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This action is funded by the European Union

ANNEX 3

of the Commission Decision on the on the on the Annual Action Programme 2017 in favour of the Republic of Liberia to be financed from the 11th European Development Fund

Action Document for Civil Society Initiative (CSI)

INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL GRANT APPLICANTS

WORK PROGRAMME FOR GRANTS

This document constitutes the work programme for grants in the sense of Article 128(1) of the Financial Regulation (Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012), applicable to the EDF in accordance with Article 37 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323 in the following section grants awarded directly without a call for proposals: section 5.4.1 “Grant – direct award (direct management)”

1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number	<u>Civil Society Initiative (CSI)</u> CRIS number: LR/FED/039-792 financed under the 11 th European Development Fund (EDF)	
2. Zone benefiting from the action/location	Liberia	
3. Programming document	National Indicative Programme (NIP) ¹ for the period 2014-2020 for Liberia	
4. Sector of concentration/ thematic area	Measures in favour of Civil Society	DEV. Aid ² : YES
5. Amounts concerned	Total estimated cost: EUR 4 425 000 Total amount of EDF contribution EUR 4 000 000 This action is co-financed in co-financing by the grant	

¹ Commission Decision on the adoption of National Indicative Programme for the Republic of Liberia (2014-2020) C(2015) 1267 of 26.2.2015.

² Official Development Aid is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective.

	beneficiary for an amount of EUR 425 000			
6. Aid modality(ies) and implementation modality(ies)	Project Modality Direct Management – grants – direct award			
7 a) DAC code(s)	150			
b) Main Delivery Channel	21 000 International Organizations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's)			
8. Markers (from CRIS DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
	Aid to environment	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality (including Women In Development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade Development	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
	Biological diversity	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagships	N/A			
10. SDGs	This action contributes to SDG 16.6 and 17.			

SUMMARY

The proposed action is in line with European Union – Liberia National Indicative Programme 2014 – 2020 Liberia. The Action aims to contribute to foster governance and promote institution building, which remains a key priority in a fragile state like Liberia, particularly in the areas of EU concentration. By focusing on Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) – as being the "demand side of accountability", the Action will be complementary to EU efforts supporting the supply side of accountability in the 4 sectors of EU cooperation (Education, Agriculture, Governance and Energy), including PFM reforms and State Building Contract (budget support).

The general objective of this action is progress in Liberia's Agenda for Transformation objectives of inclusive wealth creation for more equal and transparent society.

The specific objectives would be linked to the three components, as follows:

1. Strengthened abilities of CSOs and the National Civil Society Council of Liberia (NCSCCL) to address their risks and to pursuit their missions;

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Strengthened CSO's advocacy roles in the EU focal sectors (i.e. Energy, Education, Governance and Agriculture);3. Strengthened collective voice of Liberian CSOs; <p>The proposed action would be implemented by Direct Management mode.</p> |
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1 CONTEXT

1.1 Sector/Country/Regional context/Thematic area

Since the end of the civil war in 2003, Liberia has steadily moved towards reconstituting its democratic institutions. Substantial efforts have been directed towards public and financial management reforms and sustainable management of the country vast resources. However, these accomplishments remain fragile as acknowledged by the EU NIP for Liberia 2014-2020.

While Liberia's ratings are above the African average for voice, accountability and political stability (e.g. Transparency International's 2014 Corruption Perception Index ranks Liberia 83 out of the 168 countries and territories assessed, with a score 37), governance, justice and public institutions remain fragile.

Additional challenges are raised by aid-dependence, the Presidential and General Elections in 2017 (first post – conflict transition of powers), the drawdown of the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission to Liberia (UNMIL) and the aftermath of the Ebola epidemic, which impacting the entire economic and social fabric of the country, exposed fragility and structural challenges of the State service provision, infrastructure, and the paramount role still played by the non-state actors to fill this gap.

Civil society efforts of collective engagement became visible during the Liberian civil conflict and right afterwards, when Liberian CSOs have played a very important role in fostering peace in their country. Following 2005 elections, a number of civil society leaders were appointed for key government positions. The loss of charismatic skilled leaders, together with the strong fragmentation, created important institutional challenges for CSOs.

Liberian CSOs have been involved in the formulation and approval of the two key public policy strategies for reform and development in Liberia (the Agenda for Transformation (AfT) and the vision *Liberia Rising 2030*). Both documents highlight the role of the local CSOs as "agents of change" in critical national processes. They have been also acknowledged to have actively participated in the design of a series of laws.

Thus, Liberian CSOs can be considered to influence policy issues in general and very actively in some sectors. Still, many Liberian CSOs continue to argue that, despite the progress, their voice remains weak, not well organized and need to be reinforced. This is the case for instance with the budget-making processes, where access to information remains a key challenge. The passage in 2010 of the Freedom of Information Act (FoI), has provided the opportunity and legal framework for CSOs to hold government accountable and for the government to be more transparent. However, the law is still facing multiple problems in being fully implemented, and access to information remains difficult and unequal.

With regards to service delivery, both Liberian as well as international CSOs, remain key actors in the provision of services in education, health, water and sanitation, as well as in agricultural extension and food security, filling gaps of weak or inexistent public services.

1.1.1 Public Policy Assessment and EU Policy Framework

The Commission Communication "The Roots of Democracy and sustainable development: Europe's Engagement with Civil Society in External Relations" (September 2012), which builds on the Agenda for Change, puts forward three priorities for the EU: Enhancing efforts to promote a conducive environment for CSOs in partner countries; Promoting meaningful and structured participation in programming and policy processes to build stronger governance and accountability at all levels; and increasing local CSOs' capacity to perform their roles as independent development actors more effectively. Furthermore, the Communication states that CSOs will be supported as actors in governance and accountability; partners in promoting social development and; stakeholders in promoting inclusive and sustainable growth.

These dispositions, and the underpinning concept of multi stakeholder development, are today central to the newly adopted global 2030 Agenda.

In Liberia, there is no legal framework governing CSO activity. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Liberia and CSOs signed in 2016 is the main Government of Liberia policy framework for the CSO sector. In that regard, although the operating environment is relatively favourable, as no affirmative restrictions exist and CSOs can develop and operate rather freely, there is no legal protection for CSOs under Liberian legislation.

At country level, support to CSOs is considered central to Liberia's post conflict and post Ebola recovery and development. Accordingly, "Measures in favour of Civil society" of EUR 4 000 000 is a cross cutting intervention across all focal sectors of the NIP 2014-2020.

The structured dialogue organised jointly by the EU Delegation and Sweden together with the National Civil Society Council (NCSC) has not taken place since April 2014, following the outbreak of the Ebola crisis. Today, consultations are progressively being resumed and CSOs have been involved in the programming of the 11th EDF, which is, *per se*, aligned with the Aft.

1.1.2 Stakeholder analysis

Civil society (CS) in Liberia is diverse and fragmented, consisting of over 1500 formal organisations registered under the umbrella of the National Civil Society Council of Liberia, and countless informal organisations.

The operating environment is generally favourable with regards to citizen participation in civic and democratic processes. Many CSOs are small community based service delivery organisations working on niche projects for their members at community level. A number of larger organisations are active at sector level in governance and accountability.

Yet, despite this proliferation and the sustained efforts to address key capacity challenges, CS capacity remains generally weak, and CSOs face a multiplicity of operational and institutional challenges that inhibit them in effectively carrying out their missions and activities.

As pointed out in several assessments³, CS internal governance continues to be a key area of concern, with a strong impact on the credibility and legitimacy of the Liberian CS fabric to represent and defend citizens' rights. This problem of legitimacy of CSOs was also identified

³ CIVICUS, "Civil Society Index Analytical Report for Liberia", op. cit., 2010, p. 20.

after the Ebola outbreak. In a study by International Alert,⁴ only half of respondents found civil society groups "trustworthy", below the trustworthiness of international NGOs, journalists, religious leaders and community groups, among others.

Despite sustained efforts to strengthen the collective voice of the sector, fragmentation also continues to be a fundamental weakness in the sector. Due to the challenging funding environment (where most CSOs depend on intentional funds), CSOs compete on a rather limited and donor-driven arena for mostly small projects – or activity-oriented funds. This competition, the establishment of many new CSOs that do not seek coordination with other civil society actors, and the lack of knowledge of what other actors actually do and achieve, create an atmosphere of mistrust.

Formal coordination among CSOs in Liberia was given a boost in 2008 when the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported the establishment of the National Civil Society Council of Liberia (NCSCCL) as a coordinating body of the CSOs. Today the NCSCCL is the largest umbrella organization in Liberia, acknowledged by donors, and mainly involved in policy dialogue activities, with a special emphasis on the AFT and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. However, its leadership has been subject to criticism by several CSOs who have demanded more internal democratic structures and transparency. Moreover, the structure of the NCSCCL is still weak and the same applies to other coordination and networking initiatives.

This fragmentation, together with the weak capacity of the Liberian CSOs in evidence-based research and advocacy seriously hampers CS involvement in policy dialogue. This, however, differs significantly across sectors: in forestry, for example, the CSOs provide valuable reports and insights, whereas in other sectors like infrastructure or economic governance most of the inputs come from international organizations.

Lack of professional staff due to limited funding is another key area of concern. Several studies point out that Liberian CSOs cannot provide regular salaries for staff and the high dependence on donor funds result in periods of little or no revenue between grants. Many CSO staff and, in some cases, entire staff of some CSOs go unpaid during periods between grants. Those who are able to pay a few core staff regularly must still rely on volunteers or interns. With limited technical capacity and weak institutional and financial systems, CSOs are unable to meet rigid donor criteria for project funding.

1.1.3 Priority areas for support/problem analysis

Under the National Indicative Programme for Liberia of 2014-2020, out of the total envelop of EUR 279 million, EUR 269 million are earmarked to support the supply side of EU four priority sectors (Governance, Agriculture, Energy and Education), EUR 6 million for support measures and EUR 4 million for Civil Society in support to NIP implementation. Main governance challenges in these sectors revolve around the lack of accountability and transparency of policy decisions and implementation, including processes involving the mobilisation and allocation of public resources (i.e. the public financial system). This is particularly acute in the education, energy and decentralised financial transfers through the Committee Development Fund, while agriculture related business such as palm oil, forestry

⁴ International Alert – "Surviving Ebola – Public Perceptions of governance and the outbreak response in Liberia", 2015

and/or fisheries are great contributors of governments revenue and tax system as well as of the Committee Development Fund (CDF).

Reinforcing the demand side of these 4 EU priority sectors as regards advocacy for accountability and transparency of the public sector, would not only allow a more effective implementation of the NIP, but also a more effective achievement of Liberia's development goals.

Against the background, underlined in paragraph 1, the following areas appear particularly relevant for support to CSOs:

- 1) Reinforcement of CSOs' organisational capacity (internal control systems) and technical skills of CSOs and their members.
- 2) The involvement of CSOs in domestic policies in the EU focal sectors (i.e. governance, energy, agriculture and education), using both invited and claimed spaces of dialogue⁵ and building on the successful experiences that exist in certain sectors, as briefly mentioned above;
- 3) Enhancement of CSOs' coordination efforts and strengthen their collective voice, while reinforcing and professionalizing their internal governance and financial structures;

The programme would support mid-sized CSOs, in order to ensure a complementarity with other funding (mainly The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) upcoming programme in support to grass-roots organisations), also as this type of CSO has potentially the biggest impact in achieving the expected outcomes. In addition the Action would support the National Civil Society Council of Liberia as the main umbrella organisation for CSOs.

This approach is fully in line with the new 2030 Agenda (i.e. the Sustainable development goals).

⁵ For further information see EuropeAid, 2014: Promoting Civil Society participation in policy and budget processes. Tools and methods series. Reference document n. 18

2 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risks	Risk level (H/M/L)	Mitigating measures
Lack of political will on the side of authorities to engage with CSOs.	M/H	The programme will play a facilitation role, to build trust between public authorities and CSOs and promote dialogue, using existing entry points and supporting both incited and claimed spaces for dialogue.
Lack or delays of implementation of decentralisation policy.	M	EU will engage in sustained policy dialogue to monitor and encourage the enforcement of public reforms, including decentralisation. The programme will support civil society to advocate for decentralisation as well as social accountability efforts at local level.
Lack of absorption capacity by CSOs.	M	During the formulation of the programme, the different implementation modalities will be carefully assessed, to ensure that CSOs have the required absorption capacity and that the programme doesn't represent a burden for them.
Lack of will on the side of CSOs to improve their governance systems and lack of cooperation within CSOs.	M	A special focus will be brought to networks and coordinating bodies, and detailed capacity development plans (based on an institutional needs assessment) will be drafted. Experts will be recruited to bring the necessary expertise to mentor and accompany organisations, and examples from other countries (e.g. codes of conduct, covenants etc) will be shared.
Politicisation of CSOs.	M	Politicisation of CSOs has been pointed out as one of the main challenges. The project will address this through a constant monitoring and dialogue.
Access to information is limited and request for information is a cumbersome and tedious process	M	A sub-component of the multi-donor support to PFM reform in Liberia through the new 'Integrated Public Financial Management Reform Project' and to which the EUD contributes will include a component to support the supply side of accountability, including support to budget transparency and information provision and sharing.
Sustainability of the results of the programme.	H	Design of an exit strategy.

Lack of coordination among relevant agencies leads to duplication of efforts.	L	A coordination mechanism will be set up and regular coordination amongst similar projects/ donors will take place.
Assumptions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smooth political transition after presidential and general elections. • Overall security situation in the country does not deteriorate. • The Government of Liberia will undertake the agreed public reforms, including the application of the Freedom of Information Act and commitments towards enhanced civic engagement, in line with the 2030 Agenda. • There are CSOs with experience in social accountability and familiar with policy and budget issues. • There are International Non-Governmental Organisations in Liberia with strong experience in supporting CSOs in capacity development to hold the government accountable as well as for institutional strengthening. 		

3 LESSONS LEARNT, COMPLEMENTARITY AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

3.1 Lessons learnt

A number of lessons emerge from past EU engagement, and that of other donors having substantially invested in Liberian CS development:

- 1) Several strategic and relevant CS support initiatives (also with regards to capacity development) existed prior to the outbreak of the Ebola crisis, but had to be put to a halt due to the emergency situation. The priority therefore today is that of resuming "the path of sustainable and inclusive development", transitioning from the emergency crisis.
- 2) The involvement of CSOs in public financial management processes through the Integrated Public Financial Management Reform Project (IPFMRP) enhanced CSOs's interests of getting engaged in this area. It proved that, with adequate training and means, CSOs are able to hold decision-makers accountable. However the current IPFMRP set up (within the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, only 2 people focusing mainly on grants distribution) is not proving efficient.
- 3) There is a need to rethink donor support models to CSOs to reinforce the CSOs' ownership and financial sustainability. Donor support to CSOs has been for the most part project-based, service-provision oriented, channelled through intermediary organisation (INGOs) and to a great extent driven by donor agendas.
- 4) Adapted support is required for networks and platforms, which have difficulties in raising funds and often compete with their members for funding at the risk of becoming project implementing bodies rather than serving their members and the network. A limited number of networks, such as WONGOSOL (Women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia), have gained trust among donors. Furthermore, financial sustainability of Liberian CSOs also requires enhancing local fundraising approaches and initiatives.

- 5) Capacity development requires an integrated approach, focusing not just on the individual technical skills of CS staff and those of the organisations, but also on their interactions and the environment in which CSOs operate. CSOs need to be strengthened according to a strategic and long-term approach.
- 6) There is a need to acknowledge and duly address the prevailing gap between the CSOs based in Monrovia and those registered in other parts of the country. There is a need to strengthen local linkages between the organizations based in Monrovia and those based in the rural areas.

3.2 Complementarity, synergy and donor coordination

At strategic level, the Action is in line with the EU Road Map for engagement with CSOs 2017-2020 currently under preparation (which translates the ambitions of the 2012 Communication "The roots for engagement") and will be key to supporting its implementation.

At programmatic level, by strengthening CSOs to enhance the demand side of accountability, the Action is complementary to the support provided to government through 11th EDF focal sectors (i.e. the supply side), by targeting CSOs working in 11th EDF focal sectors.

The Action is also intended to be complementary to the EU support to the PFM reform, through the contribution to the basket fund for the implementation of the next phase of the "Integrated Public Financial Management Reform Project", implemented by the World Bank. In this second phase, under development, the WB is planning to put strong focus to enhance the supply side of accountability, especially access to information.

The Action will be complementary and will look for synergy with other EU Member States/ Development Partners interventions (support to "middle level" CSOs vs grassroots organisations (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Sweden, USAID).

At the level of operational support, currently there are 14 thematic projects implemented by or in support of Civil Society under EU CSOs – Local Authorities, European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and FOOD (Pro-Resilience Action) thematic budget lines. There are also a number of Health, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and revival of border communities projects financed by a special Ebola EDF funding as well as Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade.

3.3 Cross-cutting issues

Liberia and the EU share a common policy approach towards crosscutting issues such as gender, children's rights, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, environmental sustainability, climate change and combating HIV/AIDS. The project will foster, in particular, good governance, respect for human rights and gender equality.

Gender gaps remain wide. Literacy rates for women in rural areas are staggeringly low at 26 %, compared to 61 % for urban women and 60 % and 86 % for rural and urban men, respectively. With regards to the work force, women make up 54 % of the labour force, including formal and informal workers in Liberia. However, they are disproportionately clustered in the least productive sectors with 90 % employed in the informal sector or in agriculture, compared to 75 % of working men. Domestic violence remains a widespread problem.

Gender will be mainstreamed in all capacity development efforts, while aiming at obtaining disaggregated data in order to allow better including gender aspects in actions. The programme will integrate the recommendations from the Gender Action Plan II.

Finally, environmental issues will be mainstreamed in capacity development activities, particularly addressed at organizations active in the sector, while improved governance also increases possibilities for improved management of the environment and natural resources at local and central levels.

4 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

This programme is relevant for the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It contributes primarily to the progressive achievement of SDG 16.6, but also promotes progress towards SDG 17. This does not imply a commitment by Liberia benefiting from this programme.

4.1 Objectives/results

The NIP 2014-2020 allocates an indicative amount of EUR 4 million to support CSOs and their contribution to the NIP, closely aligned with the national Agenda for Transformation (AfT).

The general objective of this action is to contribute Liberia's AfT objectives of wealth creation and increased inclusiveness for more equal and just society.

More specifically, the programme would aim at strengthening the capacity of Liberian CSOs to become credible governance actors, and deepen their engagement in the domestic public policy cycle, in line with the commitments under the 2030 Agenda.

The expected outputs are as follows:

1. Improved Internal Control⁶ systems of CSOs/the National Civil Society Council of Liberia (NCSCL);
2. Strengthened knowledge of, skills in and engagement on advocacy, policy dialog, public sector reforms and public accountability;
3. Improved networking and coordination skills of Liberian civil society;

The main targets of the programme are Liberian middle-level CSOs who are interested and willing to play an enhanced role in domestic public policies. 8-12 CSOs and the National Civil Society Council of Liberia, as the main umbrella organisation in Liberia will be supported through a mixture of dedicated capacity development and sub-grants.

⁶ Internal Control being an integral process that is effected by an entity's management and personnel and is designed to address risks and to provide reasonable assurance that in pursuit of the entity's mission, the following general objectives are being achieved:

- Executing orderly, ethical, economical, efficient and effective operations
- Fulfilling accountability obligations;
- Complying with applicable laws and regulations
- Safeguarding resources against loss, misuse and damage

4.2 Main activities

Component 1 – addressing EO 1 - Strengthened abilities of CSOs and NCSCL to address their risks and to pursue their missions;

This component would consist of provision of support to improve the Internal Control systems of CSOs/ NCSCL.

Activities: Baseline study allowing choosing/confirming the choice of targeted CSOs, capacity gap assessments (inception phase), provision of organisational development and accompanying CSOs in the application.

Component 2 – addressing EO 2 - Strengthened CSO's advocacy roles in the EU focal sectors (i.e. Energy, Education, Governance and Agriculture);

This component is formed by 2 sub-components:

Component 2.1 Support to strengthen CSOs and their member's technical skills.

Activities: provision of technical and advocacy skills training and accompanying/mentoring CSOs in their application.

Component 2.2 Financial support in the form of small sub-grants will be provided by the Implementing Partner to targeted CSOs (on average 8-12 middle-level CSOs), including the National Civil Society Council of Liberia as the main CSO umbrella organisation, to play their evidence-based advocacy, policy dialogue, networking and watchdog roles while also further contributing to developing CS capacities. The sub-grantees will be mentored in the implementation of these sub-grants.

Component 3 – addressing EO3 – Strengthened collective voice of Liberian CSOs;

Activities: Provision of training and assistance allowing CSOs/ NCSCL to reinforce their networking/coordination/consolidation.

4.3 Intervention logic

The Action aims to contribute to increased inclusive wealth creation for a more equal and transparent society. By focusing on the "demand side of accountability", the Action will be complementary to EU efforts supporting the supply side of accountability in the 4 sectors of EU cooperation (Education, Agriculture, Governance and Energy), including PFM reforms and State Building Contract (budget support).

Subject to assumptions enumerated above, the Action will provide technical and capacity development to CSOs that would allow them to meet capacity challenges in terms of accountability by making themselves more accountable and transparent, as well as improving their skills in playing watchdog roles. Given the limited resources of Liberian CSOs to take action and the need for long-term support for capacity development, funds in form of small sub-grants (and possible follow-up sub-grants) up to total EUR 60 000 will be provided to implement transparency and accountability initiatives in line with the CSO's strategy and mandate. Performance will be assessed, based on the level of accomplishment of results but also on the level of institutional development of the organisation. Finally, support to strengthen the collective action among these organisations and cross-sector learning will also be supported as part of the collective action needed to promote democratic development.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

Both in indirect and direct management, 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 measures affecting the respective countries of operation.

5.1 Financing agreement

In order to implement this action, it is foreseen to conclude a financing agreement with the partner country, referred to in Article 17 of Annex IV to the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement.

5.2 Indicative implementation period

The indicative implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 4.2. will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 60 months from the date of entry into force of the financing agreement.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's authorising officer responsible by amending this decision and the relevant contracts and agreements; such amendments to this decision constitute non-substantial amendment in the sense of Article 9(4) of Regulation (EU) 2015/322.

5.3 Implementation of the budget support component

N/A

5.4 Implementation modalities

5.4.1 Grant: direct award (direct management)

(a) Objectives of the grant, fields of intervention, priorities of the year and expected results

Objective of the grant is to strengthen the capacity of Liberian CSOs to become credible governance actors, and deepen their engagement in the domestic public policy cycle, in line with the commitments under the 2030 Agenda.

Fields of intervention are capacity building, operational support and organisational development of CSOs.

Priorities throughout the implementation of the grant will be internal control systems, advocacy and networking of CSOs.

The expected results are as follows:

1. Improved Internal Control systems of CSOs/ NCSCL;
2. Strengthened knowledge of, skills in and engagement on advocacy, policy dialogue, public sector reforms and public accountability;
3. Improved networking and coordination skills of Liberian civil society.

(b) Justification of a direct grant:

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to:

An assessment of the security situation and the operational conditions in Liberia was produced by the Delegation in March 2017. On this basis, the European Commission has granted the renewal of flexible procedures applicable to cases of crisis situation, as defined in article 190.2 of the Rules of Application (RAP of the Financial Regulation 966/2012) until 30/06/2018.

Based on the lessons learnt from the donor support to Liberian CSOs, the preliminary findings of the identification and formulation missions conducted for the Action (i.e. more than 15 bilateral semi-structured interviews with more than 15 International Non-Governmental Organisations, including, the coordinating body of International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) in Liberia, Liberia International Non-Governmental Organisation, LINGO) there is a strong evidence that there is only a very limited number of NGOs with the technical and financial capacity to implement EU grants in Liberia and that, in addition, would have:

- Experience in the capacity development of local CSOs;
- Experience and skills in voice & accountability work and;

Until now we have managed to pre-identify only 3 INGOs (i.e. Oxfam IBIS⁷ –policy dialogue and accountability- ActionAid, MercyCorps- in Policy Dialogue) and 2 local CSOs (i.e. Accountability Lab and Development Innovations and Networks (IRED) yet the latter with limited capacity for managing EU grants, work on issues around social accountability and policy dialogue in combination with the provision technical and institutional capacity development.

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to a direct award of the grant is justified because:

Based on the lessons learnt from the donor support to Liberian CSOs, the preliminary findings of the identification and formulation missions conducted for the Action (i.e. more than 15 bilateral semi-structured interviews with more than 15 INGOs, including, the coordinating body of INGO in Liberia, LINGO) there is a strong evidence that there are only a very limited number of NGOs with the technical and financial capacity to implement EU grants in Liberia and that in addition would have:

- Experience in the capacity development of local CSOs;
- Experience and skills in voice & accountability work and;

Until now we have managed to pre-identify only 3 INGOs (i.e. Oxfam IBIS –policy dialogue and accountability- ActionAid, MercyCorps- in Policy Dialogue) and 2 local CSOs (i.e. Accountability Lab and IRED) yet the latter with limited capacity for managing EU grants, work on issues around social accountability and policy dialogue in combination with the provision technical and institutional capacity development.

(c) Eligibility conditions

⁷ Oxfam IBIS, Non-profit organisation in Copenhagen, Denmark. <http://oxfamibis.dk/>

The main applicant should be:

- be legal persons **and**
- be non-profit-making **and**
- be a non-governmental organisation; **and**
- be established in a Member State of the European Union or any other country **and**
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary **and**
- Demonstrate previous presence or experience working in Liberia.

(d) Essential selection and award criteria

The essential selection criteria are the financial and operational capacity of the applicant.

The essential award criteria are relevance of the proposed action to the objectives of the call; design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action.

(e) Maximum rate of co-financing

The maximum possible rate of co-financing for this grant is tentatively 90 %.

In accordance with Articles 192 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 applicable in accordance with Article 37 of (EU) regulation 2015/323 if full funding is essential for the action to be carried out, the maximum possible rate of co-financing may be increased up to 100 %. The essentiality of full funding will be justified by the Commission's authorising officer responsible in the award decision, in respect of the principles of equal treatment and sound financial management.

(f) Indicative trimester to conclude the grant agreement

Second trimester of 2018.

5.5 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

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

The Commission's authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility in accordance with Article 22(1)(b) of Annex IV to the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of products and services in the markets of the countries concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult.

5.6 Indicative Budget

	EU contribution under the present AD (in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, (in EUR)
5.4.1 Direct grant (direct management)	3 700 000	425 000
Component 1 (indicative amount)	2 000 000	
Component 2 (indicative amount)	1 200 000	
Component 3 (indicative amount)	625 000	
5.9 Evaluation and 5.10 Audit	160 000	
5.11 Visibility	15 000	
Total	4 000 000	425 000

5.7 Organisational set-up and responsibilities

The day-to-day technical and financial management and administration of the action will be the responsibility of the implementing partner.

They will be responsible for narrative and financial reporting, as well as for the collation, aggregation and management of relevant documents and other documents required for the undertaking of evaluation and audits.

A Programme Steering Committee (PSC) will be set up to oversee the implementation of the programme. The Steering Committee could review and orientate the work of the activities and shall supervise its overall implementation. The PSC will be integrated by the EU Delegation, the National Authorising Officer (NAO) and the implementing partner. Representatives from line ministries and of beneficiary organisations shall also be part of the committee.

The PSC shall be held at least twice a year with a first meeting following briefly after the signature of the financing agreement.

5.8 Performance 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 will establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action (with dedicated staff) and elaborate regular progress reports, not less than annual, and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (outputs and direct outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the log-frame matrix. The report shall be laid out in such a way as to allow monitoring of the means envisaged and employed and of the budget details for the action. The final report, narrative and financial, will cover the entire period of the action implementation.

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).

5.9 Evaluation

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

The mid –term evaluation will be carried out for potential problem solving and learning purposes, in particular with respect to capacity built of CSOs and better service delivery.

The final evaluation will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision).

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 15 days in advance of the dates foreseen 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. 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.

Indicatively, two contracts for evaluation services shall be concluded in the second quarter of 2019 and in the first quarter of 2021.

5.10 Audit

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 audits or expenditure verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

Indicatively, two contracts for audit services shall be concluded under a framework contract, in 2019 and in 2021.

5.11 Communication and visibility

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU.

This action shall contain communication and visibility measures which shall be based on a specific Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action, to be elaborated at the start of implementation and supported with the budget indicated in section 5.6 above.

In terms of legal obligations on communication and visibility, the measures shall be implemented by the Commission, the partner country, contractors, grant beneficiaries and/or entrusted entities. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, the financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

The Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Action shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

The Communication and Visibility activities will be the responsibility of the implementing partners (namely the INGO or the consortium of NGOs awarded with the grant) and therefore a budget for a Communication and Visibility Plan will be duly allocated in the grant.

Indicatively, one contract for EUR 15 000 shall be concluded after the signature of the grant.

6. PRE-CONDITIONS

N/A

5 APPENDIX - INDICATIVE LOGFRAME MATRIX (FOR PROJECT MODALITY) ⁸

The activities, the expected outputs and all the indicators, targets and baselines included in the logframe matrix are indicative and may be updated during the implementation of the action, no amendment being required to the financing decision. When it is not possible to determine the outputs of an action at formulation stage, intermediary outcomes should be presented and the outputs defined during inception of the overall programme and its components. The indicative logframe matrix will evolve during the lifetime of the action: new lines will be added for including the activities as well as new columns for intermediary targets (milestones) for the output and outcome indicators whenever it is relevant for monitoring and reporting purposes. Note also that indicators should be disaggregated by sex whenever relevant.

	Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Targets	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Overall objective: Impact	Increased inclusive wealth creation for a more equal and transparent society.	<p>1. Growth rates of the household expenditure/income per capita among the bottom 40 % per cent of the population and the total population;</p> <p>2. Proportion of the population satisfied with their last experience of public services;</p> <p>3 CIVICUS⁹ Enabling Environment Index (EEI) for Liberia;</p> <p><i>(Note: Other indexes/rankings related to aspects of the EE and inclusive policy making, e.g. sustainability index, etc may also be used, especially if CIVICUS EEI is discontinued)</i></p>	<p>1-2. National Domesticated Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) benchmark (To Be Defined (TBD))</p> <p>3. EEI: 88th position (amongst out of 109) with an index of 0,41 in 2013 in terms of the conditions within which</p>	1 - 3 To be defined during the inception phase	<p>- Final Evaluation</p> <p>- Governmental reports of the implementation of the SDGs, particularly Goal 16.6 and 10.1</p> <p>- CIVICUS Enabling Environment Index</p> <p>- Transparency International indexes</p>	

⁸ Mark indicators aligned with the relevant programming document mark with '*' and indicators aligned to the EU Results Framework with '**'.

⁹ CIVICUS is an international non-profit organisation. (World Alliance for Citizen Participation is an international alliance of members and partners which constitutes an influential network of organisations at the local, national, regional and international levels, and spans the spectrum of civil society) <http://www.civicus.org/>

			civil society work			
Specific objectives: expected outcomes	<p>1. EO 1: Strengthened abilities of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) and the National Civil Society Council of Liberia (NCSCL) to address their risks and to pursue their missions;</p> <p>2.</p> <p>EO 2: Strengthened CSO's advocacy roles in the EU focal sectors (i.e. Energy, Education, Governance and Agriculture);</p>	<p>Related to EO 1:</p> <p>1.1 Level of strength of Internal Control systems of the CSOs and of NCSCL</p> <p>Related to EO 2:</p> <p>2.1 Number of CSOs acting as governance actors and capable of holding the government accountable;</p> <p>2.2 Level of engagement of CSOs/ NCSCL in the domestic public policy cycle (especially national/ sector/ country budget drafting and implementation), in particular in relation to the focal sectors of EU cooperation;</p> <p>2.3 Number of initiatives (local plans, sector plans, specific projects etc.) within targeted sectors where budgets and/or tax collection reports are elaborated through</p>	<p>1. To be defined through the institutional assessments, using Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) or others (to be used <u>as a base line</u>) during the inception of the programme</p> <p>2.1 Ad-hoc and uneven sector to sector Knowledge to be deepened during the inception phase through the detailed mappings per sector</p> <p>2.2- 2.5 TBD in the inception phase</p>	<p>1. To be defined through the institutional assessments during the inception of the programme</p> <p>2.1 - CSO engagement is formalised in the 4 sectors of cooperation (Knowledge to be deepened during the inception phase through the detailed mappings per sector</p> <p>2.2 – 2.5 TBD in the inception phase</p>	<p>-OCAT or similar institutional assessment reports</p> <p>-Public Finance Management (PFM) and Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) reports</p> <p>-Assessments of State Building Contracts tranche release</p> <p>-Open Budget Initiative reports</p> <p>-PFM and PEFA reports</p>	<p>Access to information is granted to CSOs and citizens</p> <p>Liberian CSOs own the programme and share the values and principles promoted by the programme.</p> <p>There is a “core group” of Liberian CSOs with some experience in social accountability and familiar with policy and budget issues</p> <p>There are International Non-governmental Organisations in Liberia with strong experience in supporting CSOs in capacity development to hold the government accountable as well as providers of institutional strengthening.</p> <p>CSOs/ NCSCL are willing to undertake the necessary internal control reforms and NCSCL reaffirms their independence vis-à-vis the Government.</p>

	<p>participatory methodologies with CSOs;</p> <p>2.4 Number of initiatives (local plans, sector plans, specific projects etc.) within targeted sectors where budgets and/or tax collection reports are elaborated through participatory methodologies with CSOs and are gender mainstreamed;</p> <p>2.5 Number of fora for dialogue set up in the targeted sectors;</p> <p>EO3: Strengthened collective voice of Liberian CSOs;</p> <p>Related to IO3:</p> <p>3.1 Level of coordination willingness of the CSOs/ NCSCL supported by the programme;</p> <p>3.2 Number of initiatives (local plans, sector plans, specific projects etc.) within targeted sectors where CSOs/ NCSCL provide an coordinated response initiated/deepened as a result of the Action;</p> <p>3.3 Number of advocacy /social accountability actions & campaigns carried out jointly by CS alliances,</p>					
		<p>3.1– 3.3 TBD in the inception phase</p>	<p>3.1– 3.3 TBD in the inception phase</p>			

Outputs	Output 1: Improved Internal Control systems of CSOs/ NCSCL;	<p>1.1 % of the CSOs + NCSCL having their Internal Control systems improved (further sub-indicators to be defined during the inception phase);</p> <p>1.2 % of the CSOs + NCSCL having Gender mainstreaming strategies and implementation policies in place;</p>	To be defined through the institutional assessments, using OCAT or others (to be used <u>as a base line</u>) during the inception of the programme	1.1 – 1.1 100 %	<p>- OCAT or similar institutional assessment reports</p> <p>- Reports from the grantees</p> <p>- Reports from the Technical Assistance (TA) supporting the NCSCL</p>	<p>INGOs are willing to be part of the programme and strengthen the capacities of Liberian CSOs</p> <p>Liberian middle level CSOs are interested in the project and in assuming increasing advocacy and accountability roles</p>
	Output 2: Strengthened knowledge of, skills in and engagement on advocacy, policy dialog, public sector reforms and public accountability	<p>2.1 Number of CSOs/ NCSCL staff trained in issues related advocacy, policy dialog, to monitoring of public policies, public accountability, including the gender aspects who can demonstrate an improved knowledge in the relevant areas;</p> <p>2.2 Number of organisations (CSOs + NCSCL) provided with assistance allowing putting in practice their advocacy skills notably in terms of engagement in public policy dialog, and public sector reforms and public accountability;</p> <p>2.3 Number of organisations (CSOs + NCSCL) supported through the sub-grant scheme;</p> <p>2.4 Level of advocacy-related and technical skills of the CSOs/ NCSCL's staff supported by the programme;</p>	2.1-2.3 To be defined during the inception of the programme	<p>2.1 All essential staff to be trained (exact number to be defined during inception phase)</p> <p>2.2 – 2.3 8- 12 Organisations (CSOs+ NCSCL)</p> <p>2.4 To be defined during the inception of the programme</p>		<p>Liberian CSOs are willing to improve their internal governance standards</p> <p>Technical Cooperation Facility (TCF) funds available for supporting the implementation of the project through a dedicated TA</p>

	Output 3: Improved networking and coordination skills of Liberian civil society	<p>3.1 Number of CSOs/ NCSCL staff trained in networking and coordination techniques who demonstrate increased knowledge in the relevant areas;</p> <p>3.2 Number of CSOs/ NCSCL provided with assistance that would allow reinforcing of their networking/ coordination ;</p> <p>3.3 Level of coordination skills of the CSOs/ NCSCL supported by the programme;</p>	<p>3.1-3.2 To be defined during the inception of the programme</p>	<p>3.1 All essential staff to be trained (exact number to be defined during inception phase)</p> <p>3.2 8- 12 Organisations (CSOs+ NCSCL)</p> <p>3.3 To be defined during the inception of the programme</p>		
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