

# SUMMARY

## Annual Action Programme 2016 in favour of Sierra Leone to be financed from the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund

### 1. Identification

EDF allocation	EUR 67 500 000
Total cost	EUR 67 500 000 of EU contribution
Basic act	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 OCTs to which Part Four of the EC Treaty applies, OJ L 210, 6.8.2013.

### 2. Country background

Sierra Leone continues to battle the adverse impact of not only the Ebola epidemic but also the crisis in the mining sector that began with the collapse of iron ore prices and culminated in the cessation of production in several mines in April 2015. The economic impact is currently considered to be very serious, and will result in an unprecedented GDP contraction estimated at 21.5% (IMF data September 2015). Such a contraction will set Sierra Leone back several years. The previous years' economic growth has been impressive culminating in 2013 with 20.1%. However, domestic revenue mobilisation is very weak and one of the lowest in the world, around 11% of GDP and has deteriorated during the Ebola epidemic and the collapse of the mining sector. The previous years' economic growth has not been inclusive. The population needs to witness real improvements in living conditions. Youth unemployment is significant and a risk for stability.

Steady progress has been made in stability and reconciliation in the ten years since the end of civil war. The special court for Sierra Leone has closed with the sentencing of former Liberian president Charles Taylor for his part in the conflict in Sierra Leone. The November 2012 Presidential, parliamentary and local elections were considered credible and largely free of violence (EU election observation mission), but democracy is still not fully mature and the "political space" has been consciously reduced by the ruling party during the Ebola crisis. Unilateral decisions and clientelism are still usual practice.

Sierra Leone's development is challenged by over-centralisation, lack of justice and high youth unemployment. Challenges that were identified as some of the root causes of the civil war are still not properly addressed and present important risks for the country's development. The Government has neglected education since the end of the civil war resulting in lack of skills at all levels. Corruption remains widespread directly affecting the poor. The Ebola crisis revealed the structural fragility of state institutions and poor quality of service delivery. An Ebola recovery plan has been launched by the Government of Sierra Leone. It focuses on three sequential steps: (i) getting to and maintaining zero Ebola cases, (ii) implementing immediate recovery priorities, including restoring health services, reopening schools, ensuring food security, expanding water and sanitation participating in the economy, and (iii) transitioning back into the "Agenda for Prosperity" (National Poverty Reduction Strategy for the period 2013-2018), which remains the defining document for the overall development of the country.

### **3. Summary of the Action Programme**

The Annual Action Programme will contribute to the Government's Ebola Recovery Strategy by supporting two key aspects: Education and Agriculture and Food Security. Both areas, together with governance, form the focal sectors of the National Indicative Programme for Sierra Leone.

There are national policy frameworks in place for the Education and the Agriculture programmes. Both programmes build on the overall Sierra Leone Poverty Reduction Strategy – "Agenda for Prosperity", relevant sector policies and the National Ebola Recovery Strategy where both education and agriculture are defined as key areas.

For the education system to contribute to vibrant growth in Sierra Leone over the decade, primary schooling must produce graduates with solid foundational skills. Junior secondary schooling should be on a rapid growth pattern with a view to absorbing virtually all graduates of the primary level over the course of the next decade. This expansion must target girls and children from marginalized communities who are currently the least likely to complete junior secondary schooling. Technical Vocational Education and Training must target the creation of marketable skills in its graduates, preparing them to enter the job market immediately upon graduation. The upper levels of the system will need to refocus on equity, quality and relevance, producing graduates who are equipped and ready to tackle Sierra Leone's own national development challenges. This will mean nudging senior secondary and tertiary education programmes away from externally-focused course offerings towards defining and meeting Sierra Leone's own knowledge and development priorities.

The Support to the Education Sector programme aims to support an education sector contributing to Sierra Leone's future. It will strengthen the implementation of the Education Sector Plan for this purpose. Four areas and entry points are identified: (1) strengthening the 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.

The overall objective of the Boosting Agriculture and Food Security programme is the reduction of poverty and food insecurity in Sierra Leone through better governance and increased agricultural productivity and diversification in line with the "Agenda for transformation" and in line with the Ebola Recovery Strategy. It will focus on three specific objectives: (1) Increasing Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Food Security's institutional capacity of formulating policies and implement these policies. The results being increased sustainable agriculture and agricultural output. (2) Enhance cashew, cocoa and coffee productivity, creating increased income for smallholders and exports. This component builds on the experiences from the previous 10<sup>th</sup> EDF project in this area. (3) Fostering sustainable agricultural diversification by disseminating farming techniques adapted to climate change.

The objective of the support to the National Authorising Officer's office (NAO) is to contribute to the efficient and effective programming and implementation of EU funded projects and programmes through a greater integration of the NAO functions into the national system and involvement of Government. The main new feature of the programme compared to previous programmes is the strong focus of a decentralised NAO function within key ministries like Education and Agriculture.

### **4. Communication and visibility**

All three projects have specific communication and visibility plans.

**5. Cost and financing**

Support to the Education Sector in Sierra Leone	EUR 29 000 000
Boosting Agriculture and Food Security	EUR 35 000 000
Support to the Office of the National Authorising officer for the EDF	EUR 3 500 000
Total EU contribution to the measure	EUR 67 500 000

The Committee is invited to give its opinion on the attached Annual Action Programme 2015 in favour of Sierra Leone.



This action is funded by the European Union

**ANNEX 1**

of the Commission Decision on the Annual Action Programme 2016 in favour of the Republic of Sierra Leone to be financed from the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund

**Action Document for Support to the Education Sector in Sierra Leone**

<b>1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number</b>	Support to the Education Sector in Sierra Leone. CRIS number: SL/FED/037-417			
<b>2. Zone benefiting from the action/location</b>	Sierra Leone. The action shall be carried out nationwide.			
<b>3. Programming document</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> EDF National Indicative Programme (NIP) for Sierra Leone			
<b>4. Sector of concentration</b>	Focal sector 2 – Education			
<b>5. Amounts concerned</b>	Total estimated cost: EUR 29 000 000 Total amount of EDF contribution: EUR 29 000 000			
<b>6. Aid modality and implementation modalities</b>	Project modality <b>Indirect management</b> with the Government of Sierra Leone and with a Member State agency – GIZ (for Specific Objective 3) <b>Direct management</b> for the procurement of services (Technical Assistance, Audit, Evaluation)			
<b>7. DAC code(s)</b>	110			
<b>8. Markers (from CRIS DAC form)</b>	<b>General policy objective</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Main objective</b>
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality (including Women In Development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Trade Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>RIO Convention markers</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Main 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>9. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagships</b>	N/A			

## **SUMMARY**

Improving education and tackling the systemic weaknesses within the sector are major challenges for Sierra Leone. Better education will provide benefits for individual students and their families, and also ensure that appropriate skills and knowledge are available for a changing economy. Youth unemployment is omnipresent and considered a possible trigger for renewed instability - investing in education and skills development is also an investment in the consolidation of peace and stability.

A potential strength for the sector is that solid policies and plans are in place, most importantly the Agenda for Prosperity 2013-2018 and the Education Sector Plan 2014-2018. Significant progress in the restoration of education service delivery has been made since the end of the war, with a surge in enrolment rates in primary schools due to the implementation of the free primary education policy. However, the implementation of the various policies and plans has been inconsistent, largely due to ineffective management and a weak teaching force. Levels of learning are very low. Recent gains in access are threatened by the Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak which resulted in the closure of schools from June 2014 – April 2015.

For the education system to contribute to vibrant growth in Sierra Leone over the decade, primary schooling must produce graduates with solid foundational skills. Junior secondary schooling should be on a rapid growth pattern with a view to absorbing virtually all graduates of the primary level over the course of the next decade. This expansion must target girls and children from marginalized communities who are currently the least likely to complete junior secondary schooling. Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) must target the creation of marketable skills in its graduates, preparing them to enter the job market immediately upon graduation. The upper levels of the system will need to refocus on equity, quality and relevance, producing graduates who are equipped and ready to tackle Sierra's Leone's own national development challenges. This will mean nudging senior secondary and tertiary education programmes away from externally-focused course offerings towards defining and meeting Sierra Leone's own knowledge and development priorities.

The proposed EU interventions aim to support this vision of the education sector and its core role in contributing to Sierra Leone's future. It will strengthen implementation of the Education Sector Plan for this purpose. Four areas and entry points are proposed based on the priorities outlined in the Agenda for Prosperity and the recent Education Sector Plan as well as the priorities presented by the High Level Management Team of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST). These areas, consistent with the vision presented above 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 CONTEXT**

### **1.1 Sector/Country/Regional context/Thematic area**

Sierra Leone is a country of approximately 6 million people on the west coast of Africa. Demographically, it is a very young country with 75% of the population below the age of 35. It is blessed with mineral resources, including diamonds, titanium ore, bauxite, gold, and chromite, and iron ore. Although 75% of its land is arable, only about 10% is cultivated.

As a result of the implementation of sound policies and structural reforms, the economy has been steadily growing. The shift in the composition of principal drivers of growth has characterised developments in recent years and has resulted in a growth rate of 15.2% in 2012. Prior to the commencement of iron-ore mining and export, growth rates averaged 5.7% per annum during 2010-2012. The Sierra Leonean economy remains fragile and extremely vulnerable to exogenous shocks in the global economy. The recent EVD outbreak has constituted a major setback to a country still suffering the impact of the war. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita is EUR 374. Domestic revenues are low by regional standards (11.3% of GDP in 2011 compared to 16% for other Low

Income Countries (LICs)) and capital expenditure is primarily supported by donor financing, equivalent to 76% of the total over 2004-2011.

Poverty levels declined from 66% in 2003 to 53% in 2011 (Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey), but Sierra Leone's social indicators are low by all standards. The country's 2013 Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.359 ranks it 177th out of 187 countries. The country's life expectancy at birth of 48.1 years and under-five mortality of 174 deaths per 1000 live births fall below the regional level. Sierra Leone also has one of the worst maternal mortality rates worldwide with 890 deaths per 100,000 live births.

Educational attainment was already low by international standards prior to the EVD outbreak that resulted in the complete closure of schools from June 2014 until April 2015. The re-opening of schools in April 2015 has been largely successful. The gross enrolment rate for primary schooling increased rapidly over the past decade and stood at 124% prior to the EVD outbreak; the gross enrolment rate for Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) was 67%. The adult literacy rate is 42% and 56% of all adults over 15 years of age have never attended school.

### ***1.1.1 Public Policy Assessment and EU Policy Framework***

The past years have seen an increase in the efforts of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) and more generally of the Government of Sierra Leone to build up a set of consistent documents reflecting a clear policy in support of the medium term development and future of the education sector. These efforts have been supported by the development partners, who have made considerable efforts to provide more and better coordinated input and are willing to align their interventions with the national strategies in the sector.

The current education policy is the 2010 National Education Policy, which seeks to provide a sound basis for directing the implementation of the new national system of education. It highlights the provision of equitable access and opportunities for sustained learning achievement for all children and young people. The White Paper on Education 2010 and the new National Education Policy have changed the structure of the current education system by adding an additional year to the senior secondary level (6-3-4-4: six years of primary, three years of junior secondary, four years of senior secondary and four years of higher education).

The 3rd generation Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) is known as the Agenda for Prosperity (AfP) (2013–2018). It addresses the importance of reforming the education sector in order to meet the emerging needs of the job market. In this respect, the AfP focuses on the improvement of access to education, equity and quality at all levels, achieving high literacy, and developing a labour force with the skills demanded by the employment generating sectors of the economy.

The Education Sector Plan (ESP) is known as 'Learning to Succeed' (2014–2018)'. It was developed with support from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). The ESP includes a Results Framework and a medium term Implementation Plan, 'Making Learning Real' (2014-2016). The plan is comprehensive in scope and addresses gaps identified in the sector analysis reported in the Education Sector County Status Report (CSR) 2013. A partial mismatch with the AfP, however, is that the ESP gives less attention to vocational skills training. The ESP was approved by the GPE in September 2013, with a recommendation from the Board to strengthen its monitoring and evaluation.

### ***1.1.2 Stakeholder analysis***

**Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST)** - Has the overall responsibility for education; responsible for policy and planning, professional standard setting, monitoring and evaluation of education service delivery; accreditation; teacher management. MEST lacks qualified and experienced people at both national and district levels; recruitment and retention of key staff is a challenge.

**District Education Offices (DEOs)** – There are 14 District Education Offices. They are responsible for implementation at the decentralised level, including the monitoring of education activities in primary and JSS and other sectors. Inspectors and school supervisors are responsible for supervision and inspection of schools, but are hampered by lack of budget and low capacity. A decentralisation process under which school supervisors were to be devolved from the Inspectorate Directorate of the MEST to Local Councils has turned out to be more challenging than originally imagined.

**Local Councils** – According to the Local Government Act 2004 and as part of the National Decentralisation Plan, responsibility for the organisation and development of primary schools and JSS was to devolve to the Local Councils. This was to include responsibility for school supervision, provision of textbooks and teacher learning materials, rehabilitation and construction of schools, preparation of an annual budget, and the disbursement of grants and subsidies to DEO and schools. A lack of qualified and experienced staff is one of the factors delaying decentralization.

**Teaching Service Commission (TSC)** - Based on the Teaching Service Commission Act of 2011, the TSC is responsible for teacher management issues, including recruitment, deployment, training, discipline, pay and retirement. The TSC is not yet functional. When functional, the TSC will take responsibility for all teacher matters except that of training / preparation.

**National Council for Technical, Vocational and other Academic Awards (NCTVA)** - Responsible for the provision of examination and accreditation systems for Technical/Vocational centres. The National Council for Technical, Vocational and other Technical Awards (NCTVA) has also played a limited role in provision of in-service training.

**Teacher Training Institutions** - Teacher education is delivered by various types of institutions throughout the four regions: Institute of Education and Extra-Mural Studies (INSEEMS) at Fourah Bay College, 4 teacher training colleges (TTCs), 3 Polytechnics, Fourah Bay College (part of University of Sierra Leone) and Njala University.

**TVET Institutions and non-formal education (NFE) Centres** - There are 380 TVET institutions registered with the MEST of which 154 receive salary and subventions from the ministry. The total enrolment of students is 27,055 with 1,718 teachers. There are 34 community learning centres and Adult Education classes reaching 48,000 learners.

**Schools and teachers** - The 2010/2011 School Census Report records a total of 7,671 schools in Sierra Leone (644 pre-primary, 5,931 primary, 888 junior and 208 senior secondary). The public school system is the largest education service provider in the country, particularly in primary education. In 2010/2011, the total number of teachers was estimated at 38,125 in primary and 17,194 in secondary school. The teaching profession is male dominated, with women accounting for 22% of basic and Senior Secondary School teachers. Financial constraints on increasing recruitment into the teaching workforce, along with a general lack of transparency in recruitment decisions have led to a system where many teachers experience years-long delays in being placed on the payroll.

**Private Sector** – Public-Private Partnerships have helped to create technical and vocational training opportunities in various sectors. For example, the establishment of the first university of creative technology in Sierra Leone based in a school building constructed with funds from the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF. Private sector demand for local human resources cannot be met without substantial vocational training or skills upgrading.

Other line ministries such as the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) and Local Government will have an important role to play in the context of strengthening the TVET sector, including the provision of information on the projected availability of jobs and the evolving needs for specialized skills training.

### **1.1.3 Priority areas for support/problem analysis**

#### **1.1.3.1 Education System**

Capacity development has been consistently identified a critical factor for the progress of the sector towards effective service delivery and achievement of better learning outcomes for all. The policy context and regulatory framework of the education sector show ambiguities and inconsistencies between the Education Act and the Local Government Act, particularly in relation to the delineation of roles and responsibilities between DEOs and Local Councils. As a result there has been considerable confusion, leading to tension and delays in the process of devolving education functions to Local Councils. This, compounded with limited capacity at local level, weakens institutional capacities for delivery, support and monitoring of education at district level.

The capacity of MEST to lead the planning and coordination of the education sector effectively is a fundamental element in achieving sector goals and objectives. Lack of personnel with appropriate skills, competences and mandate for senior and middle management posts has exacerbated the difficulties arising within directorates. Having an overview of programmes or plans is challenging and the intervention of any coordinating function faces significant barriers. These difficulties within central MEST extend to, and are compounded in the districts. Articulated planning cycles and reporting between different levels in MEST and with other stakeholder agencies are currently inadequate to ensure coordination and coherence in activities, priorities, timings and resource-utilisation across the sector. Special attention is required for financial governance in the sector taking into account the various stakeholders involved (MEST, MoFED, Local Councils, School principals). Currently the sector makes limited use of data to underpin planning and decision-making. Despite the promising achievement of a functional Education Management Information System (EMIS), a lack of reliable data on Higher Education, TVET and NFE still exists together and because of the non-inclusion of these educational cycles and modalities within the present EMIS.

#### **1.1.3.2 Quality of Teachers and Teacher Management**

Education results are weak and learning outcomes and completion rates are low by international standards. Most teachers lack both subject matter expertise and pedagogical skills. This is due both to recruitment of unqualified teachers and weaknesses in pre- and in-service training. Teachers receive little instructional support and have few teaching and learning materials. The proposed implementation of a policy to use local languages as the medium of instruction has not been implemented. Personnel management functions for the teaching profession are inconsistent and non-transparent, including systems for appointment, deployment, promotion and remuneration as well as records management and conditions of service. The percentage of qualified teachers is low, with only 48% of teachers considered qualified. The proportion of unqualified teachers has grown since 2004/5 and many teachers who are considered qualified did not receive adequate subject matter and pedagogical skills training. The disparities in teacher training between the urban and rural areas of the country are extreme. Distance education initiatives have begun to address this issue but are limited in comparison to the scale of the national situation.

Training programmes are not reviewed regularly, and the curriculum is not fully implemented due to limitations and inadequate teaching methods. A further question is how the large numbers of untrained and unqualified teachers are to be incorporated into the formal teacher workforce. This is particularly challenging in the context of community schools, a growing sector at this time. Public teacher management (recruitment, deployment, transfer, replacement, remuneration, promotion and supervision) is carried out by various actors: MEST, MoFED, District Councils, proprietors and schools. The efficiency of procedures for teacher recruitment, deployment, and promotion needs to be improved. The teacher training institutions do not offer management courses for head teachers.

#### **1.1.3.3 TVET and Non-Formal Skills Training**

TVET experienced a relative drop in its share of recurrent public resources, which raises concerns of the ability of the subsector to adequately cater for the large number of young people who have missed out on education or are unable to continue their education in the formal mode due to demographic, social, economic and related reasons. Moreover, the drop in resources is not in line with the priorities

outlined in the Agenda for Prosperity, where TVET is rightly one of the four priority areas for the education sector. TVET is offered in a wide variety of institutions, which are weakly regulated for quality, and operate at a number of different levels within the education system (including an indistinct division within the NFE sub-sector). The TVET curriculum is outdated and unresponsive to labour market change. There is little interaction with employers. A national TVET policy has been drafted but is being revised in the light of recent development. When completed, the policy will guide the development of the TVET sector, in the medium term. A multi-sectoral approach to addressing TVET challenges could prove useful in Sierra Leone. The 2010 Education Policy states that “Government shall establish and support a nation-wide functional adult literacy programme to increase access to literacy for adults, especially women.”

#### **1.1.3.4 Access to Junior Secondary Education**

Great efforts have been made to rehabilitate and reconstruct schools that were destroyed, damaged, or abandoned during the war. This together with the free primary education policy contributed to a significant increase in enrolment. Although more children are entering school than ever before, access is still not universal. Inequities in access are primarily along socio-economic and geographic lines though gender disparities are apparent at the post-primary level. The Ebola epidemic has worsened the situation. The availability of schools is a major determinant for enrolment of students, especially in already underserved areas. Long distance to school, bad roads and the cost of transportation pose a challenge to poor families.

## **2 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

<b>Risks</b>	<b>Risk level (H/M/L)</b>	<b>Mitigating measures</b>
Inadequate institutional capacity of MEST at central and local level in terms of personnel and technical skills.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Capacity Development Strategy was developed in 2011 and is currently being implemented with support from donors;</li> <li>• Monitoring capacity will be strengthened through the implementation of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund currently being set up;</li> <li>• Planning and coordination as well as systems data and records management are proposed as interventions under this programme;</li> <li>• Close monitoring and management of specific project components;</li> <li>• System strengthening as a key component during the first phase of this programme.</li> </ul>
Decentralized staff (DDE offices, inspector and supervisors), Local Councils and School Management Committees (SMC) have limited capacity to manage educational resources, and to provide reliable feedback and data to MEST central Directorates.	High	
Lack of transparency and gaps in procedures and regulations could trigger corruption and misuse of funds.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close monitoring and enhanced technical policy and political dialogue with the MEST;</li> <li>• Provision of training to MEST staff on EU procedures and regulations.</li> </ul>
Works contracts are vulnerable to corruption.	Medium	
Weak information systems provide inadequate data for decision-making.	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DFID is currently funding aspects of EMIS through UNICEF;</li> <li>• A new school census as well as censuses for TVET, HED and NFE will be conducted with GPE and DFID funds;</li> <li>• Improvement of the systems data and records management proposed as an intervention under this programme.</li> </ul>

Lack of absorption capacity during the 2016-18 phase as required structures, processes and systems are not yet fully in place.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use project modality for the first phase of the programme;</li> <li>• Close monitoring and enhanced technical policy and political dialogue with the MEST.</li> </ul>
Resistance of Teachers' Union to changes regarding their management and supervision.	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve Teachers' Union on issues of teacher management and supervision.</li> </ul>
<b>Assumptions</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political willingness: The Government of Sierra Leone continues to make education a national priority, which is reflected in the education budget and in the appropriate staffing of the MEST. Continued political willingness to reform the education sector, to make the Teaching Service Commission fully functional and operational and to improve service delivery;</li> <li>• The Sierra Leone Teachers' Union has a demonstrated willingness to engage on issues of teacher management and supervision.</li> <li>• Willingness to ensure eligibility for Sector Budget Support prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase, (e.g. sector development strategy being implemented and level of quality of financial management within the sector).</li> <li>• Implementation of the complementary measures by other donors/development partners (Capacity Development Strategy, Change Unit) will yield the expected outcomes and improve the planning and management capacity of the MEST at the central and local levels.</li> <li>• Government of Sierra Leone is committed to fighting corruption and fraud in the sector.</li> <li>• Line ministries are committed relating to technical and vocational education and skills training and willing to cooperate with MEST to set up the institutional framework of the TVET sub-sector and increase the opportunities for technical and vocational training.</li> <li>• Donors fully align their support with the Government of Sierra Leone strategic priorities as spelt out in its policies, strategies and plans.</li> <li>• Government of Sierra Leone is committed to staffing the newly rehabilitated schools with qualified and trained teachers, who are included in the payroll.</li> <li>• Private sector actors are committed to contributing towards an improvement of the TVET system.</li> </ul>		

### 3 LESSONS LEARNT, COMPLEMENTARITY AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

#### 3.1 Lessons learnt

Lessons learned identified by other donors and stakeholders that should be considered in the design and implementation of the EU intervention:

Project design and formulation:

- The engagement of MEST in the process needs to be sustained throughout to ensure ownership;
- Political will is essential to the success of this intervention. Some key institutional changes are needed (e.g. a functioning TSC, teacher recruitment and pay, resolution of ambiguities around decentralisation, responsibility for in-service teacher training, consensus around a TVET strategy, implementation of language-of-instruction policy, etc.);
- All stakeholders involved should receive training and clear-cut project implementation guidelines;
- Identification of existing capacities and capacity building must be programmed from the start of the project(s);

- Open communication between key Ministry representatives and donors/partners contributes to Education Development Partners' better understanding of Ministry lines of decision and facilitates finding solutions to issues as they arise.

#### Project implementation:

- A strong project coordination and guidance team must be in place within MEST prior to start of implementation and remain in place throughout the project cycle;
- Attention should be paid to the absorption capacity of the Ministry and relevant training put in place in order to strengthen the capacities needed;
- A strong monitoring and evaluation strategy and plan must be in place to ensure successful implementation of the Education Sector Plan (ESP) and associated projects/interventions;
- Financial accountability procedures and monitoring mechanisms must be robust;
- Performance-based budgetary programming must be matched with technical activities.

### 3.2 Complementarity, synergy and donor coordination

Donor contributions play a critical role in the development budget for the government. Yet, the donor community remains small, with AfDB (African Development Bank), DFID (Department for International Development – UK), EU, German Cooperation (GIZ), GPE (Global Partnership for Education - administered by World Bank), IDB (Inter-American Development Bank), JICA (Japanese International Cooperation Agency), and UNICEF being the main donors/development partners in the education sector. The majority of donors are working towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG 2 and 3) and the improvement of the quality of learning, particularly focusing on primary education. DFID's interventions also target, although to a lesser extent, the junior secondary level. AfDB, IDB and GIZ (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) are currently engaged in TVET and skills training.

DFID and UNICEF support cluster monitoring (inspectorate system) in six remote districts and address four objectives (human resources, educational management information system, procurement and budget execution) of the Capacity Development Strategy (CDS). Furthermore, DFID and the World Bank have established a Multi-Donor Trust Fund to support the delivery and monitoring of the ESP. The second component of the GPE funds will focus on improving teacher management and robust consistent school data collection (school census), whereas the third component will support the MEST in project management and supervision activities. The African Development Bank funded Phase II of the Teacher Record Management Improvement Project (TRIMP), which is now completed.

The project should seek convergence with and draw on the results of the current EU civil service reform programme with special attention to teachers' payroll, career prospects and salary grids. The project would benefit from complementary actions aimed at boosting demand for quality services, by developing accountability for service delivering at community level. The thematic budget line Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities (CSO-LA) could be a means to support the emergence of community-based accountability mechanisms for education standards. Synergies could be also sought with the upcoming programme on education within the Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic programme. Lastly, the project has synergies with the EU's budget support programme which currently has two education-related performance indicators, namely the establishment and functioning of the TSC and the reform of the teachers' payroll.

### 3.3 Cross-cutting issues

In view of its objectives, the Education Sector Support Programme is expected to have a positive impact on the following cross cutting issues: gender equality, child rights and protection and indirectly on sexual and reproductive health, infant and maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS. No negative impact on the environment is expected, any construction is to be planned and executed in an environmentally sensitive manner. Gender Equality: Given major barriers to school completion for girls and high drop-out rates for girls, gender equality will be mainstreamed in various aspects of the project. Strong emphasis will be put on increasing the numbers of female teachers in particular in Secondary. Educational infrastructure and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities will be gender

sensitive and inclusive. The teaching curricula should be gender sensitive and include how to teach cross cutting issues like reproductive health, gender-based violence (GBV), HIV/AIDS, as well as WASH aspects. TVET opportunities should pay attention to equal opportunities for boys and girls. Child Rights and Protection: The proposed interventions will address child rights through the implementation and enforcement of the Code of Conduct for teachers and other educational personnel and ensure that learning environments are free from violence, sexual harassment and abuse.

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

##### **4.1 Objectives/results**

➤ **Overall objective:**

The overall objective is for children to have equitable access to high quality learning in Sierra Leone, in line with national education policies and targets.

➤ **Specific objectives:**

The specific objectives of the proposed EU support are in line with the strategic objectives of the Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2014-2018 and the *Agenda for Prosperity*:

- S.O. 1:** To strengthen education system management in order to improve equity and quality
- S.O. 2:** To improve primary school teaching and learning
- S.O. 3:** To improve management and delivery of technical and vocational education
- S.O. 4:** To improve equitable access to secondary education

The results of S.O. 1 will determine eligibility for Sector Budget Support from 2018 onwards.

➤ **Expected results:**

**S.O. 1: To strengthen education system management in order to improve equity and quality**

E.R. 1: Stronger and more transparent personnel management and Human Resources functions in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST)

- a. Improved recruitment processes for teachers through Teaching Service Commission (TSC), including clear rules for inclusion on payrolls
- b. Accurate personnel records-keeping
- c. Generalized use of job descriptions, performance evaluation mechanisms and career development paths for MEST personnel, in cooperation with the Human Resource Management Office (HRMO)
- d. Clear division of labour between centralized and decentralized entities

E.R. 2: Improved capacity of MEST to collect and use data to inform decision-making

- a. Consistent use of evidence-based planning processes
- b. Expansion of Education Management Information System (EMIS) to include learning outcomes, as well as Technical and vocational education and training (TVET), non-formal education (NFE) and higher education
- c. Accurate and reliable data and records management

E.R. 3: Enhanced financial and operational planning of Local Councils (LC) for education

- a. Strengthen activity planning at LC level
- b. Supervisory visits included in LC budget planning
- c. In-service training budgets agreed between LC and MEST, and implemented

E.R. 4: Stronger policy dialogue and donor coordination functions

- a. Government convenes education partners technical meetings at least quarterly
- b. Policy discussed and clarified at annual Joint Education Sector Review

## **S.O. 2: To improve primary school teaching and learning**

E.R. 1: An expanded, more results-focused distance education programme

- a. Updating of training methodologies especially that of subject matter for reading, maths, and science
- b. Introduction of code of conduct training into pre-service curriculum
- c. Strengthening the results focus, in part through support for classroom-level assessments
- d. Improve follow-up and supervision

E.R. 2: Implementation of regular in-service teacher training

- a. Core set of at least 14 trainers in 2 districts trained to provide in-service training
- b. Preparation of training modules for reading, mathematics, science at all 6 primary grades levels
- c. All teachers in government and government assisted schools in at least 2 districts, including community teachers, receiving in-service training at two yearly intervals, including use of teaching notes

E.R. 3: Provision of direct instructional support to teachers

- a. Preparation of detailed teaching notes, backed by needed teaching and learning materials, for grades 1-3 reading and mathematics
- b. Support to cluster monitors
- c. Randomized control trial (RCT) conducted around implementation in a set of approximately 100 schools in mother tongue instruction for grades 1-3

E.R. 4: Improved capacity for instructional supervision

- a. Consensus around norms/markers for measuring progress, metrics
- b. Deputy Directors at LC level trained, mentored on
- c. Preparation of school visit protocols and checklists for instructional and administrative support

## **S.O. 3: To improve management and delivery of technical and vocational education**

E.R. 1: Diagnostic Study of TVET in Sierra Leone, which would involve mapping of TVET institutions and provide the basis for development of a legal and institutional framework for TVET and information required for driving forward the ongoing work on establishing a multi-sector coordinating structure

E.R. 2: Creation of a skills certification programme

- a. Development of certification requirements in core skills areas to be identified based on labour market needs
- b. Implementation of skills certification programme

E.R. 3: Implement in-service teacher training, including curriculum development and training of trainers

- a. Develop teacher training curriculum
- b. Training of trainers completed—at least 15 trainers
- c. In-service TVET teacher training scheme rolled out in at least 2 districts

E.R.4: Establish a communication platform (website) to support the work of a multisector coordinating structure

## **S.O. 4: To improve equitable access to secondary education**

E.R. 1: Rehabilitation/renovation & upgrading of targeted junior secondary schools in rural areas

- a. agreement on criteria of eligibility for rehabilitation/renovation/upgrading
- b. WASH facilities created and maintained in eligible schools

- c. Other upgrades (extra classrooms, science labs, new furniture and learning materials, etc) carried out in eligible schools if appropriate
- d. teacher housing built if appropriate in eligible schools

E.R. 2: Implementation of norm-based teacher deployment

- a. TSC develops teacher deployment norms for secondary schools
- b. Secondary school boards review teaching deployment against new norms
- c. Implementation of norms; incentive scheme to secondary schools for non-salary budgets

#### **4.2 Main activities**

Four main activities are proposed:

1. Strengthen MEST management in order to improve equity and quality
2. Strengthen teacher training and direct instructional support
  - a. Expand existing distance education programme for teacher training
  - b. Establishment of targets/markers for improved teaching, norms
  - c. Reinvigorate continuous professional development (in-service teacher training)
  - d. Provision of coaching and mentoring support to Deputy DEOs in support of supervisory classroom visits, school visit protocols and checklists for instructional and administrative support, support to cluster monitors
  - e. Support to Local Councils for inclusion of education activities in activity plans, work plans
  - f. Provision of direct instructional support in the form of detailed teaching notes for reading and mathematics in the early grades together with teacher learning materials
  - g. Randomized Control Trial (RCT) in 2 districts and up to 100 primary schools in mother tongue instruction in grades 1-3
3. Improved management and delivery of technical and vocational education
  - a. Diagnostic study of TVET in Sierra Leone, which would involve mapping of TVET institutions and provide the basis for development of a legal and institutional framework for TVET and information required for driving forward the ongoing work on establishing a multi-sector coordination structure
  - b. Create a skills certification programme
  - c. Provide in-service training of TVET teachers
  - d. Establish a communication platform (website) to support the work of a multi-sector coordination structure
4. Improved offer and quality of secondary schooling facilities

This would be policy-driven, i.e. conditioned upon agreements (and implementation) on policies around teacher deployment and training, improvement of working conditions for secondary school teachers, correct monitoring and community involvement, etc.

- a. Build WASH facilities (including provisions for sustainable maintenance), additional classrooms, science labs, etc, and teacher housing in junior secondary schools
- b. Develop teaching syllabus for secondary schooling
- c. Strengthen secondary school teacher management

#### **4.3 Intervention logic**

The first activity proposed would create clarity around responsibilities at both the central and decentralised levels. It would create a coaching and mentoring function to support decentralised entities, as well as create accountability mechanisms. The second activity would address the low-capacity teaching environment. An important prerequisite will be to establish clear policies assigning responsibility for in-service training, and for school supervision.

The third activity would leverage activities by other partners in TVET, including GIZ's broader work helping to lay the foundation for the sector to make a more meaningful contribution to the labour market.

The fourth activity would address constraints to expansion and improved quality of secondary schooling, while addressing equity concerns. Girls’ share of enrolments is currently in decline as girls advance through secondary school. Increasing the number of female teachers and the WASH facilities, which would improve schooling conditions and sanitation for all students and teachers, would be of particular support to girls. Housing facilities for teachers and headmasters would make it easier to recruit teachers to more remote rural areas.

**5 IMPLEMENTATION**

**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 operational 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 36 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**

Not applicable.

**5.4 Implementation modalities**

**5.4.1 Procurement**

In the light of low levels of capacity within the Ministry and lack of experience in managing EU funds and procedures, direct management of certain components of this programme is the preferred implementation modality. The National Authorising Officer and the beneficiary Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) shall be fully involved in the procurement processes and the performance assessment of those components.

Subject in generic terms, if possible	Type (works, supplies, services)	Indicative number of contracts	Indicative trimester of launch of the procedure
Procurement of technical assistance	Services	1	Q1/2016

**5.4.2 Indirect management with a Member State agency**

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with GIZ (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) in accordance with Article 58(1)(c) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 applicable in accordance with Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323. This implementation (specifically activities related to S.O 3) entails improved management and delivery of technical and vocational training. This implementation is justified because of GIZ's in-country experience and proven expertise in the domain. These put GIZ in a unique position to carry out the TVET part of the programme and add value to this activity. GIZ is a trusted partner, already responsible for running

innovative TVET programmes in the country and with a lead support role in the TVET coalition which is a nationally owned initiative.

The entrusted entity would carry out the following budget-implementation tasks: managing and enforcing any contracts concluded to allow for the realisation of the diagnostic study of TVET in Sierra Leone, the creation of a skills certification programme; the implementation of in-service teacher training in TVET, including curriculum development and training of trainers, and the establishment of a communication platform (website) for a multisector coordination structure. All policy choices around the basic parameters of the activity remain the sole responsibility of the Commission, in liaison with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), reflecting its overall responsibility for education, and will not be delegated.

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

A part of this action with the objectives of strengthening education system management to improve equity and quality, improving primary and secondary school teaching and learning and increasing equitable access to secondary education may be implemented in indirect management with Sierra Leone in accordance with Article 58(1)(c) of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 applicable in accordance with Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323 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 contracting 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 ordinary operating costs, direct labour and contracts below EUR 300 000 for procurement and up to EUR 100 000 for grants.

The financial contribution covers, for an amount of EUR 100 000, the ordinary operating costs incurred under the programme estimates.

In accordance with Article 190(2)(b) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 and Article 262(3) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 applicable in accordance with Article 36 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323 and Article 19c(1) of Annex IV to the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, the partner country shall apply procurement rules of Chapter 3 of Title IV of Part Two of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012. These rules, as well as rules on grant procedures in accordance with Article 193 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 applicable in accordance with Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323, will be laid down in the financing agreement concluded with the partner country.

#### **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

	<b>EU contribution (EUR)</b>
5.4.1 Indirect Management with GIZ (Delegation Agreement)	3 000 000
5.4.2 Indirect management of the Programme Estimate to meet costs inherent in the fulfilment of S.O. 1, 2 & 4, including the rehabilitation of schools	12 000 000
5.4.3 Direct Management of technical assistance to provide expert advice to the Ministry Programme Estimate	12 000 000
5.9 Evaluation, 5.10 Audit	400 000
5.11 Communication and visibility	100 000
Contingencies	1 500 000
<b>Total</b>	<b>29 000 000</b>

## 5.7 Organisational set-up and responsibilities

Four experts would be recruited to support MEST at the central level, a Lead Expert with responsibility for overseeing and supporting the team of experts. This expert would also support MEST in improving its capacity for evidence-based policy dialogue as well as its capacity for donor coordination. Three other experts would support MEST at the central level: a Monitoring and Evaluation specialist who would give support to the EMIS upgrading under way, as well as to general data management processes; a training specialist who would support the Inspectorate Directorate (to be verified) and support the central Ministry in developing norms, standards, goals, impact monitoring, etc., for the training programmes – helping to define the role of the centre as one of both support and strategic direction in a decentralization process; and an HR specialist to work with MEST on defining the new job descriptions that flow from the decentralization process, as well as performance evaluation/accountability mechanisms, personnel records management (giving further support and momentum to a process that has already been under way).

Four experts would be recruited to support teacher training institutions in two districts. They would train teachers and teacher-trainers. A core part of their work would be to help the teacher training institutions develop a practicum during which teacher candidates would receive classroom experience and support. An additional 2 management experts would be paired with the pre-service experts, but would work on in-service issues, school supervision, etc. Their role would be – in addition to training teachers and teacher trainers – to help design a functioning in-service teacher training programme, focused on results, that effectively supports teachers in community schools, teachers without formally approved qualifications, etc. Part of this work would be to help design detailed teaching notes (scripted lessons) for use by teachers. They would work primarily with the district in which they are located.

The Programme Estimate will have a standard set-up with a nominated independent Imprest Team. The imprest team will be guided by a steering committee made up with wide representation from Government of Sierra Leone including members of the MEST and the National Authorising Officer (NAO) who will have overall responsibility for steering the programme in line with Government of Sierra Leone policy. Representation of the EU Delegation on the steering committee is also essential.

## 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 Delegation and implementing partner's responsibilities. For the rehabilitation of the secondary schools and the TVET components, the implementing partners shall

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 logframe 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 importance 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 (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the fact that Sierra Leone aims to receive sector budget support for Education after this project.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least thirty 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, one contract for evaluation services shall be concluded under a framework contract at the end of activities.

### **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, one contract for audit services shall be concluded under a framework contract at the end of activities.

### **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.

**APPENDIX - INDICATIVE LOGFRAME MATRIX**

	<b>Intervention logic</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Baselines (incl. reference year)</b>	<b>Targets (incl. reference year)</b>	<b>Sources and means of verification</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
<b>Overall objective: Impact</b>	To improve equitable access to teaching and learning	Improvements to EGMA and EGRA* zero-scores disaggregated by gender, rural/urban, income quintile	Draw from existing EGRA and EGMA studies	Ideally, to be drawn from the partner's strategy	Follow-up EGMA and EGRA exercises	
<b>Specific objective(s): Outcome(s)</b>	1. To strengthen education system management  2. To improve primary school teaching and learning  3. To improve management and delivery of TVET  4. To improve equitable access to secondary school	1. % teachers recruited through the TSC disaggregated by gender; % of LCs with approved activity plans as prerequisite for budget transfer; Expansion of EMIS to include learning outcomes  2. # of teachers, including community teachers receiving training disaggregated by gender; DDEO trained in supervision Implementation of RCT around teaching of reading  3.# of subject areas implementing skills certification ; Diagnostic study carried out Teacher training implemented  4.# of schools refurbished; % female teachers recruited	1.  2. To be determined  3. To be determined  4. To be determined	1. 80%  2. To be agreed  3. To be agreed  4. To be agreed	Independent sampling  2. Independent testing at time of in-service teacher training courses	.

\* Early Grade Mathematics Assessment and Early Grade Reading Assessment.

<b>Outputs</b>	1. Improved Human Resource practices	1. % MEST personnel who have gone through a performance evaluation	1. <10%	1. 50% by year 2, 75% by year 3		
	2. Better teaching	2.% of teachers receiving in-service training in 2 districts	2. To be determined	2. 30% by year 2, 65% by year 3		
	3. Improve TVET delivery	3. Number of individuals receiving skills certification	3. 0	3. To be determined		
	4. Improve access to secondary education	4. Number of JSS receiving WASH facilities	4. To be determined	4. To be agreed		



This action is funded by the European Union

**ANNEX 2**

of the Commission Decision on the Annual Action Programme 2016 in favour of the Republic of Sierra Leone to be financed from the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund

**Action Document for Boosting Agriculture and Food Security (BAFS)**

<b>1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number</b>	Boosting Agriculture and Food Security (BAFS) CRIS number: SL/FED/037-403 financed under 11 <sup>th</sup> European Development Fund			
<b>2. Zone benefiting from the action/location</b>	Sierra Leone. The action shall be carried out nationwide.			
<b>3. Programming document</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> EDF National Indicative Programme (NIP) for Sierra Leone			
<b>4. Sector of concentration/ "thematic area"</b>	Focal sector 3 - Agriculture and food security			
<b>5. Amounts concerned</b>	Total estimated cost: EUR 35 000 000. . Total amount of EDF contribution: EUR 35 000 000.			
<b>6. Aid modality and implementation modalities</b>	<b>Indirect management</b> with the Government of Sierra Leone, for the procurement of services and three grants via Calls for Proposals, one grant via direct award and through Programme Estimates for grants and procurement. <b>Direct management</b> for the procurement of services (Technical Assistance, Audit, Evaluation).			
<b>7. DAC code(s)</b>	311 Agriculture			
<b>8. Markers (from CRIS DAC form)</b>	<b>General policy objective</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Main objective</b>
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality (including Women In Development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>RIO Convention markers</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Main 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>9. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagships</b>	Food Security and Agriculture			

## SUMMARY

As part of the EU's support to Economic Partnership Agreement Development Programme: **the Overall Objective** of the Boosting Agriculture and Food Security (BAFS) Programme will be the reduction of poverty and food insecurity in Sierra Leone through better governance and increased agricultural productivity and diversification. The project is part of the overall EU support to the Economic Partnership Agreement Development Programme (PAPED).

**Three Specific Objectives are proposed to achieve the overall objective:**

### **Specific objective 1: Increasing the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security institutional capacity of formulating food security strategies and sector policies**

This objective includes the capacity building of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS) enabling it to provide (i) governance to promote the increase of agriculture production and food security based on sustainable agricultural land use concepts and (ii) to support academic and research institutions to increase the general education on the sector and in particular to create the basic education curriculum in veterinary and animal husbandry subjects.

### **Specific objective 2: Enhancing cashew, cocoa and coffee productivity, income generation for smallholders and exports**

With this objective BAFFS wants to follow up on the actions started under the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF. It aims to carry on providing support to cashew, cocoa and coffee (CCC) sectors especially in the field of certification, traceability, and trade. Particular emphasis will be put on the promotion of agro-forestry production systems as a means to ensure productivity increases by responding to the need to adapt to climate change. It will also contribute to its mitigation through reduced deforestation and forest degradation.

### **Specific objective 3: Fostering sustainable agricultural diversification by disseminating farming techniques adapted to climate change**

This component of BAFFS promotes innovative and integrated farming concepts adapted to climate change (such as inter-cropping, inter-planting, crop rotation concepts, integrated pest management, etc.) to ensure an inclusive and sustainable growth in agriculture with job creation and private sector involvement. Special attention will be given to promote youth and women entrepreneurs.

The total amount allocated to agriculture and food security in Sierra Leone for the National Indicative Programme (NIP) 2014-2020 (7 years) is EUR 60 000 000. This allocation for the BAFFS programme is split into a first phase of four years and a second phase of three years. The indicative budget of this first phase of the BAFFS programme amount is EUR 35 000 000 of EDF contribution. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS) will be supported by a Technical Assistance Team (TAT) bringing skills to reinforce MAFFS capacities and contribute to the achievement of the objective of the programme.

A Technical Assistance service contract will be managed under direct management mode. Grants and Programme Estimates (including supplies and services) will be managed under indirect mode. Of the 4 grants foreseen, one will be awarded to the Sierra Leone Agriculture Research Institute (SLARI) via direct award, the other 3 will be awarded via call for proposals to international and/or intergovernmental organisations or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or EU Member State agencies/entities; any other activity will be implemented by the MAFFS Programme Coordination Unit (PCU) Programme Estimates. The Government of Sierra Leone will be the contracting authority.

## 1 CONTEXT

### 1.1 Sector/Country/Regional context/Thematic area

Sierra Leone's agriculture sector remains the biggest sector of the economy contributing between 46-54% to the country's Gross Domestic Product<sup>1</sup>. The production of cassava and other food products, including sweet potato, poultry, small ruminants and cattle, increased in the past few years during the Agenda For Change period; the production of traditional export crops such as cocoa and coffee also increased (by 217% and 60% respectively). Cocoa and coffee exports increased between 2007 and 2011 by 105% and 220% respectively.

Agriculture still has a large undeveloped potential, particularly with regard to export-based crops. For more local consumption and immediate food and nutritional security, the production of diversified agricultural produce and the rejuvenation of the long-neglected and important livestock sub-sector also have great potential.<sup>2</sup>

However, despite the potential, the growth in production and export, agricultural exports remain low and undiversified. In this sense, access to market and to credit is a major constraint. Furthermore inadequate coordination between Government agencies, in addition to limited capacities of MAFFS, is hampering the development of the agriculture sector by private actors. It could be stated that, in spite of the efforts made, with the support international donors, Sierra Leone continues to manage poverty rather than effectively promote agro and agro-business to increase production, export and trade whilst limiting imports.

Additionally, farmers are not able to intensify, diversify and add value to their produce due to a lack of access to inputs such as improved vegetables materials (IVM), know-how, micro-finance, and access to markets. They are stuck in a cycle of poverty unless focussed technical support and means are provided to increase production and farm incomes. In fact, poverty remains disproportionately rural with 78% of the poor living in rural areas

As a result, many people suffer malnutrition and are food insecure, being more liable to shocks, dependent on assistance, and unable to contribute to the national economy. Despite the increase in food production, food and nutrition security remains largely vulnerable with chronic malnutrition of 35% in children between 6 and 59 months of age stunted and 10% severely stunted.

The Ebola virus disease outbreak could further undermine the agriculture sector progress as production, productivity and access to market will be affected during the current and next production seasons. An estimate in August 2014 expects 30% of the overall country output to be lost during the current production season.<sup>3</sup>

#### ***1.1.1 Public Policy Assessment and EU Policy Framework***

There has been, since the end of the civil war (2002), a lack of long-term investment or attention to create an enabling environment for the private sector to operate and invest in agricultural activities. This is now starting to change but considerably more work is still needed. It includes updating legislation and regulations, investing in value-addition, diversifying away from low-value staple annual crops to focus on the promotion of fruits and vegetables, the development of agricultural micro-industry and a better management of livestock.

The present programme is consistent with Sierra Leone's Vision 2025 to become a middle-income country. It will contribute towards the 'Diversified Economic Growth' objective of the current poverty reduction strategy, the Agenda for Prosperity (AfP) 2013-2018. It aims to build up a sustainable, diversified, and commercial agricultural sector ensuring food self-sufficiency, increasing exports and creating job opportunities for Sierra Leonean women and men.

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank: DTIS, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Programme rationale: Comprehensiveness: cash crops and livestock value chains analysis; Inclusive Comprehensive Agriculture Development Programme, ICADEP 2015-2018, October 2014.

<sup>3</sup> General country and economic context: Inclusive Comprehensive Agriculture Development Programme, ICADEP 2015-2018, October 2014.

The programme is also in line with the National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan (NSADP) 2010-2030. The plan provides a broad framework to put into action the agriculture sector objectives of the Government's poverty reduction strategy. Its relevant objectives include: increasing agricultural productivity; promoting commercial agriculture; promoting sustainable land use and improving agricultural research.

As far as the MAFFS investment plans are concerned, the Smallholder Commercialisation Programme (SCP) was the flagship programme from 2008 onwards. It officially ended in 2014. By the end of 2014, MAFFS developed the draft of the Inclusive Comprehensive Agriculture Development Programme (ICADEP) for the period 2015-2018. The overall goal of ICADEP is to facilitate employment, increase and diversify incomes for rural populations through private enterprise development and accelerate agricultural growth.

ICADEP is presently under revision by the national and international stakeholders and expected to start its implementation in 2016. ICADEP is a relevant investment plan that responds to identified opportunities and challenges in Sierra Leone including Objectively Verifiable Indicators. One of the key objectives of ICADEP is to significantly improve sector governance and local institutional capacities. The BAFS programme will contribute to the achievement of the four components of ICADEP and is in line with the broader National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan and thus the Agenda for Prosperity.

In line with the EU policy framework -- assisting developing countries in addressing food security challenges -- the BAFS programme focuses on improving the sector's effective governance and strengthening governmental assistance mechanisms for vulnerable populations through smallholder agricultural development. Furthermore, BAFS aims to promote a comprehensive approach to food security taking into consideration the environmental sustainability of the actions promoted, in line with the EU Agenda for Change<sup>4</sup> objective of promoting a sustainable agricultural system.

### **1.1.2 Stakeholder analysis**

The programme will mostly benefit the following stakeholders: 1) Government and its institutions, 2) smallholder farmers and food insecure households, and 3) the private sector.

(1) The **Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS)**: MAFFS remains the lead ministry overseeing the agricultural sector as well as food security issues. It is responsible for policy making, strategic planning, data collection, monitoring and evaluation and the enforcement of regulations. Additionally, the role of government is to provide an enabling environment, conducive for private sector growth and national development as stated in component 4 of the ICADEP.

However, due to the many challenges of the sector, MAFFS and agriculture institutions remain weak. Lack of resources – human, infrastructural and financial – remains a huge challenge. This is particularly evident in sectors such as the livestock production and husbandry. Furthermore, extension services are weak, suffering from bottlenecks notably due to capacity constraints in research and data collection. Capacity to manage data, incoherent and dysfunctional certification schemes and a lack of coordination with other in line Ministers and public entities also hamper progress in the sector. This is compounded by a critical situation in academic institutions where general education regarding agriculture is poor and veterinary medicine is totally unavailable in the country.

In this context, MAFFS will be the main beneficiary of the institutional capacity building component of the BASF, both at central and district level (**district agricultural officers - DAO**), in order for it be able to support smallholder farmers and to improve the rural production and livelihoods of farmers.

The **Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI)** is responsible for integrating research material and techniques into the mainstream but lacks adequate human/financial resources. The

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<sup>4</sup> The Agenda for Change, adopted in 2011, is the basis for the EU's development policy and is accessible here: [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/policies/european-development-policy/agenda-change\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/policies/european-development-policy/agenda-change_en)

capacity of SLARI cocoa and coffee research stations in Kupwabu and Pendembu to develop seed multiplication units and establish seed gardens with improved varieties will be reinforced. Seed testing and the recollection of genetic material for other crops could also be introduced.

(2) In line with the main goal of the EU external assistance policy: promoting inclusive, sustainable and environmentally respectful growth, and converging with the tenets of the Agenda for Change, **smallholder farmers** are targeted as the driving force of agricultural production in Sierra Leone. They will be directly involved in the two productive components. It is expected that they graduate throughout the programme by gradually gaining autonomy towards self-financing, and reaching better and more sustainable livelihood conditions. Smallholder farmers' poverty reduction is targeted through support to export cash crops as well as agricultural diversification.

(3) **The private sector** – including all actors such as exporters of cash crops as well as input dealers and producers of agricultural products - should be supported as the important driving force to promote agricultural growth. Business partnerships such as contract farming (outgrowing schemes) for cash crops and the establishment of commercial transactions for input supply and agricultural products will be promoted by this programme. BAFS will directly support private sector activities by supporting agribusinesses under a grant scheme. Furthermore, it will improve efficiencies in the value chain i.e. increasing the quantity and quality of smallholder production and improving farmer-to-trader linkages (CCC grant). As such, the private sector is a direct beneficiary under the grant schemes.

### *1.1.3 Priority areas for support/problem analysis*

Although various efforts were made with the support of donor funded activities, it seems that Sierra Leone is still managing poverty rather than promoting development, in particular rural development. Within the agriculture sector there is a general lack of a flexible, holistic approach to rural development led by the Government, resulting in piece-meal efforts that produce few synergies and limited results.

Capacities are lacking in the promotion of agribusinesses, economic analysis of farming systems, data collection and analysis as well as internal information systems. The absence of reliable data on the agriculture sector and its dynamics contributes to the difficulties in governing the sector. Additionally, government agencies and donor coordination are required for a stronger agriculture sector. Marketing of agriculture products and the trading environment result in high transaction costs and make agricultural products expensive in the national markets. MAFFS' trade-oriented policies and regulations often need to be supported by complementary actions of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce but lack of coordination means these synergies are not optimised.

MAFFS' capacities need to be strengthened to better lead the formulation, coordination and implementation of sound food security policies which lead to self-sufficient food production. Government extension services lack capacity, general training and education and resources to promote innovative and environmentally sustainable methodologies for diversification of production. However agricultural diversification could increase the overall total production whilst improving the nutritional value of products at the same time Diversifying agricultural production using sustainable land use schemes, such as the plantation of fruit trees or intercropping of other nutritious crops like cassava and beans, could significantly improve the management of the environment and have a positive impact on climate change.

Prior to the economic collapse of the 1980s and the civil war, agricultural cash crops - cocoa and coffee in particular - were the backbone of the export sector. Although exports of cocoa or coffee have yet to put Sierra Leone on the world map as an important supplier of these commodities, producers -- especially cocoa -- and exporters have developed a solid reputation for reliability in recent years.<sup>5</sup> Activities to develop the cocoa, coffee and cashew sectors have already started under the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF.

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<sup>5</sup> E.g. the quality for cocoa exports increased in recent years and previous discounts on international markets have been reduced. Cocoa defects in 2014 have been reduced to 5.11% nearly achieving the international average of 5%. Source: Cocoa Working Group Meeting Protocol, 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2015.

However, due to tree crops long production cycles support need to be continued to ensure sustainability of the action. Certification schemes need also to be further promoted and implemented.

For many other crops, local markets are underdeveloped. Limited access to inputs, high post-harvest losses and value chain inefficiencies are some of the underlying causes. Although the Smallholders Commercialisation Programme (SCP) programme was supposed to address these issues, the Agricultural Business Centres (ABCs) are not fully operational. This is probably because of their top-down set-up rather than having grown organically from the bottom-up. Instead, privatization of ABCs and contract farming schemes might offer a preferable private sector-driven alternative, especially if smallholder farmers and other private sector stakeholders are adequately linked.

Livestock and animal production in general to increase protein intake is low. The livestock capacity of the country was completely destroyed during the long conflict. No real investments were made since the end of the war and the country relies on expensive imports (mainly from Guinea and Mali). Promoting livestock as a diversification component in rural household-farming systems presents a viable income addition for small and medium holders. It represents a sustainable way of using natural, abundant but unexploited fodder resources. However research, education in veterinary/animal husbandry subjects and improved extension services dedicated to livestock production are requirements to ensure that these effects trickle down to our target group.

There is a lack of applied research and the provision of their results which severely hampers the growth and development of the agricultural sector. SLARI has not received enough attention and resources to provide services to smallholder farmers, weakening the value-chain and its potential for profitability. This mainly relates to the production of improved vegetal material of all kinds and its distribution to the agricultural sector as one necessary feature for increased yields.

**2 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

The following are risks identified and measures to reduce and mitigate each of them:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Mitigation Measure</b>
Support of Government of Sierra Leone through Ministries is ineffective and inter-ministerial cooperation is low (especially for Food Security policies, supporting agricultural trade legislation and regulations needed to access international markets)	High	Promote government agencies and donor coordination. Promote in-line Ministries and Agencies together with MAFFS (like Min of Industry and Trade, Min of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Min of Education, Sciences and Technology, Min of Energy and Water Resources, Min of Local Government and Rural Development , Min of Land, Country Planning and Environment, etc.) to initiate a coordinated dialogue (seed funds for a project implementation unit (PIU) part of the programme)
Transparency in budget spending remains at low levels (low accountability of governmental institutions)	High	Build up internal controls in MAFFS through TA. The utilisation of the previous EU programme under the 10 <sup>th</sup> EDF Agriculture for Development (A4D) PCU could mitigate this risk as related to the BAFS funds.
Limited capacity of MAFFS to implement the programme	from High to Low	Build up management capacity in MAFFS through TA (part of the programme). Utilisation of the A4D-PCU staff will reduce the risk from High to Low)
Data collection and information systems (statistics) are limited	High	Build capacity of MAFFS Planning, Evaluation, Monitoring and Statistical Department and start MIS implementation (MIS start-up is part of the programme)

The non-availability of improved vegetal material (IVM)	High	Build capacity of SLARI to introduce and multiply IVM (proposed direct grant)
Lack of government support for private sector initiatives	Medium	Awareness raising of trade dynamics among MAFFS and private sector with the support of Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce, Associations, etc. (part of the programme)
Pest and diseases reduce productivity specially in livestock sector	Medium	Train farmers in pest and disease control (part of the programme)
Discounted international prices for Sierra Leonean cocoa	Medium	Improve quality and promote certification (part of the programme)
Lack of government support for private sector initiatives	Medium	Support to agribusiness unit, bottom up approach via grants (part of the programme)
Smallholders are excluded in favour of investments in agribusiness plantations	Medium to low	Promote smallholder inclusive business models to improve producer/exporter linkages in the value chain (part of the programme)
Smallholders will not be integrated into markets	Low	NSA and LA funding activities (as part of the programme) will mitigate this risk
<b>Assumptions</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political stability will continue</li> <li>• MAFFS assumes its leadership role in the design, implementation and monitoring of ICADEP and coordinates with other Government Ministries / Agencies and stakeholders</li> <li>• The Government of Sierra Leone will develop a commonly agreed framework and willingness to align policy, legislation and a set of common, time-bound priorities for development, probably led by State House and in line with component 4 of ICADEP.</li> <li>• World commodity prices for major cash crops will be stable or on the rise.</li> <li>• Agri-business sector willing to provide extension services and inputs.</li> <li>• Endorsement of the Strategy Paper of 12.06.2015 is implemented.</li> <li>• The included vaccination campaign should last for at least 5 years (within the two programme phases), it will start as soon as MAFFS is ready accordingly to an in-depth analysis to be implemented during the inception phase.</li> </ul>		

### 3 LESSONS LEARNT, COMPLEMENTARITY AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

#### 3.1 Lessons learnt

Institutional sustainability remains a constraint, especially the reinforcement of MAFFS' technical and Human Resources capacities. Capacity-building and institutional strengthening, leading to policy formulation based on success stories and well-designed strategies, remains a challenge.

Even though the agricultural production basis has been partially rehabilitated, land and labour productivity remains a severe constraint, be it for staples or cash crops. The lack of appropriate inputs such as seeds/seedlings and fertilizers is evident and the private sector presence offering services and inputs to smallholders needs to be strengthened. Diversification was also promoted over recent years but a lot remains to be done especially in the tree crops and livestock sectors. Bottom-up approaches promoting diversification have not been actively supported by Government institutions and in-depth analysis of existing farming systems and the interaction of their different components is missing.<sup>6</sup> A bottom-up approach is therefore required to develop sustainable farming systems further.<sup>7</sup>

The support of cash crops such as cocoa has shown its effectiveness over the last years but additional actions are required to increase smallholders' production and marketing skills.

<sup>6</sup> A farming system approach would allow analysing possible bottlenecks at the level of farm-household level as regards the concurrence of labour, capital and land for different crops and livestock. Instead of developing such a holistic approach, MAFFS concentrates on the promotion of single crops or agricultural activities such running the risk to neglect interactions between different farm components.

<sup>7</sup> This will be the overall objective of the "Other crops and Livestock" grant foreseen under BAFS.

As far as food security is concerned, there is a consensus that the “hunger” period during the rainy season is the most critical food insecure period and that landless rural inhabitants are the most vulnerable populations.

Currently, Food Security and Nutrition are only addressed in a post-Ebola crisis context. Little attention is paid to alarming figures of stunting in children under five (36%). One quarter of newborns also suffer from low birth weight. These figures indicate long lasting trends. Although Sierra Leone is signatory to the “Scaling-up Nutrition” movement, no real comprehensive policy has been designed so far. Political commitment is key but not sufficient if skills are not available.

During the recent evaluation of the SCP carried out in 2014<sup>8</sup>, the lessons learnt include: (i) lack of focus on developing marketing and management skills for farming as business, (ii) mixed success of ABCs due to unclear ownership and management structure, (iii) the need to develop value chains from field to market versus only focusing on production and (iv) weak monitoring and evaluation. The BAFS programme design takes on board these lessons learnt.

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

The BAFS programme will further develop results of the A4D project. Although the BAFS does not deal specifically with climate change and environmental impact assessment, significant environmental issues have been identified during screening and addressed in the formulation phase. BAFS will co-ordinate its activities with other ongoing EU funded programmes specifically targeting climate change and environment. The project dovetails with work undertaken by **REDD+** (programme specifically dealing with Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation system) and the **Environmental Governance and Mainstreaming** project which targets support to Sierra Leone in the areas of environment and climate change mitigation and adaptation. PRO-ACT 2015, dealing with Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture, will also be designed complementarily.

In order to avoid duplication of support to smallholders' production, the BAFS programme needs to be closely coordinated with other donors' on-going projects. Coordination of activities is foreseen with the ongoing projects like the West Africa Agricultural Productivity (World Bank), the Rehabilitation and Community Based Poverty Reduction Project (International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)), the Employment Promotion Project (German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ)) , the Sierra Leone Opportunities for Business Action (Department for International Development (DFID)) and with the World Bank's Rural and Private Sector Development Project (currently in the formulation stage) which is also market-oriented.

### **3.3 Cross-cutting issues**

The project aims to adopt a comprehensive approach to food security and related considerations about the environmental sustainability of agricultural production. This is in line with the EU Agenda for Change objective of promoting sustainable agriculture. The approach draws upon the following cross-cutting issues:

**GOVERNANCE:** pro-poor development and good governance are the main objectives of BAFS. Specifically the programme aims to strengthen institutional capacities in the agriculture sector allowing for its better governance.

**TRADE DEVELOPMENT** is a significant objective of BAFS. It will support smallholder farmers to increase the quantity and quality of agricultural production and improve their integration into the economy.

**GENDER:** women are expected to benefit largely as smallholders, especially as women often run very small farms. At the household level, women are also the main breeders of small ruminants.

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<sup>8</sup> Smallholder Commercialization Programme (SCP) Lessons learnt. Page 20. Inclusive Comprehensive Agriculture Development Programme, ICADEP 2015-2018. October 2014.

Moreover, women, together with infants, benefit most from a nutrition or food fortification programme. Special emphasis will be given to women entrepreneurs when defining the calls for proposals for the “Agribusiness and Innovative Farming” grant (hereafter “Agribusiness grant”) and “Other Crops and Livestock” grant (hereafter OC+L grant) under the BAFS.

**RIGHT TO FOOD:** Sierra Leone is signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights that enshrines the Right to Food in its article 11. The Constitution of Sierra Leone calls for the State to "place proper and adequate emphasis on agriculture in all its aspects so as to ensure self-sufficiency in food production" (article 7, alinea d).

**CLIMATE CHANGE and ENVIRONMENT:** In line with the EU's comprehensive approach to environmentally sustainable agricultural production and the tenets of the Agenda for Change, the BAFS Programme promotes increasing agricultural productivity and encourages agricultural diversification in environmentally sustainable ways. For cocoa and coffee, environmental sustainability is ensured thanks to the establishment and maintenance of low-carbon and agro-forestry systems of multi-storey crop cultivation limiting emissions from shifting cultivation. BAFS Programme promotion of cashew (which grows well on hillsides too dry and too stony for other crops) and arboriculture diversification increases global biomass and plant cover of soils, thereby limiting erosion and reducing desertification risks. In newly established orchards, inter-cropping with pulses inoculated with selected strains of rhizobium can protect soils and ensure long-term improvements in soil fertility at no environmental costs. This in turn contributes to minimising soil depletion and avoiding desertification processes.

**YOUTH:** The migration towards the urban centres is generally acknowledged as one factor contributing to the lack of labour in the agricultural and rural sectors. Unfortunately, offering youth a livelihood by agriculture remains a challenge as they often do not have full access to land and other resources. Therefore, special emphasis will be given to youth entrepreneurs when defining the calls for proposals for the “Agribusiness and Innovative Farming” and “Other Crops and Livestock” grants foreseen under the BAFS programme. Moreover, the BAFS programme proposed strategy includes additional hints on YOUTH EMPOWERMENT and JOB CREATION to support promoting inclusive and sustainable growth.

## **4 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION**

### **4.1 Objectives/results**

The **Overall Objective** of the programme will be the reduction of poverty and food insecurity in Sierra Leone through better governance and increased agricultural productivity and diversification.

#### **Specific Objectives:**

The programme has 3 specific objectives:

#### **Specific objective 1: Increasing MAFFS institutional capacity for formulating food security strategies and sector policies**

The first BAFS component aims to reinforce the Government of Sierra Leone and in particular MAFFS capabilities to foster better governance of the sector both at central and regional level. This will be done by strengthening the operational units already existing within MAFFS; new units will also be created. Strong coordination mechanisms, including with other line ministers, should lead to the set-up of task forces for the development of food security strategies and accompanying assessment tools. In addition, considering the critical situation of education in agriculture in general and veterinary-animal husbandry in particular, special support is foreseen for capacity building within MAFFS and for the academic and research entities related to the sector. Success of all interventions in this component may create an implementing environment conducive to future sector budget support for the agriculture sector. Results to be achieved under this component are:

<b>Result 1.1</b>	Institutional capacities of MAFFS in providing sector guidance for food security and sustainable land use are reinforced.
<b>Result 1.2</b>	National agriculture, veterinary-animal husbandry education and research entities are strengthened.

**Specific objective 2: Enhancing cashew, cocoa and coffee (CCC) productivity, income generation for smallholders and exports**

Work will continue in redeveloping the three chosen cash-crops in dedicated areas through agroforestry systems ensuring climate change adaptation. The intervention will further aim to replace the over-aged, low-yield varieties of plants using improved vegetable material (IVM) to be produced by the Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI) seed nurseries or other sources and by supporting the emerging agri-business, export-focussed sub-sector. Economies of scale will increase production and processing, moving away from small, uneconomical, fragmented areas only capable of producing at a subsistence level. Results to be achieved under this component are:

<b>Result 2.1</b>	Production: agroforestry systems for cashew, coffee and cocoa are established.
<b>Result 2.2</b>	Efficient and effective value chains of cash crops for export (CCC) are promoted with special focus on increasing quantity and quality of production, processing, marketing and trading while implementing environmentally sustainable agricultural practices. Possibility to extend the number of crops analysed.

**Specific objective 3: Fostering sustainable agricultural diversification by disseminating farming techniques adapted to climate change and ensuring that smallholders have fair market linkages**

Diversification of agricultural production will help increase food security as well as the ability to withstand external shocks related both to climate change and to prices instability. It will also provide a better nutritional basis for smallholders. The BAFS will concentrate on two major axes to diversify agriculture: (i) crops diversification using sustainable farming systems and (ii) promotion of the livestock sector.

Crop diversification implies promoting environmentally sustainable farming systems with the introduction and multiplication of IVMs together with a set of sound agricultural practices aimed at ensuring adaptation to climate change in particular. SLARI will play a major role in this sub-component. Crop diversification includes fruit trees, tuberous crops and pulses. This activity will increase land productivity in the long-run as yields increase. It will also contribute to food security by offering farmers possibilities to diversify their livelihoods as well as their diet. Crop diversification will result in increasing the total biomass and reducing the risk of soil degradation while ensuring a better production.

The livestock sub-sector will be strongly promoted as a powerful tool for economic and nutritional diversification. The benefits of its restoration can be substantial considering its importance in the nutritional and economic aspects as well as social and cultural aspects. In addition, a national vaccination campaign of small ruminants against PPR will be carried out. This aims to provide a major boost to animal production by reducing disease-related mortality. A five-year vaccination campaign (during the two phases of the BAFS programme) will be initiated as soon as indicated conditions are met by the MAFFS. Results to be achieved under this component are:

<b>Result 3.1</b>	Diversification of agricultural and livestock production is promoted. Implementation of animal health promotion campaigns and immunisation. Promotion of sustainable agricultural development and enhanced internal trade possibilities.
<b>Result 3.2</b>	Sierra Leone Non-State Actors, like FBOs, CBOs, NGOs, Associations and Federations, together with Local Authorities build economically viable agribusinesses along with the private sector assuring Added Value Chain (AVC) covering the whole AVC from input to marketing.

## 4.2 Main activities

Summary of results, key activities and corresponding major budget lines (without TA, audit and contingencies)

Result No	Selected key activities	Budget line	Budget (EUR)
<b>Result 1.1:</b> Institutional capacities of MAFFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prepare sectoral and food security policies and their approval by Government of Sierra Leone via PIU and implement them</li> <li>- Define concepts and implement actions to promote sustainable agriculture within MAFFS Units and Departments</li> <li>- Build capacities within MAFFS (crops, extension, livestock, etc.)</li> <li>- Elaborate MIS concept and start development of one module</li> <li>- Build capacities (CB) in produce certification and agribusiness</li> <li>- Implement one-stop shop for programme management with semi-autonomous PCU</li> </ul>	MAFFS CB and Mobility, Management Information System concept, Certification unit, one-stop shop, Agribusiness, SPS, etc., units, visibility, PCU operation	6 100 000 (under OPEs)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthen Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute capacities</li> <li>- Introduce and multiply IVM (tree crops, pulses, staple food except cereals)</li> </ul>	Direct Grant SLARI	2 000 000
<b>Result 1.2:</b> CB in agriculture, veterinary-animal husbandry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertake HR assessment and build capacities in animal health / veterinary services</li> <li>- Develop academic career and provide academic degree</li> </ul>	Support to the 5 education entities	1 300 000 (under OPEs)
<b>Result 2.1 and 2.2:</b> CCC value chains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rehabilitate CCC plantations</li> <li>- Increase production area with IVM</li> <li>- Follow up certification and traceability</li> <li>- Support CCC commodity associations</li> <li>- Hand-over of extension and lessons learnt</li> <li>- Analysis on the possibility to add cash crops</li> </ul>	CCC grant	4 500 000
<b>Result 3.1:</b> Diversification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify and promote diversification (cropping pattern, rotation, soil conversation, livestock promotion) focusing on women and youth</li> <li>- Develop and promote animal health campaigns</li> <li>- Monitor adoption rates of each sub-grant</li> </ul>	OC+L grant	4 500 000
<b>Result 3.2:</b> Agribusiness promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Train target group (focus on women and youth) in identifying business ideas and preparing feasibility / business plans</li> <li>- Support creation of agribusiness along AVCs</li> <li>- Promote auction systems especially for emerging cash crops</li> <li>- Monitor success rates of innovative farming and agribusiness founded</li> </ul>	Agribusiness and Innovative farming grant	10 300 000

## 4.3 Intervention logic

The main assumption is that the actual A4D PCU disposes of sufficient and already trained staff to be able to implement the BAFS programme and manage the funds foreseen via Programme Estimate.

The BAFS programme formulation indicates that in excess of EUR 7 000 000 are directly implemented under the PCU control, the total OPE value, including specific contracts will be of EUR 33 300 000. The Delegation will directly implement audit and evaluation and decide the utilisation of the contingencies.

The implementation strategy of the BAFS programme agreed with MAFFS is mainly designed to increase ownership for all stakeholders. The aim is to move away from managing poverty towards an

improved nutritional status and possibly cash income for farmers, whilst supporting food security. Activities to support Export Cash Crops and Agricultural Diversification (including nutrition amelioration) to really Boost Agriculture and Food Security are put in place with the necessary investments in capacity building (in-house for MAFFS and SLARI) and in-country through the education system to all stakeholders.

Given the assumption and after a risk analysis, the proposed implementation intervention logic has met the agreement of the Beneficiary Authorities and of the main stakeholders' representatives including Non-State Actors.

Additionally, as requested by the MAFFS, an initial support for the creation of a unique PIU (see result 1.1) will allow a more appropriate agricultural sector approach (through the involvement of other line ministries). It will ensure that sectoral and food security policies are jointly decided and made operational. Examples include policies related to land tenure and/or internal and export trade facilities that are normally under the mandate of other ministries.

The MASF also requested additional funds to start a five-year vaccination campaign. This has been included and could start once operational conditions are met (mainly internal organisation and capacity built up). The vaccination campaign will initially support the small ruminants sector and should not only cover the Ovine Rinderpest or Peste de petit ruminant (PPR) which is considered to be the major problem but also worm and mange tick infestation, etc.

Based on the above assumptions and risks analysis, the proposed action intervention logic can be summarised as:

### **Specific objective 1: Institutional capacity building and formulation of food security strategies**

The MAFFS is the main representative of the State in the agricultural and food security sectors and acts as first in all issues relevant for Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security. Strengthening MAFFS's capacities in strategic guidance as well as its operational abilities (result 1), will allow to create a conducive environment for more efficient services to smallholders and possibly other agricultural sector stakeholders and to create a strategic and policy framework supporting private sector activities as one condition for further agricultural growth. This also aims to provide an adequate framework to reduce food insecurity. More efficient and needs oriented services in agricultural extension to smallholders are needed resulting in and spearheading the diffusion of good agricultural practices promoting sustainable land use approaches.

### **Specific objective 2: Support to cashew, cocoa and coffee (CCC) for export**

The second component (reflected in results 2.1 and 3.2) deals with all aspects of the value chains enhancement of the cash crops for export, the CCC. This component ensures continuity in activities already initiated under the A4D programme and builds partly on the results achieved in component 1. The proposed CCC grant will put special emphasis on further promoting sustainable cash crops directly involving the end-beneficiaries in order to increase local ownership mostly via the proposed sub-granting.

### **Specific objective 3: Support to environmentally sustainable agricultural diversification**

The third component (reflected in results 3.1 and 3.2), via the proposed OC+L grant, will put special emphasis on promoting sustainable agriculture dealing with the diversification of food production in its two aspects of crop and livestock production as well as the promotion of agribusiness along added value chains.

**A horizontal intervention** is made available for both Specific objectives 2 and 3. It further enhances the bottom-up approach and aims to support Non State Actors/Local Actors to realise their business ideas along added value chains and livestock markets development. The grant takes a bottom-up approach by mostly building on private sector initiatives for the promotion of viable agribusiness

covering all different steps of an AVC. It will create additional employment opportunities and further integrate smallholders into the formal economy. It also contributes to food security by providing additional income opportunities.

BAFS will give special emphasis to promoting women and youth as future entrepreneurs. Additional specific actions in the field of Climate Change and Environment together with gender and youth will be given special attention. It is therefore considered that, within the implementation of the activities, those relating to result 3.2 will be mostly dedicated to fund specific agribusiness seed capital interventions and innovative farming. The private sector in general and farmers in particular can participate in these initiatives. Special emphasis is put on women and youth. Nevertheless, the general public and NGOs/Associations/Unions, etc. will be invited to promote this intervention via the establishment of school gardens in the public sector and/or the establishment of demonstrative farms implemented by local NGOs and as well farmer-based organisations and associations for example.

At least 250 direct interventions will be supported among the activities indicated in the specific objectives 2 and 3 and the horizontal intervention.

Particular attention is given to supporting women and youth as well as to climate change and the protection of the environment.

This project, being the first phase of the BAFS programme, does not include an exit strategy. However, it will be part of the second phase.

## **5 IMPLEMENTATION**

### **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 operational 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**

Non applicable.

### **5.4 Implementation Modalities**

#### ***5.4.1 Procurement (Direct Management)***

In the light of the low level of capacity within the Ministry and lack of experience in managing EU funds and procedures, direct management of certain components of this programme is the preferred implementation modality. A service contract to provide for the Technical Assistance to Boosting Agriculture and Food Security in Sierra Leone is foreseen. It allows the National Authorising Officer (NAO) and the Contracting Authority to focus on planning and coordination and leave the technicalities to the TA team without risk of interference. The NAO and the beneficiary Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) shall be fully involved in the procurement processes and the performance assessment of the TA component.

Technical Assistance Team to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security	Service	1 contract	1 <sup>st</sup> trimester
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#### **5.4.2 Indirect management with the partner country**

A part of this action with the objective to reduce poverty and food insecurity in Sierra Leone through better governance, may be implemented in indirect management with Sierra Leone in accordance with Article 58(1)(c) of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 EDF applicable in accordance with Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323 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 risk assessment) and may apply ex post control for procurement contracts up to that threshold. The Commission will control ex ante the contracting 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 Sierra Leone. In those cases payments are executed by the partner country for ordinary operating costs, direct labour and contracts below EUR 300 000 for procurement and up to EUR 100 000 for grants.

The financial contribution partially covers, for an amount of EUR 7 400 000, the ordinary operating costs incurred under the programme estimates.

In accordance with Article 190(2)(b) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 and Article 262(3) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 applicable in accordance with Article 36 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323 and Article 19c(1) of Annex IV to the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, the partner country shall apply procurement rules of Chapter 3 of Title IV of Part Two of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012. These rules, as well as rules on grant procedures in accordance with Article 193 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 applicable in accordance with Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323, will be laid down in the financing agreement concluded with the partner country.

#### **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, subject to the following provisions.

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

Implementing modalities		EU contribution	Specific Objective
Ref. MANAG. MODE	TYPE of FINANCING		
5.4.1 INDIRECT	Programme Estimate	7 400 000	1, 2 and 3
5.4.1 INDIRECT	Grants supporting activities for specific objectives 2 and 3; 3 calls for proposals	19 300 000	2 and 3
5.4.1 INDIRECT	Grant to SLARI; direct award	2 000 000	1, 2 and 3
5.4.2 DIRECT	TA Service Contract/ Procurement	4 600 000	1,2 and 3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>33 300 000</b>	
Contingencies (to be used only with prior agreement of EU Delegation)		1 200 000	
Communication, Evaluation and 2 Audit contracts (5.10)		500 000	
<b>Total max contributions</b>		<b>35 000 000</b>	
<b>Total BAFS first phase programme</b>			

## 5.7 Organisational set-up and responsibilities

The programme will be implemented under indirect management mode. A Financing Agreement will be signed between the European Commission and the NAO, and the overall management of the programme will be delegated to the MAFFS in Freetown. A Programme Steering Committee (PSC) will be established for orientation and follow-up purposes. All line Ministries (as mentioned in the activities related to result 1.1 and the PIU establishment) will be part of the SC together with the main representative of Non-State actors like farmers associations, federations, etc. The Commission will be the Contracting Authority for the service contract via a call for tenders. The NAO and the beneficiary MDA shall be fully involved in drawing up the Terms of Reference, the selection process, as well as the assessment of the performance of the TAs.

The Government of Sierra Leone will be the Contracting Authority for the grants (3 via call for proposals and one via direct award) and Programme estimates. The rules on procurement and grant procedures will be laid down in the financing agreement concluded with the partner country. The Technical Assistance Team will provide necessary skills to reinforce MAFFS and MAFFS-PCU capacities.

One grant is to be awarded from the Government of Sierra Leone to the already selected (and justified entity, SLARI) under direct award. The justification for this grant is based on the fact that SLARI is the only research centre in Sierra Leone dealing with the necessary support to the BAFS programme.

## 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 shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress annual reports and final reports. Additionally a short version of narrative report will have to be submitted quarterly. 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 project monitoring will therefore be the primary responsibility of the MAFFS PCU. The TAT will assist in these activities primarily providing the PCU for a draft internal manual of evaluation, monitoring and reporting (financial and narrative).

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

It will be carried out towards the end of the second year of implementation, for problem solving and learning purposes, in particular with respect to the formulation of the second phase of the programme. The entire programme duration is seven years and the total allocated for agriculture and food security for the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF (NIP 2014-2020) is EUR 60 000 000. The programme is split into a first phase of four years and a second phase of three years. The evaluation mission will therefore have also the scope to formulate the second phase of the BAFS programme.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least one month 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.

Final / Ex-post evaluation will be included in the programme' second phase.

## **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, the first to audit the second year PE final report and a second ex-post after closing of the PE.

## **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.

It is to be indicated that approx. EUR 500 000 of information, communication and visibility activities is included in the PE and will be directly managed by the MAFFS PCU.

## APPENDIX - INDICATIVE LOGFRAME MATRIX

The inputs, the expected direct and induced outputs and all the indicators, targets and baselines included in the list of result indicators are indicative and may be updated during the implementation of the action without an amendment to the financing decision. The table with the indicative list of result indicators will evolve during the lifetime of the action: new columns will be added for intermediary targets (milestones), when it is relevant and for reporting purpose on the achievement of results as measured by indicators.

	Intervention logic	Nr	Indicators	Baseline value 2015	Target value 2018	Means of verification	Assumptions
Overall objective / Impact	Reduction of poverty and food insecurity in Sierra Leone through better governance and household improved living conditions and higher incomes	O.1	Rural incomes grow by x% 1)2)	Reference values to estimate the relative change can be taken from the CFSN survey and NAS (once completed)	7%	CFSN survey	Political stability will continue.
		O.2	Rural poverty reduced by x% 1)2)		-20%		
		O.3	Extreme hunger reduced by x% 2)		-50%		
		O.4	Rural food insecurity reduced by x% 2)		-50%		
Specific Objectives / Outcome	Institutional Capacity-building and Formulation of Food security strategies and sector policies Support to Cashew, Cocoa and Coffee (CCC) Cash Crops for Export Support to environmentally sustainable agricultural diversification	S.1	Agriculture growth per annum 2)	To be completed after the publication of the National Agricultural Survey report conducted in 2014/2015	4.5% p.a.	Agricultural statistic of Sierra Leone	The Government of Sierra Leone will develop a commonly agreed framework and willingness to align policy, legislation and a set of common, time-bound priorities for development, probably led by State House and in line with component 4 of ICADEP.
		S.2	Increase in CCC farm income until End of Participation (EoP)	Corresponding A4D endline survey value	+10%	BAFS monitoring reports	
		S.3	New agribusiness enterprises established 2)	0 under BASF	100 enterprises until EoP by BASF	BAFS monitoring reports	
		S.4	Number of new jobs in AVCs created 2)	0 under BASF	1,000 permanent agribusiness jobs created under BASF	BAFS monitoring reports	
		S.5	Percentage of women-led agribusiness enterprises founded	0 under BASF	At least 25% of all enterprises founded	BAFS monitoring reports	

		S.6	Agriculture sector governance system established	0	Capacity of MAFFS strengthened, including improvement of agric. policies, consultation and coordination of stakeholders enhanced, stronger leverage of Farmers' Org., service delivery improved		
Results / Output	<b>Result 1.1:</b>  Institutional capacities of MAFFS in providing sector guidance for food security and sustainable land use are reinforced	R1.1	Food security policy developed		Food security policy is approved by Parliament	Publication reference of respective Act official gazette	MAFFS assumes its leadership role in the design, implementation and monitoring of ICADEP and coordination with other Government agencies and stakeholders in the sector. National Agricultural Survey allows update on production areas presently used.
		R1.2	Cocoa sector policy completed		Cocoa sector policy approved	Cocoa sector Working Group	
		R1.3	Availability of accurate agriculture yield statistics for major cash and staple crops and reliable production estimates		Yield and reliable production estimates for cocoa, coffee, cashew, and 3 other staple crops apart from rice are available	Planning Evaluation Monitoring and Statistics Division's yield reports and production estimate on at least 5 major cash and 5 major staple crops	
		R1.4	Farm income statistics available		Farm income estimates available for 5 major farming types at EoP (based on random sample data collection)	PE reports	
		R1.5	MIS concept approved		1 concept at EoP	PE reports	

Results / Output		R1.6	Foreign direct investments facilitated by MAFFS Agribusiness Unit (number and value)		At least 5 negotiations for a total value of 15 million USD at EoP	PE reports	
		R1.7	Increase in certified agricultural produce due to facilitation of MAFFS certification unit		At least 2,000 farmers outside cocoa and coffee sector certified at EoP	PE reports	
		R.1.8	Number of MAFFS staff trained		At least 300 MAFFS staff capacitated	PE reports	
		R.1.9	SLARI capacities strengthen		SLARI capacitated to introduce IVM	PE reports	
Results / Output	<b>Result 1.2:</b>  National veterinary education and livestock research entities are strengthened	R2.1	Academic career in animal health / veterinary services established		1 academic degree		
		R2.2	Number of students enrolled in this subject matter		At least 25 students enrolled		
		R2.3	Veterinary services / animal health student exchange programme established (regional or international)		5 Students sent abroad under exchange programme (by EoP)		
Results / Output	<b>Result 2.1:</b>  Efficient and effective value chains of cash crops for export, (Cocoa, coffee and cashew), are promoted	R3.1	Number of plantlets by crop produced by SLARI		At least 100,000 plantlets produced per year at EoP (all fruit and tree crops)	SLARI annual project reports	World food commodity prices will continue to rise in general.
		R3.2	Adoption rate of good agricultural practises within farming community		At least 35% of adoption rate between trained farmers / rural households	Grantees reports	
		R3.3	Smallholders certified individually or as groups after year 3 certification started (X number of smallholder farmers)		At least 25,000 for cocoa At least 7.500 for coffee	Grantees reports	
		R3.4	Cashew farmers certified (individually / groups)		At least 1,500 farmers certified	Grantees reports	

Results / Output		R3.5	Participation in trade fairs		At least 3 international fairs	Grantees reports	
	<b>Result 3.1:</b>	R4.1	No of diversification activities promoted		At least 20 different (10 crops / 10 livestock)	Grantees reports	
	Diversification of agricultural and livestock production is promoted	R4.2	No of farmers / rural households trained (diversification and Livestock)		At least 2,500 farmers / rural households trained	Grantees reports	
		R4.3	Ratio of trained community adopting training contents		35% adoption rate of trained farmers / rural households	Grantees reports	
		R.4.4	Vaccination campaigns conducted		At least 2 vaccination campaigns	Grantees reports	
	<b>Result 3.2:</b>	R5.1	Number of persons trained in business skills 2)		At least 1,000	Monitoring reports agribusiness grant	
	Private sector and Civil Society organisations are supported to build economically viable agribusinesses for AVCs	R5.2	Number of business plans / feasibility submitted for kick-start funding		At least 250	Monitoring reports agribusiness grant	
		R5.3	Number of agribusinesses supported officially registered		At least 125	Monitoring reports agribusiness grant	
		R5.4	Percentage of women-led agribusiness enterprises founded		At least 25%	Monitoring reports agribusiness grant	
		R5.5	Percentage of agribusiness enterprises founded led by youth		At least 40%	Monitoring reports agribusiness grant	

[1] The mark indicators are in line with ICADEP document indicators. NB: ICADEP and its indicators are currently under revision by national and international stakeholders.

[2] Taken from ICADEP and targets aligned with available budget lines



This action is funded by the European Union

**ANNEX 3**

of the Commission Decision on the Annual Action Programme 2016 in favour of the Republic of Sierra Leone to be financed from the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund

**Action Document for the “11<sup>th</sup> EDF Support to the Office of the National Authorising Officer for the EDF”**

<b>1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> EDF Support to the Office of the National Authorising Officer for the EDF CRIS number: SL/FED/038-476 financed from the 11th European Development Fund			
<b>2. Zone benefiting from the action/ location</b>	Sierra Leone. The action shall be carried out at the following location: based in Freetown, Sierra Leone			
<b>3. Programming document</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> EDF National Indicative Programme (NIP) for Sierra Leone			
<b>4. Sector of concentration</b>	Cross-cutting support measures			
<b>5. Amounts concerned</b>	Total estimated cost: EUR 3 500 000 Total amount of EDF contribution EUR 3 500 000			
<b>6. Aid modality and implementation modalities</b>	Project Modality <b>Indirect management</b> with the Government of Sierra Leone <b>Direct management</b> for procurement of services (Technical Assistance, Audit, Evaluation).			
<b>7. DAC code</b>	15110 Public Sector Policy and Administrative management			
<b>8. Markers (from CRIS DAC form)</b>	<b>General policy objective</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Main objective</b>
	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)	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<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"/>
	<b>RIO Convention markers</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Main objective</b>
	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"/>	

<b>9. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagships</b>	N/A
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**SUMMARY**

**The overall objective** of the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF Support to National Authorising Officer's (NAO) Support Office is to contribute to sustainable inclusive growth and poverty reduction in Sierra Leone, as outlined in the National Agenda for Prosperity, through effective delivery of EU cooperation in line with the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda and the EU's commitments to the Busan New Deal.

**The specific objective** is to contribute to efficient and effective programming and implementation of EU funded projects and programmes through a greater integration of the NAO functions into the national system and involvement of government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), in accordance with EDF procedures and the Development Cooperation Framework (DCF).

To improve ownership in relation to EU cooperation, support is to be further integrated into the Sierra Leonean administration and the specific NAO Support Office structure, created to monitor cooperation with the EU, should be tailored to recommendations outlined in the DAC Peer Review of the EU - © OECD 2012. This new EDF support to the NAO Support Office functions would therefore be fully consistent with the commitments made by the EU in the Paris Declaration, Accra Agenda and the Busan New Deal which led the European Commission to develop its new strategy for technical cooperation. This project will focus on improving the coordination and exchange of information between all stakeholders involved in EDF cooperation activities in Sierra Leone, with a special focus on MDAs.

**Expected results** of the project include:

R.1 The role of the NAO Support Office in coordination of the EDF portfolio (notably with line ministries) is enhanced.

R.2 MDAs' strategic planning capabilities, increased capacity for accountable and fair service delivery and policy dialogue capacities are enhanced at sector level, particularly in areas pertaining to the focal sectors of the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF National Indicative Programme (NIP): Governance, Agriculture, Education and Infrastructure.

R.3 MDAs' capacities to manage technical and financial issues related to the implementation of EDF-funded programmes are strengthened.

R4: Results oriented monitoring and reporting is strengthened, and accountability on EU funded actions is enhanced.

**The preparation of the proposed project** is based on the conclusions and recommendations of the 2013 Advisory Report on the future of EU support to NAO Support Office; the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) Discussion Paper No. 73 (*Striking the right balance: The Future of NAO Support Office's in ACP-EU Cooperation*); Development Assistance Committee (DAC); The European Commission's Backbone Strategy: *Reforming Technical Cooperation and Project Implementation Units for External Aid provided by the European Commission's (July 2008)*; the *Study of Options for Improving Institutional Capacity in the framework of Aid Management Units* (GFA Consulting Group, June 2014), a formulation mission held in April 2015, as well as various discussions and communications between the EU and the government.

## 1 CONTEXT

### 1.1 Country context

The Government of Sierra Leone, in its pursuit to accelerate economic growth and reduction of poverty, is implementing the Agenda for Prosperity. The EU has allocated EUR 376 million under the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF to support the government to implement development projects and poverty reduction interventions in order to attain growth and poverty reduction objectives. The magnitude of the allocation confirms the position of the EU as a major strategic development partner in Sierra Leone. Four sectors (Governance & Civil Society including a budget support state building contract and accompanying measures, Agriculture & Food Security, Education and a specific transport intervention) have been selected as EU focal sectors under the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF. Selection of these focal sectors is in line with the government's priorities under the Agenda for Prosperity.

The NAO Support Office represents the government in all its operations financed by the EDF. The EU provides support to run a unit to help the NAO Support Office (who, in the case of Sierra Leone, is the Minister of Finance and Economic Development - MoFED) to implement EDF-funded projects. The office of the NAO coordinates project design and oversees project implementation and determines the degree of operational and financial responsibility of the relevant ministries.

Some ministries (e.g. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security - MAFFS and Ministry of Education, Science and Technology - MEST) have the ambition to take a greater responsibility in the financial management of their externally funded projects. EU support programmes will be tailored to reflect and support the responsibilities determined by the NAO Support Office.

The 11<sup>th</sup> EDF Support to the NAO Support Office aims to improve the EU's **aid effectiveness** through more efficient implementation of projects and therefore contribute to growth and the reduction of poverty as stipulated in the Agenda for Prosperity.

#### *1.1.1 Public Policy Assessment and EU Policy Framework*

In the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda, developing countries have pledged to strengthen their systems and donors committed to use those systems to the greatest extent possible.

With regard to NAO Support Office, the analysis of prior practices concluded that they should have closer cooperation with the line ministries for everything related to project implementation. The NAO Support Office should remain responsible for the financial circuits while maintaining the central role of coordinating operations.

The proposed support is geared towards facilitating involvement of line ministries and other beneficiaries in programme preparation and implementation in order to ensure **ownership** and **alignment** of the EU support to the above-mentioned strategies and plans – through strengthening capacities and systems to effectively manage the available resources. This is also important in the context of possible future joint programming for greater development impact by making aid more effective and enhancing ownership. The support will also facilitate effective monitoring and hence contribute to **managing for results** which is critical for the government's A4P and EU's Agenda for Change.

This new support will be fully consistent with the commitments made by the EU in the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda and the Busan New Deal for Engaging with Fragile States, which led the European Commission to develop its new framework strategy for technical cooperation.

### **1.1.2 Stakeholder analysis**

- *Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs):* 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 10<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 and Economic Development; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development; Ministry of Works; Environmental Protection Agency; Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs; the Anti-Corruption Commission and Ministry of Energy and Water Resources.
- *The Delegation of the European Union:* The EU Delegation has devolved powers to represent the European Commission in all spheres of its competence and in all its activities in Sierra Leone. Having the responsibility for the European Commission's technical and financial execution of its cooperation with Sierra Leone, the EU Delegation is the key interlocutor for the NAO Support Office. The EU Delegation is a co-partner with the NAO Support Office in the management of programmes and projects. The EU Delegation, in cooperation with the NAO Support Office, is responsible for assuring a productive partnership that guarantees success for EU-Sierra Leone cooperation.
- *Other Departments and Ministries:* The Development Assistance Coordination Office (DACO) relies on the NAO Support Office for information sharing on EU support and should liaise closely with the NAO Support Office. DACO would require enhanced input from the NAO Support Office to optimise EU-related data gathering for the Aid Management Platform and to improve and harmonise national aid-management approaches and tools.
- *The NAO Support Office:* The NAO Support Office is composed of the Director of the NAO Support Office, his deputy Director. The day-to-day activities of the Office are managed by the Director and his deputy. The activities include provision of managerial support and policy guidance to the National Authorising Officer (Minister of Finance) himself in order for him to carry out his mandate; interaction with the EU Delegation and all relevant MDAs to support effective implementation of programmes and projects. The Office is beneficiary and in charge of the NAO support programme. The programme provides means to execute its mandate as defined by the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement (Cotonou Agreement).

### **1.1.3 Priority areas for support/problem analysis**

Cooperation between the European Commission and the Government of Sierra Leone – managed jointly by the EU Delegation and the NAO Support Office – has experienced challenges in the form of delays, ineligible expenditure, results with limited sustainability and implementation difficulties.

The EU is one of the most important providers of overseas development aid in Sierra Leone (foreign aid represented about 40% of capital expenditure in 2012). The *Study of Options for Improving Institutional Capacity in the framework of the EDF* (2014) highlighted persistent challenges to the implementation of the principles of the Paris Declaration under the current model of development cooperation. It pointed to room for improvement in the use of national systems and integration into national plans, as the current situation has a tendency to limit ownership and compromise sustainable results.

The NAO Support Office, due to its historical presence and close relationship with an important source of external funds, is a well-known structure among Sierra Leone institutions. Its role and functioning, however, are not well understood by its technical counterparts in MDAs. It is anticipated that the NAO Support Office will play a more proactive role in the programming, and preparation of cooperation programmes and reduce turnaround times of project documents, reduce ineligible expenditure 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 Support project will be central to improving the management of the EDF, with support being given to Government of Sierra Leone at both the centralised and decentralised level. To address this need over the past five years, the NAO Support Office has benefitted from a specific support programme with the potential to largely improve the working environment, including through the construction of a new NAO building. The 11<sup>th</sup> EDF support programme will aim to consolidate progress and address weaknesses identified in the last support programme.

Under current projections, around 50% of the resources in the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF will be allocated to support individual projects and programmes in the Governance, Education, Agriculture & Food Security, and Infrastructure focal sectors. There are still on-going projects/programmes under 10<sup>th</sup> EDF which means added workload for both NAO Support Office and the EU Delegation in the run-up to the phasing out of 10<sup>th</sup> EDF programmes in around 2017/2018.

Programming and management of the projects/programmes need specialised knowledge of Commission/EDF procedures, which requires considerable training and time to acquire. The main foreseen challenge is limited capacities in line ministries that will implement significant EU funded projects/programmes for the first time. Even for ministries that have been implementing the projects, there has been a challenge of keeping the experienced staff due to high staff turn-over. The increase of EDF funds under the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF (from EUR 245 million in 10<sup>th</sup> EDF to EUR 376 million in 11<sup>th</sup> EDF) needs to be matched with improved and increased capacity both within the NAO Support Office but also in the line ministries managing EDF-funded programmes.

So far the NAO Support Office in Sierra Leone has been principally preoccupied with the administrative, procedural and regulatory facets of implementation of EDF funded programmes. This has constrained the Support Office from actively performing more strategic functions such as planning, programming, and monitoring as well as provision of requisite coordination, methodological and procedural support to line ministries and other beneficiaries.

To address the above challenges, the proposed action is intended to improve the interface between the NAO Support Office, the EU Delegation and line ministries as well as other beneficiaries of EDF resources.

In order to strengthen cooperation between the NAO Support Office and the MDAs, the appointment of dedicated focal points – preferably programme and financial officers - under EU programmes in each of the relevant line ministries is recommended. This would contribute to building capacity in the national administration, mainstreaming their roles in development cooperation management and allowing, over time, for reliance on country systems as a default option, stipulated in the Accra and Busan<sup>1</sup> declarations.

In the context of the evolution of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, the rationalization of NAO Support Office activities and increased capacities within line ministries are important for future management of EU funded projects beyond Cotonou. Therefore, a sharper focus

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<sup>1</sup> European Union - Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Peer Review 2012.

during implementation of the proposed programme will be placed on ensuring that this strategy feeds into and informs a broader capacity development strategy within government. The aim, over time, will be to ensure that government management of external support is of a high quality, sustainable and principally financed through domestic resources.

**2 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

<b>Risks</b>	<b>Risk level (H/M/L)</b>	<b>Mitigating measures</b>
High staff turn-over in government ministries and agencies may bring challenges in implementing EU funded projects given the use of specific EU rules and procedures.	M	Memoranda of Understanding were signed to guarantee the availability of quality staff for coordination of EU funds at Ministerial level. The present NAO Support Office will set up a Helpdesk function to advise MDAs in the daily management of EDF projects.
Performance frameworks are insufficiently defined, if at all.	M	A Common Result oriented Monitoring Framework will be set in place, as a result of preparation work made jointly by the NAO Support Office and MDAs and with the involvement of the EU Delegation.
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.
Required re-focussing on core responsibilities and quality improvements assumes that the national stakeholders will be appropriately staffed, both in terms of quantity, competency and skills mix.	M	Government will be able to second staff with required skills to the NAO Support Office.
<b>Assumptions</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 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 MDAs concerned. This delegation should be reflected in future primary commitments through their formal endorsement of the relevant Authorising Officer.</li> <li>- It also relies on a clear political drive that should ensure that the MDAs concerned undertake the necessary steps to take financial responsibility over their expenditures.</li> <li>- The NAO Support Office and EU Delegation staff – aided by technical assistants - will coach the decentralised units notably in the first years of operations, so as to smooth the “learning curve” for MDAs to deal directly with EDF procedures.</li> </ul>		

- The information flow between the NAO Support Office at central level, MDAs and the EU Delegation should be closely monitored by all three stakeholders.
- Relationships with the national coordinating bodies for external aid (such as Development Aid Coordination Office (DACO)) remain to be formalised, as part of an exit strategy for direct EU support for the management of EU aid.

### 3 LESSONS LEARNT, COMPLEMENTARITY AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

#### 3.1 Lessons learnt

Lessons learnt from the past five years support and clearly spelt out in the recent evaluation can be articulated at three levels: Institutional; Functional and Structural.

At an **institutional level** there is a potent case for developing an NAO Support Office system better tailored to supporting implementing MDAs. With dedicated EU focal points in each MDA allowing for smoother integration in line with the Cotonou agreement. There is a common understanding that there should be more direct involvement of line MDAs and beneficiary entities in specialised areas of expertise requiring input from technical ministries. The main objective is to strengthen the capacity of MDAs beneficiaries of EDF funding. This increase in ownership and capacity building would result in economies of scale that would benefit the government. The NAO Support Office will have a role in managing the funds for the NAO support project, managing training activities, EDF information coordination, project monitoring, communication and sustaining links with the Government of Sierra Leone Public Finance Management (PFM) system.

With regards to strategic positioning of the Unit as recommended in the ECDPM Discussion Paper No. 73 (Striking the right balance: The Future of NAO Support Offices in ACP-EU Cooperation), the Support Office is strategically positioned at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. The European Commission Paper on Reforming Technical Cooperation and Project Implementation Units for External Aid outlines characteristics for a Unit to be defined as "parallel" or "integrated". However the Sierra Leone NAO support office could be defined as partially integrated, because it functions within the government management framework, albeit with challenges in its relations with line ministries. Challenges remain to ensure a timely turnaround of files, a better integration of EU assistance into the government's planning and implementation cycles, and further harmonisation of EU aid with that provided by other donors.

The NAO Support Office has a critical role to play in providing requisite support to ensure that the formulation and implementation of EU funded programmes and projects are in line with the government objectives, plans and policies as well as the agreed cooperation arrangements between the Government of Sierra Leone and Development Partners (DPs), particularly the EU.

Moreover, there is a need for greater accountability of the NAO Support Office as a service provider to national stakeholders, beneficiaries of EDF funding. A system providing feedback and follow up on performance of the NAO support office functions would allow beneficiaries to contribute to improvements in intra-government service provision.

At a **functional level** the "operational" functions of the NAO Support Office need to be accentuated and strengthened. A key area that will require attention in the new programme is design and use of a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, training and capacity building in MDAs to effectively engage in development processes as ultimate goals. Indeed, one of the elements emphasised in the recent evaluation of EU Delegation - NAO Support Office

relations<sup>2</sup> relates to weak monitoring and evaluation systems for EU funded projects in Sierra Leone. The report calls for reinforcement of internal monitoring and evaluation tools and devices as well as communication and visibility of the projects. Therefore monitoring and evaluation and visibility will be given a greater priority under the proposed action. One envisaged means is to prepare a joint monitoring framework for the EU Delegation and the NAO Support Office and to ensure its systematic implementation. A scheduled monitoring mission plan should be established taking in all EDF-funded projects with agreed standards for monitoring reports. The NAO Support Office's role in encouraging and facilitating a more structured technical dialogue with the MDAs should be bolstered and a stronger follow-up on recommendations from monitoring and evaluation reports should be enacted by the NAO Support Office.

There is a need to develop a performance-oriented culture within the NAO and beyond, whereby the NAO Support Office, in close collaboration with the EU Delegation, can set performance targets in EDF-funded programmes for MDAs that are realistic and adapted to their needs. A systematic strategy for communicating these results through enhanced visibility activities should be developed. This ties in to a framework of mutual accountability as outlined above with regard to the possibility for MDAs to feedback on NAO Support Office performance. Internal controls within the NAO system should be improved and clearer delineation of hierarchical relationships will be essential to an improved functioning of the NAO Support Office (for example, ensuring a more independent relationship between the Imprest Administrator and the Imprest Accounting Officer as stipulated in the Practical Guide to Contract Procedures for EU External Actions (PRAG<sup>3</sup>)).

At the **structural level**, and in the context of the final years of the Cotonou Agreement and the EU's commitments to the Busan New Deal, a strengthened relationship with the Government of Sierra Leone's Development Aid Coordination Office (DACO) will be essential. Ensuring accurate data availability, eradicating duplication and strengthening the use of country systems will be key to the sustainable success of any programme to support the NAO Support Office. The on-going support programme has provided substantial infrastructure – most notably a new NAO Support Office building currently undergoing completion – to allow for a more autonomous and sustainable functioning of the NAO system in the coming period. During a recent EDF-funding hiatus the Government of Sierra Leone stepped in to cover core running costs of the NAO support office. Greater national ownership should go hand in hand with the EU's commitment to improving and using country systems in line with the Busan New Deal, which should form the backbone of future support.

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

Given its nature, the proposed action is complementary to aid management initiatives of the Government of Sierra Leone and contributes to the management and oversight of all EDF funded actions. The NAO Support Office is unique and no other development partner provides such specific similar support programmes to assist the government in aid management. The Support Office plays a pivotal role in assisting implementing agencies to use EDF procedures and regulations. It should be added that dialogue on a variety of issues between EU Delegation (and other donors) and the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, or more generally the government, is facilitated through various DP secretariats (notably General Budget Support (GBS) and Public Finance Management (PFM) but also others), in which the NAO Support Office is not directly involved.

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<sup>2</sup> *Study of Options for Improving Institutional Capacity in the framework of Aid Management Units* GFA consulting group 2014

<sup>3</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/>

### **3.3 Cross-cutting issues**

The project aims to intervene in all areas included in the NIP and the Regional Indicative Programme. It will also be able to focus on all cross-cutting issues including gender equality and women's empowerment, good governance and the fight against corruption, the environment and HIV/AIDS.

## **4 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION**

### **4.1 Objectives/results**

The overall objective of the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF Support to the NAO Support Office programme is to contribute to sustainable inclusive growth and poverty reduction in Sierra Leone, as outlined in the National Agenda for Prosperity, through effective delivery of EU cooperation in line with the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda and the EU's commitments to the Busan New Deal.

The specific objective is to contribute to efficient and effective programme preparation and implementation of EU funded projects and programmes through a greater integration of the NAO Support Office functions into the national system and involvement of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), in accordance with EDF procedures and the Development Cooperation Framework (DCF).

The proposed action will be targeting the following results:

R.1 The role of the NAO Support Office in coordination of the EDF portfolio (notably with line Ministries) is enhanced.

R.2 MDAs' strategic planning capabilities, increased capacity for accountable and fair service delivery and policy dialogue capacities are enhanced at sector level, particularly in areas pertaining to the focal sectors of the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF NIP: Governance, Agriculture, Education and Infrastructure.

R.3 MDAs' capacities to manage technical and financial issues related to the implementation of EDF-funded programmes are strengthened.

R4: Results oriented monitoring and reporting is strengthened, and accountability on EU funded actions is enhanced.

### **4.2 Main activities**

Activities will focus on strategic issues such as mid-term and end-term programme reviews, coordination, and facilitating technical discussions among relevant parts of government including line ministries and agencies. They will be implemented by the NAO Support Office, the teams in charge of EDF projects within MDAs, and the Technical Assistance that is foreseen in the present action.

**Activity 1.1.** Support the restructuring and internal organisation of the NAO Support Office.

It is proposed to: update a capacity needs assessment for the NAO Support Office and MDAs; review and update internal manuals and reporting of the NAO Support Office; establish internal planning, monitoring and reporting standards; set up an internal quality and financial control system (including for IT data collection, IT use, archive system, human resources (HR) management, and own expenditures).

The following should be ensured: effective systems for Monitoring and Evaluation utilised; financial management manual utilised; NAO Support Office Monitoring and Information System utilised; Human Resource manual utilised.

**Activity 1.2.** Improve the coordination of the EDF portfolio at the level of the NAO Support Office.

This will be achieved through the effective coordination of the programming, planning and budgeting of the EDF, notably in the view of the preparation of the Mid Term Review of the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF. The NAO Support Office will undertake regular progress reviews of the portfolio of EDF projects, ensuring that the timetable of commitments and disbursements agreed at the time of formulation is adhered to. In parallel, it will plan and facilitate training activities for all recipients of EDF.

**Activity 2.1.** Defining methods of work that are conducive to policy dialogue.

The NAO Support Office will ensure that the programme and project cycle management of EU aid are the result of in-depth discussions with the concerned MDAs and other parties.

The NAO Support Office will assist in strengthening institutional capacity of the relevant national institutions in the development policy, sector-strategy planning and resource allocation.

It is expected that relationships with the Government of Sierra Leone's Development Aid Coordination Office (DACO), other institutions related to budgeting and planning (National Planning Unit, other initiatives), and other stakeholders of external aid not directly related to project implementation (such as: fiscal actors, Court of Auditors, Parliament, Civil Society Organisations) are sustained on a regular basis. Outputs of this dialogue will be reported consistently, notably in terms of clear achievements.

**Activity 2.2.** Improve the capacity of the NAO Support Office for policy analysis in the focal sectors of the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF NIP (Governance, Agriculture, Education and Infrastructure).

The NAO Support Office will identify and liaise with existing initiatives related to the strengthening of planning and budgeting exercises within MDAs. It will elaborate joint (NAO Support Office / MDAs) work plans for the purpose of planning the use of EU funds at sector level. The NAO Support Office will ensure that these directly contribute to the country's development agenda.

**Activity 2.3.** Strengthening institutional capacities of MDAs.

Upon their request, and when in line with the objectives of the present support project, dedicated TA and the NAO Support Office may reinforce MDAs in their sector policy-making, strategic planning, resource allocation, internal processes, and preparation to the requisites related to the preparation of budget support operations. This should be done in close cooperation with the department in charge of donor coordination within the beneficiary MDAs.

**Activity 2.4** Organisation and delivery of specific trainings related to thematic or strategic areas.

The NAO Support Office, with TA support, will organise and facilitate the delivery of trainings on specific contents, related for instance to reform programmes (budget planning, budget credibility, financial accountability, local governance, sector M&E, policy dialogue, gender mainstreaming, environmental and climate change mainstreaming, etc); or cross cutting issues to enhance the inclusion in projects/programmes of specific results and indicators (gender, environment, climate change, HIV/AIDS).

**Activity 3.1.** Elaboration and implementation of a capacity building map on EDF procedures for relevant MDAs and Non State Actors.

In line with Activity 1.1, this will consist of elaborating and implementing a training map on EDF procedures for recipients of EDF support actions, including the relevant MDAs, other public institutions and Non State Actors (essential training packages may include: financial management, project cycle management, managing calls for proposals).

**Activity 3.2.** Setup a Helpdesk function at the level of the NAO Support Office, to ensure that EDF stakeholders receive timely and quality assistance to prepare and implement projects, tenders, contracts and programme estimates.

This activity implies identifying and launching the organisational processes related to the operationalisation of a Helpdesk function for the NAO Support Office. It will thereby ensure rapid assistance is given to implementers, especially with recurrent challenges such as procurement and financial management, providing pro-active support to the dedicated focal points and projects teams assigned in each MDA, including through the provision of updated information on EU templates and procedures.

**Activity 3.3.** Provide direct technical assistance support to the implementation of EDF projects.

The NAO support project will, where necessary, provide technical assistance to MDAs, notably in their department dedicated to the management of external support, so as to facilitate the daily management of EDF projects.

**Activity 4.1.** Elaborate a joint MDA/NAO Support Office monitoring tool based on a Common Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) Framework.

Support the NAO Support Office staff and the relevant MDAs to define a common ROM framework on the basis of their needs and of existing information and indicators at both project and sector level. This implies determining relevant indicators, systematic sources of verification, and identifying necessary additional studies to implement the common ROM framework.

**Activity 4.2.** Improvement of accountability on the use of the resources of the EDF.

Facilitate the follow-up of the performance of the EDF, including of the funding used by the NAO Support Office, by national stakeholders, including the Audit Service Sierra Leone, MDA beneficiaries of the EDF, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED), and other potential EDF beneficiaries. Encourage the improvement of overall performance within the NAO Support Office and MDAs in the EDF focal sectors (e.g. through monitoring of internal performance, setting operational performance targets, fair reporting on progress towards objectives).

**Activity 4.3.** Establishment of a communication plan for the NAO Support Office, in line with the findings of the Common Results Oriented Monitoring Framework.

Strengthen the capacities of NAO Support Office staff to communicate on progress and achievements of EDF-funded projects. The communication activities should also support the exchange of best practices, know-how and expertise in priority areas and therefore also be conducive to dialogue with other EDF stakeholders.

#### **4.3 Intervention logic**

The proposed action intends to support the functions of the NAO Support Office as per the following four dimensions (each one being reflected in the expected results).

Primarily, the NAO is the representative of the State and acts as Contracting Authority for the EDF, responsible for the use of public resources. In practice, this can be done by putting the NAO Support Office in charge of giving strategic guidance to its thematic counterparts (i.e. the MDAs), performing an **overall coordination and supervision** of the use of the resources made available. The focus here is put on a central NAO Support Office which acts as a supervisory and coordination body.

Coordination implies planning activities and following progress against schedule, building structured M&E systems, making informed decisions, managing technical and financial information. The NAO also has a pivotal role in making sure that resources of the EDF are integrated into central planning, budgeting and accountability systems.

The second dimension is related to the preparation of the EDF-supported actions in the focal sectors. Indeed, the NAO is notably in charge of ensuring the relevance of the primary commitments according to national strategies and plans, in terms of objectives, time schedule and dedicated budget. In Sierra Leone, it notably implies ensuring **the coherence of the programming and improving planning and reporting capacities at sector level**. Related activities will focus on the link between a central NAO Support Office and MDAs and facilitating dialogue with the EU Delegation.

The third dimension is on **the implementation and management of EDF projects on a daily basis**. This involves managing ongoing contracts and payments, and ensuring a smooth implementation of the activities.

The NAO is also in charge of representing the interests of the final beneficiaries. This is done through **ensuring accountability and measuring performance of the EU-Sierra Leone cooperation**. There is a role for the NAO Support Office to ensure that this cooperation is facilitated by:

- a) a stronger M&E system notably at portfolio level, for the whole of the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF,
- b) information related to EU support (projects, activities, commitments, payments, potential support) that is better communicated and integrated into national systems (aid coordination and planning, national programming and budgeting of public funds, Audit Service Sierra Leone, Parliament, civil society actors, etc).

Both tools should be used in synergy with the other actions funded by the EU. It is indeed the opportunity to support the exchange of best practices, know-how and expertise in priority areas, support visibility and communication activities, including specialised seminars and conferences.

## **5 IMPLEMENTATION**

### **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 operational 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 36 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

Not applicable.

### 5.4 Implementation modalities

#### 5.4.1.1 Procurement (direct management)

The procurement of the service contract to provide technical assistance to the NAO Support Office will be directly managed by the EU Delegation, in common accord with the NAO Office. It has been agreed by all parties that this will allow for greater reactivity on the part of the TA, based on past performance and ensure improved levels of impartiality when providing expert advice on organisational development. The NAO Office will be closely involved in producing the terms of reference (ToR) and in the selection process for, as well as the performance assessment of, the technical assistance.

For the sake of expediency, the tender process for the afore-mentioned service contract may be launched prior to the approval of this document by the EDF committee, using a suspensive clause, in accordance with Article 19b of Annex IV to the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement.

Subject in generic terms, if possible	Type (works, supplies, services)	Indicative number of contracts	Indicative trimester of launch of the procedure
Technical Assistance	Services	1	Before the signature of the Financing Agreement, with a suspensive clause (Art. 19b of Annex IV of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement)

#### 5.4.1.2 Indirect management with the partner country

A part of this action with the objective of *contributing to efficient and effective programme preparation and implementation of EU funded projects and programmes through a greater integration of the NAO functions into the national system and involvement of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), in accordance with EDF procedures and the Development Cooperation Framework (DCF)* may be implemented in indirect management with Sierra Leone in accordance with Article 58(1)(c) of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 applicable in accordance with Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323 according to the following modalities:

The partner country will act as the contracting authority for the procurement and grant procedures. The programme estimate imprest team will be drawn from the Government of Sierra Leone representatives (indirect management). 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 contracting 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 ordinary operating costs, direct labour and contracts below EUR 300 000 for procurement and up to EUR 100 000 for grants.

The financial contribution partially covers, for an amount of EUR 1 200 000, the ordinary operating costs incurred under the programme estimates.

In accordance with Article 190(2)(b) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 and Article 262(3) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 applicable in accordance with Article 36 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323 and Article 19c(1) of Annex IV to the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, the partner country shall apply procurement rules of Chapter 3 of Title IV of Part Two of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012. These rules, as well as rules on grant procedures in accordance with Article 193 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 applicable in accordance with Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2015/323, will be laid down in the financing agreement concluded with the partner country.

**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**

	<b>EU contribution (EUR)</b>
5.4.1 – Technical Assistance (direct management)	1 620 000
5.4.2 – Indirect management with Sierra Leone (programme estimate)	1 700 000
5.8– Evaluation, 5.9 – Audit	100 000
5.10 – Communication and visibility	50 000
Contingencies	30 000
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 500 000</b>

**5.7 Organisational set-up and responsibilities**

A Supervisory Committee will be created to demonstrate a high level political commitment at national level over the present action. It will provide strategic guidance to the overall project and specifically to the Management Board of the project (see below). The Supervisory Committee will comprise at least the NAO, the Head of the EU Delegation (Chairs), and the Ministers of Agriculture, Education, and Infrastructure.

Management-level meetings will also be prepared at least twice a year, through a Management Board that will include the NAO Support Office, the Head of Cooperation of the EU Delegation, and the Focal Points in the MDAs (MEST, MAFFS and Sierra Leone Road Authority). The foreseen technical assistance team will support the process. Project stakeholders maybe invited when relevant.

## **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 end, 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). 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 importance of the action, a mid-term evaluation(s) will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.

It will be carried out for problem solving, learning purposes, in particular with respect to the progress made towards the expected results, the capacity of the institutions involved in the present Action, and the suitability of the institutional arrangements made, with the view of launching a second phase of the action. For this reason, the timing of the mid-term evaluation is crucial, as its recommendations and conclusions should be used in the preparation of the second phase.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least two weeks in advance of the dates foreseen for the evaluation missions. The implementing partners 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, one contract for evaluation services shall be concluded by month 22 after implementation start.

## **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, one contract for audit services shall be concluded by month 20 after implementation start.

## **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 5.66 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.