



# EU ROADMAP FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY IN SIERRA LEONE FOR THE PERIOD 2021 - 2023

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Status:** public

**Date of approval:** August 2021

**Update of a previous RM:** Y

**Part of the Joint Strategy?** N

**Approved by** (list of MS and possibly other donors endorsing the RM): IRELAND, GERMANY, FRANCE



# PART I – BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEXT AND PAST EU ENGAGEMENT

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## A. THE STATE OF CIVIL SOCIETY: BRIEF UPDATE ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

### Brief Context Analysis:

Sierra Leone faces complex, interlinked and persistent development challenges. It is a fragile country and recovery after the civil war 1991 – 2002 was set back by several external shocks (Ebola, iron ore price slump, and recently Covid 19). The vast majority of its population is still facing dire socio-economic conditions as illustrated by the 2020 Human Development Index of 184/189.

Sierra Leone is a constitutional republic with a directly elected President who is both Head of State and Head of Government. Since the end of the civil war in 2002, Sierra Leone has held three multi-party elections, the latest in 2018 that led to an alternation of power. The next Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Council elections are foreseen in 2023.

President Bio has embraced a progressive human rights agenda and has taken important initiatives to pursue this agenda. Though weak, the media can operate relatively freely and civil society has an important voice. The abolition of the death penalty in 2021, and the scrapping of criminal libel provisions in 2020 were important achievements. However, the political tensions that marked the last electoral cycle continue to dominate the political and public space. There remains a discrepancy between the Government's declared ambition to pursue inclusive policies and its political behaviour. Opportunities to strengthen democratic oversight and accountability functions have not been seized. Lack of independence of the judiciary and weak access to justice weigh on the rule of law.

Overall, 2020-2021 have been marked by increased polarisation of the political space, violent riots and incidents which were met with police heavy-handedness. Both opposition and civil society denounced abuse by security forces, unlawful and arbitrary detentions and obstruction of democratic expression.

The legal and regulatory framework for CSOs has evolved in an over restrictive way and has the potential to restrict the operating environment for NGO. Government efforts to institutionalise engagement with civil society have not been meaningful or comprehensive.

Persistent inequalities, poverty, poor service delivery and weak social protection continue to be important drivers of fragility. Youth unemployment and underemployment pose a threat to social cohesion and youth are often instrumentalised by the political elite to perpetrate violence. Gender inequality is entrenched in all spheres of social, economic, and political life. Although the government has identified the high prevalence of violence against women and girls as a key challenge in its National Development Plan, gender based violence remains very high in Sierra Leone with rape cases involving infants. Sierra Leone also continues to have one of the highest FGM rates in Africa. Child marriage and teenage pregnancy are commonplace.

Positively, a progressive Gender Policy was adopted in 2020 and an ambitious Affirmative Action Bill was adopted by cabinet in July 2021, opening up opportunities for enhanced gender equality and space for women in decision making, and guarantees for victims of sexual violence in line with international human rights standards.

The Government's top priority is to improve equitable access to quality education which for now remain extremely low and is disproportionately affecting girls.

The Government has rekindled the Constitutional Review Process that was started but not concluded under the previous Government, with a more ambitious and progressive agenda. Commitment has also been made towards the review of the legal and regulatory framework for engagement with Non-Governmental Organizations. Key will be to create transparency around these processes and to engage constructively with key stakeholders, in order to build the necessary momentum and consensus to make substantive progress on the democratisation and human rights agenda.

In this context, the political and operational strategic priorities for engagement with Civil Society Organisations action over the period 2021-2024 are:

**PRIORITY 1.** The EU contributes to an enabling environment for Civil Society actors in Sierra Leone, with a particular emphasis on the legal framework, dialogue and coordination.

**PRIORITY 2.** The EU promotes an enhanced participation of Civil Society, youth groups, faith-based organisations, women and disability organisations in the public space, emphasising the local level, where windows of opportunity exist for enhanced engagement with national and local authorities

**PRIORITY 3.** The EU encourages an enhanced capacity of Sierra Leonean CSOs in order to become more relevant, effective and legitimate actors in their engagement on democratic governance and sustainable development, with particular emphasis on gender issues (GBV and women's participation), youth and environment.

#### **A1. Enabling environment for CSOs in Sierra Leone : brief update on development**

CSOs operate in a relatively free space. There is no systematic threat on Civil Society Organisation and Human Rights Defenders (HRDs); the Government of Sierra Leone has not actively clamped-down or de-registered NGOs, but on a case by case basis there have been occurrences of intimidation and the legal and regulatory framework for civil society has evolved over time in a restrictive way, with limited safeguards to protect the space for civil society.

The 2017 revision of the NGO Policy imposed stricter requirements for NGOs and community-based organisations, such as aligning their activities with the government's development policy. All NGOs are since, required to register with the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, which has the power to scrutinise organisations' financial information and operations, contrary to the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders

The 2019 Development Cooperation Framework (DCF), and subsequent regulatory framework adopted by the Government of Sierra Leone, appears to retain a significant number of restrictive provisions from the NGO policy, which have the potential to heighten the threats against CSOs and erode the exercise of the right to freedom of expression and association in the country. The DCF introduces limiting measures such as restrictive eligibility criteria, burdensome registration process and limits operational areas, including the mandatory signing of Service Level Agreement (SLA) with all relevant Ministries Departments and Agencies as a precondition for registration. Registering CSOs has become increasingly cumbersome, costly and time-consuming, particularly for smaller CSOs based outside the capital city. These cumbersome procedures are seen by CSOs as an obstacle, as they favour control over facilitation of civil society activities, contribute to maintaining, and even deepening, gaps of administrative influence where corrupt practices occur. Moreover, the administrative process under the proposed DCF could conflict with donors' grant management processes or cause significant delays,

potentially affecting the amount of development assistance available to Sierra Leoneans.

Development Partners have particular concerns about how the DCF and regulatory framework could affect Civil Society Organisations and NGOs whose primary purpose is advocacy. Some NGOs have indicated to Development Partners that they will not be able to adhere to the requirements of the Service-Level Agreements as currently presented, and therefore that they will be unable register under the DCF. This could have significant implications for the overall level of development assistance to Sierra Leone, and more importantly on democratisation, as these organisations form an important part of Sierra Leone's democracy and have a vital role in promoting institutional accountability.

The adoption in October 2020 of a highly controversial un-negotiated Labour Bill, which imposes drastic changes in employment conditions, has further raised the operating challenges for CSOs and tensions with the State Authorities.

Lack of independence of supreme democratic and accountability institutions also weights on the space for CSOs. The Parliament and Anti-Corruption Commission have increasingly targeted CSOs and exercised their oversight functions in ways that have been denounced as unproportioned and unhelpful.

Civil society also denounced abuse by security forces, unlawful and arbitrary detentions and obstruction of democratic expression.

Legal safeguards to civil society activists and human rights defenders are limited and not in conformity with UN Declarations and Guiding principles. Notably Sierra Leone has not adopted a national law on the protection of Human Rights Defenders, nor has it adopted laws and measures to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and fully guarantee the protection of defenders working on issues related to land and environmental rights.

Positively Sierra Leone, in July 2020, repealed Part V of the Public Order Act to expunge the crime of seditious libel and decriminalise defamation, opening the space for freedom of expression and association. Seditious libel provisions had been in force since 1965 and were used by successive governments to clamp down on political opponents and muzzle or arrest civil society activists.

The UN Human Rights Council Universal Period Review reviewed Sierra Leone human rights records in May 2021. On the occasion a high number of UN members states and CSOs have called on Sierra Leone to review the NGOs Policy and Development Cooperation Framework and refrain from adopting policies and regulations that de rule or de facto restrict CSOs or interfere with their financial autonomy and independence of action. Commitments were made on the part of the Government of Sierra Leone to implement the UPR recommendations.

Positively, further to EU/MS high level engagement and advocacy (infra item 2.B1) the Government has de facto put on hold some of the most controversial requirements under the DCF and Labour Act - in particular the strict budgetary thresholds, the requirement for re-registration of NGOs and salary revision - and some workable arrangement, albeit ad-hoc and not-transparent, has been agreed with CSOs.

## A2. Participation of Civil Society in public space

Participation of Civil Society in public space is relatively limited, hindered by institutional and capacity constraints on both part of the State and Non State parties.

The institutional framework for multi-stakeholders dialogue and monitoring established under the Mid-Term National Development Plan 2018-2023 is largely ineffective and Government efforts to institutionalise engagement with civil society have not been meaningful nor comprehensive. There remains a discrepancy between the Government's declared ambition to pursue inclusive policies and its political behaviour. It is meanwhile to be noted that many CSOs also play into the divisive political environment with little transparency over their constituent basis.

Since the adoption of the Mid Term Development Plain in 2018, there has been a rise in Governmental consultations with CSOs. However, these tend to be ad-hoc, unstructured, ill prepared, not fully inclusive, with Civil society representatives being often handpicked by the government and it is uncertain whether Civil society inputs are followed up and have a real impact.

Positively however, President Bio made strong commitment in 2020 towards enhanced dialogue with Civil Society and a formal structure was set up in July 2020 under the leadership of Sierra Leones Vice-President, Dr Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, to enhance dialogue with civil society organisations on governance issues. Albeit the ambition was to establish a permanent dialogue structure, High-level consultations with CSOs were convened only once, in October 2020, to debate specifically accountability of COVID-19 related public expenditure.

Also positively, the government has increasingly allowed space for civil society organisations to express their opinion in the review of critical governance reforms, most notably on decentralisation and electoral legal reforms. The Statutory membership of the national umbrella organisations National Election Watch (NEW – counting 400 members) and Campaign for Good Governance in the National Task Force for implementation of Electoral Observation Mission recommendations, and decentralisation policy review Task Force, and their significant inputs are definite progress to be recognised and build upon.

In addition, we see increased engagement of CSOs in local participatory processes and in Parliamentary work. With support from EU/MS and development partners CSOs participation in the formulation/implementation/oversight of national and district development plans is increasing. CSO-led Surveys and initiatives such as the Afro-barometer Survey, the District Level performance scorecards or Budget review spearheaded by national NGOs such as the Institute for Governance Reform, Action Aid and the Budget Advocacy network are increasingly gaining strength and attention, here included by the Parliamentary Oversight Committees.

However, substantial capacity constraints continue hindering the potential for CSO engagement and impact in public space. Most CSOs do not have the required skills and resources to follow their proposals down to adoption and implementation. Moreover, the fragmentation and lack of representativeness of CSOs makes it difficult for CSOs to aggregate concerns and speak with one coordinated and legitimate voice, and makes it equally difficult for Government and EU-Development partners to establish a structured dialogue with civil society.

### A3. Landscape and capacity of CSOs

The civil society landscape in Sierra Leone is rather vibrant, with a long history of activism, from championing independence during the colonial period to playing a critical role in the country's transition from dictatorship and war to peace and democracy. Civil society organisations (CSOs) were a driving force behind the Lomé Peace Accord and the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Since then, they have multiplied and diversified their roles with the direct support of development partners. They have also demonstrated their essential functions during recent periods of hardship, by filling gaps in the provision of public services, in the absence of a functioning public sector.

However, landscape and capacity greatly varies whether one looks at international NGOs or national CSOs. Whilst International NGOs are relatively strong, well-staffed and have established effective coordination mechanism, Sierra Leonean CSOs face several capacity constraints which hinder their capacity to perform their roles, spanning from limited financial and human resources, weak research and evidence-based advocacy capacity, weak (or non-existent) organisational governance, accountability and representativeness. Most national CSOs lack human capacity below the top management, have personalised management structure with limited formalised management and internal control systems. There is little evidence of strategic planning, annual budgeting and financial control systems.

The lack of strong evidence-based advocacy skills, effective information & research as well as limited technical expertise and representativeness within CSOs to back up their claims, works to the detriment of CSOs, making it easier for the GoSL to dismiss CSOs positions and advocacy.

Financial foundations of most national CSOs are very weak and dependent to external donors funding. Lack of State-led grant schemes, limited donor presence and funding opportunities in country, weak fundraising skills and failure to meet donors' eligibility requirements in terms of operational, financial capacity and accountability hinder CSOs capacity to access sustainable funding streams. Albeit on the raise, direct funding from traditional donors to Sierra Leonean CSOs is limited, as most DPs continue to channel the majority of their funds through INGOs. Most CSOs rely on project-based funding from external donors, most often as sub-contractor of International NGOs-led programmes. To the best of our knowledge there is no core funding to national NGOs for long-term strategic planning/implementation.

Most CSOs, particularly those based outside of the capital, struggle to secure funding for their work, have a financially unsustainable base, limiting their ability to retain staff, plan and implement their work, develop specialisation or increase the scale and scope of their operations. Faced by the risk of ceasing operations many CSOs tend to prioritize the search for funds over their strategic priorities.

As a result, the civil society "sector" is weak, highly donor-dependent and fragmented; characterized by piece-meal and short-term interventions, changes of mandates and priorities, as donor funding priorities evolve, high staff turnover rates, loss of institutional knowledge and a lack of progress in developing CSO movements.

With few exceptions of networks and umbrella organisations, coordination amongst CSOs is very weak, hampered by the competition for funds. The Sierra Leone Association of NGOs (SLANGO) does not fulfil its mission to support coordination and joint advocacy of its member NGOs. It came under heighten criticism at the time of the formulation of the policy, legal and regulatory framework for CSOs and Labour Law, as it failed to seek, convey and represent CSOs interests. Confronted with increasing questioning from its constituencies, it also faces their resistance to adhere to a common Code of Conduct. Other CSOs networks and umbrella organisations exist, either issue or sector-based, but are most often results of donor intervention.

Whilst these issues affect all CSOs, the impact on organisations that work towards gender equality is reportedly even more pronounced. Women rights' organisations tend to be proportionally weaker under-resourced and lack the capacity, the networks and the understanding around 'donor language' to be able to access long-term donor funding that would enable them to advance the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda. Women's CSOs work to shift deeply entrenched gender norms and practice. The changes needed are complex, long-term in nature and are hard to measure. Women's CSOs are committed to measuring impact but they need capacity building and the time and human resources required to be adequately reflected in funding agreements. The shift from long-term and 'core' funding for national organisations to short-term, project-based funding channeled through INGOs has been detrimental to the ability of women's organisations to secure socially transformative outcomes. There is an overall lack of coordination of the women's sector and there are relatively few formal spaces for women's organisations to engage directly with the government.

CSOs presence and capacity seems to be also very weak in the environmental sector. In a country characterised by rapid population growth and urbanisation, adverse impact of climate change, poor governance and fast depletion of natural resources (deforestation, rapid loss of mangrove and marine eco-systems, wildlife and biodiversity), it is highly regrettable to note the quasi-total absence of specialised CSOs and environmental activism.

Finally, the COVID19 crisis has also fast re-shaped the landscape. The scale of the health, social and economic crisis, the requisite to quickly respond to urgent emerging needs in a context marked by lack of resources, high competition and poor coordination has considerably escalated underlying divides and tensions, between national and local authorities, between state and non-state parties, between international and national NGOs.

In Sierra Leone, as elsewhere in the world, there has been a surge in humanitarian aid and a rapid shift towards a top-down humanitarian logic. Indeed, with the COVID 19 pandemic, significant amounts of foreign aid have been mobilised and mostly channelled through International NGOs, with national CSOs most often sub-contracted to support service provision/preparedness and response. Some critics have pointed to the adverse effects of this in the implementation of longer-term development strategies, but more positively the crisis has also proved the critical role international/national NGOs/faith based organisations play in development, awareness building and provision of services and the positive impact of collaborative approaches and DP engagement to de-escalate tension, support to comprehensive multi-stakeholders' interventions, effective service delivery, social cohesion and accountability (infra item 2.B1).

## B. LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE PAST ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs

### B.1 Lessons learnt from the EU engagement with Civil Society

#### *1. Overview and lessons learnt from EU financial support to Civil Society in Sierra Leone*

The European Union (EU) and its Member States have a long-standing relationship with civil society organizations (CSOs) in Sierra Leone. Their role and contribution as development partners and agenda for change is fully recognized and the contribution to CSOs and Non State Actors' capacity building and action is rather substantial.

As of July 2021 the **projects portfolio of the EU Delegation alone includes thirty eight (38) ongoing action grants with Non State Actors (INGOs, NNGOs, Research Institutes/Universities) totaling an overall EU contribution of over 45 Million Euros**. These are funded under either the EU Budget instrument in support to CSOs-Local Authorities the European Initiative for Human Rights and Democracy, or the 11 European Development Fund – national programmes. A synthesis of all EU ongoing partnerships with Non State Actors is provided under Annex II hereafter.

Additional resources are availed by EU Member States under their bilateral cooperation programmes.

MS/EU support towards CSOS is rather comprehensive and multifaceted. It aims at supporting provision of critical social services, food security, access to water, energy, income generating activities to marginalized segments in society as well as social accountability and democratization. Since 2020 it has been further strengthened and partially repurposed to respond to the new needs engendered by the COVID19 pandemic.

The EU support is aligned with the principles and priorities set forth in the *EU Road map for engagement with Civil society organisations in Sierra Leone, the EU Human Rights Strategy 2018-2020, the Gender Action Plan and 11EDF national indicative programme*. It aims at supporting agriculture, diversified crop and sustainable livestock production (a focal sector under the 11 EDF NIP); effective service delivery at local level, domestic electoral observer organizations' capacities and citizens participation in democratic governance reforms leading to 2022 and 2023 electoral cycle; the fight against Gender Based Violence; promoting gender equity and women empowerment.



Ireland is also a leading player in support to gender equality and women empowerment/ fight against SGBV as well as the human right and democratization agenda. It has a long-standing history of support to women organizations and NGOs specialized in this area, as well as the media. Its project portfolio includes also substantial aid towards improved nutrition and food security, here included with NGOs.

Germany' engagement with CSOs focuses on support to vocational training, health (here included epidemiological surveillance and Sexual Health Rights and maternal health) and governance of natural resources (notably artisanal mining), in alignment with bilateral cooperation priorities and GIZ-implemented programmes funded by the European Union.

France has no bilateral cooperation programme with Sierra Leone but does support a number of CSOs-led initiatives under decentralised cooperation and multi-country programmes, notably on access to water and food security.

MS/EU financial assistance to CSOs is complemented and supplemented by substantial aid by other likeminded donors such as the United Kingdom (lead donor in the health sector and PFM, supportive of media and CSOs-led initiative in the area of economic governance, social accountability, local participatory development, access to water, land planning, waste management) USAID (active in support to CSOs-led initiatives in support to local development, democratization, water and energy) and the UNDP (democratization, peace building, support to youth and women empowerment etc).

Given the aforementioned capacity constraints faced by the majority of national CSOs, Official Development Aid is channeled mostly through international NGOs, sub-granting CSOs and CBOs. It consists mostly of 3 year action grants with very limited core-funding for longer term organizational development.

DP financial support has gradually and positively shifted from direct provision of services towards support to national and local authorities' capacity, engagement in planning and budgeting processes and social accountability.

IINGOs/NGOs still play a critical role in gap-filling and providing basic social services – notably to marginalized segments in society – but **CSOs association with and support to District Councils and Municipalities** for effective delivery of services and functions devolved to local authorities is positively on the rise. This trend, strongly promoted and supported by the European Union in line with the Communication “*Empowering Local Authorities in partner*

*countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes*” is bearing positive development outcomes and is worth strengthening in the future. In the same vein, EU support to the **Local Authority Association of Sierra Leone (LOCASL)**, and its meaningful impact on the review of the Decentralization Policy and legal framework, highlights the need and opportunities to keep investing in Local Authority Associations to strengthen advocacy, coordination and knowledge sharing among LAs, quality supervision, promotion of local development plans

Efforts have been deployed to strengthen partnerships between **CSOs and private sector**, notably in support to sustainable food systems (e.g. under the 11EDF Boost Agriculture for Food Security) and renewable energy provision. The European Union recognizes the critical role and potential for private sector engagement in development, and commits to coordinated engagement to promote an enabling business environment and partnership with local development actors (CSOs and LAs).

Partnerships with Universities and Research Institutes has been proactively sought to boost evidence-based action and advocacy, but remain very modest and to be further strengthened.

In the past, whilst the EU recognized the role **faith-based organizations and religious leaders** play in society, partnership had been rather sporadic and limited to action grants to a few International faith based IINGOs (e.g. Christian Relief Services, Trocaire, CAFOD Catholic international development charity). The COVID19 pandemic and subsequent need to rapidly outreach all segments of society, has further highlighted the potential of collaborating with FBOs in the implementation of service delivery, public awareness and social cohesion campaigns. EU/MS have increased their financial aid through faith based IINGOs (e.g. CRS, Trocaire) to support COVID19 rapid response in partnership with Local Authorities with very satisfactory outcomes. However, capacity constraints and funding eligibility requirements hinder the possibility to collaborate directly with the national inter-religious council of Sierra Leone and local faith based organizations.

EU engagement with CSOs also highlights the need to **strengthen dialogue with youth and gear more support towards youth focused CSOs and youth-associations and networks**. Youth constitute nearly half of the overall population, bear critical potential to champion reforms and promote positive change, but can be easily manipulated by political elites and become a threat to security and social cohesion. EU/Germany bilateral cooperation focus on

enhanced Technical Vocation training and job creation is a positive development but more action is needed to support youth-focused and youth-centered development, and youth driven advocacy (e.g. on environmental protection and good governance).

## *2. EU policy dialogue with and in support to Civil Society*

Over the implementation period of the previous CSOs Road map the EU (EUD/MS) actively engaged with representatives of the government and civil society to promote dialogue, de-escalate tensions. The EU encouraged a shared commitment to institute mechanisms for meaningful dialogue with a focus on addressing threats to civic space for civil society, promoting sound economic governance, democratisation, gender equality and women empowerment, improved access to justice and advocating for the abolition of the death penalty, in line with the priorities and objectives of the EU CSO Roadmap, EU Gender Action Plan and EU Human Rights and Democracy Country Strategy for Sierra Leone.

Because of the diversity of civil society actors in Sierra Leone the EU/MS have engaged at different level and in different format. Dialogue has been regular and well-structured with the representatives of the International/European NGO community in Sierra Leone, as International NGOs have successfully established an effective coordination and accountability mechanism, which enabled close engagement notably on advocacy for enabling CSOs policy, legal and regulatory environment and EU programming 2021-2024. EU/MS and like-minded partners (UK) have worked closely with the troika of the INGO Steering Committee, both at technical level - in the framework of the within the Development Partner Governance and Accountability Working Group (GAWG) - and EU Heads of Mission level. This enabled coherent and constructive engagement with the Government of Sierra Leone that led to workable arrangements on the most controversial clauses of the Labour Bill and regulatory framework for Civil Society.

The aforementioned capacity gaps and lack of coordination, representatively and accountability has hindered the establishment of a structured dialogue and coordination mechanism between DP and national CSOs. Capacity constraints and unclear organisational mandates/representativeness limit the capacity of CSOs to meaningfully take part to structured dialogue at the national and local level. Nevertheless EU engagement with national CSOs has been intense, both

in support to critical services delivery and core governance reforms.

The EU has successfully promoted the inclusion of CSOs in critical policy, legal and regulatory review processes as well as in the national response to the COVID19 pandemic. In 2020 (selected) national CSOs were formally included and could participate meaningfully in the national task forces established to monitor the implementation of the Electoral Observation Missions recommendations, the review of electoral legal framework, the review of the decentralisation policy and Local Government Act, and the District Coordination and Emergency responses structures established to prevent and respond to the COVID19 pandemic (DICOVERC).

The launch of the National high-level dialogue with Civil Society by H.E. the President Julius Maada Bio in October 2020 is testimony of this positive trend and heighten recognition of CSOs role as development partner.

Experience from past engagement highlights the benefit of joining forces with CSOs to raise voices for accountability on critical reforms. Strong CSO advocacy and cohesive EU/MS engagement have certainly contributed to some of the most important achievements and advances on the human rights and governance agenda over the recent years: notably the abolition of the death penalty; the adoption of a progressive national gender policy and Gender Affirmative Bill; the adoption of a Local Government Bill and cybercrime act that safeguards the fundamental principles of democracy and human rights; the monitoring of electoral observation mission recommendations and progress towards key electoral reforms. These important progress would not have been achieved without EU/MS continuous advocacy with Government to open up space and institute mechanisms for dialogue with CSO, EU joint advocacy with AdvocAid, Prison Watch, Amnesty International and Human Rights Defender Network to end the death penalty; the partnership with domestic observers (National Election Watch (NEW), and organization promoting good governance (e.g. Institute for Governance Reforms (IGR), CARL), gender equality and women empowerment (50-50, SEND, Eminent Women).

In the absence of structured dialogue with national CSOs, the EU engagement with local CSOs offers an example of a workable alternative, a model whereby regular dialogue is sought with umbrella organisations and lead CSOs in priority sectors.



Experience has also shown the importance of defining sector-based approaches and ensuring the real and perceived independence civil society action. For policy advocacy action to succeed it is critical that civil society action is endogenous and not perceived to respond to external agendas. Furthermore in fragile countries and state-building context, global experience has shown that while collective action and mobilisation may be suitable and feasible to oversee essential service delivery and fight corruption, action on sensitive sectors (e.g. land dispute or natural resources management) may lead to conflict and safety. Therefore, development partners must carefully assess the risks and apply the principle of 'do no harm'.

Lessons from recent EU/MS engagement with CSOs has also shown the benefit of strengthening collaboration between **CSOs and the supreme democratic institution – the Parliament** – as well as promoting **partnership between CSOs and Local Authorities in support to accountability and local participatory development**.

The collaboration between women rights activists, specialized NGOs (e.g. 50-50, SEND) and the Parliamentary Women Caucus has been instrumental in heightening the debate on women participation in decision making, promoting the formulation and adoption of a National Gender Policy in 2020 and Affirmative Gender Bill in 2021 and gender sensitive reforms in the electoral legal and regulatory framework. Collaborative approaches between EU/MS supported CSO and the Parliament – such as the presentation of public service delivery score cards, or of Budget analysis reports by specialized NGOs such as Institute for Governance Reform or Budget Advocacy Network to Parliamentary Committees – have also shown the potential of strengthening the parliamentary oversight capacity and social accountability of service delivery by national and local authorities.

As stated before (infra 1.A2) the health, social, economic crisis engendered by the COVID19 pandemic has exacerbated underlying tensions and divides between state and non-state actors, national and local authorities, international and national NGOs. The EU/MS actively engaged with representatives of the government, national and local authorities and civil society not just to support the implementation of COVID19 preparedness and response strategy but also and foremost to promote dialogue and collaborative approaches, de-escalate tensions and ensure social cohesion. The EU Heads of Mission

actively engaged with National authorities to advocate for the establishment of coordination mechanisms, increased space and resources towards Local Authorities and CSOs to ensure an effective decentralised response to the crisis.

The establishment by national authorities of the District COVID19 Emergency and Coordination Committees (DICOVERC) inclusive of national, local authorities, INGOs/NGOs is a positive outcome of EU engagement.

Also all EU/MS bilateral programmes and ongoing commitment towards CSOs have been repurposed, to different degrees, to support the preparedness and response to the COVID19 pandemic and its adverse economic and social impact.

Ireland and the European Union Delegation joined efforts under the Team Europe Initiative to fight Covid19 and actively sought to promote local participatory CSO-led response in association with Local Authorities in coherence with national preparedness and response strategy and the mandates devolved to districts and municipalities under the decentralisation strategy. A 4 million EURO coordinated operation has been fast-tracked under the EU/Ireland bilateral cooperation programmes to support CSOs led local response to COVID19. The intervention sought to promote partnership between INGO/NGOs, local and national authorities in the effective delivery of a decentralised response to the COVID19 crisis in coherence with the national strategy. It actively supported COVID19 preparedness and response and economic recovery in 13 districts out of 16 and effectively contributed towards de-escalation of tensions amongst different stakeholders.

Selected INGO/NGOs proved able not only to fill gaps in service delivery and provide rapid response to the emerging needs engendered by the COVID19 crisis on most marginal segment of society, but also to support Local authorities' role, resources and capacity in ensuring a local participatory development and locally sensitive /context-fit mitigation strategies in coherence with the national plans and protocols.

The role of the Interfaith Council and faith based organisations in outreaching communities of all faith and raise awareness, promote behavioural change and adherence to COVID19 protocols must be recognised and built upon in future programming – notably in relation to peace-building and prevention of electoral violence, fight against SGBV, FGM, environmental protection.

In the context of the COVID19 crisis, EU has also strengthen its engagement with/contribution to CSOs in support to oversight and social accountability of the COVID19 national emergency response, social cohesion and fight against disinformation and polarisation.

The positive outcome of EU engagement with CSOs highlights the following strategic priorities, going forward EUD/MS shall:

- Keep **engaging regularly with national and international NGOs**, both at technical and EU HoMs level, on sectorial priorities and broader governance reforms; regular engagement with INGO Steering Committee to be continued and dialogue with national CSOs to strengthened and structured notably in the framework of the Governance and Accountability Working Group
- Keep **advocating for the Government to meaningfully engage with development partners, NNGOs and INGOs** with a view to address threats to civic space for civil society and **substantively review and improve the DCF** for a more effective and less restrictive framework for CSOs;
- **Actively engage with representatives of the government and civil society to promote dialogue, de-escalate tensions, and** institute mechanisms for meaningful policy dialogue and social accountability, most notably on matters related to economic governance, democratisation, natural resources management, gender equality and women participation;
- Actively engage in support of **effective implementation of the national decentralisation policy and local development**: keep advocating for democratisation reforms, effective **decentralised fiscal policy and PMF practices**, increased **space and resources towards Local Authorities** to enable the implementation of the devolved functions and effective service delivery at local level; actively promote **partnership between CSOs and LAs** for enhanced local participatory development and service delivery; strengthen support towards decentralised cooperation and accountability mechanisms; **support the Local Authority Association** for enhanced advocacy, capacity building and peer review of Local Authorities
- **Promote partnership between the CSOs and Private Sector Operators**, in view to maximise efficiency, impact, job opportunities, economic growth and sustainability of operations notably in the agriculture and energy sectors.
- **Strengthen collaboration between CSOs and Parliament**, notably on evidence-based advocacy and oversight of public service delivery;
- **Strengthen engagement with Faith-based organisations** in the implementation of peace building, public awareness, edutainment or behavioral change campaigns (e.g. notably on social cohesion and prevention of electoral violence, in the end of Female Genital Mutilations, Sexual Gender Based Violence and Child Marriage);
- **Strengthen support to youth-focused networks**, and youth-centred development, notably to promote social cohesion, prevention of electoral violence, job creation, fight against SGBV and environmental protection;
- **Strengthen engagement with and support to academia and research institutes**, and partnership between these and the CSOs to strengthen evidence-based advocacy, policy making and service delivery;
- **Continue supporting Civil Society and citizens' participation for enhanced advocacy and social accountability of economic and democratic governance, promotion of human rights and implementation of service delivery in the priority sectors identified under the Team Europe Initiative (Food systems strengthening, nutrition, energy), the GAP III Country Level Implementation Plan (gender equality and women empowerment, sexual reproductive health rights, fight against SGBV, FGM and Child Marriage) and the EU Human Rights & Democracy Strategy.**

## B2. Lessons learnt from the implementation of the previous Roadmap

### 1. on support to decentralized development

One of the primary objectives of the EU CSO Roadmap for Sierra Leone, since its first version in 2014, was to support development and social accountability by enhancing capacity of local civil society actors, promoting partnership between **CSOs and Local Authorities** and **space for CSOs engagement in local governance and local development**.

When addressing issues such as climate change, growing inequalities, migration, and urbanisation, Local Authorities (LAs) are at the forefront when responding to the challenges on the ground and providing viable solutions for their communities. As the public institutions closest to citizens, local authorities are responsible for executing a mandate in line with their constituencies' needs, mainly through the provision of basic services, ensuring inclusive policy-making and inducing sustainable development.

The implementation of the CSO RM has confirmed the relevance and need to promote partnerships amongst all local actors involved in development processes. Developmental outcomes, social accountability and social cohesion are reportedly higher in the districts with well established collaboration between LAs and CSOs. Furthermore against a general trend of shrinking space for CSOs, progress and enhanced cooperation between CSOs and local authorities has been observed in the districts targeted by EU cooperation, not last in the implementation of the COVID19 response.

Local Authorities have demonstrated having a critical role to play in providing support to the public and Districts in delivering the Service and decentralisation, and CSOs can support as catalysts for change. The ability of CSO to do this effectively is linked to their ability to participate in local planning and budgeting process, promote the culture of efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in Governance and support Local Authorities in delivering services. The award of contracts to CSOs-led initiatives which requires the formal association of Local Authorities in the formulation and implementation

of the action has proved instrumental in this respect and an approach to be continued.

It was also observed that support to the Association of Local Authorities and peer learning across local authorities, with the help of CSOs/donors, is a powerful approach in constrained civic spaces, to de-escalate tensions and promote reforms in a highly polarised landscape.

### 2. on providing support/ building capacities of national CSOs and CBOs

The latest EU "Roadmap for engagement with civil society" was finalised in 2018, following a consultation of the civil society sector that enabled the EU Delegation to update its priorities for engagement and implementation modalities for the period 2018-2020.

In line with the 2012 Communication on EU Engagement with Civil Society in External Action<sup>1</sup>, it was concluded that the **grant funding shall be awarded primarily by mean of competitive procedures** (calls for proposals) targeting local CSOs.

In this vain direct award of grants by negotiated procedure has been limited to the implementation of sensitive human rights and democratisation-focused actions and the rapid response to the COVID19 crisis. The majority of EU funds have been awarded by mean of competitive procedures and a new pilot approach was introduced in 2019 which prioritised award of action-grants to local CSOs applying as lead applicants.

Two calls for proposals, valued respectively three (3) and eight (8) Million EURO were published by the EU Delegation in 2019<sup>2</sup>, to support prevention of Sexual Gender Based Violence and enhance CSOs contribution to the implementation of Local Development Plans, in line with the objectives and priorities identified under the EU CSOs Roadmap and Gender Action Plan.

1 2012 EC Communication 'The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations', URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0492:FIN:EN:PDF>

2 Preventing Sexual and Gender Based Violence against Women and Girls in Sierra Leone (EuropeAid/162644/DD/ACT/SL); Enhancing CSOs contribution to the implementation of Local Development Plans through socio-economic service delivery and public policy support in Pujehun, Kenema, Bombali and Kambia (EuropeAid/164196/DD/ACT/SL)

Whilst it is too early to assess the results and impact of the grants awarded to CSOs since the adoption of the EU CSO Roadmap, a CSO-led rapid assessment has been undertaken to take stock of challenges and lessons learnt on the pilot approach pursued under the EU CSOs Roadmap. The rapid assessment was implemented by Trocaire an Irish based faith-based organisation committed to supporting local civil society actors. Trócaire has led over the period 2018-2021 an EU-funded action aiming at supporting local CSO strengthening, involving 6 CSO as co-applicants. Furthermore Trócaire, oversees and chairs the Civil Society Strengthening Working Group in Sierra Leone, is also a co-applicant on three EU-funded actions led by local CSOs.

Trocaire's rapid assessment highlighted that whilst the EU calls for proposals have positively raised the opportunities and space for local CSOs as agents for change and actors for development, there are important lessons to be learnt for future programming as local organisations face through the development, implementation, and closure phases of an action specific challenges that may expose CSOs and the EU or other donor to unnecessary and avoidable risks and have the potential to contribute to financial and reputational damage that may compromise localised development and the capacity of the CSOs to operate.

#### The assessment highlighted the following challenges:

At Proposal Development phase: EU proposals are highly competitive, and the capacity of local CSOs to compete depends on the strength of their linkages with international actors that have successfully developed proposals in the past, or capacity to hire professionals to support with proposal development. Many local CSOs that submitted proposals to the EU in recent rounds had limited knowledge of the standards and steps for developing successful proposals.

Co-Financing: The EU typically finances between 75% and 95% of the total eligible cost of the CSO's action, with the beneficiaries providing between 25% and 5% of the total eligible cost as co-financing. This creates an unrealistic challenge for local organisations that do not possess reserves or unrestricted funds to cover the match; in practice, they must partner with an international agency that is capable of providing the match funding. In turn, international agencies have to balance allocations of unrestricted income as matched funding for their own grants, as well as local CSO-led grants, which may restrict the number of CSO-led projects that they can realistically support.

Pre-financing: Unlike many international NGOs, local CSOs in Sierra Leone do not possess reserves or unrestricted funds that will allow them to pre-finance their interventions. This will expose them and the EU to considerable financial risk, particularly if they accrue ineligible costs that they are unable to pay for at the end of an intervention. It is also unrealistic for international NGO co-applicants to assume the risk of ineligible costs incurred by a lead applicant or other local or international co-applicants.

During implementation: Lack of knowledge of EU financial and grant management procedures: local CSOs tend to be unaware of EU grant rules and regulations and required close monitoring by the donor and training. Unfortunately the travel and mission restrictions imposed by COVID19 limited the opportunities for trainings in 2020-2021, exposing CSOs to risks in terms of complying with the general conditions applicable to EU-financed grant contracts, ineligible costs or other infractions of donor compliance measures.

#### Recommendations for the design/management of grant-making mechanisms in support to Local CSOs:

EU/MS are recommended to consider the following measures to support fair access to funding opportunities by national CSOs and address the challenges and minimise the risks that local CSOs face in relation to the design, implementation, and closure of donor funded grants:

- Conduct consultations with civil society organisations and organisations supporting civil society strengthening, in Freetown and the districts, to identify the needs of civil society organisations and the role these actors can play for future funding opportunities.
- Conduct a formal scoping exercise prior to releasing the calls for proposals to consult with and assess the capacity and potential of local CSOs in Sierra Leone. This would support the development of informed and judicious eligibility criteria for the calls to ensure they are appropriate and targeted for the organisations able to apply. Identifying CSO-specific criteria and adjusting the standards of assessment will reduce local CSOs' reliance on INGOs to provide financial and/or human resource support during the proposal development and submission process. This will enable more local CSOs to lead the application process and will encourage a more tangible move towards localisation.

- Identify staggered levels of eligibility based on the scale of the action (timeframe and budget allocation); this would help to reduce the financial risk currently assumed by the CSOs, their INGO co-applicants, and the EU/MS.
- Conduct trainings in concept note and full proposal development, both in Freetown and the districts, to support increased knowledge among CSOs across Sierra Leone. This training can be outsourced, if necessary, to international actors based in Sierra Leone with experience in this area.
- Use the restricted approach (a two-phased approach to concept note and proposal development), rather than the open call procedure (single submission of both the concept note and full proposal).
- Providing more detailed feedback on applicants' funding applications will help eliminate errors in future applications.
- Eliminate the co-financing requirement for local CSOs. Financing in full, will create a more equitable environment for local CSOs to apply for EU funds, taking into account the challenges they face in terms of the lack of unrestricted funding.
- Eliminate the withholding of the 10% final payment to local organisations, so that they may complete their interventions without unnecessary delays. Local CSOs will face challenges in being able to pre-finance the final payment amount. If local organisations are not provided with full funding within a project implementation period, they will be at risk of not being able to deliver on all activities and outcomes.
- Provide timely training on grant management and general conditions to all local CSOs, with provisions made to support the participation of all co-applicants and associates. Training should be provided at the beginning of the grant period, with annual refresher trainings thereafter.
- Request annual expenditure verifications for all multi-year projects led by CSOs. This would enable the CSOs to have a more accurate understanding of ineligible expenditures incurred on an ongoing basis. This would also mitigate the EU's risk of not recovering ineligible expenditures.

However, the CSOs acute capacity constraints and challenges encountered in the implementation of the grants awarded under the two pilot calls for proposals also show the relevance to continue promoting 1) opportunities for INGOs to lead on EU grants in partnership with local CSO co-applicants, thus enabling CSOs to gain experience as co-applicants, and 2) financial support to third parties to enable grassroots or community-based organisations to access funding.

Evidence shows that when INGOs lead grants, they can support local CSOs to deliver interventions while assuming the pre-financing responsibilities, match-funding requirements, and overall financial responsibility and risk. This also allows CSOs, particularly those that have limited experience delivering donor-funds, to build up their experience and capacity prior to leading on grants. For grassroots or community-based organisations, financial support to third parties is seen as a useful modality to promote localisation, particularly for organisations that would not (and possibly never) meet the eligibility criteria for lead applicants.

Ultimately local development informed and driven by local actors is achievable when local partners have access to opportunities that centre their priorities, facilitate and promote responsible localisation, and are underpinned by the strong and active support mechanisms of international actors, such as INGOs and donors. As the movement towards localisation continues to grow, we have a collective duty to support local actors appropriately and responsibly. This includes documenting our successes and challenges and drawing from lessons learned as we go forward. Support for the efforts outlined above, therefore, shall reduce risk to both local CSOs and the development partners, and will better enable local CSOs to be compliant and deliver quality, well-managed programmes. In doing so, the EU/MS will build and promote an approach to localisation that is sustainable, maximises impact, and accelerates progress towards shared development goals.



Other lessons learnt from the implementation of the EU road Map:

- Capacity development requires an integrated approach using different instruments and frameworks in a coordinated manner, focusing not just on the technical capacity of Civil Society staff and organisations, but also on the institutional development of CSOs, their internal governance structure, their interaction with other CSOs and State institutions. CSOs need to be strengthened according to a strategic and long-term approach. Ultimately, there is a need to acknowledge and duly address the prevailing gap between the CSOs based in Freetown, the capital city and those in other parts. There is a need to strengthen local linkages between the organisations based in the capital city and those found in the rural areas.
- The EU and EU Member States should continue to prioritise capacity development, research and knowledge dissemination, networking and structuring of networks, advocacy campaigns, and mentoring opportunities for CSOs.
- The financial sustainability of most CSOs in Sierra Leone is precariously leading to piecemeal intervention and reliance

on continuous external donor funding. Whilst it was realised that external donors would remain crucial for the near future, it is essential to start a process for seeking a more diverse basis for financial sustainability. Promotion of income generating activities, support to market driven investments and partnerships with private sector are also effective means to enhance project sustainability

- Adapted support is required for faith-based and CSOs networks and umbrella organisation, which have difficulties in raising funds and often compete with their members for funding at the risk of becoming project implementing bodies rather than serving their members and the network.
- The dual strategy of DP Technical coordination under the framework of the Governance Accountability Working Group, and high level dialogue by EU Heads of Mission, civil society and national authority has proved effective to de-escalate tensions, strengthen social accountability and CS inclusion in policy making, address threats to the civic space and support enabling policy and legal environment for civil society. It is also recommended that such EU and EU Member States efforts towards cohesive donor engagement with CS is maintained.

# PART II – EU STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN TO ENGAGE WITH CSOs

## A. THE STRATEGY FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOS AND HOW IT RELATES TO THE EU COUNTRY ENGAGEMENT AND AGENDA 2030/SDG

OBJECTIVES FOR THE EU ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs	RELATED SECTOR & COMMISSION PRIORITY	RELATED SDG
<p><b>PRIORITY 1. The EU contributes to an enabling environment for Civil Society actors in Sierra Leone, with a particular emphasis on the legal framework, dialogue and coordination.</b></p> <p><b>SUB-PRIORITIES</b></p> <p>1.1 Contribute to the enhancement of the legal framework regulating the registration and functioning of CS actors.</p> <p>1.2 Improve coordination among Development Partners on CS issues and with CS actors</p> <p>1.3 Design and implement actions that are gender-mainstreamed in all priority areas and sectors, corresponding to the OECD definition of the Gender Marker G1 and G212 at both local and national</p>	<p>Contributing to an enabling environment for civil society is a vital dimension of the Commission priority on Governance, Peace and Security at large, and a primary objective of the CSO thematic programme. It is also a key condition to ensure the achievement of the SDGs.</p> <p>Gender empowerment is a cross cutting theme and contributes to the five Commission priorities but specifically on Governance, Peace and Security at large, and a primary objective of GAP III. It is also a key condition to ensure the achievement of the SDGs.</p>	<p>SDG 16</p> <p>SDG 17</p> <p>SDG 1</p> <p>SDG 5</p> <p>SDG 10</p> <p>SDG 4</p>
<p><b>PRIORITY 2. The EU promotes an enhanced participation of Civil Society, youth groups, faith-based organisations, women and disability organisations in the public space, emphasising the local level, where windows of opportunity exist for enhanced engagement with national and local authorities</b></p> <p><b>SUB-PRIORITIES</b></p> <p>2.1 Promote systematic engagements between CSOs, youth groups, faith-based organisations, women and disability organisations, the national or local authorities and/or donors in key national, regional and/or international policy-making mechanisms.</p> <p>2.2 Promote spaces of dialogue and consultation for local/national/sectoral development plan/strategy policy discussions/laws/sub-laws.</p> <p>2.3 Design and implement actions that are gender-mainstreamed in all priority areas and sectors, corresponding to the OECD definition of the Gender Marker G1 and G212 at both local and national</p>	<p>CSO participation is a cross cutting theme and contributes to the five Commission priorities but specifically on Governance, Peace and Security at large, and a primary objective of GAP III. It is also a key condition to ensure the achievement of the SDGs.</p> <p>In Sierra Leone CSO, participation will be assured in all main cooperation areas namely green growth (renewable energy, agriculture/fisheries, and environmental protection), education and governance.</p> <p>Gender empowerment is a cross cutting theme and contributes to the five Commission priorities but specifically on Governance, Peace and Security at large, and a primary objective of GAP III. It is also a key condition to ensure the achievement of the SDGs.</p>	<p>SDG 5</p> <p>SDG 10</p> <p>SDG 16</p> <p>SDG 3</p> <p>SDG 4</p> <p>SDG 17</p>
<p><b>PRIORITY 3. The EU encourages an enhanced capacity of Sierra Leonean CSOs in order to become more relevant, effective and legitimate actors in their engagement on democratic governance and sustainable development</b></p> <p><b>SUB-PRIORITIES</b></p> <p>3.1 Develop CSOs managerial, organisational and technical capacities in order for them to become capable and credible actors to influence and monitor public policies.</p> <p>3.2 The EU reinforces CS mainstreaming by enhancing its knowledge/interaction with local CS actors in focal sectors of operation</p> <p>3.3 Design and implement actions that are gender-mainstreamed in all priority areas and sectors, corresponding to the OECD definition of the Gender Marker G1 and G212 at both local and national</p>	<p>This priority is a vital dimension of the EU priority on Governance, Peace and Security at large, and a primary objective of the CSO thematic programme. CS actors hold authorities accountable, legitimate representatives of the interests of citizens groups (central to the achievement of the SDGs) and effectively perform their roles as independent actors of development, governance and public diplomacy</p> <p>Gender empowerment is a cross cutting theme and contributes to the five Commission priorities but specifically on Governance, Peace and Security at large, and a primary objective of GAP III. It is also a key condition to ensure the achievement of the SDGs.</p>	<p>SDG 16</p> <p>SDG 17</p> <p>SDG 10</p> <p>SDG 5</p> <p>SDG 4</p>

## B. THE ACTION PLAN

OBJECTIVES FOR THE EU ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs		ACTIONS (including analysis, policy and political dialogue, operational support)	MEANS (EU programmes / instruments to implement the actions)
<b>PRIORITY 1. The EU contributes to an enabling environment for Civil Society actors in Sierra Leone, with a particular emphasis on the legal framework, dialogue and coordination.</b>	<b>1.1 Contribute to the enhancement of the legal framework regulating the registration and functioning of CS actors.</b>	<p>Support the GoSL and Civil Society specifically national CS at large in the process of revising the Legal framework on CSOs (or legal framework amendment proposals drafted) that expresses the best interests of both the Government and CSOs, monitoring possible risks and trends towards shrinking space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empower women's CSOs and CBO to undertake a gender analysis on budget allocation, social services development including SGBV provision, adherence to national gender legislation and policies, access to justice initiatives.</li> </ul>	<p>EUD and Irish Embassy through policy and political dialogue, engage with the Government, the Ministry concerned for NGOs and Parliamentarians.</p>
		<p>Support the GoSL and Sierra Leonean Civil Society at large in the review, monitoring and eventual update of other relevant dispositions (in addition to the NGO Policy) of the <b>legal framework related to civil society</b> like the service level agreements etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSOs advocating for gender equality will be the key driver and beneficiaries of an enhanced enabling environment for CSOs in Sierra Leone</li> <li>Improving legislations that prohibit or address GBV and strengthening the enforcement of legislations using social accountability mechanism(s), led by women's rights organization in partnership with non-State actors (such as CSOs, UN, private sector), to monitor and engage in ending GBV</li> </ul>	<p>EUD and Irish Embassy through policy and political dialogue (and, if needed, specific bilateral funds allocated to this action).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EUD supports to the Spotlight initiatives at country level</li> <li>EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III and CLIP</li> </ul> <p>Other actors and tools to be defined in a later stage</p>
		<p>A functioning donor <b>coordination group on CS</b> (including, but not limited to, the EUD, Ireland, UK, Germany and UNDP, aiming at discussing both technical and political issues, such as the enabling environment), which would include a simple information sharing tool in which data related to each donor's implementation agenda would be shared.</p>	<p>CSO Working Group, co-led by the EUD (or any other DP interested in leading) – no technical or financial instrument is needed</p>
	<b>1.2 Improve coordination among Development Partners on CS issues and with CS actors</b>	<p>Regular contacts <b>between EU and CS</b> actors on policy-related issues, through initiatives such as the organisation of an annual CS Forum/meeting (that could be organised with all grantees and new CS actors of interest, identified by EUD and MS).</p>	<p>EUD (or any other DP interested in leading) – no technical or financial instrument is needed, other than logistics.</p>
		<p>Use the <b>District Presence</b> within the bilateral programmes to seek enhanced DP coordination at a district level on a pilot basis.</p>	<p>EU/MS, as part of the bilateral programmes</p>
<b>PRIORITY 2. The EU promotes an enhanced participation of Civil Society, youth groups, faith-based organisations, women and disability organisations in the public space, emphasising the local level, where windows of opportunity exist for enhanced engagement with national and local authorities</b>	<b>2.1 Promote systematic engagements between CSOs, youth groups, faith-based organisations, women and disability organisations, the national or local authorities and/ or donors in key national, regional and/ or international policy-making mechanisms.</b>	<p>Explore future provision of capacity development to national and LCs on</p> <p>a) CS participation in the public policy cycle and on CS roles (including social accountability) and</p> <p>b) engaging on consultation and dialogue with CS as well as sharing participative experiences on national and local public policies with relevant local actor (private sector, CSOs, communities).</p>	<p>EU/MS policy dialogue and bilateral cooperation, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11EDF Programme in support to CSOs-LAs</li> <li>11EDF Programme in support to Governance in Sierra Leone</li> </ul>
		<p>Empower CBOs and youth organizations, <b>faith-based</b>, women and disability <b>organisations</b> at the local/rural level to monitor access and quality of <b>public service delivery</b> (social accountability) as a tool to pressure providers into better delivering services.</p>	<p>EU/MS policy dialogue and bilateral cooperation, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11EDF Programme in support to CSOs-LAs</li> <li>11EDF Programme in support to Governance in Sierra Leone</li> </ul>
		<p>Promote the monitoring by CSOs of the local budget and <b>investments linked to LDP of Local Councils</b>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11EDF Programme in support to Governance in Sierra Leone</li> </ul>
		<p>Support <b>CS involvement in the Electoral cycle</b> (i.e. advocacy for legal reforms, domestic observation, civic education, public awareness, moderation of tensions, HR Commission), both prior to and after the Elections process itself.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EIDHR grants to National election Watch</li> </ul>
		<p>Allocate % of funding for women's CSOs to monitor levels of gender aware civic education, voter registration, self-representation during voting, security provisions and levels of SGBV during election, gender parity in election staffing including polling booths, election observers and in the NEC.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EIDHR grants to 50-50</li> <li>Ireland (policy dialogue/CfP)</li> </ul> <p>Other actors to be identified</p>

OBJECTIVES FOR THE EU ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs	ACTIONS (including analysis, policy and political dialogue, operational support)	MEANS (EU programmes / instruments to implement the actions)
<b>2.2 Promote spaces of dialogue and consultation for local/national/sectoral development plan/strategy policy discussions/laws/sub-laws.</b>	<p>Identification of areas suitable for enhanced coordination between CS, national Govt. and Local Councils by carrying out a mapping (not by sector but by regions), analysing</p> <p>a) their legal frameworks,</p> <p>b) opportunities for CS/Public sector cooperation and c) relevant actors (public/private) per sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support Gender analysis and statistics initiatives in Sierra Leone</li> <li>• Support decent work agenda in (i) non-traditional areas, such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), armed / law-enforcement forces and (ii) new areas that are offered by low-carbon, circular and digital economy</li> <li>• Support women and men to take equal part in the value chain of product or service related to green technologies or digital solutions lifting the institutional, cultural and technical barriers that prevent individuals from practicing their SRHRR</li> </ul> <p>85% of EUD and EUMS funded programmes and projects must be gender mainstreamed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11EDF Programme in support to CSOs-LAs</li> <li>• EU Budget grants to CSOs</li> <li>• Ireland (policy dialogue/grants)</li> </ul> <p>Other actors to be identified</p>
	<p>Initiatives leading to promote joint actions between LAs and Civil society building upon the Territorial Approach to Local Development (TALD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve mutual knowledge between CSOs and LAs and enhance mutual exchange of information (budgets and action plans) between them.</li> <li>• Define a set of areas where joint actions between LAs and CSOs should be encouraged with a view to improving strategical dialogue and service delivery.</li> <li>• Provision of capacity development to CSOs on participation in the public policy cycle (see 2.2 above) and on consultation and dialogue with the public sector.</li> <li>• Provision of capacity development to LAs on CSOs' integration within the public policy cycle.</li> <li>• Support civil society-led initiatives aimed at improving inclusive social and economic service delivery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11EDF Programme in support to CSOs-LAs</li> <li>• EU Budget grants to CSOs</li> <li>• Ireland (policy dialogue/grants)</li> </ul>
	<p>Initiatives related to Local Development Plans (LDPs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen the capacity of LAs to lead local dialogue processes on local development plans and provide funding for joint initiatives with CSOs (and if relevant other actors of the territory such as the private sector).</li> <li>• Promote CS participation in development (and update) of annual LDPs at a Local Council level.</li> <li>• Provide facilitation support to establish formal consultation frameworks between the CSOs/CBOs and LAs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11EDF Programme in support to CSOs-LAs</li> <li>• EU Budget grants to CSOs</li> <li>• Ireland (policy dialogue/grants)</li> </ul> <p>Other actors to be identified</p>
	<p>Other potential areas of intervention in relation to public accountability are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parliamentary control, surveillance, and prisons monitoring.</li> <li>• CS role in ensuring that the MDAs and all local councils comply with Part XV of the local government act on transparency and accountability (joint work or monitoring/evaluation of LCs).</li> <li>• Monitoring women and youth participation in local development/budget planning processes and in actions promoting accountability of LC and service delivery.</li> <li>• Justice sector monitoring, including the informal justice sector (mediation)/ paralegal programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EUD programmes</li> <li>• GIZ programme on CS activism and mining (advocacy, public discourse)</li> <li>• EUD (grant to AdvocAid)</li> <li>• Justice sector support Programmes by other donors</li> </ul> <p>Other actors and tools to be defined in a later stage</p>

OBJECTIVES FOR THE EU ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs		ACTIONS (including analysis, policy and political dialogue, operational support)	MEANS (EU programmes / instruments to implement the actions)
<p><b>PRIORITY 3. The EU encourages an enhanced capacity of Sierra Leonean CSOs in order to become more relevant, effective and legitimate actors in their engagement on democratic governance and sustainable development</b></p>	<p><b>3.1 Develop CSOs managerial, organisational and technical capacities in order for them to become capable and credible actors to influence and monitor public policies.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support an alternative civil society platforms/networks as they emerge, whose membership would not be compulsory but that would be able to serve the needs of NNGOs/CSOs, could be considered.</li> <li>• Follow up on relevant sections in the recommendations of the EUD Gender Analysis for Sierra Leone; consider gender analysis of civil society, possibly in pilot districts of CSO/LA EDF programme.</li> <li>• Support coordination efforts to women's CS's in addition to CSOs working on women and girls' rights issues.</li> <li>• Support women to be better equipped with necessary skills through technical and vocational education and training (TVET)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EUD programmes</li> <li>• EUD supports to the Spotlight initiatives at country level</li> <li>• Policy and political dialogue</li> <li>• EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III and CLIP</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion/development of specialized training components in CFP and TA projects (e.g. adapted training &amp; information session prior to the launch of CFP, organisation of mentoring sessions for all CSOs having submitted a successful concept note, integration of understanding and interaction with civil society in trainings for civil servants, etc.).</li> <li>• Request CSOs to include a Capacity Development component in projects submitted for funding.</li> <li>• Provide financial resources (together with support/mentoring) to SL CSOs, youth groups, faith based and disability groups (particularly grass roots and CBOs) to implement grassroots projects.</li> <li>• Ring fenced budget for (i) organisational capacity building support for women's CSO's (ii) senior-level management training for women in civil society.</li> <li>• Give increased priority to funding to: (i) governance roles and (ii) capacity development of CSOs.</li> <li>• Provide training of trainers to SL CSOs in issues related to their constituencies, grassroots CSOs &amp; CBOs strengthening and in intra-CS collaboration.</li> </ul> <p><b>Where feasible, the following principles should be integrated in CFP</b> launched by the EUD, Ireland, GIZ (and, potentially, by other DPs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion, in CFP, of "sub-granting" components, whereby local actors can access funding to implement actions;</li> <li>• Request the creation of consortia/partnership with local partners (SL CSOs) who exist 6 months prior to the submission of the proposal to exclude ad hoc creations of NGOs for integration in projects;</li> <li>• Request, where feasible, a specific percentage of the total budget to be managed by local partners;</li> <li>• Request a minimum percentage of activities to be implemented by local partners;</li> <li>• Aim to award a minimum number of actions/grants to be led by local CSOs;</li> <li>• Lower the minimum threshold for grants (if allowed and feasible) for a part of the budget to be awarded;</li> <li>• Limit the percentage of direct implementation by INGOs;</li> <li>• Request CSOs to include a CD component in projects submitted for funding (see 2.2).</li> <li>• Include, in CFP and TA projects, activities of liaison between DP and CS actors in order to maximise the impact of projects on the communities around them; this is of particular application to infrastructure projects.</li> <li>• Gender issues (women's participation) and youth; mainstream gender issues in local CS initiatives and encourage the participation of women in leadership positions to promote changes in social norms.</li> <li>• Direct support delivered to women's organisations and the women's sector around (i) accessing donor funding (ii) influencing donor priorities (iii) Supporting the integration of gender equality priorities into the wider support provided to CSO's.</li> <li>• Mainstream, where possible, CS in the activities of the bilateral programme of focal sectors, going beyond the "donor-grantee" relationship (on issues such as the integration of CS actors in participatory budgeting, monitoring and evaluation of general development policies, enhancing the diffusion of public budget and enhancing the public understanding of the NAS (Court of Audit)).</li> <li>• Carry out sectorial mappings of relevant CSOs in relevant sectors such as Agricultural/ Rural Development, Gender Equality/Women's Empowerment, Public Finance and Education, analysing CSOs' roles, capacities and areas of expertise and their interactions with the public sector, with a view to better integrating these actors in the CFPs and/or budget support programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EUD, Irish Aid, and GIZ (CfP and TA projects)</li> <li>• EUD bilateral programmes</li> </ul> <p>EUD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSO/LA 2022 CfP</li> <li>• EIDHR 2021 CfP</li> <li>• EU bilateral CS/LA programme (2020/2023)</li> <li>• "Boosting agriculture for food security programme" (BAFS) 3</li> <li>• GAP III and CLIP</li> <li>• EUD programmes</li> <li>• EUD supports to the Spotlight initiatives at country level</li> <li>• Policy and political dialogue</li> </ul> <p>EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III and CLIP</p>



OBJECTIVES FOR THE EU ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs	ACTIONS (including analysis, policy and political dialogue, operational support)	MEANS (EU programmes / instruments to implement the actions)
	<p><b>3.2. Design and implement actions that are gender-main-streamed in all priority areas and sectors, corresponding to the OECD definition of the Gender Marker G1 and G212 at both local and national</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empower women's CSOs and CBO to undertake a gender analysis on budget allocation, social services development including SGBV provision, adherence to national gender legislation and policies, access to justice initiatives through CS capacity building initiatives.</li> <li>• CSOs advocating for gender equality will be the key driver and beneficiaries of an enhanced capacity development for CSOs in Sierra Leone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EUD programmes</li> <li>• EUD supports to the Spotlight initiatives at country level</li> <li>• EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III and CLIP</li> </ul> <p>Other actors and tools to be defined in a later stage</p>

## PART III– FOLLOW-UP OF THE RM

OBJECTIVES FOR EU ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs		OUTCOME INDICATORS	TARGET	BASELINE INFORMATION (if available)	SOURCES OF INFORMATION & MEANS OF VERIFICATION
<b>PRIORITY 1.</b> The EU contributes to an enabling environment for Civil Society actors in Sierra Leone, with a particular emphasis on the legal framework, dialogue and coordination.	<b>1.1 Contribute to the enhancement of the legal framework regulating the registration and functioning of CS actors.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of responsiveness of the government to the needs of CSOs when drafting or updating civil society legislation (i.e. whether CSOs proposals are taken into account, etc.)</li> <li>CSOs' perception on the quality and applicability of the legal framework regulating CSOs</li> <li>% of new actions that are gender responsive and targeted (G1+G2) at country</li> </ul>	High  Positive  At least 85% of national actions by 2023	Low  Negative  To be defined	Laws and other regulations on civil society (i.e. laws, by-laws, decrees, etc.)  Official Gazette  Public consultation reports and minutes of Government and CSOs meetings  Minutes of Parliamentary meetings (or sub-committee meetings) related to the discussion of the legal framework regulating CSOs  Regional governance indexes (e.g. the Ibrahim index on Governance for African countries)  Specific studies commissioned by CS and/or other donors  • EEAS/ DEVCO Roadmaps stocktaking report  • Gender assessment/ country profile report  • EU-funded project/ programme reports  • CSOs activities reports  • EU projects ROM/evaluation reports  • EU project/programme Steering Committee's minutes of meetings
	<b>1.2 Improve coordination among Development Partners on CS issues and with CS actors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of EU-funded initiatives launched, and of informal/formal structures created in the framework of EU-related actions and projects, promoting DP/DP and DP/CSO coordination.</li> </ul>	85%	To be defined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reports issued by EU-funded projects/programmes</li> <li>Joint statements issued by the EUD and/or other donors</li> <li>EU/CSO consultations agendas and minutes of meetings</li> <li>EU/Government minutes of meetings and agendas</li> <li>Annual EUD reporting on the HRCDS and other reports issued by the political section</li> <li>Political reports by MS embassies</li> </ul>

<b>PRIORITY 2. The EU promotes an enhanced participation of Civil Society, youth groups, faith-based organisations, women and disability organisations in the public space, emphasising the local level, where windows of opportunity exist for enhanced engagement with national and local authorities</b>	<b>2.1 Promote systematic engagements between CSOs, youth groups, faith-based organisations, women and disability organisations, the national or local authorities and/or donors in key national, regional and/or international policy-making mechanisms.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of more systematic engagements between CSOs the authorities and/or donors in key national, regional and/or international policy-making mechanisms</li> <li>• Evidence of more systematic mainstreaming of CSOs into the EU priority areas, related sectors, Team Europe Initiatives</li> </ul>	<p>At least more evidence available by 2023</p> <p>At least more evidence available by 2023</p>	<p>To be defined</p> <p>To be defined</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laws and other regulations on civil society (i.e. laws, by-laws, decrees, etc.)</li> <li>• Official Gazette</li> <li>• Public consultation reports and minutes of Government and CSOs meetings</li> <li>• Minutes of Parliamentary meetings (or sub-committee meetings) related to the discussion of the legal framework regulating CSOs</li> <li>• Regional governance indexes (e.g. the Ibrahim index on Governance for African countries)</li> <li>• Specific studies commissioned by CS and/or other donors</li> <li>• EU-funded project/programme reports</li> <li>• EEAS/ DEVCO Roadmaps stocktaking report</li> <li>• Gender assessment/ country profile report</li> <li>• EU-funded project/programme reports</li> <li>• CSOs activities reports</li> <li>• EU projects ROM/evaluation reports</li> <li>• EU project/programme Steering Committee's minutes of meetings</li> </ul>
	<b>2.2 Promote spaces of dialogue and consultation for local/national/sectoral development plan/strategy policy discussions/laws/sub-laws.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence in practice of invited spaces of dialogue and consultation for local/national/sectoral development plan/strategy policy discussions/laws/sub-laws</li> <li>• Existence of civil society organisations mediating between citizens and line ministries as well as local authorities on policies related to the targeted sectors</li> </ul>	<p>At least more evidence of existence available by 2023</p> <p>At least more evidence of existence available by 2023</p>	<p>To be defined</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laws and other regulations on civil society (i.e. laws, by-laws, decrees, etc.)</li> <li>• Official Gazette</li> <li>• Public consultation reports and minutes of Government and CSOs meetings</li> <li>• Minutes of Parliamentary meetings (or sub-committee meetings) related to the discussion of the legal framework regulating CSOs</li> <li>• Regional governance indexes (e.g. the Ibrahim index on Governance for African countries)</li> <li>• Specific studies commissioned by CS and/or other donors</li> <li>• EU-funded project/programme reports</li> </ul>

OBJECTIVES FOR EU ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs		OUTCOME INDICATORS	TARGET	BASELINE INFORMATION (if available)	SOURCES OF INFORMATION & MEANS OF VERIFICATION
<b>PRIORITY 3. The EU encourages an enhanced capacity of Sierra Leonean CSOs in order to become more relevant, effective and legitimate actors in their engagement on democratic governance and sustainable development</b>	<b>3.1 Develop CSOs managerial, organisational and technical capacities in order for them to become capable and credible actors to influence and monitor public policies.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent to which CSOs report improved consultations, dialogues, access with national, regional and/or international stakeholders on public policies</li> <li>Public perception of civil society, beneficiaries and the community on CSOs</li> <li>% of new actions that are gender responsive and targeted (G1+G2) at country</li> </ul>	<p>Tbc</p> <p>High/ Positive</p>	<p>To be defined</p> <p>Fair</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public opinion poll on CS</li> <li>CS mapping studies (if available)</li> <li>Institutional assessment reports (if available and/or undertaken within the programme to assess the capacity level of the target CSOs)</li> <li>National Codes of conduct/ covenants/etc. reports</li> <li>National indexes/ratings to assess CS capacities</li> </ul>
	<b>3.2 The EU reinforces CS mainstreaming by enhancing its knowledge/ interaction with local CS actors in focal sectors of operation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent to which national, regional and/or international statements acknowledge the role of CSOs in development</li> <li>Perception from CSO's members on CSO's effective knowledge management capacity and products</li> </ul>	<p>Tbc</p> <p>High/ positive</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Fair</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EU-funded project/ programme reports</li> <li>CSOs activities reports</li> <li>EU projects ROM/evaluation reports</li> <li>EU project/programme Steering Committee's minutes of meetings</li> <li>CS platform/NGO coordination body/etc. reports</li> <li>Survey to question targeted CSOs</li> <li>National, regional and international fora meeting reports and minutes of meetings</li> </ul>

# PART IV – ANNEXES & REFERENCES

## ANNEX 1: THE PROCESS

### How were MS/EU+ present in the country involved in the drafting of the RM?

The Road Map formulation is informed by the regular technical and high-level dialogue amongst EU/ MS present in the country (Ireland, Germany and France) and likeminded partners (notably UK, UN RCO, UNDP, UNWOMEN, WB).

MS/EU+ Dialogue is regular and over the period 2019-21 has intensely focused on RM priority matters, with a number of Heads of Mission (HoMs) joint or coordinated demarches to address the threats against CSOs and advocate in support to enabling environment for CSOs, or CSOs inclusion in core governance reforms process. The RM formulation draws heavily from the outcomes of such MS/EU+ demarches (e.g. MS/EU/UK/UNRCO joint meetings or coordinated demarches with Vice-President, Minister of Economic and Planning and Development, Minister of Labour, Minister of Local Government).

The Road Map is also informed by the outcomes of the MS/EU dialogue and consultations underpinning the formulation of the EU Human Rights and Democratisation Strategy and the Gender Action Plan.

The RM objective and scope was presented to the MS/EU+ members of the Governance and Accountability Working Group, and Gender Equality Working Group in first quarter 2021.

A zero draft RM was circulated by the EUD to MS on 16th July, final draft on August 9th.

### What mechanisms are set up to ensure the involvement of MS/EU+ in the implementation and follow up of the RM?

No parallel mechanism has been established to monitor the implementation and follow up of the RM, as a structured dialogue and coordination mechanism already exists to ensure MS/EU+ coordinated action on RM priority issues:

- **the Governance and Accountability Working Group** gathers MS/EU+ Governance advisers on a bi-monthly basis and focuses on democratisation, governance and social accountability. It provides a structured dialogue platform for engagement with CSOs (meets regularly the IINGO Steering Committee, SLANGO and key CSOs umbrella organisations/network). This group engages regularly with CSOs and actively monitor progress and threats on human rights and democratisation/ governance reforms and the CSOs policy/legal/regulatory environment. It has been very active and instrumental in promoting civic space and addressing the threats against CSOs. It reports directly to the MS/EU+ HoM Working Group on Democratisation. (Current Chair: UK, Outgoing Chair: Ireland: members EU, Ireland, UNDP, WB)
- **The Freetown Working Group on Democratisation:** gather MS/EU+ HoMs (UK, EU, Ireland, UNDP, UNRCO) on a regular basis to monitor risks and opportunities pertaining to the democratisation and human rights agenda and enhance coordinated/coherent DP engagement. It has actively engaged the national authorities at the highest level (President, Vice-President, Minister of Planning Economy and Development, Minister of Labour, Minister of Local Government) to promote dialogue, de-escalate tensions, address the threats against CSOs, promoting the review of the CSOs policy, legal and regulatory environment, ensure their inclusion in core governance and democratisation process (e.g. electoral reforms, review of the decentralisation policy).



<p><b>What consultations with CSOs were organised? What type of actors were involved? What mechanisms, if any, were used to ensure the inclusiveness of the process?</b></p>	<p>The RM builds on the intense nation-wide consultative processes which underpinned the formulation of the 11EDF Programmes in support to CSOs-LAs and Governance. This included individual meetings and focused group discussions with both international and national NGOs in Freetown, North, South and East regions.</p> <p>Consultations on matters pertaining the CSOs policy and legal environment were organised by the CSOs themselves in association and with support by Ireland and the European union. Notably Trocaire, an Irish faith based organisation, chaired the IINGO Steering Committee and led the Civil Society Strengthening Working Group in Sierra Leone and was pivotal in organising consultations with IINGO, NGOs, CSOs and CBOS and reporting back to the MS/ EU Heads of Mission and Governance Advisers.</p> <p>Consultations with the IINGOs Steering Committee members were organised in July 2020 on future EU programming, Team Europe Initiative and priorities for the CSOs Roadmap. This were led by the Heads of Mission for Ireland, Germany and EU. Regular dialogue has continued since which has informed the RM formulation</p> <p>Virtual consultations with national CSOs on both the RM and EU future Programming were organised by the EU Delegation in June 2021.</p> <p>As stated in the RM, structured dialogue with national CSOs is challenged by a number of factors, but consultations remain intense in the framework of the multiple EU funded programme and CSOs-led initiatives.</p>
<p><b>What mechanisms, are set up to continue the dialogue with CSOs? What mechanisms, if any, will be used to ensure the inclusiveness of the dialogue?</b></p>	<p>MS/EU+ Coordinated and structured dialogue with International and National NGOs will continue in the framework of the <b>Governance and Accountability Working Group</b>.</p>
<p><b>How is the RM integrated /coordinated with the JP process?</b></p>	<p>N.A. Given the limited MS presence there is no Joint Programming in Sierra Leone, nevertheless it is foreseen to integrate RM into the planned Team Europe Initiatives on Energy and Food Systems.</p>
<p><b>How does the RM relate to other country processes including human rights and democracy country strategies, the gender action plan, etc.?</b></p>	<p>Synergy and coherence has been sought in the formulation of the RM with Human Rights and Democracy Strategy for Sierra Leone and the GAP III priorities. This has reflected in a synergetic consultative process where the three EU strategies have been debated and formulated in coherence, and coherent objectives, and implementation modalities. E.G. the CSOs roadmap prioritises capacity building and support to Women Associations to support implementation of the GAP III, or and electoral observers groups to support implementation EU HRD Strategy.</p>

## ANNEX 2: RELEVANT REFERENCES AND SOURCES TO DEEPEN THE UNDERSTANDING ON THE STATE OF CS AND EU ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

### EU thematic/bilateral programmes with civil society actors

In line with the *EU Human Rights Strategy 2018-2020* and the *EU Road map for engagement with Civil society organisations in Sierra Leone*, a number of actions are supported by the EU, Ireland and Germany to specifically contribute to 1) democratisation and social cohesion; 2) fight against Gender Based Violence 3) Gender Equity and Women Empowerment; 4) promotion of Sexual Health Rights and maternal health; 5) an enabling environment for CS actors in Sierra Leone, with a particular emphasis on the legal framework, dialogue and coordination; 5) enhance capacity of Sierra Leonean CSOs in order to become actors of development; 6) enhance participation of CSO in the public space, with a particular emphasis on the local level, where windows of opportunity exist for enhanced engagement.

**As of July 2021 the projects portfolio of the EU Delegation includes twenty-two (38) ongoing action grants with Non State Actors (INGOs, NNGOs, Research Institutes/Universities) totaling an overall EU contribution of over 45 Million Euros.** These are funded under either the 11 European Development Fund, the EU Budget instrument in support to CSOs-Local Authorities and the European Initiative for Human Rights and Democracy.

Notably:

- Under the **European Instrument in support to Civil Society Organisations**, five (5) action grants totalling 4.5 M EUR EU contribution have been awarded in 2018 by mean of a competitive procedure to promote Civic engagement in support to inclusiveness, accountability and gender responsive public service delivery, notably in the education, health and agricultural sectors. These are

Domain	Contract year	Contract number	Contract title	Expiry date	Starting date	Contracting party	EU Contribution
CSO-LA	2018	398395	IMAGES: Improving Management of CSOs in Education Sector	30/12/2021	01/07/2018	FONDAZIONE AVSI	905,352.4
CSO-LA	2018	398274	Civic engagement Inclusive of the Voice of girls and women in Community ownership of health and education (CIVIC)	30/06/2021	01/07/2018	HEALTH LIMITED	632,268.0
CSO-LA	2018	398273	Building an active civil society for improved gender responsive public service delivery especially for women & girls to attain sustainable development in Sierra Leone	05/07/2021	06/07/2018	ACTION AID INTERNATIONAL (SL) LIMITED	1,200,000.0
CSO-LA	2018	398391	Enhancing CSOs' capacities for more inclusive governance and development processes in Kenema District	31/08/2021	01/09/2018	APT ACTION ON POVERTY	559,157.0
CSO-LA	2018	398355	Civil society strengthened to support rural women's agency, empowerment and influence in local governance and agricultural development processes in northern Sierra Leone	31/10/2021	01/08/2018	TROCAIRE	1,151,703.0

- Under the **European Instrument in support to Civil Society and Organisations**, four (4) action grants totalling 2 M EUR EU contribution have been awarded in 2019 by mean of a competitive procedure to national Civil Society Organisations to support the fight against Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) (awareness campaigns at community level, support to treatment and access to justice for SGBV survivors). These are:

Domain	Contract year	Contract number	Contract title	Expiry date	Starting date	Contracting party	EU Contribution
CSO-LA	2019	409200	Community Empowerment for Prevention of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) for Women and Girls	21/08/2021	22/08/2019	DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE PROGRAMME	531,000.0
CSO-LA	2019	409276	Enhancing access to justice for SGBV survivors and promoting the rights of women and girls in Freetown, Bombali and Kenema	31/12/2021	01/10/2019	ADVOCAID	457,681.4
CSO-LA	2019	409199	Stand Up, Speak Out: Breaking the silence around gender based violence among rural communities in East and Southern Regions of Sierra Leone	22/02/2022	23/08/2019	MOVEMENT TOWARDS PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY	500,000.0
CSO-LA	2019	409275	Strengthening GBV prevention and inclusive response services in Sierra Leone	01/03/2022	02/09/2019	RAINBO INITIATIVE	600,000.0

- In 2020, under the **European Instrument in support to Civil Society and Organisations**, two (2) action grants totalling 2,5 M EUR EU contribution have been awarded to Civil Society Organisation by mean of negotiated procedures in the framework of the COVID19 Emergency Response, to contribute towards COVID19 preparedness and response, social accountability in partnership with Local authorities. These are:

Domain	Contract year	Contract number	Contract title	Expiry date	Starting date	Contracting party	EU Contribution
CSO-LA	2020	415636	#EUStandsWithSalone - Supporting Freetonians confront COVID19	22/07/2021	22/04/2020	CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS	2,230,000.0
CSO-LA	2020	417006	#EUStandsWithSalone: Supporting District level response to COVID-19 in Falaba and Karene districts.	30/06/2021	01/07/2020	TROCAIRE	270,000.0

- Under the **European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights**, two (2) action grants have been awarded in 2019 and 2020 by mean of negotiated procedures with two local CSO platforms of eminent women and domestic observers to support women participation in the political process and enhance domestic observers organisations and citizens participation in Democratic Governance reforms leading to the 2023 electoral cycle, in line with 2018 EU EOM Recommendations. These are:

Domain	Contract year	Contract number	Contract title	Expiry date	Starting date	Contracting party	EU Contribution
EIDHR	2019	409334	Beyond Politics of Men: Empowering Women to be Effective Political Actors in Sierra Leone	28/08/2022	29/08/2019	THE 50/50 GROUP SIERRA LEONE	820,711.6
EIDHR	2020	415580	Enhancing Domestic Electoral Observer organisations and Citizens Participation in Democratic Governance Reforms leading to the 2022 and 2023 electoral cycle	08/05/2022	09/05/2020	NATIONAL ELECTION WATCH	779,252.9

- EU programme titled: **“Support to Civil Society and Local Authorities for local development in Sierra Leone”** (11 European Development Fund – Dec. ref. FED/2017/039-030 – EU Commitment 25.083.000 EUR over the period : June 2018- June 2025)
- This programme funded under the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund seeks to promote Local authorities and civil society engagement and action in local governance and development process across the country. Eight (8) action grants totalling 9.5 M EUR EU contribution have been awarded since 2019 to civil society organisations to promote local participatory process, and action in support to improved service delivery, accountability, gender equity and women empowerment in partnership with the District Councils of Bombali, Falaba, Kambia, Karene, Kenema, Pujehun, as follows:

Domain	Contract year	Contract number	Contract title	Expiry date	Start date	Contracting party	EU Contribution
FED	2020	421103	#EUStandsWithSalone: Strengthening Inclusion of Women and People with Disability (PWD) in Service Delivery in Falaba District	30/06/2022	01/01/2021	FALABA DISTRICT WOMEN'S NETWORK	157,880
FED	2019	410619	Strengthening the Capacity of Local Authorities for Advancing Integrated Local Development Initiative with focus on WASH and Agriculture in Kenema District	13/09/2022	14/11/2019	DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE PROGRAMME	1,000,000
FED	2019	410741	Improved Access to Sustainably Managed Micro-Finance and WaSH Systems; WASH Self-Supply Project	18/09/2022	19/11/2019	DEUTSCHE WELTHUNGERHILFE EV	1,000,000
FED	2019	410618	Action for Inclusive Social and Economic Service Delivery in Kambia District	31/10/2022	01/11/2019	ACTION AID INTERNATIONAL (SL) LIMITED	1,106,245
FED	2019	410739	Supporting Participation, Accountability and Civil Society Empowerment in Pujehun District	31/10/2022	01/11/2019	PARTNERSHIP ACTION COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT	1,079,861
FED	2019	410742	Empowering Local Communities in Sierra Leone	08/11/2022	09/11/2019	MOUVEMENT FOR ASSISTANCE IN PROMOTION OF RURAL COMMUNITIES	813,205
FED	2019	410580	Governance Accountability Under Gender Empowered Development by Civil Society (GAUGED Civil)	06/03/2023	07/11/2019	ACTION FOR ADVOCACY AND DEVELOPMENT	1,078,054
FED	2020	421687	#EUStandsWithSalone: Scaling up of basic services in rural areas of Bombali and Karene districts to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 crisis	31/12/2023	01/01/2021	ASSOCIATION INTER AIDE	971,000

- EU programme titled: **“Boosting Agriculture for Food Security (BAFS)”** (11 European Development Fund – Dec. ref. FED/2017/ 37-403 – EU total Commitment 33 000.000 EUR over the period : June 2018-June 2026)
- This programme funded under the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund aims at supporting the reduction of poverty and food insecurity in Sierra Leone through a multi-stakeholder approach in support to Sustainable agriculture and Livestock Production. The programme promotes partnerships between State and Non-state actors and Civil Society Organisations and Private sector in support to research, Crop Production and diversification, value chain development, income-generating activities for small older farmers.
- Since 2018 sixteen (16) action grants totaling 20 M EUR EU contribution have been awarded to Non State Actors (INGO, NGOs, National Universities and Research Centers). These are as follows:

Don	Contract year	Contract	Contract title	Expiry date	EC signature	Contracting party	EU
FED	2018	399382	Enhancing Cocoa, Coffee, Cashew, Horticultural Crops and Livestock Diversification, and Income Generation for Smallholder Farmers and Exports in Sierra Leone.	15/08/2023	12/11/2018	SIERRA LEONE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE	2,000,000
FED	2019	408216	Develop a Vibrant, Competitive and Profitable Sierra Leonean Cocoa, Coffee and Cashew Economy, Driven by Private Supply Chain Actors Within a Regulatory Framework	19/07/2023	15/07/2019	SOLIDARIDAD NETWORK WEST AFRICA	3,200,000
FED	2019	408217	Improving Food Security and Increasing Income for Smallholder Farmers Through Sustainable Livestock Production in Sierra Leone	21/07/2022	13/07/2019	STICHTING BRAC INTERNATIONAL	1,499,000
FED	2019	408218	Diversifying and Boosting Crop Production in Sierra Leone	22/07/2023	09/07/2019	OXFAM	2,375,912
FED	2019	408219	Diversifying and Boosting Livestock Production in Sierra Leone	31/07/2023	10/07/2019	OXFAM	1,483,174
FED	2019	411118	Establishing Modern Livestock Production and Value Addition Systems in Sierra Leone	13/12/2022	12/12/2019	OCTOPUS GROUP OF COMPANIES	2,500,000
FED	2019	411119	Agribusiness Development from Organic Resources (ADORE)	13/12/2023	12/12/2019	DEUTSCHE WELTHUNGERHILFE EV	2,664,133
FED	2019	411233	Agribusiness development through out-grower scheme engagement	20/12/2022	19/12/2019	BENNIMIX FOOD COMPANY LIMITED	424,995
FED	2019	411234	Sustainable Cassava Commercialization through Entrepreneurs Strengthening Support	13/12/2021	12/12/2019	STICHTING BRAC INTERNATIONAL	596,248
FED	2019	411235	Youth Economic Empowerment through Strengthened Vegetable Value Chains in Sierra Leone	16/12/2022	12/12/2019	CATHOLIC AGENCY FOR OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT	539,999
FED	2019	411236	Partnership for Unlocking the Potential of Groundnut Value Chain in Sierra Leone	13/12/2021	12/12/2019	ACTION CONTRE LA FAIM	594,000
FED	2019	411396	Establishing Sustainable and Competitive Cassava and Plantain Value Chains Across Four (4) Districts in Sierra Leone - Strengthening Smallholder Farmer Linkages to Domestic and International Markets	20/12/2021	20/12/2019	WESTERN AFRICA OFFGRID (WAO)	540,038
FED	2019	411423	Smallholders Agricultural Diversification and Economic Empowerment (SADEE)	13/12/2021	12/12/2019	DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE PROGRAMME	539,153
FED	2019	411427	Establishing a Sustainable Vibrant Competitive and Profitable Onion Value-chain Economy Primarily Driven by Producers and Marketers in Sierra Leone	13/12/2022	12/12/2019	ENGIM - ENTE NAZIONALE GIUSEPPINI DEL MURIALDO	600,000
FED	2019	411457	Cashing in on Cashew: Towards a Vital Cashew Value Chain in Sierra Leone (CioC)	23/12/2022	16/12/2019	STICHTING REFORMATORISCHE HULPAKTIEWOORD EN DAAD	599,227
FED	2020	411462	Contributing to Food Security and Poverty Alleviation through the Improvement of Palm Oil Processing	17/01/2022	16/01/2020	KAMARA	423,044

**MS bilateral programmes/projects (with Civil Society Organisations)** Yes ☐ No ☐

If Yes, list the MS which have such programmes and their description





