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THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX 3

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multiannual action plan in favour of the Republic of Sierra Leone for 2022-2024

Action Document for the Cooperation Facility for Sierra Leone

MULTIANNUAL PLAN

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

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act	<u>Cooperation Facility for Sierra Leone</u> CRIS number: NDICI/AFRICA/2021/43593 OPSYS business reference: ACT- 60729 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (<u>NDICI-Global Europe</u>)
2. Team Europe Initiative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting (inter alia) TEI.
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The action shall be carried out in West Africa, Sierra Leone
4. Programming document	Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 - Republic of Sierra Leone
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results	<p>The Cooperation Facility is a cross-cutting instrument which overall objective is to promote a sustainable socio-economic development in the country, and to enhance EU's interests and positions in Sierra Leone.</p> <p>The specific objectives of the action are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To facilitate the implementation of the Multiannual indicative Programme 2021-2027 (MIP) which priority areas are: 1) Green economy; 2) Human Development, and 3) Governance;2. To support the EU Global Strategy. <p>The main expected results are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Support to the interventions of the MIP2. Strengthening of EU strategic communication, increased understanding, awareness and appreciation of the EU3. Enhancing of the role of the EU as a strategic partner for Sierra Leone

PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION				
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Cooperation Facility			
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG: SDG 17 - Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development Other significant SDG(s): SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, SDG 15: Life on land, SDG 5: Gender Equality			
8 a) DAC code(s)	15110 Public Sector Policy and Administrative management 99810 Sectors non specified			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel @	European Commission - Development Share of Budget : 42000			
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
10. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective @	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	11. Internal markers and Tags:	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective
Digitalisation @ Tags: digital connectivity		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

	digital governance digital entrepreneurship job creation digital skills/literacy digital services		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Connectivity @ Tags: transport people2people energy digital connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Migration @ (methodology for tagging under development)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities (methodology for marker and tagging under development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
12. Amounts concerned	Budget line(s) (article, item): BGUE-B2022-14.020120-C1-INTPA Total estimated cost: EUR 3 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 3 000 000 The contribution is for an amount of EUR 800 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2022, and for an amount of EUR 1 100 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2023, and for an amount of EUR 1 100 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2024, subject to the availability of appropriations for the respective financial years following the adoption of the relevant annual budget, or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
13. Type of financing	Direct management through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grants - Prizes - Procurement contracts for services and small-scale supplies, or works Indirect management through: The entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.4			
14. Type of measure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cooperation facility <input type="checkbox"/> Measures in favour of Civil Society			

1.2 Summary of the Action

Sierra Leone suffers from severely low economic and human development. Since the end of the civil war (1991-2002), the situation in Sierra Leone has progressively improved and the economy has started to grow. However the country is still one of the poorest in the world and its full economic potential is untapped. Some progress has been made on key indicators for gender, such as on the share of women employed for cash in total number

employed in non-agricultural activities, which currently stands at 45%, compared with 41% in 2013. Their male counterpart's standing at 72%. Challenges remain important and among them, continued gender stereotypes and limited financial and general capacity constraints facing women. The country faces complex, interlinked and persistent development challenges. Over the last twenty years, the country was hit by several external shocks (Ebola, iron ore price slump, and recently COVID-19) and the vast majority of its population is still facing dire socio-economic conditions as illustrated by a Human Development Index of 184/189 with important gender inequalities proved by the Gender Inequalities Index (155/162). The main challengers are:

- (1) Economic challenges of stagnation, unemployment and low productivity;
- (2) Social challenges of poverty, inequality, precariat combined with population growth;
- (3) Weak governance and fragile democracy;
- (4) Environmental challenges of biodiversity loss, degrading ecosystems and climate change.

In that context, the general objective of the **Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 (MIP)** is to promote a stable and prosperous democracy and economic diversification through three main priority areas of intervention:

- Green economy
- Human development
- Governance

The expected results of the MIP are:

- Green economy: progress towards a green and resilient economy to provide decent jobs and a sustainable, inclusive green economic transformation
- Human development: strengthened education and social protection systems for people living in vulnerable situations
- Governance: strengthened democratic institutions, better government efficiency, and improved investment climate

Lessons from past cooperation programmes have shown that, in this challenging context, a flexible instrument which allows for quick responses is instrumental to the swift implementation of these programmes. This Cooperation Facility should also facilitate a Team Europe approach and help to coordinate, design, implement and assess respective initiatives.

In that context, this Cooperation Facility will be a transversal instrument to launch activities which are not yet formally identified in support of the implementation of other initiatives of the MIP. Concretely, the Cooperation Facility will be small scale initiatives to be mobilised on an ad-hoc base. This Facility is also meant to put into practice the new EU external approach as well as the Gender Action Plan III (GAP III, 2021-2025)¹. Beyond the MIP, the activities to be launched under this Facility will accompany the transition to the NDICI-Global Europe and critically serve the interests of the EU, and of its public, economic and cultural diplomacy - including through strategic communication actions towards the wider public.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

2.1.1 Political and financial outlook

Sierra Leone's turbulent past has left the country dangling at the bottom of all development indicators with dependency on external aid alarmingly high. Inherent institutional weaknesses, very low human capital development, deeply rooted governance deficiencies, distractions from the development agenda and proneness to

¹ EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III, welcomed through Presidency Conclusions by 24 Member States - An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EU External Action, https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/join-2020-17-final_en.pdf

external shocks hinder the country development potential. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the economy was only slowly recovering from the 2016 collapse of world market prices for iron, the Ebola epidemic, which paralysed the economy and led to a GDP contraction of 20.5% and the 2017-18 pre-electoral environment that impacted on the macro-economic and public finance management. The country has made more gains in urban poverty reduction, currently estimating 34.8% (on 2018 survey calculation), compared to 46.9% in 2003/04; against rural poverty at 73.9%, compared to 78.7% in 2003/04 - suggesting poverty remains a rural phenomenon in the country².

After a period of lax policies reflecting in the significant deterioration of fiscal aggregates and the accumulation of a large stock of arrears, the government elected in April 2018 adopted sound policies paving the way for restored macroeconomic stability and fiscal sustainability. Capitalising on this progress, Sierra Leone secured, in November 2018, a new International Monetary Fund (IMF) Extended Credit Facility (ECF) -supported program and has been engaging other development partners to support wide-ranging economic and social reforms. The authorities engaged in reforms in different areas including public finance management, fighting corruption, human capital development, agriculture and fisheries development, enhancing gender equality and women empowerment or tackling gender based violence. Tangible progress can be observed relating to human development and in particular in relation to the education sector which has been high in the political agenda with the flagship Free Quality School Education Programme (increase in expenditures and critically in enrolment rates). Likewise, the sound macro-economic and fiscal policy mix is reflecting in sounder aggregates such as the inflation heading to single digit, the rise in domestic revenue mobilisation or the prospect of a primary budget surplus in 2022. However the shock of COVID-19 pandemic has been preventing Sierra Leone from fully grasping the expected benefits of the policy shift.

The balance is quite mixed when it comes to economic governance. Efficiency of the government institutions and quality of service delivery remain a concern. The recent resuming of activities in the mining sector point to some improvement in the business and investment climate, but sustained progress is hampered by the perception of corruption which remains high.

COVID-19 pandemic indeed severely hit Sierra Leone economy and public finances. The shock was external but highlighted the vulnerabilities of the country stemming from some deep-rooted weaknesses reflected in the extremely delicate balance between legitimate development needs and fiscal space. As a result of the pandemic, public debt rose to 73% of GDP – high risks of debt distress according to the IMF and also above the quasi fiscal rules of the government.

Sierra Leone has signed all the nine fundamental human rights treaties and submitted initial and/or periodic reports on five of the seven ratified treaties, namely: Convention Against Torture, Convention on Civil and Political Rights, Convention on the Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination and Convention on the Rights of Children.

2.1.2 Rationale and Assessment

The basis for programming is the Medium-term National development Plan (MTNDP 2019-2023). The MTNDP is a comprehensive plan that is frank about the challenges faced by Sierra Leone and relevant to the country needs. MTNDP's key socio-economic goals are aligned with the EU cooperation policy.

The challenges are wide-ranging and can be classified as sectorial (such as inadequate human capital and education or lack of access to energy and finance), systemic (such as persistent inequalities and poverty or weak democratic and inefficient institutions) and political (high political polarisation which undermines consensus-building and participation).

With a view to sustain the prospects of a resilient, prosperous and peaceful future in the interest of Sierra Leone and the EU, the Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 will adopt a comprehensive approach combining:

² Voluntary National Review (VNR), Report 2021, Sierra Leone. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/279542021_VNR_Report_Sierra_Leone.pdf

i) the promotion of an inclusive economic transformation towards sustainable green growth and economic diversification with, ii) a conscious process that addresses the drivers of fragility and enable strong social and political institutions.

Activities under the Cooperation Facility are not explicitly identified and are not necessarily linked to a specific policy or programme of the EU but should contribute to gender equality and the GAP III. Mindful of the shortcomings above mentioned and of the need to promote EU interests and positions in Sierra Leone, small-scale initiatives will be launched on an ad-hoc base to support the implementation of the MIP as well as EU public, cultural and economic diplomacy.

The activities are expected to be of diverse nature and could include:

- Design and roll out at national level of (a) major public campaign(s) aimed at ordinary citizens, with the objective of measurably increasing the profile, awareness, understanding and approval of the EU's partnership with the country. All such campaigns will be data-driven, rigorously tracking hard Key Performance Indicators (KPI) that will allow content to be constantly adjusted in line with evidence of the material and approaches that resonate most successfully with the audience.
- Actions to promote understanding and awareness of the Union's values, interests and specific policies, including human rights, foreign and security policy, science and research, gender equality, the visibility of Team Europe Initiatives, fight against disinformation, as well its multilateral agenda.
- Strengthening of networks and long-term relationships with key target audiences and partners –such as youth, students, women, academics, Non State Actors (NSAs), business and innovative companies- including leveraging existing EU programmes, in order to facilitate future cooperation across policy areas.
- Evaluations assessments or studies, capacity-building activities, or procurement of small equipment or works if deemed necessary.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Short problem analysis:

Lessons from past cooperation initiatives – including the Technical Assistance Facilities- highlight the importance for the EU Delegation to count with a flexible instrument which allows for quick responses to the needs stemming from the specificities of programme implementation in a country facing a long-lasting situation of fragility and low level of development. In particular the low institutional capacity in the government sector and beyond is a hindrance to swift and effective responses.

Likewise, the introduction of NDICI-Global Europe creates new opportunities for Sierra Leone and EU interests especially in the political and promotion of human rights sphere. However the new modality also implies a transition period during which needs not yet fully identified are likely to emerge. It is of critical importance that the partners and stakeholders are better aware of the new EU external approaches.

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

The expected partners and stakeholders of the action are diverse and include: the EU, EU Member States, Sierra Leone's central government bodies, sub-national governments, and Non State Actors including business and civil society associations, business community.

The proposed action will provide the EU Delegation with a useful instrument for the implementation of the initiatives identified in the MIP and also beyond in support to the EU strategic communication and economic diplomacy. The action will allow to react quickly, when windows of opportunities to foster EU external policy objectives arise. The specific activities are not identified ex-ante or linked to a specific policy or programme but should respect gender equality and the human rights based approach. On the contrary, small scale initiatives – but potentially with a significant leverage- will be launched on an ad-hoc base supporting people living in vulnerable

situations. The flexibility in the planning of the activities –and hence the responsiveness of the instrument- as well as the wide range of modalities which can be targeted will be critical to the efficiency of the Cooperation Facility.

On the basis of a strategic plan, to be drawn up by the Delegation, the Cooperation Facility will implement activities aimed at increasing awareness and communication of EU values, interests, in particular Team Europe approach and actions including public outreach events and campaigns. The strategic plan will also integrate the political communication aspects financed under the Press and Information budget.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The overall objective of the action is to promote a sustainable socio-economic development in the country, and to enhance EU's global agenda, values and positions in Sierra Leone. The specific objectives are:

- To support the implementation of the MIP (and the TEI “Green Pact in Sierra Leone”) in particular relation to the improvement of business environment and investment climate, to the protection of terrestrial and marine ecosystems and biodiversity or to the governance of terrestrial and marine resources. To put into practice the EU Global Strategy and to promote EU values and positions in Sierra Leone

The expected outputs/ outcomes of the MIP are:

1. Green economy: progress towards a green and resilient economy to provide decent jobs and a sustainable, inclusive green economic transformation
2. Human development: strengthened education and social protection systems
3. Governance: strengthened democratic institutions, better government efficiency, and improved investment climate

The Specific Objectives of this action are:

1. To complement the interventions of the MIP
2. To reinforce EU strategic communication, increase understanding, awareness and appreciation of the EU
3. To strengthen the EU role as a strategic partner for Sierra Leone

The expected results of this action in relation to the above Specific Objectives (SO) are:

SO1- To complement the interventions of the MIP

Expected results:

- 1.1 Improved understanding of the context through analysis and research on areas relevant to the achievements of the objectives of the MIP (and the TEI “Green Pact in Sierra Leone”) in particular relation to the improvement of business environment and investment climate, to the protection of terrestrial and marine ecosystems and biodiversity or to the governance of terrestrial and marine resources
- 1.2 Enhanced formulation, implementation, monitoring, audit and evaluation of EU interventions

SO2- To reinforce EU strategic communication

Expected results:

- 2.1 Enhanced EU visibility and appreciation through strategic communication on MIP interventions and public diplomacy on EU Global Agenda

SO3- To strengthen the EU role as a strategic partner for Sierra Leone

Expected results:

- 3.1 Reinforced political and policy dialogue –including with Non State Actors (NSAs)- on key areas such as human rights, gender, climate change, governance and trade
- 3.2 Strengthened public, cultural and economic diplomacy

3.3 Enhanced collaboration on multilateral matters

3.2 Indicative Activities

The initiatives of this proposed action will be aligned with the general and specific objectives above described but will be formally identified when the needs arise. The adaptable character of this facility is instrumental to its responsiveness. They should underpin and operationalise the EU's foreign policy in Sierra Leone.

The activities to be launched under the Cooperation Facility listed below are only tentative and not meant to be exhaustive.

Activities related to SO1:

- Research, studies and services on key technical topics related to MIP priority areas, including cross-cutting issues which are not included in the original programmes and projects they relate to
- Technical assistance and capacity development initiatives targeting the central government and agencies
- Initiatives aiming at strengthening the institutional capacity and financial sustainability of NSAs and local authorities
- Support for the participation of Sierra Leone – general government and NSAs- in EU and international initiatives
- Capacity development and institutional building, including through exchanging public expertise, such as TAIEX and Twinning.
- Coordination, design, implementation and assessment of TEI
- Preparation and promotion of the interventions of other EU instruments in the country (EFSD+, Erasmus+, Research, etc.) including feasibility studies, preparation of blending or private sector investments, promotion and networking activities
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Audits
- Small scale interventions including procurement of work and services not included in other projects and programmes

Activities related to SO2:

- Strategic communication, public diplomacy and fight against disinformation in relation to the MIP and to the EU Global Agenda
- Cultural diplomacy activities (actions could take the form of campaigns, organisation and sponsoring of events of public outreach and visibility to targeted audiences)
- Training and scholarship programmes for the youth, for key players in Civil Society Organisations (CSO) or for public institutions staff

Activities related to SO3:

- Political and policy dialogue –including with NSAs- on areas such as human rights, gender, climate change, governance or trade.
- Assessment of laws and policies and elaboration of sector and policy analyses, position papers, op-eds and lobbying strategies and their implementation
- Strengthening and capacity building of public bodies involved in the oversight of public policies
- Economic diplomacy activities (fairs, visits, matchmaking events, investment promotion together with EU MS, etc.)
- Support of pro-European associations (business organisations, ex-alumni networks, etc.)
- Actions to support EU influence, positions and values.

The commitment of the EU's contribution to the Team Europe Initiatives foreseen under this action plan will be complemented by other contributions from Team Europe partners. It is subject to the formal confirmation of each respective partners' meaningful contribution as early as possible. In the event that the TEIs and/or these contributions do not materialise the EU action may continue outside a TEI framework.

3.3 Mainstreaming

With reference to the National Indicative Programme and the Mid-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP 2019-2023) of the Government of Sierra Leone, cross cutting issues such as good governance, environment and climate change, gender equality and other issues related to human rights are significant priorities. To ensure results, said cross-cutting issues will be mainstreamed in the identification, preparation and implementation of on-going and future EU interventions.

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls will be reinforced by adopting a multi-dimensional contextual analysis as regards gender. The action will support the collection of sex-disaggregated data, the qualitative monitoring of action design and implementation arrangements, and the assessment of the gender effects. This will allow narrowing the gender gap in economic opportunities. The action contributes to the EU Gender Action Plan III (GAP III, 2021-2025), more specifically “addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities offered by the green transition and the digital transformation” and “promoting economic and social rights empowering girls and women”.

Human Rights

The Action operationalises the human rights-based approach by ensuring that all rights are respected and that empowerment, participation, non-discrimination, accountability and transparency are promoted. It will capacitate "rights-holders" in claiming their rights and "duty-bearers" in meeting their obligations.

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
Strategy, planning and policies	Limited knowledge of the new EU external approach	M	L	Management guidance and follow up, policy dialogue with European partners
Implementation , monitoring evaluation of policies	Low institutional capacity and government effectiveness	H	M	Use of well-target small scale intervention

The new EU external approach, fostering a stronger Europe, is not understood or exploited by Delegation staff and European partners. Likewise, this action is a novelty. Adequate management guidance and follow up, as well as policy dialogue with European partners shall mitigate this risk.

Lessons Learnt:

Previous EU initiatives including Technical Cooperation Facilities (TCF) are instructive of the context and risk for this Cooperation Facility. Within the stipulations of their financing agreement, successive TCF proved to be flexible, allowing the EU to respond quickly to the needs raised by the specificities of programme implementation in a country facing a long-lasting difficult situation and fragility. The demand-driven activities contributed to the funding of strategic studies and enhanced the smooth preparation and implementation of bigger cooperation programmes, and supported the achievement of results foreseen in the previous EDFs.

However, the need to consent with the National Authorising Officer (NAO) limited the scope of previous TCFs. In order to finance actions in the primarily EU's interest and have full control of the initiative, no financing agreement with the host country will be signed. A 3-years multi-annual approach shall ensure continuity of the action.

Lessons learnt from previous technical cooperation and training projects in Sierra Leone include the difficulties in sustaining progress in a country that is at a low level of development. A significant obstacle to the success of EU funded programmes lies in the generally very weak institutional capacities (and in the insufficient coordination in the public and private sectors).

Civil society organisations are critical actors in development and should play a more important role in promoting accountability, transparency, and inclusion, as well as in service delivery particularly in rural areas. However generally speaking, there is a critical need to strengthen the capacity of CSOs if they are to engage in a structured dialogue with beneficiaries, authorities and Development Partners.

Likewise, well-targeted small scales interventions targeting specific public institutions could raise awareness and yield significant impact.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is to support the EU-Sierra Leone partnership. It will enable the EU to support the interventions of the MIP, reinforce EU strategic communication and strengthen the role of the EU as a strategic partner for Sierra Leone.

The context in which the interventions will take place is one of low institutional capacity and significant exposure to risks at different levels (country or sectoral).

The Cooperation Facility will be instrumental to mitigate these risks and to maximise the impact of the EU cooperation programme and of its strategic communication and economic diplomacy. Considering the above constraints, it is critical that the EU counts with a flexible instrument which allows for quick, small and well targeted interventions including cross-cutting issues which are not included in the original programmes and projects.

In that perspective, the Cooperation Facility will complement the interventions of the MIP. Thanks to its design and nature, the action will be a suitable instrument to efficiently put in place small interventions, e.g. to work closely with and to support the Civil Society and NSAs or local authorities. Likewise, the action can bring specific support to existing programmes and projects with a view to maximise their impact.

The Cooperation Facility will also offer the possibility to reinforce the strategic communication of the EU and the role of the EU as a strategic partner of Sierra Leone. They will enable the implementation of the Strategic Communication Plan with a view to enhance understanding, awareness and appreciation of the EU. The specific activities are expected to be of different modalities.

Generally speaking, the concrete initiatives to be put into place under this action will be driven by needs which remain to be specified. By nature, these initiatives will be complementary but expected to have an important potential impact in relation to their budget.

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

Results	Results chain (a): Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (a): (at least one indicator per expected result)	Sources of data
Impact	1.To support the interventions of the MIP 2.To strengthen EU strategic communication 3.To enhance the role of the EU as a strategic partner for Sierra Leone	1.Number of MIP interventions supported 2.Number of identification/ formulation studies contracted 3.Number of financing agreements signed	1.Implementation reports and terms of reference 2.Signed contracts 3.Signed financing agreements
Outcome 1	Evidence-based disaggregated data and expertise for the MIP implementation provided	1.1.Number of research studies produced and used 1.2.Number of MIP technical assistance provided 1.3.Number of grants to NSA provided	1.1.Terms of reference of projects/ programmes 1.2. and 1.3.Signed contracts
Outcome 2	EU's strategic communication is reinforced, resulting in increased public understating, awareness and appreciation	2.1.EU visibility, awareness and brand recognition among target public 2.2.Number of campaign	2.1.Political reports 2.2.Media coverage – including social media-
Outcome 3	EU's role as strategic partner of Sierra Leone reinforced	3.Number of international and local partnerships established	3.1.Communiques 3.2.Political reports
Indicative output 1 related to outcome 1	1.1.Improved understanding of the context through analysis and research on areas relevant to the MIP (and the TEI)	1.1.1 Number of analysis and research completed	1.1.1 Research mission reports
Indicative output 2 related to outcome 1	1.2.Enhanced formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EU interventions	1.2.1 Number of technical assistance missions contracted	1.2.1 Technical assistance mission reports

Indicative output 1 related to outcome 2	2.1 Enhanced EU visibility and appreciation through strategic communication on MIP interventions and on EU Global agenda	2.1.1 Number of communication activities on MIP initiatives 2.1.2 Number of communication activities on regarding EU values (human rights, gender, climate change) 2.1.3 Number of followers in social media (Facebook and twitter)	Communication report
Indicative Output 1 related to Outcome 3	3.1 Reinforced political and policy dialogue on key areas including human rights, gender, climate change, governance or trade	3.1 Number of dialogue events organised	3.1 Political reports and notes
Indicative Output 2 related to Outcome 2	2.2 Strengthened public, cultural and economic diplomacy	2.2 Number of events organised	2.2 Political reports and notes

4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the Republic of Sierra Leone.

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 adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.
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 Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures³.

4.3.1 Direct Management (Grants)

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

³ 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.

The purpose of the grants will be to support to entities not pertaining to the central government which fulfil the overall objective of this action, i.e. supporting the implementation of the MIP (and the TEI), putting into practice the EU Global Strategy and promoting EU values and positions in Sierra Leone. The following conditions will need to be met:

- Objectives and/ or activities/ mandates of the entity are aligned with the objectives of the MIP and of the EU Global Agenda
- The demonstration by the entity of its operational capacity to deliver, of the transparency and sustainability of its operations

(b) Type of applicants targeted

The possible beneficiaries of grants have not been identified at this stage. They may include:

- Non State Actors
- Universities
- Local authorities

4.3.2 Direct Management (Prize(s))

Purpose of the prize:

a) Prizes will contribute to SO2- To reinforce EU strategic communication and SO3- To strengthen the EU role as a strategic partner for Sierra Leone

b) The type of participants targeted:

Legal entities and natural persons or groupings without legal personality (such as pupils or schools), local authorities, public bodies, international organisations, NGOs (for instance for environmental prizes), economic actors such as SMEs, profit or non-profit organisations (for instance for innovative approaches).

4.3.3 Direct Management (Procurement)

Procurement of services, works and small equipment is considered for the three specific objectives mentioned in section 3.1.

The procurement of services is considered for undertaking studies and assessments, for mobilising technical assistance, for organising events or launching communication campaigns.

The procurement of works or small equipment is considered to support the implementation of initiatives aligned with the objectives of the MIP or EU interests or positions.

4.3.4 Indirect Management with a Member State Organisation and/or an international organisation

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with International Organisations, provided the objectives are aligned with these of the MIP and that the agencies have a comparative advantage in the implementation of the initiative.

The International Organisation(s) will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

1. The demonstration by the entity of proven operational capacity to deliver i.e. prior experience working on past and current EU funded initiatives similar to the activities under this action with a record of satisfactory performance.
2. The entity must have undergone an ex ante assessment of its systems and procedures and there should be no conflict of interest.
3. Value addition of the entity in terms of reach, established physical presence in the activity location and ability to engage with a wide spectrum of notable stakeholders and partners.
4. Value for money, transparency and accountability considerations.

The implementation by these entities entails SO1- To complement the interventions of the MIP.

4.4 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

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

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

4.5 Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (EUR) 2022	EU contribution (EUR) 2023	EU contribution (EUR) 2024	EU contribution (EUR) TOTAL
Objective 1): Support to the interventions of the MIP	500 000	900 000	800 000	2.200 000
- Direct Management (procurement)	400 000	480 000	400 000	1.280 000
- Direct management (grant)	100 000	120 000	100 000	320 000
-Indirect Management with an international organisation	0	300 000	300 000	600 000
Objective 2): Strengthening of EU strategic communication	200 000	100 000	200 000	500 000
- Direct Management (procurement)	170 000	100 000	170 000	440 000
- Direct Management (Prizes)	30 000	-	30 000	60 000
Objective 3) Enhancing of the role of the EU as a strategic partner for Sierra Leone	100 000	100 000	100 000	300 000
Direct Management (procurement)	100 000	80 000	100 000	280 000
- Direct Management (prizes)	-	20 000	-	20 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	This will be covered by the funds under “Objective 1 – Direct management”			
Total	800 000	1.100 000	1.100 000	3 000 000

4.6 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The implementation of the action being direct management, the Delegation will be fully responsible for identifying and selecting the initiatives. Standard procedures will apply.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the Commission may participate in the above governance structures set up for governing the implementation of the action.

5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1 Monitoring and Reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced.

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

The Delegation will establish internal procedures for planning and monitoring the activities under this Action. Likewise the Delegation will report on a yearly basis on the activities implemented under this facility.

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, no ex-post evaluation(s) will be carried out for this action or its components.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination⁴. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

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.

Regional and global strategic communication and public diplomacy funds will be managed from headquarters.

At country level, action documents for specific sector programmes are no longer required to include a provision for communication 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.

To that end, the delegation in Sierra Leone will first develop short strategic communication and public diplomacy plans that reflect the objectives of the Delegation as a whole in this domain, initially covering the period up to the Mid-Term Review (MTR). The plan will be endorsed by a coordination mechanism comprised of the European External Action Service (EEAS), the department for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) and the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), and will be reviewed, modified and extended as appropriate as part of the MTR process.

The EU is well known in Sierra Leone and enjoys a solid reputation as a privileged partner. However, knowledge about its wide range of interventions and actions is limited even for those deployed in the country. The awareness and understanding of the role of the EU as a global actor also critically need to be enhanced.

⁴ See best [practice of evaluation dissemination](#)

The main communication objective will be to improve the visibility of the EU and the understanding of its values and actions by projecting the EU's positive role not only as a reliable development partner but also as a global actor. Mindful of this objective, the Delegation will promote a dynamic image of the EUD team, share success stories in Sierra Leone and communicate about EU values, EU solidarity and EU's role internationally.

The second objective together with EU Member States (MS) and like-minded partners will be to communicate on our support to the government and to NSAs in areas that resonate locally and where EU has added value: strengthening of institutions, electoral support, improved local governance and service delivery, empowerment of women and girls, fight against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, right to education for all, access to justice, decent job creation, private sector development, agricultural diversification and the importance of environmental action.

The third objective is to implement public outreach and visibility actions in line with HQ communication priorities, among which: EU-Africa relations, support to multi-lateral and global partnerships, Green Deal /climate change, engagement with youth, cultural operators and the media and last but not least fight against disinformation.

This will allow the Delegation to plan and execute a multiannual strategic communication plan and public, cultural and economic diplomacy actions with sufficient critical mass to be effective on a national scale.

The plan will target different stakeholders – including general government, NSAs, universities, women, youth, students, business, and innovative companies - with specific objectives, messages and means, to be identified in the communication plan.

The plan will include the design and roll out at national level of major public campaigns aimed at ordinary citizens, with the objective of measurably increasing the profile, awareness, understanding and approval of the EU's partnership with the country. Such campaigns will be data-driven, rigorously tracking hard KPIs that will allow content to be constantly adjusted in line with evidence of the material and approaches that resonate most successfully with the audience.

The communication plan will be implemented through direct management (procurement). It is envisaged that a contract for communication and visibility will be contracted.