



Funded by the European Union

European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) Phase II

Component 2

Support to the National Assembly and Judiciary Programme Profile

Overview

The European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) is the EU's flagship democracy support programme in Nigeria. The programme is designed to complement the efforts of the Nigerian government to improve and strengthen democracy.

Background

Nigeria has held six consecutive General Elections since 1999, with varied outcomes. The 1999 and 2003 elections were flawed, and the 2007 election fell far short of international and regional standards for democratic elections, leading to condemnation. The 2011 and 2015 elections showed strong improvement due to large-scale reforms by the Independent

National Electoral Commission (INEC). However, the elections of 2019 and 2023 were viewed as missed opportunities to consolidate the gains made in 2011 and 2015. Nigeria's ability to play a positive role in governance, security, and stability in the West Africa sub-region and the African continent depends on the unity, representativeness, and health of its democracy. Improving governance structures, democratic institutions, and increasing the limited participation of the majority of the population, particularly women and youth, in governance and decision-making processes is crucial.

The implementation of the EU-SDGN programme fulfills the EU's continued interest in supporting the process of democratic and electoral reforms in Nigeria, with the aim of enhancing the capacity of the country's national institutions.

Thematic Focus

The EU Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) is articulated through six components, which are:



Component 1: Support to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)



Component 2: Support to the National Assembly and Judiciary



Component 3: Support to Political Parties



Component 4: Support to Media



Component 5: Support to Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities



Component 6: Support to Civil Society Organisations

The EU-SDGN programme has a cohort of 16 organizations, each with a specific role and focus within the programme.

Objective

Strengthening capacities for legislative and judicial reform in compliance with democratic principles and standards.

Beneficiaries

National Assembly: The legislature in Nigeria operates across three federating units, including the National Assembly (NASS), a bicameral legislature composed of the Senate and the House of Representatives. At the state level, State Houses of Assembly (SHAs) operate a unicameral legislature, while local governments operate a single chamber made up of councilors from different wards. The primary functions of the legislature are lawmaking, representation, and oversight, and through these roles, they are expected to contribute to democratic consolidation, improve state capability, and promote inclusion. However, this process has encountered significant challenges since the return to democracy in 1999 due to various factors, including high

turnover of legislators, low skills of elected officers and support staff, and limited political will. The National Assembly requires technical support, particularly at the committee level, to enhance the quality of its lawmaking and oversight responsibilities. Additionally, it is vital to increase public scrutiny of the National Assembly's activities and promote citizen access and participation in the legislative process.

Judiciary: The judiciary is Nigeria's third arm of government, solely responsible for the administration of justice. Prior to any elections, the President of the Appeal Court is required to establish Election Petition Tribunals to resolve disputed electoral outcomes. This emphasizes the necessity of engaging with this branch of government to familiarize them with electoral processes and procedures, and to establish practice directions to govern electoral adjudication.

Approach

The following are areas where support will be provided to enhance the capacity of the National Assembly (NASS) and Judiciary:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Providing targeted support to NASS members to improve their skills and knowledge on legislative practices, procedures, and Committee rules. ▶ Improving research and legislative analysis, and expanding citizen outreach. ▶ Providing core institutional support to clerks of select NASS Committees on legislative drafting. ▶ Supporting the strengthening of engagement between NASS members and their constituents through constituency offices and public hearings at the local level. ▶ Developing the capacity of elected women, youth, and persons with disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Supporting target Committees to hold stakeholder consultations and collate inputs for an inclusive electoral and constitutional review exercise. ▶ Supporting the recruitment of technical experts to build up the skills and knowledge of NASS to drive electoral reforms and aggregate views, strategies, and proposals for reform. ▶ Supporting the development of practice directions for election petition tribunals. ▶ Providing training and capacity building for Judges of the Election Petition Tribunals.
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The following outcomes are expected to be achieved through the component:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ NASS and targeted NASS committees are supported to improve their legislative duties, specifically related to election-related legislations and oversight functions. ▶ Improved access for citizens to NASS, and enhanced engagement by NASS with their constituencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increased capacity for elected female, youth, and persons with disabilities. ▶ A strengthened judiciary to ensure the effective administration of electoral justice.
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Implementing Partners: This component is implemented by two partners, which include:

- Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC)
- Yiaga Africa

