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ANNEX 3

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multi-country multiannual action plan on an EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme in favour of the Western Balkans and Türkiye for 2024-2025

Action Document for “EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2024-2025”

This document constitutes the multiannual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and annual and multiannual action plans and measures in the sense of Article 9 of IPA III Regulation and Article 23(2) of NDICI - Global Europe Regulation.

1. SYNOPSIS

1.1. Action Summary Table

Title	EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2024-2025 Multi-country multiannual action plan on an EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme in favour of the Western Balkans and Türkiye for 2024-2025
OPSYS	OPSYS business reference: ACT-62281
ABAC	ABAC Commitment level 1 number: JAD.1299145 (allocation 2024) JAD.1299146 (allocation 2025)
Basic Act	Financed under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III)
Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)	No
EIP Flagship	No
Team Europe	No
Beneficiary(y)/(ies) of the action	The action shall be carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Programming document	IPA III Programming Framework
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	

Window and thematic priority	Mainly Window 1. Rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy Thematic Priority 5: Fundamental rights (with reference to media - freedom of expression)- 50% Thematic Priority 7: Civil Society- 50% (Partially Windows 2 and 3)			
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG (1 only): SDG 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions Other significant SDGs (up to 9) and, where appropriate, targets: SDG 01: No Poverty SDG 05: Gender Equality SDG 08: Decent Work and Economic Growth SDG 10: Reduce Inequalities SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities			
DAC code(s)	15150 Democratic participation and civil society – 90% 15153 Media and free flow of information – 10%			
Main Delivery Channel	20000 - Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society 60000 - Private sector institution			
Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity			
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>
	Internal markers and Tags	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective

EIP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EIP Flagship	YES <input type="checkbox"/>		NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Tags:	YES		NO
Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Energy	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Environment and climate resilience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Economic development (incl. private sector, trade and macroeconomic support)	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Human Development (incl. human capital and youth)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Health resilience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Migration and mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Agriculture, food security and rural development	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rule of law, governance and Public Administration reform	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Digitalisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tags	YES		NO
digital connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
digital governance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
digital entrepreneurship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
digital skills/literacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
digital services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tags	YES		NO
digital connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
energy	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
transport	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
education and research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input 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	
Amounts concerned	<p>Budget line: 15.020101.01</p> <p>Total estimated cost: EUR 7 600 000</p> <p>Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 7 000 000</p> <p>The contribution is for an amount of EUR 1 000 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2024 and for an amount of EUR 6 000 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2025, subject to the availability of appropriations for the respective financial years following the adoption of the relevant annual budget, or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.</p> <p>This action is co-financed in joint co-financing by: EUR 600 000 to be provided by potential applicants and co-applicants.</p>
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION	
Implementation modalities (management mode and delivery methods)	<p>Direct management through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grants - Procurement
Final date for concluding contribution / delegation agreements, procurement and grant contracts	<p>For 2024 Budget: At the latest by 31 December 2025</p> <p>For 2025 Budget: At the latest by 31 December 2026</p>
Indicative operational implementation period	<p>For 2024 Budget: 72 months following the adoption of the Financing Decision</p> <p>For 2025 Budget: 84 months following the adoption of the Financing Decision</p>

1.2. Summary of the Action

The overall objective of the Action is to strengthen participatory democracy and the EU approximation and integration process in Bosnia and Herzegovina, through an enhanced contribution by civil society and media. IPA III assistance within the Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2024-2025 will encourage sector-based networking and cooperation among Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in particular in the following areas: rule of law, anti-corruption, education, health, electoral processes, social inclusion, environment and climate change, youth, culture, local economy and entrepreneurship, women's rights, freedom of expression and media. Gender and inclusion of minorities (including Roma population) will be a cross cutting issue. This support will be further consolidated via the Resource Centre third phase, for CSOs with the aim to address the problem of low capacity of CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and make a sustainable impact achieved through www.EUResurs.ba web portal.

The Action will also increase domestic CSOs' capacities to contribute to transparent and fair elections, and improve capacities of CSOs to combat corruption, improve social dialogue and support social partners.

Furthermore, assistance will also be provided to the Government at different levels to build their capacities for more effective inclusion of CSOs in policy and decision-making.

1.3 Beneficiar(y)/(ies) of the Action

The action shall be carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Context

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) continues to be committed to fulfilling the 14 key priorities set up in the Commission Opinion and accompanying Analytical Report as well continuing to implement the Stabilisation and Association Agreement and recommendations of the meetings of the joint bodies under the Agreement.

A general assessment of the civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina corresponds to a general assessment of the BiH state and society – fragmented, institutionally very weak, financially unsustainable and greatly dependent on political and financial support of the international community, without clear vision of how to meet citizens' needs, with a private sector and unfavourable public perception of the general social benefit of their work. The civil society organizations that have emerged and evolved in BiH after the end of war conflict have not been direct local response to specific renewal and reintegration issues but rather consequences of the international initiatives and availability of the international funding and civil society development projects. The civil society in BiH is dominated by small grass root organisations without full time employees that operate locally with an aim of protection of interests and gained social rights of specific social or interest groups. The civil sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina is insufficiently based on membership. The lack of basis of civil society organisations in more numerous memberships brings their social legitimacy in question. Insufficient membership in associations indicates the absence of tradition, as well as the lack of trust on the part of citizens in institutions generally, which also applies to civil society institutions. The lack of citizens' trust in institutions is only logical, having in mind that institutions were designed to support the regime, rather than to meet different needs of the population. However, the main weakness of the civil society in BiH is still the cooperation and networking.

The coordination mechanism among EU Member States and EU have been institutionalized and done in clear and well-defined processes within the programming of financial assistance. In addition to EU and IPA programmes there are bilateral donors such as USAID, SIDA, Norway.

The IPA III Programming framework considers the support to civil society and media as one of the priorities to improve democracy and rule of law. It calls, inter alia for "*particular focus (...) to safeguard the freedom of expression and independence of media as pillars of democracy*". Gender is transversal to all IPA III framework priorities, and it has a specific mention in the following below.

The Programme will primarily contribute to Window 1: Rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy, Thematic Priority 5: Fundamental rights (with reference to media freedom of expression and gender) and Thematic Priority 7: Civil Society; Window 2: Good governance, EU acquis alignment, good neighbourly relations and strategic communication, Thematic Priority 1: Good governance - Economic governance; and Window 3: Green agenda and sustainable connectivity, Thematic Priority 1: Environment and climate change.

Since 2015, all EU candidate countries and potential candidates prepare Economic Reform Programmes (ERPs). ERPs prepare the Beneficiaries for their future participation in the EU's economic policy coordination procedures. They also play a key role in improving economic policy planning and steering reforms to sustain macroeconomic stability, boost competitiveness and improve conditions for inclusive growth and job creation. The ERPs are a key element of the «fundamentals first» approach in the EU's enlargement strategy. BiH has adopted the Economic Reform Programme 2021-2023 with the aim to continue progress in medium-term macroeconomic and fiscal policy framework and structural reform programme to improve country growth and competitiveness. Obligation of EU Membership with alignment with the EU Acquis of relevant legislation

and its implementation and enforcement remain a high priority in order to achieve progress on different EU Acquis Chapters. All these commitments undertaken by BiH in the European integration process are reflected in the strategic approach of this Strategic Response and planning of priorities until 2024 under all IPA III Programming Windows.

In November 2023 the European Commission adopted the 2023 Enlargement Package, providing a detailed assessment of the state of play and the progress made by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, and for the first time also Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia on their respective paths towards accession to the European Union. In particular, the report focuses on the progress in the implementation of fundamental reforms, as well as on providing clear guidance on the reform priorities ahead. When it comes to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Commission recommends the opening of accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina once the necessary degree of compliance with the membership criteria is achieved. On 14-15 December 2023, the European Council confirmed it will open negotiations once the necessary degree of compliance with the membership criteria is achieved. The country needs to apply further efforts to fulfil the key priorities set out in the Commission Opinion on its EU membership application. The Commission will continuously monitor the progress and compliance in all areas related to the opening of negotiations and report to the Council at the latest in March 2024.

Numerous strategic documents underline priorities addressed under this Action Document as follows:

Economic Reform Programme of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This programme is explained as a cross-cutting strategy in the context of W4 TPs 1-3 (Education, employment, social protection and inclusion policies, and health; private sector development, trade, research and innovation; Agriculture and rural development) and is primarily focused on these areas. The reforms of the Programme in general contribute to the achievement of Window 1 overall objective in terms of strengthening the institutions and legal framework while aligning with EU standards and regulations aiming to facilitate exercise of fundamental rights and to improving business environment and its measures (target TP 3 of Window 1).

New Growth Plan for the Western Balkans. Boosting the Western Balkans' socio-economic convergence with the EU & accelerating EU reforms. The Commission has proposed that the plan be implemented through a new financing instrument: The proposed €6 billion Reform and Growth Facility for the Western Balkans is based on the 4 pillars: 1) Enhancing economic integration with the European Union's Single Market, 2) Boosting economic integration within the Western Balkans through the Common Regional Market, which could add 10% to their economies, 3) Accelerating fundamental reforms and 4) Increased financial assistance. The reforms of the Programme in general contribute to the achievement of Window 1 overall objective.

Strategic Framework for BiH. This strategic document is explained as a cross-cutting strategy in the context of Window 4 Thematic Priority 1-4 (Education, employment, social protection and inclusion policies, and health; Private sector development, trade, research and innovation; Agriculture and rural development; and Fisheries) addressing a range of fundamental rights in these areas. **With regards to the Window 1 overall objective**, the Framework in general addresses strengthening of institutions and human resources thereof; development of legal framework and harmonisation with EU and accelerating process of transition ("strengthen staff, technical and financial network of relevant institutions for harmonisation of technical regulations"), and emphasises transparency in public sector. More specifically, it contributes to the W1 overall objective and is cross-cutting the W1 thematic priorities in the areas of: i) justice; ii) anticorruption iii) security and border management iv fundamental rights v) demining.

Action Plan for Improving the State of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of LGBTIQ Persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Period 2021 – 2023. This is a strategic document within the TP 5, but at the same time it is a cross-cutting strategic document for gender mainstreaming of the Window 1. Aim of the Action Plan is to ensure that human rights and freedoms of LGBTIQ persons are respected, protected and fulfilled. The Action plan sets the following three general goals: equality and prohibition of discrimination and equal rights in all areas of life and a society of respect.

Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2015-2019. This is a strategic document within the thematic priority 2, but at the same time it is a cross-cutting strategic document of the Window 1. It sets the objectives of: (i)

establishment and strengthening of institutional capacities and improvement of the normative framework for the fight against corruption, and (ii) improvement of the effectiveness and efficiency of the judicial institutions and bodies for law enforcement in the area of the fight against corruption.

The Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for Social Inclusion of Roma 2021-2025 puts stress on the non-discrimination of Roma and raising awareness of necessity for inclusion of Roma in all social processes in BiH. Action plans for Roma in BiH specifically target areas of education, employment, housing and health protection - Action Plan for Addressing Roma Issues in the Fields of Employment, Housing and Health Care, Framework Action Plan on the Educational Needs of Roma.

Over the recent years, the EU has increased its focus on civil society as a way to meet the key challenges in establishing functioning democratic institutions. In the Western Balkans, the EU's approach in supporting civil society will continue to focus on strengthening participatory democracies and the EU approximation and integration process through a strengthened contribution by civil society. In line with the "DG NEAR Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in the enlargement region 2021-2027"¹, the EU support will aim at achieving the following three outcomes:

- A conducive environment for civil society to carry out its activities
- Strengthened cooperation and partnership between CSOs and public institutions and
- Reinforced CSO capacity and resilience to carry out their activities effectively.

This is also reflected in the 2018 Western Balkan Strategy stating that "*governments should ensure stakeholders can actively participate in the reform and policy making process, for example by establishing inclusive structured dialogues on reform priorities with the involvement of an empowered civil society. An enabling environment for civil society organisations is therefore crucial*".

The "DG Enlargement Guidelines for EU support to media freedom and media integrity in enlargement countries, 2014-2020"² expired in 2020, but their main elements remain valid. As indicated in the Guidelines: "*Free media come as the principal precondition for freedom of expression. Since the media and their markets are basically national in scope, there is little EU acquis. However, in the context of the EU Enlargement policy, the European Commission assesses against the Copenhagen political criteria whether there is real respect and true commitment to promoting freedom of expression in the given aspiring country.*"

2.2. Problem Analysis

Area of support #1: civil society

Short problem analysis

An empowered civil society is a crucial component of any democratic system and should be recognised and treated as such by the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A long-term EU support to Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities and Civil Society led to the establishment of a publicly accessible registry of the Civil Society Organisations. According to the records from registry there are 25,646 registered associations and foundations. The official data obtained from entity statistics bureaus and tax offices related to full time employees vary from 3,063 to 4,247 employees. It represents some 3.5% of the total number of employees outside of the agricultural sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina has all the characteristics of civil society in a transitional country dominated by sport-recreational associations and associations that represent interests of specific social groups.

¹ [DG NEAR Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in the Enlargement Region 2021-2027 \(europa.eu\)](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/guidelines-eu-support-civil-society-enlargement-region-2021-2027)

² https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/guidelines-eu-support-media-freedom-and-media-integrity-enlargement-countries-2014-2020_en

As was outlined in the European Commission Annual 2023 Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina³, *“The Opinion’s key priority 11 on ensuring an enabling environment for civil society still needs to be addressed, notably by upholding European standards on freedom of association and freedom of assembly. Meaningful and systematic consultations with civil society have yet to be ensured as part of an inclusive policy dialogue. A framework for the transparent funding of civil society organisations still needs to be adopted. The reintroduction of criminal penalties for defamation in the Republika Srpska entity, which entered into force in August 2023, severely impacts the environment for civil society. Legislative initiatives in parliamentary procedure in the Republika Srpska entity to target civil society organisations as foreign agents, if adopted, would mark a regrettable and undeniable major step backwards”*.

The EU’s policy on civil society is based on the *“DG NEAR Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in the enlargement region 2021-2027”*⁴. The Baseline Assessment Report 2021 on the civil society highlighted the following for Bosnia and Herzegovina⁵: *“In Bosnia and Herzegovina, freedoms of association, peaceful assembly and expression are regulated at the level of the state, the two entities and Brčko District. In addition to the constitutional level, the rights are protected by respective legislation in the three jurisdictions. Given the set-up of Bosnia and Herzegovina, international human rights law, including the European Convention on Human Rights, is embedded in domestic legislation and takes precedence over domestic law. With regard to freedom of association, even if laws on associations and foundations are enacted in each jurisdiction separately, they feature similar or identical provisions. They place no unlawful restrictions on the scope of CSO activities and pursuit of objectives, and they provide for both voluntary and involuntary termination of CSOs. An area of improvement here would be to further simplify the regulatory requirements, for instance by providing recognition to informal groups and civic initiatives, in order to decrease the burden on the associations. Some laws on public assemblies prohibit individuals and entities from organising or participating in assemblies if they are under a court order not to participate in an assembly, without providing clear grounds for and effective safeguards to challenge such a ban. Even though laws on freedom of expression are largely in line with standards, case law differs across jurisdictions creating uncertainty given that the same situations can be adjudicated differently in different courts. Laws on the protection from defamation should be amended to incorporate higher standards of acceptability, tolerance, and proof in cases involving public figures”*.

Legislation on gender equality remains to be harmonised across the country and effectively enforced. Greater involvement and political commitment need to be ensured however in its implementation with clearly defined steps and milestones, tasks, and responsibilities. An action plan on women, peace and security is also in place and significant efforts were made across the country in order to create an environment supportive of greater participation of women in the police and in the army. More participation of women in decision-making and in security and peace institutions, an effective mechanism of monitoring and accountability systems, and adequate funding from the budget for implementing the Action Plan remain priorities. Women are under-represented in politics and public life. Gender impact assessments are not carried out as required by law. The gender pay gap remains significant at around 25%. The treatment of maternity, paternity and family leave continues to differ between entities and among cantons. The institutional response to gender-based violence needs to be improved, including on protective measures, victim support, legal aid and safe accommodation. Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to accelerate the prosecution of crimes of sexual violence, provide reparation to women victims of war crimes, and secure witness protection. Data collection needs to be improved to enable the development of sound policies targeting key gender gaps, and provide relevant data on gender-based violence.

³ SWD(2023) 691 final. COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT “Bosnia and Herzegovina 2023 Report Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2023 Communication on EU Enlargement policy”, Brussels, 8.11.2023

⁴ [DG NEAR Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in the Enlargement Region 2021-2027 \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/easip/en/dg-near-guidelines-for-eu-support-to-civil-society-in-the-enlargement-region-2021-2027)

⁵ <https://tacso.eu/eu-civil-society-guidelines/>

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

BiH's Ministry of Justice and its Department for Civil Society was leading governmental body. The cooperation with Republika Srpska's ministries and few cantonal (e.g. Una-Sana) was intensified through EU4CivilSociety project www.eu4cs.ba. The cooperation with Federation's relevant institutions was established in ad hoc manner and mainly when those institutions have specific goal to achieved e.g. participation within project steering committees (e.g. RELOAD, TACSO).

Grassroot organisations proactively advocated for policy changes. Activists dealing with issues perceived as sensitive (anticorruption, women's rights, rights of LGBTIQ persons, migrants, the environment) continued to be subject to threats, abuse and physical attacks. Civil society organisations also provide services to disadvantaged groups, in substitution to public authorities. These activities were hampered by restrictions of movement during the pandemic, which also affected their financial sustainability. Available public funding decreased during and after the pandemic, and civil society organisations have not been eligible for economic recovery measures reserved to the private sector. A framework for the transparent and impartial distribution of public funds to associations remains needed across the country.

Area of support #2: media

Short problem analysis

As was outlined in the European Commission Annual 2023 Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina: *“Key priority 11: Ensure an enabling environment for civil society, notably by upholding European standards on freedom of association and freedom of assembly: While the overall legal and regulatory framework is broadly in line with the EU acquis, recently the Republika Srpska entity adopted in the first reading a draft law targeting civil society actors as ‘foreign agents’ which, if fully adopted, would mark another regrettable and undeniable major step backwards. Key priority 12: Guarantee freedom of expression and of the media and the protection of journalists, notably by: (a) ensuring the appropriate judicial follow-up to cases of threats and violence against journalists and media workers, and (b) ensuring the financial sustainability of the public broadcasting system. Step: guarantee freedom of expression and of the media and the protection of journalists, notably by ensuring the appropriate judicial follow-up to cases of threats and violence against journalists and media workers. There continue to be concerns about political pressure, intimidation and threats against journalists. In July 2023 the Republika Srpska entity re-introduced criminal penalties for defamation, with disproportionate restrictions that severely impact freedom of expression and of the media and representing a major step backwards. No action was taken to ensure the financial sustainability of the public broadcasting system”*.

In the coming year, Bosnia and Herzegovina should, in particular:

- ensure the protection of journalists and a systematic institutional follow-up on threats and violence against them;
- ensure the financial sustainability and political independence of public broadcasters, and harmonise entity legislation with the state-level law on the public broadcasting system;
- adopt legislation on media ownership transparency and criteria on public advertising.

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

BiH's Ministry of Justice and its Department for Civil Society was leading governmental body. Other relevant ministries such as BiH Ministry of Communication and Transport and Communication Regulatory Agency, Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees are also involved in the follow up of media and freedom of expression issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

2.3. Lessons Learned

The Civil Society Facility and Media Programme offers a single window of support to civil society and media freedom, bringing together EU support at bilateral and multi-country level. Considerable IPA II funding has been allocated to civil society development, in particular to build the capacities of civil society to actively take part in policy dialogue, reinforce local democracy and strengthen civil society organisations to fight corruption and protect the environment.

The Mid-term Evaluation of the Civil Society Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey (CSF) contains a section specifically related to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Major conclusions are:

- The CSF is a very relevant instrument for support to civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Relevance is high both from the point of strong linkages of the CSF objectives to the Copenhagen political criteria for accession and their operationalisation for Bosnia and Herzegovina in terms of preservation of democratic governance and human rights.
- CSF financial assistance is efficient. The cycle of programming, tendering and contracting goes relatively quickly, without major delays. CSF financial assistance has increased its reach to grassroots and community-based organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The evaluation found that CSF assistance is flexible and responds to the changing needs of civil society organisations and of the government. This is extremely important in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the political and socio-economic context is very complex and affects civil society significantly. This flexibility also raises the very relevance of CSF.
- There is a varying degree of effectiveness of CSF assistance in addressing civil society needs. With regards to effectiveness of support to the capacities of CSOs in internal organisation and organisational capacity, the CSF has had more success, with direct results seen in improvements to individual CSO and network capacities.
- Whilst project level impacts are visible, the broader impact from CSF funding in Bosnia and Herzegovina is less strong. Donor involvement is shrinking, leaving the EU as the main donor. CSF-supported projects have more visible outcomes on specific target groups. The most visible impact of the assistance is seen in the profiling and consolidation of networks, allowing them to continue to enhance constructive dialogue and collaboration with public authorities. External factors affecting CSF ability to achieve positive outcomes and impacts are political, as well as the low institutional and human capacities within grassroots CSOs, and a lack of continuous financial support for CSOs.
- The sustainability of CSF actions in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains fragile, and many of the actions financed by the CSF will face difficulties in producing effects after projects close. Systematic and transparent mechanisms for funding of CSOs are lacking, as is an overall government strategy for ensuring the enabling environment for the development of civil society.
- The focus on human rights in the CSF for Bosnia and Herzegovina is strong; however, the focus on gender seems to be more declarative than essential. Focus on the environment has been positive. While CSF assistance appropriately targets issues relating to human rights and the environment, it seems that gender is not yet a truly mainstreamed concept.
- CSF actions in Bosnia and Herzegovina follow priorities as recognised by EU programming documents and EU progress reports. Synergies between the CSF, Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and some sectoral support instruments can be further developed.
- CSF projects follow EU visibility requirements. The CSF is, besides the EIDHR, the most visible instrument for civil society. Participation in CSF-funded projects also allows organisations to work on stronger advocacy and inclusion in policy processes, which in turn, raises the visibility of the EU as a donor. Also, as civil society organisations work at the local level, their proactive promotion of the EU as a donor raises awareness of EU support in local communities.

Finally, evidence indicates that civil society should not be supported in isolation, but as an integral part of every policy area. Civil society should be regarded as a cross-cutting issue and not as separate sector. In Bosnia

and Herzegovina, the EU is promoting involvement of CSOs in consultations regarding programming of EU funds (namely IPA I, IPA II, IPA III and EIDHR) as well as in the preparation of the EU annual enlargement report. The EU Integration process will be a major challenge for Bosnia and Herzegovina with a particular role for CSOs.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1. Intervention Logic

The Overall Objective/Impact of this action is to strengthen participatory democracy and the EU approximation process in the Bosnia and Herzegovina through an enhanced contribution of civil society and media.

The Specific Objective/Outcomes of this action are:

1. Civil society's involvement in the EU integration process in Bosnia and Herzegovina enhanced.
2. Ensured freedom of expression and independence of media.

The Outputs to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objective (Outcome) are

- 1.1 *contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1)*: Improved transparency, accountability and non-discriminatory government support to CSOs;
- 1.2 *contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1)*: Improved and increased participation of Civil Society Organisations in the decision-making processes by relevant institutions;
- 1.3 *contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1)*: Policies related to the engagement and involvement of CSOs in the decision-making process are developed;
- 1.4 *contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1)*: Enhanced CSO capacities and better targeting of actions through an improved strategic long-term organisational planning;
- 1.5 *contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1)*: Increased networking coalition building in campaigning and advocacy activities;
- 2.1 *contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2)*: Enhanced professional capacity of journalists and media actors.

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that if the government supports CSOs in a transparent and fair manner, the authorities include CSOs in their decision-making, the governments ensure enabling policies, CSOs are guided by long-term planning and CSOs regularly network, then civil society's involvement in the EU integration in BiH is enhanced.

3.2. Indicative Activities

Outputs 1.1 and 1.2

- **Capacity-building for the Bosnia and Herzegovina governments to include CSOs into decision-making**

The activity will consist in technical assistance support with the aim to better include CSOs into the decision and policymaking and improve/develop their strategic documents defining cooperation with CSOs and social partners (employees, employers, governments) in an inclusive, evidence-based process. It will target the problem of weak cooperation and dialogue between governments and civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina and extend it in direction of support to social dialogue and social partners (employees, employers, governments) including on such issues as legislation, collective negotiations, assessing the need for new legislation, drafting the laws and monitoring the implementation of reforms.

Outputs 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 and 2.1

- **Support to existing and newly established CSO networks (1.3, 1.4, 1.5) and Enhanced professional capacity of journalists and media actors (2.1)**

The activities will provide support to existing and newly established CSO networks will enable and support CSOs to engage in sector networking across a range of themes, such as rule of law, anti-corruption, education, health, electoral processes, social inclusion, environment and climate change, youth, culture, local economy and entrepreneurship, women rights, freedom of expression and media. The assistance will enable CSOs to advocate for positive societal changes, including towards public institutions. This support will be consolidated via Resource Centre, third phase, for CSOs with aim to address the problem of low capacity of CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and make sustainable impact achieved through www.EUResurs.ba web portal.

The support to be provided under the Resource centre will focus on the strengthening of existing or new civil initiatives/groups Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and contribute to the development of the civil society actors in BiH as competent and publicly recognized actors in decision-making processes in BiH – in particular in the EU integration process as well as to improve the transparency and visibility of the actions supporting the Civil Society through established platform. The project support is aimed to improve the functionality and working environment and framework for CSOs by enhancing the CSOs human and technical capacities (such as support to volunteers, low-cost offices and local funds for co-financing the projects). The activities will address also the freedom of expression and the protection of journalists as media freedoms remain threatened.

3.3. Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Biodiversity

There are a number of environmental/ecological CSOs (e.g. ECO BiH network⁶) active in Bosnia and Herzegovina who have been instrumental in persuading responsible authorities to take a more pro-active role in dealing with environmental problems. This action envisages activities and development in this area towards influencing responsible authorities at all levels to deal with the pressing environmental problems to be covered by the Action. Transparency of the decision-making process in area of environment and public participation, as well as access to environmental information will be further pursued and improved through proposed activities and CSOs play a vital role in this process.

Local authorities have an important role to play in environmental protection and civil society groups have been active in co-operating at local level in order to bring about improved practices. These efforts will be carried out in a consistent and harmonised manner in order to enable tangible progress and in line with requirements of the EU acquis in area of environment. This Action will encourage and "systematise" this development.

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1⁷. This implies that Bosnia and Herzegovina is in the process of acceding to the European Union and over the past years has successfully set up the legislative and policy framework for gender equality. It is a signatory to a number of important and binding international documents, which guarantee the equality of men and women and prohibit gender-based discrimination. This action will address challenges in effectively implementing the legal and

⁶ EU Civil Society and Media Programme supported full information on [https://euresurs.ba/projekat/ekoloska-mreza-%22eko-bih%22-\(2018...\)/7](https://euresurs.ba/projekat/ekoloska-mreza-%22eko-bih%22-(2018...)/7)

⁷ significant objective

policy framework on gender equality that has negative impact on real equality experienced by women and men, and on development outcomes in general.

Data collection will be addressed under this Action to enable the development of sound policies targeting key gender gaps, and provide relevant data on gender-based violence. Lack of human resources and institutional capacity to implement the normative framework for equality of women and men remain among the most serious challenges in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which might be addressed as well.

Giving the recent developments in BiH with regard to domestic violence this action will also focus on the measures Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (implementation of Istanbul Convention). Following the horrific crimes and femicide in August 2023, the institutional solution to help all women, victims of violence and the new legislation that will ensure more rights for women and more severe sanctions against perpetrators, i.e. those who commit violence against women should be developed and implementation supported. In the area of prosecution and procedural law, in this report GREVIO expresses the concern that domestic violence and other forms of violence against women are considered by judges in Bosnia and Herzegovina as offences of low social danger. Worrying judicial and sentencing practices are identified, such as the predominant use of mitigating circumstances, the large use of plea-bargaining agreements and the imposition of very lenient sentences, which ultimately entail a sentiment of impunity among perpetrators and victims alike.

Human Rights

This action will be implemented in a non-discriminatory manner and according to equal opportunities principles that guarantee that no distinctions will be made on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, ability or other possible grounds in any aspect. In this regard, all civil society and media activities will put an emphasis on engaging, representing and reporting on the rights of most disadvantaged groups, including people living in poverty, vulnerable women, children, persons with mental and/or physical disabilities, Roma, as well as other minority groups.

As regards international human rights instruments, Bosnia and Herzegovina has ratified all major UN and international human rights conventions. The principles of the European Convention on Human Rights are entrenched in the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which also guarantees the supremacy of this Convention over national legislation. However, the Constitution fails to guarantee full access to fundamental human rights to citizens who do not affiliate to any of the three "constituent peoples" in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the Sejdic-Finci case, which relates to some major constitutional amendments, has yet to be addressed and the Action will pay attention to this issue and where possible seek to address it.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Non-binary, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) people in Bosnia and Herzegovina are regularly suffering from discrimination and violence. Same-sex couples are continuously discriminated against, as the legal system fails to recognise their social and economic rights, including the right to family life. The social inclusion of intersex and especially transgender persons, who are particularly marginalised, also needs to be improved. The prosecution of hate crimes and hate speech against LGBTIQ persons must be improved. The intervention will also target LGBTIQ persons, assisting in furthering their interests, ensuring full respect of their rights and advocating for the full equality of this group in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Action will contribute to improve the social inclusion of the above-mentioned disadvantaged groups and fight discrimination, including antigypsyism.

In 2022, the Press and Online Media Council in BiH received 566 complaints about potential violations of the code of journalistic ethics in BiH. Through the self-regulation (publishing of denials and corrections), 365 complaints have been resolved, 64% of the total number. When it comes to hate speech comments complaints,

394 complaints out of total number of 566 in 2022 referred to hate speech, discrimination, and hatred in visitor’s comments.

In July 2023 the Republika Srpska entity reintroduced of criminal penalties for defamation, which has severely impacted freedom of expression and of the media and represents a major step backwards in the protection of fundamental rights. Furthermore, in September 2023, the Republika Srpska entity assembly adopted in first reading a draft law targeting civil society groups as foreign agents; this has already had a negative effect on civic space in the entity. These regrettable developments risk spilling over to the other parts of the country.

The Action will address also the *freedom of expression and the protection of journalists as media freedoms remain threatened*.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. This implies that even though Bosnia and Herzegovina ratified the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (CRPD) and its optional protocol and the relevant law prohibits discrimination, persons with disabilities continue to face challenges regarding access to education, healthcare and social assistance. Very few public buildings are accessible to persons with physical disabilities. The Council for Persons with Disabilities needs to be further engaged in all relevant processes. The authorities also need to improve data collection, including gender-disaggregated data on women and men with disabilities. However multi-sectoral and comprehensive implementation mechanisms should be put in place in order to address all mentioned issues. This action is aimed to address aforementioned issues.

3.4. Risks and Assumptions

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/Medium/Low)	Impact (High/Medium/Low)	Mitigating measures
External environment	Political instability/lack of political will	Medium	High	Regular inclusive and evidence-based regional political dialogue with the parties concerned Continuous monitoring of progress achieved in order to adapt the approach of the action during the implementation phase Steering Committees to be set up for the different initiatives established through the action will review information at beneficiary level to assess the potential impact on implementation and suggest further mitigation measures, as required
External environment	The overall political situation and establishment of the governments on all levels upon the	Medium	Medium	Knowledge-based approach supported by partnership promotion and mutual respect among stakeholders

	General and Local Elections could influence implementation of the proposed activities.			
People and the organisation	Limited number of staff in beneficiary institutions and heavy workload	Medium	Medium	Ensure that <u>a dedicated department (including staff)</u> is identified in all beneficiary and coordinating institutions during the process of ToR drafting, and that they are made aware of their roles in the implementation process.
Legality and regularity aspects	The main implementation risk on project level is lack of transparency in re-granting process by the successful implementers	Medium	Medium	close follow-up and involvement in monitoring of re-granting process by EU Delegation

External Assumptions

- Political support and will of the government levels of Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue with the democratisation and EU integration process in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the involvement of a strong civil society.
- Support and sufficient level of interest by all government levels to cooperate with CSOs and their networks.
- Political support to media freedom and anti-corruption activities.
- Civil Society Organisations have interest to cooperate under sectoral networks

3.5. Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (2022-)	Targets (2027)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	To strengthen participatory democracy and the EU approximation process in Bosnia and Herzegovina through an enhanced contribution by civil society and media.	Quality of structures and mechanisms in place for cooperation between CSOs/media and public Institutions	The Charter(s) of Cooperation/ policy documents applied namely Articles 6 (responsibilities of BiH Council of Ministries and Article 7 (responsibilities of CSOs)	The Charter(s) of Cooperation/ policy documents applied, namely Article 6 (50%), Article 7 (50%)	EU Report Independent assessments Annual reports	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 1	Civil society's involvement in the EU integration process in Bosnia and Herzegovina enhanced.	1.1 Percentage of laws/bylaws, strategies and policy reforms effectively consulted with CSOs. 1.2 Percentage of CSOs that represent vulnerable groups such as, LGBTIQ, migrant minorities, Roma, women, persons with disabilities and others as appropriate, in line with the Human Rights Based Approach	1.1 Civil Society participation identified in 15% of the new laws, strategies and policy reforms developed 1.2 No precise data on CSOs addressing vulnerable groups involved in consultation processes	1.1 Civil Society participation identified in 35% % of the new laws, strategies and policy reforms developed 1.2 10% of the 557 CSOs addressing protection of human rights ⁸	Project reports Competent government institutions report DG NEAR Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in WBT Baseline Assessment report and Assessment report for subsequent years	- Political support and will of the government levels of Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue with the democratisation and EU integration process in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the involvement of a strong civil society. - Civil Society Organisations have interest to cooperate under sectoral networks
Outcome 2	Ensured freedom of expression and independence of media.	2.1 Extent to which media are protected by law from threats, attacks, judicial harassment	2.1 Journalists and civil society activists, which monitor and criticize political	2.1 and 2.2 Improved legislative framework for ensuring media freedoms and	Project reports DG NEAR Assessment report	- Political support to media freedom and anti-corruption activities.

⁸ Mapping study of CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2022, <https://europa.ba/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2022Sep-Mapping-study-of-CSOs-in-BiH.pdf>

		and discriminatory treatment (1.2.b)	elites and report on corruption, are increasingly under political pressure, intimidation and attacks.	integrity by introducing the criminalization of hate speech in the public space, which includes hate speech against journalists in BiH (online and offline).		
		2.2 Proportion of CSOs that operate effectively without threats, attacks, judicial harassment and discriminatory treatment (1.2.c)	2.2 9% of the surveyed CSOs were subject to threats or physical attacks either their organisation or their members or both.			
Output 1.1	Improved transparency, accountability and non-discriminatory government support to CSOs	1.1.1 Amount of public funding for CSOs	1.1.1 23% of public authorities allocated through public call/tender procedures	1.1.1 10% increase of the public funding	Competent government institutions reports	
Output 1.2	Improved and increased Civil Society Organisations participation in the decision-making processes by relevant institutions	2.1.1 Number of public institutions that included CSOs in their decision-making	2.1.1 10%	2.1.1 80%		

<p>Output 1.3</p>	<p>Policies related to the engagement and involvement of CSOs in the decision-making process are developed</p>	<p>3.1.1 Mechanisms for dialogue between civils society and relevant government structures meaningfully include CSOs (2.3.f of the Guidelines)</p>	<p>3.1.1 Adopted adequate documentation on the BiH level addressing and supporting civil society development with clearly stated goals and measures for implementation, clear allocation of responsibilities and funding available. Legislation applied in limited number of Public str</p>	<p>3.1.1 Strategic framework for creation of more enabling environment for civil society development adopted at all levels in BiH (state, entities, District Brcko, cantons and minimum 50% of municipalities)</p>	<p>Project reports Project Monitoring Visits</p>	<p>- Support and sufficient level of interest by all government levels to cooperate with CSOs and their networks. - Civil Society Organisations have interest to cooperate under sectoral networks</p>
<p>Output 1.4</p>	<p>Enhanced CSO capacities and better targeting of actions through an improved strategic long-term organisational planning.</p>	<p>4.1.1 Proportion of CSOs that have an organisational strategy, including vision, mission and goals (3.1.e of the Guidelines) 4.1.2 Proportion of CSOs that have organisational human resources policies (3.8.b of the Guidelines)</p>	<p>4.1.1 55% of CSOs have an organisational strategy⁹ 4.1.2 22% of the responded CSOs have adopted or implemented at last one (out of 9 policies)</p>	<p>4.1.1 80% of CSOs have an organisational strategy 4.1.2 80% of CSOs have adopted or implemented at least one policy</p>	<p>DG NEAR Assessment report</p>	<p>- Support and sufficient level of interest by all government levels to cooperate with CSOs and their networks. - Civil Society Organisations have interest to cooperate under sectoral networks</p>
<p>Output 1.5</p>	<p>Increased networking and coalition building in campaigning and advocacy activities</p>	<p>5.1.1 Proportion of CSOs taking part in local, central and international CSO</p>	<p>5.1.1. 58% of all CSOs involved in the DG NEAR Survey were part</p>	<p>5.1.1 80% of the surveyed CSOs are</p>		

		networks (3.6.a of the Guidelines) 5.1.2 Proportion of CSOs engaged in cross-sectoral partnerships with academia, social partners and private sector (3.6.b)	in at least a local, national or international CSO networks 5.1.2 53.8% of all CSOs involved in the DG NEAR Survey were engaged	involved in networks 5.1.2 80% of the surveyed CSOs are engaged in cross-sectoral partnerships with academia, social partners and private sector		
Output 2.1	Enhanced professional capacity of journalists and media actors	2.1.1 Number of media professionals who increased their capacities in properly addressing threats	2.1.1 N/a	2.1.1 10% of the surveyed media professionals	Project reports Survey reports	- Political support to media freedom and anti-corruption activities.

⁹ DG NEAR First Assessment report, Annex X, Country Analysis-BiH

4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1. Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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 72 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 in duly justified cases.

4.3. 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 measures¹⁰.

4.3.1. Direct Management (Grants)

4.3.1.1. Grants

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

The purpose of the grant is to strengthen the capacity of CSOs to contribute to Bosnia and Herzegovina's society development in particular sectors (Outputs 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1).

(b) Type of applicants targeted

The applicants shall comply with essential eligibility criteria as follows:

- be legal persons and
- be non-profit-making and
- be non-governmental organisations

The part of the action under the budgetary envelope reserved for grants may, partially or totally and including where an entity is designated for receiving a grant without a call for proposals, be implemented in indirect management with an entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- The entrusted entity shall be selected based on a call for expression of interest submitted either by an international organisation or a Member State organisation individually, or, by the partnership, in which an international organisation or a Member State organisation is a lead partner.

¹⁰ [EU Sanctions Map](#). 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.

- An entity to be entrusted with the implementation of an Action shall possess operational capacity for managing large scale interventions which combine technical assistance and grants to demonstrate transparency of the grant award and management procedures.
- Technical competences shall be demonstrated by an entrusted entity (either individually or within a partnership) in the following fields relevant to the intervention: introduction and implementation of activities in support to strengthening of civil society organisations and supporting their work in the areas of Human rights protection, antidiscrimination, youth, rural women and vulnerable categories of unemployed (long-term unemployed, persons with disability and Roma), capacity building of the social work institutions, economic empowerment of women, working with Roma population, anticorruption, media.

4.3.2. Direct Management (Procurement)

Procurement will contribute to achieving the following outputs:

Output 1.1: The government’s support to Civil Society Organisations is available and provided in a transparent, accountable, fair and non-discriminatory manner; and

Output 1.2: Civil Society Organisations are included in the decision-making processes by relevant institutions

This assistance shall provide support the Bosnia and Herzegovina governments to better include CSOs into the decision and policy-making and improve/develop their strategic documents defining cooperation with CSOs and social partners (employees, employers, governments) in an inclusive, evidence-based process. It will target the problem of weak cooperation and dialogue between governments and civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina and extend it in direction of support to social dialogue and social partners (employees, employers, governments) including on such issues as legislation, collective negotiations, assessing the need for new legislation, drafting the laws and monitoring the implementation of reforms.

4.4. 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, subject to the following provisions.

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 realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult (Article 28(10) NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

4.5. Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR) 2024	EU contribution (amount in EUR) 2025	Indicative third-party contribution (amount in EUR)¹¹
Methods of implementation – cf. section 4.3			
Outcome 1 composed of	1 000 000	5 400 000	540 000

¹¹ The co-financing to be provided by potential applicants and co-applicants.

<i>Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.1</i>			
Support to existing and newly established CSOs networks		5 400 000	540 000
<i>Procurement (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.2</i>			
Capacity-building for the Bosnia and Herzegovina governments to include CSOs into decision-making	1 000 000		
Outcome 2 composed of		600 000	60 000
<i>Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.1</i>			
Enhanced professional capacity of journalists and media actors		600 000	60 000
Grants (direct management) – total envelope under section 4.3.1		6 000 000	
Procurement (direct management) – total envelope under section 4.3.2	1 000 000		
Evaluation – c.f. section 5.2 Audit – c.f. section 5.3 Strategic Communication – c.f. section 6	N.A.	To be covered by another Decision	N.A.
Totals	1 000 000	6 000 000	600 000

4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The actions will be implemented under Direct Management mode.

The Contracting Authority shall be the Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In addition to the main beneficiaries (CSOs) other institutions will be included in implementation of the proposed activities. Should it be necessary, additional institutions and organisations relevant to the achievement of the planned activities, will be included in the implementation. In line with the standard practice, in the initial stage of project implementation, a Steering Committee will be established to oversee progress in the implementation of activities. Furthermore, if deemed necessary, additional technical Working Groups of experts: representatives of institutions or organisations, will be established for a specific tasks and activities. Given a large number of institutions in the sector, as well an extensive number of activities, Steering Committees will be at the centre of ensuring efficiency, effectiveness of implementation of this Action. The role of each structure defined above will be identified in order to avoid overlapping of the leadership and avoid potential conflict.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the Commission may participate in the above governance structures set up for governing the implementation of the action.

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, as well as the degree of achievement of its Outputs and contribution to the achievement of its Outcomes, and if possible at the time of reporting, contribution to the achievement of its Impacts, as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix.

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).

Arrangements for monitoring and reporting, including roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring; the implementation of support to civil society should include monitoring and evaluation systems at different levels:

Activity level: the EU Delegation will be responsible for monitoring and evaluation throughout the implementation phase. TACSO as well as external contractors may assist these efforts, especially through the annual assessment against the standards and indicators set out in the *DG NEAR Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in the Enlargement Region 2021 - 2027*.

Central/Programme level: CSOs will be actively involved in the yearly monitoring of indicators and results. Yearly meetings will analyse the development of the CSOs in all the Beneficiaries and the advancement towards the targets.

Additional tools include ad hoc and on-the-spot visits will ensure monitoring of progress and a Result Oriented Assessment might be undertaken.

5.2. Evaluation

Having regard to the importance and nature of the action, a mid-term evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components contracted by the Commission.

It will be carried out for problem solving and learning purposes, in particular with respect to efficiency and effectiveness of the action.

The Commission shall form a Reference Group (RG) composed by representatives from the main stakeholders at both EU and national (representatives from the government, from civil society organisations (private sector, NGOs, etc.), etc.) levels. If deemed necessary, other donors will be invited to join. The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 15 days in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation exercise and 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.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the Beneficiary 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, in agreement with the Beneficiary, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

The financing of the evaluation shall 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

All entities implementing EU-funded external actions have the contractual obligation 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. To that end they must comply with the instructions given in the 2022 guidance document [*Communicating and raising EU visibility: Guidance for external actions*](#) (or any successor document).

This obligation will apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, the Beneficiary, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU Member States. In each case, a reference to the relevant contractual obligations must be included in the respective financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and contribution agreements.

7. SUSTAINABILITY

In order to achieve sustainability beyond the implementation period, the design of the assistance takes account of the following:

- Financial assistance will be delivered in an appropriate mix of funding instruments to respond to different types of CSOs and needs in a flexible, transparent, cost-effective and results-focused manner.
- Design corresponding to needs/demands shared amongst the key beneficiaries, i.e. key stakeholders such as civil society and public institutions are consulted in the design process.

The focus of the assistance is on the development of strategic documents for Bosnia and Herzegovina by joint efforts of governments and civil society. In the process of developing the documents, governments and civil society will be assisted to build and develop the mechanism for their cooperation as well as to build capacity needed for use of these mechanisms.

The three components of the assistance's outcome (Bosnia and Herzegovina strategic documents, mechanisms for cooperation between the governments and civil society, and developed capacities of governments and civil society) support each other, they will be developed by key local stakeholders in accordance with their assessed and confirmed needs, so their ownership will guarantee sustainability.

The action will seek to have its outcomes enacted in relevant Bosnia and Herzegovina legislation wherever possible with ensured financial resources and implementation mechanisms.

Appendix 1: IDENTIFICATION OF THE PRIMARY INTERVENTION LEVEL FOR REPORTING IN OPSYS

A Primary intervention (project/programme) is a coherent set of results structured in a logical framework aiming at delivering development change or progress. Identifying the level of the primary intervention will allow for:

- ✓ Differentiating these Actions or Contracts from those that do not produce direct reportable development results, defined as support entities (i.e. audits, evaluations);
- ✓ Articulating Actions and/or Contracts according to an expected common chain of results and therefore allowing them to ensure a more efficient and aggregated monitoring and reporting of performance;
- ✓ Having a complete and exhaustive mapping of all results-bearing Actions and Contracts.

The present Action identifies as;

Contract level (i.e. Grants, Contribution Agreements, any case in which foreseen individual legal commitments identified in the budget will have different log frames, even if part of the same Action Document)	
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Group of contracts
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