



Brussels, 28.4.2016
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COMMISSION DECISION

of 28.4.2016

**on the Annual Action Programme 2016 in favour of Sierra Leone to be financed from
the 11th European Development Fund**

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EU) 2015/322 of March 2015 on the implementation of the 11th European Development Fund¹, and in particular Article 9(1) thereof,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EU) 2015/323 of 2 March 2015 on the financial regulation applicable to the 11th European Development Fund², and in particular Article 26 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) The Commission has adopted the Country Strategy Paper for Sierra Leone³ which provides for the following priorities: agriculture and food security, and education.
- (2) The objectives pursued by the Annual Action Programme (AAP) to be financed under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF)⁴ Internal Agreement ("Internal Agreement") are to support the post Ebola recovery programme put forward by the Government of Sierra Leone. The AAP will contribute to improved learning outcome by supporting the education sector and increase agricultural production by supporting the agriculture sector. Both interventions will contribute to the overall poverty reduction in Sierra Leone in accordance with the national Poverty Reduction Plan "Agenda for Prosperity". The AAP will in addition support the National Authorising Officer's office.
- (3) The action entitled "Support to the Education Sector" aims to support the education sector and its core role in contributing to Sierra Leone's future. Four areas and entry points are proposed based on the priorities outlined in the Agenda for Prosperity and the recent Education Sector Plan. These areas are as follows: (1) strengthening education system management to support better teaching and learning; (2) improving the quality of teaching and learning; (3) strengthening the relevance and capacity of technical and vocational training; and (4) improving equitable access to secondary education.

¹ OJ L 58, 3.3.2015, p. 1.

² OJ L 58, 3.3.2015, p. 17.

³ Commission Decision on the adoption of the National Indicative Programme between the European Union and Sierra Leone C(2014)3633 of 12.06.2014.

⁴ Internal Agreement between the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States of the European Union, meeting within the Council, on the financing of European Union aid under the multiannual financial framework for the period 2014 to 2020, in accordance with the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, and on the allocation of financial assistance for the Overseas Countries and Territories to which Part Four of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union applies, OJ L 210, 6.8.2013.

- (4) The action entitled "Boosting Agriculture and Food Security" will focus on reducing poverty and food insecurity in Sierra Leone through better governance and increased agricultural productivity and diversification. It will do so by developing the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security's institutional capacity for formulating food security strategies and sector policies; enhancing cashew, cocoa and coffee productivity, income generation for smallholders and exports and finally fostering sustainable agricultural diversification by disseminating farming techniques adapted to climate change.
- (5) The action entitled "11th EDF Support to the Office of the National Authorising Officer (NAO) for the EDF" will contribute to efficient and effective programming and implementation of EU funded projects and programmes through greater integration of the NAO functions into the national system and involvement of Government, in accordance with EDF procedures and the Development Cooperation Framework.
- (6) It is necessary to adopt a financing decision the detailed rules of which are set out in Article 94 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012⁵ EDF applicable in accordance with Article 2(1) and Article 26 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323.
- (7) The Commission should entrust budget-implementation tasks under indirect management to the entities specified in this Decision, subject to the conclusion of a delegation agreement. In accordance with Article 60(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, the authorising officer responsible needs to ensure that these entities guarantee a level of protection of the financial interests of the Union equivalent to that required when the Commission manages Union funds. These entities comply with the conditions of points (a) to (d) of the first subparagraph of Article 60(2) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 and the supervisory and support measures are in place as necessary.
- (8) The Commission should entrust budget-implementation tasks under indirect management to Sierra Leone, subject to the conclusion of a financing agreement. In accordance with Article 60(1)(c) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 applicable in accordance with Article 2(1) and Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323, the authorising officer responsible needs to ensure that measures are taken to supervise and support the implementation of the entrusted tasks. A description of these measures and the entrusted tasks are laid down in Annexes 1, 2 and 3 to this Decision.
- (9) The authorising officer responsible should be able to award grants without a call for proposals provided that the conditions for an exception to a call for proposals in accordance with Article 190 of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012, applicable in accordance with Article 37(1) of Regulation (EU) 2015/323 are fulfilled.
- (10) It is necessary to allow the payment of interest due for late payment on the basis of Article 92 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 and Article 111(4) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012, applicable in accordance with Article 29(1) of Regulation (EU) 2015/323.
- (11) Pursuant to Article 94(4) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012, the Commission should define changes to this Decision which are not substantial in order to ensure that any such changes can be adopted by the authorising officer responsible.

⁵ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 of 29 October 2012 on the rules of application of Regulation No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (OJ L 362, 31.12.2012, p. 1).

- (12) The measures provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the European Development Fund Committee set up by Article 8 of the Internal Agreement.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

Adoption of the measure

The Annual Action Programme 2016 in favour of Sierra Leone to be financed from the European Development Fund, as set out in the Annexes, is approved.

The programme shall include the following actions:

- Annex 1: "Support to the Education Sector";
- Annex 2: "Boosting Agriculture and Food Security";
- Annex 3: "11th EDF Support to Office of National Authorizing Officer for EDF".

Article 2

Financial contribution

The maximum contribution of the European Union for the implementation of the programme referred to in Article 1 is set at EUR 67 500 000 and shall be financed from the 11th European Development Fund.

The financial contribution provided for in the first paragraph may also cover interest due for late payment.

Article 3

Implementation modalities

Budget-implementation tasks under indirect management may be entrusted to the entities identified in Annexes 1, 2 and 3, subject to the conclusion of the relevant agreements.

The elements required by Article 94(2) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 applicable in accordance with Article 26 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323 are set out in the Annexes.

Grants may be awarded without a call for proposals by the authorising officer responsible in accordance with Article 190 of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012.

Article 4

Non-substantial changes

Increases or decreases of up to EUR 10 000 000 not exceeding 20% of the contribution set by the first paragraph of Article 2, or cumulated changes to the allocations of specific actions not exceeding 20% of that contribution, as well as extensions of the implementation period shall not be considered substantial within the meaning of Article 94(4) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012, provided that they do not significantly affect the nature and objectives of the actions. The use of contingencies shall be taken into account in the ceiling set by this Article.

The authorising officer responsible may adopt such non-substantial changes in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and proportionality.

Done at Brussels, 28.4.2016

For the Commission
Neven Mimica
Member of the Commission