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THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX III

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the annual action plan in favour of Sri Lanka for 2024

Strengthening the Sri Lankan Civil Society as Actors of Development and Governance

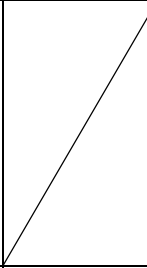
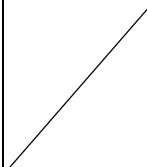
ANNUAL MEASURE

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and measures in the sense of Article 24 of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act | Strengthening the Sri Lankan Civil Society as Actors of Development and Governance OPSYS number: ACT- 62616 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (<u>NDICI-Global Europe</u>) |
| 2. Team Europe Initiative | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting (inter alia) TEI. |
| 3. Zone benefiting from the action | The action shall be carried out in Sri Lanka |
| 4. Programming document | Multiannual indicative programme for Sri Lanka for the period 2021-2027 |
| 5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results | Measures in favour of civil society (relevant (indirectly) for all MIP Objectives and Expected Results for Sri Lanka) |
| PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION | |
| 6. Priority Area(s), sectors | Not applicable |
| 7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) | Main SDG (1 only): 17 (partnerships for the goals) Other significant SDGs (up to 9) and where appropriate, targets: SDG 5: gender equality SDG 10: Reduced inequalities |
| 8 a) DAC code(s) | DAC code – 43010: multi-sector |
| 8 b) Main Delivery Channel | 20000 NGOs and civil society |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. Targets | <input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance | | | |
| 10. Markers (from DAC form) | General policy objective @ | Not targeted | Significant objective | Principal objective |
| | Participation development/good governance | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | Aid to environment @ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | | | |
| | Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Disaster Risk Reduction @ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Inclusion of persons with Disabilities @ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Nutrition @ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | RIO Convention markers | Not targeted | Significant objective | Principal objective |
| | Biological diversity @ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Combat desertification @ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Climate change mitigation @ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Climate change adaptation @ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Internal markers and Tags | Policy objectives | Not targeted | Significant objective | Principal objective |
| | Digitalisation @ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship digital skills/literacy digital services | YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |  |
| | Connectivity @ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | transport people2people energy | YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |  |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | digital connectivity | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Migration @ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Reduction of Inequalities @ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Covid-19 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| BUDGET INFORMATION | | | | |
| 12. Amounts concerned | Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020131 Total estimated cost: EUR 3 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 3 000 000 | | | |
| MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION | | | | |
| 13. Type of financing | Direct management through: - Procurement and - Grants | | | |
| 14. Type of measure | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation facility <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Measures in favour of Civil Society | | | |

1.2 Summary of the Action

Civil society in Sri Lanka is rich and diverse in terms of history, size, areas of work, capacities, and resources. The civic space has largely remained dynamic in Sri Lanka as reflected in the mass demonstrations of the first half of 2022. However, recently passed legislations, such as the Online Safety Act or those in the making such as the NGO Bill could have potentially a bearing on the functioning of civil society organisations (CSOs). Some CSOs report about significant constraints, especially those working on sensitive topics.

In this context, the action “Strengthening the Sri Lankan Civil Society as Actors of Development and Governance” will strengthen the capacity of CSOs, in particular regarding the organisational/institutional advocacy and management skills, targeting in particular community-based organisations, women and youth associations outside Colombo and engaged in the priority areas of the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2021-2027. The support will be provided in line with the EU-Sri Lanka CSOs Roadmap 2021-2024, the Human Rights and Democracy Country Strategy for Sri Lanka 2021-2024 as well as the Country-Level Implementation Plan (CLIP) for the Gender Action Plan (GAP) III. Besides providing organisational, advocacy, networking and other capacity development, the action will be also used to enable a structured dialogue between CSOs and the EU as well as dialogue with the Sri Lanka authorities and to support implementation of service delivery actions in the context of the economic crisis through a small grants' facility. Civil society will be supported to be seen as a credible partner in development, which at the time of the recovery from the economic crisis has particular relevance in income generation and contribution to social support and protection.

The action will be implemented through service and grant contracts. As a fall-back option implementation through indirect management with an international organisation with partner/s having expertise and experience on similar interventions and having established links with the relevant stakeholders, will be considered.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

Civil society in Sri Lanka is rich and diverse in terms of size, areas of work and capacities and resources. According to some CSOs, the enabling environment for those organisations working on sensitive issues has deteriorated in recent years, and the relationship between these CSOs and public authorities in Sri Lanka has at times being

strained. There are continuing reports of enhanced surveillance by police and security forces. Organisations that are predominantly development oriented maintain a better working relationship with government authorities. In some cases, these relationships have graduated to substantive collaborations and partnerships with a high degree of engagement and trust on the part of the government counterpart, as exemplified notably in the health sector during the Covid-19 pandemic or in the fight against gender-based violence. Local organisations operating at the district level often have a closer relationship with the state bureaucracy given their proximity, frequency of interactions and trust earned over time. Some of these organisations expanded the scope of their development work into more sensitive themes such as women's participation in politics and civic roles in local governance. The space for such collaborative work at the local level shows potential for expansion. This is an important 'bridge' between the public authorities and CSOs, which could be further promoted.

In some cases, these collaborations have evolved into some form of policy dialogue between civil society and governmental agencies at various levels, for instance in the areas of environment, gender equality, good governance or SME development just to name a few.

The NGO Secretariat ensures that all NGOs functioning in Sri Lanka are registered and functioning within the frame of government policies. It has been placed under the purview of the Ministry of Public Security since July 2022. NGOs have reported being subjected to burdensome reporting requirements on projects activities, finances and beneficiaries. NGOs receiving foreign funding are monitored by the authorities. An NGO Bill which is still in the making would further impact the way NGO would operate in the country.

Over time, gender equality has become a central theme of the work carried out by CSOs in Sri Lanka. Some organisations focus exclusively their work on gender-related issues while others have incorporated it as a cross-cutting issue. Key topics include sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), livelihoods as well as women's role/participation in politics. Transitional justice-related issues linked to disappearances and economic empowerment of female-headed households remain high priorities for organisations active in the Northern and Eastern provinces. There is a myriad of gender approaches used by different CSOs and donors. There is some criticism on the clarity and soundness of these approaches, as well as on the sometimes top-down approach adopted by gender equality promoters.

Financial viability and organisational capacity for most CSOs remain structurally weak. In addition, Sri Lankan CSOs often lack clearly defined governance structures and a very low number of qualified individuals are engaged in the sector, making it difficult to fill senior positions. Training is mostly provided in Colombo and tailored to the implementation of specific projects rather than for building organisational capacities. There is also lack in transparency and in many cases financial management systems, including procedure manuals and accounting system, are weak. There is however an important distinction to make here between Colombo-based central organisations and local organisations. The former are more likely to have clearly defined missions, better financial management and engage in strategic planning as compared to the local ones. However, these organisations focus less on the implementation of their strategic plans. In contrast, smaller organisations operating at the local level often have greater flexibility and are able to quickly adapt to community needs and priorities as civil society networks and coalitions are often formed around a specific issue or in specific context. Overall, civil society remains rather fragmented.

The emergence of new forms of youth-led organisations working for social change with their own perspectives and strategies of actions is to be noted. These organisations may take a different form than the old traditional models of CSOs, with a strong and active presence on social media platforms where most of the younger generation interact. Furthermore, regarding people with disabilities, despite being the biggest single minority (most of them below the poverty line), they have been historically marginalized from decision making processes and continue to face serious challenges with regard to their participation and representation in such processes due to systematic barriers which includes structural, social and legal and other policy barriers.

Empowering civil society while providing necessary space for their functioning in all its diversity is discussed in the regular EU-Sri Lanka political and policy dialogue with the government and in the context of GSP+ monitoring.

The response of the EU includes support to CSOs under the thematic instruments. Further support to the CSOs is needed to address existing challenges. Therefore, the EU envisages to strengthen CSOs capacities in response to the socio-economic challenges, to establish a continuous dialogue between the EU and CSOs as well as with the authorities, and to closely coordinate with other donors and implementing partners.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Short problem analysis: Based on the contextual analysis outlined in the section above, the proposed Action will focus on the following constraints and challenges faced by civil society actors in Sri Lanka:

1. Lack of capacity of CSOs in terms of organisation, advocacy and networking.
2. Socio-economic challenges and poor public service delivery.
3. Constrained environment for CSOs. Some CSOs fear that new laws (e.g. NGO bill, online safety bill) might further increase the authority's supervision and monitoring of CSOs.

Identification of main stakeholders and corresponding institutional and/or organisational issues (mandates, potential roles, and capacities) to be covered by the action:

1. The main stakeholders for this Action are the Sri Lankan civil society organisations (including the media), which are the main target/beneficiaries, and with a particular focus on community-based/grassroots organisations, women, youth-led associations and persons with disabilities.
2. The Action will also involve the government (e.g. the NGO Secretariat) and the relevant public authorities (at provincial and local level) in order to facilitate the dialogue.
3. Final beneficiaries of CSOs' action are the population living in vulnerable situations (i.e. women in all their diversity, youth, people with disabilities and those living in rural areas), which is affected by poor public service delivery.
4. Close coordination will be ensured with the key donors and implementing partners working with civil society organisations in Sri Lanka.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective of this action is to strengthen Sri Lankan civil society (in its whole diversity) as actors of governance and development, thereby contributing to the achievement of overall priorities of the EU-Sri Lanka partnership as outlined in the MIP 2021-2027, and the EU Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society in Sri Lanka 2021 – 2024.

The Specific Objectives/ of this action are to:

Specific Objective 1 - Enhance organisational, advocacy, networking, protection and project management capacities of civil society organisations, with a dedicated focus on local/community-based organisations operating in the most difficult environments as well as on women, youth and persons with disabilities' associations;

Specific Objective 2 – Implement a small grants facility in order to increase CSOs' capacities (focusing on women, youth associations and persons with disabilities) to respond to socio-economic challenges and provide human-rights based service delivery.

Specific Objective 3 - Establish and maintain an inclusive structured dialogue, in order to better analyse and monitor the enabling environment and cooperation landscape, and to feed into future EU political and policy dialogue with public authorities as well as the EU services; To increase partnership between CSOs (including women, youth and persons with disabilities' associations) and the government, incl. provincial and local authorities.

The Outputs to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objectives are:

For Specific objective 1:

Output 1.1: Enhanced understanding of local CSOs' capacity needs and constraints, including those representing women, youth-led and people living in vulnerable situations (i.e. people with disabilities).

Output 1.2: Tailor-made and accessible trainings and capacity-building designed and delivered across the country including gender, youth and persons with disabilities' perspectives.

For Specific objective 2:

Output 2.1: A small grants facility is operational enabling CSOs to face socio-economic shocks and provide human-rights based service delivery.

For Specific objective 3:

Output 3.1: Increased EU knowledge and understanding of the civic space and legal environment for civil society (in its whole diversity) in Sri Lanka,

Output 3.2: A structured dialogue between EU-civil society is active and broadened, including for the new programming, promoting networks among civil society actors, support CSOs dialogue with public authorities and their overall policy role.

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1.1:

- Carry-out a detailed needs assessment and gender/youth/people with disabilities analysis of local civil society organisations' main constraints and priority needs/interests, taking into account new forms of CSOs interactions (e.g. social media) and focusing in particular on the organisations active in the EU political and cooperation priority areas for Sri Lanka.

Activities related to Output 1.2:

- Design tailor-made and accessible training/capacity-building programmes (including gender/youth/people with disabilities transformative training) in terms of organisation, advocacy, networking, protection and project management of the targeted organisations selected as being active in the EU political and cooperation priority areas for Sri Lanka.
- Roll-out the trainings/capacity-building programmes across Sri Lanka.
- Survey/monitoring of impact.

Activities related to Output 2.1:

- Support CSOs to overcome the economic crisis by focusing particularly on socio-economic support.
- Operate a small grant facility to enable CSOs to respond to the socio-economic situation of the population living in vulnerable situations and complementing public services.

Activities related to Output 3.1:

- Detailed mapping of the local civil society landscape (in its whole diversity), with data disaggregated at least by age and sex, and if possible also by disability.
- Regular analyses /monitoring of legal, institutional and political country developments and debriefing to the EUD.
- Regular participatory consultations with local CSOs (including women's organisations, activists/human rights defenders working on women rights and gender equality, youth organisations, organisations working for disability inclusion) to collect insights and discuss on evolution of the enabling environment/civic space.

Activities related to Output 3.2:

- Design strategies to increase EU outreach and dialogue with CSOs (in its whole diversity) beyond its usual partners.
- Strategize and organise regular, inclusive and participatory consultations with civil society actors on different topics, in close connection with the EU- Sri Lanka political and policy dialogue and cooperation.
- Explore options to strengthen, from a human-rights based approach, the dialogue between local civil society (in its whole diversity) and public authorities at the local and national level in certain strategic areas, including a tripartite dialogue EU-CSOs-Sri Lanka government.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

Outcomes of the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) screening (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project): The EIA (Environment Impact Assessment) screening classified the action as Category C (no need for further assessment).

Outcome of the CRA (Climate Risk Assessment) screening (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project): The Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening concluded that this action is no or low risk (no need for further assessment).

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that, in alignment with the III EU Gender Action Plan (in particular, the thematic area - Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women) and the CLIP Sri Lanka gender equality is a cross-cutting issue that will be mainstreamed throughout the different activities and envisioned outputs and outcomes of the Action. In particular, local civil society organisations working on gender equality and women's rights in Sri Lanka will be targeted both in the context of dialogue/consultations and of the capacity-building activities.

Human Rights

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is an essential component of the proposed action since one key component is for the EU to better understand, monitor and discuss the country developments and trends as regards the state of the civic space and the enabling environment for civil society organisations (including women's organisations, human rights defenders and activists, youth organisations, organisations working for disability inclusion) to operate. The Action adopts a human rights-based approach and its working principles of applying all human rights for all, meaningful and inclusive participation and access to decision-making, non-discrimination and equality, accountability and rule of law for all and transparency and access to information supported by disaggregated data.

Besides, local rights-based organisations will be privileged interlocutors and beneficiaries under this action.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. This implies that, in alignment with the 2021-2030 EU Disability Strategy, efforts will be made to identify and actively involve local CSOs working for disability inclusion in the scope of the structure dialogue. Furthermore, capacity-building activities supported by the action will be accessible and addressed also to these organisations.

Reduction of inequalities

Local CSOs often play an important role as actors of development at the local level, including in terms of providing essential services in remote areas/to communities living in most vulnerable situations and hence contributing to the reduction of inequalities.

Democracy

The main objective of the proposed action is to strengthen the role of civil society (in its whole diversity) as an actor of development and governance in Sri Lanka, so that CSOs can also perform their oversight/watchdog role and participate meaningfully in policy-making, planning and accountability processes.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

Several societal topics are sensitive in the Sri Lankan society. Conflict-sensitive approaches will be adopted when mapping/identifying the targeted civil society organisations to be covered by the action as well as when designing and rolling-out the capacity-building activities.

Disaster Risk Reduction

N/A

Other considerations if relevant

N/A

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

| Category | Risks | Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low) | Impact (High/ Medium/ Low) | Mitigating measures |
|----------------------|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| External environment | Significant changes in the Sri Lankan political landscape (related to the 2024 elections) and new legislation (e.g. online safety bill) leads to a more restrictive environment for civil society to operate. | Medium /high | High | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Closely monitor country political, legal and institutional developments and its implications on human rights/fundamental freedoms/civic space - Maintain regular political dialogue with the Government on civic space/enabling environment-related issues (advocacy) - Explore how to involve public authorities/institutions at the central and local level in the implementation of some capacity-building project activities as well as how to enhance dialogue between civil society and public authorities - Consider project adjustments if necessary, using built-in project flexibility |
| External environment | Conservative beliefs and attitudes within the population make project implementation challenging in some areas. | High | Medium | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carry-out political economy and “do-no-harm” analyses to strategize the interventions, identify socio-cultural sensitivities and monitor impact - Put emphasis on inclusive awareness-raising/sensitisation and carefully designed communication strategies, with attention on the specific needs of vulnerable categories of the population - Conduct regular field missions in Sri Lanka for proper project monitoring and understanding of the local context including from the gender perspective - Consider project adjustments if necessary, using built-in project flexibility - Identify local “allies” and work with them on gender and HRBA approaches (including among local authorities) |

Lessons Learnt:

This action builds on the insights and lessons learnt from EU regular dialogue with local organisations and from the portfolio of projects implemented directly or indirectly by local civil society organisations, as well as through calls for proposals under the thematic instruments. However, coordination and lack of capacity of CSOs remain an issue.

In 2023, the Delegation was able to provide new support to CSOs and under the HR/D instrument for EUR 4 242 500 EUR. Three grants were contracted under the CSOs budget line for a total of EUR 2 670 000, the focus being on improving nutrition, gender issues and providing inclusive and resilient economic growth in Sri Lanka. Three grants were contracted under the HR/D budget line for a total of EUR 1 572 500 focusing on democracy and political pluralism. Therefore, there is some funding to CSOs which should be part of a structured dialogue with the EU.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is to support the EU-Sri Lanka partnership. It will enable the EU to: **If:** (1) The organisational, advocacy, networking, protection and project management capacities of civil society organisations (in its whole diversity) are enhanced, and

If: (2) An inclusive and participatory structured dialogue between CSOs and the EU as well as with government (as much as possible) is established and maintained, and

If: (3) The CSOs capacities to respond to socio-economic challenges are increased and gender responsive and human-rights based service delivery is delivered through the operationalisation of a small grants' facility,

Then: The Sri Lankan Civil Society (in its whole diversity) is strengthened as actors of governance and development, thereby contributing to the achievement of overall priorities of the EU-Sri Lanka partnership as outlined in the MIP 2021-2027, and the EU Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society in Sri Lanka 2021–2024.

This is **BECAUSE** the action will contribute to the effective understanding of the environment for CSOs in Sri Lanka, by mapping and carrying a detailed needs/interests assessment and gender/youth/disability analysis of local civil society organisations' main constraints and priority needs/interests, focusing in particular on the organisations which are active in the EU political and cooperation priority areas for Sri Lanka. This will enable tailor-made trainings and capacity-building programmes (including gender/youth/disability transformative training) being delivered effectively across the country. The EU-CSO dialogue will be established and maintained with a focus on key CSOs players and EU political and policy priorities for Sri Lanka. The CSOs capacities will be strengthened to face socio-economic crisis through the operationalisation of a small grant facility.

The main underlying **assumptions** in this theory of change are that there is no modification of the agreements underlying the EU-Sri Lanka cooperation of development (priorities of the MIP, CSOs roadmap, GSP+, etc..), that further changes in the Sri Lankan political landscape do not lead to a more restrictive environment for civil society to operate and that patriarchal socio-cultural norms and conservative beliefs and attitudes within the population do not make project implementation challenging in some areas.

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

Given the nature of this Action a Logical Framework Matrix is not required at Action level.

4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

4.2 Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 60 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.

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

4.3 Implementation of the Budget Support Component – N/A

4.4 Implementation Modalities

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

4.4.1 Direct management (grants)

Grants: (direct management)

A part of this action may be implemented in direct management through grant(s).

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

Grant(s) will be used to achieve the specific objectives 1 and 2 and the outputs related to SO1 and SO2 in terms of CSO capacity strengthening, trainings and management of a small grants' facility.

b) Type of applicants targeted

Targeted applicants will be civil society organisations. Key selection criteria will be notably the knowledge of the country context, local presence as well as professional experience and expertise in providing capacity building support to local civil society in Sri Lanka.

4.4.2 Direct management (procurement)

A part of the action will be implemented through direct management using partly procurement/service contracts. This procurement will contribute to Overall and Specific Objective 3 described in section 3.1. This procurement will take the form of a service contract for technical assistance. The global budgetary envelope reserved for procurement is 500 000 EUR. This technical assistance will be responsible for the delivery and coordination of the activities as mentioned in section 3.2, referred to the Specific Objective 3 analysing the civic space and legal environment as well as implementing a structured EU-civil society dialogue.

4.4.3 Changes from indirect to direct management mode (and vice versa) due to exceptional circumstances (one alternative second option)

If the action cannot be implemented in direct management due to circumstances outside of the Commission's control, indirect management will be used with a pillar assessed entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- technical expertise in the targeted sector (support to civil society, gender equality);
- knowledge of the political context and civil society landscape in Sri Lanka;
- close connection/networks (or demonstrated ability/willingness to develop them) with the relevant Sri Lankan public institutions, professional associations and civil society organisations;
- sufficient implementation/absorption capacity (including in terms of M&E) and;
- willingness to provide adequate visibility to the EU as per the EU visibility requirements.

The implementation by this entity entails the whole set of objectives, results and indicative activities under this action as outlined under sections 3.1 and 3.2 here above.

4.5 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply.

The Commission's authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of services in the markets of the countries or territories concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where application of the eligibility rules would make the realization of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult (Article 28(10) NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

4.6 Indicative Budget

| Indicative Budget components | EU contribution (amount in EUR) |
|--|--|
| Implementation modalities – cf. section .4.4 | |
| Specific Objectives 1 and 2 (SO1: strengthening CSO capacities and SO2: management of a small grants' facility) composed of | 2 500 000 |
| Grants (direct management) –cf. section 4.4.1 | 2 500 000 |
| Specific Objective 3 (SO3: Establish a structured EU-CSO dialogue) composed of | 500 000 |
| Procurement (direct management) – cf. section 4.4.2 | 500 000 |
| Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3 | may be covered by another Decision |
| Total | 3 000 000 |

4.7 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The project will be governed by a Project Steering Committee (PSC) whose composition will be further established and which will include the EU, implementing partners and other relevant stakeholders. The steering committee will meet at least twice a year to review progress against indicators, review the ongoing work plan and coordinate responses to issues identified in implementation in an advisory function to the contracting authority.

A technical Project Implementation Committee (PIC) will also be established, with the participation of the implementing partners and EU. Thematic and technical monitoring of the progress in the implementation of the Action will be entrusted to the PIC. This body will meet at least quarterly, and ad hoc meetings will be organised whenever necessary. The detailed composition of the PIC and PSC will be defined during the inception phase.

5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1 Monitoring and Reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced.

Monitoring will assess gender equality results and the implementation of the rights-based approach working principles (applying all human rights for all; meaningful and inclusive participation and access to decision-making; non-discrimination and equality; accountability and rule of law for all; and transparency and access to information supported by disaggregated data). Monitoring will be based on indicators that are disaggregated by sex, age, and disability when applicable.

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

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a final evaluation may be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.

It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the fact that lessons learned might be used for future interventions related to support to civil society organisations.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 90 days in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

Evaluation shall also assess to what extent the action is taking into account the human rights-based approach as well as how it contributes to gender equality and women's empowerment and disability inclusion. Expertise on human rights, disability and gender equality will be ensured in the evaluation teams

The evaluation reports may be shared with the partners and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, apply the necessary adjustments.

The financing of the evaluation may be covered by another measure constituting a Financing Decision.

5.3 Audit and Verifications

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audit or verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

6 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The 2021-2027 programming cycle will adopt a new approach to pooling, programming and deploying strategic communication and public diplomacy resources.

In line with the 2022 “[Communicating and Raising EU Visibility: Guidance for External Actions](#)”, it will remain a contractual obligation for all entities implementing EU-funded external actions to inform the relevant audiences of the Union's support for their work by displaying the EU emblem and a short funding statement as appropriate on all communication materials related to the actions concerned. This obligation will continue to apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, partner countries, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU member states.

However, action documents for specific sector programmes are in principle no longer required to include a provision for communication and visibility actions promoting the programmes concerned. These resources will

instead-be consolidated in Cooperation Facilities established by support measure action documents, allowing Delegations to plan and execute multiannual strategic communication and public diplomacy actions with sufficient critical mass to be effective on a national scale.