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ANNEX 2

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 EU Support to democracy, peace and social cohesion in 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	EU Support to democracy, peace and social cohesion in Sierra Leone CRIS number: NDICI AFRICA/2021/43590 OPSYS business reference: ACT-60688 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 Sierra Leone
4. Programming document	Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 - Republic of Sierra Leone
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results	MIP Priority area 3: Governance Specific Objective 1: Strengthened democratic institutions, voice and accountability, and checks and balances shall deepen the democracy, peace and social cohesion.
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	3.1 Democracy, peace and social cohesion 151 - Government & Civil Society 152 - Conflict, Peace & Security
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG: 16 “Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions” Targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16.3 “Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and ensure equal access to justice for all”, 16.6 “Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels”, 16.7 “Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels”. Other significant SDGs (up to 9) and, where appropriate, targets: SDG 5: “Gender Equality” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.5 “Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life”. SDG 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

	<p>▪ 10.2: “By 2030 empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status”.</p> <p>SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals</p>			
8 a) DAC code(s)	15150 - Democratic participation and civil society (10%) 15151 - Elections (50%) 15152 - Legislatures and political parties (10%) 15153 - Media and free flow of information (10%) 15210 - Security system management and reform (10%) 15220 - Civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution (10%)			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	20000 – Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society. 21000 - International NGO 40000 – Multilateral organisations			
9. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
10. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women’s and girl’s empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
11. Internal markers and Tags:	Digitalisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Tags: digital connectivity		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital governance		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital entrepreneurship			

	job creation digital skills/literacy digital services		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" 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 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
12. Amounts concerned	Budget line(s): BGUE-B2022-14.020120-C1-INTPA Total estimated cost: EUR 7 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 7 000 000 The contribution is for an amount of EUR 5 000 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2022 and for an amount of EUR 1 600 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2023 and for an amount of EUR 400 000 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	Indirect management with the entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.1 and/or Direct management through grants (section 4.3.2).			

1.2. Summary of the Action

In view of the increasing political polarisation and threats to peace and stability as the country moves closer to the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2023, the European Union renews its commitment towards democratic governance in Sierra Leone and pledges support to the conduct of peaceful and credible elections and enhanced citizens' participation in electoral processes and political space.

The present action aims at consolidating the democratic process in Sierra Leone and supporting change processes undertaken by the Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) and promote rights holders and citizens participation (notably women and youth) in democratic governance and political process through strengthening of Civil Society Organisations (CSO)-led initiatives, media and democratic institutions supporting transparency and accountability of duty bearers. In line with the results outlined in the multiannual indicative programme, the action will seek to consolidate democracy, peace and social cohesion in Sierra Leone, specifically by:

- providing the national electoral management bodies with needed know-how and means to conduct peaceful and credible elections, (notably addressing implementation and accountability gaps in the areas of legal reforms, electoral planning, electoral risks management, conflict prevention and mitigation results management systems, civic/voter education, gender equality and inclusion);
- supporting elections' related conflicts and violence prevention/mitigation/management by i) identifying (root) causes of electoral conflict, ii) promoting inter-party dialogue and dispute resolution mechanisms, iii) improving

capacities of electoral stakeholders in effective leadership and conflict management/prevention approaches in the conduct of elections, iv) supporting judiciary capacity to resolve election disputes timely and peacefully;

- supporting CSOs, media, parliament in view to strengthen citizens' participation, social accountability, promote electoral and democratic reform and support conflict-free electoral process.

The action adopts an **electoral cycle approach** that addresses key pre-election issues and contributes to the technical conduct of the elections and sets the space for furthering reforms and enhance inclusive democracy at the grassroots level. It promotes and supports the **implementation of the 2018 Electoral Observation Mission (EOM)**'s recommendations – a political and programmatic priority for the European Union – and builds on the outcomes and recommendations of the National EOM Task Force and the electoral reforms conferences spearheaded by the Electoral Management Bodies of Sierra Leone, as well as of the UN Needs Assessment and EU **Electoral Follow Up missions deployed in 2021**. The underlying intervention logic is underpinned by the electoral risks management and conflict sensitivity approach as well as EU and the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone (EC-SL) gender equality and inclusion policies, which identify electoral risks and non-inclusion as critical risks to democracy.

The implementation modalities will be confirmed after the adoption of the Financing Decision. In recognition of the strategic relevance of pursuing a coherent and multilateral response to political risks and governance challenges, the European Union seeks to implement the action in partnership with one or more International Organisation(s) and in collaboration with EU Member States in line with a Team Europe approach. Two implementation modalities are envisaged: 1) **Indirect management with international organisation(s)** to support all objectives of the action and notably i) contribute towards a coordinated multilateral response to electoral needs and related risks, coherent political dialogue and peace messaging by the international community; ii) provide technical assistance to the electoral management bodies, judiciary and security apparatus; iii) procure sensitive electoral material, if need be. It is envisaged the international organisation(s) will entrust implementation of some tasks to sub-delegated implementing partners, notably CSOs, to support multi-stakeholders engagement in democratic inclusion, electoral conflict prevention and election dispute resolution; civic/voter and peace education and social media literacy. 2) **Direct management: the direct award of action grant(s) to NGOs/public bodies** to support i) democratic inclusion, specifically focused on political participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities (PWDs); ii) electoral conflict prevention and election dispute resolution; iii) peace education and social media literacy; iv) citizens watch and domestic electoral observation and other CSOs-led initiatives in support to deepening democracy.

This action complements and supplements ongoing EU commitment towards democratic governance funded under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) National Indicative Programme as well as the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). The action is aligned with the European Consensus for Development, the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, the EU Roadmap for engagement with CSOs, the EU Gender Action Plan III (GAP III, 2021-2025)¹ and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The action will contribute towards progress in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 'Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels', as well as SDG 5 'Gender equality' and SDG 10 'Reduced inequalities'.

2. RATIONALE

2.1 Context

Since the end of the civil war (1991-2002), the situation in Sierra Leone has progressively improved, the country has maintained peace and stability and achieved good progress in state-building efforts. The economy has started to grow with positive prospects of socio-economic development. However the country is still one of the poorest in the world, is dangling at the bottom of all development indicators and is facing considerable threats. Sierra Leone's human development is very low (position 184 out of 188 countries) and the gender inequality index is one of the lowest in the world (position 155 over 162 countries). 52% of the population lives below the poverty line. Sierra Leone's full economic potential is untapped and the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the country longstanding social and economic challenges, further increasing inequalities. The pandemic will continue to dampen consumption and investment in the short terms. Although the annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate is predicted at 3% in 2021, Sierra Leone is only projected to reach pre-COVID GDP per capital levels in 2024. The economic costs of the

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

crisis, including setbacks to the Government's revenue mobilisation goals, have worsened the already-tight fiscal financing, and Sierra Leone's is at a high risk of debt distress.

Sierra Leone's history of protracted conflict and civil war ended with a transition to democracy that has seen four consecutive elections held since 2002, the most recent being in 2018. While the country has experienced alternation of power, two political parties - the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and the All People's Congress (APC) have dominated the electoral landscape since the 1960s. Though there are other parties, they do not weigh heavily on the political scene and political polarisation is extremely high and strongly tied with ethnic and regional divides.

The last parliamentary and presidential elections in 2018 occurred in a challenging context marked by economic and infrastructural recovery as the country was emerging from the Ebola pandemic and other natural disasters. The 2018 elections saw the opposition SLPP emerge winner of the presidential elections with a narrow margin, in a run-off election. Though the electoral process was considered credible, the results were keenly contested and the electoral process could only be concluded following mediation by regional and international partners after a period of tensions, amplified by political polarisation. The process ultimately allowed for political alternation through elections and has been praised as another milestone in Sierra Leone's democratisation journey.

However, despite the democratic transition democracy in Sierra Leone remains fragile. In the absence of a full reconciliation after the civil war the potential for political tensions between parties remains high. The electoral context has been marred in the recent past by lengthy and highly controversial court decisions over electoral disputes and subsequent bye-elections, which were marked by violence. Political polarisation, as well as ethnic divisions remain defining factors of Sierra Leonean politics. Reducing political tensions and reaching balanced democratic reforms would enhance stability and reduce the likelihood of politically motivated violence in the short term. This action seeks to support the country through its transition from a post-conflict context towards a sustainable inclusive development path through the conduct of peaceful, credible and transparent elections in Sierra Leone in 2023 and beyond, and improved participation of all citizen and especially women and youth in the democratic and political space.

The EU has a long history of engagement in Sierra Leone, in the area of electoral assistance as well as electoral observation, decentralisation, parliamentary support and social accountability. Together with other donors (e.g. UN) the EU has contributed to electoral operations since 1996. Fully-fledged electoral observation missions were deployed in 2007, 2012 and in 2018 and the EU was one of the key funders of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) implemented project "Support to the National Electoral Commission (SNEC)", which was re-engaged in 2021 to support monitoring and implementation of electoral observation mission recommendations and notably electoral legal reforms.

Since 2018 the European Union is the only development partner providing electoral cycle support to Sierra Leone. Under the framework of the 11th EDF Governance Support Programme, the two main Electoral Management Bodies, the Sierra Leonean Parliament and the National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA) receive technical and financial support. Two complementary grants are funded under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights to support i) citizens' watch and engagement in monitoring and advocacy of Electoral Observation Missions' (EOM) recommendations and ii) women's groups' advocacy and action in support to gender equality in politics and decision-making. These actions are ongoing and will complement the interventions funded under this action.

Implementing Electoral Observation Missions' (EOM) recommendations is a key political and programmatic priority for the European Union. This is strongly pursued under the ongoing 11th EDF Governance Support Programme by means of a partnership agreement with the UNDP and independent Technical assistance provision. The EU-UNDP's partnership agreement has been renewed in 2021 to provide coordinated support towards the follow up and implementation of key EOM recommendations. In the aftermath of the 2018 general elections, the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone, with support by the UNDP multi-donor basket fund, organised a national conference to review the recommendations provided by the national and international election observer missions which had been deployed. Subsequently, a multi-stakeholders National Task Force was formed in 2019 to work towards implementing EOMs' recommendations. Positively the National Task Force was relaunched in June 2021 and in August 2021, the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone (EC-SL) held a national conference on electoral legal reforms which aimed at building political consensus around a **roadmap of electoral reform towards the 2023 elections**. Awareness was raised and some level of consensus was built around key EOM recommendations, whose implementation this action will specifically seek to support. While there is no certainty about the political will for constitutional amendments, the EC-SL, Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) and the Judiciary have prioritised the reforms process in 2021 with a series of new and revised electoral laws expected by early 2022.

An **Electoral Follow-up Mission (EU EFM)** took place in October 2021; it highlighted both the opportunity and need for critical and timely action towards the implementation of the 2018 Electoral Observation Mission recommendations to ensure credible, inclusive, transparent and peaceful elections.

Whilst the context remains fragile it is also marked by **strong national ownership and a positive track record for democratic reforms**. Indeed, His Excellence President Julius Maada Bio won the elections with a progressive campaign agenda which made the electoral reforms, gender equality, decentralisation and repeal of the seditious libel, priority commitments of his government and he delivered what governments before him failed to do.

Very important steps have been taken by the present administration to consolidate democracy. In July 2020, Sierra Leone abolished seditious libel, opening the space for freedom of expression and association. Seditious libel provisions had been in force since 1965 and were used by successive governments to clamp down on political opponents and muzzle or arrest journalists. Alongside the repeal bill, the Parliament also enacted the new Independent Media Commission (IMC) Act 2020 covering provisions for a stronger IMC and passed in June 2021 a Cybercrime Act which is regarded as inclusive of political parties and non-state actors' contributions and providing sufficient safeguards to freedom of speech and other human rights.

Furthermore, in July 2021 ministers of cabinet approved the Gender Empowerment Bill for parliamentary debate. This bill, tabled in parliament in October aims at expanding both the political and economic spaces for women. In particular, the Bill proposes minimum 30% parliamentary seats for women in all districts. It is expected that commitment towards women participation in political and electoral processes will also be reflected in the on-going reviews of the Public Election Act and Political Parties Act.

Also positively, in the course of 2021, the President reached out to CSOs and invited them to engage dialogue at the highest level on national issues related to governance and social cohesion. Since then, space for civil society engagement has been strengthened and some protracted controversial issues promoted by the government in the review of the decentralisation policy and legislation seeking to introduce non-partisan elections for local authorities have been withdrawn, another confidence building measure by the executive.

In line with the key EOM recommendation to secure predictable financing for elections, the Government of Sierra Leone has increased budgetary allocation to the Electoral Commission and pledged to support the 2023 election process through a dedicated financial allocation under the **National Election Support Trust Fund (NEST)**, thereby providing some assurance that operations will be enabled for the elections to unfold peacefully and efficiently.

Positively the government has also established in September 2021 a **multi-stakeholder Electoral Steering Committee (ESC)** with the aim to ensure coordination among all electoral stakeholders and monitor the management of significant electoral risks relating to financing, security, justice systems and operations.

Finally, following the conduct of a **UN needs assessment mission** in March 2021 the UN Secretariat has consented to the deployment of technical and financial aid to the national electoral management bodies, the judiciary and the security sector to support the conduct of local, parliamentary and presidential elections in 2023.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Despite the 2018 democratic transition, the potential for political tensions between and within parties remains high. **Ethnic and regional political divides**, created during the country's tumultuous political history, continue to fuel conflict and **electoral violence** remain defining factors of Sierra Leonean politics. These tensions are related to the **highly polarised political landscape**, with the SLPP strongly affiliated with the south-eastern part of the country where Mende people are dominant whereas the APC has its powerbase in the north, with a strong concentration of the Temne and Limba ethnic groups.

Tensions are also influenced by **intra-party dynamics and rivalries**. These mainly relate to the relations between the hardliners and the more moderate voices which see benefit in a cooperative attitude towards opposition and a more inclusive agenda.

Lack of inter as well as intra-party political dialogue hinders the potential for peaceful resolution of disputes and cohesive policy making as well as political commitment towards electoral reforms. There is **lack of a robust political**

parties' dispute resolution mechanism and PPRC's capacity to implement its mandate and resolve party disputes and tensions is limited.

The political tensions that marked the electoral environment still continue to characterise the public space and are exacerbated by **disinformation, hate speech, growing negative and abusive social media incendiary postings** that seem to be fomenting unrest. The period 2020 and 2021 has been marked by the occurrence of isolated yet very violent incidents throughout the country, with eruption of **unrest and violence among youths** which have resulted in **heavy handed responses from the security agents** and loss of lives. These all merit continued close monitoring and preventive measures.

Sierra Leone has a long history of inequality, neglect and marginalisation of women and youth, a fact cited by the Truth and reconciliation Commission as a key contributing factor to both the eruption and protracted nature of the civil war. A USAID-supported assessment of democracy, human rights and governance issues in Sierra Leone noted a lack of evidence that post-conflict reforms have addressed these issues. Thus the action will seek to incorporate strong focus and targets for inclusion of women and youth across its objectives.

Women are strongly under-represented in the political sphere and ensuring that women can access and compete on an equal footing for leadership and decision-making roles remains a major concern. Whilst existing rules and regulations governing political process as well as public and civil service are mostly gender neutral, a number of legal provisions have discriminatory effect such as those related to candidates' nomination fees and resignation requirements for eligibility to contest elections by public officers. Gender inequalities are high in costumes and practices. Sierra Leone is generally a patriarchal society. Women are confronted with limited education, access to and control over resources and access to decision making. Their voice, visibility, participation and representation in elective and appointment positions remain relatively low. There are issues of marginalisation and under-representation of women in all spheres of life, including in leadership and decision-making institutions such as chieftaincy, ministerial appointments, heads of parastatals, representation on boards, etc. In 2018, only 100 women (a mere 12.5% of all candidates) ran for parliamentary seats. Currently, out of 132 directly elected Members of Parliament (MPs), 16 are women and out of 14 Paramount Chiefs MPs, 2 are women making up 14.52% of the total parliamentarians. There are 18.9 % female councilors in local government. There are only two female ministers out of a total of 24 and four deputies out of the same number. There is one female ambassador and only five women heads of state institutions².

Sierra Leone's young population is an opportunity and a risk to the conduct of elections. The 2015 census shows that 80% of Sierra Leoneans are aged below 35 years. Since the end of the civil war, a new generation of new voters has emerged, who did not experience the war. This leaves the risk that this group of young voters living in the context of endemic poverty and unemployment could be hijacked by the political class for their selfish agenda. This youthful population at the same time presents an opportunity to have a new generation of voters who could change the face of politics by promoting democratic norms and demanding accountability from the political class.

Many of the issues that emerged in the run-up to the 2018 elections remain unresolved:

- **Financing for elections:** Positively, the Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) has pledged to increase budgetary allocation to the Electoral Commission (EC-SL) and support the 2023 election process through a dedicated financing arrangement or "trust fund", thereby providing some assurance that electoral preparations will be on track and sufficient. However, there was a similar notion ahead of the 2018 elections that did not materialise. As a result the international community was obliged to step in to ensure that elections could proceed, without delay, and with the required levels of integrity. 2022 National Budget, currently under legislative scrutiny, indicates a high national-level commitment to funding for elections. However, should there be yet again a need, the project might step in and support the planning and procurement of sensitive electoral material (e.g. ink, ballot papers, etc.). Such procurement would be considered on an emergency basis only.
- **Voter registration:** the integrated civil registration system which is expected to provide data for the extraction of the voter register is not yet fully operational. If the civil registry functions are not effectively and successfully established on time for next election, there might be need for EC-SL to undertake another

² Inter-Parliamentary Union (2021). Global Data on National Parliamentarians. https://data.ipu.org/node/153/data-on-women?chamber_id=13524

active registration of voters. EC-SL and NCRA will need to collaborate closely during the voter registration exercise in order to properly capture eligible citizens in both the national civil register and the voter registry.

- **Results management:** In the past, transmission of election results has been criticised for not being sufficiently timely nor fully transparent. EC-SL has a long-stated goal to strengthening results management by decentralising its process further to the district level, where the district election manager is the returning officer for respective elections. In 2012, results were “partially” tabulated at the district level through a Results Management System (RMS) developed in cooperation with the Election Commission of Nigeria. In 2018, EC-SL intended to expand the regional RMS to the district level; however, time, funding and infrastructure constraints led to the pragmatic decision of only using the region-based tally. For 2023, EC-SL has committed again to extending the system to the district level. With sufficient resources, time and commitment, this is feasible. However, EC-SL has lost a number of senior staff critical to its IT and Database capacity, which leaves it in a potentially weaker position than 2018. The EU Governance Program is currently supporting training of E staff on database management and networking and an assessment of the hardware and networking requirements to generate secure results at the district level to be transmitted via the regional tally level and to headquarters. As it is unclear whether the commission will have the financial and human resources to carry out the decentralisation, additional support might be required in the procurement of the material/networking for each of the centre and training to district and regional level tally centre staff.
- **Absence of a specialised election offences court and outdated/insufficient Court’s procedural rules:** Numerous observer missions have noted that there is great need to support Court’s procedural rules to ensure that elections petitions are adjudicated within a reasonable period compatible with electoral timeframes. This is particularly true for the Supreme Court’s dealing with presidential election disputes. The Court has declared an intent to develop these rules well in advance of the 2023 election period but progress is limited. The establishment of an effective specialised **election offence court system** would need support in the areas of training of judges and court personnel on the court procedures and election legal framework. This may involve the production of judicial bench books or other guides on election case law and statutory instruments.

New challenges have also emerged since 2018 which require consideration:

- **A new electoral commission with limited experience:** While the EC-SL can count on many experienced technical staff, the 2022-23 cycle of elections will be conducted by a commission under a completely new leadership with all commissioners, including the chair, having changed from the 2018 elections. In addition, there have been many unfilled vacancies within the commission; this will likely affect performance in upcoming elections. Recent reorganisation into new departments combined to staff mobility and turn-over will also have an impact on critical capacities like strategic communications and database management.
- **The potential changes in electoral law, including possible gender quota requirements** may require the running of additional (women-only) elections, the creation of new candidate nomination and seat allocation requirements, depending on the system agreed to. Such changes are not only technical (and may require potentially additional funds) but will complicate the electoral process also from a citizen’s perspective and necessitate significant voter education efforts, notably to target first time and less educated voters.
Uncertainties remain that could impact the electoral calendar: the EC-SL in its strategic plan towards 2023 elections noted a number of decisions on the part of the government that have a bearing on the smooth implementation of the already congested electoral calendar. These relate mainly to: (i) the unprecedented and highly contested decision to conduct a mid-term census which could lead to the creation of new districts and a re-draw of electoral boundaries; (ii) ongoing reforms to the Local Government Act of 2004 that could modify the tenure of local councils elections; (iii) possible delays in establishment of a fully operational civil registration system which will necessitate a proactive solution by EC-SL and NCRA to capture citizens as voters; (iv) possible constitution amendments that may affect the electoral legal and regulatory landscape, including changes to the electoral system resulting from gender quotas.
- **Eroded trust in the Electoral Management Bodies and Judiciary:** criticism about political context developments and challenges to fundamental democratic principles is on the rise as well as concerns about the independence and impartiality of the electoral management bodies (EC-SL, PPRC) the Judiciary and the police.

Stakeholders analysis:

The action aims to inspire and support change processes undertaken by the Electoral Management Bodies, the Judiciary and security apparatus, political parties, the parliament, sub-national governments, the media and national Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

Special focus will be given to **young population, women and girls and people living with disabilities**. Specific attention will also be paid to the groups living in vulnerable situations who could be positively or negatively affected by the action. The action will seek to engage with stakeholders representing them in the identification/formulation and implementation of the activities.

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

Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone (EC-SL): constitutional body empowered to conduct electoral operations, here-included voter registration, boundaries' delimitation and referenda. While the EC-SL is a well-established institution with considerable capacity to organise and administer elections, recipient already of substantial EU funded technical assistance under the 11th EDF Governance Support Programme, the recent organisational reform, and new appointments to the Board of Commissioners and EC-SL Secretariat, will require further capacity-strengthening. While the Government has pledged substantial budgetary support towards the implementation of the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan for Elections further resources might be needed. While carrying out elections is solely in the purview of EC-SL, it is also highly dependent on other state institutions, such as Ministry of Finance, the National Civil Registration Authority, the Office of National Security and others.

Political Party Registration Commission (PPRC): constitutional body mandated to register and regulate political parties' activity. However, PPRC staffing and financial resources are grossly insufficient to enable effective implementation of its mandate and PPRC's ability to regulate and sanction behaviour of parties once established, including the monitoring of campaigns, and financing of politics, is hampered under the current legal framework. Its mandate and functions might be strengthened following the ongoing review of the Political Parties Act. If so, there will be both a need and opportunity for capacity building of this critical electoral management body.

Own capacity needs assessment and EU and other development partners (UN/IDEA) gap analysis of both EC-SL and PPRC noted significant capacity gaps which are common for the two Electoral Management Bodies, specifically in the following areas:

- Capacity to anticipate and mitigate risks well in advance in the electoral cycle ;
- Capacity to resolve election-related conflicts in a peaceful manner to avoid the outbreak of violence and dissolve political tensions ;
- Capacity to effectively use technology to support the credibility of voter registration and results management ;
- Human and financial resources.

The proposed action will specifically address, in conjunction with the assistance provided by the 11th EDF Governance Support Programme, the weaknesses noted in the areas of risk identification and mitigation, alternative dispute resolution, voter registration and results management and staff technical capacity.

Judiciary: comprised of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court, Magistrates courts and local courts is the sole competence in the administration of justice in Sierra Leone. Election petitions typically go to the High Court but in some cases directly to the Supreme Court. The High Court may also establish a dedicated Election Offenses court per the public elections act. Law Reform Commission has the constitutional mandate to oversee legal reforms, the Attorney General office is playing an increasingly leading role over the ongoing electoral legal reforms.

The **Sierra Leone Police (SLP)** is responsible of ensuring access to criminal justice, security and stability conducive for economic, social and political development in Sierra Leone. This includes providing security in elections, including the safety of elections staff and voters. SLP also has a critical role in investigating electoral offenses. In the framework of the post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction efforts, the SLP and security apparatus has received substantial capacity building and strengthening support, but capacity gaps persist.

Scrutiny will need to be applied to programmes working with Electoral Management Bodies, police and judiciary. While the support to these structures is absolutely critical to improve elections in Sierra Leone, the independence of these institutions has been increasingly questioned by some civil society organisations, political parties, political analysts and observers. Activities will be premised on a "do no harm" approach, ensuring these institutions fulfil their duties in elections and defend and protect citizens' rights. Depending on the level of independence and

professionalism exhibited by these critical institutions, the European Union may need to re-assess the scope of assistance, and enhance interventions in support to human rights protection and access to justice.

Parliament remains key to amending laws that limit participation of women, people in the diaspora and public office holders in public life. However, there is a continued spirit of lack of consultations among political players in and outside of parliament which renders challenges to processing priorities of national interest. In conjunction with the efforts already spearheaded by the 11th EDF Governance Support programme and other development partners supporting the legislative (UK, UN) the action will seek to engage political actors including the parliament and political parties' leadership to promote legal and electoral reforms in line with ongoing national dialogues and election observer recommendations. The action could support parliamentary committees and caucuses and Parliamentary research capacity to strengthen **legislation and scrutiny of the government**, e.g. by equipping the **parliamentary library/research centre** supporting dialogues, providing advisory services, comparative research analysis to guide parliamentary committees in their deliberations on the legal reform process.

The action might support institutional capacity building and action by other democratic institutions, notably the **National Council for Civic Education and Development** and the **National Human Rights Commission**, notably in respect to the implementation of the i) EOM's 2018 recommendation on voting of prisoners on remand voting and the vehicle ban; ii) voter and civic education, iii) promotion co-existence and national cohesion.

Local authorities have been at the centre of a contentious decentralisation policy shift and review of the legislative governing the local authorities' mandate. The ongoing review of the Local Government Act 2004 is likely to extend the tenure of the local councillors. As a result, the election of the Mayors of the 5 municipalities and Chairmen and councillors of the 16 district councils and respective wards is likely to occur simultaneously with parliamentary and presidential elections. The action will seek to prevent and mitigate the operational challenges and political tensions that might triggered by these developments and support voter education and the conduct of effective and credible elections.

National Civil Society Organisations: Sierra Leone has a relatively vibrant civil society that works on a broad range of governance, electoral and citizen participation issues, here-included electoral observation, violence prevention and resolution. The 2017 Constitutional review process and 2018 elections saw the establishment of influential CSOs coalitions which are actively engaged in electoral observation and citizens' participation in democratic governance reforms. Notably, during the 2018 elections, a coalition of 400 CSO's named *National Election Watch (NEW)* deployed an effective citizen observation and parallel voting tabulation system, and led post-election reviews and advocacy activities. With follow up funding from the EU, National Elections Watch (NEW) is implementing a project aiming at enhancing the role of domestic electoral observer organisations and citizen's participation in democratic governance reforms leading to the next cycle of elections in 2022 and 2023. The main objective is to ensure that voices of civil society remains relevant in-between elections and participate in the various governance reform processes that have bearing on electoral matter. The coalition is statutory member of the EOM National Task Force and Electoral Steering Committee (ESC).

In December 2020, the Electoral Commission signed an Memorandum Of Understanding (MoU) with three national Civil Society Organisations (the *Inter Religious Council*, *Eminent Women Peace Mediators Sierra Leone (EWPMSL)* and *The Campaign for Human Rights and Development International (CHREDI)*) establishing the *Elections Conflict Prevention and Mediation Working Group (ECPMWG)* with the key objective to preserve peace, prevent and resolve electoral violence.

The action will complement and supplement the ongoing support under the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights to *National Election Watch* and the coalition of women rights advocates "50/50". It will seek to support citizens watch platforms to observe electoral operations and political processes, track performance and advocate for increased women participation in political processes and the implementation of electoral reforms in line with 2018 EOM recommendations. It will seek to support CSO partners that are working with the EC-SL, promoting community-based conflict mitigation efforts, engaging traditional and religious leaders and addressing inter-party and intra-party conflicts ahead of elections. It will also seek to further establish and strengthen networks, platforms and NSAs, focusing on **formal and informal women and youth associations**, as vehicle to craft and disseminate peace messages, promote political dialogue and social cohesion, and implementation of key electoral observers missions' recommendations. Activities will include establishment/strengthening of CSOs inclusive - electoral risks management/early warning and rapid response mechanisms; training for CSOs on Electoral Dispute Resolution mechanisms, media monitoring, dialogues with political parties, traditional and religious leaders. The action will also target the specific needs of Women/Youth and PWDs Associations in line with the principles and objectives

underlined in the EU Road Map for engagement with Civil Society and the Country Level Implementation Plan towards Gender Equality adopted in 2021.

Women's groups: whilst it is clear that women do not participate in governance and political process at the same rate as men do, they do play a strong role in public life in other ways. During the civil war and after, women have been crucial to peacebuilding, reconciliation, human rights and other areas of work critical to the country's stability. Over the years, women have competed for traditional leadership roles, becoming chiefs and paramount chiefs, although they make up a small minority of these positions. Sierra Leone enjoys now a number of influential women's groups / coalitions of CSOs advocating for gender equality and women participation in political processes both at national and community level. Amongst these: the *50/50 Coalition*, a formal network of women advocates/MPs advocating for legal reforms (notably the introduction of an electoral quota system) and increased women participation in political process and decision making; and the *Eminent Women Peace Mediators Sierra Leone (EWPMSL)* with a long standing history of political mediation and conflict preventions/mitigation. The action will seek to engage such organisations and support their action as well as of other formal/informal women and youth associations, as vehicle to craft and disseminate peace messages, promote political dialogue and social cohesion, and implementation of key electoral observers missions' recommendations. The action will also advocate for the elimination of harmful traditional practices as it is demonstrated that Female Genital Mutilations are promoted by political leaders to galvanise supporters as the country draws closer to elections.

Faith-groups and religious leaders: in a country praised for its exceptional religious tolerance, religious leaders and inter-faith groups such as the *Inter Religious Council* play a pivotal role in civic education/conflict prevention and mitigation. The action will seek to engage with them in the promotion of peace-building messages and implementation of civic education campaigns and mediation activities.

Media: the media play an indispensable role in the proper functioning of a democracy. They can play a "watchdog" role by unfettered scrutiny and discussion of the successes and failures of candidates, governments, and electoral management bodies, the media can inform the public of how effectively they have performed and help to hold them to account. The media also have other roles in enabling full public participation in elections by educating voters on how to exercise their democratic rights; by reporting on the development of an election campaign; by providing a platform for the political parties and candidates to communicate their message to the electorate; by providing a platform for the public to communicate their concerns, opinions, and needs, to the parties/candidates, the EMB, the government, and to other voters, and to interact on these issues; by allowing the parties and candidates to debate with each other; by reporting results and monitoring vote counting; by scrutinising the electoral process itself, including electoral management, in order to evaluate the fairness of the process, its efficiency, and its probity; by providing information that, as far as possible, avoids inflammatory language, helping to prevent election-related violence. The media are not the sole source of information for voters, but in a world dominated by mass communications, it is increasingly the media that determine the political agenda, even in a less technologically developed country such as Sierra Leone. Yet the media can also play a detrimental role and increase tension by spreading false allegations and inflammatory language. In a context where print and broadcast media in Sierra Leone is relatively weak, constrained by lack of technical and financial resources, marked by low editorial and technical skills and questionable integrity it becomes all the more critical to promote professional journalism and media monitoring and regulation.

The repeal of the seditious label law and adoption of the IMC Act in 2020 have strengthened the independence, mandate and authority of the **Independent Media Commission (IMC)** and increased the opportunity for both media advocacy and regulation.

The action will seek to strengthen IMC monitoring capacity and provide support to independent media as transparency/watchdog; campaign platform; open forum for debate and discussion/public voice and as public educator. It will seek to support independent media and broadcasters in effectively apply knowledge to engage and collaborate in the discourse on electoral reforms in a non-partisan, informed and effective way, to demand accountability from policymakers and electoral management bodies, and support voters education. Special attention will be given to radio broadcasters and community radio stations (e.g. *Independent Radio Network*). It will seek to support the *Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ)* and other media advocacy groups to address the threats posed by the use of the digital information space, to develop initiatives to address disinformation and promote civil use of the digital information space among politicians and voters.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to facilitate conditions for inclusive, credible, transparent and peaceful electoral and political processes in Sierra Leone

The Specific Objectives (Outcomes) and related outputs of this action are:

1 - To enhance the participation of key stakeholders in electoral and political processes

- 1.1 Citizens (notably women, girls, youth, PWDs) are more informed of election rights and participate in electoral and political processes with a gender sensitive approach*
- 1.2 Political parties comply with an enhanced political party regulation system*
- 1.3 Civil society organisations and media effectively engage in the electoral processes in a cohesive, informed non-partisan way supporting transparent electoral process and accountability of duty bearers*

2 - To enable the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone to conduct credible and inclusive presidential, parliamentary and local elections in 2023 and beyond

- 2.1 Transparency, polling, counting and tabulation procedures are effectively strengthened in line with EOM recommendations;*
- 2.2 Logistic planning and election materials are in place*
- 2.3 Timely delivery of election results information*

3 - To resolve election disputes timely and peacefully before during and after the elections

- 3.1 Timely resolution of election petitions and offences*
- 3.2 Police respond to electoral issues timely and competently*
- 3.3 Electoral disputes/conflicts are prevented or mitigated and resolved*

4 - To improve the electoral legal and regulatory framework ahead and beyond 2023

- 4.1 The electoral legal and regulatory framework is improved in line with EOM recommendations*
- 4.2 The Constitutional Review process is effectively relaunched, promoting democratic consolidation and improving the electoral legal framework*

3.2 Indicative Activities

As an overarching priority, activities will seek to support implementation of previous Electoral Observation Missions' recommendations and complement/supplement the national efforts already supported under the 11th EDF National and Regional Indicative Programmes. **Indicative activities** may include:

Related to Output 1.1 on enhanced citizens' awareness and participation:

- Support **formulation and implementation of Voter and Civic Education campaigns**. The project will notably seek to support EC-SL in assessing voter education needs and developing voter education programme, messaging and outputs (radio clips, town criers, SMS messages, TV PSAs, billboards, community theatre, etc.). This could cover the voting process, but also the registration process, the results process and confidence building measures, and other key areas. Voter education and participation programmes will integrate a human rights-based approach and **focus specifically on women as well as youth, people with disability, illiterate adults and prisoners on remand**. Specific messages using specific delivery methods could be created to improve their informed participation not only as voters, but potentially as advocates of voting rights and election workers. The project will prioritise support to the roll out of EC-SL school-based civic education programmes and other **Voter and Civic Education campaigns** implemented by or in collaboration with the EC-SL, National Commission for Civic Education and Development (NaCCED), National Commission for Disability (NCD), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), CSOs, Independent radio networks and media, political parties, and other specialised agencies.
- The action might support institutional capacity building and action by other democratic institutions, notably the National Council for Civic Education and Development (NaCCED) and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on voter and civic education, here-included on voting of prisoners on remand;
- Work with CSOs, Community Radio Networks, National Commission on Democracy, and other agencies on voter education. This could cover practicalities of the voting process (where to vote, how to vote, what are you voting for, etc.); but also the registration process, the results process and confidence building measures, and other key areas.

- Activities in support to **Gender Equality and Women's Political Participation**; Youth and Disability Inclusions: technical and financial assistance to EC-SL/PPRC/NaCCED/CSOs to: a) Support the implementation of EC-SL Gender & Inclusion Policy; b) carry out gender and disability audits; c) review polling station for accessibility; d) strengthen intra-party democracy, specifically focusing on gender and youth inclusion; e) sustain engagement of the platform for party female and youth wings as a means of promoting women/girls and youth engagement especially in the post-election period; f) establish a youth internship/junior professional programme where young Sierra Leoneans (especially women) from higher institutions would work with the commission to further boost its limited staff capacity; strengthen CSOs capacity to promote women/youth PWDs participation in politics.

Related to Output 1.2 on enhanced political party regulation system:

- **Institutional capacity building of the PPRC**: technical support may be provided to institutional policy, staff development and training on several initiatives emanating from the impending reform to the Political Parties Act, political party finance, conflict resolution, strategic communication, alternative dispute resolution. The project could support PPRC organisational audit and subsequent institutional capacity building. The project could support setting up a potential political finance unit, and to revise party instructions on formation or recertification. A key initiative of PPRC will be to revise the code of conduct for political parties, potentially including this new code in the PPA. The project could provide training to strengthen governance and capacities of PPRC, supporting the development of institutional policies (HR, communications, etc), TORs and staff reference materials/handbooks; strategic communications with stakeholders and public outreach.
- Training programmes for political parties – facilitated in collaboration with PPRC - to comply with code of conduct, registration, financing and other requirements as well as aspirational goals to increase women and youth participation in party affairs.

Related to Output 1.3 on strengthened social accountability:

- Domestic Observation and CSO' Watch: the projects will seek to strengthen national CSOs capacity to observe electoral processes, implement parallel voting tabulation, monitor campaign financing and expenditure, electoral motivated spending by would-be candidates and government; as well as abuse of state resources.
- Activities that support free and uncensored flow of information on public and electoral issues that increase the editorial and technical skills and the integrity of the print and broadcast media, encourage the creation of a network of fact-checkers in a selected pool of media outlets in order to contrast disinformation (e.g. training of journalists, organisational capacity building and support to SLAJ and the Independent Radio Network as respectively, the mechanism providing support to journalists, and the national coalition of community of radio networks).
- Strengthening the investigative and reporting capacity of journalists, editorial teams, social network managers etc. to promote coverage of electoral processes in an ethical, responsible and balanced manner (training activities, exchanges, pilot projects, competitions etc).
- Promoting the counter-narrative and the positive campaigns to combat hate speech, incitement to violence and disinformation as well as support to existing media self-regulation structures and processes regarding non-violent language, political fair play and ethics of electoral media coverage.
- Technical and financial assistance to support Independent Media Commission (IMC) monitoring capacity of electoral media coverage (by supporting the review of the Code of Conduct for election reporting and coverage; procurement of software and digital equipment for media monitoring at national and district level).

Related to Output 2.1 on effective Transparency, polling, counting and tabulation procedures:

- Technical and financial assistance to the Electoral Commission to strengthen transparency and strategic communication, notably with political parties and electoral stakeholders. Notably the project will seek to support implementation of EC-SL Strategic Communication Policy, facilitate EC-SL-Political Parties Liaison Committee, strengthen EC-SL website management, advocate for the publication of electoral decisions, minutes of PPLC meetings and results data disaggregated by polling station.
- The action will seek to support design, adoption and procurement of improved Results Reporting Forms.

Related to Output 2.2 on logistic planning and procurement:

- Procurement of electoral material: as a general approach, capital expenditures and "like to have" costs should be minimised. However should there be yet again a need for the international community to support the procurement of essential electoral material in view to ensure that elections could proceed, without delay, and with the required levels of integrity. On an emergency basis the action could support the EC-SL planning and

procurement of certain materials (ink, ballot papers, etc.). Ballot papers procurement might be conditioned upon equitable ordering of candidates.

Related to Output 2.3 on timely delivery of election results:

- Technical and budgetary support to decentralize the results management process further to the level of the district, where the district election manager is the returning officer for respective elections.
- Technical and financially support EC-SL to develop a system of public election results display, where EC-SL can continuously transmit results, releasing them to the public at agreed upon thresholds.
- Security testing on the Result Management System software and network.

Related to Output 3.1 on timely resolution of election petitions and offences:

- Support the development of rules of procedure for judicial hearings related to election petitions/the establishment and functioning of a specialised Electoral Offences Court and train judges and court personnel on the court procedures and election legal framework.
- Support candidates, voters, journalists and media outlets, and other stakeholders who may require assistance by establishing a network of legal aid providers, through working with CSOs, the Sierra Leone Bar Association and others in the provision of pro bono or reduced legal services, particularly supporting victims of electoral offences and political violence.

Related to Output 3.2 on police response to electoral issues:

- Training of police forces regarding the roles and responsibility of police on Election Day and in the protection transport of election staff and materials, voters' safety and protection of human rights, limits of police intervention in electoral issues, and documenting electoral offences.
- Establishment and lending critical technical support to the electoral security coordination structure, involving EC-SL, ONS, SLP etc. on conflict management and early warning early response systems.

Related to Output 3.3 on electoral disputes/conflicts prevention and mitigation:

- Support towards the deployment of a EMBs (EC-SL & PPRC)-led Electoral Risk Management tool (recruitment of data collectors and data analysts, support to connectivity and coordination of stakeholders).
- Technical advisory services and support to PPRC to strengthen PPRC's ability to resolve party disputes and tensions; facilitate inter-party dialogues, establish a robust political parties dispute resolution mechanism within PPRC.
- Support to inter-party dialogues, mediation mechanisms included international mediation efforts.
- Support for civilian activities related to conflict prevention and resolution, including capacity building, monitoring, dialogue and information exchange, peace messaging (radio, TV messages, talk or peace clubs, theatre plays, songs, etc.) targeted interventions in electoral violence hot spots, with pre-identified actors of peace, such as religious and traditional leaders, women organisations, etc.
- Technical co-operation to law enforcement agencies, Parliament, and the Judiciary assist review and reform of the security system to improve democratic governance and civilian control.

Related to Output 4.1 on reform of the electoral legal and regulatory framework :

- Technical assistance to the Electoral Management Bodies, Attorney General Office, Law Reform Commission and duty bearers for the revision of electoral legal and regulatory frameworks; facilitation of multi-stakeholders consultative processes; capacity building and support to planning/implementation of revised legal and strategic frameworks, etc.
- Support political party leaders, parliamentary committees (Legal and Political Affairs Committees) and caucuses engaging in electoral and democratic reforms process, e.g. by supporting dialogues, pre-legislative consultations, providing advisory services, comparative research analysis to guide parliamentary committees in their deliberations on the legal reform process; further strengthening the Parliamentary legal department, knowledge base/e-library/research centre in view to strengthen MPs capacity to scrutinise legislative proposals.
- Building capacity of the Government Bookshop and Printing Department within the Ministry of Information and Communication to ensure timely availability of the Bills to Parliament and publication of the White Paper and the Constitution, national policies, legislation and regulations (e.g. by supporting procurement of equipment for the Printing Department and digitisation of the National Gazette).

Related to Output 4.2 on the Constitutional Review process :

- Supporting constitution-building processes (e.g. convening thought-leading conferences of practitioners on constitution-building, providing in-country technical advice and capacity building for national constitution-makers, offering research services and access to comparative knowledge).

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

Outcomes of the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) screening: The EIA (Environment Impact Assessment) screening classified the action as Category C (no need for further assessment). Shall procurement of electoral material be supported by the action, careful consideration will be paid to environmental impact and waste management.

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

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls and youth

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that gender equality is a significant objective. The action will promote gender equality, women's and girls' rights and empowerment and non-discrimination on any grounds, through targeted and mainstreamed actions. It will also give particular attention to the rights of the child and empowerment of youth.

In conjunction with 11th EDF Governance Support Programme and other partners (UNDP, UNWOMEN, Ireland) the action seeks to ensure women's full and effective participation in politics and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political and public life, notably by:

- Promoting electoral legal reforms in favour of increased participation of women in politics
- Support the implementation of EC-SL Gender & Inclusion Policy; provide support to EC-SL gender and inclusion department and District-based working groups to lead its engagement with stakeholders on inclusion. Notably assist EC-SL a) revise the gender tally sheet/data capture process; b) review polling station for accessibility of pregnant/elder women;
- Support the PPRC to a) strengthen intra-party democracy, specifically focusing on gender and youth inclusion revamp; b) sustain engagement of the platform for party female and youth wings as a means of promoting women/girls and youth engagement especially in the post-election period; c) establish a youth internship/junior professional programme where young Sierra Leoneans (especially women) from higher institutions would work with the commission to further boost its limited staff capacity.
- Strengthening CSOs capacity to promote women and youth participation in politics. The action contributes to the Gender Action Plan III (GAP III, 2021-2025), more specifically the thematic area "promoting equal participation and leadership".

Human Rights

The action aims at promoting the fundamental principles of human rights and democracy, protecting and promoting political rights, empowering and promoting the political inclusion of all irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status. The action will apply a human rights-based approach encompassing all human rights, with a focus on poorer, marginalised and vulnerable people and groups, including persons with disabilities. Activities will be guided by the principles of 'leaving no one behind', equality and non-discrimination on any grounds. By strengthening the judiciary and supporting the establishment of a special court/strengthen proceedings to deal with electoral disputes the action shall support the right holders in claiming their rights. It shall also work with the security apparatus, notably the Police Sierra Leone, to strengthen human rights

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. This implies that the action will specifically address the special needs and promote political inclusion of people living with disabilities (PWDs). This will be particularly the case in the design/implementation of civic and voter education campaigns, voter registration and electoral poll infrastructure development, as well as rules and procedures. The action shall support the implementation of EC-SL Inclusion policy and commitment to address the specific needs of PWDs, and will support the establishment and operations of Disability-focused CSOs/groups/coalitions. Notably, the action will provide support to EC-SL gender and inclusion department and District-based working groups to lead its engagement with stakeholders on inclusion; assist EC-SL a) carrying out a disability audit; b) review polling station for accessibility.

Democracy

Supporting the exercise of democracy and diverse forms of participation of citizens in and beyond elections is at the very core of EU intervention. The action will promote both the supply and demand side of democratic governance, supporting the duty bearers implementing core reforms and democratic participation and civil society. The action seeks to support direct democracy instruments such as citizens 'led dialogues and initiatives on democratic governance; as well as strengthen CSOs capacity to represent and advocate for their members, to monitor, engage and hold governments to account, and to help citizens learn to act in the public sphere; curricula and teaching for civic education at various levels. The action prioritises civil society accountability as critical to democratic development. In this regard, the international organisation(s) entrusted of the implementation of the action will also work with national NGOs.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

The action is based on a comprehensive multi-disciplinary analysis of context, capacities, risks and vulnerabilities, integrates a resilience approach and is conflict sensitive. A vulnerability assessment was drawn by the EU Delegation in 2021 and an in-depth conflict analysis shall be conducted by the entity(es) selected to implement the action during the formulation and inception phase to ensure conflict sensitivity and the special needs and circumstances of the partner country and their population is duly taken into account.

Operations will pursue specific conflict prevention and social cohesion objectives and shall be guided by the principles of 'do no harm' and of 'leaving no one behind'. Amongst the envisaged activities: provision of technical assistance to the EMBs to establish electoral risk management tools; technical co-operation to law enforcement agencies, Parliament, and the Judiciary assist review and reform of the security system to improve democratic governance and civilian control; Support to inter-party dialogues and mediation mechanisms, support for civilian activities related to conflict prevention and resolution, including capacity building, monitoring, dialogue and information exchange.

Disaster Risk Reduction: not relevant

Other considerations if relevant: not relevant

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
1	Elections are delayed by resurgence of health crisis or political reforms and operations (mid-term census; civil/voter registration) which push the calendar back	Low	Low	Many countries have successfully held elections during COVID outbreaks, meaning a delay is not likely to be needed. The project will need to suspend operations or be reprogramed if the delay is significant. While less democratic, a delay will likely allow for additional activities to be fully implemented.
1	Political factors do not allow intended reforms to materialise	High	High	There is a possibility that reforms to political finance, election administration, and the judicial process are stymied by political interests/fears and lack of trust from electoral stakeholders. The EU is supporting and following the electoral reform process closely, and will seek to support action (notably EOM recommendations) and cross party dialogue to booster the confidence in the EMBs and credibility of the electoral processes
1	The real or perceived lack of independence and impartiality of the Electoral Management Bodies and Judiciary hinder the programme	High	High	Through political dialogue and cooperation the EU will seek to promote critical reforms and action that boost independence, transparency of EMB and credible electoral outcomes. The action will notably seek to support EMBs transparency and strategic communication, and

	outcomes and the credibility of the electoral process			implementation of effective polling, counting, tabulation and results management procedures. Scrutiny will need to be applied when working with Electoral Management Bodies, police and judiciary. Bi-partisanship agreement and safeguards to institutional integrity will be envisaged (e.g. possibility to nominate contracted judges, independence and impartiality of the nominative authorities, rules of proceedings that establish fast track procedures devoid of interference and formalism). Activities should be premised on a 'do no harm' approach
1	Electoral violence erupts despite preventive measures and early warning response mechanisms	Medium	High	The action will lie on a sound conflict analysis and will focus on risk management in elections, election dispute resolution, inter-party dialogue and regulation of political parties. It will seek to develop and deploy an electoral risk management tool to strengthen EC-SL and PPRC capacity to recognise and respond to complexities and risks well in advance in the electoral processes. The Action will also support CSO-led electoral conflict prevention initiatives, engaging political and religious leaders.
2	The Electoral Management bodies or other partners do not prioritise program activities	Medium	High	The extent that proposed activities will be successful depends on the ability of partners to prioritise and take the measures needed to implement programmes. Enhanced dialogue with national authorities and coordination with Development partners is paramount. The EU Delegation will need to coordinate with the diverse set of stakeholders and be on message with the beneficiary institutions, tying continued support in some fields with a commitment to follow through on others.
3	Low institutional capacity and government effectiveness, as well as corruptive practices, hinder efficient and effective implementation of the action and electoral operations at large	High	High	Strong governance and effective monitoring, reporting and evaluation system will be established to ensure sound operational and financial management. Regular Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and reporting mechanisms and technical committees will be established to inform and follow the day-to-day progress of activities with national stakeholders and implementing partners. A Project Board/Steering Committee will be established to provide overall programmatic strategic leadership and contribute to preventive diplomacy and advocacy to national actors as may be required. It will liaise closely with the National Electoral Steering Committee which has been established in September 2021 with non-programmatic scope.
4	Action fails to engage effectively with populations living in vulnerable situations and specifically women, people with disabilities and youth	M	M	The Action will enhance participation of women with awareness rising and information campaign with support of women organisations. Human rights and gender training will be provided to political parties, CSOs and duty bearers supporting participation of women within electoral process.

				Media capacity will be enhanced to promote, document and analyse women participation.
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The main risks include:

- Lack of political will among national authorities hinder implementation of EOM recommendations and critical electoral reforms;
- The government might take decisions that could undermine the electoral calendar/process, such decisions include the conduct of a mid-term census which could alter electoral boundaries and the possibility of a constitution amendment process that would necessitate a referendum;
- A resurgence of the COVID-19/Ebola pandemic could derail the implementation of the election calendar;
- Electoral violence erupts despite preventive measures and early warning response mechanisms;
- Insufficient or inefficient allocation of national resources towards the Electoral operations;
- Low institutional capacity and government effectiveness hinder efficient and effective management of national or donor resources, implementation of the action and electoral operations at large.

Risks will be mitigated by the action and through EU active engagement and continuous political dialogue and coordinated action with the international community. Notably, specific attention will be paid to project governance structure and accountability mechanisms, donor coordination and aid effectiveness. Enhanced governance and accountability in the context of the Electoral multi-stakeholder Steering Committee (ESC) chaired by the Chief Minister and UN Resident Coordinator shall also mitigate risks and leverage prospects of electoral reforms and inclusive, fair and peaceful electoral processes.

Lessons Learnt:

The action design draws heavily on the lessons learnt from previous electoral cycles and the recommendations issued by domestic and international observers, as well as the lessons learnt from the actions and research undertaken in the framework of the ongoing EIDHR and 11th EDF EU funded programmes and projects in support to democratic governance (notably the EU funded³, EC-SL/PPRC assessments, capacity & gaps analysis gender and inclusivity assessment and the outcomes of the national conference on electoral legal reforms held in August 2021).

The action also builds on the outcomes and recommendations of assessments and research drawn by other development partners, most notably the preliminary findings of the UN Needs Assessment Mission conducted in March 2021, IDEA EC-SL/PPRC gap analysis, USAID governance evaluation, Irish Aid/EU funded CSO-led evidence based studies on women in politics and decision making. Further elements are expected by the UN NAM report and UNDP Conflict assessment.

Monitoring and implementation of the previous Electoral Observation Missions is a key political and programmatic priority for the European Union.

Election observers made a number of recommendations after the challenging elections of 2018. The recommendations included institutional and legal reforms to strengthen the independence and powers of the election management bodies – the Election Commission of Sierra Leone (EC-SL) and the Political Party Registration Commission (PPRC), and the judiciary and Office of National Security (ONS) as well as the delineation of powers between the EC-SL and the National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA) on voter registration. The reforms also seek to address politically sensitive issues such as the question of dual citizenship, the timeframe for resignation of public office holders before an election, positive gender discrimination (quota of reserved seats), and predictability of the date of elections within the electoral cycle. Other less sensitive issues like the sequencing of elections, nomination fees, are also priority recommendations.

Recommendations to EC-SL focus on the need to strengthen results management procedures and transparency, and enhance inclusivity of elections by focusing more on the needs groups living in vulnerable situations such as women and girls and people with disability.

Numerous observer missions have noted that there is dire need to **strengthen the judiciary**, revise the Court's procedural rules to ensure that elections petitions are adjudicated within a reasonable period which are compatible with electoral timeframes. This is particularly true for the Supreme Court's dealing with presidential election disputes. Another recommendation from observer missions is to support the establishment of an election offences court which has a mandate that runs through the entire period of hearing electoral disputes.

³ Support to Governance DEC 038586; TA Governance CTR 396380; TA Civil Registration CTR 398504; EU/UNDP Basket Fund CTR 390345; Grant with 50/50 Group CTR 409334; Grant with NEW CTR 415580

The 2018 European Union EOM put forward 29 recommendations to strengthen future electoral processes in the country. Out of the 29 proposed recommendations, 21 require a change of the legal framework in order to be implemented. The EU Electoral Follow Up Mission concluded that, to date, only one has been fully implemented and two partially, but recognised that considerable efforts are ongoing and that there is time and opportunity to address the outstanding recommendations.

Further lessons can be learnt from previous electoral cycles, notably:

- **On voter education:** vast amounts of time and money have been spent on voter education campaigns over the recent electoral cycles, much of it by the donor community. While there is some basic information that will remain a priority (when and where to vote), much of the information conveyed is not premised on any research into the actual information needs, the most vulnerable demographic groups in terms of voter education, and the manner in which to best reach these people. The action should follow evidence-based research (being conducted by the EU governance programme in advance of elections) to ensure that the voter information and education programmes are targeted correctly.
- The track record in results management and other key, high impact areas of elections has shown that EC-SL **has ambitious plans in advance of elections only to seek a more practical but less optimal solution as the election nears due to time and money constraints**. This may well happen in 2023 if proper planning timelines are not adopted and agreed to. It will inevitably be necessary to adopt project plans to the reality of the electoral calendar. Large procurements of electoral materials should be covered by the government budget. However, this is likely to be “unconfirmed” till a late stage and EC-SL may wish to hedge bets by approaching donors. Additionally, if EC-SL can obtain funds from donors their own budgeted funds may be redirected to other purposes. The European Union Delegation (EUD) will have to carefully monitor the requests for any electoral funding to ensure that donor funding is addressing real needs.
- The **2018 results reporting** process was impacted by a lack of certain reporting features, to give the EC-SL adequate insight for planning the ongoing management of results and to provide the public with regularly updated, detailed information on the status of results processes and partial results. The EU governance project will develop a Software Requirements Specifications in order to define the new reporting features required by the updated/new RMS. The project can further support the EC-SL in implementing the modifications well-prior to 2023 elections and conduct security testing on the software and network.
- There is a **distrust of national institutions and government by political parties**. This affects the Electoral Management bodies, the SL Police and the Judiciary as well as the National civil registration authority which is expected to provide data for the EC-SL voter register. The notion of strengthening PPRC to properly register and provide some oversight of political party activity, while needed, will potentially be met with hesitance by some parties.

Whilst the findings of the UN Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) of March 2021 are still to be disclosed, preliminary findings point to the importance of fostering a multilateral coherent donor engagement in electoral matters and maintaining a continuous political as well as programmatic dialogue with National authorities and electoral stakeholders at large. The re-establishment of the Electoral Steering Committee, which had a positive impact in 2018 elections, is a direct outcome.

The time available and attention span of key institutions (particularly EC-SL and PPRC) will diminish as the election period draws nearer, and is subject to competition by multiple partners (11th EDF EU Governance Programme; NDI; UNDP; UN Women; IDEA, USAID, civil society organisations; and others). This project would add additional agency or agencies to this mix. There will be an extreme level of coordination required to unify approaches and positions in areas of electoral planning, sequence and prioritise activities, and prevent duplication of tasks and forum shopping. This will undoubtedly require high levels of donor coordination to ensure aid effectiveness.

3.5 Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is informed by an understanding of the time-bound nature of electoral processes. The project therefore adopts an **electoral cycle approach** that addresses key pre-election issues and contributes to the technical conduct of the elections and sets the space for future reforms and more inclusive democracy at the grassroots in the post-election phase.

It promotes and supports the **implementation of the previous Electoral Observation Missions'** recommendations - a political and programmatic priority for the European Union – and builds on the outcomes of the **Electoral Follow Up Mission deployed in October-November 2021**, as well as the lessons learnt from the previous and ongoing EU interventions in the sector and from the preliminary findings and recommendations of the UN Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) undertaken in 2021. The project is also underpinned by EU gender equality and inclusion policies and conflict sensitivity approach to programmatic interventions, which identifies violent conflicts and non-inclusion as critical risks to democracy. The action therefore addresses these issues as cross-cutting across all project outcomes.

Delivery of essential support to the electoral process/cycle, political process, access to justice and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and social accountability would help consolidate democracy and social cohesion and achieve sustained capacity for further electoral reform, also taking into account lessons learnt from **previous** and ongoing cooperation programmes, recommendations emanating from international electoral observation support, including EU EOMs/EFM and EEM and UN NAM. This would be complemented with technical assistance provided under the 11th EDF Governance Support Programme to strengthen Government's reform agenda and continuous political dialogue.

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that:

- Elections are the moment when citizens get to make their choice for the policies and leaders they wish to be governed by. To make this happen, citizens require access to information on one hand and an actual spectrum of political choices on the other. The intervention believes that if educational materials are developed they can be used by the Electoral Commission and CSOs and other partners to reach key demographic audiences, including women and new (first time) voters. This will result in their being correctly registered and thus able to vote, and having a firm understanding of the process by which to cast a valid ballot for their political choice. Meanwhile, if reforms at PPRC are carried out and new templates, forms and procedures supported, then parties can register successfully and report as per legal requirements, the role of money in politics is more widely transparent, and voters will have different political options to choose from on Election Day.
- For the Election Day to happen, critical materials are required to operate the polling centres and an infrastructure is required to transmit tallied, electoral results to EC-SL. If the required materials are purchased then polling stations can open on time, and if networking of district offices is completed then results can be tallied and transmitted from this level, and electoral results can be established transparently and efficiently.
- For elections ultimately to be credible and accepted by the citizenry, they must also be nonviolent and allow for peaceful resolution of any complaint, dispute or objection. To resolve any disputes around elections, and to properly investigate and prosecute illegal acts, both the police and the judiciary must acquire the requisite skills concerning election offences and petitions through the development of specialised procedures and institutions and training programmes. Disputes can also be mitigated at the inter-party and intra-party level by interventions of PPRC or established conflict prevention mechanisms, often in cooperation with security structures and civil society actors. Finally, peace messaging can also help inform a wider audience of the need for restraint, and counter false narratives which may be used to instigate unrest.

IF

- A conducive environment is created for informed dialogue on addressing conflict and election-related violence;
- Political actors including the Parliament and political parties' leadership show political will for legal and electoral reforms in line with ongoing national dialogues and election observer recommendations, well ahead of the 2022-2023 elections;
- The government and ruling party remain committed to the implementation of the electoral calendar and refrain from decisions that could compromise the trajectory of the electoral calendar;
- EC-SL and PPRC have a conducive context and requisite resources to operate as independent institutions;
- Judiciary and the police acquire the requisite skills concerning election offences and petitions through the development of specialised procedures and institutions and training programmes;
- CSOs and the media have the enabling environment to promote public awareness, women participation and demand accountability of authorities;

And if the selected implementing partners are provided with opportunities to work with national partners to develop the capacity of key electoral stakeholders - the EC-SL, PPRC, Judiciary, Police and security agencies, the parliament, leadership of political parties, local governments and CSOs through: technical assistance, capacity development, comparative research and knowledge production, dialogue facilitation, peer learning, and advocacy.

THEN

- Policy makers increase knowledge and skills on electoral processes and apply these competencies to recognise and consider risks in elections and to create an enabling environment for inclusivity and accountability in electoral processes, then this would create an environment for EC-SL, PPRC and civil society to develop knowledge and skills on electoral processes.
- EC-SL and PPRC increase knowledge and skills on managing electoral processes and apply these skills to recognise and mitigate electoral risks, and more effectively implement the Electoral Cycle Approach; and embody the principles of impartiality, integrity, transparency, efficiency, professionalism and service-mindedness.
- The EC-SL and PPRC increase knowledge on party regulation, and apply the skills to effectively monitor, prevent and mitigate threats to democracy, especially the threats posed by barriers to inclusion and illegal and illicit money in politics.
- The Police and the Judiciary increase capacity to properly investigate and prosecute illegal acts, and resolve disputes around elections.
- Media and Civil Society Organisations that benefit from support increase knowledge on the electoral process and apply the skills and competencies to engage and collaborate in the discourse on electoral reforms in a more informed and effective way; and address the threats posed by the use of the digital information space and demand accountability from policymakers and electoral management bodies.
- Local governments increase knowledge on citizen engagement, women and young participation, and apply the skills to improve their practices and decision-making processes.

AND THEN electoral and institutions in Sierra Leone would become more responsive effective, accountable and transparent; more categories of citizens would be more politically included, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status. The likelihood of inclusive, peaceful and credible electoral processes and Sierra Leone's transition from a post-conflict context to a stronger democracy would be strengthened.

BECAUSE (assumptions)

- The government and political actors in Sierra Leone are committed to reforms and are willing to open their internal party processes to scrutiny.
- EC-SL, PPRC, Judiciary and security actors are open and willing to work with technical support providers.
- Implementing partners identify and are able to reach civil society organisations, media institutions, women groups and other pro-democracy actors that are genuinely committed to democratic reform.

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

Results	Results chain (@): Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (@): (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	To facilitate conditions for inclusive, credible, transparent and peaceful electoral and political processes in Sierra Leone	<p>1 Observer assessment of elections</p> <p>2 Percentage of seats held by women in national parliament and/or sub-national elected office (SDG 5.5.1/16.6)</p> <p>3 Electoral reforms adopted in line with 2018 EOM recommendations</p> <p>4 Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Country Index</p>	<p>1 Assessment as partially Free and Fair; Credible; partially Transparent</p> <p>2 14.52% of total parliamentarians. 18.9% of councilors in local government</p> <p>3 achievement of EU EOM 2018 is 2/29</p> <p>4 Electoral Democracy Index 2021: Rank 81, score 0.57 Egalitarian Component Index 2021: Rank 88, score 0.63 Participation Component Index 2021: Rank 37, score 0.64</p>	<p>1 Assessment as “Free and Fair”; “Credible”; “Transparent”</p> <p>2 increased %</p> <p>3 10/29</p> <p>4 score improved</p>	<p>1 EOM reports</p> <p>2 EC-SL /Parliament</p> <p>3. EU Qualitative assessment of progress on EU EOM recommendation</p> <p>4 V-Dem Report https://www.v-dem.net</p>	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 1	1 Enhanced participation key stakeholders in the 2023 elections and beyond	<p>1.1 % of registered voters that are women</p> <p>1.2 Number of invalid ballots</p> <p>1.3 % of new parties registered</p>	<p>1.1 N/A</p> <p>1.2 5.2%</p> <p>1.3 100%</p>	<p>1.1 51.1%</p> <p>1.2 2.6%</p> <p>1.3 100%</p>	<p>1.1 EC-SL data</p> <p>1.2 EC-SL data; EOM reports</p> <p>1.3 PPRC Data</p>	

Outcome 2	2 The EC-SL is prepared to conduct credible and inclusive elections	2.1 Polling stations open on time 2.2 Required electoral materials present at each polling station	2.1.N/A 2.2 N/A	2.1 95% 2.2 98%	2.1 EC-SL data/ EOM reports 2.2 EC-SL data/ EOM reports	
Outcome 3	3 Election disputes are resolved timely and peacefully, before, during and after elections	3.1 Time to resolve complaints 3.2 % of investigations that reach courts within 3 months 3.3 establishment of an effective specialised court to handle electoral disputes	3.1 3+ years 3.2 <5% 3.3 no specialised Court	3.1 6 months 3.2 >75% 3.3 established 6 months before E-Day	3.1 EOM reports; Judiciary 3.2. Crim. & Invest. Dep. data	
Outcome 4	4. To improve electoral legal and regulatory framework ahead and beyond 2023	4.1 The electoral legal and regulatory framework is improved in line with EOM recommendations 4.2. The constitutional review process is effectively relaunched promoting democratic consolidation	4.1 Of the 21 EU2018 EOM rec which require legal amendment none is implemented (2021) 4.2 the CRP process has stalled since 2017, White paper not published	4.1. PEA2012, PPA2006, are revised in line with 2018 EOM and commune national conferences 2021 4.2.The White paper is published	4.1 EU EFM/ExM, 2023 EU EOM implementation plan report	National ownership and political will is paramount
Output 1 related to Outcome 1	1.1 Voter education materials/campaigns produced	1.1.1 Number of messages developed by EC-SL 1.1.2 Number of research based campaigns focused on women, girls, youth, PWDs participation in political and public life 1.1.3 EC-SL school-based civic education program rolled out 1.1.4 number/outreach of campaigns run by CSOs and democratic institutions (NaCCED, NCD, NHRC) in partnership with EC-SL	1.1.1 N/A 1.1.2 N/A 1.1.3 under formulation 1.1.4 N/A	1.1.1 20 1.1.2 1.1.3 implemented in < 10% Secondary Schools 1.1.4 < 10% eligible voters	1.1.1 EC-SL data; media reports	
Output 2 related to Outcome 1	1.2 (Party) Reporting templates developed; binding code of conduct developed	1.2.1 Code of conduct for Political Parties signed 1.2.2 % of party financial reports filed 1.2.3 Number of templates/forms developed 1.2.4 Training programmes for political parties on code of conduct, registration, financing 1.2.5 PPRC functional software/equipment/systems to monitor political party financing	1.2.1 N/A 1.2.2 <10% 1.2.3 N/A 1.2.4. N/A 1.2.5 N/A	1.2.1 1 1.2.2 >75% 1.2.3 at least 5 1.2.4 at least 5 1.2.5 software and system in place	1.2.1 PPRC 1.2.2 PPRC 1.2.3 PPRC 1.2.4. PPRC 1.2.5. PPRC	
Output 3 related to Outcome 1	1.3 Civil society organisations and media effectively engage in the	1.3.1 2023 local, parliamentary and Presidential elections are object of effective domestic observation	1.3.5. N/A 1.3.6 N/A 1.3.7 N/A since 2018	1.3.5. software and equipment available at		

	electoral processes in a cohesive, informed non-partisan way supporting transparent electoral process and accountability of duty bearers	1.3.2 PVT is effectively implemented 1.3.3 CSOs-led debates and press statements on campaign financing, electoral motivated spending and abuse of state resources 1.3.4 number of balanced/non-partisan investigative reports, op-eds and articles on electoral processes 1.3.5 IMC functional software/equipment at national and district level to support media monitoring 1.3.6 IMC Code of Conduct on electoral media reporting 1.3.7 Training of independent media on ethical electoral reporting and social cohesion		national and district level 1.3.6. Code of Conduct developed 1.3.7 at least 3 trainings		
Output 1 related to Outcome 2	2.1 Transparency, polling, counting and tabulation procedures are effectively strengthened	2.1.1 EC-SL decisions, procedures, PPLC meeting minutes and results data disaggregated by polling station are published on EC-SL web page and in appropriate means of communication. 2.1.2 Sessions of EC-SL commissioners are inclusive of political parties/candidates' representatives and accredited observers 2.1.3 Political Parties Liaison Committee meets regularly and agenda /minutes/conclusions published on EC-SL website 2.1.4 RRFs revised to include reconciliation of the number of voters who received ballots, as confirmed by their signatures or thumbprints in the register of voters, with the number of votes cast 2.1.5 A breakdown of results of all elections by individual polling station is published without delay and in full, as they are progressively tabulated, including the number of registered voters and invalid votes, in tally centres as well as on a webpage.	2.1.1. N/A 2.1.2 N/A 2.1.3 meets irregularly and outcomes not published 2.1.4. N/A 2.1.5 N/A	2.1. are published 2.1.2 are inclusive 2.1.3 PPLC meets regularly and outcomes are published 2.1.4 RRF revised accordingly 2.1.5 published accordingly within < 1 day	EC-SL website PPLC and EC-SL Board meeting minutes Tally centres	
Output 2 related to Outcome 2	2.2 Election materials procurements; operations or risk plans developed	2.2.1 timely acquisition of electoral materials 2.2.2 operational or risk plans	2.2.1 N/A 2.2.2 1	2.2.1 TBD 2.2.2 1	2.2.1 copy of invoices/photos 2.2.2 EC-SL	

Output 3 related to Outcome 2	2.3 Results management systems enhanced and networking to districts completed	2.3.1 Detailed procedures for the tabulation and publication of results are established and communicated by the EC-SL to party/candidate agents and observers 2.3.2 District tally centres operational 2.3.3. Number of visits to EC-SL website results pages 2.3.4 Published results (preliminary or partial)	2.3.1.N/A 2.3.2 0 2.3.2 N/A 2.3.3 3 days	2.3.1 procedures established and published at least one month in advance of any electoral event. 2.3.2 16 districts 2.3.2 3 million 2.3.3 1 day	2.3.1. EC-SL website 2.3.2 EOM reports 2.3.3 EC-SL website 2.3.4 EC-SL data; EOM reports	
Output 1 related to Outcome 3	3.1.1 Judicial officials trained; rules of procedure developed 3.1.2. Pro bono or reduced legal services provided to victims of electoral offences and political violence.	3.1.1 Number of judicial representatives trained 3.1.2 Rules adopted 3.1.3 Electoral offences and political violence complaint filed/ cases committed	3.1.1 N/A 3.1.2 0	3.1.1 <1000 3.1.2 1	3.1.1 Training records 3.1.2 Judiciary	
Output 2 related to Outcome 3	3.2 Police officers trained; Coordination centres established/supported	3.2.1 Number of officers trained 3.2.2 Number of MOUs developed	3.2.1 N/A 3.2.2 0	3.2.1 1000 3.2.2 1	3.2.1 Training records 3.2.2 EC-SL /ONS/ SLP records	
Output 3 related to Outcome 3	3.3 ERM system deployed; conflicts mitigations /mediations; peace messages	3.3.1 Number of election risk “hotspot” maps 3.3.2 Number of interventions by Committee/ community CSOs 3.3.3 Number of peace messages aired 3.3.4 Number of victims of electoral violence and disputes disaggregated by sex, age and disability	3.3.1 N/A 3.3.2 N/A 3.3.3 N/A	3.3.1 16 3.3.3 50 3.3.3 10	3.3.1 EC-SL data 3.3.2 grantee reports 3.3.3 media monitoring	
Output 1 related to Outcome 4	4.1. The electoral legal and regulatory framework is improved 4.1.2. The reform process is inclusive of Parliament, political party leaders, CSOs views 4.1.3 The National Gazette publishes legislation timely	4.1.1 The Public Elections Act and Political Parties Act are reviewed in line with 2018 EOM recommendations and conclusions of national conferences on electoral reforms and PPA in 2021 4.1.2 The legal reforms recommended by EU EOM 2018 are implemented 4.1.2.1 Number of national conferences/dialogues, pre-legislative consultations inclusive of political parties leaders, relevant Parliamentary Committees and Caucuses and CSOs 4.1.3.1 The Electoral related bills, regulations, White Paper and Constitution	4.1.1 N/A 4.1.2 0/21 4.1.2.1 NEC National conference on Electoral Reforms Aug 2021 & PPRC conference on PPA October 2021 0 prelegislative consultations on PEA-PPA 4.1.3.1 NA 4.1.3.2 NA	4.1.1. PEA and PPA reviewed in line with 2018 EOM recommendations 4.1.2 at least 50% 4.1.2.1 pre-legislative consultations / multi-stakholder dialogues 4.1.3.1 National Gazette publishes according to legal obligations 4.1.3.2 electoral legal and regulatory	Acts Amending PEA2012 and PPA 2006 National Gazette National website	

		are timely produced by the Government Bookshop and Printing Department (MIC) and available to the MPs and public 4.1.3.2 legal regulatory framework is published		framework is published online		
Output 2 related to Outcome 4	4.2.1 The Constitutional Review process is effectively relaunched, promoting democratic consolidation and improving the electoral legal framework 4.2.2 4.3.1 The CRP process is transparent and inclusive of political parties and CSOs views	4.2.1.1 Number of thought-leading conferences of practitioners on constitution-building 4.2.1.2 Number of research services on best practices and access to comparative knowledge 4.2.2 White Paper and Constitution timely published by the National Gazette for submission to the House of Parliament and public access	4.2.1.1 N/A since 2017 4.2.1.2 N/A since 2017 4.2.2 N/A	4.2.1 n. conference CRP multi-stakeholders consultations 4.2.2 White Paper/Constitution printed and available to interested parties and published on GoSL /Parliament website	4.2.2.Governmnet Bookshop and national website / Parliament	Political will to relaunch the Constitutional Review Process adopting inclusive and transparent constitution-building approaches

4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the Government 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 72 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 measures⁴.

4.3.1 Direct Management (Grants)

1. Purpose of the grant(s)

The grant(s) will contribute in obtaining the following outputs:

- 1.1 Citizens (notably women, girls, youth, PWDs) are more informed of election rights and participate in electoral and political processes with a gender sensitive approach).*
- 1.3 Civil society organisations and media effectively engage in the electoral processes in a cohesive, informed non-partisan way supporting transparent electoral process and accountability of duty bearers.*
- 3.3 Electoral disputes/conflicts are prevented or mitigated and resolved.*

2. Type of applicant targeted

Non-Governmental Organisations (Civil Society Organisations; media associations; association of local authorities, faith-based NGOs; inter-faith councils); groupings without legal personality, public bodies.

3. Justification of a direct grant

N/A

4.3.2 Indirect Management with international organisations

This action may be implemented in indirect management with entrusted entities, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria: organisations' technical competence, operational capacity and high degree of specialisation in provision of specialised knowledge and technical assistance in the field of democratisation, notably on electoral management and security, transitional justice, electoral reforms and constitution-building, ITC for elections, inter-party dialogue, political party organisation, political party finance, gender equality and inclusion, citizens' engagement and parliamentary strengthening;

The implementation by this(these) entity(s) entails the achievement of **all objectives identified by the action**:

1. To enhance the participation of key stakeholders in electoral and political processes.
2. To enable the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone to conduct inclusive presidential, parliamentary and local elections in 2023 and beyond.
3. To resolve election disputes timely and peacefully before during and after the elections.

⁴ 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.

4. To support constitutional, legal and regulatory reforms which enhance the electoral framework ahead and beyond 2023.

Exception to the non-retroactivity of costs:

The Commission authorises that the costs incurred may be recognised as eligible as of 1st January 2022 in view of the relevance, sensitivity and urgency to support electoral reforms and implementation of Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) recommendations following the EU Electoral Follow Up Mission which took place in October-November 2021.

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

If negotiations planned to implement the action in indirect management with international organisations fail, the action could be implemented fully or partly in direct management through grants.

If negotiations planned to implement the part foreseen in direct management, the action could be implemented fully in indirect management with entrusted entities.

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, subject to the following provisions.

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

4.5 Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (EUR) 2022	EU contribution * (EUR) 2023	EU contribution * (EUR) 2024	EU contribution * (EUR) TOTAL
Objective 1: To improve and enhance the participation of key stakeholders in electoral and political processes Indirect management with international organisation - cf. section 4.3.2 Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.1 - Outputs: 1.1 <i>Citizens (notably women, girls, youth, PWDs) are more informed of election rights and participate in electoral and political processes with a gender sensitive approach).</i> 1.3 <i>Civil society organisations and media effectively engage in the electoral processes in a cohesive, informed non-partisan way supporting transparent electoral process and accountability of duty bearers.</i>	3 000 000	300 000	0	3 300 000

Objective 2: To enable the EC-SL to conduct presidential, parliamentary and local elections in 2023 and beyond Indirect management with international organisation - cf. section 4.3.2	700 000	300 000	0	1 000 000
Objective 3: To resolve election disputes timely and peacefully before during and after the elections Indirect management with international organisation - cf. section 4.3.2 Grants (direct management) - cf. section 4.3.1 - Output: <i>3.3 Electoral disputes/conflicts are prevented or mitigated and resolved.</i>	1 000 000	800 000	200 000	2 000 000
Objective 4: To support implementation of Electoral Observation Mission recommendations ahead 2023 and beyond Indirect management with international organisation - cf. section 4.3.2	300 000	200 000	200 000	700 000
Evaluation – cf. section 0 Audit – cf. section 0	N.A will be covered by another Decision			
Contingencies	0	0		0
Totals	5 000 000	1 600 000	400 000	7 000 000

* Subject to the availability of appropriations following the adoption of the relevant budget for the period 2023 and 2024

4.6 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

Support to election-relevant institutions will be provided by implementing partner organisation(s) reporting directly to the EU Delegation. It is envisaged that the implementing partners entrusted to implement the action or part of the action, have or will establish a country office in Freetown, Sierra Leone that will be staffed by dedicated resident senior programme officers with sector specific expertise; and supported by programme assistants; M&E; Procurement; Budget & Financial advisers to support efficient implementation of operations. Whereas possible resident advisers; long- and short-term experts will be embedded at one or more of the beneficiary institutions (EC-SL, PPRC, SLP and judiciary).

Due to the multiple EU actions in support to democratic governance, the number of partners involved in providing electoral assistance, and the sensitive, complex and time-bound nature of such assistance, a four-layer governance structure is envisaged:

1) Implementing Partners Coordination Committee(s): EU funded implementing partners and their sub-delegated implementing agents are expected to collaborate and coordinate closely together and seek synergy and aid effectiveness with other Development partners Implementing Agents active in the same space/supporting the same beneficiary institution. Coordination meetings, meeting at least once a month, are envisaged to ensure that the implementation is following the right track and to allow for continuous coordination. Such committees shall be co-chaired by the EU Technical Assistance team mobilised under the 11th EDF Governance Support Programme/the lead Implementing partner/Beneficiary Institution and comprise of IPs senior technical experts and Programme Managers. The EU TA team mobilised under the 11th EDF Governance Support Programme is expected to assume a critical role in supporting evidence-based coordinated action.

2) An EU Programme Technical Committee (TC): will facilitate discussions on technical aspects of the EU funded Action. The technical committee will contribute to the exchange of experiences and information, guaranteeing that all activities are tailored to the identified needs and are relevant to the political and social context of the country. It will take technical level decisions, related to the specific activity to be supported, the timing of the activity, the modality of implementation (internally, outside consultant, sub-grant etc), and the selection of key experts. The Technical Committee will meet at least once a month and review progress on a quarterly basis. It will be chaired by

the EU Delegation and a representative of the host country to be determined later stage. It will comprise representatives of the EUD, Implementing partners and representative of Beneficiary institutions (PPRC, EC-SL, SLP, and Judiciary). The Project Technical Committee may decide to set up **sub-committees/working groups** upon request, to facilitate the coordination between implementing agents and cross-component actions.

The Technical Assistance of the 11th EDF EU Governance Support Programme /implementing partner's leads/Senior experts will work in close collaboration with the technical committee in order to maximise information exchange as well as to enhance the collaboration with the project beneficiaries. This mechanism will allow the implementation an inclusive approach oriented toward greater ownership of results by the beneficiaries.

3) An **EU Programme Steering Committee (PSC)** with decision-making capacity over the programme will be established to provide overall oversight, strategic guidance and coordination at the highest level. The Committee will be co-chaired by a representative of the partner country yet to be determined (Chief Minister, Vice-President, Chair of the Electoral Management Body) and the EU Head of Delegation. High-level representatives of the programme's beneficiaries as well as the Heads of the implementing organisations will also attend. Due to the number of partners involved in providing electoral assistance, and the sensitive/time-bound nature of such assistance, this committee will need to frequently meet, at least on a quarterly basis. Further meetings can be organised whenever deemed necessary. This mechanism will ensure the overall relevance of the action to the general objective as well as its compliance with beneficiaries' requirements and needs.

4) **Multi-stakeholders Electoral Steering Committee (ESC)**

The action will also fit within a broader framework of technical cooperation and political dialogue on democratic assistance and will seek to contribute to coordinated and coherent multilateral response to electoral needs.

The European Union Delegation will participate to the multi-stakeholder Electoral Steering Committee (ESC) which has been established in September 2021 with the aim to a) ensure coordination among all electoral stakeholders; b) monitor overall preparedness of Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) to conduct national-level elections; c) mobilise and consolidate efforts and resources; d) monitor the management of significant electoral risks relating to financing, security, justice systems and operations

The committee co-chaired by the Chief Minister and the UN Resident Coordinator, comprises of the Heads of Electoral Management Bodies and Ministry and Development Agencies contributing to electoral processes and legal reforms; as well as political parties and domestic observers representatives. It shall constitute an important, a non-programmatic, forum for high level engagement to support efficient allocation of resources towards electoral needs, monitoring/advocacy of EOM recommendations and electoral reforms, political dialogue and mediation.

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 from a gender and human rights-based approach, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (Outputs and direct Outcomes) as measured by corresponding disaggregated indicators, using as reference the log-frame 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:

Monitoring and reporting responsibility lies with implementation partners in collaboration with EMBs and concerned Ministries and Development Agencies.

The Action shall ensure that there is a systematic M&E system covering the overall project, as well as specific M&E systems to capture each component's own progress towards implementation. The development of these component-level M&E systems shall be done in close association between EUD and each component leader IP. Yearly M&E sessions shall be set up at the level of the project, including the institutional beneficiaries' representatives, and regular

M&E documentation shall be provided by the IPs (bi-annually or quarterly) to ensure a comprehensive follow-up and assessment.

The identification of the baselines and the collection of data shall be the responsibility of each IP leader, working closely with the M&E staff from each of the implementing partners and beneficiary institutions. M&E focal points should also be identified within each of the institutional beneficiaries, to facilitate data gathering and collection, and smoothen the overall process.

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a mid-term, final and/or ex-post evaluation(s) will be carried out for this action or its components.

A mid-term evaluation will be carried out via an implementing partner, through a joint mission, or via independent consultants contracted by the Commission, for problem solving and learning purposes, in particular with respect to the possibility of launching a second phase of the action, etc.

Final and/or ex-post evaluation via independent consultants contracted by the Commission will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the fact that such as an innovative action or a pilot might be tested, in areas related to information technology, work with political parties, the youth, inter-religious groups. The evaluation will be gender and human rights sensitive, assess gender equality and human rights results and implementation of human rights-based approach working principles (participation, non-discrimination, accountability and transparency).

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 60 days in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination⁵. 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.

The financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a Financing Decision.

5.3 Audit and Verifications

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

6. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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

It will remain a contractual obligation for all entities implementing EU-funded external actions to inform the relevant audiences of the Union's support for their work by displaying the EU emblem and a short funding statement as appropriate on all communication materials related to the actions concerned. To that end they must comply with the instructions given in the Communication and Visibility Requirements of 2018⁶ (or any successor document), notably with regard to the use of the EU emblem and the elaboration of a dedicated communication and visibility plan, to be completed for every action at the start of implementation. Visibility and communication measures should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

⁵ See best [practice of evaluation dissemination](#)

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/communication-visibility-requirements-2018_en.pdf

Effectiveness of communication activities on awareness about the action and its objectives as well as on EU funding of the action should be measured.

Implementing partners shall keep the Commission and concerned EU Delegation/Office fully informed of the planning and implementation of specific visibility and communication activities before work starts. Implementing partners will ensure adequate visibility of EU financing and will report on visibility and communication actions as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees.

This obligation will continue to apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, partner countries, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU member states.

However, action documents for specific sector programmes are no longer required to include a provision for communication and visibility actions promoting the programmes concerned. These resources will instead be consolidated in Cooperation Facilities established by support measure action documents, allowing Delegations to plan and execute multiannual strategic communication and public diplomacy actions with sufficient critical mass to be effective on a national scale.

APPENDIX REPORTING IN OPSYS

An Intervention⁷ (also generally called project/programme) is the operational entity associated to a coherent set of activities and results structured in a logical framework aiming at delivering development change or progress. Interventions are the most effective (hence optimal) entities for the operational follow-up by the Commission of its external development operations. As such, Interventions constitute the base unit for managing operational implementations, assessing performance, monitoring, evaluation, internal and external communication, reporting and aggregation.

Primary Interventions are those contracts or groups of contracts bearing reportable results and respecting the following business rule: ‘a given contract can only contribute to one primary intervention and not more than one’. An individual contract that does not produce direct reportable results and cannot be logically grouped with other result reportable contracts is considered a ‘support entities’. The addition of all primary interventions and support entities is equivalent to the full development portfolio of the Institution.

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 is defined in the related Action Document and it is revisable; it can be a(n) (group of) action(s) or a (group of) contract(s).

Tick in the left side column one of the three possible options for the level of definition of the Primary Intervention(s) identified in this action.

In the case of ‘Group of actions’ level, add references to the present action and other action concerning the same Primary Intervention.

In the case of ‘Contract level’, add the reference to the corresponding budgetary items in point 4.6, Indicative Budget.

Option 1: Action level		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single action	Present action: all contracts in the present action
Option 2: Group of actions level		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Group of actions	Actions reference (CRIS#/OPSYS#): <Present action> <Other action>
Option 3: Contract level		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	<foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract)>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 2	<foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract)>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 3	<foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract)>
	(...)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of contracts 1	<foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract) 1> <foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract) 2> <foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract) #>

⁷ [ARES \(2021\)4204912](#) - For the purpose of consistency between terms in OPSYS, DG INTPA, DG NEAR and FPI have harmonised 5 key terms, including ‘action’ and ‘Intervention’ where an ‘action’ is the content (or part of the content) of a Commission Financing Decision and ‘Intervention’ is a coherent set of activities and results which constitutes an effective level for the operational follow-up by the EC of its operations on the ground. See more on the [concept of intervention](#).