EU ROADMAP FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY IN <u>SIERRA LEONE</u>

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VALID FROM 2018 to 2020 – ENDORSED BY THE EUD

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CS: Civil Society
CSO: Civil Society Organisations
CBO: Community Based Organisations
CfP: Call for Proposals
CSO: Civil Society Organisation
CD: Capacity development
DPs: Development Partners
EE: Enabling environment
EU: European Union
EUD: European Union Delegation
GoSL: Government of Sierra Leone
INGOs: International Non – Governmental Organizations
MOFED: Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MS: Member States
NGOs: Non-Governmental Organisations
PEA: Political Economy Assessment
RM: Roadmap
SLANGO: Sierra Leonean Association of NGOs

Introduction

The September 2012 European Commission Communication on the "Roots of Democracy and Sustainable development, Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations" encourages the formulation of EU roadmaps to guide the process of engagement with civil society at country level. The EU and the Member States should develop country roadmaps for engagement with civil society organisations (CSOs), to improve the impact, predictability and visibility of EU actions, ensuring consistency and synergy throughout the various sectors covered by EU external relations. These roadmaps are also meant to trigger coordination and sharing of best practices with the Member States and other international actors, including simplification and harmonisation of funding requirements.

The Sierra Leone Roadmap is intended to present a shared EU and Member States analysis of the civil society landscape, its enabling environment as well as the obstacles, constraints and opportunities faced by CSOs. It also identifies EU priorities and concrete steps for engaging with and supporting CSOs in Sierra Leone, leading to concrete gains on synergies and ultimately to collective impact.

The country roadmap seeks to address the following priorities elaborated in the above-mentioned Commission communication:

- To enhance efforts to promote a conducive environment for CSOs in partner countries.

- To promote a meaningful and structured participation of CSOs in domestic policies of partner countries, in the EU programming cycle and international processes; and

- To increase local CSOs capacity to perform their roles as independent development actors more effectively.

The roadmap elaborates the environment of civil society (legal, political and socio-cultural context), the level of civil society engagement and representation, institutional and organizational (structures and coordination) of CSOs and civil society financing. The roadmap further identifies key priority areas, which will provide a guide for EU-CSO engagement and further be used as a reference document in improving cooperation and coordination between the EU, international partners and the CSOs in the period 2017-2020.

PART I – CIVIL SOCIETY CONTEXT IN SIERRA LEONE

The civil society landscape in Sierra Leone is 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 important roles during recent periods of hardship, by filling gaps in the provision of public services, in the absence of a functioning public sector. However, the severe Ebola epidemic (2014-2015) has profoundly affected the country in all areas including that of development cooperation. With the surge in humanitarian aid and the shift towards a top-down humanitarian logic, Sierra Leonean CS actors have been perceived by development partners (DPs) more as implementing entities of already designed strategies and programmes, rather than development actors in their own right. Indeed, with the Ebola crisis, significant amounts of foreign aid have been channelled through INGOs with local CSOs being used as sub-contractors, most of the funding targeting the direct provision of service. The management of funds by the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) has attracted criticism and bred tensions with local service-providing CSOs, which perceive governmental attempts at coordinating assistance as the revival of state control mechanisms.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT – A revised NGO policy has been in preparation in the past years, with DPs and CSOs being invited to comment upon on a number of occasions. A fifth draft is being finalised and could possibly be presented as a bill for the Parliament to vote. Yet, the international and local CSO community continues to voice concern over potential changes in the policy that risk further restraining the space for civil society to operate freely, despite progressive Constitutional provisions and the passing of the Access to Information Bill in 2013. The 1965 Public Order Act (which addresses libel and defamation issues) and the Treason of State Offence Act 1965 have been critical points on the agenda for political dialogue over civil society in the past years. Registration procedures for CSOs include their mandatory adhesion to SLANGO (The Sierra Leonean Association of NGOs), annual reporting and information disclosure obligations toward line ministries and MOFED (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development), and annual registration. These cumbersome procedures are seen more as an obstacle by CSOs, as

they favour control over facilitation of civil society activities, and contribute to maintaining, and even deepening, gaps of administrative influence where corrupt practices occur.

PARTICIPATION – Despite a rise in GoSL consultations with CSOs, it is uncertain whether CS inputs are followed up and have a real impact. There is no institutional framework, let alone accountability mechanisms, regulating CS engagement and most CSOs do not have the required skills and resources to follow their proposals down to adoption and implementation. Moreover, the fragmentation of CSOs makes it difficult to aggregate CS concerns and speak with one coordinated and legitimate voice. Consultations are ad-hoc and reflection of their results into government policy is often unclear with CS representatives being often hand-picked by the GoSL. The lack of strong evidence-based advocacy skills, effective information & research as well as limited technical expertise within CSOs to back up their claims, works to the detriment of CSOs, making it easier for the GoSL to dismiss CSOs claims. Furthermore, as financial foundations of most CSOs are weak, they tend to prioritise the search for funds, which prevents them from developing specialization. As a result, the sector is characterized by constant expansions and changes of mandates as donor funding priorities evolve.

In Sierra Leone whilst the government has enacted a range of laws providing *protection for women and girls*, the implementation of these laws and support for women's CSOs is weak. Currently there is a real risk of reversals in progress on gender equality. The shift from long-term and 'core' funding for national organisations to short-term, project-based funding channeled through INGO's has been detrimental to the ability of women's organisations to secure socially transformative outcomes. There is an overall lack of coordination of women's activities from GoSL and there are few formal spaces for women's organisations to engage directly with the government.

CAPACITY – Sierra Leonean CSOs face several capacity constraints to perform their roles, spanning from weak (or non-existent) organisational governance, weak capacity below the top management, personalised structures and limited formalised management systems. Beyond the afore-mentioned constraints in evidence based advocacy, there is very little evidence of strategic planning, annual budgeting and financial control. This lack of organisation is limited by resource, both financial and human, scarcity. Coordination is also very weak, hampered by the competition for funds, and SLANGO, doesn't fulfil its mission to coordinate the activities of its member NGO. Confronted with increasing questioning from its constituencies, it also faces their resistance to adhere to a common Code of Conduct. Other networks and umbrella organisations exist, either issue or sector-based, and/or established or promoted by individual donors. Examples of direct contractual relationships between DPs and Sierra Leonean CSOs are limited, as most DPs continue to channel the majority of their funds through INGOs, concerned over the capacity of SL CSOs to meet their accountability requirements. Last but not least, capacity development efforts by INGOs and DPs towards SL CSOs are very limited, and INGOs continue to work with SL CSOs as sub-contractors of their programmes.

Whilst these issues impact on all CSO's, the *impact on organisations which work towards gender equality is even more pronounced*. Women's CSOs are 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.

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

PRIORITY 1. The EU contributes to an enabling environment for CS actors in Sierra Leone, with a particular emphasis on the legal framework, dialogue and coordination.		
CHALLENGE 1: The new legislation to be adopted by the GoSL risks further restricting the space for CSOs. Mutual knowledge and working relationships between Development Partners (DP) and Civil Society (CS) as well as among DP working on CS-related issues, are weak and limited to funding patterns .		
SUB-PRIORITIES	**ACTIONS**	**MEANS AND ACTORS (INSTRUMENT)**
1.1 Contribute to the improvement of the **legal framework**	Support the GoSL and Civil Society in the process of adopting a new **NGO Policy** that expresses the best interests of both, monitoring possible risks and trends towards shrinking space.	EU Member States and EU Delegation, as well as other DPs including, through policy and political dialogue, including the pre-legislative sessions.
	Support the GoSL and Civil Society in the review, monitoring and eventual update of other elements of the **legal framework related to civil society**. This includes, among others: the public order act, the treason and state offences act, the secrecy provisions of the CS general orders, the freedom of information and of expression act, and the issue of the service level agreements.	EU Member States and EU Delgation, and other DPs through policy and political dialogue (and, if needed, specific bilateral funds allocated to this action).
1.2 Enhance **coordination among DP** on CS issues **and with CS actors**	Exploring the option of a coordination group **on CS** (including, but not limited to, the EUD, Ireland, UK, Germany, UNDP and other interested DPs, aiming at discussing both technical and political issues, such as the enabling environment), including a simple information-sharing tool on data related to each donor's implementation agenda.	EUD and other DPs to explore – no technical or financial instrument is needed.
	Establish **regular contacts between EU and CS** actors on policy-related issues, through initiatives such as the organisation of an annual CS Forum/meeting (e.g. with all grantees and new CS actors of interest).	EUD (or any other DP interested in leading) – no technical or financial instrument is needed, other than logistics.
	Use the **District presence** that will be set up within the bilateral programme EU CS/LA to seek enhanced DP coordination at a district level on a pilot basis.	EUD (CS/LA bilateral programme).
PRIORITY 2. The EU encourages an enhanced capacity of Sierra Leonean CSOs in order to become actors of development.		
CHALLENGE 2: The independence, capacity and institutional organisation of the Sierra Leone Association of NGOs (SLANGO) is put into question by most of DP and CS actors; moreover, the managerial, organizational and technical capacities of SL CSOs are weak, due to both external (lack of investment in capacities of SL CSOs by INGOs and other DP) and internal (lack of management and capacity development culture within SL CSOs) factors.		
SUB-PRIORITIES	**ACTIONS**	**MEANS AND ACTORS (INSTRUMENT)**
2.1 Enhance CSOs' coordination.	▪ Support an **institutional assessment of SLANGO,** including: (i) analysis (and possible re-thinking) of its mandate, leadership, organisational capacities, legitimacy and representativeness vis-à-vis its constituencies and its relations and autonomy vis-à-vis the GoSL and; (ii) recommend strategies to strengthen its representativeness and also independence, analysing the feasibility of those strategies. ▪ Consider support to alternative Civil Society platforms/networks as they emerge that could serve the needs of NNGOs/CSOs ▪ Follow up on 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. ▪ Support coordination efforts to women's CS's in addition to CSOs working on women and girls' rights issues.	EUD ▪ TA funded through the CSO/LA support measures ▪ Policy and political dialogue ▪ EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) II
2.2 Develop	**Capacities to be strengthened include:**	▪ EUD, Irish Aid, GIZ and DFID (CfP and

CSOs' managerial, organisational technical and resource mobilisation capacities.	▪ Internal governance (including information management systems), transparency and accountability. (organisational autonomy, coherence of mandate, functional boundaries, reliable procedures). ▪ Project design, financial and operational management, reporting, development planning; ▪ Engagement skills vis-à-vis public authorities (national and local), especially on citizen-led initiatives during the whole public policy cycle, including evidence-based advocacy and skills related to dialogue and mediation with public actors. ▪ Collaborative work with other CSOs. ▪ Engagement in relation to the private sector and its role in investing and contributing to sustainable growth and job creation **Actions include:** ▪ Inclusion/development of specialized training components in CfP and TA projects to be launched (e.g. training/information before CfP launches, training for CSOs at concept note stage, integration of understanding and interaction with civil society in trainings for civil servants, etc.). ▪ Request CSOs to include a CD component in projects submitted for funding; ▪ Provide financial resources (together with support/mentoring) to SL CSOs particularly grass roots and CBOs to implement grassroots projects. ▪ Ring fenced budget for (i) organisational capacity building support for women's CSO's (ii) senior-level management training for women in civil society. ▪ Give increased priority to funding to: (i) governance roles and (ii) capacity development of CSOs. ▪ Provide training to trainers to SL CSOs in matters related to relations to their constituencies, grassroots CSOs & CBOs strengthening and in intra-CS collaboration.	TA projects) ▪ EU CS/LA bilateral programme ▪ CSO/LA support measures
2.3 Increase contribution of local CSOs to the definition and implementation of international cooperation.	**Where feasible, the following principles should be integrated in CfP** to be launched by the EUD (and, potentially, by other DPs) ▪ Insertion, in CfP, of "sub-granting" components, whereby local actors can access funding to implement actions; ▪ Request the creation of consortia/partnership with established local partners (SL CSOs); ▪ Request, where feasible, a specific percentage of the total budget to be managed by local partners; ▪ Request a minimum percentage of activities to be implemented by local partners; ▪ Aim to award a minimum number of actions/grants to be led by local CSOs; ▪ Lower the minimum threshold for grants (if allowed and feasible) for a part of the budget to be awarded; ▪ Limit the percentage of direct implementation by INGOs; ▪ Request CSOs to include a CD component in projects submitted for funding (see 2.2). ▪ 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; especially in infrastructure projects. Mainstream gender issues in local CS initiatives and encourage the participation of women in leadership positions .	EUD ▪ CSO/LA 2017 CfP ▪ EIDHR 2017 CfP ▪ EU bilateral CS/LA programme (2018/2019) "Boosting agriculture for food security programme" (BAFS) 3 CfPs (2017/18)DFID CfP (Social Accountability Programme)

SUB-PRIORITIES	ACTIONS	MEANS AND ACTORS (INSTRUMENT)
2.4 The EU reinforces CS mainstreaming by enhancing its **knowledge/ interaction with local CS** actors in focal sectors specifically governance	▪ Carry out specific CSO mappings 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 them in planned programmes. ▪ 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)).	▪ "Boosting agriculture for food security programme" (BAFS) ▪ Action taken under the GAPII ▪ Complementary measures to the budget support within the "State Building Contract" ▪ World Bank ("PFM improvement and consolidation project") Other EUD bilateral programmes
2.5. Promote EU/CSO joint work on gender equality capacity development	▪ 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.	▪ GAP II ▪ GIZ: Working on allocating mining revenue in mining areas towards gender related projects.

PRIORITY 3. The EU promotes an enhanced participation of CS in the public space, with a particular emphasis on the local level, where windows of opportunity exist for enhanced engagement.

CHALLENGE 3: participation of CS in the public space is limited, due to a) a lack of both public sector and CSOs capacities to engage with each other, b) a lack of mutual knowledge between CS and sector and c) the lack of initiatives at national, regional and local level to identify areas for mutual cooperation.

SUB-PRIORITIES	ACTIONS	MEANS AND ACTORS (INSTRUMENT)
3.1 Reinforce **public sector capacities** to better engage with CSOs	▪ Explore future strengthening of capacities of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, as well as the Local Government Service Commission and other relevant MDAs, especially when addressing CS issues and local consultations; ▪ Explore future provision of **capacity development to LCs** on a) CS participation in the public policy cycle and on CS roles (including social accountability) and on b) engaging on consultation and dialogue with CS as well as sharing participative experiences on local public policies with relevant local actors (private sector, CSOs, communities).	▪ EUD, as part of CS/LA bilateral programme ▪ DFID
3.2 Promote **collaboration between public sector and CS**, particularly at local level	▪ Identification of **areas suitable for enhanced coordination between CS and LCs** (identifying actors and needs, preparing the ground for the CS GG bilateral programme); in this, carrying out a regional mapping, analysing a) their legal frameworks, b) opportunities for CS/Public sector cooperation and c) relevant actors (public/private) per sector.	EUD CS/LA bilateral programme .
	National level initiatives ▪ Identify and take stock of engagement initiatives, such as the Natural Resources Plans, where CS actors have been involved with Public Actors, to be used as examples/reference for national consultations	▪ EU CS/LA programme. ▪ GIZ ("Let the People Talk" programme – focused on the mining sector;

	Initiatives leading to promote joint actions between LAs and Civil society building upon the Territorial Approach to Local Development (TALD) ▪ Improve mutual knowledge and exchange of information between CSOs and LAs (e.g., on budgets and action plans). ● Define a set of areas where joint LA/CSO actions should be encouraged to improve strategic dialogue and service delivery. ● Provision of capacity development to CSOs and LA on participation in the public policy cycle and on consultation and dialogue with the public sector. Support to civil society-led initiatives aimed at improving inclusive social and economic service delivery.	implemented through the local NGO Campaign for Good Governance - CGG). ▪ EUD (Boosting Agriculture for Food Security (BAFS) Programme): call for proposals to be launched. ▪ DFID social accountability programme	
	Initiatives related to Local Development Plans (LDPs) ▪ 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 local actors (e.g. private sector). ▪ Promote CS participation in development/update of annual LDPs at Local Council level. ▪ Provide facilitation support to establish formal consultation frameworks between the CSOs/CBOs and LAs.		
3.3 Promote **accountability of public actors** (including their public policies and services).	▪ Empower CBOs and youth organizations at the local/rural level to monitor access and quality of **public service delivery** (social accountability) as a tool to pressure providers into better delivering services.	UK (SABI programme, including TA and a specific CfP)	
	▪ **Empower women's CSOs and CBO's 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.	Means and actor to be defined	
	▪ Promote the monitoring by CSOs of the local budget and **investments linked to LDP of Local Councils**.	EU (CS/LA bilateral programme)	
	▪ Support CS involvement across the **electoral cycle** (civic education, observation, inclusiveness etc). ▪ Allocate % of funding for women's CSO's 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.	▪ EUD (EIDHR or CSO/LA grant) ▪ Ireland and UK (policy dialogue/CfP) ▪ Other actors to be identified	
	Other potential areas of intervention in relation to public accountability are: ▪ Parliamentary control and surveillance and prisons monitoring. ▪ 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). ● Monitoring women and youth participation in local development/budget planning processes and in actions promoting accountability of LC and service delivery. ▪ Justice sector monitoring, including the informal justice sector (mediation)/paralegal programmes.	▪ Potential GIZ programme on CS activism and mining (advocacy, public discourse) ▪ EUD (direct grant to Prison Watch) ▪ UK Justice Programme ▪ Other actors and tools to be defined in a later stage	

PART III– FOLLOW-UP ON THE PROCESS AND STRATEGY

PROCESS INDICATORS	
INDICATOR (and target)	*BASE LINE INFORMATION AND FURTHER COMMENTS*
Involvement of MS in the RM (target: MS present in the country are actively involved in the RM process).	*Consultations took place, for the RM drafting process, with:* - *The 3 EU MS present in the country: Ireland, Germany and the UK.* - *The WB and UNDP, both active in the support to CS.*
Level of consultations held with CSOs regarding the RM (target: The RM entails consultations with a broad range of local CSOs).	*The RM builds on the pre-feasibility assessment and formulation of the good governance programme, where consultation with INGOs and NNGOs took place (individual meetings and 3 focus groups, covering the South and East of the country). Additional individual meetings with INGOs, SL NGOs and a Focus group in the North of the country were organised.*
Complementarity of RM vis-à-vis related EU and other DPs processes (target: RM is complementary to the HR and Democracy Country Strategy, Right Based Approach and the Gender Action Plan).	*Human Rights and Democracy country strategies are in the process of being drafted and coordination with the Roadmap needs to be enhanced; in this, consultations took place with the Political section; the Gender action plan is in the process of being drafted – consultation took place with the Gender consultant in charge of its drafting.*

OUTCOME INDICATORS	
PRIORITIES and SUB-PRIORITIES (SP)	*INDICATORS*
PRIORITY 1. The EU contributes to an enabling environment for CS actors in Sierra Leone, with a particular emphasis on legal and coordination-related issues	
SP 1.1 Contribute to the improvement of the **legal framework** regulating the registration and functioning of CS actors.	*Level of compliance of the Sierra Leonean (horizontal and sectorial) legislation on CSOs with CS-related enabling environment principles.*
SP 1.2 Enhance **coordination among DP** on CS issues **and with CS actors**	*Number 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.*
PRIORITY 2. The EU encourages an enhanced role of Sierra Leonean CSOs as integral actors of development.	
SP 2.1 Enhance CSOs' coordination through the assessment and eventual strengthening of the **CSOs coordination body and support to other coordination fora.**	*Reviewed mandate, leadership, organisational capacities, legitimacy and representativeness of SLANGO; emergence of other relevant entities active on CSO coordination; number of reinforcement initiatives for SLANGO and/or other entities active in CSO coordination.*
SP 2.2 Develop **CSOs' managerial, organizational and technical capacities** in order for them to become capable and credible actors.	*Percentage of funds/projects awarded through grants/service contracts including initiatives aiming at strengthening SL CSOs.*
SP 2.3 The EU reinforces CS mainstreaming through the enhancement of its **knowledge of and interaction with local CS** actors.	*Level of EUD knowledge of the CSOs active on sectors relevant for EU intervention, such as Agriculture/Rural Development or Public Finance and level of CS mainstreaming into EU activities in them.*
PRIORITY 3. The EU promotes dynamics leading to an enhanced participation of CS in the public space, both horizontally and in specific sectors of activity.	
3.1 Reinforce **public actors' capacities** for better CSOs engagement	*Number of EU-funded initiatives aiming at reinforcing public actors' skills around CS/PS collaboration.*
SP 3.2 Promote **collaboration between public sector and CS**, particularly at local level	*Number of EU-funded initiatives aiming at identifying suitable areas for coordination between CSOs and Local Councils.* *Number of concrete initiatives, stemming out of EU-funded activities, having as a focus the joint work between public sector and CS both at local (around Local Development Plans) and national (highlighting initiatives having worked nationwide) levels.*
SP 3.3 Promote **accountability of public actors** (including their public policies and services).	*Number of EU-funded initiatives having as a goal the capacity development and/or actual implication of CS actors in monitoring public service, both at local and national levels.*