing the information required to provide preliminary answers to the EQs. Work in this phase will consist of two activities

Desk activities - review interviews with key stakeholders and other initial data collection using different tools such as surveys.

Field activities - further data collection and analysis with the aim of testing the

hypotheses identified during the 'Desk activities'.

2.3.2.1 Desk activities

Objectives of the activities: to analyse the relevant data, draft preliminary answers to the Evaluation Questions and identify the hypotheses to be tested.

Main activities of evaluators

In-depth analysis of relevant documents and other sources. This is to be done systematically and should reflect the methodology as described in the Inception Report. Selected remote/face-to-face interviews and other to support the analysis of data, as relevant.

Fine-tuning of the evaluation tools.

Finalization of the organisation of the field visits, including list of people to be interviewed, dates and itinerary of visits, and attribution of tasks within the team.

Formulation of the preliminary responses to each Evaluation Question, with analysis of their validity and limitations.

Identification of the issues still to be covered and of the preliminary hypotheses to be tested during field.

Preparation of a slide presentation of preliminary findings from the phase (free format).

Remote/face-to-face presentation of the preliminary findings from the Desk Phase at the EU Delegation or virtually to the Reference Group, supported by the slide presentation.

2.3.2.2 Field activities

Objectives of the activities: to conduct primary research and validate/modify the hypotheses formulated during the desk activities.

Main activities of evaluators

Completion of primary research following the methodology described in the Inception Report. Guarantee of adequate contact, consultation with, and involvement of the different stakeholders, including the relevant government and local authorities and agencies, throughout the phase.

Use of the most reliable and appropriate sources of information, respecting the rights of individuals to provide information in confidence, and being sensitive to the beliefs and customs of local social and cultural environments, throughout the phase.

Preparation of a slide presentation of intermediate/preliminary (Desk and Field) findings and preliminary conclusions (to be tested with the Reference group)

Face-to-face presentation of the intermediate/preliminary (Desk and Field) findings and preliminary conclusions at the EU Delegation to the Reference Group, supported by the slide presentation.

2.3.3 Synthesis Phase

Objectives of the phase: to report on results from the evaluation (final answers to the Evaluation Questions (final findings) and formulate conclusions and recommendations).

Main activities of evaluators

Analysis and synthesis of the evidence and data collected during the previous phases to provide a final answer to the Evaluation Questions.

Preparation of the Draft Final Report; its content is described in Annex V.

Remote/face-to-face presentation of the Draft Final Report at the EU Delegation or virtually to the Reference Group, supported by a slide presentation.

Preparation of a response to the draft QAG (Quality Assessment Grid) formulated by the Evaluation Manager via the EVAL module⁵⁴

Once the comments on the Draft Final Report are received from the Evaluation Manager, addressing those that are relevant and producing the Final Report, upload to the EVAL module; its content is described in Annex V. While potential quality issues, factual errors or methodological problems should be corrected, comments linked to diverging judgements may be either accepted or rejected. In the latter instance, the evaluators must explain the reasons in writing (free format).

Preparation of the Executive Summary and upload to the EVAL module by using the compulsory format given in the module.

Inclusion of an executive summary (free text format) in the Final Report (see Annex V).

The evaluators will make sure that:

their assessments are objective and balanced, statements are accurate and evidence-based, and recommendations realistic and clearly targeted;

when drafting the report, they will acknowledge clearly where changes in the desired direction are known to be taking place already;

the wording, inclusive of the abbreviations used, considers the audience as identified in Art. 2.1 above.

2.3.4 Dissemination Phase

Objective of the phase: to support the communication of the results of the evaluation. In particular to present the findings, the conclusions and the recommendations of the evaluation to the main stakeholders and to specifically promote the active use of the evaluation not only internally (EUD) but also to various public institutions/donors (EU Member States, key donors, MDAs, private actors, and civil society).

The targeted audience will be EUD staff, EU MS, CSOs, LAs, Private Sector, Media, and relevant MDAs etc.

Main activities of evaluators

A dissemination conference will be organised at a suitable venue on the basis of the Final Report and the contractor will provide two speakers at least for this event. The purpose of the presentation is to describe the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation to main stakeholders and to promote the active use of the evaluation, not only internally (EUD) but also to various public institutions/donors (EU Member States, key donors, private sector, the media and CSOs, etc.). The contractor shall prepare a slide deck supporting the presentation and will draft the minutes of the conference.

The slide presentation will be sent to the evaluation manager two weeks prior to the conference for comments before finalisation, and the date for the presentation fixed 2

⁵⁴ All mentions to the EVAL module throughout the text in accordance with the Art.43.3 of the "Draft Framework Contract Agreement and Special Conditions" of the SIEA Framework Contract. The module EVAL will be integrated into OPSYS.

months before.

No catering or room rental costs for this presentation are to be included in the offer, while costs of the presence of the experts at the presentation are to be covered under the evaluation budget.

Additional to the presentation, the contractor is encouraged to propose the realisation of further dissemination material such as a video, an animation or other as considered appropriate. This further dissemination material is to be suitable for online publication and shall be submitted for comments before finalisation 4 weeks prior to the approval date.

References: the team should take inspiration from the ESS/INTPA work on **Dissemination of Evaluation Results** at https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/evaluation_guidelines/wiki/disseminating-evaluations; this contains an analysis of best practice in 12 international organisations and NGOs plus five 'how-to' guides on production of infographics, briefs, videos, blogs and podcasts.

2.3.5 Additional deliverables

Identification study of next phase of the EU Support to Decentralization (for internal purpose, min 5 pages - max 10 pages) - *Indicative deadline 08.07.2022*

Objective of the phase: The objective is to indicate the path to be followed by the EU programming in the field of support to Decentralization, building on the previous achievements of the pilot EDF Decentralization Program that is still ongoing and considering lessons learnt. The EUD expect an analysis that explore the relationship among traditional authorities (Paramount Chiefs and their Councils at chiefdom level), local government authorities (District and City Councils) and representative of the central government at local level (MDAs, District Officers). The core question is how to promote a TALD in the legal framework of SL, while improving the relationship among local actors of development or at least avoiding creating power unbalances that could deteriorate the access to quality services for citizens in rural areas or create political tensions. Programmatic draft documents might be shared for experts' review and technical comments.

Re-design of the last phase of the actual Programme for more sustainability and impact (not only for the internal purpose, min 2 max 3 graphic factsheets or leaflets) - *Indicative deadline 29.07.2022*

Objective of the phase: The objective is to provide a graphic factsheet/leaflet to summarize the conclusions and recommendations of the midterm evaluation (Executive Summary) and to propose a consequent redesigned action plan for a better impact of the Programme (redesign the LogFrame of the action if needed).

Participation of 1 Expert to the next Programme Steering Committee - *Indicative period: Second week of October 2022*

Objective of the phase: The Delegation asked to the contractor to provide assistance in presenting the Results of the Mid Term Evaluation to the high table of stakeholders during the next Steering Committee of the Programme. The objective aims to maintain the objectivity/independence of the exercise.

2.3.6 Overview of the outputs and meetings and their timing

The synoptic table below presents an overview of the outputs to be produced by the team, the key meetings with the Reference Group (including the Evaluation Managers) as described previously, as well as their timing.

Evaluation phases	Outputs and <i>meetings</i>	Timing
Inception phase	<i>Meeting: kick off</i>	<i>Tbc</i>
	Note Inception Report	End of Inception Phase
	Comments to the draft QAG	End of Inception Phase
	Submission of the Final Inception Report	End of Inception Phase
Interim: Field activities	Intermediary note	End of Field Activity
	Comments to the draft QAG	End of Field Activity
	Submission of the final note	End of Field Activity
	Slide presentation	End of Field Activity
	<i>Meeting: debriefing on intermediate/preliminary (Field) findings</i>	End of Field Activity
Synthesis phase	Draft Final Report	<i>Tbc</i>
	Comments to the draft QAG	Together with Final Report
	Final Report and final evaluation matrix	15 days after receiving comments on Draft Final Report
	Executive summary of the Final Report	Together with Final Report
Dissemination Phase	Presentation slide of evaluation findings and conference preparation	<i>Tbc</i>
	Presentation (conference) and media dissemination materials	<i>Tbc</i>

Additional Deliverables

Identification study	Indicative deadline: 08.07.2022
Re-design of the last phase of the actual Programme (factsheet/leaflet)	Indicative deadline: 29.07.2022
Presentation to the next Programme Steering Committee	Indicative period: Second week of October 2022

2.4 Specific contract Organisation and Methodology (Technical offer)

The invited framework contractors will submit their specific contract Organisation and Methodology by using the standard SIEA template B-VII-d-i and its Annexes 1 and 2 (B-VII-d-ii).

The evaluation methodology proposed to undertake the assignment will be described in Chapter 3 (Strategy and timetable of work) of the template B-VII-d-i. Contractors will describe how their proposed methodology will address the cross-cutting issues mentioned in these Terms of Reference; it should be gender sensitive, contemplate the use of sex- and age-disaggregated data and demonstrate how interventions have contributed to progress on gender equality.

The methodology should also include (if applicable) the communication action messages, materials and management structures.

This evaluation may be impacted by difficulties in accessing the field due to security constraints or health-related issues. The to-be-selected contractor will bear the duty of ensuring that the evaluators will respect, at all times, the relevant international, national and local guidance regarding travel limitations and will exert due care in preventing the spread of diseases, avoiding any unreasonable, unnecessary risks.

The specific contract Organisation and Methodology should contain a clear and detailed description of the methods that the evaluation will use to address potential difficulties in access to the field. These may include the combination of face-to-face and remote methods of data collection, if relevant⁵⁵.

2.4.1 Evaluation ethics

All evaluations must be credible and free from bias; they must respect dignity and diversity, and protect stakeholders' rights and interests. Evaluators must ensure confidentiality and anonymity of informants and be guided by professional standards and ethical and moral principles in the observation of the 'do no harm' principle. The approach of framework contractors to observe these obligations must be explicitly addressed in the specific Organisation and Methodology, and implemented by the evaluation team throughout the evaluation, including during dissemination of results.

2.5 Management and steering of the evaluation

2.5.1 At the EU level

The evaluation is managed by the Programme Manager- Valentina Favero; Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone; the progress of the evaluation will be followed closely with the assistance of a Reference Group consisting of members of EU Services:

Serena Bertaina,

Team Leader, Governance and Civil Society

⁵⁵ The Framework Contractors are invited to consult the wealth of resources available through the two ESS/INTPA initiatives Evaluation in Hard-to-Reach Areas and Evaluation in Crisis: <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/devco-ess>.

N'Fa Kargbo,

Evaluation focal person, EUD

Julius Munthali,

Team Leader, Technical Assistance Team

Edith Lebbie,

Secretary, Governance and Civil Society.

The main functions of the Reference Group are:

to define and validate the Evaluation Questions;

to facilitate contacts between the evaluation team and the EU services and external stakeholders;

to ensure that the evaluation team has access to, and has consulted with, all relevant information sources and documents related to the intervention;

to discuss and comment on notes and reports delivered by the evaluation team.

Comments by individual group members are compiled into a single document by the Evaluation Manager and subsequently transmitted to the evaluation team;

to assist in feedback on the findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations from the evaluation;

to support the development of a proper follow-up action plan after completion of the evaluation.

2.5.2 At the Contractor level

Further to the requirements set out in Article 6 of the Global Terms of Reference and in the Global Organisation and Methodology, respectively Annexes II and III of the Framework contract SIEA 2018, the contractor is responsible for the quality of the process, the evaluation design, the inputs and the outputs of the evaluation. In particular, it will:

support the Team Leader in its role, mainly from a team management perspective. In this regard, the contractor should make sure that, for each evaluation phase, specific tasks and outputs for each team member are clearly defined and understood;

provide backstopping and quality control for the evaluation team's work throughout the assignment;

ensure that the evaluators are adequately resourced to perform all required tasks within the timeframe of the contract.

2.6 Language of the specific contract and of the reports

The language of the specific contract is to be in English. All reports will be submitted in English.

3. Logistics and timing

Please refer to Part B of the Terms of Reference.

Planning, including the period for notification for placement of the staff⁵⁶

As part of the technical offer, the framework contractor must fill in the timetable in the Annex VI to be finalised in the Inception Report. The 'indicative dates' are not to be formulated as fixed dates but rather as days (or weeks or months) from the beginning of the assignment (to be referenced as '0').

Sufficient forward planning is to be taken into account in order to ensure the active participation and consultation with government representatives, national/local or other stakeholders.

4. REQUIREMENTS

Please refer to Part B of the Terms of Reference.

All the costs other than costs for key experts of the evaluation team will be reflected in a dedicated budget provision under the chapter "Other details" of the framework contractor's financial offer.

5. REPORTS

For the list of reports, please refer to Chapter 2.3 of Part A and to Part B of the Terms of Reference.

5.1 Use of the EVAL module by the evaluators

The selected contractor will **submit all deliverables by uploading them into the EVAL Module**, an evaluation process management tool and repository of the European Commission. The selected contractor will receive access to online and offline guidance in order to operate with the module during the related specific contract validity.

5.2 Number of report copies

Apart from its submission, the approved version of the Final Report will be also provided in 10 paper copies and in electronic version (USB drive) at no extra cost.

Instead of the electronic version, the EUD required to the contractor that the final report is printed - in colour and binding – in at least 50 printed copies to be shared with local partners.

5.3 Formatting of reports

All reports will be produced using Font Arial or Times New Roman minimum letter size 11 and 12 respectively, single spacing, double sided. They will be sent in Word and PDF formats.

⁵⁶ As per Article 16.4 a) of the General Conditions of the Framework Contract SIEA

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

6.1 Content of reporting

The outputs must match quality standards. The text of the reports should be illustrated, as appropriate, with maps, graphs and tables; a map of the area(s) of intervention is required (to be attached as annex).

6.2 Comments on the outputs

For each report, the Evaluation Manager will send the contractor consolidated comments received from the Reference Group or the approval of the report within 15 calendar days. The revised reports addressing the comments will be submitted within 10 calendar days from the date of receipt of the comments. The evaluation team should provide a separate document explaining how and where comments have been integrated or the reason for not integrating certain comments, if this is the case.

6.3 Assessment of the quality of the Final Report and of the Executive Summary

The quality of the draft versions of the Final Report and of the Executive Summary will be assessed by the Evaluation Manager using the online Quality Assessment Grid (QAG) in the EVAL Module (text provided in Annex VII). The Contractor is given the chance to comment on the assessments formulated by the Evaluation Manager through the EVAL module. The QAG will then be reviewed, following the submission of the final version of the Final Report and of the Executive Summary.

The compilation of the QAG will support/inform the compilation of the FWC SIEA's specific contract Performance Evaluation by the Evaluation Manager.

Annex 5.4. Evaluation Matrix

Relevant Criteria	Key Questions	Sub Criteria	Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Stakeholders	Methods for Data Analysis
Relevance	<p>The extent to which the Outcome activities are suited to the priorities and policies of the country at the time of formulation</p> <p>Are we doing the right things?</p>	Alignment with SLE needs	EQ1- To what extent the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone programme respond to the evolving needs of the CSOs and LAs to operate in their respective roles and areas of engagement?	Alignment of the Programme to country strategies and programmes on CSOs and LAs sectors	Beneficiaries, ministries	Desk review (country programmes and strategies), interviews
		Design	EQ2-To what extent the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme is using the best combination of approaches to maximize its support?	Coherence of the Programme with SLE needs in the sector	EUD, TAT, IPs, beneficiaries at central and local level)	Desk review, interviews
		Alignment with EU policies	EQ3 - To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme helped to achieve the EU development cooperation objectives?	Coherence with EU strategic and programming documents	EUD	Desk review Interviews
Coherence	Internal consistency inside the programme and with other EU actions	Programme Consistency	EQ4- To what extent is the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme complementary and coherent with other development interventions which have similar objectives and what is its added value? In particular, with other EU Programmes and Instruments	Evidence of complementarity and no overlapping with other EU Member States' interventions in the sector	EUD, MSs, partially IPs	Desk review (MSs cooperation strategies in the sector), interviews

Relevant Criteria	Key Questions	Sub Criteria	Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Stakeholders	Methods for Data Analysis
			supporting Civil Society and/or Local Authorities and with interventions of EU Member States?			
Effectiveness	The extent to which the Outcome activities attain its objectives Are the things we are doing working?	Achievements: participatory governance	EQ5- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme contributed to increase, in a sustainable way, the quantity and quality of consultation and policy contributions of CSOs and LAs at local, district and national level?	Evidence of strengthened cooperation between CSOs and LAs at all levels	EUD, TAT, beneficiaries, IPs	Desk review Interviews
		Achievements: empowerment of CSOs and LAs	EQ6- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme contributed to the empowerment of CSOs and LAs as development actors?	Evidence of improvements in target areas	EUD, TAT, beneficiaries, IPs	Desk review, interviews
		Achievements: democratic governance	EQ7- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme helped to ameliorate democratic governance through inclusive policymaking?	Evidence of increases in inclusive policymaking	EUD, TAT, beneficiaries, IPs	Desk review, interviews
		Achievements: territorial approach to local	EQ8- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local	Evidence of positive changes in local development in target areas	EUD, TAT, beneficiaries (CSOs	Desk review, interviews

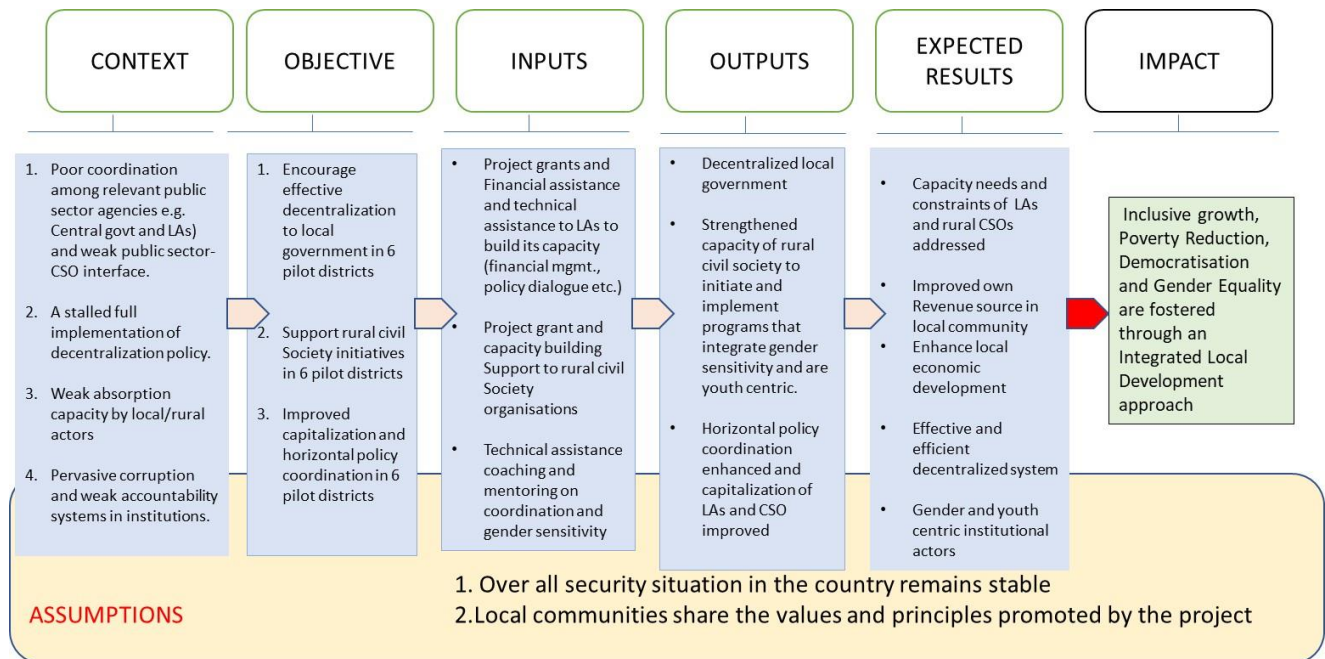
Relevant Criteria	Key Questions	Sub Criteria	Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Stakeholders	Methods for Data Analysis
		development	development in Sierra Leone programme promoted local development through a territorial approach?		– LAs), IPs	
		Private sector involvement	EQ9 – To what extent and how have CSO and LA alongside the private sector proven to be effective actors to implement the EU development strategy?	Evidence of positive changes brought about through increased cooperation with the private sector	EUD, TAT, beneficiaries (CSOs – LAs), IPs	Desk review Interviews
		Achievements: CSOs strengthening	EQ10- To what extent and how have the achievements of the Programme contributed to CSOs strengthening in terms of: CSOs work effectiveness CSOs institutional capacity CSOs operational capacity including policy monitoring outreach capacity of smaller CSOs	Evidence of intended / unintended positive effects in the four aspects mentioned in the EQ	EUD, TAT, beneficiaries (CSOs), IPs	Desk review Interviews
Efficiency	Measurement of the outputs in relation to the inputs Are we doing things right?	Organizational Efficiency	EQ 11 -Was management adequate to the planning and execution requirements? (Management Arrangements, Work Planning, Finance and co-finance, value for money, Timing and delays, M&E Stakeholder Engagement, Reporting, Communications)	Evidence of fund disbursement being appropriate to maximize utility Evidence of decision making, timeliness, programme adjustment and learning Evidence of M&E systems having been established and utilized for decision making	EUD, TAT, IPs	Desk review Interviews
Impact	The extent to which the benefits received by the target beneficiaries had a wider overall effect	Changes	EQ 12 - What are the impact prospects of the Programme?	Perspectives on, or initial evidence of, changes in mentality,	EUD, TAT, Beneficiary	Interviews Desk review

Relevant Criteria	Key Questions	Sub Criteria	Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Stakeholders	Methods for Data Analysis
	on larger numbers of people in the sector or districts or in the country as a whole. Have there been changes?			attitudes and adherence to participatory governance principles enshrined in the Programme	institutions	
Sustainability	The benefits of the Programme related activities that are likely to continue after the Programme fund has been exhausted Will the changes last?	Institutional sustainability	EQ 13 - Which institutional arrangements allow for maintaining the benefits achieved?	Evidence of institutional consolidation of cooperation between CSOs – LAs – private sector	EUD, TAT, IPs, Beneficiaries	Desk review Interviews
		Policy Sustainability / Ownership	EQ 14 - What is the policy sustainability of the Programme?	Evidence of high-level political support	EUD, TAT, IPs, Beneficiaries	Interviews
EU Added Value	The benefits of partnering with the EU in SLE on the sector	Contributions to outcomes that cannot be assigned to other actors or forces	EQ 15 - What has been the advantage of having EU as a partner in the governance and CSO development sector, compared to other initiatives from other donors?	Contributions to outcomes that cannot be assigned to other actors or forces Evidence of 'uniqueness' of EU knowledge and best practices	EUD, TAT, EU donor MSs, beneficiaries	Interviews Desk review
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	The benefits which will improve the situation of marginalised women Will changes extend to women and other vulnerable groups?	Inclusiveness, adherence to GEWE principles	EQ 16 - To what extent and how were gender issues and marginalised categories taken into account in the programme strategy and implementation?	Adherence to the principles of Leave No One Behind, and to EU/OECD Gender equality principles Number and % of programme activities that are gender responsive	EUD, TAT, EU donor MSs, beneficiaries	Analysis of the Programme according to OECD Gender Marker standards; interviews
Environment and adaptation to climate change	The extent to which the Programme contributed to attenuate the effects of climate change Is the Programme addressing environmental issues?	Degree of environment sensitiveness	EQ 17 - Did the Programme positively affect the environment and climate change issues currently identified in Sierra Leone?	Number and % of activities / actions of the Programme targeting environmental and climate change issues	TAT, IPs, local beneficiaries	Desk review, interviews

Annex 5.5 Reconstruction of the Intervention Logic and Theory of Change

Below the theory of change developed during the evaluation. It aims to present the causal pathway and articulate the outcome of how and why the programme expect the desired outcomes to come about.

Figure 1. Theory of Change-The Support to Civil Society and Local Authorities for Local Development in Sierra Leone Programme” (2018-2025)



Annex 5.6. Proposed Evaluation Questions (EQs)

The team analysed the Indicative Questions contained in the ToRs and derived from them a set of proposed Evaluation Questions (EQs), which will be revised by the EUD and discussed at the beginning of the Field Phase. The following table resumes the process leading from the original questions to the revised EQs.

Table – EQs

Criterion	Indicative Questions (ToRs)	Comments	Revised Questions
Relevance	EQ1- To what extent the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone programme respond to the evolving needs of the CSOs and LAs to operate in their respective roles and areas of engagement?	Added last sentence (EUD)	EQ1- To what extent the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone programme respond to the evolving needs of the CSOs and LAs to operate in their respective roles and areas of engagement and to build reciprocal trust ?
	EQ3-To what extent the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme is using the best combination of approaches to maximize its support?	Under relevance as it is referred to the design of the action	EQ2-To what extent the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme is using the best combination of approaches to maximize its support?
	No question	Added (EUD)	EQ 3 -To what extent this combination of approaches will still be relevant?
	EQ9- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme helped to achieve the EU development cooperation objectives?	Under relevance as it regards relevance of the Programme to EU policies	EQ4 - To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme helped to achieve the EU development cooperation objectives?
Coherence	EQ2- To what extent is the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme complementary and coherent with other development interventions which have similar objectives and what is its added value? With other EU Programmes and Instruments supporting Civil Society and/or Local Authorities and with interventions of EU Member States.		EQ5- To what extent is the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme complementary and coherent with other development interventions which have similar objectives and what is its added value? With other EU Programmes and Instruments supporting Civil Society and/or Local Authorities and with interventions of EU Member States.
Effectiveness	EQ4- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in		EQ6- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme contributed

	Sierra Leone Programme contributed to increase, in a sustainable way, the quantity and quality of consultation and policy contributions of CSOs and LAs at local, district and national level?		to increase, in a sustainable way, the quantity and quality of consultation and policy contributions of CSOs and LAs at local, district and national level?
	EQ5- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme contributed to the empowerment of CSOs and LAs as development actors?		EQ7- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme contributed to the empowerment of CSOs and LAs as development actors?
	EQ6- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme helped to ameliorate democratic governance through inclusive policymaking?		EQ8- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone Programme helped to ameliorate democratic governance through inclusive policymaking?
	EQ7- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone programme promoted local development through a territorial approach?		EQ9- To what extent and how has the Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone programme promoted local development through a territorial approach?
	EQ8 – To what extent and how have CSO and LA alongside the private sector proven to be effective actors to implement the EU development strategy?		EQ10 – To what extent and how have CSO and LA alongside the private sector proven to be effective actors to implement the EU development strategy?
	EQ10- To what extent and how have the achievements of the programme (both intended and unintended) all along the result chain of the action, in relation-but not limited- to the following aspects: a. The maximisation of the effectiveness of the work of CSO organisations to become actors of governance in their own rights and contributors to policymaking on development related topics at local, district and national level.	The EQ text has been summarized	EQ11- To what extent and how have the achievements of the programme contributed to CSOs strengthening, in terms of: a. CSOs work effectiveness b. CSOs institutional capacity c. CSOs operational capacity including policy monitoring d. outreach capacity of smaller CSOs

	<p>b. The institutional capacity of CSO organisations and LAs (i.e. improved governance structures, improved planning and budgeting methods).</p> <p>c. The operational capacities of CSO organisations. That is, the capacity of CSO organisations to influence decisions and policies of international organisations (both with local and national scope) and other relevant stakeholders (i.e. government authorities, private sector), as well as their capacity to contribute to the monitoring of policies and agreements implementation.</p> <p>d. The outreach capacity of smaller CSOs. In other words, the evaluation should assess whether Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone have contributed to the efforts made by smaller CSOs to make their voices heard and have some influence in policymaking.</p>		
Efficiency		No questions	EQ 12 - Was management adequate to the planning and execution requirements? (Management Arrangements, Work Planning, Finance and co-finance, value for money, Timing and delays, M&E Stakeholder Engagement, Reporting, Communications)
Impact		No questions	EQ 13 - What are the impact prospects of the Programme?
Sustainability		No questions	EQ 14 - Which institutional arrangements allow for maintaining the benefits achieved? EQ 15 - What is the policy sustainability of the Programme?
EU added value		No questions	EQ 16 - What has been the advantage of having EU as a partner in the governance and CSO development sector, compared to other initiatives from other donors?
Gender equality and women's empowerment		No questions	EQ 17 - To what extent and how were gender issues and marginalised categories considered in the

			programme strategy and implementation?
Environment and adaptation to climate change		No questions	EQ 18 - Did the Programme positively affect the environment and climate change issues currently identified in Sierra Leone?

Annex 5.7. Revised Workplan

No	ACTIVITY	CONSULTANT DAYS																																				
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	
INCEPTION																																						
1	Kick off meeting with the EUD																																					
2	Analyses of preliminary data																																					
3	Meetings with OMSA R Project Managers																																					
4	Preparation of the IR																																					
5	Delivery of the Inception Report																																					
FIELD																																						
6	Presentation of Methodology																																					
7	Finalization of the IR																																					

18	Re-design of the last phase of the actual Programme																																													
19	Participation of 1 Expert to the next Programme Steering Committee																																													

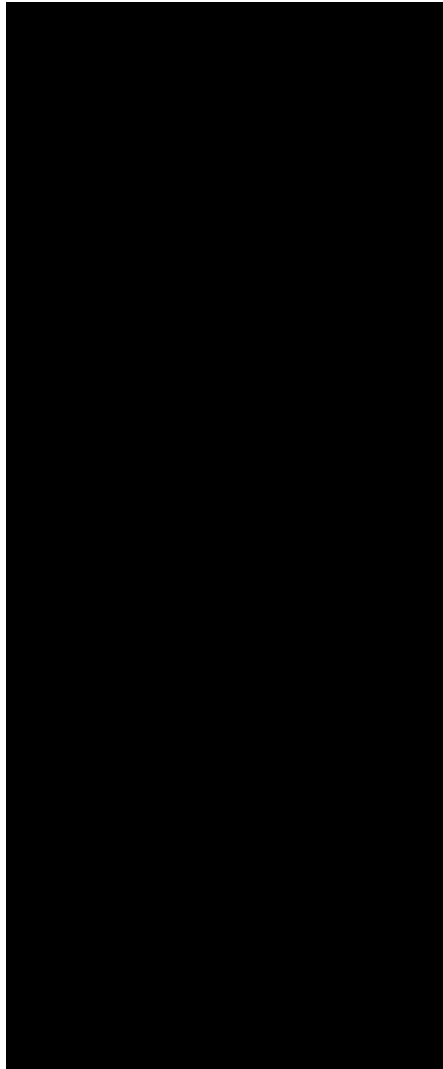
Annex 5.8. Documentation Received

As per ToRs	Available	To be provided
Action Document	Yes	No
Relevant national/sector policies and plans from National and Local partners and other donors	Yes	No
Intervention identification studies	Yes	No
Intervention feasibility /formulation studies	Yes	No
Intervention financing agreement and addenda	Yes	No
Interventions quarterly and annual progress report of each Contract available to the date	Yes	No
Baseline report	Yes	No
European Union's internal monitoring reports of the intervention	Yes	No
Other relevant audit reports of each Contract available to the date	Yes	No
Guidance for gender sensitive evaluations	Yes	No
Calendar and minutes of all the meetings of the Steering Committee of the interventions	Yes	No
Gender Action Plan III	Yes	No
Technical and administrative provisions (TAPs)	Yes	No
Increase in the EU contribution, extension of the implementation/execution period, Budget reallocation and other modification of the TAPs	Yes	No
PPT Bombali, Falaba, Kambia, Kenema	Yes	No
Baseline report	Yes	No
Analysis of Bombali, Kambia, Kenema, Pujehun District Council's Proposed Activities by Programme Management Unit (PMU)	Yes	No
Capacity Assessment and Capacity Building strategy	Yes	No
Decentralisation Policy and Local Government Act 2004	Yes	No
Risk Management Framework	Yes	No
Report on Cadastre System	Yes	No
Gender Country Level Implementation Plan for Sierra Leone	Yes	No
Programme Steering Committee Presentations	Yes	No
Investments study 2018 Final Report AECOM	Yes	No
Initial studies 2017 - Needs at District Level IBF report	Yes	No

Guidelines Call for Proposal CSOs	Yes	No
Country reports	Yes	No
CSOs reports	Yes	No
Programme Management Unit (PMU) Progress Reports	Yes	No

Annex 5.9. List of persons or organizations interviewed

Name and Surname	Function	Institution
	PMU staff	DAI
	Member Of Parliament	Parliament
	Director of Local Government	Ministry of local government and rural development
	Minister of Planning and Economic Development of Sierra Leone and Supervisor of European Development Fund (EDF)	Ministry of Planning and Economic Development
	Development/ Governance Specialist	President at State House
	Director	National Authorising Office (NAO)
	Director of Decentralization Secretariat	Ministry of local government and rural development
	Project Manager	InterAide, CSO
	Program Director	AADSL, CSO
	Chief Executive Officer	MAPCO/APT empowering communities, CSO
	Program Manager	Welthulgerhilfe, CSO
	Executive Director	Association for Well-Being for Rural Community (ABC) Development, CSO
	Director of Fiscal decentralization Department of Ministry of finance	Ministry of Finance
	UNDP resident representative	UNDP



Governance Program Specialist	UNDP Governance Unit
Program Manager	Trocaire, CSO
Chairman	Bombali District Council
Chairman	Bombal District Council
Chairman	Falaba District Council
Chief Administrator	Falaba District Council
Chairman	Kambia District Council
Chief Administrator	Kambia District Council
Chairman	Karene District Council
Chief Administrator	Karene District Council
Chairman	Kenema District Council
Chief Administrator	Kenema District Council
Deputy Chief Administrator	Kenema District Council
Chairman	Pujehun District Council
Chief Administrator	Pujehun District Council
Project Manager	Action Aide, CSO
Executive Director	Kaddo, CSO
Program Manager	Partnership Community Action for Community Empowerment (PACE), CSO

Annex 5.10. Details of Projects Evaluated

CRIS AND/OR OPSYS #	INTERVENTION TITLE	BUDGET(EUR)	START DATE	END DATE	LOCATIO N	
1	FED/ 2017 / 039-030	Support to civil society and local authorities for local development in Sierra Leone	25,083,247.00	25/06/2018	25/06/2025	All the districts
2	FED/2018/401-697	TA Support to Civil Society and Local Authorities for local development in Sierra Leone - DAI GLOBAL AUSTRIA GMBH & CO KG	4,483,247.00	08/11/2018	07/12/2023	All the districts
3	FED/2019/410-580	· Governance Accountability Under Gender Empowered Development by Civil Society (GAUGED Civil) - ACTION FOR ADVOCACY AND DEVELOPMENT	1,078,054.00	06/11/2019	06/03/2023	BOMBALI
4	FED/2019/410-617	· Empowered Kambia Civil Society, Women, and Youth Influence Agricultural Production and Sustainable Income Development - KAMBIA DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT AND REHABILITATION ORGANISATION (KADDRO)	893,755.00	30/10/2019	31/08/2022	KAMBIA
5	FED/2019/410-618	· Action for Inclusive Social and Economic Service Delivery in Kambia District - ACTION AID INTERNATIONAL (SL) LIMITED	1,106,245.00	01/11/2019	31/10/2022	KAMBIA
6	FED/2019/410-619	· Strengthening the Capacity of Local Authorities for Advancing Integrated Local Development Initiative with focus on WASH and Agriculture in Kenema District - DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE PROGRAMME	1,000,000.00	13/11/2019	13/09/2022	KENEMA
7	FED/2019/410-739	· Supporting Participation, Accountability and Civil Society Empowerment in Pujehun District - PARTNERSHIP ACTION COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT	1,079,861.00	31/10/2019	31/10/2022	PUJEHUN
8	FED/2019/410-741	· Improved Access to Sustainably Managed Micro-Finance and WaSH Systems; WASH Self-Supply Project - DEUTSCHE WELTHUNGERHILFE EV	1,000,000.00	18/11/2019	18/09/2022	KENEMA
9	FED/2019/410-742	· Empowering Local Communities in Sierra Leone - MOUVEMENT FOR ASSISTANCE IN PROMOTION OF RURAL COMMUNITIES	813,205.00	08/11/2019	08/11/2022	PUJEHUN

CRIS AND/OR OPSYS #		INTERVENTION TITLE	BUDGET(EUR)	START DATE	END DATE	LOCATIO N
1 0	FED/2020/413-374	· Empowered Pujehun District Council for efficient service delivery to the citizens	2,500,000.00	23/06/2020	31/05/2023	PUJEHUN
1 1	FED/2020/413-376	· Empowered Bombali District Council for efficient service delivery to the citizens - BOMBALI DISTRICT COUNCIL	2,500,000.00	24/06/2020	31/05/2023	BOMBALI
1 2	FED/2020/413-907	· Empowered Kenema District Council for efficient service delivery to the citizens - KENEMA DISTRICT COUNCIL	2,500,000.00	23/06/2020	23/06/2023	KENEMA
1 3	FED/2020/413-913	· Empowered Kambia District Council for efficient service delivery to the citizens - KAMBIA DISTRICT COUNCIL	2,500,000.00	23/06/2020	23/06/2023	KAMBIA
1 4	FED/2020/421-103	· #EUStandsWithSalone: Strengthening Inclusion of Women and People with Disability (PWD) in Service Delivery in Falaba District - FALABA DISTRICT WOMEN'S NETWORK	157,880.00	18/12/2020	30/06/2022	FALABA
1 5	FED/2020/421-687	· #EUStandsWithSalone: Scaling up of basic services in rural areas of Bombali and Karene districts to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 crisis - INTER AIDE	971,000.00	22/12/2020	31/12/2023	BOMBALI and KARENE
1 6	FED/2021/424-780	· Empowered Falaba District Council for Efficient Service Delivery to the Citizens - FALABA DISTRICT COUNCIL	1,050,000.00	26/05/2021	26/11/2023	FALABA
1 7	FED/2021/424-782	Empowered Karene District Council for Efficient Service Delivery to the Citizens – KARENE DISTRICT COUNCIL	1,050,000.00	26/05/2021	26/11/2023	KARENE