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### ANNEX

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

#### **Exceptional Assistance Measure regarding the Central African Republic**

### **1. IDENTIFICATION**

Action: **Supporting mediation and stabilisation processes, and strengthening peaceful coexistence and democratic space**

Action Reference: NDICI CR 2023 / 31

Cost: EUR 5 000 000 (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**

The action aims to address political polarisation and its consequences on peaceful coexistence in the Central African Republic (CAR) and includes efforts on stabilisation, mediation as well as on a strengthened peaceful coexistence and democratic space. The first component will provide mediation support to the revitalisation and implementation of the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation and the follow-up of issues not fully addressed in the 2022 Republican Dialogue. It will involve all parties in order to explore mediation opportunities between the government and armed groups as well as mediation on equally important local disputes and conflicts. The second component will support access to independent and fact-based information in both French and Sango in order to reduce the risk posed by disinformation and hate-speech thus contributing to the preparation of inclusive, transparent, and peaceful local elections. Mindful that female candidates faced physical violence and threats during general elections in 2021, a specific focus will be given to the full, equal and meaningful participation of Central African women in political processes, both as voters and candidates for elections. The third component will contribute to ongoing stabilisation efforts based on a stabilisation programme drawn up by UNDP at the request of the Central African Government. This support will be provided for small-scale infrastructure and basic public services, and will be directed

towards communities in particular need, including communities hosting IDPs as well as refugees from the conflict in Sudan. Finally, a fourth component will focus on needs for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to populations affected by violent conflicts, with a focus on children, who have been exposed all their lives to recurrent violence and experienced injury, displacement, or involvement in armed groups. Accordingly, grave violations regarding children in armed conflict in the CAR will be considered and addressed. This could include legal counsel and assistance for socio-economic reintegration, support to victims of sexual violence, and MHPSS monitoring of demobilised young people and children. It will pay particular attention to local cultural factors such as those identified in recent independent reports on mental health in CAR.

### **3. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE**

#### **3.1 BACKGROUND**

The Central African Republic continues to face a multitude of challenges, including high levels of poverty, lack of sustained access to basic services, illegal exploitation of natural resources, and frequent violence and abuses involving various armed groups as well as Wagner Group mercenaries. Moreover, the political situation remains fragile. In August 2023, the Constitutional Court validated a constitutional referendum that not only delayed local elections but also removed presidential term limits. Regional developments, notably the violent conflict in neighbouring Sudan and movements to and from Chad have led and continue to lead to further instability. Foreign actors that have direct interests in an unstable environment use hybrid attacks, such as disinformation, thereby contributing to a deteriorating political situation. Disinformation adds to the challenges of maintaining a consistent long-term approach to stabilization and to communicating the objectives of the EU-CAR partnership. In fact, the EU expressed concern over the risk of further polarisation of the country's political context and continues to call for inclusive and transparent dialogue among the parties and democratic processes.

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

The multitude of challenges both within the Central African Republic but also beyond its borders constitutes an exceptional and unforeseen situation in the sense of Article 4(4) of the NDICI Regulation. Especially the validation of the constitutional referendum by the Constitutional Court represents a *de facto* boycott of national processes and consequently fuels democratic backsliding in the country, the latter exacerbated by malign influence operations; notably disinformation and hate speech. In addition to recent regional developments in Sudan, the continuation of mediation efforts is timely. 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), (l), (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; (l) support for measures to ensure that the specific needs of women and children in crisis and conflict situations, including preventing their exposure to gender-based violence, are adequately met; (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

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigating measures</b>
<p>Volatile security and political instability including potential pre- and post-electoral violence and protest might negatively affect the implementation.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Constant dialogue with national stakeholders involved in the supported processes and regular assessment of potential blockages to the implementation. Monitoring of the situation will be ensured to adapt the implementation to the changing security situation if necessary.</p>
<p>Low ambition and/or unwillingness of national and local authorities could hamper implementation.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>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 other actions.</p>
<p>Activities – especially regarding mediation – overlap with actions by other members of the international community.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>In order to not duplicate ongoing efforts from the international community working in the CAR, 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.</p>
<p>Independence and autonomy of implementing partners working on mediation could reduce the EU’s influence on their course of action and hence possible outcomes.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Implementing partners working on mediation should be supervised and monitored by the EU Delegation and the FPI Regional Team Nairobi.</p>

## **4. OBJECTIVES**

### **4.1 OVERALL OBJECTIVE**

The overall objective of the action is to address political polarisation and its consequences on peaceful coexistence in the CAR; including efforts on stabilisation, mediation as well as on a strengthened peaceful coexistence and democratic space.

### **4.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

- 4.2.1 Provide mediation support to the revitalisation and implementation of the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, the follow-up of issues not fully addressed in the 2022 Republican Dialogue as well as the Luanda Joint Road Map for Peace in the CAR of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.
- 4.2.2 Support access to independent, fact-based and context-specific information in both French and Sango in order to reduce the risk posed by disinformation and hate-speech and thus contribute to the preparation of inclusive, transparent, and peaceful local elections. Further support full, equal and meaningful participation of Central African women in political processes.
- 4.2.3 Contribute to ongoing stabilisation efforts based on a stabilisation programme drawn up by UNDP at the request of the Central African Government.
- 4.2.4 Focus on needs for MHPSS to populations affected by violent conflicts, with a focus on children, who have been exposed all their lives to recurrent violence and experienced injury, displacement, or involvement in armed groups.

## **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 EU contributes to the revitalisation and implementation of the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, the follow-up of issues not fully addressed in the 2022 Republican Dialogue and the Luanda Joint Road Map for Peace in the CAR of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.1.1 Provide technical advice and support to the authorities implementing the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (APPR), the Republican Dialogue as well as the Luanda Joint Road Map for Peace in the CAR 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):** All parties will be involved in order to explore mediation opportunities between the government and armed groups as well as mediation on equally important local disputes and conflicts. Dialogue at the regional level is moreover being strengthened.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.2.1 Organise 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 Investing in local capacity and creating neutral spaces for ongoing dialogue between the driving forces in the CAR;
- 5.2.3 Organise 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 Carry out ad hoc consultations with key politicians, creating a neutral space for dialogue on urgent issues in the country;
- 5.3.2 Support the organisation of dialogue between political parties, representatives of civil society and members of the National Assembly on the peace process;
- 5.3.3 Organise workshops to address the follow-up of issues not fully addressed in the 2022 Republican Dialogue.

With reference to the specific objective 4.2.2:

**Expected Result (4):** The EU contributes to inclusive, transparent, and peaceful local elections with a particular focus on reducing the risk posed by disinformation and hate-speech through access to independent, fact-based as well as context-specific information in both French and Sango, and on full, equal and meaningful participation of Central African women in political processes. Taken note that article 20 of the APPR stipulates that the Parties agree to ‘holding free, fair, inclusive, transparent and credible elections’<sup>1</sup>, specific objective 4.2.2 is embedded in these objectives.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.4.1 Improve the understanding of Central African citizens of national political processes – especially with a view to the local electoral process – based on neutral and independent information programs adapted to the contexts of each region;
- 5.4.2 Build the capacities of Central African citizens – including journalists – to develop skills on critical analysis of information received;

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Security Council, *Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic*, S/2019/145, <https://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/political-agreement-peace-and-reconciliation-central-african>, p. 9f., [Retrieved 30.10.2023].

- 5.4.3 Build the capacities of local media and their engagement vis-à-vis disinformation and hate speech;
- 5.4.4 Mitigate the negative impact of hate speech and disinformation content;
- 5.4.5 Enable conditions to create the full, equal and meaningful participation of Central African women in political processes and decision-making – both as voters and candidates for elections – mindful that female candidates faced physical violence and threats during general elections in 2021;
- 5.4.6 Support local and national media to portray positive images of women and girls in political and public life local and to challenge discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes about women's and girls' political participation and leadership.

With reference to the specific objective 4.2.3:

**Expected Result (5):** Contribute to ongoing stabilisation efforts based on a stabilisation programme drawn up by UNDP at the request of the Central African Government.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.5.1 Rehabilitation/construction of essential basic social infrastructure and improvement of social services in target localities;
- 5.5.2 Revitalisation of local economies and provision of means of subsistence to targeted populations (construction of productive infrastructures, material assistance to farmers, training on financial education);
- 5.5.3 Promotion of social cohesion and peace gains in the target area (conflict analysis, community mobilisation, training on gender-based violence and human rights).

With reference to the specific objective 4.2.4:

**Expected Result (6):** Needs for MHPSS are both addressed and reduced. Particular focus will be given to populations affected by violent conflicts, focusing particularly on children.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.6.1 Identify not only state policies on mental health but also local and international actors engaged working in the field of MHPSS;
- 5.6.2 Build on these local and international existing efforts, while being mindful of gendered norms around MHPSS as well as specific consequences on children;
- 5.6.3 Ensure to reduce stigmatisation of victims suffering from negative consequences on mental health, such as trauma resulting from the conflict;
- 5.6.4 Provision of legal counsel and assistance for socio-economic reintegration, support to victims of sexual violence, MHPSS monitoring of demobilised young people and children.

## 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 measures<sup>2</sup>.

#### 6.1.1 Grant: direct award (direct management)

##### (a) Purpose of the grant

The grants will contribute to achieving the specific objectives 4.2.1, 4.2.2 and 4.2.4 and the expected results 1, 2, 3, 4 and 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.

##### d) Exception to the non-retroactivity of costs

The Commission authorises that the costs incurred may be recognised as eligible as of 15.11.2023 because of the urgency of the crisis situation requires an immediate start of the activities.

#### 6.1.2 Indirect management with a pillar assessed entity

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This implementation entails contributing to the programme drawn up by UNDP at the request of the Central African Government. Activities will include the rehabilitation/construction of essential basic social infrastructure and the improvement of social services in target localities; the revitalisation of local economies and the provision of the means of subsistence to targeted populations (construction of productive infrastructures, material assistance to farmers, training on financial education); as well as the promotion of social cohesion and peace gains in the target area (conflict analysis, community mobilisation, training on gender-based violence and human rights). The envisaged entity has been selected using the following criteria: due to the fact that UNDP designed the stabilisation concept to be

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<sup>2</sup> [www.sanctionsmap.eu](http://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.

supported, UNDP has the required expertise to implement that specific component. Consequently, UNDP has been chosen as the respective implementing partner.

The implementation by this entity entails specific objective 4.2.3 and expected result 5.

**6.1.3 Changes from indirect to direct management mode due to exceptional circumstances**

If negotiations with the above-mentioned entrusted entity fail, that part of this action may be implemented in direct management in accordance with the implementation modality identified in section 6.1.1.

**6.2 INDICATIVE BUDGET**

The total European Union contribution under this Financing Decision **will not exceed EUR 5 000 000**. A breakdown among components is provided hereunder, and is indicative.

**Indicative budget breakdown**

Components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, in currency identified
Specific Objective 4.2.1: Provide mediation support to the revitalisation and implementation of the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, the follow-up of issues not fully addressed in the 2022 Republican Dialogue as well as the Luanda Joint Road Map for Peace in the CAR of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region:		
– 6.1.1. Direct grant (direct management)	700 000	N/A
– 6.1.1. Direct grant (direct management)	700 000	N/A
Specific Objective 4.2.2: Support access to independent, fact-based and context-specific information in both French and Sango in order to reduce the risk posed by disinformation and hate-speech and thus contribute to the preparation of inclusive, transparent, and peaceful local elections. Further support the full, equal and meaningful participation of Central African women in political processes:		
– 6.1.1. Direct grant (direct management)	1 000 000	N/A

<b>Components</b>	<b>EU contribution (amount in EUR)</b>	<b>Indicative third party contribution, in currency identified</b>
Specific Objective 4.2.3: Contribute to ongoing stabilisation efforts based on a stabilisation programme drawn up by UNDP at the request of the Central African Government:		
– 6.1.2. Indirect management with UNDP	1 000 000	N/A
Specific Objective 4.2.4: Focus on needs for MHPSS to populations affected by violent conflicts, with a focus on children, who have been exposed all their lives to recurrent violence and have experienced injury, displacement, or involvement in armed groups:		
– 6.1.1. Direct grant (direct management)	1 600 000	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 000 000</b>	<b>N/A</b>

### **6.3 ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The action shall be implemented under direct management and indirect 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**

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**

This programme contributes to the European Union's comprehensive approach in the Central African Republic. In addition to the links and synergies with the actions previously financed under the Instrument contributing to 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 geographic pillar of the NDICI-Global Europe instrument. 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 the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).