

EU grants € 52.5 million to consolidate recovery efforts and democratic governance in Sierra Leone

The European Commission today approved the Annual Action Programme 2010 in favour of Sierra Leone to provide € 52.5 million through the 10th European Development Fund to support transition from post-conflict to development.

"Sierra Leone has come a long way since the end of the conflict in 2002. But much is still needed to consolidate achievements and to address the important challenges that remain, above all poverty and its many dimensions in Sierra Leone. Also, preparations for Presidential, Parliamentary and Local elections in 2012 are just getting underway. This year's Annual Action Programme will provide timely support in this context." said Jean-Pierre Reymondet, Head of the European Union Delegation to Sierra Leone.

The objective of the 2010 Annual Action Programme (AAP) is to support Sierra Leone's strategic approach to poverty reduction as set out in its "Agenda for Change 2008-2012". The AAP is composed of four projects:

- Electoral Assistance (€ 8 million) – EU funds will provide much needed financial and technical support to strengthen national capacities for election management.
- Priority Infrastructure Works (€ 23.5 million) – High priority roads and bridges will be rehabilitated. The project includes infrastructure improvements in the capital city Freetown to protect against flooding and landslides.
- Agriculture for Development (€ 16 million) - More than 75% of the population of Sierra Leone is active in the agriculture sector and exports of cash crops play an important role in the country's economic development. EU funds will provide support to increase productivity, improve quality and ensure better market access for selected cash crops.
- Decentralised Service Delivery (€ 5 million) – EU funding will support the government's efforts to increase the role of local councils in decision making and improve delivery of basic services at local levels.

This new Annual Action Plan follows the 2008 AAP, which totalled € 70.17 million and included budget support and assistance for infrastructure rebuilding. The forthcoming cooperation AAP 2011 is expected continue support to the development of essential infrastructure, and to focus on increasing efficiency in public service delivery and strengthening environmental governance. EU cooperation with Sierra Leone provides a total of € 264 million under the 10th European Development Fund for the period 2008-2013. Additional support is granted through regional and worldwide thematic programmes.

For more information please contact:

Gibril Foday-Musa
Delegation of the European Union to Sierra Leone
Phone: (+232) 881 36000
Gibril.Foday-Musa@ec.europa.eu



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