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ANNEX

Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – Global Europe

Exceptional Assistance Measure regarding Central African Republic

1. IDENTIFICATION

Action: Central African Republic - Contributing to Human Security, Conflict Prevention, Stability and Peacebuilding

Action Reference: NDICI CR 2021 / 49

Cost: EUR 10 000 000 (European Union 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

This action aims to support recent political and diplomatic initiatives intended to revitalise the peace process as well as other actions aimed at preventing an escalation of violence at community level in Central African Republic (CAR).

The assistance will include the provision of strategic advice and technical expertise to national and local authorities, signatory armed groups and stakeholders involved in the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, the Republican Dialogue and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region initiative, and on the promotion of a conducive political space between and among those actors.

It will also focus on conflict prevention at local level. This will include local mediation, for example, related to agro-pastoral conflicts as well as the strengthening of local communities, authorities and organisations to promote peace through mechanisms such as mediation, reconciliation and the identification and delivery of local peace dividends. Efforts to identify and fight against disinformation and community rumours, which is a major source of intra- and inter-community tensions, will also be supported.

This action builds on the EU's significant engagement in peacebuilding and particularly in supporting the peace process in CAR since 2018.

3. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

3.1 BACKGROUND

The presidential and legislative elections of late 2020-early 2021 in Central African Republic, which re-elected the incumbent, President Touadéra, took place in a context of high political tension, insecurity and weak state control of the national territory. Numerous attacks by a new coalition of armed groups called Coalition of Patriots for Change - CPC, (led by former President Bozizé) took place, leading to weak voter participation. President Touadéra was proclaimed winner of the presidential election on the first round with 53% of the votes (35% participation) and was sworn in on 30 March 2021.

While a new prime minister and a new government were appointed in the summer (on 15 June and 23 June respectively), the security and political situation remains tense. A new round of municipal elections in 2022 could trigger further instability and violence. In parallel, disinformation and defamatory campaigns circulate in the country often facilitated by the actions of organized networks and have also fuelled conflict at community level.

With regards to security, the relatively successful counter-offensive since January against the coalition of armed groups has made it possible to regain control of parts of the country. Nevertheless, numerous illegal armed groups still control a vast part of CAR territory, facilitated by the slow reinforcement of state structures (army and police in particular) and expansion of state authority outside Bangui, together with the lack of provision of basic social services.

The implementation of the Political Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (APPR-RCA), signed by 14 armed groups and the CAR authorities in February 2019, has not made significant progress. It remains blocked by a lack of dialogue and trust, against a background of dysfunctional implementation mechanisms and repeated violations of the peace agreement by armed groups.

However, recommendations on the implementation of the 2019 Peace Agreement were adopted in April 2021 by the authorities, following an assessment launched by President Touadéra to revitalise the functioning of its mechanisms. These recommendations now need to be implemented and the political process relaunched, with greater involvement of the authorities as well as dialogue with those armed groups that have remained in the Agreement or are ready to return.

The establishment of the new Government has also generated some momentum in the process leading to the organization of a "Republican Dialogue" to mobilize all segments of Central African society, around an agenda on peace and security, political stability, national reconciliation, good management of natural resources and inclusive and democratic governance. In addition, at the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region held in September 2021, a joint road map for peace in the CAR was adopted, in which participants called for an inclusive dialogue in support of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and urged the Government to declare a

ceasefire which was subsequently announced, unilaterally, by President Touadéra on 15 October.

EU’s significant engagement in peacebuilding since 2018 helped the parties to sign the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (APPR-RCA) and since then has supported its implementation. Uninterrupted support to these processes could help revitalize the peace process and bring significant political leverage.

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

The organization of a “Republican Dialogue” and its eventual implementation, the joint road map adopted at the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the unilateral ceasefire announced by President Touadéra provide a political momentum and a unique opportunity to revitalise the peace process and foster peace and restore territorial integrity in CAR. To seize this window of opportunity, it is necessary to reinforce mediation efforts at all levels, support dialogue between Government and armed groups, support the Government’s initiatives for inclusive peace as well as fight disinformation and prevent conflict at local level. This constitutes an exceptional and unforeseen situation in the sense of Article 4(4) 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), (b), (e), (n) and (q) of Regulation (EU) 2021/947 specifically provides for the use of the NDICI rapid response pillar to provide: (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; (b) support for the implementation of UNSCRs on women, youth, peace and security; (e) support for international criminal tribunals and ad hoc national tribunals, truth and reconciliation commissions, transitional justice and other mechanisms for the legal settlement of human rights claims and the assertion and adjudication of property rights; (n) support for measures to promote and defend respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law, and the related international instruments, 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

Risk	Impact	Mitigating measures
Volatile security and political instability including potential post-electoral violence and protest might	High	Constant dialogue with all national stakeholders involved in the supported processes and regular assessment of potential blockages to the

negatively affect the implementation.		implementation of the different components of the suggested programme. Monitoring of a flexible planning of activities. And rescheduling or modifying certain activities or components if necessary.
The unwillingness of national and local authorities hampers implementation.	Medium	Implementing partners are well established and work closely with national and local authorities. The action indeed depends on good partnerships already established during earlier phases of actions.
Political space becomes more constrained for civil society and media to engage in and report on accountability issues.	High	Implementing partners to closely collaborate with the Government at all levels to avoid restrictive space for the projects to function, establishing a meaningful policy dialogue from the on set in close coordination with the EU Delegation.
Project activities overlap with actions by other members of the international community.	Low	Mediation actors have committed to coordinate not only amongst themselves but also under the leadership of the EU Delegation and are required to report on coordination.

4. OBJECTIVES

4.1 OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the action is to contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for national peace in Central African Republic by strengthening the ability of local peace mechanisms to prevent violent conflict, build dialogue and foster peace at national and local level.

4.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- 4.2.1 Support national efforts to stabilize the country through mediation, dialogue and strategic advice.
- 4.2.2 Create an enabling environment for national peace in CAR by reducing the risk of tensions and violent conflict at the local level strengthening the ability of local peace mechanisms to prevent violent conflict, build dialogue and foster reconciliation and support transitional justice.

- 4.2.3 Support the production of verified, independent information to counter rumours, fake news and hate speech.

5. ACTION COMPONENTS AND EXPECTED RESULTS

The main expected results/outcomes include:

With reference to the specific objective 4.2.1:

Expected Result (1): The political peace process through advice to national authorities and other stakeholders involved is supported.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.1.1 Provide technical advice and support to the authorities on different peace initiatives, including the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (APPR), the conclusions of the Republican Dialogue and the roadmap of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region;
- 5.1.2 Support mediation and monitoring related to local peace agreements involving signatory communities, armed groups and local authorities, in conjunction with the national authorities.

Expected Result (2): Dialogue at the regional level is strengthened.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.2.1 Organize awareness-raising workshops around the APPR and its implementation with diaspora and Central African communities, including refugees, residing in the countries of the sub-region;
- 5.2.2 Organize meetings between the main Central African political leaders and other national and regional actors involved in the APPR.

Expected Result (3): Dialogue between political parties, the National Assembly and civil society is strengthened.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.3.1 Support the organisation of dialogue between political parties, representatives of civil society, and members of the National Assembly on the peace process;
- 5.3.2 Carry out ad hoc consultations with key politicians, creating a neutral space for dialogue on urgent issues in the country;
- 5.3.3 Organise workshops for the promotion of the Republican Dialogue.

With reference to the specific objective 4.2.2:

Expected Result (4): Actors involved in community peace mechanisms, including local authorities and religious stakeholders, are better able to promote needs-based and inclusive dialogue, trust building and violence prevention initiatives.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.4.1 Map existing local peace mechanisms and carry out participatory (and gender sensitive) conflict analysis to understand challenges in promoting dialogue at local level;
- 5.4.2 Facilitate dialogue across conflict divides at community level;
- 5.4.3 Sensitise communities on existing local peace mechanisms and how to access them;
- 5.4.4 Develop and implement action plans using small grants to address key conflict drivers identified in the conflict analysis;
- 5.4.5 Strengthen coordination between local peace mechanisms and local, prefectural and national state authorities, including security forces;
- 5.4.6 Ensure that this coordination allows humanitarian aid to reach those in need, in compliance with International Humanitarian Law;
- 5.4.7 Sensitise communities on the national peace process (including by use of radio programmes) and identification of entry points for community engagement;
- 5.4.8 Support for the process of inter-community reconciliation relating to the return of displaced persons or refugees in targeted prefectures;
- 5.4.9 Enhance processes of transitional justice both at national and local level.

Expected Result (5) Local conflicts over land are addressed, focusing on the cattle corridor broadly spanning the border with Central African Republic bordering Cameroon, Chad and Darfur.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.5.1 Organise a conflict analysis and stakeholder mapping regarding transhumance in the region;
- 5.5.2 Promote local peace and dialogue processes with the local communities, including internally displaced people and returnees, women and local authorities, with a view to providing policy recommendations to address root causes and reaching local peace agreements;
- 5.5.3 Support local mediation efforts regarding issues related to transhumance;
- 5.5.4 Implement pilot projects to generate scalable models, delivering tangible outcomes that build sustainability and confidence in peacebuilding;
- 5.5.5 Organise discussions on key findings and recommendations with decision makers at the local and national levels, as well as within the international community.

With reference to the specific objective 4.2.3:

Expected Result (6): Inter- and intra-community tensions are reduced through verified, independent and context-specific information radio programmes.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.6.1 Improve understanding of the issues at stake regarding the peace process and the local electoral process;
- 5.6.2 Support the professionalization of the work of local media;
- 5.6.3 Capacity building for journalists to develop skills on critical analysis of information received.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 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 measures¹.

6.1.1 Grant: direct award (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant

The grant will contribute to achieving the objectives as presented in sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2, and the results presented in sections 5.1, 5.4 and 5.5.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

The types of applicants targeted by this direct award are international and national non-governmental organisations and non-profit organisations.

(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.

6.1.2 Grant: direct award (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant

The grant will contribute to achieving the objectives as presented in sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2, and the results presented in sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

The types of applicants targeted by this direct award are international and national non-governmental organisations and non-profit organisations.

(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.

6.1.3 Grant: direct award (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant

The grant will contribute to achieving the objectives and results as presented in sections 4.2.2 and 5.5.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

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.

The types of applicants targeted by this direct award are international and national non-governmental organisations and non-profit organisations.

(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.

6.1.4 Grant: direct award (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant

The grant will contribute to achieving the objectives and results as presented in sections 4.2.2 and 5.4.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

The types of applicants targeted by this direct award are international and national non-governmental organisations and non-profit organisations.

(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.

6.1.5 Grant: direct award (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant

The grant will contribute to achieving the objectives and results as presented in sections 4.2.3 and 5.6.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

The types of applicants targeted by this direct award are international and national non-governmental organisations and non-profit organisations.

(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 10 000 000**. A breakdown among components is provided hereunder, and is indicative.

Indicative budget breakdown

Components	EU	Indicative third party
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	contribution (amount in EUR)	contribution, in currency identified
Specific Objective 4.2.1: Support national efforts to stabilize the country through mediation, dialogue and strategic advice.		
6.1.1 – Direct grant (direct management)	2 200 000	N/A
6.1.2. – Direct grant (direct management)	1 500 000	N/A
Specific Objective 4.2.2: Create an enabling environment for national peace in CAR by reducing the risk of tensions and violent conflict at the local level strengthening the ability of local peace mechanisms to prevent violent conflict, build dialogue and foster reconciliation and support transitional justice.		
6.1.3. – Direct grant (direct management)	2 000 000	N/A
6.1.4. – Direct grant (direct management)	2 300 000	N/A
Specific Objective: 4.2.3 Support the production of verified, independent information to counter rumours, fake news and hate speech.		
6.1.5. – Direct grant (direct management)	2 000 000	N/A
Total	10 000 000	N/A

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 to Central African Republic**, 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 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 a final report. Every 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

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU.

This action shall contain communication and visibility measures which shall be based on a specific Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action, to be elaborated at the start of implementation.

In terms of legal obligations on communication and visibility, the measures shall be implemented by the Commission, the partner country, contractors, grant beneficiaries and/or entrusted entities. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, the financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

The Communication and Visibility Requirements for European Union External Action (or any succeeding document) shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

Acknowledging that activities financed under this action will be politically sensitive and/or may constitute a security risk for the implementing partner/beneficiaries, the communication and visibility plan for this measure should develop a differentiated approach to satisfy the requirements from the legal obligations to which EU external funding is bound to without putting at risk the actions supported by this measure.

7. COMPLEMENTARITY, COORDINATION AND FOLLOW-UP

This programme contributes to the European Union's comprehensive approach in the Central African Republic and is part of the Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan — in particular pillar 1, which aims to restore peace, security and promote reconciliation. In addition to the links and synergies with the actions previously financed under the Instrument for Stability and Peace, the activities envisaged under this programme will be complementary and in line with the work already carried out or planned by the European Union in the framework of its

cooperation with the Central African Republic via other instruments, notably the Bêkou Fund and the European Development Fund (EDF) and the geographic pillar of the Global Europe Instrument. More specifically, close coordination and complementarity of activities will be ensured with the ongoing EDF programme, which supports the deployment of justice, the fight against fake news, internal security and administration. Complementarity will also be ensured with budget support programmes (within the framework of the National Indicative Programme). Finally, coordination and complementarity will be ensured with other initiatives related to the dialogue and mediation process initiated in particular by the European Union, the African Union and United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).