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ANNEX

of the Commission Decision on the financing of the individual measure in favour of the
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Action Document for "European Response to Electoral Cycle Support in Ethiopia (EURECS-Ethiopia)"

1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number	"European Response to Electoral Cycle Support in Ethiopia (EURECS-Ethiopia)" CRIS number: ET/FED/041-916 financed under the 11 th European Development Fund (EDF)	
2. Zone benefiting from the action/location	The action shall be carried out in Ethiopia with project team based in Addis Ababa.	
3. Programming document	11 th EDF National Indicative Programme (NIP) 2014-2020 for Ethiopia	
4. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	SDG 16 "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions" to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. SDG 5 "Gender equality" to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.	
5. Sector of intervention/ thematic area	Action 2: Electoral support	DEV. Assistance: YES ¹
6. Amounts concerned	Total estimated cost: EUR 10 000 000 Total amount of EDF contribution: EUR 10 000 000	
7. Aid modality and implementation modality	Project Modality Direct management through: - Grants	
8 a) DAC code(s)	Main DAC code: 15151 Elections; 15150 Democratic participation and civil society; 15160 Human rights; and 15170 Women's equality organisations and institutions.	
b) Main Delivery Channel	12004 Other public entities in recipient country	

¹ Official Development Assistance is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective.

9. Markers (from CRIS DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and Women's and Girl's Empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	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"/>
10. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagships	N/A.			

SUMMARY

Ethiopia has embarked on a path of political reform that has led to an opening of the political space and sparked considerable optimism within the population and the international community. Despite the positive dynamics put in motion by the Prime Minister's reform agenda, severe challenges lie ahead. These are, most notably, the continuing ethnic violence, with the presence of more than three million internally displaced people (IDP) early 2019 and the challenging organisation of competitive multi-party democratic elections in May 2020 for the first time since 2005.

The preparation of the 2020 election comes with a number of challenges in itself. Ethiopia's current electoral set-up is rather weak and key stakeholders, including political parties and non-state actors, are not all fully prepared. But it is mainly the institution in charge of the organisation of the electoral process itself that is a source of concern. The National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) needs to demonstrate independence and proper technical capacity in order to overcome the trust imbalance and gain the confidence of the Ethiopian citizens.

The intervention presented hereby aims to contribute to Ethiopia's stability, peace and prosperity (overall objective), by supporting the process of democratisation, rule of law and respect for human rights. Its specific objective is to contribute to effective electoral management and leadership in Ethiopia over the 2020-2025 electoral cycle. It is part of a broader "EU democratic package" composed by 3 other interventions related to national dialogue, support to the political parties dialogue, and prevention and mitigation of electoral violence².

² The 'EU democratic package' is composed by 4 different interventions related to the overall context for the general elections 2020 for an approximate envelope of 17.9 M EUR: i. National dialogue (1 M EUR, funded under our Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) of the Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI)); ii. Support to non-state actors on prevention of electoral violence (3.6 M EUR, funded under IcSP-FPI); iii. Support to dialogue among political parties (1.8 M EUR, funded under

The action hereby is composed by two phases covering a full electoral cycle (5 years). Each phase translates into a separate intervention (or project): the first one (36 months) focuses on the support for the 2020 general election and its immediate aftermath; the second (24 months), on the lessons learnt and follow-up implementation of (electoral observations) recommendations in view of future elections.

The approach followed by this action relies on the following outputs: an increased leadership and strategic management capacity of NEBE in conducting transparent and accountable electoral processes (output 1); increased institutional and technical capacity of NEBE in conducting credible electoral processes (output 2); an enhanced liaison NEBE-external groups in an inclusive and responsive electoral process (output 3); and lessons learnt from the 2020 general elections brought to an inclusive 2025 elections strategic planning (output 4).

In conclusion, outputs 1 and 2 aim at building the capacity of the electoral administration: leadership, management, logistics and operations; output 3 aims at strengthening the public confidence/ trust/ credibility on the process in an overall framework of promotion of a culture of democracy, prevalence of the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and output 4 aims at creating a virtuous learning curve for achieving a credible electoral environment throughout the full electoral cycle.

1 CONTEXT ANALYSIS

1.1 Context Description

Ethiopia is currently undergoing a major transformation. After over a year in office, Prime Minister (PM) Abiy Ahmed, has taken a fast sequence of crucial decisions to tackle the country's multiple political, economic and social challenges, thus, drastically changing the leadership and policy in the Government.

PM Abiy's reform agenda is of great importance as Ethiopia is a strategic partner for the EU in the conflict-affected Horn of Africa region, where it has traditionally played a major role of influence and stabilisation. The peace with Eritrea is a major breakthrough and only one illustration of the current transition. The country is also poised to remain an important actor in the pivotal Red Sea region.

The reform process opened by the new administration resulted in a dramatic change in the political landscape. Several opposition parties have returned to the country, others have been removed from the terrorist list where they had been placed, and a line of dialogue between the government/ administration and the opposition has been opened with several fora being organised between political parties and the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) in view of the general elections 2020.

The elections are expected to be politically competitive for the first time since 2005, and the overall opening of space for public action anticipates a level of engagement not seen before. There is enormous expectation within civil society regarding the potential for an enlarged space and role for civil society organisations (CSOs) in the new context. But there is also concern about the ability and credibility of the Electoral Board to overcome the trust

IcSP-FPI); and iv. This action on European Response to Electoral Cycle Support in Ethiopia (10 M EUR, funded under EDF).

imbalance, its own weak capacity and guarantee effective electoral management and leadership³.

1.2 Policy Framework (Global, EU)

The commitment of the EU to supporting, developing and consolidating democracy, the rule of law and human rights is at the core of the EU's identity, and is well-grounded in the various legal instruments that govern EU structures and activities. These include the Treaty on the European Union (1992)¹, which states that the EU "is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities."

Externally, support to democracy is at the centre of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and of the EU's development cooperation. Relations between the EU and its partners are established recognising that the consolidation of democratic institutions and human rights is a joint value and a common interest. In line with this policy, the EU provides extensive support to initiatives and programmes that seek to develop and consolidate human rights, democratic institutions and the rule of law in partner countries. Since the early 1990s, a human rights clause has been included in all EU agreements with partner countries, notably the Cotonou Agreement (2000) with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries.

Regulations 975/99 and 976/99 of 29 April 1999⁴ provide the legal basis for activities intended to further consolidate democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, by underlying the provision of technical and financial aid for operations aimed at supporting the processes of democratisation, in particular: support for electoral processes, especially by supporting independent electoral commissions, granting material, technical and legal assistance in preparing for elections; promotion of pluralism both at political level and at the level of civil society by strengthening the institutions needed to maintain the pluralist nature of that society. These objectives were further developed in 2009 in the *Council Conclusions on Democracy Support in the EU's External Relations*⁵.

The EU is a leading global actor in the field of electoral assistance and provides technical and material support to electoral processes in many partner countries. The methodological approach to election assistance was outlined in the 2000 Communication on Election Assistance and Observation⁶.

The EU in Ethiopia intends to implement a long-term support strategy within the framework of democratic development and support to good governance. The promotion of genuine democracy and respect for human rights is not only a moral imperative: it is also the determining factor in building sustainable human development and lasting peace. Actions in

³ Electoral management entails effectively organizing a high quality election process while electoral leadership is the ability to project and inspire competence, productivity, ethical behaviour and trust.

⁴ Council Regulation (EC) N° 975/1999 of 29 April 1999 laying down the requirements for the implementation of development co-operation operations which contribute to the general objective of developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law and to that of respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, Official Journal L 120, 8/5/1999, page 1. Council Regulation (EC) N° 976/1999 of 29 April 1999 laying down the requirements for the implementation of Community operations, other than those of development co-operation, which, within the framework of Community co-operation policy, contribute to the general objective of developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law and to that of respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, Official Journal L 120, 8/5/1999, page 8.

⁵ https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/111250.pdf

⁶ 2000 EC Communication on Election Assistance and Observation, COM(2000)191.

support of democratisation and respect for human rights, including the right to participate in the establishment of governments through free and fair elections, can make a major contribution to peace, security and the prevention of conflicts. These objectives are in line with the National Indicative Programme (NIP) 2014-2020 for the EU cooperation with Ethiopia⁷, where one of the agreed cross-cutting areas of collaboration is "civil society and synergetic governance". It is also in line with the European Joint Co-operation Strategy with Ethiopia 2017-2020 where the European development partners coincided that governance is one of the three priority clusters. And, finally, it is in accordance with the Strategic Engagement (2016) where the EU and Ethiopia affirm their commitment to the fundamental principles of sustainable development, democracy, human rights, good governance and the rule of law; regional cooperation and integration.

The action contributes to the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010-2015⁸ - EU Gender Action Plan II (GAPII 2016-2020) and particularly its objectives 17; equal rights and ability for women to participate in policy and governance processes at all levels; and 18; women's organisations and other CSOs and Human Rights Defenders working for gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment and rights freely able to work and protected by law.

1.3 Public Policy Analysis of the partner country/region

Ethiopia is categorised as an "authoritarian regime" according to The Economist Intelligence Unit's index of democracy 2018. This has also been the case over the last decade⁹. For the past 27 years Ethiopia's political system has been characterised by strict party and state control. The ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) has 100% of the seats in Parliament and controls virtually all social and economic life (state enterprises, security services, media).

However, Ethiopia is undergoing a historical transition, set off by the April 2018 appointment of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed following sustained anti-government protests. Abiy has pledged to reform Ethiopia's authoritarian state and rewrite the country's repressive electoral, terrorism, and media laws. He has apologised for past shortcomings, former party officials have been arrested (including those suspected of corruption) and some opposition rebels and imprisoned figures have been given official posts. Showing the way to work towards multi-party democracy, he ordered the release of political prisoners and invited exiled opposition parties to return to Ethiopia and engage in political dialogue. By December 2018 there were no journalists in Ethiopian prisons for the first time since 2004, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists¹⁰. However, Ethiopia remains beset by political factionalism and intercommunal violence related to political, ethnic, border, and land issues in locations across the country with over 3 million internally displaced persons early 2019 as a consequence; abuses by security forces and violations of due process are still common, and many restrictive laws remain in force¹¹.

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/national-indicative-programme-ethiopia-2014-2020_en

⁸ SEC(2010)265 final of 8.3.2010.

⁹ Report available on: http://www.eiu.com/Handlers/WhitepaperHandler.ashx?fi=Democracy_Index_2018.pdf&mode=wp&campaignid=Democracy2018

¹⁰ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/ethiopia>

¹¹ Ibidem.

The roadmap "Ethiopia: A new horizon of hope" presented by the new administration in November 2018 calls for democracy and rule of law¹² and to "build national consensus by preparing and starting implementation of comprehensive national roadmap for democratisation and transition". It also pleads to "take measures to enhance independence, impartiality and capacity of the judiciary and democratic institutions" paves the way to "a level playing field [to] hold free, fair and credible elections in 2020" and "implement the national roadmap for transition and democratisation and strengthen constitutional democracy"¹³. While the perspective of general elections in May 2020 is perceived by many as an opportunity for real participation and freedom of choice, the preconditions for democratic and credible elections need to be put in place in a tight timeline.

According to the Constitution, national elections should be held every fifth year, and any postponement would then require a constitutional amendment. In the midst of a reform process, however, the stakes are high and there is a concern that holding elections during an incomplete transition might cause more harm than good. With growing insecurity, fuelled by a deterioration in the rule of law in certain areas, and particularistic ethnic politics generating local conflicts, holding elections could create further instability, or limit free and fair elections in certain areas¹⁴. At the same time, delaying or not holding elections could also fuel political tensions and put in question the legitimacy of the current government.

Ethiopia has ratified all major instruments and treaties relevant to the organisation and management of elections. These treaties require NEBE to act independently and operate transparently, to be financially accountable and follow adequate procurement procedures. However, concerns regarding NEBE's operations, independence, transparency and accountability have been widely expressed since 2005. The last parliamentary elections (2015) were not seen as held in accordance with democratic standards. The behavioural independence of the NEBE was also questioned. In fact, major opposition parties rejected the results of those elections but filed no formal complaints due to lack of independence of the NEBE and adjudicating institutions.

The appointment of Ms Birtukan Mideksa, a former judge and leading opposition figure in the 2005 elections, as new Chairperson of the Board in November 2018 is a first step to re-build the popular trust in the institution and its mandate for free, impartial and fair elections. Other steps taken relate to the revision and amendment of the legal electoral framework, including the proclamation establishing the Board (and defining its structure and mandate), and the electoral law and the law on political parties and their financing, among others, currently at the House of Peoples' Representatives for approval and expected to be passed by July 2019.

The Ethiopian Constitution recognises women's equal rights with men in the political, social, economic and cultural spheres, in line with the international human rights framework (Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), African Charter, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, etc.). Accordingly, women have the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly and through freely elected representatives, the right to vote and to be elected to any level of government offices

¹² The roadmap (a one-page table) is available on: <http://www.pmo.gov.et/en/>

¹³ Government's roadmap 'Ethiopia: A new horizon of hope' (November 2018), available on: <http://www.pmo.gov.et/en>

¹⁴ The Emerging 2020 Ethiopian Electoral Landscape A Political Economy Analysis, Rift Valley Institute, draft report submitted to DFID, February 2019.

and to be a member of any political organisation, labour union, trade organisation or employers or professional association of their choice. The government has adopted a women's policy and National Action Plan for gender equality. Despite all these, women are still at the subordinate position and women in the country and their involvement in policy formulation and decision-making processes has been minimal. A window of opportunity has opened with the late 2018 appointments in Cabinet (50% women), the Presidency and other high level positions. Apart from the direct impact of women occupying these decision-making posts, there is optimism about the positive influence this can generate in the perception and empowerment of future generations, especially girls.

1.4 Stakeholder analysis

The National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE)

Ethiopia has organised five elections to the House of People's Representatives (HPR) since the introduction of multiparty politics in 1994. All elections have been managed by the NEBE. Established in 1993¹⁵ and reaffirmed by the Constitution of 1994, the NEBE is established as "an independent and autonomous organ for conducting elections having its own legal personality"¹⁶. Its Board has the mandate to ensure the establishment of a government elected through a free, impartial and fair election conducted in accordance with the Constitution; ensure the existence of an electoral system that enables political parties and private candidates respect the Constitution and institutions established by it, compete equally and impartially; enable citizens to exercise their constitutional democratic rights to elect and be elected. Apart from its Head Office in Addis Abeba, NEBE has regional offices in all regions. Under the supervision of the Board, the Secretariat is the administrative arm of NEBE. These provisions have not changed despite a new proclamation for the (re)establishment of NEBE was passed in April 2019. Nowadays, apart from the reputational flaws, NEBE is under-staffed and under-resourced, and perceived as a frail institution. But some promising steps have been taken towards NEBE's reform following the appointment of its new Chair: a new Board (for which open candidacies were sought and are being discussed with political parties) is to be presented for approval by the House of Peoples' Representatives before end of June 2019; the development of an independent structure for the NEBE throughout the country - gradually diminishing its dependence on local administrative structures - is being discussed; and efforts are being made to reach out to civil society and media to improve access to information and transparency.

Political parties

Political parties in Ethiopia are often based on ethnicity. The country's major ethnic parties are allied with the EPRDF, but have historically had little room to effectively advocate for their constituents. Ongoing friction inside the ruling coalition between the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which previously dominated decision-making as well as resource allocation, and the other ethnically based parties, including Prime Minister Abiy's Oromo Democratic Party (ODP), continues.

The EPRDF is attempting to prove itself as an efficient, democratic and reformed party that is capable of leading Ethiopia's development and democratisation. Its past record of democratisation, protection of human rights and good governance, and the contested equitable

¹⁵ Proclamation 641/1993.

¹⁶ Ethiopia, The amended electoral Law, 2007.

distribution of resources give the party negative connotations to its time in power¹⁷. On top, internal power struggles within and between the four constituent parties of EPRDF have not yet been resolved and some members of the establishment are not completely convinced of the reform measures that the new leadership is taking.

As the political space in Ethiopia is opening up there is a general aura of interest by all political parties to ensure that the transition process in the country is consolidated upon. They all note that their interest is ensuring a peaceful transition process and not necessary to exclusively focus on the coming general elections. It seems that all opposition parties support the ongoing reforms. Many argue that the EPRDF should be in power to prevent a power vacuum and to save Ethiopia from disintegration, while others allege that the elections are not a country priority and that the government should concentrate on restoring peace and stability. As a result, the timing of elections is one of the main elements of disagreement.

At the same time, political parties face a series of challenges related to the building of their bases (especially those who have recently returned from exile), their knowledge of the "rules of the political game", about their own capacity to take part in it and the ongoing changes to the legal framework affecting their registration, financial foundations and fundraising capacity, etc.

Security actors

Security forces are one of the main stakeholders in an election. Guaranteeing the efficiency of election logistics and security of polling stations and other high value locations like NEBE offices is an important part of the process. A clear role of the security forces is therefore paramount, as is their understanding of human rights and democratic values. The framework of the Ethiopian security forces is complex and includes the military, police (federal and state), and the intelligence services. At the lowest administrative level (kebele) militias are in charge of security; they operate in loose coordination with regional and federal police and the military, with the degree of coordination varying by region.

The Judiciary

The Ethiopian Constitution provides for the personal independence of judges and the institutional independence of the judiciary. However, in practice, the judiciary has been subject to political interference. The lack of effective independence due to the non-existence of real separation of powers in Ethiopia has blurred the crucial role the judiciary has in resolving disputes impartially, ensuring the rule of law and in setting limits to power. An independent judiciary has been one of the main demands of opposition parties as electoral disputes led to post-election violence in 2005. The present electoral dispute resolution system is scattered, complicated and has gaps in a number of aspects that are crucial for independent and impartial determination of complaints relating to the election, its process and results.

Civil Society and Civil Society Organisations

Currently, there are over 3500 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) registered at federal and over 200 CSOs at the regional level in Ethiopia. Due the restrictive space for operations with the passing of the 2009 CSO law, CSOs in Ethiopia have spent the last ten years in "survival mode". The recent amendments to the legal framework and a more enabling environment, not only for their existence but also for their involvement in issues related to governance at large,

¹⁷ Freedom House in Freedom of the World 2019 report assigns Ethiopia an overall score of 19/100, with a freedom rating 6.5/7, political rights 7/7 and civil liberties 6/7 (1=Most Free, 7=Least Free). Thus, it classifies the country as 'not free'.

are a cause for optimism. CSOs in Ethiopia have indicated readiness for active engagement in the public space, implementing initiatives to further participatory and inclusive democracy. The EU has been accompanying Ethiopian CSOs over the last decade through its Civil Society Fund and it is currently supporting the formation of a consortium of Ethiopian CSOs for electoral support. Religious and traditional groups also have a role to play in the broadening of the political space, be it by supporting or challenging the general debates on the "secular state model" in Ethiopia or deepening the paradigm of "identity politics".

Electoral stakeholders traditionally neglected: women, youth and persons with disabilities

The issue of women participation in Ethiopian politics has not been in a good situation for long. A recent study by researcher Shimelis Kassa¹⁸ states that women's poor representation and low level participation has been a persistent trend in Ethiopia: "Women make up to about 51% of the [Ethiopian] population. In spite of this statistic, women have been having minimal political participation. Lack of commitment for increased women participation and absence of sufficient political knowledge about women representation have been some of the problems for poor participation of women in the politics". The measures taken towards greater representation of women in positions of leadership gives hope for a change though this "empowerment" is not (yet) reflected at regional and local levels including the domestic spaces and at most community levels.

A second group that has historically shown low levels of formal participation in the political life is youth. However, it is expected that they would be a driving force in the 2020 elections as the 2015-2018 protests were marked by youth mobilisation largely along ethnic lines: Qeerro (Oromia), Fano (Amhara), Ejito (Sidama), Zerma (Gurage) and Yelega (Wolayta). These groups appear informally organised, and they have proved to be both supportive and disruptive to the reformed government. There is an expectation that the 2020 elections will attract these young populations to the polls with an estimate of 15 million new voters. But there is also a risk that the government will not be able to immediately satisfy all their expectations (most of them related to the high unemployment rate among youth) and they might decide to react by disrupting and intimidating the process.

A third neglected stakeholder group is persons with disabilities. The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Concluding observations (November 2016,) was concerned that restriction to the right to vote of "notoriously insane persons " is possible under the law in Ethiopia. It noticed that persons with disabilities were not guaranteed support to exercise their right to vote in law and in practice. The Committee recommended Ethiopia to take all legislative and other measures to guarantee the political rights of persons with disabilities, in particular persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities, including by removing any restrictions on the exercise of political rights, in law or in practice.

Media

The crackdown on dissent that began in 2009 with the enactment of an array of draconian legislation decimated the country's once vibrant human rights community and its independent media, and the damaging effects are likely to persist for some time. Since the EPRDF leadership change in 2018, the media in Ethiopia has enjoyed greater freedom. Social media continues to play an important role in the furthering of political demands and is the main source of information for the youth groups who have been mobilised in various ethnic groups

¹⁸ <https://www.omicsonline.org/open-access/challenges-and-opportunities-of-women-political-participation-in-ethiopia-2375-4389-1000162.php?aid=64938>

around the country. However, the polarisation of media, and the often inflammatory role it plays, may exacerbate the already fragile political situation and intensify ethnic demands and conflicts.

The international community

The international community could play a positive role in the forthcoming election, including providing technical and financial assistance to NEBE, financial and advisory support to political parties and civic education projects, supporting dialogue between political parties and serving as independent observers.

1.5 Problem analysis/priority areas for support

Ethiopia's landmark May 2005 parliamentary elections witnessed displays of openness and genuine political competition unprecedented in Ethiopia's long history. But the post-election uncertainty and violence laid bare the deeply entrenched patterns of political repression, human rights abuse and impunity that have characterised the day-to-day reality of governance in much of the country since then¹⁹.

The following two electoral processes of 2010 and 2015 lacked the pre-conditions for genuine democratic elections.. The 2010 Electoral Observation Mission to Ethiopia concluded that while several positive improvements were introduced since the 2005 elections, there were negative developments in the practical application of the legal and electoral framework. Although, the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) largely managed the electoral process in an efficient and competent manner, the electoral authorities failed to dispel the opposition parties' lack of trust in their independence. As a result, the electoral process fell short of international commitments for elections, notably regarding the transparency of the process and the lack of a level playing field for all contesting parties.

These are mainly related to the freedom of the press and of association and to the shrinking political space, failures in transparency of the process and absence of a fair level playing field for all political parties, as exemplified by a broad interpretation of the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation leading to the arrest of opposition politicians, journalists, editors and civil society activists.

Ethiopia's 2018 shift towards a democratisation process allows for a great deal of optimism. But, at the same time, highlights the need to focus on much more than short-term, event-based support (i.e. to the 2020 elections) to longer-term comprehensive assistance with increased focus on the sustainability of true democracy. In fact, it is expected that in the coming years Ethiopians will engage in deliberations related to (ethnic) federalism, a potential amendment to the Constitution, regional self-determination, building of democratic institutions, etc.

That is why **the proposed intervention focuses on the Electoral Cycle Approach**²⁰ to understand the cyclical nature of the various challenges faced in electoral processes. Accounting for every stage of the electoral process and building upon the premise that

¹⁹ <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2006/country-chapters/ethiopia>

²⁰ The Electoral Cycle Approach was jointly developed by electoral specialists with extensive field experience from the European Commission (EC) and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA). The Electoral Cycle approach was then explained in detail in October 2006 in the EC Methodological Guide on Electoral Assistance, in the IDEA Handbook on Electoral Management Design (December 2006) and later on also in the UNDP Implementation Guide on Electoral Assistance (November 2007).

elections are comprised of a totality of interacting elements where a wide range of legal, technical and organisational aspects must be considered simultaneously, and where a variety of activities (before, during and after election day itself) the approach also requires the engagement with a wide range of players that have to be supported for the whole process to be successful.

Special attention is given by this action to guaranteeing effective electoral management and leadership by NEBE. The approach relies on two priorities: on the one hand, building the capacity of the electoral administration: leadership, management, logistics and operations. On the other, strengthening the public confidence/ trust/ credibility on the process in an overall framework of promotion of a culture of democracy, prevalence of the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The action acknowledges the multidimensional, complex and long-term nature of democracy building processes and, recognizing that the electoral cycle is a political process with multiple players, it foresees their full engagement in a broad (and complementary) **political dialogue**, without which the efficacy of electoral assistance would be limited.

2 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risks	Risk level (H/M/L)	Mitigating measures
New appointments to NEBE can have an impact on the relationships with the government while the reduction of institutional memory of electoral processes may affect the speed of implementation of the electoral calendar.	M	Support for regular exchanges between Government and NEBE management.
Legislative amendments can have a huge impact on the timeline and rules of the game while delays in the adoption of the framework can jeopardise the continuity of the cycle.	M	Close technical advice to the drafters of legislation, support for background information for hearings and exchanges with decision-makers.
Government or political forces' resistance to or support for electoral reform processes could have an impact, positive or negative, on the credibility and acceptability of the outcomes.	M	Support to strategic communication of NEBE and improved relations with all electoral stakeholder on the basis of access to and transparency of information.
Violence and conflict can deter people from participating in the electoral process; prevent delivery of election materials; disrupt political campaigns; delay civic and voter education initiatives; prevent attendance at polling stations; lead to allegations of partisanship of security forces; and affect the acceptability of the outcome of the polls.	M	Support to operational planning (including security) using proper tools to monitor the security situation (including coordination with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP's) grassroots early warning system) and plan proper mitigation measures.
Assumptions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The electoral cycle follows the Constitutional provisions for the organisation of elections every five years with the closest exercise to date scheduled for May 2020 or within 6 months of that date. • The Government leadership continues to push for and can achieve a sufficient level of comprehensive and appropriate reform relevant to successful elections. • The Government and major domestic actors (NEBE, security actors, political parties, media, civil society) continue to be open to external support and can effectively absorb, to albeit incomplete yet sufficient degree, the intense capacity building and cultural shift 		

requirements towards democratisation.

- The Government provides high-priority levels of human and financial resources as well as political capital to a strengthened NEBE and rest of the electoral machinery.
- The preparation and conduct of elections among IDPs and other conflict-affected areas is completed successfully and sufficiently so that major sections of the electorate are not disenfranchised.
- Domestic and international observers will be allowed to monitor the elections and present their reports and recommendations which, in turn, would inform a longer-term strategy for the EU intervention.

3 LESSONS LEARNT AND COMPLEMENTARITY

3.1 Lessons learnt

In terms of NEBE operational activities, the EU EOM report on the 2010 elections highlighted that local administration offices - perceived as controlled by the ruling party - were used for storing sensitive electoral materials prior to the election and that government officials staffed electoral offices. In practice, thus, the NEBE seemed to be operating in a somewhat "grey " zone when it comes to structural independence. Behavioural independence was also questioned during the 2015 parliamentary elections. Independence is essential to Electoral Management Boards (EMBs) ability to organise credible elections and entails that EMBs do not bend to external - whether governmental, political or other partisan - influences, that they act and are perceived as neutral. It also means that the EMB must ensure effective enforcement of electoral laws and regulations with impartiality.

The action, thus, foresees serious efforts to limit the involvement of governmental administrative structures, down to kebele level, in the organisation and implementation of the electoral process. These measures could prevent and curtail suspicions of governmental control of the electoral process as well as the blurred separation between the state and the ruling party in electoral activities and the undue use of state resources at regional and local levels.

Measures to enhance transparency at all levels of the electoral administration will be taken to guarantee its accountability via the publication and dissemination of all of the technical tools of the electoral process (polling station lists, constituency lists, lists of registered voters, information on public financing of election campaigns, etc.).

Support to the NEBE Board members is foreseen to guarantee it is an independent, multi-party and diverse panel with technical capacity for its decision-making role.

At regional and local level, training of trainers (ToT) and cascade training of polling station staff -especially regarding the opening, closing and counting process- is envisaged. This massive operation could entail the training of between 150 000 and 300 000 people.

3.2 Complementarity, synergy and donor coordination

Complementarity and coordination with other international actors/ electoral assistance providers

To date there are three main international initiatives under preparation to support the 2020 general elections in Ethiopia. None of the three initiatives has been "cleared" by the Government of Ethiopia or the NEBE yet as the NEBE leadership is still expecting the appointment of the new Board (four members). The EU is the only partner considering a longer-term support to the electoral process/ transition to democracy (5 years) following the electoral cycle approach. These three electoral support initiatives are:

- i. "Supporting Elections for Ethiopia's Democracy Strengthening (SEEDS), 2019-2022" by the **United Nations** (with UNDP in the lead). The SEEDS ProDoc (February 2019) proposes a 3-year and USD 23 million action focusing on capacity support to NEBE for its operations, its communication outreach and media engagement, and its role sustaining peace and stability through the election period. The UN has recently increased the scale of its operation to USD 40 million, though they are still fundraising to reach this full amount.
- ii. **USAID** will engage the three partners from the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) for different assistance interventions for a period of 3 years (the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) along with smaller engagement of Internews and the Electoral Institute of South Africa (EISA)). The procurement process is under way, so not many details have been shared yet about the scope of the actions. It is known, however, that IFES will focus on the technical assistance to NEBE, NDI will focus on political parties, and IRI will concentrate on civil society strengthening. The envelope currently available for all interventions is USD 19.9 million.
- iii. The **European Union** has been working since the last quarter of 2018 on an "EU democratic package"²¹ and, specifically, on the electoral cycle support action this document refers to for a period of 5 years with a financial allocation of EUR 10 million (EDF). Complementary 18-month actions (part of the package) are being finalised through the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) on prevention of electoral violence, political parties dialogue and political and extremist violence. These three interventions are being discussed in Brussels for a financing decision to be formalised by the end of June 2019.

UN-USAID-EU have agreed on a series of **coordination and code of conduct principles** aimed at harmonising approaches and enhancing mutual accountability. They also note that resource requirements for electoral assistance will possibly be greater than what the international community will be putting forward; that the Government of Ethiopia and, more specifically NEBE, has the primary and central role to play in managing electoral activities while the Ministry of Finance and Economy has the primary responsibility for ensuring that adequate resources are made available; and, finally, that there is a need to build on existing coordination efforts and reconfirm the will of partners to present cohesive and complementary support projects/programmes.

²¹ See footnote 3 for details.

The Government of Ethiopia and NEBE expressly requested coordinated international support for the political and electoral process. In response, the EU, UN and US partners developed an **electoral dashboard**. The three major stakeholders also agreed to advocate for the establishment of a specialised "**election sub-group**" **within the Governance Technical Working Group** within the Development Assistance Group. Such sub group was set up in May 2019 and is expected to hold its first meeting in mid-June 2019.

DEMO Finland, the Open Society Foundation, FOJO Media and International Media Support are also expected to work on specific issues.

Coordination with EU Member States

Governance is one of the three priority clusters for assistance of the European Joint Co-operation Strategy with Ethiopia, 2017-2020. The strategy lays out a shared vision for European partners to support Ethiopia's long-term development and reinforce its strategic partnership. Political governance and institutions are two of the priority areas for joint engagement.

The EU Delegation has involved the EU Members States present in Ethiopia in all stages of its 'electoral process thinking' and encouraged joint initiatives according to the EU MS' priorities and interests and based on the joint programming initiative. Some EU Member States have been clear in their intention to work with other partners (i.e. Sweden, Denmark and the UK are contributing to the UNDP fund), others have confirmed their interest in a joint EU action (Germany and Czech Republic).

Synergy with other EU financial instruments

The intervention proposed particularly builds on the other actions of the 'EU democratic package' but it also complements other EU ongoing initiatives in Ethiopia funded by different EU financial instruments (i.e. EDF, EIDHR, IcSP): the Civil Society Fund II and III, the Ethiopian Social Accountability Programme (ESAP3-Governance and citizen engagement at local level); the support to an early-warning system via assistance to the Ministry of Peace (namely, Piloting Conflict Early Warning and Rapid Response Reforms and Upgrades in Ethiopia', CEWRR), and the Support to the Legal and judicial reform in Ethiopia via assistance to the Legal and Judicial Advisory Council to the Attorney General's Office.

Special attention is given to conflict prevention, mitigation and management not only under this particular action but also in the other interventions of the 'EU democratic package', especially those financed via the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace.

4 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

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

Overall Objective:

To contribute to Ethiopia's stability, peace and prosperity.

Specific objective:

More effective electoral management and leadership in Ethiopia over the 2020-2025 electoral cycle

Output 1: Increased leadership and strategic management capacity of NEBE in conducting transparent and accountable gender-responsive and rights-based electoral processes.

Independence of the NEBE is one of the main concerns of Ethiopian citizens as regards electoral processes. This relates to the structural independence from the Government, the behavioural independence (non-biased by external pressure - whether governmental, political or other partisan influence -), and its financial independence. NEBE is also expected to take measures to enhance transparency at all levels of the electoral administration to guarantee its accountability.

Indicative activities:

- Online and hybrid training on leadership and conflict management for NEBE Management Board.
- Leadership training of trainers (ToT) and cascade training for NEBE junior staff in headquarter and in NEBE regional offices
- Peer to peer exchanges with members of other regional Electoral Management Boards (EMBs).
- Training on elections logistics and operations of NEBE as well as "on demand" advisory services.
- Contextualised training and coaching for the NEBE Board and Secretariat.
- Mainstreaming gender concerns within the NEBE policies and programmes, including registration, and polling procedures, safety, voter information campaigns, external relations, electoral legal, and outreach programmes, reporting and analysis of data.
- Provide training on gender awareness for all staff, including on policy for tackling Violence against Women in Elections (VAWIE).
- Technical and operational support for the establishment and running of a Joint Election Operations Centre (JEOC).
- Training and advisory support on Strategic Communication.
- Support to institutional Communication of NEBE and the design of NEBE's Communication Policy.
- Online and hybrid training on integrity and malpractice.
- Support for publishing and disseminating technical tools of the electoral process: polling station lists, constituency lists, lists of registered voters, information on public financing of election campaigns, exact procedures and arrangements for minority constituencies, etc.

Output 2: Increased institutional and technical capacity of NEBE in conducting credible electoral processes.

The second aspect raised as a concern of Ethiopian citizens is the weak technical capacity of the NEBE to conduct free and fair elections. Thus, in order to enhance credibility of its operations NEBE needs to improve its core institutional capacity (professionalism, technical and communication skills) through long-term and operational capacity development.

Indicative activities:

- Advice and technical coaching on the elections focusing on improving operations including voter registration.
- Operational and logistical support for the improvement of voter registration and polling stations mapping using Geographic Information Systems (GIS).
- Peer to peer exchanges with members of other regional EMBs.
- Review operations manuals and outreach materials from a gender perspective.
- Setting-up a Media Monitoring Unit.

- Production of "Media and elections guide" and a "gender sensitive code of electoral coverage".
- Training on political party monitoring for NEBE staff.
- Support to the legal department of NEBE via advisory services and training on global best practices.
- Operational assistance for establishment and running of an Election Monitoring tool.
- Support for human resources planning and management.
- Support for enhanced relations with security actors and assistance for security planning.
- Support to NEBE to develop and implement campaign finance regulations
- Candidate registration - timeline and guidance for candidates, database to capture information for ballot.
- Support for candidate registration database linked to ballot design/print.
- Support NEBE in monitoring party/candidate financing.
- Train the NEBE national and regional staff dealing with political parties on the new campaign rules and regulation and their ability to monitor and report violations.
- Establish a database and tools to track and verify financial reporting by political parties to ensure they comply fully with the campaign finance regulation.
- Publish the campaign spending by parties on NEBE website.
- Support NEBE in processing political party registration in a timely manner via training NEBE staff on new election law (pertaining to political party registration); engaging firm for development and training on candidate registration database, and/or engaging firm for development and training on observer database.

Output 3: Enhanced liaison NEBE-external groups/stakeholders in an inclusive and responsive electoral process

The credibility of NEBE is also dependent on its relations with the different electoral stakeholders such as political parties, civil society organisations (CSOs), the voting population and the media. Enhancing the liaison NEBE-external groups is expected to lead to a more inclusive process and broader participation. This, in turn, would allow NEBE to be more responsive to demands and expectations, including in dealing with electoral disputes.

Indicative activities:

- Assistance for the set-up of consultation platforms with political parties, CSOs and media.
- Facilitation of NEBE's dialogue with civil society organisations, especially with women's and youth groups, organisation representing persons with disabilities, and traditional and religious leaders.
- Developing and supporting implementation of a gender policy and action plan to be included in the communication plan.
- Setting up of an inter-agency committee on voter education programming, paying special attention to the needs of persons with disabilities, people living in remote areas, etc..
- NEBE to negotiate airtime for voter and civic education messages.
- Organise stakeholder events at the national and regional levels to announce the start of campaign season and communicate key timeline and rules of engagement.
- Roll out voter and civic education in all the regions of Ethiopia.
- Create database and adopt tools to effectively engage and communicate with political parties.
- Organisation of rallies and market outreach activities in all the regions of Ethiopia.
- Support for the registration and accreditation of domestic and international observers.

- Support to electoral dispute settlement and framework of the legal dispute resolution.
- Capacity building for Judiciary to process complaints and challenges resolution for political party registration.
- Training of judges and others stakeholders on electoral dispute resolution (EDR) and alternative dispute resolutions (ADR) mechanisms.

Output 4 Lessons learnt from the 2020 general elections are brought to an inclusive 2025 elections strategic planning

International and local stakeholders engage to develop and implement improved gender responsive and rights based strategic plans towards 2025.

Indicative activities:

- Systematisation of the recommendations from different domestic and international observation missions to the 2020 general elections, with particular consideration of the EU EOM recommendations.
- Organisation of consultative fora and reflective sessions to understand the lessons learnt from the 2020 general elections, taking EOM recommendations under consideration.
- Support the role of CSOs and National Human Rights Institution in promoting electoral rights through advocacy campaigns.
- Support for the organisation of workshops with political parties, CSOs, religious and traditional leaders, persons with disabilities, women and youth groups, disabled persons' organisations, etc. to identify gaps in the 2020 general elections and propose specific action plans.
- Development of NEBE strategic planning for the inter-election period, leveraging best practices from African and global contexts.
- Support for the revision of the legal framework including for electoral dispute resolution, political party functioning and financing, campaign financing, legislation for local elections, legislation for national referenda.
- Support for drafting legislative amendment proposals based on observers' recommendations.
- Support for planning of storing management and improving capacity for in-between elections management.
- Support for the planning of long-term human resource management strategies, capacity building/ trainings strategies, communications strategies, civic and voter education strategies, etc.
- Mainstreaming gender and human rights concerns by integrating gender-responsive rights-based approach within the NEBE policies and strategies.

The action will provide a phased support to the electoral process/ transition to democracy following the electoral cycle approach. Activities related to outputs 1, 2 and 3 will be implemented in a first phase as an immediate support for the general elections 2020. Activities related to output 4 will be implemented in a second phase to support post general election 2020.

4.2 Intervention Logic

The EU is the only donor considering a longer-term support to the electoral process/ transition to democracy following the electoral cycle approach. Thus, in line with international recommendations, the EU Delegation proposes a 60-month (5 year) intervention divided into

two phases to cover a full electoral cycle, each phase contributing to the same overall and specific objectives

The *first phase* (36 months) will look into the immediate support towards the 2020 general elections. In this phase the EU would support both the capacity of the electoral administration (leadership, management, logistics and operations) and the relations/ outreach of the electoral administration towards the Ethiopian citizens. The assumption behind is that improving the technical capacity of the NEBE and strengthening the public confidence/ trust/ credibility on the electoral process are mutually reinforcing elements.

A technically robust, inclusive and responsive electoral process will be perceived as a credible, effective and transparent process. It will thus contribute to a free and fair democratic electoral process overall, which is essential for democratisation, rule of law and respect for human rights. All these being themselves key to stability and peace in the country.

Some of the external assumptions and contextual factors that explain why and how the action is likely to generate results are, for example: the new reform agenda leading to the establishment of a new NEBE (with an independently appointed Board); the opening of the political space following the return of opposition parties and the establishment of an Ethiopian Political Parties Dialogue towards a consolidated transition process; legal and judicial reforms more responsive to citizen's participation and a new enabling environment for civil society engagement.

A *mid-term evaluation of phase 1* will be conducted. The EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) potential report and recommendations, other observations reports (domestic and international) and potential capacity needs evaluations, plus reports from the other interventions comprising the "EU democratic package" would be used to define priorities and activities for the second phase (24 months), knowing that local elections and referenda are likely to be organised after 2020 and that the post-election might require the revision of the legal framework and an strategic approach to the way of doing business.

Thus, the *second phase* (24 months) would focus on the lessons learnt from the 2020 general elections and engage international and local stakeholders to support the development and implementation of gender responsive and rights based strategic plans towards 2025. These lessons learnt would be used to develop and/or revisit the legal framework, the operational planning, the internal capacity of NEBE's management and staff (including its training needs), the civic and voter education and citizen's' outreach strategies, etc.

4.3 Mainstreaming

This action covers some of the basic human rights at play during electoral processes including freedom of speech, freedom expression and of the press; freedom of assembly and association; and the right to due judicial process (in cases of disputes).

Elections do not equate to democracy but they are an essential step in the democratisation process and an important element in the full enjoyment of a wide range of human rights. Elections are human rights events for two reasons. Firstly, because they give voice to the political will of the people. Secondly because to be truly free and fair they must be conducted in an atmosphere which is respectful of human rights. The right to take part in government directly or through freely chosen representatives is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of

Human Rights (article 21.1) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (article 25):

The UDHR and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) also establish fundamental freedoms which relate to elections and the wider electoral environment.

Other universal human rights treaties provide additional standards for electoral processes and the wider environment in which they take place. They include: the International Covenant on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) (1966); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979); the Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities (CRPD) (2006). In addition, several provisions of the UN Convention against Corruption (2003) are relevant for the election process, in particular, as regards transparency and political finance.

The principal regional instruments for elections are the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007) and the African Union Declaration on Principles Governing Democratic Elections (2007).

Elections can not only legitimise political authority and promote governance, but can also play a vital role in a society as a mechanism to regulate internal conflict and contribute to reconciliation and to the achievement of peace. However, they can also fuel previous conflicts and generate new ones. That is why the action mainstreams a conflict sensitive approach as a way, not only to understand the context in which it operates, but also the interaction between the intervention and the context in order to anticipate and act upon it to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts. The main way to prevent election related conflicts and violence proposed is via focusing on the development of leadership and conflict management skills for all electoral stakeholders.

The action also foresees promoting gender mainstreaming in electoral activities apart from specific activities intended to improve the legal framework from a gender-sensitive perspective and increase female participation in the electoral processes as voters, candidates, electoral administrators and observers.

In conclusion, the action is designed following the principles of a rights-based approach (ensuring all rights are applied, promoting participation and access to the decision making process, fostering non-discrimination and equal access, encouraging accountability and access to the rule of law, and transparency and access to information). This is reflected in the definition of its overall and specific objectives, expected results and tentative activities. Overall, the action contributes to strengthening the capacities of rights-holders to make their claims (with special attention to those traditionally disenfranchised from the political and electoral processes, i.e. women, youth and persons with disabilities) and of duty-bearers to meet their obligations.

4. 4 Contribution to SDGs

This intervention is relevant for the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It contributes primarily to the progressive achievement of ***SDG 16 "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions"*** to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

This action contributes to SDG 16 by focusing on developing the capacity of the electoral management board; engaging citizens in the political life and especially promoting the political participation of those at risk of being left behind (women, youth); empowering women as political actors and leaders; promoting electoral dialogue between parties; supporting civic and voter education; promoting democratic values, institutions and processes; supporting Ethiopian efforts to ensure the integrity and freedom of inclusive and peaceful electoral processes, among others.

The action also contributes to *SDG 5 "Gender equality"* to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Financing agreement

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

5.2 Indicative implementation period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 4 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is **72 months** from the date of entry into force of the financing agreement.

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

5.3 Implementation of the budget support component

N/A.

5.4 Implementation modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures²².

The proposed implementation modality relies on a dual approach:

- i. a direct grant to the European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES) for the implementation of phase 1 of the action (36 months) for immediate support to the 2020 general elections, and
- ii. a grant resulting from a call for proposals for the implementation of phase 2 of the action (24 months) for the follow-up of lessons learnt and recommendations post-elections and strategic planning towards 2025.

²² www.sanctionsmap.eu Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

5.4.1 Grants: (direct management)

Phase 1 of the action:

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

To contribute to effective electoral management and leadership in Ethiopia as key factors in achieving free, fair, credible and inclusive democratic electoral processes. Phase 1 would specifically deal with activities related to outputs 1, 2 and 3 mentioned above.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

N/A.

(c) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to the European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES). ECES is a not for profit private foundation headquartered in Brussels with a global remit. It promotes sustainable democratic development through the provision of advisory services, operational support and management of large projects in the electoral and democracy assistance field. ECES is a member of the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) and is part of its Board of Directors. EPD is the most important network of European civil and political society organisations working on democracy assistance.

Also, there are a series of elements that were positively assessed regarding ECES involvement as implementing partner in the action, namely:

- i) Its substantive experience from implementing EU and EU MS-funded projects in support of electoral processes ;
- ii) Its approach strategy: 'A European Response to Electoral Cycles Support' (EURECS), which is consistent with European values and EU policies, in line with international standards, commitments and obligations; and based on the idea that elections are long-term processes;
- iii) An approach that builds on the recommendations of EU Electoral Observation Missions (in Ethiopia, in 2005 and 2010);
- iv) It is experienced in support of democratic and electoral processes with a strong South-South and national ownership-oriented approach;
- v) The guarantee for full EU visibility in accordance with the EUs visibility guidelines, but, more importantly, full involvement of the EU in decision-making allowing for a full EU identity of the assistance that can leverage the electoral policy and political dialogue.

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because Ethiopia is in a crisis situation in accordance with Article 195(a) of the Financial Regulation and Article 72 of the Cotonou Agreement and provided that the crisis declaration still applies at the moment the grant is awarded. While major progress has been made in terms of human rights, media and peace with Eritrea, Ethiopia remains beset by political factionalism and intercommunal violence related to political, ethnic, border, and land issues in many locations across the country. Inter-ethnic clashes in several areas have led to the internal displacement of 3.2 million people. In 2019, 8.6 million people are in need of humanitarian support.

5.4.2 Grants: (direct management)

Phase 2 of the action:

(a) Purpose of the grant

To contribute to effective electoral management and leadership in Ethiopia as key factors in achieving free, fair, credible and inclusive democratic electoral processes. Phase 2 would specifically deal with activities related to output 4 mentioned above.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

For the identification of the implementing partner responsible for phase 2 of the action, the Delegation will launch a **call for proposals** to identify the most suitable organisation. The call is expected to be launched within a year after the 2020 general elections and be informed by evaluations/ reports / lessons learnt from that exercise. The eligibility criteria of potential applicants would be defined in the guidelines of the call but are expected to include: be a legal person, be non-profit-making and be a specific type of organisation (public bodies, international organisations, foundations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), etc.) with proven experience in the provision of technical assistance and support to post-electoral processes, especially in transitioning countries and the African continent.

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 on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of products and services in the markets of the countries concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult.

5.6 Indicative budget

	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
5.4.1 Grant (direct award) (including Communication and visibility)	7 000 000
5.4.2 Grant (call for proposals) (including Communication and visibility)	2 800 000
5.9 Evaluation, 5.10 Audit	200 000
Total	10 000 000

5.7 Organisational set-up and responsibilities

A Programme Steering Committee (PSC) will be constituted as platform for overall coordination, guidance, oversight and review of progress of activities and will aim at harnessing synergies with similar interventions. The Steering Committee will be chaired by representatives of the NEBE, the implementing partner and of the Delegation of the European

Union to Ethiopia. The PSC shall meet bi-annually unless otherwise agreed by the three parties.

An overall governance arrangement is currently being discussed among NEBE, official electoral stakeholders (Supreme Court, Ministry of Peace, Attorney General Office, etc.) and the three main international partners (UN, USAID and EU) for the potential establishment of a National Steering Committee as a national policy/ decision-making and coordination platform for the overall electoral process.

5.8 Performance and Results monitoring and reporting

Monitoring by the EU with regular contact with the implementing partner and frequent field visits by the task manager. Joint missions with international partners providing similar assistance will be encouraged to promote coordination and synergies. Without strengthened monitoring mechanisms, the necessary risk management as outlined above cannot be successful. Existing objectively verifiable indicators (OVIs) include those developed within present frameworks, while additional ones will be identified by project implementers in conjunction with the EU.

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

Any monitoring and evaluation will be gender-sensitive, assess gender equality results and implementation of rights-based approach working method principles (participation, non-discrimination, accountability and transparency) in terms of implementation of the project and project outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation will be based on indicators that are disaggregated by a minimum sex and age. In order to monitor development and inequalities data/indicators will be disaggregated even further including disability, location urban/rural, group etc. when applicable. Key stakeholders will be involved in the monitoring process.

Reports shall be laid out in such a way as to allow monitoring of the means envisaged and employed and of the budget details for the action. The final report, narrative and financial, will cover the entire period of the action implementation.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

5.9 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a mid-term and final evaluations will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission and in association with the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia.

The mid-term evaluation will be carried out for learning purposes in particular with respect to compiling international electoral observations' recommendations. These would be used to adapt the overall project strategy and define the activities and work plans for phase 2 of the action. The mid-term evaluation is expected to inform also the call for proposals for the identification of the implementing partner for phase 2.

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

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 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.

Evaluation services may be contracted under a framework contract.

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.

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

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.

Communication and visibility will be implemented under the budget foreseen for grants (5.4.1 and 5.4.2).

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

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

APPENDIX - INDICATIVE LOGFRAME MATRIX (FOR PROJECT MODALITY) ²³

	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicative indicators (at least one indicator per expected result)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact (Overall Objective)	To contribute to Ethiopia's stability, peace and prosperity,.	1. Ethiopia's performance/score/ ranking in democracy and human rights indices. 2. Rule of Law score**	1 Human Rights Watch (HRW) report. 2. Database and reports from World Bank Worldwide Governance indicators (WGI) project	Not applicable
Outcome(s) (Specific Objective(s))	More effective electoral management and leadership in Ethiopia over the 2020-2025 electoral cycle	1. Number of citizens registered in electoral rolls as a proportion of those with the right to vote, disaggregated by sex and age (and pertinence to minority groups like IDP). 2. Number of citizens effectively participating of the elections in comparison with those registered in the electoral rolls, disaggregated by sex and age (and pertinence to minority groups?). 3. Timeliness of the public	1 and 2. NEBE reports on citizens' participation on elections 3. NEBE report on elections	The electoral cycle will be maintained following the Constitutional provisions for the organisation of elections every five years with the closest exercise to date scheduled for May 2020. The preparation and conduct of elections among IDPs and other

²³ Mark indicators aligned with the relevant programming document mark with '*' and indicators aligned to the EU Results Framework with '**'.

		<p>declaration of election results.</p> <p>4. Political parties' members perception of 'fair elections' understood as equal right to contest the elections, campaign for voter support and hold meetings and rallies.</p> <p>5. Number of verified electoral disputes/complaints/ cases raised and receiving timely treatment.</p> <p>6. Presence of a competitive, multi-party political system.</p>	<p>results</p> <p>4.1 Surveys / interviews with members of political parties. 4.2 Political parties' reports.</p> <p>5.1 NEBE and judiciary reports on EDR 5.2 Political parties reports 5.3 Media reports.</p> <p>6. Annual and ad hoc reports from human rights and other organisations: i.e.: Freedom in the World report, The Economist Intelligence Unit's index of democracy, Human Rights Watch report; International Federation of Journalists reports, Human Rights and Democracy in the World reports (EU), Human Rights and Democracy Reports (FCO UK), Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports (US State Dept.), World Governance Index (WG and Forum for a new World Governance), Reporters Without Borders' (RSF) Press</p>	<p>conflict-affected areas is completed successfully and sufficiently so that major sections of the electorate are not disenfranchised.</p>
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			Freedom Index, etc.	
Outputs	Output 1. Increased leadership and strategic management capacity of NEBE in conducting transparent and accountable electoral process	<p>1.1 Status of development and implementation of NEBE's strategic and operational plan</p> <p>1.2 Joint Election Operation Centre established, operational and coordinated by NEBE.</p> <p>1.3 Level of effective publication of a clear electoral calendar, polling station lists, constituency lists, lists of registered voters, information on public financing of election campaigns, exact procedures and arrangements for minority constituencies, etc.</p> <p>1.4 Independent Electoral Management Board enabled to perform core functions for the realisation of democratic elections and improved transparency, accountability, participation/inclusiveness representation, and gender equality in electoral processes.</p>	<p>1.1 to 1.4 NEBE's performance reports, Media reports and NEBE reports</p> <p>1.2 Readiness Index (IFES) and reports from EMSC (EU)</p> <p>1.3 Reports from EOMs (EU and others, international and domestic)</p>	<p>The Government leadership will continue to push for and can achieve a sufficient level of comprehensive and appropriate reform relevant to successful elections.</p> <p>The Government provides high-priority levels of human and financial resources as well as political capital to a strengthened NEBE and rest of the electoral machinery.</p>

	Output 2: Increased institutional and technical capacity of NEBE in conducting credible electoral processes.	<p>2.1 Number of trained staff (NEBE staff and polling station staff) in comparison with the previous elections (2015).</p> <p>2.2 Quality of the legal framework for political parties, including their registration and functioning.</p> <p>2.3 Status of pre-election preparation according to Readiness Index (IFES)</p> <p>2.4 Number of reported incidents of violence during the election period.</p>		The Government provides high-priority levels of human and financial resources as well as political capital to a strengthened NEBE and rest of the electoral machinery.
	Output 3: Enhanced liaison NEBE-external groups in an inclusive and responsive electoral process	<p>3.1 Significant public access of major political parties to the electorate through the media and through generally open political campaigning.</p> <p>3.2 Degree of alignment of EDR framework line with relevant legislations, ensuring equal access of voters and candidates to EDR mechanisms</p> <p>3.3 Number of political parties registered.</p>		The Government and major domestic actors (PMO, NEBE, security actors, political parties, media, civil society) continue to be open to external support and can effectively absorb, to albeit incomplete yet sufficient degree, the intense capacity building and cultural shift requirements towards democratisation.

		<p>3.4 Number of observers (domestic and international) accredited by NEBE.</p> <p>3.5 Proportion of women and members of minorities as polling staff.</p>		
Outputs	Output 4: Lessons learnt from the 2020 general elections are brought to an inclusive 2025 elections strategic planning	<p>4.1 Number and quality of strategies developed towards 2025.</p> <p>4.2 Status of implementation of recommendations of the Election Observation Mission (EOM).</p>	<p>4.1 NEBE's performance reports</p> <p>4.2 EU EOM reports and potential mission follow-up reports</p>	<p>The electoral cycle will be maintained following the Constitutional provisions for the organisation of elections every five years.</p> <p>Domestic and international observers will be allowed to monitor the elections and present their reports and recommendations which, in turn, would inform a longer-term strategy for the EU intervention.</p>