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**THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**ANNEX**

of the Commission Decision on the financing of an individual measure in favour of the Republic of Sierra Leone

**Action Document for Technical Cooperation Facility (TCF) VI**

<b>1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number</b>	Technical Cooperation Facility (TCF) VI CRIS number: SL/FED/042-444 financed under European Development Fund (EDF)	
<b>2. Zone benefiting from the action/location</b>	West Africa, Sierra Leone The action shall be carried out at the following location: Sierra Leone	
<b>3. Programming document</b>	National Indicative Programme (NIP) 2014-2020 for Sierra Leone <sup>1</sup>	
<b>4. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>	Main SDG: SDG 17 - Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development Other significant SDG(s): SDG 1 - End poverty in all its forms everywhere SDG 2 - End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture SDG 4 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all SDG 5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls SDG 8 - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all SDG 9 - Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	
<b>5. Sector of</b>	Support Measures	DEV. Assistance: YES

<sup>1</sup> Commission Decision C(2014)3633 of 12.6.2014 on the adoption of the National Indicative Programme between the European Union and Sierra Leone

<b>intervention/ thematic area</b>				
<b>6. Amounts concerned</b>	Total estimated cost: EUR 3 536 000 Total amount of EDF contribution EUR 3 536 000			
<b>7. Aid modality and implementation modalities</b>	Project Modality <b>Direct management</b> through: ➤ Grants ➤ Procurement <b>Indirect management</b> with the Government of Sierra Leone			
<b>8 a) DAC code</b>	15110 Public Sector Policy and Administrative			
<b>b) Main Delivery Channel</b>	Public Sector Institutions - 10000			
<b>9. Markers (from CRIS DAC form)</b>	<b>General policy objective</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>RIO Convention markers</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	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"/>
<b>10. Internal markers</b>	<b>Policy objectives</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Digitalisation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Migration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>11. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagships</b>	N/A			

## **SUMMARY**

**The overall objective** of the action is to ensure the efficient and effective use of EU's development assistance in support of the implementation of the Government of Sierra Leone's development strategies and policies. The portfolio of the National Authorising Office (NAO) features a number of EU funded programmes that are essential to the country's development.

This action will therefore support the operations of, and improve the capacities within the Office of the NAO for the efficient planning, implementation and monitoring of development projects and programmes financed by the EU under the National Indicative Programme (NIP). It will also improve awareness among key actors in the country of general development and of EU policies and programmes.

Another important component of the TCF is the provision of technical assistance to the focal sectors of the NIP and other common areas of interest. It will be used to provide short and medium term technical assistance, policy advice and studies based on specific needs. The TCF may also be used for audits and evaluations if not covered under the respective Financing Agreements of the NIP.

Finally, the last component of the TCF is the provision of much needed medical supplies in Sierra Leone in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

## **1. CONTEXT ANALYSIS**

### **1.1 Context Description**

Sierra Leone's turbulent past has left the country dangling at the bottom of all development indicators with dependency on external aid alarmingly high. Inherent institutional weaknesses, very low human capital development, deeply rooted governance deficiencies, distractions from the development agenda and proneness to external shocks hinder the country's development potential. The economy is only now slowly recovering from the 2016 collapse of world market prices for iron; the Ebola epidemic, which paralysed the economy and led to a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contraction of 20.5%; and the 2017-18 pre-electoral environment that impacted the macro-economic and public finance management.

However, the government elected in 2018 is projecting a positive reform trajectory offering opportunities to build e.g. on areas such as public finance management, fighting corruption, human capital development, agriculture and fisheries development, or tackling gender based violence. The current focus on innovation and the possibility of more evidence-based policy making should also be harnessed.

Sierra Leone's current leadership demonstrated its reform credentials since the year it took office. Fiscal balances had deteriorated significantly in 2016-2017, reflecting fiscal deficits and exceeding expenditure thresholds. Sierra Leone's high level of external debt, and weak growth, exports and revenue put macroeconomic stability at risk. Domestic debt has almost doubled over the past 4–5 years, at much higher cost and with a term profile susceptible to rollover risks. The high stock of implicit debt, in the form of domestic arrears owed to suppliers, compounds the problem. The 'new Direction' proved able to adopt prompt and appropriate corrective measures to curtail unnecessary expenditure, improve the performance of fiscal objectives and establish a

fiscal policy oriented towards macroeconomic stability and debt sustainability, which helped to shore up public finances and stabilise the economy. Increased revenues and significant under-spending resulted in a lower-than-programmed fiscal deficit.

The authorities capitalised on this progress, securing a new International Monetary Fund (IMF) Extended Credit Facility (ECF)-supported programme and engaging other development partners to support wide-ranging economic and social reforms.

A new 5-year national development plan was adopted in April 2019, which provides a fair operational framework, with a strong focus on implementation and clear links with the *Sustainable Development Goals*. The Mid-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP 2019-2023) is a comprehensive plan that is candid about the challenges faced by Sierra Leone and relevant to the country's needs. It focuses on strengthening governance and accountability to reduce vulnerabilities to corruption, building resilience, and investing in people (education), economic diversification (notably agriculture and fisheries) and infrastructure. The MTNDP's key socio-economic goals are well aligned with the EU cooperation priorities and the Budget Support Programme's objectives.

However, with activities on multiple fronts, lingering political tensions and limited fiscal space, capacity constraints will be a watch point. Development partner's assessment cautions that the financing of the agenda and implementation capacity are the key risks. Financing of the MTNDP on a sustainable basis and a sound expenditure framework will be critical to its success. During the past years, economic recession and weaknesses in public financial management have contributed to the accumulation of substantive domestic payment arrears which have hampered the efficiency of public investment and social spending and increased vulnerabilities in public sector balance sheets. The Government has committed to addressing Sierra Leone's longstanding challenge of large and persistent public expenditure arrears and is defining a clearing strategy under IMF supervision which should be consistent with maintaining macroeconomic stability, strengthening fiscal policy, institutions, anchored on inclusive growth and transparency and building buffers to limit arrears build-up.

In January 2020, Sierra Leone became aware of the outbreak of the novel coronavirus in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. Since then, the Government of Sierra Leone has taken preventive measures and has been monitoring the progress very closely. Since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on 30 January 2020, the Government of Sierra Leone immediately activated the National Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) at Level 2. To proactively prevent the spread of the epidemic in Sierra Leone, the Government of Sierra Leone has taken several decisions such as i) mandatory quarantine measures for travellers from COVID-19 at-risk countries, ii) the declaration of the state of public emergency, iii) the closure of airspace and land borders, iv) a 3 days full lockdown, etc.

However, Sierra Leone has weak health systems, which are still recovering from major shocks (Ebola Virus Disease, mudslide, frequent Lassa fever and measles outbreaks) with an inadequate health workforce. Specific public health systems indicators, particularly on sufficient and robust health system to treat the sick and protect health workers and overall risk environment and country vulnerability to biological threats are not the best.

## **1.2 Policy Framework (Global, EU)**

In line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the proposed Technical Cooperation Facility VI (TCF) programme is a follow up to the previous Technical Cooperation Facilities under previous and current EDFs. It provides a flexible instrument for Capacity Development and Policy and/or expert advice to strengthen EU programmes' implementation and formulation, policy dialogue and broader donor coordination within the framework of the overall partnership between the EU and Sierra Leone.

## **1.3 Public Policy Analysis of the partner country/region**

The implementation of the previous national development strategy (Agenda for Prosperity, 2013 - 2018) was disrupted due to electoral related activities. Following the general elections of March 2018 and the appointment into office of a new opposition-led Government, the priorities have changed and a successor development plan was prepared.

Sierra Leone's new Mid-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP), 'Education for Development', was adopted in February 2019 and offers a relevant framework for engagement in the coming years. It covers the first 5 years (2019-23) of a 20-year long-term national vision of achieving middle-income status by 2039. It lays out the authorities' strategy for accelerating growth and reducing poverty. The overriding aspiration is to build a competitive, diversified and resilient economy, with well-developed infrastructure and well-educated citizens. The plan reflects extensive public consultation, where an estimated two million people contributed to the priority setting and validation processes.

The MTNDP's key socio-economic goals are well aligned with the EU cooperation priorities and the Budget Support Programme's objectives. It is supported by comprehensive programmes promoting human capital development, infrastructure and competitiveness, governance and accountability, and economic diversification notably in the areas of agriculture, fishing, local manufacturing and tourism, and resilience.

Sierra Leone currently ranks 184<sup>th</sup> out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index<sup>2</sup> and with the lowest life expectancy at birth (52.2 years) and the highest maternal mortality rate, (1,360/100,000) in the world, human development remains Sierra Leone's major challenge. The human capital development strategy centres on the Government's flagship programme - the Free Quality School Education Programme (FQSE) - which aims at increasing access to quality pre-primary, primary, secondary, technical and vocational education and training as well as university education to ensure that its citizens can engage in meaningful productive economic activity.

The economic policy agenda is also well aligned with the programme's objectives. It focuses on addressing the prevailing challenges, including high poverty rates, rapidly growing population, lack of diversification, vulnerability to external shocks, reliance on agriculture and mining, and high public debt. The aim is to reduce dependency on iron ore exports and to boost trade, innovation, science and technology and job creation. Current agricultural policies aim to boost production - most notably of rice - to ensure food self-sufficiency and security. With almost 75%

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<sup>2</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2018-update>.

of the total land area being arable and suitable for a wide variety of crops, the ambition is to become 90% food self-sufficient and to develop agricultural value chains by 2023. With an estimated fish bio-mass of 450 000 metric tons, the target is that fishery accounts for 16% of the GDP in 2023 (compared to current 12%). As for the mining sector, the aim is to increase exploitation of alternative minerals such as gold, diamond, titanium, rutile and bauxite.

The plan is aligned with global and regional frameworks such as the Mano River Union Strategy, the African Union Agenda 2063, the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the New Deal Peace-building and State-building Goals. Unfortunately, however, the plan is not accompanied by a National investment plan to prioritise public investment projects and its articulation with sectorial strategies is not sufficiently structured.

#### **1.4 Stakeholder analysis**

The immediate beneficiaries are the staff of the National Authorising Office (NAO), the line Ministries, Ministries, Departments and Agencies and Non-State Actors concerned with programming, implementation and monitoring of the MTNDP and EU funded projects/programmes. Other Development Partners are also key stakeholders to ensure joint and harmonised provision of capacity development and technical cooperation. The ultimate beneficiary is the population of Sierra Leone, as a result of a more efficient, effective and rapid use of EU resources made available to Sierra Leone through the EDF.

The Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) are the key players in the implementation of EDF programmes and projects. Their skills' enhancement in effective financial and project management, procurement and monitoring requires continued support. Under the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF, the need for building a more effective relationship between the NAO Support Office and MDAs has been identified. Monitoring information from each sector will feed into the review process of general budget support.

The main MDAs involved in EDF programmes are: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development; Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry; Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education; Ministry of Technical and Higher Education; Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development; Ministry of Work and Public Assets; Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs; Ministry of Energy; Ministry of Trade and Industry; Minister of Political and Public Affairs; Ministry of the Environment.

#### **1.5 Problem analysis/priority areas for support**

Cooperation between the European Commission and the Government of Sierra Leone - managed jointly by the EU Delegation and the NAO Support Office - often experiences challenges in the form of delays, ineligible expenditures, results with limited sustainability and implementation difficulties.

The NAO Support Office is a well-known structure among Sierra Leone institutions. Its role and functioning, however, are not well understood by its technical counterparts in MDAs. The NAO Support Office should play a more proactive role in the programming and preparation of cooperation programmes and reduce turnaround times of project documents, reduce ineligible expenditures and levels of unspent funds. The added value of the NAO Support Office could be

increased, notably on support and facilitation for project management purposes, including on technical issues and project supervision.

Given the human resources capacity constraints in Sierra Leone a NAO specific support is central to improving the management of the EDF.

In the context of post-Cotonou negotiations, the rationalisation of the NAO Support Office activities and increased capacities within line ministries are important for future management of EU funded projects. Therefore, during the implementation of the proposed programme, a sharper focus should be placed on capacity development within the Government. The aim, over time, will be to ensure that the Government's management of external support is of high quality, sustainable and principally financed through domestic resources.

## 2. RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The TCF VI aims to be a tool that is available for the Government through the NAO Support Office to foster the implementation of EDF projects/programmes. External risks are not specific to this action but to all EDF funded activities in Sierra Leone.

<b>Risks</b>	<b>Risk level (H/M/L)</b>	<b>Mitigating measures</b>
Ownership and commitment varies over time and is influenced by multiple factors.	M	Regular policy dialogue with the Government of Sierra Leone and other stakeholders on TCF priorities.
Fragmentation and duplication of Technical Cooperation initiatives.	M	Whenever relevant, specific TCF activities will be vetted with the relevant Development Partners and/or with the concerned development partner agencies to ensure coordination and synergies.
NAO Support Office system is disconnected from best practices in implementing aid effectiveness. For instance, NAO Support Office staff performs basic accounting tasks independently from the mandated national institution in charge of aid administration, or NAO Support Office does not sufficiently inform on key financial information on the global EU aid at country level.	M	Regular dialogue and feedback mechanisms should support the change towards an enhanced coordinating role for the NAO Support Office.
<b>Assumptions</b>		
1. Conditions to be met prior and during implementation include the Government's commitment to maintain political and economic stability; progress in the fight against corruption and underlying principles as laid out in the Cotonou Agreement; strengthen efforts to limit allowances which are potentially distortive of incentives and development		

goals. During the formulation and throughout the implementation of Technical Cooperation and Capacity Development activities, strong emphasis will be given to value for money and cost-effective resources mobilisation.

2. The present action model implies there is a clear attribution and distribution of responsibilities between MDAs and a NAO Support Office at the central level. This will be done through the formal delegation of the implementation from the NAO Support Office to the concerned MDAs. This delegation should be reflected in future primary commitments through their formal endorsement of the relevant Authorising Officer.
3. It also relies on a clear political drive that should ensure that the concerned MDAs undertake the necessary steps to take financial responsibility over their expenditures.
4. The information flow between the NAO Support Office at central level, MDAs and the EU Delegation should be closely monitored by all three stakeholders.

### **3. LESSONS LEARNT AND COMPLEMENTARITY**

#### **3.1 Lessons learnt**

TCF has been used since the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF. It proved to be a flexible instrument allowing the NAO and the EU to respond quickly to the needs raised by the specificities of programme implementation in a country facing a long-lasting difficult situation and fragility. TCF activities contributed to the funding of strategic studies and enhanced the smooth preparation and implementation of activities, and supported the achievement of results foreseen in the previous and current EDFs.

Lessons learnt from previous technical cooperation and training projects in Sierra Leone include the difficulties in sustaining progress in a country that is at a low level of development. The main obstacle to the success of EU funded programmes mainly lies in the lack of capacity and coordination in the public and private sector. Particular attention will be brought to the coordination between the NAO and the EU Delegation as well as targeted MDA's.

Previous TCF interventions have met the needs of the Government in terms of technical assistance and training needed to support the implementation of the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> EDF. This new Technical Cooperation Facility aims to support the implementation of the last programmes under the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF and preparing activities to be carried out under a future cooperation agreement.

From an operational point of view, lessons learnt from earlier TCFs indicated that the largest needs were within the Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) of the TCF. However, the more recent TCF programmes including the TCF V have indicated increasing needs under the Training Support for Projects and Programmes (TSPP) and the Conferences and Seminars (CF) components.

#### **3.2 Complementarity, synergy and donor coordination**

This intervention will complement the capacity development focus foreseen in other EU funded programmes and strengthen their implementation with provision of gap filling activities if necessary.

It is expected that, in addition to specific EU projects/programmes, the TCF will contribute to policy dialogue, donor harmonisation and joined/coordinated donor activities, such as analytical

studies. Whenever relevant, specific TCF activities will be coordinated with the relevant Sector Working Group and/or with the concerned development partner agencies to ensure coordination and synergies.

For the purpose of ensuring complementarity, synergy and coordination, the Commission may sign or enter into joint donor coordination declarations or statements and may participate in donor coordination structures, as part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union.

#### **4. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION**

##### **4.1 Overall objective, specific objective(s), expected outputs and indicative activities**

The **overall objective** of this action is to increase the impact and the sustainability of the cooperation activities of the European Union in Sierra Leone.

The **specific objectives** of the intervention are:

**SO1:** To ensure the effective delivery of ongoing and future EU development cooperation in Sierra Leone.

**SO2:** To ensure a more coherent and informed approach to policy dialogue, development cooperation and related issues.

**SO3:** To support the Government of Sierra Leone in its response to the COVID-19 crisis.

The **expected results/outputs** are:

*For SO1*

R1.1: Effectiveness, efficiency and capacities of the NAO and MDAs in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EDF programmes are enhanced.

R1.2: EU funded programmes and projects are properly identified, formulated, implemented, monitored and evaluated with the participation of the Government, Non State Actors (NSAs) and development partners.

R1.3: Transparency and publicity of the use of EU resources is ensured through visibility and communication of EU actions.

*For SO2*

R2.1: Partnership and policy dialogue among the Government, EU, NSAs and development partners in endeavours relevant to development cooperation are strengthened.

R2.2: Knowledge and participation of Sierra Leone in EU and global dialogue in areas of mutual interest are developed and continued.

*For SO3*

R3.1: Some essential medical supplies to fight COVID-19 in Sierra Leone are provided to the Government of Sierra Leone.

The **indicative activities** are:

- 1) **TAF - Technical Assistance Facility** - to hire short and medium term consultants to contribute to the main stages of the project cycle, including audits and evaluations and programme related training activities. A part of the TAF could be for instance devoted to infrastructure detailed design studies (specifically of roads programmes, energy support programmes, urban development plans). Studies could also be contracted on communication and visibility issues. The TAF could also include specific expertise and assistance to support and integrate cross-cutting issues, mainstreaming them across all stages of the programming cycle especially, but not limited to, on the priority sectors of the EU and the Government of Sierra Leone and including issues such as jobs and growth, gender, women's empowerment, environment, climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.
- 2) **Support to the NAO office** - to ensure that structures are in place for the implementation of ongoing and future programmes under decentralised management, coordination capacity and transition to the post-Cotonou programming cycle. This activity will also focus on strategic issues such as mid-term and end-term programme reviews, coordination, and facilitation of technical discussions among relevant parts of government, including line ministries and agencies.
- 3) **CB - Capacity building** - to hire short and medium term consultants to support capacity building actions for State and non-state actors and to assist Sierra Leone Institutions in the preparation/development and management of sectorial policies and programmes.
- 4) **TSPP - Training Support for Projects and Programmes** - this activity will finance the organisation and/or participation in various trainings, conferences, seminars and sensitisation activities in Sierra Leone and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries, as well as financially supporting conferences of high interest for both Sierra Leone and the EU. Visibility actions can also be financed under this component.
- 5) **CS - Conferences and Seminars** - to support the participation of Sierra Leonean officials or NSAs in regional and international meetings, seminars or training activities on development and other related topics organised by the EU and other international organisations. To support the organisation of workshops, conference and seminars for Sierra Leone/ACP officials on priorities of EDF/ACP matters.
- 6) **PMS - Procurement of Medical Supplies** in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

## **4.2 Intervention Logic**

The TCF VI will be used to facilitate the mobilisation of short and medium expertise as technical assistance as detailed in sub section 4.1 that will enhance institutional development. The programme will also facilitate awareness and support visibility of the EU - Sierra Leone cooperation through training, conferences and seminars. The latter will also entail logistical support including for the participation in these trainings, conferences and seminars. Although this programme is not directly linked to any particular initiative or policy, it will provide support to a broad range of government policies and especially but not limited to those relevant to the concentration sectors of the NIP 2014-2020 and to the cross-cutting issues (including jobs and

growth, gender, women's empowerment, environment, climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies).

The actions carried out by this technical cooperation facility will complement the Government of Sierra Leone's own activities in these priority sectors, as outlined in the Mid-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP 2019-2023).

### **4.3 Mainstreaming**

With reference to the National Indicative Programme and the MTNDP 2019-2023 of the Government of Sierra Leone, cross cutting issues such as good governance, environment and climate change, gender equality and other issues related to human rights are significant priorities. To ensure results, said crosscutting issues will be mainstreamed in the identification, preparation and implementation of ongoing and future EU. The Government of Sierra Leone as main stakeholder will be consulted, as well as the civil society, private sector, donors, etc. via seminars, workshops and consultations.

### **4.4 Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

This intervention is relevant for the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It contributes primarily to the progressive achievement of SDG 17, while also contributing to SDGs 1, 2, 4, 5, 8 and 9.

## **5 IMPLEMENTATION**

### **5.1 Financing agreement**

In order to implement this action, it is foreseen to conclude a financing agreement with the partner country.

### **5.2 Indicative implementation period**

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 4 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 48 months from the date of entry into force of the financing agreement.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer by amending this Decision and the relevant contracts and agreements.

### **5.3 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 measures<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.sanctionsmap.eu](http://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.

### **5.3.1 Grants: (direct management)**

#### **(a) Purpose of the grant(s)**

The purpose of the operating grant is to enable the NAO to carry out its mission and contribute to the efficient and effective programming and implementation of EU funded projects and programmes.

The funding is intended to underwrite the NAO's administrative and infrastructure costs, assist with strategic financial and organisational capacity, and/or help maintain core essential staff.

#### **(b) Types of beneficiaries**

National Authorising Office(s).

#### **(c) 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 the National Authorising Office.

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because the Minister of Planning and Economic Development acts as National Authorising Officer of the Republic of Sierra Leone, and the operating grant is aimed at supporting the functioning of the NAO Office, which is part of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (which corresponds to the situation described in Article 195(f) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1046 of 18 July 2018.

### **5.3.2 Procurement (direct management)**

The procurement of service and supply contracts will be directly managed by the EU Delegation, in common accord with the NAO office and are linked to the following activities:

- Contracting of ad-hoc technical expertise to support the effective implementation of the MTNDP 2019-2023, EU's current and future NIPs/Regional Indicative Programmes (RIPs) and other EU initiatives in favour of the country's sustainable development.
- Contracting of ad-hoc technical expertise to strengthen the Government of Sierra Leone's results-oriented monitoring, financial management and control systems.
- Mobilisation of technical assistance to support the Government in undertaking studies to assist in formulation of sector specific government policies/strategies/action plans/etc.
- Mobilisation of technical assistance deemed relevant in supporting the wider political dialogue, human rights, governance and aid effectiveness commitments.
- Mobilisation of technical assistance for the preparation, implementation and monitoring of activities in other sectors relevant to EU development cooperation in Sierra Leone, which may not be directly related to the NIP 2014-2020 and the future NIPs/RIPs.
- Mobilisation of audits and evaluations of programmes/projects whenever they cannot be financed out of the programmes/projects themselves or where it is convenient or efficient to combine a number of audit/evaluations of related interventions.

- Mobilisation of short and medium term consultants to support capacity building actions for State and non-state actors and to assist Sierra Leone Institutions in the preparation/development and management of sectorial policies and programmes.
- Mobilisation of short and medium term consultants for communication activities aiming at increasing the visibility, dialogue and awareness of EU political and technical cooperation in Sierra Leone. It could also finance activities and events to promote dialogue between Sierra Leone, the EU and other development partners and actors (including NSAs) on issues relevant to the EU in Sierra Leone and beyond.
- Procurement of medical supplies to fight the COVID-19 crisis in Sierra Leone.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Indicative type (works, supplies, services)</b>	<b>Indicative trimester of launch of the procedure</b>
Mobilisation of technical expertise / technical assistance	Services	All along the contracting period
Procurement of medical supplies	Supplies	3 <sup>rd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> trimester 2020

### **5.3.3 Indirect management with the partner country**

A part of this action with the objective of financing a) the participation of Sierra Leonean officials or NSAs in local, regional and international conferences, meetings, seminars or training activities on development and other related topics organised by the EU and other international organisations and b) the organisation of workshops, conferences and seminars for Sierra Leone / ACP officials on priorities of EDF / ACP matters may be implemented in indirect management with Sierra Leone (via the National Authorising Office) according to the following modalities:

The partner country will act as the contracting authority for the procurement and grant procedures. The Commission will control ex-ante all the procurement procedures except in cases where programme estimates are applied, under which the Commission applies ex-ante control for procurement contracts above EUR 100 000 (or lower, based on a risk assessment) and may apply ex-post control for procurement contracts up to that threshold. The Commission will control ex-ante the grant procedures for all grant contracts.

Payments are executed by the Commission except in cases where programmes estimates are applied, under which payments are executed by the partner country for direct labour and contracts below EUR 300 000 for procurement and for grants.

The financial contribution does not cover the ordinary operating costs incurred under the programme estimates.

The partner country shall apply the Commission's rules on procurement and grants. These rules will be laid down in the financing agreement to be concluded with the partner country.

#### 5.4 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 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.

#### 5.5 Indicative budget

	EU contribution (in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, in currency identified
<b>Objective 1: To ensure the effective delivery of ongoing and future EU development cooperation in Sierra Leone</b> composed of		
Grants (direct management) - cf section 5.3.1	693 000	N/A
Procurement (direct management) - cf section 5.3.2	560 000	N/A
Indirect management with Sierra Leone - cf section 5.3.3	150 000	N/A
<b>Objective 2: To ensure a more coherent and informed approach to policy dialogue, development cooperation and related issues</b> composed of		
Grants (direct management) - cf section 5.3.1	693 000	N/A
Procurement (direct management) - cf section 5.3.2	560 000	N/A
Indirect management with Sierra Leone - cf section 5.3.3	150 000	N/A
<b>Objective 3: To support the Government of Sierra Leone in its response to COVID-19 crisis</b> composed of		
Procurement (direct management) - cf section 5.3.2	600 000	N/A
<b>Evaluation, (cf. section 5.8), - Audit (cf. section 5.9) / Expenditure verification</b>	80 000	N/A
<b>Contingencies</b>	50 000	N/A
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3 536 000</b>	N/A

## **5.6 Organisational set-up and responsibilities**

Overseeing of the implementation of the Programme Estimate under the TCF VI will be done by the NAO, in line with applicable procedures.

Management-level meetings will also be prepared at least twice a year, through a Management Board that will include the NAO Support Office and the Head of Cooperation of the EU Delegation. Project stakeholders may be invited when relevant.

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

## **5.7 Performance and Results monitoring and reporting**

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

Reports 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).

## **5.8 Evaluation**

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

It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 14 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, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

Evaluation services may be contracted under a framework contract

## **5.9 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.

It is foreseen that audit services may be contracted under a framework contract.

## **5.10 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.

For the purpose of enhancing the visibility of the EU and its contribution to this action, the Commission may sign or enter into joint declarations or statements, as part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union.

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 Requirements for European Union External Action (or any succeeding document) shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

**6 N/A**