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ANNEX 3

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the annual action plan 2024 in favour of the Republic of Liberia

Action document for “Liberia Spotlight Initiative 2.0: Reducing SGBV to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment”

ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

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

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic act	Liberia Spotlight Initiative 2.0: Reducing SGBV to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment OPSYS number: ACT-62371 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)
2. Team Europe Initiative	No
3. Zone benefiting from the Action	The Action shall be carried out in Liberia
4. Programming document	Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2021-2027 for Liberia
5. Link with relevant MIP objectives / expected results	The Action will contribute to the following MIP’s objective: 3.3) Ensure a violence-free equal playing field for women and girls. <u>Expected results:</u> R3.3.a) All forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres substantially reduced R3.3.b) All harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation substantially reduced
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
6. Priority areas / sectors	The Action will contribute to the MIP’s priority area 3) Improving financial and democratic governance. <u>Indicative sectors:</u> (151) Women’s rights (gender equality, ending violence against women and girls).
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG: SDG 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls Other significant SDGs: SDG 3 (Good health and well-being); SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities); SDG 16 (Peace, justice, and strong institutions); SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals).

8.a) DAC codes	15180 – Ending violence against women and girls – 40% 15170 – Women’s rights organisations and movements, and government institutions – 20% 16015 – Social services (including youth development and women and children) – 20% 15131 – Justice, law, and order policy, planning and administration – 20%			
8.b) Main delivery channel	UN-Multi Partner Trust Fund Office – 41401			
9. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and human development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human rights, democracy and governance			
10. Markers (from the DAC form)	General policy objective @	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development / good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women’s and girl’s empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster risk reduction @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with disabilities @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	11. Internal markers and Tags:	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective
Digitalisation @		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship digital skills/literacy digital services		YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	/
Connectivity @		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
digital connectivity energy transport health education and research		YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	/
Migration @		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	Reduction of inequalities @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
12. Amounts concerned	Budget line: 14.020120			
	Total estimated cost: EUR 13 000 000			
	Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 13 000 000			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
13. Type of financing	Indirect management with the entities to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.4.1			

1.2 Summary of the Action

The overall objective of this Action is to contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) in Liberia by significantly reducing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), one of the most common forms of violation of women's rights in Liberia. It will also ensure the rehabilitation of SGBV victims and survivors as well as the full protection of women and girls in all their diversity, particularly those facing increased risk of violence, such as women with disabilities. To attain this objective, the Action uses an integrated and multi-sectoral approach to reduce SGBV and its severe consequences on women and girls and other marginalised groups through interventions encompassing prevention, protection, and response compounded with Government's institutional support. The Action will build on the EU's recent investment in the Spotlight Initiative by addressing the gaps in implementation and consolidating the results.

At the micro level, the Action will use an evidence-based community mobilization approach to change attitudes towards and perceptions of SGBV, by also engaging men and boys to challenge the negative masculinity that underpins SGBV. Furthermore, it will target religious, traditional, and community leaders and increase their role in prevention and in the reduction of stigma across gender and disability. The Action also intends to economically empower disadvantaged and marginalised women and youth, increase their voice and agency, and reduce their vulnerabilities to SGBV. At the macro level, the Action will seek to advocate for legislation that protects women and girls from SGBV and increase the knowledge and capacity of law enforcement bodies and service providers to enforce existing laws. The meso-level approach will target local governments, county administrations, service providers, and legal and judicial systems.

In addition, the Action will contain interventions that scale up access to justice for victims and perpetrators, law enforcement and accountability, as well as comprehensive and coordinated services, one-stop centres and quality safe homes to address women's and girls' multi-dimensional needs.

The Action will heavily contribute to the realization of the [EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#), which aims to make significant progress by 2025 towards ending gender-based violence and challenging gender stereotypes, and to the [EU Gender Action Plan 2021-2025 \(GAP III\)](#) mainly with regard to the following areas: 1) freedom from all forms of gender-based violence; 2) promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights; 3) promoting economic, and social rights, empowering girls and women, as well as to the 2030 Agenda's principle of leaving no one behind (LNOB).

The proposed Action is in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular with SDG 5 (Gender equality). Furthermore, it also contributes to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities), SDG 16 (Peace, justice, and strong institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). It has synergies with the TVET – Youth Rising programme, which may give opportunity for gender violence survivors' empowerment, through education and employment opportunities.

At national level, the Action is aligned with the new Government 100 Days Deliverables and its ARREST (Agriculture, Roads, Rule of Law, Education, Sanitation, and Tourism) development agenda, which expresses the Government's commitment to enact laws and formulate policies that ensure the empowerment of women, girls, youth, children, and persons with special needs. The Government is also committed to prioritise gender in its new National Development Plan, currently being developed, which will replace the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) that expired in 2023. The Action is also aligned with the National Disability Action Plan 2023-

2027, the National Action Plan on the Prevention and Management of SGBV in Liberia (2018-2023) and the SGBV roadmap. It will also contribute to the realisation of the new National Gender Policy.

1.3 Zone benefitting from the Action

The Action shall be carried out in Liberia, which is included in the list of ODA recipients.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

Liberia is a least developed country with a population of 5.36 million (2022)¹, and a patriarchal society where gender inequalities are widespread. Women and girls, particularly those living with disabilities, are socio-economically disadvantaged in all spheres of society, from political voice to intra-household decision-making and economic power². Gender norms follow a traditional and conservative pattern and challenging them requires overcoming structural obstacles. Some gender related barriers include the patriarchal construction of the Liberian society, harmful cultural practices, impunity, community pressure, religious interference, and violence towards both adults and children. When gender intersects with other discriminatory factors – such as disability, origin or ethnicity – the compounded risks for exclusion are much higher. Liberia’s history of violent conflict as well as recent health crises (Ebola and Covid-19 pandemics) have further exacerbated the high levels of unresolved trauma, unemployment, drug addiction, school dropout rates, and economic insecurity, thus contributing to negative forms of masculinities that increase the prevalence of SGBV³.

Liberia is ranked 164th out of 170 countries in the UNDP Gender Inequality Index of 2021. Its Human Development Index for women and girls was 0.447, lagging that of men and boys, which was 0.513 in 2021⁴.

Even though Liberia elected the first female president of an African country, in the October 2023 election, the numerical representation of women in the legislation remained at 10.7%, slightly less than the previous election in 2017. Although a 30% gender quota was included as part of the electoral reform bill and received approval from both houses in Liberia, it failed to be enacted due to a lack of Executive Approval. Six parties did not nominate any female candidate at all. At the same time, at the voter registration stage slightly less than half of the total registered voters were women, and in highly populated counties (Nimba, Bong or Montserrado), more women were registered than men⁵.

While land rights and tenure security are critical to social and economic empowerment, longstanding cultural norms and practices have favoured men in property and inheritance rights in Liberia, with women struggling to access land and leadership positions in formal and informal land governance.

In 2022, the literacy rate of those aged 15-49 was 52% and 75% for women and men respectively⁶. Access to information and services on sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS for young people, and women in particular, is also limited. HIV prevalence is nationally at 2.1%⁷.

Violence against women and girls remains one of the most significant human rights violations in Liberia. Furthermore, women and girls from marginalised groups, such as persons with disabilities (PWDs) and LGBTQI, are at higher risk of experiencing violence and are more likely to live in poverty⁸. However, important data gaps on SGBV and disability in Liberia make it difficult to fully grasp the entity of such violence⁹.

SGBV has physical, psychosocial, and health repercussions. It also traps women and girls into poverty along with its consequences – i.e., economic hardship, social marginalisation, and the denial of basic human rights – and deepens

¹ Liberia Population and Housing Census (2022).

² The challenge of unlearning: a study of gender norms and masculinities in Liberia. UN Women (2019).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Human Development Report 2021/2022. UNDP (2022).

⁵ [Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa.](#)

⁶ [Liberia Demographic and Health Survey 2019-2020.](#)

⁷ Ensuring Rights and Choices for all Liberians: Liberia Annual Report 2019. UNFPA (2019).

⁸ Five links between poverty and violence against women. Action Aid (2018).

⁹ [Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. List of issues in relation to the initial report of Liberia.](#)

existing economic inequalities between women and men. Violence against girls in schools directly leads to poor performance, lower enrolment, absenteeism, and high drop-out rates¹⁰.

According to the 2019-2020 Liberia Demographic and Health Survey, 60% of women aged 15-49 have experienced physical violence and 9% have experienced sexual violence. Less than half (42%) of women who have experienced physical or sexual violence have ever sought help¹¹.

Established in 2001 by an Act of the National Legislature, the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection serves as the driving force of the Government for the implementation of regional and international human rights instruments signed and ratified by the Government¹².

At national level, Liberia has developed a National Gender Policy¹³ (2010-2015, revised in 2018) and has passed legislations and acts with a view to addressing gender inequality. These include the Domestic Relations Law (1973); the Inheritance Act of 1998 (which specifies Equal Rights in marriage and inheritance under Customary and Statutory Laws); the Rape Law of 2005 (which outlaws gang rape and stipulates life-term sentence for aggressive forms of rape); the Land Rights Act (2018), which increases women's access to land and enhances economic empowerment and participation in community land ownership; the Decent Work Act (2015), which ensures that women and men are equal before the law in terms of employment and that the increase of the minimum wage is not discriminatory across gender; and the Anti-Human Trafficking Act (2005), prohibiting trafficking in persons.

Notwithstanding the progress made to put in place frameworks that will bridge the gender gaps across sectors, gender disparities persist, and women and girls have limited access to the formal economy, education, and health services. Furthermore, women's political voice and their role in management and decision-making positions remains marginal. According to UN Women, women with disabilities are two to three times more likely than other women to experience violence, including by family, intimate partners, caregivers, and institutional facilities¹⁴. 2016 data on disability indicates that in Liberia the prevalence of functional difficulties is higher for women (14.6%) than for men (13.5%)¹⁵.

The proposed Action is aligned with the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, the EU Gender Action Plan and the Country Level Implementation Action Plan (CLIP) Liberia. It is also aligned with the Government's ARREST (Agriculture, Roads, Rule of Law, Education, Sanitation, and Tourism) development agenda¹⁶. This Action will contribute to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities), SDG 16 (Peace, justice, and strong institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), and it is consistent with the EU strategic approach on governance, peace, and security. This Action creates an opportunity to consolidate the work begun with the Spotlight Initiative with the view not only to sustaining it but also reaping concrete results and building on lessons learned. As documented in the Meta Review of the Spotlight Initiative, implementing a multi-stakeholder approach on a topic which is both sensitive and complex requires strong UN, EU and Government leadership, clear and accepted accountability mechanisms, and coordination structures (including for implementing partners), and an integrated programme approach thoroughly contextualised. The proposed Action follows the Spotlight 2.0 minimum requirements laid out in the EU-UN Joint Guidance Note, incorporating these lessons learned, while adjusting to ensure a leaner, more streamlined, and context-specific way of working. In this regard, the Action also builds on the findings and recommendations of the [European Court of Auditors \(ECA\) Special Report on Spotlight](#).

2.2 Problem Analysis

Liberia has gradually evolved towards peace and stability since the end of the civil war in 2003. For many Liberian women and girls, however, the violence experienced during wartime still occurs. Violence against women and

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Gender Equality and Social Inclusion. Foundational rights and access to public services for all Liberians. USAID (2022).

¹² <https://socialprotection.org/connect/stakeholders/liberia-ministry-gender-children-social-protection-mogcsp>.

Liberia Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection.

¹³ Liberia National Gender Policy (2010-2015). Ministry of Gender and Development (2009).

¹⁴ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/women-and-girls-with-disabilities/facts-and-figures#notes>.

¹⁵ <https://disabilitydata.ace.fordham.edu/country-briefs/lr/#:~:text=In%20Liberia%2C%20the%20share%20of,11.6%25%20and%202.5%25%20respectively>.

¹⁶ The Action is also in line with the new National Development Plan, which is currently being developed.

girls remains one of the most significant human rights violations in Liberia¹⁷ and continues to impact women and girls in complex and intersecting ways with multiple forms of consequences.

Sexual violence (rape and sexual assault) makes up 81% of all SGBV cases, with 88% of the victims of these crimes being girls. Intimate partner violence (IPV) is also widespread. According to the Liberian Demographic and Health Survey (LDHS) 2019-2020, the overall prevalence of IPV within the last 12 months was 44.74%. Out of 326 cases of physical assault in 2018, 93% were committed against women and girls¹⁸. Out of the 2,664 SGBV cases reported in 2019, rape accounted for 69.5%¹⁹. In 2020, out of the 2,240 SGBV cases reported, 80% were rape²⁰. Harmful traditional practices (HTPs) such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage are also widely practiced. The proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before the age of 18 is 35.9%, of which 8.8% were married or in a union before the age of 15²¹.

Liberia's rate of teenage pregnancy, around 30%, is one of the highest in the world, as the maternal mortality ratio, with 661 deaths per 100,000 live births according to UN 2020 data²². Besides, 44.4 % of women aged between 15-49 years are estimated to have suffered FGM, with the prevalence of the practice standing at 72% in rural Liberia²³.

Society power structures mostly privilege boys and men in Liberia, and SGBV, including FGM is rooted in unequal power relations between men and women that are embedded in a system that sustains itself through discriminatory gender stereotypes and norms, and unequal access to and control over resources and decision-making. SGBV prevents women from playing a vital role in the country's development and is an enormous impediment to safe sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Addressing SGBV to advance gender equality hence requires efforts not only in promoting awareness and behaviour change, but also in challenging the fundamental power dynamics that define gender norms, disability-related stigma and relationships²⁴.

At the national level, even though the various advocacy efforts of women's rights organisations and CSOs to end SGBV resulted in the introduction of robust laws and policies that protect the human rights of women and girls, implementation is still lacking. Challenges also remain in enforcing these laws, owing to the vastly under-resourced justice and security sectors, weak law enforcement capacity, and lack of political will. Furthermore, despite having ratified the major international and regional instruments condemning FGM as a human rights violation, including the Maputo Protocol, Liberia remains one of the only three West African countries that do not have a law criminalizing the practice. Hence, the need to also address the gaps in legislation.

While the Spotlight Initiative made significant strides in breaking the taboo on FGM, leading to a 3-year country-wide suspension of the practice in February 2022 and to the total ban of the practice in Montserrado County in February 2023 (followed by Grand Cape Mount, Bog, Nimba and Lofa), these gains should be anchored by formal FGM legislation as a way of sustaining the efforts and ensuring accountability. The Action identification mission found that FGM cases have neither been reported nor prosecuted even though the practice continued after the total ban declared in Montserrado County and elsewhere.

The lack of harmonisation of Liberia's hybrid justice system i.e., customary vs. statutory legal systems and the failure of the customary laws to fully safeguard women and girls from SGBV is another challenge identified. Revisiting and aligning customary law provisions in accordance with international human rights principles that the country has endorsed and acceded to is of paramount importance since the nature of customary provisions could be at times gender discriminatory. Previous studies noted that judicial harmonisations may pose challenges, for instance in terms of cultural tensions between different ethnic groups. While merging the two judicial systems could prevent these tensions, it might require dialogue between groups to establish common grounds²⁵.

¹⁷ Tsegaw, M., Mulat, B. & Shitu, K. Intimate partner violence and associated factors among reproductive age women in Liberia: a cross-sectional study using a recent Liberian demographic and health survey. BMC Women's Health (2022).

¹⁸ Enough excuses: challenging gender norms that support violence against women and girls in Liberia. Oxfam & ENOUGH (2019).

¹⁹ Ensuring Rights and Choices for all in Liberia. Liberia Annual Report 2019. UNFPA (2019).

²⁰ CLIP Liberia.

²¹ Accessed from <https://data.unwomen.org/country/liberia> on 5 March. UN Women (2023).

²² CLIP Liberia.

²³ <https://liberia.unfpa.org/en/topics/gender-based-violence-19>.

²⁴ [UNICEF Gender Transformative Approach for Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation](#).

²⁵ Liberia Country Gender Equality Profile. UN Women (2021).

Sexual Reproductive and Health Rights (SRHR) can also be compromised by gaps in the legislation as for example, the revised Liberian rape code requires abortion to be sanctioned by two physicians who have certified in writing the reasons why the abortion is necessary,²⁶ a requirement difficult to attain for women and girls in rural settings as well as for women and girls with disabilities.

The challenges the security and justice institutions face in the provision of services to SGBV survivors are immense. Among these are challenges related to logistical and financial resources in handling SGBV cases such as transportation of survivors, tracing and referral of cases, communications, and operational resources, amongst many others. The recent capacity needs assessment done by the Spotlight Initiative for the security and justice sector also revealed a huge capacity gap within these institutions to effectively prevent and mitigate violence against women and girls in Liberia and provide for accessible and safe support measures for women and girls with disabilities. The assessment found out that most of the law enforcement personnel are stationed in Monrovia with minimal deployment in the counties impeding timely prevention and response. The report further alluded to the worsening situation in the capacity of these institutions comparing it to the previous similar capacity assessment conducted in 2019 attributing it to the economic challenge and dwindling resources especially following the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)'s withdrawal²⁷.

Additional challenges lie in the costs incurred in accessing the referral pathway, which often lead survivors to resort to alternative dispute resolutions. Indeed, it is mostly family members, survivors, communities and CSOs that must bear the costs related to SGBV referral pathways and not the duty bearers. This is due to the limited resources allotted to the justice and security sectors.

The lack of access to justice and accessible services for survivors is another major challenge identified. One-stop centres are not present in some counties, including in SGBV hotspots such as Nimba and Lofa. There are only 12 one-stop centres in the country and 3 specialized SGBV courts (Montserrado, Nimba, and Bong), which remain hard to access for those living in rural areas, where the needs are generally high.

As part of SGBV response services, safe homes have been operating in Liberia since 2012. However, there are currently only five safe homes in the whole country. Through Spotlight's support, the existing safe homes were refurbished to continue service provision. Given the high prevalence of SGBV, the 5 safe homes are not enough to address the needs in the various counties. It is also important to provide livelihood pathways to survivors once at the safe home/or after. EU TVET – Youth Rising programme and agriculture training could provide survivors with skills that may lead them to a gainful employment. TVET schools, for instance, are connected with local CSOs in the counties raising awareness for SGBV survivors to enrol in TVET programmes, which offer, among others, agriculture, aquaculture, hospitality, and fashion skills training. Synergies could be also built with our upcoming Private Sector programme focusing on inclusive and sustainable agriculture value chains. SGBV survivors could also benefit from trainings and self-employment opportunities.

In addition, the services provided should be made more accessible to persons with disabilities by including sign language, audio material or easy-to-read texts, as well as accessible infrastructure, while offering training on disability rights and particularly on gender and disability and SGBV to staff among other measures.

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

The Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection (MoGCSP) will be in the lead. Established in 2001, the MGCSP serves as the driving force of the Government for the implementation of regional and international human rights instruments signed and ratified by the Government.

Relevant line ministries such as the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior Affairs, and Ministry of Health are among the key players for SGBV prevention, protection, and response in the planned interventions at both national and sub-national level. Gender focal points of these ministries and agencies will also be involved. The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning will be involved concerning issues of gender budgeting, while the Ministry of Education will be consulted and targeted for school-level SGBV prevention and response, including for

²⁶ https://www.law.cornell.edu/women-and-justice/resource/offenses_against_the_family_chapter_16_penal_law_-_title_26_-_liberian_code_of_laws_revised.

²⁷ Capacity need assessment of Justice and Security Institutions on Prevention, Protection and Response to SGBV, HTP and Violence Against Women and Girls. Spotlight Initiative (2022).

gender/SGBV mainstreaming in the education curriculum or possible post-rescue training opportunities. Legislative bodies also have a role to play in oversight and law-making.

Specialised UN Agencies, mainly the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN Women), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), will be engaged as major stakeholders in implementing the project interventions related to their comparative advantage on SGBV (including prevention, protection/law enforcement, response and service provision), women's economic empowerment, and SRHRs.

International non-governmental organisations (INGOs), CSOs, women-led organisations, and women's rights organisations, human rights defenders, organisations of persons with disabilities and media initiatives will have a role to play in implementing the prevention of SGBV at the community and grassroots levels through strategic, inclusive and participatory communication/consultation processes. Local authorities including the judicial circuit and magistrate courts will be involved to effectively protect the rights of women and girls at the local level. Traditional and religious leaders such as the National Council of Chiefs and Elders of Liberia, community leaders, youth organisations, and academic and research institutions will also be central interlocutors, as well as SGBV service providers at all levels.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The **overall objective** of this Action is to advance gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) in Liberia.

The **specific objectives** of this Action are:

1. Legislative and policy frameworks on all forms of violence against women and girls are in place, known, implemented and monitored by national and sub-national systems and institutions.
2. Gender equitable social norms, attitudes and behaviours change at community and individual levels to prevent violence against women and girls and harmful practices, including as a result of women's economic empowerment interventions.
3. Women and girls who experience violence and harmful practices use available, accessible and quality essential services and have access to justice.
4. Women's rights groups and civil society organisations more effectively influence and advance progress on GEWE and VAWG.

The **outputs** to be delivered by this Action contributing to the corresponding specific objectives are:

Contributing to outcome 1 (or specific objective 1)

- 1.1 Laws and policies that prevent SGBV/HTPs and protect the rights of women and girls from SGBV/HTPs are enacted and strengthened.
- 1.2 Women's rights organisations, MGCSP institutional stakeholders at national and subnational level, and law enforcement bodies' capacity to create a societal level of awareness in existing laws and provisions that promote the rights of women and girls are enhanced.
- 1.3 Government's capacity to monitor and enforce existing laws and legislations on SGBV is elevated.

Contributing to outcome 2 (or specific objective 2)

- 2.1 SGBV and HTPs are reduced and positive changes in knowledge and attitudes towards social and gender norms perpetuating SGBV are reported in targeted communities.
- 2.2 Traditional, community and religious leaders and communities have increased capacity to promote and protect the rights of women and girls and other marginalised groups.
- 2.3 SGBV survivors and former *zoes* (traditional FGM practitioners) have increased access to economic empowerment opportunities.

Contributing to outcome 3 (or specific objective 3)

- 3.1 Government, women's rights organisations, and service providers' capacity to increase access and provide coordinated and comprehensive services to SGBV survivors and women and girls at risk of SGBV is enhanced.
- 3.2 Women, girls, and other marginalised groups' knowledge and access to quality safe homes and SRHR services are enhanced.
- 3.3 Women and girls' survivors of violence and their families have increased knowledge on how to access justice.

Contributing to outcome 4 (or specific objective 4)

- 4.1 Women's rights groups and CSOs have increased opportunities to share knowledge, network, partner and jointly advocate with relevant stakeholders at sub-national and national levels.
- 4.2 Women's rights groups and relevant CSOs have increased capacity in using social accountability mechanisms for advocacy and influence on prevention and response to VAWG and GEWE.
- 4.3 Women's rights groups and CSOs have strengthened capacities to design, implement and monitor their own programmes on ending VAWG.

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities relating to output 1.1:

- Advocate for SGBV-related legislation and for the harmonisation of customary and statutory laws.
- Advocate for the establishment of protection measures for victim and witness protection.

Activities relating to output 1.2:

- Provide gender equality/SGBV prevention and awareness training to members of relevant Government agencies, judiciary, and legislature.
- Capacitate women's organisations to deliver legal awareness/literacy on SGBV and SRHRs.

Activities relating to output 1.3:

- Provide technical assistance to relevant law enforcement agencies and support the coordination/harmonisation of case management systems.
- Support the development of a new gender-responsive planning and budgeting (GRPB) policy.

Activities relating to output 2.1:

- Mobilise communities through evidence-based approaches to social norms change, engaging men and boys to challenge negative masculinities.
- Provide GEWE/SGBV/SRHR training in high schools, while advocating for the integration of GEWE/SGBV prevention in the elementary school curriculum.

Activities relating to output 2.2:

- Conduct gender/SGBV prevention training for traditional and religious leaders.
- Set up a coordination mechanism of opinion makers, government, CSOs, media, and service providers.

Activities relating to output 2.3:

- Provide inclusive skills training for targeted women on viable income-generating activities.
- Organise village saving and loan associations (VSLAs) and provide start-up capital for targeted women, involving men/partners in training and economic empowerment activities.

Activities relating to output 3.1:

- Build the government capacity to decentralize one-stop centres and ensure the provision of inclusive, accessible and comprehensive services.
- Support the development of gender policies and gender mainstreaming tools in selected sectoral ministries, while enhancing the MGCSP's technical team and M&E unit's capacity to monitor.

Activities relating to output 3.2:

- Strengthen the clinical management of rape services and advocate for the integration of SGBV/SRHR within health facilities.
- Support existing safe homes, introduce income-generating activities for their sustainability and build the capacity of government, CSOs and other partners to increase and expand their efficiency and accessibility.

Activities relating to output 3.3:

- Capacitate the national gender machineries and women's organisations to increase access to free legal aid.
- Enhance speedy access to justice for SGBV survivors and perpetrators.
- Build the capacity of the government to decentralise and expand the accessibility of Criminal Courts E, specialised in sexual offences.

Activities relating to output 4.1:

- Support CSO knowledge sharing, and increase opportunities for networking, joint advocacy and partnerships.

Activities relating to output 4.2:

- Support women's organisations and CSOs to use appropriate accountability mechanisms for advocacy around VAWG.

Activities relating to output 4.3:

- Strengthen CSOs' capacities on programme design, operational management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental protection and climate change

Outcomes of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening: the EIA screening classified the Action as Category C (no need for further assessment).

Outcomes of the Climate Risk Assessment the (CRA) screening: the CRA screening concluded that this Action is no or low risk (no need for further assessment).

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per the OECD gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this Action is labelled as G2. This implies that gender equality is the principal objective for undertaking this Action, as indicated in both the general and specific objectives. Given that gender inequality is one of the root causes of SGBV, which in turn hinders women's full potential and participation in all spheres of society, addressing SGBV is contributing to gender equality and women's empowerment. Therefore, the intervention fully contributes to GAP III commitment to applying a gender-transformative approach together with the human rights-based approach and intersectionality as well as conducting and using updated gender analyses to inform decision-making on future actions and integrating these into all relevant dialogues, policies, strategies, programmes and operations.

Human rights

This Action adopts a human rights-based approach and intends to promote and respect the rights of women and girls and other marginalized groups, including PWDs, in accordance with the international and regional human rights normative frameworks Liberia has ratified such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1984); the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2008); the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2012); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (as well as its optional protocols) (1993); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The Action will also support Liberia's laws and policies promulgated at the national level to promote and protect the human rights of women and girls and provide the impetus for ending violence against women, which include the Domestic Violence Act of 2019, the Rape Law of 2016, the Children's Law of 2011, the Decent Work Act of 2015, and the revised National Gender Policy 2020-2022. This Action will apply the working principles of the human rights-based approach throughout the design and implementation of the intervention as well as an intersectionality approach. As a G2 Action, promotion of women's and girls' fundamental rights will be the principal objective.

Disability

As per OECD disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this Action is labelled as D1. This implies that the Action will significantly contribute to the inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities from its overall objective (impact) level. The Action will support the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in all activities on prevention of SGBV, the protection of their rights as survivors of SGBV as well as their access to SGBV response services, including legal services and justice. Women and girls with disabilities will also be targeted in the economic empowerment intervention (Output 1.3) geared towards reducing the vulnerabilities to SGBV. The Action will be in line with the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, the EU guidance note on disability inclusion in EU external action, and the National Action Plan on Disability in Liberia 2023-2027.

Reduction of inequalities

As per the inequality marker, this Action is labelled as I-2. The principal objective of this Action is to significantly reduce SGBV on women and girls in all their diversity, which contributes to reducing gender inequalities. Furthermore, one of the specific objectives (outcome 1) of this Action aims at preventing SGBV through tackling the root causes of gender-based violence, i.e., social and gender norms that relegate women to a subordinate position and underpin SGBV, including harmful practices such as FGM.

Violence against women and girls remains one of the significant human rights violations in Liberia and has life-long physical and psychosocial health consequences. It also traps women and girls into poverty, economic hardship, social marginalization, and basic human rights denial, while deepening existing economic inequality between women and men. Living in poverty in turn increases the risk of women and girls experiencing violence and also increase the risk of falling victims of traffickers. This Action therefore bridges the gap of gender inequality by preventing and addressing SGBV. It also reduces the vulnerabilities to SGBV of socio-economically disadvantaged women and other marginalized groups through economic empowerment interventions.

Democracy

The respect of women's rights and freedom of women, youth and other marginalized communities from violence coupled with economic empowerment interventions intend to promote their increased agency and voice and their subsequent participation in the democratic processes.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

Gender equality is a fundamental human right which creates the foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable society. Women's contribution has been crucial to bring an end to the Liberian civil wars and to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2003, and this engagement remains essential nowadays. With

inequalities being a root cause of conflict, gender equality is a pre-condition for peace, resilience and stability in the country. Under the Sirleaf administration, several inclusive national frameworks were developed, such as Liberia Rising Vision 2030 (a post-conflict vision for an equitable, diverse and democratically stable country), the Strategic Roadmap for National Peace-building, Healing and Reconciliation, and the Liberia Peace-building Plan. These framework were intended to reduce gender inequality and strengthen women's participation in the governance process.

Disaster risk reduction

N/A

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
External environment	The parliamentary and presidential elections held at the end of 2023 might still result in a reshuffling within the civil service and in a potential loss of institutional memory.	L	M	Conduct bilateral meetings, and awareness sessions to bring civil servants up to speed and gain higher level support for the programme implementation.
Planning, processes and systems; Legality and regularity aspects	Limited political will/Government's commitment to the eradication of SGBV and the criminalization of HTPs.	M	H	Advocacy with duty bearers, policymakers, legislators, and relevant stakeholders to make SGBV a national priority and mitigate the risk of political hijacking of FGM.
People and the organisation	Lack of traditional leaders and elders' genuine commitment towards the eradication of SGBV/HTPs without incentives involved.	H	H	Utilise evidence-based strategy to bring attitudinal shift.
People and the organisation; Legality and regularity aspects	Religious and traditional leaders' resistance to harmonize customary and statutory laws on HTPs.	H	H	Conduct sustained democratic dialogue with all groups, in particular with opinion leaders and norm setters.
Planning, processes and systems; Communication and information	Sustaining the service provision/safe homes after the project closure.	H	M	Develop concrete sustainability and exit strategies.
People and the organisation	The sour relationship between traditional leaders and CSOs.	H	H	Organize a platform for traditional chiefs/leaders and CSOs working on FGM to identify common positions on HTPs and address differences.
Legality and regularity aspects	Limited engagement in favour of gender equality, the human rights-based approach, the empowerment of women and the rights of persons with disabilities by the targeted institutions and non-state actors.	H	H	The project will provide adequate resources to work with institutions and non-state actors on the importance of integrating gender equality, a human rights-based approach, and the rights of persons with disabilities.
Lessons Learnt:				

The Spotlight Initiative has been implemented in Liberia since 2019 and ended in December 2023. The various consultations made with stakeholders during the identification phase captured lessons listed below, both from the Spotlight and other similar interventions on SGBV.

- While engaging with traditional/religious leaders is needed to sustain the fight against SGBV/HTPs, monetising development/channelling funds to traditional/religious leaders to work on GEWE could compromise their commitment.
- Bypassing key Government institutions/national gender machineries coordination mandate and not involving it in the selection of implementing partners can jeopardise CSO's accountability and report to the Government body.
- Increased coordination and collaboration with key government ministries, agencies and partners is a key ingredient to national ownership.
- Investment in building and supporting youth-led platforms and grassroots women's organisations to drive SGBV prevention and response are great assets to sustainability.
- Constant engagement of CSOs increases joint advocacy, monitoring leads to timely reporting on SGBV & HTPs.
- Improved facilities at the one-stop centres and safe homes in the Spotlight counties have increased access and accountability.
- Engaging men/boys and community leaders can make the fight against SGBV more effective.
- Clear accountability mechanisms for the UN country team need to be clearly defined and implemented, for example through a joint working strategy which formulates coordination spaces for each level of decision-making, with roles and functions of each space and its members.
- A close collaboration and shared objectives enable the EU and the UN to jointly drive the agenda of the Spotlight Initiative and in contributing to establishing and maintaining a positive dynamic among all actors. It is therefore critical to invest time in building and sustaining a collaborative working relationship.
- Extensive participatory stakeholder engagement during the stages of the programme cycle, including at the highest Government level is key. Engaging stakeholders and building ownership to collect feedback, to discuss roles and to balance and respond to different interests and priorities require substantial investments of time.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this Action is that:

IF (A) an enabling institutional, legislative and policy environment informed by the evidence of what works and from quality and comparable data is in place and translated into action;

IF (B) favourable social norms, attitudes and behaviours are promoted at institutional, community and individual levels to prevent VAWG, including through increased voice and agency of women and girls and economic empowerment of disadvantaged and marginalized women and youth;

IF (C) women and girls who experience violence are empowered to use available, accessible and quality essential services and recover from violence, while perpetrators are duly prosecuted;

IF (D) the knowledge, expertise and capacities of women's rights organisations and civil society organisations, including those representing youth and groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination is drawn upon and strengthened,

THEN (5) there will be a substantial reduction in violence against women and girls, while survivors will have increased access to justice as well as psychosocial and legal assistance and rehabilitation, which in turn will contribute to women's empowerment and to a more gender-equal and disability-inclusive society in Liberia.

BECAUSE (6) better evidence-based responses to VAWG are available, violence is being prevented before it happens or before it re-occurs by addressing legal, social and gender norms, disability stigma, and inequalities, and challenging dominant notions of masculinity, and those experiencing violence, as well as their dependents, will be empowered to recover and rebuild their lives with appropriate assistance and support.

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

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

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

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

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

The activities, the expected outputs and related indicators, targets and baselines included in the logframe matrix may be updated during the implementation of the Action, no amendment being required to the financing decision.

PROJECT MODALITY (3 levels of results / indicators / source of data / assumptions – no activities)

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	To advance gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) in Liberia.	1. Incidence of SGBV (disaggregated by gender and disability status) 2. % of girls and women aged 15-49 years who have undergone FGM/cutting, by age* 3. % of women aged 15-49 who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care (SDG 5.6.1)	1. Tbd in the inception phase 2. 38.2% (2019/2020) 3. Tbd in the inception phase	1. 20% reduction by the end of the programme 2. Tbd in the inception phase 3. Tbd in the inception phase	1. National level statistics 2. LDHS 3. One-stop centre and safe homes reports; Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 1	Legislative and policy frameworks on all forms of violence against women and girls are in place, known, implemented and monitored by National and sub-national systems and institutions.	1.1 # of new and/or strengthened laws and/or policies on ending VAWG and/or gender equality and non-discrimination developed that respond to the rights of women and girls facing intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination and are in line with international HR standards, within the last year (1.1.1) 1.2 % of referred cases of gender-based and sexual violence against women and children that are investigated and sentenced (FPI RF) 1.3 % increase in government budget allocated to address VAWG/HPs	1.1 1 Domestic Violence Law 1.2 Tbd in the inception phase 1.3 Tbd in the inception phase	1.1 5 laws on GEWE passed or amended, incl. FGM criminalisation) 1.2 Tbd in the inception phase 1.3 Tbd in the inception phase	1.1 Official Gazette 1.2 Reports from special Courts E, SGBV task force, MoGCSP, MoJ 1.3 Liberia's annual budget reports; Ministries Agencies and Commissions reports	There is political will to pass and amend laws on SGBV despite parliamentary and presidential elections in 2023 and potential changes in the civil service; the institutional memory on SGBV is maintained.
Outcome 2	Gender equitable social norms, attitudes and behaviours change at community and individual levels to prevent violence against women and girls and harmful practices, including as a result of women's economic	2.1 # of women who have become entrepreneurs under VSLAs framework (disaggregated by age) 2.2 % of people who think it is justifiable for a man to (subject) beat his wife/intimate partner (to violence), by sex and age 2.3 Proportion of people who think it is justifiable to subject a woman or	2.1 Tbd in inception phase 2.2 Tbd in inception phase 2.3 Tbd in inception phase 2.4 Tbd in inception phase	2.1 Tbd in inception phase 2.2 Tbd in inception phase 2.3 Tbd in inception phase 2.4 Tbd in inception phase	2.2 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention 2.3 LDHS; national surveys 2.4 LDHS; national surveys 2.5 LDHS; national surveys	There is a progressive change in attitude and perceptions on gender and SGBV.

	empowerment interventions.	girl to FGM, disaggregated at least by sex and age 2.4 # of community and religious leaders who publicly condemn gender-based violence, disaggregated by sex				
Outcome 3	Women and girls who experience violence and harmful practices use available, accessible, and quality essential services and have access to justice.	3.1 # of SGBV survivors accessing life-saving services (disaggregated by sex and disability status) 3.2 % of health and social facilities with accessible GBV material about prevention, response and referral 3.3 % of SGBV survivors and perpetrators accessing a fair trial (disaggregated by sex and age)	3.1 Tbd in the inception phase 3.2 Tbd in the inception phase 3.3 Tbd in the inception phase	3.1 Tbd in the inception phase 3.2 Tbd in the inception phase 3.3 Tbd in the inception phase	3.1 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention 3.2 Facilities reports; Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention 3.3 Court E reports; Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention	Increased accessibility and quality of services of safe homes and one-stop centres in the country, in particular in the counties not included in the previous programme.
Outcome 4	4 Women's rights groups and civil society organisations more effectively influence and advance progress on GEWE and VAWG.	4.1 % of women's rights organisations, autonomous social movements and relevant CSOs that have increased their coordinated efforts to jointly advocate on ending VAWG 4.2 Extent to which there is an increased use of social accountability mechanisms by civil society in order to monitor and engage efforts to end VAWG 4.3 % of women's rights organisations, autonomous social movements and CSOs, including those representing youth and groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination/marginalization, report having greater influence and agency to work on ending VAWG	4.1 Tbd in the inception phase 4.2 Tbd in the inception phase 4.3 Tbd in the inception phase	4.1 Tbd in the inception phase 4.2 Tbd in the inception phase 4.3 Tbd in the inception phase	4.1 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention 4.2 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention 4.3 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention	The political environment remains stable, open and conducive to civil society.
Output 1 relating to Outcome 1	Laws and policies that prevent SGBV/HTPs and protect the rights of	1.1.1 # of national assessments/research conducted with support of the EU-funded intervention	1.1.1 Tbd in the inception phase	1.1.1 Tbd in the inception phase	1.1.1 Research documents; Progress reports for the EU-	There is sufficient mobilisation from government and civil society as well

	women and girls from SGBV/HTPs are enacted and strengthened.	1.1.2 # of policy advocacy initiatives carried out for witness protection law with support of the EU-funded intervention	1.1.2 Tbd in the inception phase	1.1.2 Tbd in the inception phase	funded intervention; CEDAW country report 1.1.2 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention	as an enabling environment for policy change.
Output 2 relating to Outcome 1	Women's rights organisations, MGCSP institutional stakeholders at national and subnational level, and law enforcement bodies' capacity to create a societal level of awareness in existing laws and policies that promote the rights of women and girls enhanced.	1.2.1 # of citizens reached through legal literacy outreach given by law enforcement bodies, MGCSP institutional stakeholders at national and subnational level, and women's right organisations with support of the EU-funded intervention (disaggregated by county/sex) 1.2.2 # of members of government agencies, judiciary, and legislature trained by the EU-funded intervention with increased knowledge and/or skills on gender equality/SGBV prevention and awareness, disaggregated by sex	1.2.1 Zero 1.2.2 Tbd in the inception phase	A.2.1 Tbd in the inception phase A.2.2 Tbd in the inception phase	1.2.1 Programme reports 1.2.2. Pre and post-training test reports	Law enforcement bodies/police and women's rights organisations participate in training and other capacity building events. MGCSP institutional stakeholders at national and subnational level, and women's rights organisations can provide free legal services.
Output 3 relating to Outcome 1	Government's capacity to monitor and enforce existing laws and legislations on SGBV is elevated.	1.3.1 # of representatives of law enforcement bodies trained by the EU-funded intervention with increased knowledge and/or skills to monitor and enforce the laws (disaggregated sex and county) 1.3.2 Extent to which EU-funded intervention contributed to coordination of data collection on the prevalence and incidence of gender-based violence among key actors 1.3.3 # of Government personnel from different sectors, including service providers, trained by the EU-funded intervention with increased knowledge and/or skills to collect prevalence and/or incidence data, including qualitative data, on VAWG	1.3.1 Tbd in the inception phase 1.3.2 No coordination 1.3.3 Tbd in the inception phase	1.3.1 Tbd in the inception phase 1.3.2 Coordination established 1.3.3 Tbd in the inception phase	1.3.1 Pre- and post-training test reports 1.3.2 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention 1.3.3 Pre- and post-training test reports	Law enforcement bodies' willingness and availability to participate in training. The GVB/IMS (information management system) is fully functional and in use.

		in line with international and regional standards, within the last year, disaggregated by sex (5.1.4)				
Output 1 relating to Outcome 2	SGBV and HTPs are reduced and positive changes in knowledge and attitudes towards social and gender norms perpetuating SGBV are reported in targeted communities.	<p>2.1.1 # of targeted community members reporting increased awareness in gender and social norms based on</p> <p>2.1.2 # of men and boys engaged in initiatives promoting positive masculinity and preventing SGBV (disaggregated by age)</p>	<p>2.1.1 Zero (2023)</p> <p>2.1.2 TBD in the inception phase</p>	<p>2.1.1 TBD in inception phase</p> <p>2.1.2 TBD in the inception phase</p>	<p>2.1.1 Baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention; Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p> <p>2.1.2 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p>	Communities, including men and boys, and traditional/religious leaders are involved and actively participate in SASA and gender-awareness initiatives.
Output 2 relating to Outcome 2	Traditional, community and religious leaders and communities have increased capacity to promote and protect the rights of women and girls, and other marginalised groups.	<p>2.2.1 # of religious leaders trained with support of the EU-funded intervention with increased knowledge and/or skills on gender equality and SGBV (disaggregated by county)</p> <p>2.2.2 # of traditional leaders, elders and <i>zoes</i> trained by the EU-funded intervention with increased knowledge and/or skills on protection of rights of women and girls and other marginalised groups (disaggregated by county and sex)</p> <p>2.2.3 # of coordination mechanisms established with opinion makers, Government representatives and service providers with support of the EU-funded intervention</p>	<p>2.2.1 TBD in the inception phase</p> <p>2.2.2 TBD in the inception phase</p> <p>2.2.3 TBD in the inception phase</p>	<p>2.2.1 TBD in the inception phase</p> <p>2.2.2 TBD in the inception phase</p> <p>2.2.3 TBD in the inception phase</p>	<p>2.2.1 Pre and post-training test reports</p> <p>2.2.2 Pre and post-training test reports</p> <p>2.2.3 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention; Coordination meeting minutes</p>	The bridge between religious and traditional leaders is built enabling their involvement in awareness raising trainings and cascading these trainings.
Output 3 relating to Outcome 2	SGBV survivors and former <i>zoes</i> (traditional FGM practitioners) have increased access to economic empowerment opportunities.	<p>2.3.1 # of VSLAs established for SGBV survivors and <i>zoes</i> with support of the EU-funded intervention</p> <p>2.3.2 # of women provided with access to socio-economic opportunities under VSLAs framework with support of the EU-</p>	<p>2.3.1 TBD in the inception phase</p> <p>2.3.2 800 <i>zoes</i> under Spotlight 1.0 (2023)</p>	<p>2.3.1 60 VSLAs established</p> <p>2.3.2 TBD in the inception phase</p>	<p>2.3.1 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p> <p>2.3.2 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p>	SGBV survivors and former <i>zoes</i> are willing to join VSLAs and actively participate in compliance with VSLAs' internal rules.

		funded intervention (disaggregated by age)				
Output 1 relating to Outcome 3	Government, women's rights organisations, and service providers' capacity to increase access and provide coordinated and comprehensive services to SGBV survivors and women and girls at risk of SGBV is enhanced.	<p>3.1.1 # of representatives of Government and service providers trained by the EU-funded intervention with increased knowledge and/or skills to deliver quality and coordinated essential services to women and girls' survivors of violence within the last year, disaggregated by sex (4.1.4)</p> <p>3.1.2 # of national gender policy and gender mainstreaming tools developed in selected ministries with support of the EU-funded intervention</p>	<p>3.1.1 Tbd in the inception phase</p> <p>3.1.2 The existing National Gender Policy expired in 2022 and the anti-GBV roadmap expired in 2023</p>	<p>3.1.1 Tbd in the inception phase</p> <p>3.1.2 TBD in the inception phase</p>	<p>3.1.1 Pre- and post-training test reports</p> <p>3.1.2 Policy documents; Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p>	Political will and available resources to pilot GRPB in selected ministries, such as the Ministry of Justice.
Output 2 relating to Outcome 3	Women, girls, and other marginalised groups' knowledge and access to quality safe homes and SRHR services are enhanced.	<p>3.2.1 # of health centres receiving support to strengthen clinical management of rape services (by county)</p> <p>3.2.2 # of women and girls trained by the EU-funded intervention with increased knowledge of how to access SRHR (disaggregated by age)</p>	<p>3.2.1 Tbd in the inception phase</p> <p>3.2.2 Tbd in the inception phase</p>	<p>3.2.1 Tbd in the inception phase</p> <p>3.2.2 Tbd in the inception phase</p>	<p>3.2.1 Facilities reports; Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p> <p>3.2.2 Facilities reports; Pre- and post-training test reports</p>	Smooth provision of and increased access to SRHR services.
Output 3 relating to Outcome 3	Women and girls' survivors of violence and their families have increased knowledge on how to access justice.	<p>3.3.1 % of SGBV survivors receiving free legal aid with support of the EU-funded intervention (disaggregated by sex and age)</p> <p>3.3.2 # of women and girls survivors and their relatives who know how to access justice.</p>	<p>3.3.1 Tbd in the inception phase</p> <p>3.3.2 Tbd in the inception phase</p>	<p>3.3.1 Tbd in the inception phase</p> <p>3.3.2 Tbd in the inception phase</p>	<p>3.3.1 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p> <p>3.3.2 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p>	<p>Available resources to provide free legal aid.</p> <p>Survivors and their families withstand pressure, pursue justice and do not compromise cases.</p>
Output 1 relating to Outcome 4	Women's rights groups and CSOs have increased opportunities to share knowledge, network, partner and jointly advocate with relevant stakeholders	4.1.1 # of official dialogues about VAWG with relevant government authorities with the full participation of women's rights groups and relevant CSOs, including representatives of groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, within last year (6.1.2)	<p>4.1.1 Tbd in the inception phase</p> <p>4.1.2 Tbd in the inception phase</p>	<p>4.1.1 Tbd in the inception phase</p> <p>4.1.2 Tbd in the inception phase</p>	<p>4.1.1 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p> <p>4.1.2 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p>	<p>Government authorities are willing to engage with women's groups and CSOs.</p> <p>Women's groups and CSOs are willing to network</p>

	at sub-national and national levels.	4.1.2 # of women's rights groups, networks and relevant CSOs with strengthened capacities to network, partner and jointly advocate for progress on ending VAWG at local, national, regional and global levels, within the last year (6.1.4)				and provide joint advocacy.
Output 2 relating to Outcome 4	Women's rights groups and relevant CSOs have increased capacity in using social accountability mechanisms for advocacy and influence on prevention and response to VAWG and GEWE.	4.2.1 # of supported women's right groups and relevant CSOs using the appropriate accountability mechanisms ²⁸ for advocacy around ending VAWG, within last year (6.2.1)	4.2.1 Tbd in the inception phase	4.2.1 Tbd in the inception phase	4.2.1 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention	Women's rights groups are willing to attend training on social accountability mechanisms.
Output 3 relating to Outcome 4	Women's rights groups and CSOs have strengthened capacities to design, implement and monitor their own programmes on ending VAWG.	4.3.1 # of women's rights groups and relevant CSOs representing groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination/ marginalization that have strengthened capacities and support to design, implement, monitor and evaluate their own programmes on ending VAWG, within the last year (6.3.1) 4.3.2 # of women's rights groups and relevant CSOs using knowledge products developed by the participating UN agencies in the design of their own programmes on ending VAWG within last year (6.3.2)	4.3.1 Tbd in the inception phase 4.3.2 Tbd in the inception phase	4.3.1 Tbd in the inception phase 4.3.2 Tbd in the inception phase	4.3.1 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention 4.3.2 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention	Women's rights groups are willing to attend training on social accountability mechanisms.

²⁸ E.g., the CEDAW, universal periodic review shadow reports, and social accountability mechanisms such as social audits, citizen report cards, etc.

4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

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

4.2 Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this Action, during which the activities described in section 3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 48 months from the date of entry into force of the financing agreement.

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

4.3 Implementation of the Budget Support Component

N/A

4.4 Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the Action with EU restrictive measures²⁹.

4.4.1 Indirect Management with an entrusted entity

A multi-partner contribution agreement will be signed with the United Nations Multi Partner Trust Fund Office acting as the Administrative Agent that ensures standardized contracting and trustee services including the release of funds to the recipient UN Agencies. As a joint UN Programme, the Spotlight Initiative will be implemented in line with UN Joint Programming and UN Development System reform principles and under the responsibility of the UN Resident Coordinator.

Part of this Action will be implemented in indirect management with an entrusted entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- Global and country experience and expertise in supporting law enforcement agencies and institutions.
- Proved track record in managing and harmonising case management systems in Liberia.
- Global and country experience in rule of law and decentralization.

The implementation by this entity entails the following outputs: Output 1.1; Output 1.2; Output 1.3.

Given its core expertise in supporting the rule of law and law enforcement agencies and institutions, this entity will also contribute to Output 3.3.

A second part of this Action will be implemented in indirect management with an entrusted entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- A track record of implementing social norm change programming at global, local and grassroots level with adequate operational capacity.

²⁹ www.sanctionsmap.eu. Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

- A track record in fighting SGBV and setting global standards for achieving gender equality.
- Global and local expertise in working with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes, and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls.
- Experience on working on gender and disability-specific discrimination and violence

The implementation by this entity entails piloting and scaling up community mobilization and awareness strategies through an evidence-based approach to social norm change in line with all outputs under Outcome 2, as well as working with women's rights groups and civil society organisations, in line with all outputs under Outcome 4. Given its expertise, this entity can also contribute to some outputs and activities under Outcome 1.

The last part of this Action will be implemented in indirect management with an entrusted entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- Global and country experience and expertise in supporting SGBV response mechanisms such as one-stop centres and safe homes.
- Extensive global expertise in SRHR and harmful practices.
- Proved tracked record in ensuring access to SRHR services in Liberia's most remote areas and for the most vulnerable groups, including youth and people living with disabilities.

The implementation by this entity entails building capacity of the Government to decentralise and expand the accessibility of one-stop centres and ensure the provision of quality and comprehensive services, including safe spaces for marginalized people in line with Outcome 3 (Output 3.1 and Output 3.2).

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

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

If indirect management implementation modalities fail for circumstances beyond the Commission's control, the Commission's services may use direct management (grants) following one (covering all Specific Objectives) or more (one for each Specific Objective or for several Specific Objectives) call for proposals open both to international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and to local NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs).

4.5. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

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

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

4.6. Indicative Budget

Indicative budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.4	
Objective/Outcome 1	

Indirect management with entrusted entities	3 300 000
Objective/Outcome 2	
Indirect management with entrusted entities	4 900 000
Objective/Outcome 3	
Indirect management with entrusted entities	4 000 000
Objective/Outcome 4	
Indirect management with entrusted entities	600 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	200 000
Totals	13 000 000

4.7 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION:

The programme will be under the coordination, leadership, and accountability of the UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC). The UNRC will guide UN inter-agency cooperation and address any concerns or issues that could impede successful programme implementation. The UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) will see that clear agency roles and responsibilities are outlined in work plans and that appropriate resources are allocated in the budget. The RCO will ensure coherent and collaborative inter-agency programming and that technical expertise from each agency is leveraged to support overall programme objectives. A programme coordination team will be formed with a direct line of accountability to the UNRC.

The UN agencies will be responsible for the delivery and monitoring of the outputs under their responsibility.

The programme will also establish a **technical committee** that will provide a forum for discussing implementation issues, challenges, and solutions. It will provide technical and programme oversight to ensure timely and quality implementation and monitoring of the programme and provide reports and updates to the joint NSC on progress made and seek guidance and advice. The working group will consist of members from the Government, EU, UN, and representatives of CSOs. It will be co-chaired by the Government, represented by the MGCSP.

PROGRAMME GOVERNANCE:

The Action will ensure synergy and coordination with existing SGBV programmes in the country by other development partners such as the Sweden and the World Bank by establishing a joint national steering committee (NSC) on SGBV. The joint NSC will be **co-chaired by the EU, UNRC and the Government of Liberia** and composed by the UN Agencies, relevant line ministries such as the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, representatives of local authorities, development partners and implementing partners. The NSC will ensure **coordination and regular exchange among all programmes** as well as responsiveness to local priorities and contexts. The NSC will establish institutional linkages with the Government's coordination mechanisms on SGBV, HTPs and SRHR to ensure coherence, knowledge sharing, and sustainability. It will also establish linkages with other parallel processes and donor coordination mechanisms on SGBV in order to create synergy and avoid duplication of efforts. In addition, the NSC will also provide overall **strategic direction, policy setting, and oversight for the overall implementation and monitoring** of the programme. It will review annual work plans, and budgets, and oversee the timely implementation of the programme for effective results. Reflective of the critical role played by CSOs in programme design and implementation, CSOs will have a representation at the Steering Committee. Detailed terms of reference will be developed to specify the role, functions, and members of the Committee.

A **CSOs reference group** will be established since the on-set to inform programme design and implementation. The CSOs reference group is a national “self-selected” reference group, representing an independent advisory body with a triple mandate: to guide and advise implementation, advocate for the

realization of its commitments and monitor its work to hold the Initiative accountable. Its members will be appointed by CSOs active in VAWG/HTPs prevention and response and will include representatives of women organisations and organisations representing rights holders such as SGBV survivors, and vulnerable and marginalized groups, notably persons with disabilities.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the EU, the Commission may participate in the above governance structures set up for governing the implementation of the Action and may sign or enter into joint declarations or statements, for the purpose of enhancing the visibility of the EU and its contribution to this Action and ensuring effective coordination.

5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1 Monitoring and Reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this Action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the Action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the Action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (outputs and direct outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring:

Implementing partners will be responsible to define before implementation or within 90 days after the start date of implementation baselines and targets for each of the output and activity indicators included in their respective project implementation document and ensure continuous learning during implementation and provide precise recommendations that are action-oriented, practical, and specific and define who is responsible for the proposed action. In order to ensure a holistic approach, to guarantee programme quality and to allow for global consolidation, the HQ based Spotlight Initiative Secretariat has developed a global results framework the country programmes are expected to align with. This Global RF will be further contextualised to reflect Liberia's specificities. An endline survey shall also be foreseen.

It is envisaged that a joint monitoring framework for this Action will be developed through technical support under this Action, where the roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis, and reporting will be spelled out. The M&E framework will be done in consultation with all stakeholders involved. Regular periodic joint field monitoring visits shall be carried out by members of all implementing partners, at a technical committee level, comprised of government, CSOs, EU, UN agencies, and service providers periodically which will be followed by reporting to the steering committee and the EU. This technical support entails fine-tuning the log frame and establishing a baseline for this Action.

To address inequality reduction in monitoring concerns, the monitoring system should be designed in a participatory manner and seek to include stakeholders in its design, application, and use. It is essential that monitoring becomes a learning tool, going beyond reporting, and that it helps in understanding whether and how the intervention facilitates changes in the drivers of inequality, and why. The monitoring system should include both quantitative and qualitative indicators to facilitate participation and understanding by all stakeholders. Further, the indicators to be used should reflect the contextual drivers of inequality and provide information on changes in these drivers.

The Administrative Agent (the Multi Partner Trust Fund Office -MPTFO) is responsible for the production and submission to the Contracting Authority (European Union Delegation) of high quality financial and narrative reporting in compliance with the Contribution agreement with the European Union.

All monitoring and reporting shall assess how the Action is considering the principle of gender equality, the human rights-based approach, and rights of persons with disabilities, including inclusion and diversity.

Indicators shall be disaggregated by sex, age and disability (where feasible) and in part taken from Spotlight's "menu of indicators" to allow for global consolidation.

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the Action, a mid-term evaluation will be carried out for this Action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.

It will be carried out for problem solving and learning purposes, in particular with respect to identifying and sharing lessons learned and feeding subsequent interventions.

A final or ex-post evaluation will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision). The evaluation plan could assess the distributional impact of activities undertaken on the bottom 40% or socio-economically disadvantaged individuals, households or groups. This can be done through the Distributional Impact Assessment tool (DIA). The DIA analysis looks at the effective targeting of beneficiaries of development interventions, identifying if more than 40% of beneficiaries are at the bottom two quintiles of the income or wealth distribution. It also allows to evaluate whether effective targeting has been done towards women, children and youth or other disadvantaged groups (e.g. ethnic minorities) or at territorial level.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least three months in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports may be shared with the partners and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, apply the necessary adjustments.

Evaluation services may be contracted under a framework contract.

All evaluations shall assess to what extent the Action is taking into account the human rights-based approach and its contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment and social inclusion. Expertise on human rights, disability and gender equality will be ensured in the evaluation teams.

5.3 Audit and Verifications

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this Action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audit or verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

6 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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

In line with the 2022 "[Communicating and Raising EU Visibility: Guidance for External Actions](#)", it will remain a contractual obligation for all entities implementing EU-funded external actions to inform the relevant audiences of the Union's support for their work by displaying the EU emblem and a short funding statement as appropriate on all communication materials related to the actions concerned. This obligation will continue to apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, partner countries, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU member states.

However, action documents for specific sector programmes are in principle no longer required to include a provision for communication and visibility actions promoting the programmes concerned. These resources will instead be consolidated in Cooperation Facilities established by support measure action documents,

allowing Delegations to plan and execute multiannual strategic communication and public diplomacy actions with sufficient critical mass to be effective on a national scale.

Appendix 1 REPORTING IN OPSYS

A primary intervention (project/programme) is a coherent set of activities and results structured in a logical framework aiming at delivering development change or progress. Identifying the level of the primary intervention will allow for:

- Articulating actions or contracts according to an expected chain of results and therefore allowing them to ensure efficient monitoring and reporting of performance;
- Differentiating these actions or contracts from those that do not produce direct reportable development results, defined as support entities (i.e., audits, evaluations);
- Having a complete and exhaustive mapping of all results-bearing actions and contracts.

Primary interventions are identified during the design of each action by the responsible service (Delegation or Headquarters operational Unit).

The level of the primary intervention chosen can be modified (directly in OPSYS) and the modification does not constitute an amendment of the action document.

The intervention level for the present Action identifies as (tick one of the 4 following options):

Action level (i.e., budget support, blending)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single action	Present Action: all contracts in the present Action
Group of actions level (i.e., top-up cases, different phases of a single programme)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of actions	Actions reference (CRIS#/OPSYS#): N/A
Contract level		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 2	
Group of contracts level (i.e., series of programme estimates, cases in which an action includes for example four contracts and two of them, a technical assistance contract and a contribution agreement, aim at the same objectives and complement each other)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of contracts 1	