



The Director-General



Secretary General

## Gender Action Plan III – 2021-2025 Country Level Implementation Plan – CLIP Sierra Leone

### 1. Context for EU action gender equality and women’s empowerment in the country

Sierra Leone is a low-income, food-deficit West African country with approximately 8.4 million people, 51% of whom are women. It faced a range of development challenges and ranked 181 out of 191 countries on the 2021 UNDP Human Development Index<sup>1</sup> and 162 out of 170 on the UNDP’s Gender Inequality Index<sup>2</sup>.

Sierra Leone faces complex, interlinked, and persistent development challenges: i) Weak Government effectiveness, patronage system, high levels of corruption and a fragile democracy, ii) Economic challenges of stagnation, unemployment and low productivity, iii) Social challenges of poverty, inequality, a sizeable precariat combined with population growth, iv) Environmental challenges of an alarming loss of primary natural forest and forest degradation, biodiversity loss, degrading ecosystems and high climate change vulnerability.

To address the country longstanding social and economic challenges and increasing inequalities, and unleash its full developmental potential the 2018 National Development Plan identified Gender Equality as a key developmental objective. Since then, the Government of Sierra Leone has indeed pursued a resolute Women Empowerment and Gender Equality agenda.

In 2019 H.E. the President Julius Maada Bio declared a State of Emergency over sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and called on the EU, the UN, and other development partners to make significant, concerted and comprehensive investment in gender equality and the fight against SGBV. A national campaign (the ‘Hands Off Our Girls’) was launched to increase awareness of violence against girls in Sierra Leone and the institutional set up for Gender Equality reinforced through the establishment of a stand-alone Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs. In the same year the newly established Ministry successfully laid at Parliament a Bill to reform the 2012 Sexual Offences Act.

In 2021, Government of Sierra Leone adopted the first Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy and laid at Parliament the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Bill, which was signed into law (GEWE Act) in January 2023. The new policy and legal framework mark a significant advancement for gender equality in Sierra Leone. The law enshrines improvements to women’s access to finance, employment opportunities, equal pay, maternity leave, and—critically—political representation. GEWE establishes a 30 percent quota for women’s participation in government for both appointed positions, including cabinet, ministry, and ambassador roles, and elected positions, such as parliamentary and local council seats. After the 2023 Elections, women representation in Parliament increased from 14.52% to 30.4%, cabinet positions went from 12.5% to 31.25% and councillors in local government went from 18.9% to 33.8%.

<sup>1</sup> <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-composite-indices/gender-inequality-index>

<sup>2</sup> <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-composite-indices/gender-inequality-index>

Moreover, in November 2023, the Minister for Gender and Children's Affairs has re-launched the Network of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians (NeWMaP) which will serve as a platform for deliberating on issues that are pivotal to women's empowerment, in compliance with the GEWE Act. Gender equality also figures high on the EU/Sierra Leone political dialogue, and is mainstreamed in EU cooperation programmes.

The EU Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP 2021-2027) shows 3 priority areas (Green Economy, Human Development and Governance) all of them with a focus and with a direct impact on women.

**MIP priority area 1 on Green Economy** focuses on **Access to modern energy; Sustainable food systems and Ecosystems & Biodiversity**. Women are extremely vulnerable in all these areas while at the same time being key players to achieve change. Conventionally, bearing the responsibility of ensuring water and energy supply and cooking, women are the primary energy users at the household level. As biomass constitutes the primary fuel for 95% of households, shifting to renewable sources would allow combating deforestation, environmental degradation, and climate change and reduce the exposure of women to indoor air pollution and relieve them from the time burden and security threat of collecting firewood. **Agriculture** has traditionally been the principal source of income, employment, and foreign exchange for the economy. About 70% of women are employed in agriculture, and provide 75% of the labour along the food value chain, from production, processing to marketing. Women's labour force participation in crop Sierra Leone recorded increasing development progress over the last decade, farming and trade and repairs stand at 65.8% and 21.9%, respectively. 95% of women are self-employed and with vulnerable employment against 85% of men. The gender division of labour in agriculture, combined with women's reproductive role, maximizes women's energy inputs and non-remunerated work. Gender parity in non-agricultural employment is low. Over 80% of economically active women work in the informal sector, where they lack any form of social protection, and are vulnerable to exploitation. The dominance of women in the self-employed/informal sector with poor working conditions, low salaries and no social protection leaves them open to exploitation and increases their vulnerability to poverty. Additionally, while a small number of women own medium- and large-scale enterprises, the majority are engaged in micro-production with no access to formal-sector skills and development-advisory services. Women have little or no access to credit facilities, improved technologies, extension services and post-harvest technologies. By custom, women outside the Western Area cannot own property or land, even though they are involved in the majority of time-consuming farm labour. The position of married women whose livelihoods and food security, tied to land access, is insecure, is easily threatened when marital breakdown deprives them of their only livelihood asset. Men also control most community level decision-making, such as decisions about sharing out harvests, despite women's equal or disproportionate labour inputs. The law protecting women's equal entitlement to inherit the property of her husband or common law does not apply in situations where the land is governed by customary tenure.

Nevertheless, there has been a strong gender-equality focus in the recent land certification process. In September 2023, the government passed the Customary land rights Act 2022. Women also tend to have less access to technology, knowledge and networks and financial services to support their transition to more sustainable agriculture practices.

Creating **affordable and reliable energy for jobs and growth** associated with the Green Economy entails changes in the industrial sector concerning prevailing gender gaps. Women are more likely to be unemployed and excluded from economic sectors like agro-industry, fishing and infrastructure developments. Inequality is visible in the public service, where approximately 25% of public servants are female. Women are more likely to do unpaid care work, work in the informal sector, and low paid jobs with limited social protection. Women are less likely to hold leadership positions and experienced various challenges when seeking those positions due to gender biases. Sexual harassment and GBV in the workplace are common. Particular emphasis is placed on improving the business climate; creating jobs, especially for women and young people; and improving vocational/educational skills in line with labour market requirements. This is directly related with the second priority below.

**MIP Priority Area 2** focuses on Human Development, notably **Basic Education and TVET and Social Protection**.

Poverty is high at 52% with more than 10% in abject poverty, affecting disproportionately rural areas, home to 75% of the poor, though there is a rapid migration of mainly poor youth to urban centres. The population of 8.4 million is young (80% are <40) and grows rapidly at 3.2% per year. Child mortality is amongst the highest in the world and life expectancy is low (52.2 years). Almost 50% of the population are food insecure and stunting is high (>30%). Only 26% of the population have access to electricity, which constrains businesses. Sierra Leonean women face extreme gender inequality and suffer marginalisation and discrimination, particularly in the areas of education, employment, political participation, and social justice.

Access to education is inequitable and quality remains extremely low. Despite education being a government priority since 2016, it is still characterised by: i) declining performance at secondary level ii) high numbers of unqualified teachers, iii) insufficient investment and policy implementation, iv) systemic deficiencies in supervision and management. Issues of unequal opportunities for boys and girls in education continue to be exacerbated by factors such as early marriage for girls, teenage pregnancies and harmful practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

The government of Sierra Leone in March 2020 lifted the discriminatory ban that prohibits pregnant schoolgirls from attending school, effectively heralding the beginning of a remarkable era for adolescent girls. The ban was introduced in 2015 as schools reopened after the Ebola crisis, which saw a rise in pregnancies among school-age girls. During the Ebola outbreak in 2014 and 2015, the government closed all schools to halt the spread of the disease. Consequently, hundreds, some say thousands - of girls became pregnant. A 2010 policy of not allowing pregnant girls in school came to the fore. So the girls were shut out of school and not allowed to write their exams.

Further to this, the government of Sierra Leone also, in March 2021, launched the National Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools. The policy seeks to ensure that schools throughout Sierra Leone are accessible to and inclusive of all children, especially those typically marginalised or excluded.

In addition, the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education has introduced sexuality education into the school curriculum geared towards the reduction of teenage pregnancy and SGBV in schools. At primary level, girls have now achieved parity with boys. However the figures highlight several regional disparities. In general girls are less likely to complete their education compared with their male colleagues. Systemic factors disproportionately affect the protection, attendance and performance of girls in school as they reach adolescence and adulthood, such as sexual exploitation by teachers and the low number of female teachers and other role models. A similar trend applies to the number of females in the management of education system, which decreases inversely with grade levels. Additionally, there is a National Strategy for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy and Child Marriage 2019 – 2023. This is currently being reviewed with the view to developing a new Strategy.

Quality basic education and social protection is essential for achieving minimum social development required for a long, healthy and creative life. Improving basic and professional education has emerged as a catalytic element for better employment perspectives. Equal education opportunities for woman and girls will be a priority. At the same time, the majority of people is highly vulnerable to numerous threats mainly resulting from their poverty, which make the expansion of social protection an imperative for social cohesion and domestic stability. This is particular true in the case of pregnant girls and teenage mothers returning to school. Lack of social protection and child care hinders their retention in school.

Notably, the EU is giving an important boost to the development of Sierra Leone's education sector by funding a programme to promote equity and access to quality education with a budget of about €1 million and a Free Education Multi-Donor Trust Fund Project. The latter is financed by a \$50 million World Bank grant and grant funds from development partners with the EU contributing €13 million, Ireland contributing €5 million, and UKAID contributing £2 million to the Fund.

**MIP Priority area 3 looks at Governance and civil society.** Within this priority area, the EU will address women in politics (through UNDP basket funds on elections and an EU programme on democracy strengthening), women economic empowerment at local level (through CSO-LA projects)

and sexual and gender-based violence SGBV (through the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to fight all violence against women and girls in Sierra Leone.

Gender-based violence perpetrated against women and girls continues to be one of the most prevalent and pervasive problems in post-conflict Sierra Leone.

In Sierra Leone women and girls face widespread and rooted structural violence and marginalisation.

According to the Afro Barometer Survey<sup>3</sup> almost 50% of Sierra Leone females experiences sexual or physical violence during their lifetime. In Sierra Leone, 83% of women aged between 15-49 are circumcised, according to Demographic and Health (DHS) Survey of 2019<sup>4</sup>. According to the 2017 Sierra Leone Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2017 report<sup>5</sup>, 12,9% of women aged between 20-24 in Sierra Leone had married before the age of 15, and 29,9% before the age of 18, positioning Sierra Leone as the 19th country with the highest child marriage rate in the world.

Ensuring both men and women understand violence as an infringement of their fundamental rights and have adequate recourse to redress for violence is therefore important in mobilising the entire population in efforts to rebuild the country and move towards development (World Bank 2012).

In spite of progress made towards a more robust legal and policy framework for gender equality and women empowerment, a significant gap remains between the laws and policies on one hand, and the reality of women's and girls' lives on the other. The persistence of VAWG in Sierra Leone is closely linked to institutionalised gender inequalities exacerbated by discriminatory customs, a patriarchal society and a history of protracted conflict and hardship. Hence, achieving gender equity remains a challenge in Sierra Leone.

Civil society organisations are critical actors in development and play a critical role in promoting gender equality and women empowerment as well as social accountability, fundamental rights and service delivery particularly in rural areas and in support to women/youth and marginalised groups.

Sierra Leone enjoys a rather vibrant women association movement, which is quite active in the fight against violence against women and girls and harmful practices (VAWG/HP) as well as in the advocacy for policy and legislative development. For decades, women's rights groups and civil society organisations (CSOs) have demanded that the States addresses violence against women and girls as a pervasive rights violation – this led to the national recognition and proclamation in 2019 of a State Emergency to fight Sexual and Gender Based Violence.

Also, CSOs and women rights movement, greatly influenced the formulation of the first national policy on gender equality and women empowerment adopted in 2021 and of the issuing Bill enacted by Parliament in November 2022.

CSOs have also actively engaged in the formulation of the revised policy, legal and regulatory framework for Non Governmental Organisation which have been adopted in 2023. The revised framework - result of comprehensive and inclusive engagement with CSOs nationwide - introduces welcome changes to the previous one - which was deemed over restrictive and bore the potential to restrict the operating environment for NGO actives in the field of human rights and advocacy. Also 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.

However, substantial capacity constraints continue hindering the potential for national CSO engagement and impact in public space. 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 compete against each other and prioritize donor driven priorities over long-term strategic intervention and coalition building. As a result, the civil society “sector” is weak, highly donor-dependent and fragmented; characterized by short-term

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.afrobarometer.org/articles/gender-based-violence-a-high-priority-in-sierra-leone-but-citizens-say-women-who-come-forward-likely-to-face-criticism-and-shame/>

<sup>4</sup> Sierra Leone Demographic and Health survey 2019 (DHS 2019), Statistics Sierra Leone (Stats SL) and ICF, 2020. Available at: <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR365/FR365.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.statistics.sl/images/StatisticsSL/Documents/sierra\\_leone\\_mics6\\_2017\\_report.pdf](https://www.statistics.sl/images/StatisticsSL/Documents/sierra_leone_mics6_2017_report.pdf)

interventions, high staff turnover rates, loss of institutional knowledge and a lack of cohesion, capacity and commitment towards developing CSO movements.

Evidence shows that the presence of vibrant, autonomous, progressive movements – including specifically feminist and women’s rights movements – is essential (and in fact a key determinant) to generating sustainable change. Thus the envisaged Spotlight Initiative has placed civil society at the center of its efforts to end violence, foreseeing sustained and continued engagement of civil society groups in decision-making, programming, and implementation

A recent stakeholders’ consultation on the mid-term review of the MIP carried out in August 2023, shows that out of the 206 stakeholders consulted, 14% have indicated gender equality among the three main priority areas the EU should focus on in its development programmes.

The Government of Sierra Leone is committed to the implementation of the Gender Equality and Women’s empowerment Act and to fight SGBV as reflected in the National Gender Strategic Plan (2018-2023).

Furthermore, analytical work has been carried out by the Gender Focal Person (GFP), with great support from the Delegation’s (Political and Cooperation Sections) and EU member states, based on the Sierra Leone Country Gender Analysis (2017). To develop recommendations, the CLIP considers the National Gender Strategic Plan (2018-2023) and the Country Strategy for Human Rights and Democracy 2021-2025. Last but not least, the CLIP contains gender-related external actions that contribute to the objectives and results of priority areas of the MIP.

Ultimately, the draft CLIP was circulated to EUMS, other Development partners for comments and feedback, before being submitted to the HoD for endorsement.

## **2. Selected thematic areas of engagement and objectives**

In relation to the programming 2021-27, to reach GAP III targets, EUDs need to ensure that at least 85% of all new actions will have gender equality as a significant (Gender Marker 1) or principal objective (Gender marker 2) in each priority area/ sector of the MIP. This section will link the goals of the EU on gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) with the Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs) and priority areas of the MIP. The EU will pursue these objectives through dialogues, activities and programmes in the next five years.

### **2.1 Overall objective of the EU:**

Gender equality is a core value of the EU and a universally recognized human right and an imperative to well-being, economic growth, prosperity, good governance, peace, and security. The overall objective of the EU is, through external actions, to confirm its role as a global front-runner in promoting gender equality. The EU will pursue a 3-pronged approach, including gender mainstreaming, targeted activities, and political dialogue, to achieve that overall objective.

Align EU initiatives with all concerning Ministries, including Gender, Health, Education, Justice.

### **2.2 Selected “areas of engagement” on gender equality and women’s empowerment and the “specific thematic objectives”:**

#### **A. Thematic area of engagement - Ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence**

The EUD and EUMS will support for

1. Women, girls and boys are better protected from all forms of gender-based violence, harmful traditional practises such as female genital mutilation and early marriage.

2. Women, men, girls and boys, who experience gender-based violence have increased access to essential services and access to legal justice.
3. Women's rights organisations, social movements and other civil society organisations are influential in ending gender-based violence.
4. Quality, disaggregated and globally comparable data on different forms of gender-based violence and harmful practices are increasingly collected and used to inform laws, policies and programmes.

#### **B. Thematic area of engagement - Promoting equal participation and leadership**

The EUD and EUMS will support for

1. Enabling conditions created for equal participation of women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, in decision-making.
2. Women and girls, in all their diversity, have improved access to justice to safeguard their civil and political rights
3. Women's organisations, other CSOs and women human rights defenders working for gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment and rights work more freely and are better protected by law
4. Equitable social norms, attitudes and behaviours promoting equal participation and leadership fostered at community and individual levels – through civic education, media, education and culture at all levels
5. Improved systems for collecting quality, disaggregated and globally comparable data on women's political participation and leadership

#### **C. Thematic area - Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women**

The EUD and EUMS will support for:

1. Increased access for women, in all their diversity, to decent work, including women's transition to the formal economy and coverage by non-discriminatory and inclusive social protection systems
2. Increased access for women in all their diversity to financial services and products, and productive resources
3. Women in all their diversity have improved access to entrepreneurship opportunities, including social entrepreneurship, alternative livelihoods and strengthened participation in the green and circular economy
4. Improved access for women in all their diversity to managerial and leadership roles in social and economic sectors and for a
5. Reduction in gender disparities in enrolment, progression and retention at all levels of education and lifelong learning for women, men, girls and boys

#### **D. Thematic area of engagement - Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights**

The EUD and EUMS will support for:

1. Enabled legal, political and societal environment allowing women and girls to access quality sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) care and services and protecting their sexual and reproductive rights.
2. Improved access for every individual to sexual and reproductive health care and services, including family planning services, information and education on sexual and reproductive rights.

**E. Thematic area of engagement – Addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities offered by the green transition and the digital transformation**

**Climate change and environment**

1. Increased participation of women and girls in all their diversity in decision-making processes on environment and climate change issues
2. Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity addressing climate change in their daily lives and preserving the natural environment are recognised and valued
3. Women and men in all their diversity increasingly participate in and have improved access to jobs, entrepreneurship opportunities and alternative livelihoods in the green economy and the circular economy

**Digitalisation**

1. Women, men, girls and boys are equally provided with and using equally public digital literacy
2. Women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity participate fully and equally in the digital economy

**F. Thematic area of engagement – Integrating the women, peace and security agenda**

1. Women and girls who are victims of conflict and SGBV have access to appropriate services that respond to their needs including mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services.
2. Increased role for women and girls in peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution, where they form an integral part of mediations and negotiations teams at all levels.
3. Women and women’s organisations’ increase their access and capacities to exercise a more significant role in all efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts in the country.

**2.3. Potential synergies, cooperation, partnership, joint implementation with EUMS or other EU actors**

The partnership between the EU Delegation and EUMS will be vital for implementing the CLIP and the attainment of GAP III targets.

There are several levels for any partnership, ranging from sharing knowledge and working together to pooling resources.

First, the draft version of the CLIP is shared with all EUMS, seeking comments, suggestions, or expression of interest before the adoption by the HoD. Existing mechanisms, EU Development partners

meetings and Heads of Missions meetings will be the regular knowledge-sharing and coordination mechanisms for the rollout of the CLIP.

More so, building on the success stories of EU public diplomacy and political dialogue – it is envisaged that the HoD and EUMS could jointly communicate for improved gender equality and women empowerment. There will be plenty of opportunities for that, for example, celebration/commemoration of ceremonial days (i.e. Women’s Day (03 March), World Day on Anti-Human Trafficking (30 July), International Day on Ending Violence against Women (25 November), Labour Day (01 May)) etc.

The Donor partners working group on Gender Equality, of which the EU Delegation and several EUMS are members is also a reasonable basis for the EU to step up joint efforts on several priority issues, in consensus with non-EUMS UN.

Furthermore, Gender equality and Women empowerment (GEWE) is mainstreamed in both Programmes and projects funded by the EU Delegation and EUMS. The EUD and EUMS will try to apply the Team Europe approach as much as possible in future gender equality cooperation. It is envisaged that ongoing and planned operations, financed by the EU Delegation and EUMS, could actively seek joint implementation opportunities. For future initiatives, it will be crucial for all EU actors/financiers to cooperate throughout the entire project cycle, (i) finding synergies in terms of its objectives, approaches, target groups, sectoral/geographical focus; and (ii) looking for fund pooling or division of labour, wherever possible. [Following the EU’s External Investment Plan (EIP), implementation of the MIP will pursue an integrated approach, combining support for private investment in Sierra Leone and improving the investment climate. The EIP will address barriers to women’s empowerment, and gender mainstreaming will be applied to EU blending operation funds and guarantees.

#### **2.4. Engagement with CSOs in the design, implementation & monitoring**

Engagement with CSOs, or in a more extensive term with all non-State actors (private sectors, social enterprises, the media, think tanks, etc.), will be instrumental for the effectiveness of the CLIP through the three priorities of the CSO Roadmap.

During the CLIP design, a virtual consultation was held with women’s organisations and CSOs working on gender equality. In developing the EU Civil Society Roadmap, an online survey with 100 respondents was undertaken that also addressed gender issues.

A validation workshop and discussion on the CLIP was held in November 2021, through the Gender Donor Partner Group that is used also for monitoring purposes.

Moreover, in the framework of the formulation of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, the EU and UN agencies will reaching out to CSOs and grassroots organisations to ensure a full alignment on the objectives and activities of the Initiative.

Activities to strengthen the gender machinery will be complemented by investing and engaging with women’s organisations and organisations working on gender issues, potentially through a CfP for a sub-granting scheme towards local CSOs. CSOs working on gender issues **should be strengthened** to interact with government structures and lobby for and support relevant policies. Dialogue and cooperation with women’s organisations and other CSOs, Faith-based organisations, disability organisations will be upheld. CfPs and direct awards will support CSOs by making available a proportion of funds for organisations advancing women and girls rights and supporting the capacity of and networking among relevant CSOs to advocate and lobby for women’s rights.



### 3. Targeted action(s) supporting gender equality and women’s empowerment

GAP III aims at increasing the number and effectiveness of actions having gender equality as a principal objective (OECD G2 action), with a target of at least one G2 action, financed by the EUD and implemented in each country by 2025.

This section will elaborate on strategic options for G2 targeted action(s), with potential support to national gender mechanisms/networks, institutional actors, women’s organizations and entities working on gender equality, according to the guidance provided jointly by the EC and EEAS.

#### 3.1. Thematic area(s) of the targeted action(s) and related GAP III thematic objective(s):

The targeted action(s) will aim at achieving sustainable change tackling gender-biased norms and stereotypes; by implementing a comprehensive and transformative approach. The table below will match G2 action(s) thematic areas with the strategic thematic objectives (STOs) of the GAP to illustrate what the EUD Sierra Leone and EUMS could do.

GAP III Thematic Objectives	PRIORITY AREAS OF THE MIP			Description of targeted action
	Green Economy	Human development	Governance	
1 Fighting SGBV		X	X	The EUD and UN Agencies will formulate and launch the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to fight all violence against women and girls in Sierra Leone. The implementation of the Initiative will put CSOs at the center. The Spotlight Initiative will tackle four pillars: (i) legislative and policy framework; (ii) norms, attitudes and behaviours; (iii) quality essential services and (iv) CSOs and Women’s movement.
2 Advancing leadership and participation		X	X	The EUD and EUMS will support capacity building and communication initiatives, which aim to promote and improve the extent and effectiveness of women’s participation in politics and other leadership role for

				meaningful and measurable decision-making at different levels.
3 Empowering women	X	X	X	The EUD and EUMS will assist in lifting the institutional, cultural, financial and technical barriers that prevent women and girls from benefiting equally from skill-building, decent work and entrepreneurship opportunities offered by green transition and digital transformation.
4 Promoting SRHRR			X	The EUD will help address the institutional, cultural and technical barriers to the SRHRR of every individual, especially adolescents and youth and people with disabilities.
5 Green transition and digital	X	X	X	The EU is committed to join forces with EU Member States under the Team Europe Initiative: “Green Alliance with Sierra Leone”, which will foster:  (1) Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for jobs and growth; (2) Sustainable agriculture and seafood systems for employment, health and nutrition; (3) Restoring, managing and protecting terrestrial and marine biodiversity and ecosystems.
6 Integrating WPS			X	The EUD and EUMS will facilitate the networking or partnership between women’s rights organizations and non-State actors (such as CSOs, UN, private sectors) on domestic revenue mobilisation for emergency (i.e. disaster / pandemic) relief and recovery initiatives, which take into account special needs and priorities of women and girls in disadvantaged circumstances.

### ***3.2. Rationale for the chosen action(s):***

The EU commits to addressing the gender-biased norms and stereotypes, which are the root causes of gender inequality in different contexts in Sierra Leone. The application of the following principles justifies the rationale for the chosen action(s):

Gender-biased norms and stereotypes are deeply rooted in the culture of Sierra Leone for a very long time and, therefore, will not be easy to change with the conventional approach currently applied by the majority of actors. As the first principle, the EU and EUMS will pursue a gender-responsive path, aiming at cultural shift (as suggested by the CONCORD Europe) at political, institutional and local levels in both public and private settings. The EU and EUMS will support women's rights organizations to initiate and coordinate change with the legislative arm of government, judiciary and executive agencies.

Second, several forms of inequality are not easy to recognize, disclose, and address, especially in the cultural context of Sierra Leone. The EU, EUMS and other development partners will explore opportunities to work with the Statistics office to collect data/figures to exemplify these inequalities. The EU and EUMS will combat intersectional disparities based on sex (and sexual orientation), racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, or age. The EU and EUMS will support those living in underprivileged and emergency circumstances, where the inequalities, as mentioned earlier, tend to worsen.

The EU and EUMS will support a change process in implementing the GEWE policy on a larger scale and with a more significant budget, focusing on women rights organizations.

### ***3.3. Main indicators to measure results:***

Indicators to measure results of the EUD targeted G2 action(s) are guided by Part 3 of the Staff Working Document (SWD 2020) accompanying the GAP III.

Main indicators (to be refined during identification and formulation) may include:

- ✓ social accountability mechanism(s), established under the lead of women rights organization and engaged non-State actors to contribute to GBV legislative debate, formulation, enforcement, monitoring and feedback
- ✓ number of individuals benefiting from EU-funded programmes to counter GBV
- ✓ number of green jobs (disaggregated by sex) supported/sustained with EU support
- ✓ number of climate change and/or disaster risk reduction strategies developed, with EU support, based on gender analysis of risk, need, barriers, demand and supply
- ✓ number of specific emergency (such as disaster/health) relief and recovery initiatives that meet the needs of women and girls
- ✓ Number of actors involved in the first instance care of victims of GBV are prepared in a continuous manner (lawyers, judges, police, psychologists, medical personnel; NGOs)
- ✓ Number of gender focal points defined in each institution and ministerial department
- ✓ Number of public institutions and social actors leading initiatives to prevent GBV against women and girls
- ✓ Number of action plans against GBV developed and implemented in schools and communities
- ✓ Number of women's organizations and collectives strengthened in their role as stakeholders in alerting, preventing and responding to GBV, as well as in coordinating the fight against GBV
- ✓ Number of One-Stop-Centres in each district to handle GBV cases medically, psychosocially and legally
- ✓ Number of victims who received quality medical and psychosocial care
- ✓ Number of women/girls feeling well protected against GBV
- ✓ Number of teenage pregnancies
- ✓ Numbers of young mothers without genital mutilations

- ✓ Numbers of freely available contraceptives/ medication after sexual violence
- ✓ Numbers of specifically trained doctors/ med staff for GBV victims
- ✓ Numbers of departments for GBV in hospitals and health stations
- ✓ Numbers of working equipment in hospitals for forensic investigations of GBV crimes
- ✓ Numbers of qualified psychological caretakers/ consultants
- ✓ Percentage of sexual violence survivors who receive treatment within 72 hours
- ✓ Number of victims who received quality legal and judicial assistance in Freetown and in provinces/ districts
- ✓ Number of cases that have been taken to court and resulted in a court decision; disaggregated by type of decision (conviction, acquittal and dismissal)
- ✓ Number of victims who benefited from socio-economic and/or educational reintegration
- ✓ Number of functional coordination mechanisms for tackling GBV at national, provincial and territorial levels
- ✓ Number of central and decentralized stakeholders with technical capacities to coordinate the fight against GBV
- ✓ Level of coverage of national GBV data collection system
- ✓ Number of implemented (running) case management systems on district levels
- ✓ Number of hours of local FSU to spend on GBV cases increases
- ✓ Number of up-to-date Gender Modules in (police/ army/ education/ justice) training curricula
- ✓ Number of multisector meetings of supporting organisations and related government key actors (health, justice, gender and education ministries..)
- ✓ Proportion of stakeholders involved in combating GBV who feed into the database

#### ***3.4. Estimated amount:***

The envisaged allocation for Sierra Leone is over 18,000,000 of EU dedicated contribution through the Spotlight Initiative and CSO-LA call. This is in line with the MIP.

The indicative allocation under MIP for gender will respect the agreed targets (85% G1 and G2) within the three priority areas. The EUD targeted G2 action(s) is/are expected to contribute to policy/political dialogue and support public diplomacy actions on gender equality and women empowerment.

#### ***3.5. Collaboration among EUMS, Team Europe Initiative(s) and with other development partners:***

EUMS are encouraged to co-finance the targeted action(s). Opportunities will be explored with other development partners. EUMS are expected to (i) endorse the working-together principle in fighting all forms of discrimination against women and girls and (ii) join political and policy dialogues, as well as public diplomacy activities in the name of the EU or the identity of Team Europe.

The EU will remain in solid collaboration with UN agencies, such as UN Women, UNDP, ILO, UNICEF and UNFPA, and other partners, such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank.

In particular, a EU-UN Spotlight Initiative is under formulation and will be launched in early 2024.

#### 4. Engage in dialogue for gender equality and women empowerment

An internal dialogue will occur on the broader Donor Coordination Group on Gender Equality, the EU plus MS, and other development partners via the donor partner development group.

Dialogue with the government, especially the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs, will occur in the established gender sector-working group. The group will explore the establishment of a pooled fund that could support selected activities. Dialogue can also take place around the CEDAW reporting.

Dialogue with CSOs will occur through the CSO networks and UN Women network with CSOs at least once a year.

#### 5. Outreach and other communication / public diplomacy activities

Outreach, communication, and public diplomacy activities play a crucial role in achieving CLIP's strategic objectives. Within the scope of 5-7 years, the ambition of the EU is to create a socio-cultural shift to greater gender equality, bearing in mind that gender-biased norms and traditional stereotypes are the root causes of gender violence and discrimination in Sierra Leone. There is a need for more efforts towards **quality data** on different forms of gender-based violence and harmful practices to inform laws, policies and programmes. The EU and MS will seek to increase data sharing on gender issues to collect best practices and efficient ways of tackling gender inequality and discrimination. This could take the form of an annual seminar, regular publication of GEWE aggregated data and a **structured learning** series between the EU, EUMS and other development partners, potentially including government stakeholders. The EU and MS will also establish a **database of existing gender analysis** and other studies in Sierra Leone to identify gaps to update the EU Gender Country Profile or the Preliminary Gender Profile of UN Women. The EU and MS will increasingly coordinate on a media campaign to end FGM and early child marriage (including but not limited to 16-days of activism against violence against women and girls campaign, women's day, human rights day). Those activities could be put together under a Team Europe Initiative on Gender to give maximum visibility to this important topic.

#### 6. Technical Facility and/or financial resources allocated to support GAP III implementation

An allocation of 15,000,000 EUR is made for targeted support to Gender in the AAP 2023. A particular amount for technical assistance, including gender experts and additional studies, will be earmarked under the Support Measures for Sierra Leone.

Date: 30.11.23 .....

Signature by Head of Delegation: ..... 

