

ORIGINAL

Agreement N° ACT-61774

FINANCING AGREEMENT
between
THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION
and
THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

EU-UN Spotlight initiative to fight all violence against women and girls in Sierra Leone



FINANCING AGREEMENT

The European Commission, hereinafter referred to as the "**Commission**", acting on behalf of the European Union, hereinafter referred to as the "**EU**",

of the one part, and

The Republic of Sierra Leone hereinafter referred to as the "**Partner**", represented by the Ministry of Finance,

of the other part, hereinafter collectively referred to as the "**Parties**",
have agreed as follows:

Article 1 - Financing of the Action

- 1.1. The Partner agrees that the EU finances the implementation of the following action described in Annex I (Technical and Administrative Provisions): EU-UN Spotlight initiative to fight all violence against women and girls in Sierra Leone, OPSYS number ACT 61774 (the "Action").
- 1.2. The total estimated cost of this Action is EUR 15 000 000 and the maximum EU contribution to this Action is set at EUR 15 000 000.

Article 2 – Execution period

- 2.1 The execution period of this Financing Agreement shall commence on the date of the entry into force of this Financing Agreement and cover the implementation and closure of all the activities described in Annex I (Technical and Administrative Provisions).
- 2.2 The effective end date of the execution period of this Financing Agreement shall be communicated by the Commission, in writing, to the Partner.

Article 3 – General obligations

- 3.1 The Partner and the EU commit to engage in a constructive political dialogue at the appropriate level on the implementation of this Financing Agreement. This dialogue may form a part of the broader political dialogue, as provided for in Article 8 of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement, or legal instrument replacing the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement.
- 3.2 In the context of the implementation of the Action, the Partner shall:
 - a) cooperate with the Commission or the entity entrusted by the latter in providing any information and administrative, logistical or political support useful for the implementation of the Action;

- b) agree that documents and information related to the Action and held by any entity may be forwarded to the Commission, by that entity, for the sole purpose of implementing this or another Financing Agreement;
 - c) inform immediately the Commission of any element brought to the Partner's attention, which arouses suspicions of irregularities, fraud or corruption in relation to the implementation of the Financing Agreement;
 - d) where relevant, undertake to take every appropriate measure to prevent, detect and punish any practices of active or passive corruption during the implementation of the Financing Agreement;
 - e) assist the Commission and the entity entrusted by the latter, where relevant, in ensuring visibility of the EU in the implementation of the Action.
- 3.3 The Commission and the Partner shall preserve the confidentiality of any document, information or other material directly related to the implementation of this Financing Agreement that is classified as confidential. The foregoing is without prejudice to Article 6. The Parties shall obtain each other's prior written consent before publicly disclosing such information. The Parties shall remain bound by the confidentiality until five years after the end of the execution period.
- 3.4 The Commission shall regularly inform the Partner of the implementation of activities described in Annex I (Technical and Administrative Provisions).
- 3.5 The Commission will implement the Action in accordance with applicable EU law (including, but not limited to, the EU Financial Regulations and the EU Treaties).
- 3.6 The Parties shall endeavour to settle amicably any disputes or complaints relating to the interpretation, application or validity of this Financing Agreement, including its existence or termination.

Article 4 - Right of establishment and residence

- 4.1 Where required by the nature of the contracts or agreements signed within the framework of the Action, the Partner shall entitle natural and legal persons participating in award procedures with a provisional right of establishment and residence in the Partner's territory(ies). This right shall remain valid for one month after the contract or agreement is awarded.
- 4.2 The Partner shall also entitle recipients of EU funds and natural persons whose services are required for the performance of this Action and members of their families with similar rights during the implementation of the Action.
- 4.3 Where a visa facilitation agreement is applicable, its provisions shall apply as well. In all other cases, the Partner shall apply its most favourable visa regime or establish facilitating procedures for issuing visas for natural persons and persons representing legal persons participating in award procedures.

Article 5 - Tax and customs provisions and foreign exchange arrangements

- 5.1 Where the Commission and the Partner have agreed in another agreement to more detailed provisions on this subject, these provisions shall apply as well.

- 5.2 The Partner undertakes to authorise the import or purchase of the foreign currency necessary for the implementation of the Action. It also undertakes to apply its national foreign exchange regulations in a non-discriminatory manner to the natural and legal persons participating in implementing contracts and agreements signed within the framework of the Action.

Article 6 – Verifications and checks by the Commission, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the European Public Prosecutor Office (EPPO) and the European Court of Auditors

- 6.1 The Partner shall assist and support the verifications and checks carried out by the Commission, OLAF, EPPO and the European Court of Auditors and their authorised agents at their request.

The Partner agrees to the Commission, EPPO, OLAF and the European Court of Auditors conducting documentary and on-the-spot controls on the use made of EU financing under the activities under this Financing Agreement and carrying out a full audit, if necessary, on the basis of supporting documents of accounts and accounting documents and any other documents relating to the financing of the activities, throughout the duration of this Financing Agreement and for five years from the end of the execution period.

- 6.2 The Partner also agrees that EPPO and OLAF may carry out on-the-spot checks and verifications in accordance with the procedures laid down in EU law for the protection of the EU's financial interests against fraud and other irregularities.

To that end, the Partner shall grant officials of the Commission, EPPO, OLAF and the European Court of Auditors and their authorised agents access to sites and premises at which operations financed under this Financing Agreement are carried out, including their computer systems, and to any documents and computerised data concerning the technical and financial management of those operations, and to take every appropriate measure to facilitate their work. Access by authorised agents of the Commission, EPPO, OLAF and the European Court of Auditors shall be granted on conditions of strict confidentiality with regard to third parties, without prejudice to public law obligations to which they are subject. Documents must be accessible and filed in a manner permitting easy inspection, the Partner being bound to inform the Commission, EPPO, OLAF or the European Court of Auditors of the exact location at which they are kept.

- 6.3 The Partner shall be notified of on the spot missions by agents appointed by the Commission, OLAF or the European Court of Auditors.

Article 7 – Protection of personal data

- 7.1 The Partner shall comply with the obligations laid down in this article where the Commission provides personal data to the Partner, for example in the context of award procedures and contracts or agreements managed by the Commission.

- 7.2 The Partner shall ensure an appropriate protection of personal data. Personal data means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person.

Personal data shall be:

- a) processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject;
- b) collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes;
- c) adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they

are processed;

- d) accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date;
- e) processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data and
- f) kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed. Personal data included in documents to be kept by the Partner in accordance with Article 6.1 has to be deleted five years after the end of the execution period..

Any operation involving the processing of personal data, such as collection, recording, organisation, storage, adaption or alteration, retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure, erasure or destruction, shall be based on rules and procedures of the Partner and shall only be done as far as it is necessary for the implementation of this Financing Agreement.

In particular, the Partner shall take appropriate technical and organisational security measures concerning the risks inherent in any such operation and the nature of the information relating to the natural person concerned, in order to:

- a) prevent any unauthorised person from gaining access to computer systems performing such operations, and especially unauthorised reading, copying, alteration or removal of storage media; unauthorised data input as well as any unauthorised disclosure, alteration or erasure of stored information;
- b) ensure that authorised users of an IT system performing such operations can access only the information to which their access right refers;
- c) design its organisational structure in such a way that it meets the above requirements.

Article 8 - Amendment

- 8.1 Any amendment to this Financing Agreement shall be made in writing, including through an exchange of letters.

Article 9 - Suspension

- 9.1 The Commission may suspend the Financing Agreement without prior notice in the following cases:

- a) the Partner breaches any obligation set under this Financing Agreement;
- b) the Partner fails to observe the principles of international law, including the principles as referred to in the United Nations Charter, the principles of democracy, the rule of law or good governance, or respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms or for internationally recognised nuclear safety standards or in serious cases of corruption;
- c) force majeure. "Force majeure" shall mean any unforeseeable and exceptional situation or event beyond the Parties' control which prevents either of them from fulfilling any of their obligations, not attributable to error or negligence on their part (or the part of their contractors, agents or employees) and proves insurmountable in spite of all due diligence.

Neither of the Parties shall be held liable for breach of its obligations under this Financing Agreement if it is prevented from fulfilling them by force majeure, provided it takes measures to minimise any possible damage.

- d) In cases such as crisis or change of position at national level (e.g. on its policy priorities).

- 9.2 The Commission may take any appropriate precautionary measure before suspending.
- 9.3 The consequences of such suspension on the Action shall be analysed and determined on a case by case basis, including the impact on on-going implementing contracts and agreements.
- 9.4 A suspension of this Financing Agreement is without prejudice to the termination of this Financing Agreement in accordance with Article 10.
- 9.5 The Parties shall resume the implementation of the Financing Agreement once the conditions allow. This is without prejudice to any amendments of this Financing Agreement, which may be necessary to adapt the Action to the new implementing conditions, including, if possible, the extension of the execution period, or the termination of this Financing Agreement in accordance with Article 10.

Article 10 - Termination

- 10.1 If the issues which led to the suspension of this Financing Agreement have not been resolved within a maximum period of 180 days, either party may terminate this Financing Agreement at 30 days' notice.
- 10.2 Without prejudice to Article 10.1 above, if at any time, the Commission believes that the purpose of this Financing Agreement can no longer effectively or appropriately be performed, this Financing Agreement may be terminated by serving (30) thirty days written motivated notice.
- 10.3 The consequences of such terminations on the ongoing activities may be analysed, where relevant, and determined on a case by case basis.

Article 11 - Addresses

All communications concerning the implementation of this Financing Agreement shall be in writing, shall refer expressly to this Action as identified in Article 1.1 and shall be sent to the following addresses:

a) for the Commission

Head of Delegation

Delegation of the European Union to Sierra Leone

Leicester Peak, Freetown – Sierra Leone

b) for the Partner

Minister of Finance

Ministry of Finance

Treasury Building, George Street

Freetown – Sierra Leone

Article 12 - Annexes

The following Annex forms an integral part of this Financing Agreement:

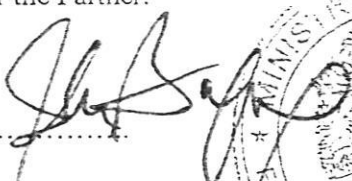

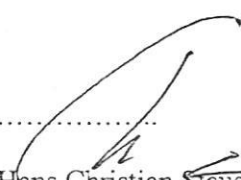

a) Annex I: Technical and Administrative Provisions.

In case of conflict between the body of this Financing Agreement and any of its Annexes, the body of this Financing Agreement shall prevail.

Article 13 – Entry into force

This Financing Agreement shall enter into force on the date on which the Commission receives a notification from the Partner confirming the completion of the internal procedures of the Partner necessary for its entry into force. The Commission shall inform the Partner of the date of the receipt of this notification. This Financing Agreement shall not enter into force if such a notification is not received by the Commission by 31 December 2024.

Done in two original copies, one copy being handed to the Commission and one to the Partner.

<p>For the Partner:</p>   <p>Mr Sheku Bangura</p> <p>Hon. Minister of Finance</p> <p>Freetown 17/04/2024</p>	<p>For the Commission:</p>   <p>Hans Christian Stausboll</p> <p>Acting Director INTPA.A</p> <p>Brussels 14/02/2024</p>
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ANNEX I OF THE FINANCING AGREEMENT NO ACT-61774

TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

1.1. Summary of the Action

The Spotlight Initiative is an ambitious multi-year partnership between the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG), here-included traditional harmful practices (HP) such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C).

The action will be implemented by the United Nations in partnership with Civil Society Organisations, national and sub-national authorities. This initiative builds on lessons learnt from the global EU-UN flagship programme and aims to scale resources, promote evidence-based programmes, and intensify focused action in key areas for the country. It aims directly at advancing SDG 5 “Gender Equality”.

The proposed action aligns with Sierra Leone’s Medium Term National Development Plan 2019-2023, specifically target 4/Cluster 5 which foresees the drastic reduction “by more than 50% of the number of women experiencing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) compared to 2018”. It will contribute to the achievement of the EU – Sierra Leone Multi Annual Indicative Programme Priority Area 3 “Governance” and Specific Objective 3 “Improved social, economic and political participation of women, girls, youths and vulnerable groups in general. Sexual reproductive health rights and fight against sexual and gender based violence/FGM supported”.

The overall objective of the Spotlight Initiative is that “All women and girls in Sierra Leone, particularly the most vulnerable, live a life free of violence and harmful practices, collectively described as violence against women and girls (VAWG)”.

Addressing violence against women and girls is a multi-faceted issue. It affects all people – particularly women and girls – in different ways and is highly context-specific. The Spotlight Initiative theory of change promotes a comprehensive multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional approach centred around 4 outcome areas: i) laws, policies and institutions (including data collection and analysis to support decision making), ii) prevention and social norms change, iii) response (services for survivors and accountability of perpetrators) as well as iv) support to and partnership with the women’s movement to advance women’s rights. This holistic strategy harnesses data, expertise and best practices to ensure that programmes promote evidence-based measures proven to work.

A part of the action will be co-implemented by UN agencies, with funds pooled with the UN Multi Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO) acting as the Administrative Agent. As a joint UN Programme, the Spotlight Initiative will be implemented in line with UN Joint Programming and UN Development System reform principles and under the responsibility of the UN Resident Coordinator. A governance structure has been designed to ensure a “whole government, high level” approach and effective coordination.

Civil Society plays a central role in the fight against VAWG/HP and as such it has a central role both in the design and in the implementation of the programme, both as part of the programme governance structure and as recipient of programme funds.

This Action pursues a Team Europe approach with Ireland as a co-funder of UN Women and potential third party contributor to the grant to civil society.