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ANNEX

Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – Global Europe Exceptional Assistance Measure regarding Sudan

1. IDENTIFICATION

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| Action: | Build civil society actors' capacity to engage in conflict resolution, mediation and countering disinformation |
| Action Reference: | NDICI CR 2023 / 39 |
| Cost: | EUR 3 500 000 (European Union (EU) contribution). |
| Budget Line: | 14 02 03 10 |
| Duration: | Maximum 18 months. The authorising officer responsible may decide to extend this period twice by a further period of up to six months, up to a total maximum duration of 30 months, under the conditions laid down in Article 23(6) of Regulation (EU) 2021/947. |
| Lead service: | FPI |

2. ACTION SUMMARY

Despite several mediation initiatives created since the outbreak of violent conflict in Sudan in April 2023, a sufficiently inclusive civilian process has not been met. The conflict has also impacted the media sector and mis- and disinformation have become tools of the warring parties to further fuel the war.

This action seeks to strengthen the role of civil society actors to engage in conflict resolution, mediation and tackling disinformation. A first component will focus on Track III mediation efforts to build local civil society organisations (CSO) and key stakeholders' capacities in Khartoum, the Darfur states and relevant peripheral areas to continue local mediation efforts and conflict resolution. The objective is to provide them with the building blocks towards developing a unified CSO advocacy and local mediation strategy, both with the aim to make their voices heard in the high-level mediation processes and continue their local work. The second component will focus on tackling hate speech and disinformation in all forms of media, in particular at the local level and address polarised political narratives.

3. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

3.1 BACKGROUND

Sudan has been rocked by violence since mid-April 2023 when tensions between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) escalated into open fighting. Today, the war continues in the capital Khartoum and the Darfur states, resulting in a catastrophic humanitarian situation as well as the destruction of critical infrastructure, public and private properties. Over the last few months, the conflict has spread to different regions such as Kordofan states, the base of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLA-N), a third armed group which opposes both SAF and RSF. More than 5 million people have been forcibly displaced and there is currently little end in sight for the adversaries to the conflict to reach a mutual peace deal. The spill-over into the region has become a real risk.

Despite numerous internal and external initiatives, no concrete political solution has been found yet. Different regional actors have created initiatives to establish a political process, and parallel attempts to broker a ceasefire have failed. The African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Eastern Africa, agreed on a road map for a political process that is yet to start. However, these efforts cannot be resolved by addressing only the problem of the centre, or by the elites. Civilian stakeholders, particularly those that have not had their voice sufficiently heard, are critical to create pressure and advocate for the cessation of hostilities and a political solution. There is a need for a more inclusive and representative approach that includes civil society organisations, political parties, academic leaders, resistance committees and new coalitions and alliances, while ensuring women and youth's meaningful participation in this political process. A more coherent and united civilian front is likely to contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive political process.

Disinformation and hate speech further fuel violence and are increasing in Sudan. The population is mainly relying on social media and radio to access information that is often used by the warring parties and their proxies to produce and disseminate their propaganda and disinformation. Moreover, many broadcast and print media have stopped operating due to security concerns. Journalists and civilian actors have been victims of targeted disinformation campaigns. It is thus urgent to build up the capacity and resilience of independent media to ensure that they are equipped to tackle mis- and disinformation.

3.2 RATIONALE FOR CRISIS RESPONSE ACTIONS UNDER THE RAPID RESPONSE PILLAR OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION INSTRUMENT

The outbreak of violent conflict in Sudan in mid-April 2023, the inability to find win-win solutions to reach a peace deal and the need to build consensus among key constituencies, particularly civilian stakeholders, constitute an exceptional and unforeseen situation in the sense of Article 4(4) (a) of the NDICI Regulation. An adequate response cannot be provided under any other European Union Instrument due to the urgency with which the funds are required and due to available resources already being firmly committed.

Annex IV, paragraph 1, second paragraph, points (a) and (q) of Regulation (EU) 2021/947 specifically provide for the use of the NDICI rapid response pillar to (a) support, through the provision of technical and logistical assistance, for the efforts undertaken by international,

regional and local organisations and by State and civil society actors in promoting confidence-building, mediation, dialogue and reconciliation, transitional justice, women’s and youth empowerment, in particular with regard to community tensions and protracted conflicts, and (q) support for measures to promote the development and organisation of civil society and its participation in the political process, including measures to enhance the role of women in such processes and measures to promote independent, pluralist and professional media.

3.3 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

| Risks | Risk levels (high, medium, low) | Mitigation |
|---|--|---|
| Access to geographical areas of action implementation is denied by security actors. | High | Regular engagement with security actors; continuous analysis of the security situation to anticipate conflict and adapt activities. |
| The security situation deteriorates further affecting the implementation of the action. | High | Continuous monitoring of the security situation; flexible approach to align programme activities; working in small local teams; clear security guidelines ensuring staff safety; online activities. |
| EU support can be perceived as biased towards specific political actors. | Medium | Principles of neutrality and independence throughout implementation; regular and transparent engagement with all actors. |
| Civilian stakeholders are not genuinely committed to agree on a joint approach towards a democratic transition. | Medium | Maintain strong relationships and networks with civilian leaders, political parties, and women’s and youth groups at all levels. Sustained bilateral and multilateral engagements on the importance and relevance of this action. Tailor activities in line with specific actors. |
| High-level coordination and mediation initiatives leave little room for participation of civilian stakeholders. | Medium | Project activities are aimed at linking civilian stakeholders with higher level mediation and coordination initiatives. At the same time, the EU will |

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| | | push for the inclusion of civilian stakeholders through its political and policy dialogue. |
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4. OBJECTIVES

4.1 OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the action is to strengthen the role of civil society actors to engage in mediation and local conflict resolution, and tackle disinformation in Sudan.

4.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- 4.2.1 To increase the capacity and coherence of civilian actors to advocate for the cessation of hostilities and for a political solution in Sudan; and
- 4.2.2 To enhance the capacity of civilian actors to tackle hate speech and disinformation in all forms of media.

5. ACTION COMPONENTS AND EXPECTED RESULTS

The main expected results/outcomes include:

Expected Result (1): Civilian actors will have increased capacity and show more coherence to advocate for the cessation of hostilities and for a political solution in Sudan.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.1.1 Conduct a mapping of local civilian mediation actors;
- 5.1.2 Support dialogue initiatives between local civilian actors and community leaders to jointly identify viable options and solutions to the key issues related to a democratic transition in Sudan and strengthen coherence around key issues of national concern;
- 5.1.3 Facilitate peace platforms where key civilian stakeholders can discuss their positions and connect these platforms to the existing higher level peace and mediation initiatives;
- 5.1.4 Organise trainings on conflict prevention, mediation and negotiation techniques to capacitate civilian stakeholders to participate in an inclusive political process and have their voices heard;
- 5.1.5 Support ongoing women and youth groups and alliances to coordinate efforts among their respective networks and to ensure more effective joint engagement and build consensus on the way forward;
- 5.1.6 More specifically, support youth, including through the existing resistance committees, to engage politically and work towards establishing a representative political system in Sudan that responds to the specific needs of younger generations;
- 5.1.7 Support research to identify options and solutions to the key issues related to the democratic transition.

Expected Result (2): Civilian actors will have the capacity to significantly reduce hate speech and to counter disinformation and polarised political narratives in all forms of media.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.3.1 Conduct a mapping of local media outlets and social media;
- 5.3.2 Organise capacity building workshops and trainings on fact-checking tools and showcase best practices;
- 5.3.3 Mentor partners on conflict and gender-sensitive reporting;
- 5.3.4 Support the development of partnerships and networks to promote responsible reporting and countering disinformation;
- 5.3.5 Organise workshops, webinars and social media campaigns to raise the awareness of civil society actors on how to identify credible information sources and to counter disinformation;
- 5.3.6 Facilitate the access of local journalists to cover peacebuilding and mediation events;
- 5.3.7 Support the development of capacity building plans and sustainable business models for selected media outlets that will allow them to operate more independently.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES

The Commission will ensure that the appropriate EU rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures¹.

6.1.1 Grant: direct award (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant

The grant will contribute to achieving the objectives and results presented in sections 4 and 5.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

Potential applicants for funding are non-governmental organisations with consolidated experience in crisis affected contexts in Sudan, including with extensive experience to achieve one or more of the expected results and specific objectives.

(c) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because **the action entails crisis management aid as referred to in Article 195(a) and as defined in Article 2(21) of the Financial Regulation** at the date of the Financing Decision.

6.2 INDICATIVE BUDGET

The total European Union contribution under this Financing Decision **will not exceed EUR 3 500 000**. A breakdown among components is provided hereunder, and is indicative.

¹ www.sanctionsmap.eu Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website, it is the OJ version that prevails.

Indicative budget breakdown

| Components | EU contribution (amount in EUR) | Indicative third party contribution, in currency identified |
|---|--|--|
| Component 1: Civilian actors will have increased capacity and show more coherence to advocate for the cessation of hostilities and for a political solution in Sudan | | |
| 6.1.1 – Direct grants (direct management) | 3 000 000 | n/a |
| Component 2: Civilian actors will be capacitated to significantly reduce hate speech and to counter disinformation and polarised political narratives in all forms of media | | |
| 6.1.1 – Direct grant (direct management) | 500 000 | n/a |
| Total | 3 500 000 | |

6.3 ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The action shall be implemented under direct management. It will be devolved and sub-delegated to the **European Union Delegation Sudan**, with the support of the Commission for the conclusion of the contracts implementing the action.

6.4 PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS 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 end, 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 report. Each report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (outputs and outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the Logframe matrix. The report shall be laid out in such a way as to allow monitoring of the means envisaged and employed and of the budget details for the action. The final report, narrative and financial, will cover the entire period of the action implementation.

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).

6.5 EVALUATION

Having regard to the nature of the action, an evaluation will not be carried out for this action or its components.

The Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner.

The financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

6.6 AUDIT

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 audits or expenditure verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

The financing of the audit shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

6.7 COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

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

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.

The 2022 "Communicating and Raising EU Visibility: Guidance for external actions" reference document shall be used to establish the appropriate contractual obligations.

7. COMPLEMENTARITY, COORDINATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The action is in support of the broader efforts of the international community to end the conflict in Sudan and resume the political process and democratic transition. It will complement high-level mediation initiatives. The EU has been supporting regional peace initiatives on Sudan, including the participation of civilian actors. Coordination will be ensured with the EU's political engagement in this respect. It will be closely coordinated with the support provided by DG INTPA, as well as with other international peacebuilding, development, and security initiatives.