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THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX III

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the Special Measure in favour of Lebanon for 2023

Action Document for EU support to education in Lebanon

ANNUAL MEASURE

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and a measure in the sense of Article 23(4) of NDICI - Global Europe Regulation.

1. SYNOPSIS

1.1. Action Summary Table

1. Title OPSYS Basic Act	EU support to education in Lebanon Special measure in favour of Lebanon for 2023 OPSYS business reference: NDICI-GEO-NEAR/2023/ACT 61931 ABAC Commitment level 1 number: JAD.1166119 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe).
2. Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)	No
EIP Flagship	No
3. Team Europe Initiative	Yes, Lebanon
4. Beneficiary of the action	The action shall be carried out in Lebanon
5. Programming document	Not Applicable
6. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results	Not Applicable
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
7. Priority Area(s), sectors	DAC Code: 110: Education
8. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG (1 only): SDG 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Other significant SDGs: SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. SDG 10: Reduced inequalities - Reduce inequality within and among countries.

	SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.			
9. DAC code(s)	110 Education: 100 % 11110 Education policy and administrative arrangements 11220 Primary Education 11240 Early childhood education			
10. Main Delivery Channel	41122 UNICEF			
11. Targets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
12. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>
	13. Internal markers and Tags	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective
EIP		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EIP Flagship		YES <input type="checkbox"/>		NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Tags transport		YES <input type="checkbox"/>		NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
environment, climate resilience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
digital	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
health resilience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Digitalisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tags	YES		NO
digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
digital governance	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
digital entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
digital skills/literacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
digital services	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
education and research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Migration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reduction of Inequalities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
COVID-19	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

BUDGET INFORMATION

14. Amounts concerned	<p>Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020110 – Southern Neighbourhood</p> <p>Total estimated cost: EUR 30 000 000.00</p> <p>Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 30 000 000.00</p> <p>The commitment of the EU's contribution to this action will be complemented by other contributions from Team Europe Initiative (TEI) partners. It is subject to the formal confirmation of each respective partners' meaningful contribution as early as possible. The education TEI should be finalised by mid-2023.</p>
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	In the event that the Team Europe Initiatives (TEI) and/or these contributions do not materialise, the EU action may continue outside a TEI framework.
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION	
15. Implementation modalities (management mode and delivery methods)	Indirect management with a pillar assessed entity (UNICEF).

1.2. Summary of the Action

This action contributes to the implementation of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education’s (MEHE) Five-Year general education Plan 2021-2025¹. It intends to ensure learning continuity in Lebanon through providing access to quality and inclusive education for the most vulnerable children, refugees from Syria and Lebanese from host communities. It intervenes in a context of severe crisis faced by the public education sector after several years of school closure due to COVID-19 outbreaks, social unrest and strikes. The overall objective of this action is to support vulnerable children in reaching their full potential through improved literacy and numeracy skills and qualifications delivered by a resilient and quality public education system. Its specific objectives are to improve the completion of inclusive and equitable quality education for vulnerable children, and to enhance the resilience of the education system at central, regional and school level to overcome the effects of crisis. It places at its heart the right of children to education, in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 4 “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” through supporting children in improving their literacy and numeracy skill so that they can ultimately reach their full potential.

This action acknowledges the long-term impact of the Syrian refugee crisis on Lebanon and the pressure put on the weak education system, addressed by the efforts to put in place a fully-subsidised afternoon shift in public schools for Syrian refugee children since 2014. Over a mid-term, it considers the learning crisis and aggravated learning losses of school-aged children in Lebanon, both refugees from Syria and Lebanese children, after three years of learning discontinuity due to COVID-19 outbreak, social unrest, teachers’ strikes, low quality of public education, and limited capacities of the public education system to deliver teaching and learning under the current socio-economic and financial crisis. Consequently, the action aims at investing at several levels of the education sector in order to remove the main barriers in access to quality education. First, it proposes to focus on the financial access to education through contributing to the coverage of enrolment fees and other education-related expenditures for refugee children from Syria and for Lebanese children from host communities. Second, it intends to support the delivery of quality public formal education for all children in public schools, as well as alternative education pathways for children out of any forms of learning. It encompasses a central investment on learning recovery to address learning losses and improve educational attainment. Third, it aims at improving the delivery of education service through support to school operational costs and upgraded infrastructures for the benefit of all children in public schools. Lastly, it aims at investing at system education level to strengthen the efficiency and accountability of education delivery. It is proposed to channel the bulk of this support through the Transition and Resilience Education Fund (TREF)², as a new aid modality to the education sector in Lebanon for improved governance, financial transparency, monitoring and reporting, data collection and cost efficiency.

This action is embedded under the Team Europe Initiative (TEI), under consolidation, for an inclusive and quality education for all children in Lebanon, ensuring learning continuity under a multiple crisis situation. The Transition and Resilience Education Fund (TREF) is centrally supported by the EU and Germany but is

¹ https://www.mehe.gov.lb/ar/SiteAssets/Lists/News/AllItems/5YP%20MEHE-GE%20__amend1_%20Feb%202022.pdf

² <https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/press-releases/ministry-education-launches-transition-resilience-education-fund-support-lebanons>

expected to be joined by more donors in 2023, including several TEI members. Therefore, both the TEI and the TREF will offer specific platforms and opportunities at different political and technical levels for a more structured dialogue with the Ministry for Education and Higher Education, continuing the switch from crisis management to reforms and policies. Current sectors of reforms under the TREF are focusing on equity education (improved regulation for non-Lebanese children registration in public schools); empowering schools (including financial management); upgraded data collection, verification and reporting; learning quality and recovery for all children (summer schools, retention support and training of teachers); revised unit cost model for refugees from Syria and Lebanese children; and system efficiency through better planning, new disbursement system against real attendance of students, teachers and opening days of schools, and improved relationship between MEHE's central level, regional education offices and schools. The current EU technical assistance embedded inside the Ministry will complement this process, accompanying reforms and capacity building at technical level.

1.3. Beneficiary of the action

All components of the action shall be carried out in Lebanon. The country is included in the list of ODA recipients.

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Context

The Syria crisis is in its second decade, and Lebanon continues to host the largest number of refugees from Syria per capita, equivalent to 25% of Lebanon's population. The social and economic situation of refugees and host communities in Lebanon has been deteriorating following the multiple crises in the country which has been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Beirut port blast. Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine disrupted the global grain supply chain, which further contributed to food insecurity for people living in Lebanon. In 2022, the language of Lebanon's political discourse has grown increasingly hostile, pushing a narrative that holds displaced households responsible for the country's hardship and the ongoing strain on public services. Devastating earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria multiplied the psychological impact of crises in Lebanon, adding further to strains of refugees from Syria.

The public education sector is facing a severe crisis after several years of school closure due to COVID-19, social unrest and strikes by teachers due to low wages, as the Lebanese currency continues to collapse. An estimated 63 % of non-Lebanese children and 22% of Lebanese children were out of basic education in 2022. Public schools can barely face their basic operational costs, learning losses are severe, public spending remains low and the education system suffers from several structural weaknesses. Public education is the unique choice for families that cannot afford private schools. The crisis also affected private and semi private schools which are accommodating 60% of the students. Few of them have the proper financial model in place to navigate the crisis.

The action aims at accompanying the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) in the implementation of its Five-Year general education sector plan 2021-2025 and respective pillars on equitable access to and participation in education, quality of education and learning outcomes, and system strengthening and governance. The EU, through its technical assistance inside the Ministry as well as through its strategic dialogue, will ensure that a new strategy is designed post-2025 through a consultative process.

The action responds to the EU policy priorities in development cooperation³ and with the EU and Lebanon commitments as part of the extended EU Lebanon Partnership Priorities plus Compact⁴ whose core objective is to improve the living conditions of refugees and vulnerable host communities in Lebanon. In particular, the action will strengthen the self-reliance of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. This will improve their prospects in

³ https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/human-development/education_en

⁴ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/24224/st03001en16docx.pdf>

their host country as well as in their country of origin, if and when the conditions for voluntary, safe and dignified return are met. The action is aligned with the Joint Communication “Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood – A new Agenda for the Mediterranean⁵”, in particular its priority “Strengthen resilience, build prosperity and seize the digital transition”, and the accompanying Economic and Investment Plan.

The action will contribute to several Sustainable Development Goals, in particular the SDG 4 on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. The action will be embedded under the “Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework (3RF)” launched by the European Union, the United Nations and the World Bank in December 2020 in response to the explosion of the Port of Beirut. The education working group under the 3RF is being revived as a high-level channel to push for reforms and selection of priorities by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, under a context where the Government of Lebanon can barely afford the continuity of public education through paying its education workforce and support schools.

By supporting access to quality education, the action responds to the political commitments made at the Brussels Conferences on "Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region" hosted by the European Union in 2022.

2.2. Problem Analysis

Short problem analysis

Since 2019 the education sector in Lebanon has been deteriorating, requiring adaptation and flexibility of partners to plan and address the growing needs. Overall, access to education for children since the onset of the Syrian crisis continues to be a major constraint at household level, while the quality of education is decreasing, schools have difficulties to operate and the teaching workforce is not offered decent salaries due to the depreciation of the local currency. Core challenges to the education sector have been pre-identified by the Team Europe Initiative in Lebanon, in line with the priorities highlighted in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education Sector Plan 2021-2025.

First, at demand for education level, many families/households do not have the sufficient financial resources to afford education-related expenditures (e.g. transport to schools, school stationeries). This is the case even under a system where the enrolment fees for children refugees from Syria in afternoon shifts in public schools are fully subsidised by the international community, and where the enrolment fees for host communities' children in morning shifts are covered by the Ministry for Education and Higher education and the international community. In 2022, the findings from the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees⁶ in Lebanon has shown that the most common reason for not attending school was the cost of transportation (34.5%) followed by cost of educational materials (29.3 per cent). Therefore, the number of children dropping out of education has been on the rise over recent years. The percentage of Syrian children out-of-school increased from 55% to 63% between 2020 and 2021 (a total of 445,000 children), while the total number of Lebanese children out of school is estimated to be 257,000 (22% of the Lebanese school-aged population), bringing the total to approximately 700,000 children (37% of the total school-aged population). The risk of new children dropping out of education or falling out of learning is also high and in danger of further deteriorating because poorer families might assign a lower value to education and its long-term benefits to prioritise immediate basic needs. Consequently, this action encompasses a new and innovative approach to education through increasing the number of out-of-school children in private and private subsidised schools.

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_426

⁶ <https://ialebanon.unhcr.org/vasyr/#/>

Children with disabilities are more exposed to miss education under crisis context. The number of children with disabilities in Lebanon, both non-Lebanese and Lebanese, is estimated at 267,790⁷ (33% Syrian, 52.2% Lebanese,)⁸. UNICEF estimates that 72% of Syrian children with disabilities are not enrolled in schools. Therefore, despite national efforts to finalise an inclusive education policy and extend it progressively to 110 inclusive education public schools, access to inclusive education remains limited. 1,326 children with disabilities only were enrolled in inclusive education school pilot for the scholastic year 2020-21.

Boys and girls have an equal access to primary education in public schools. However, in specific geographic areas, girls are more exposed to child protection risks (child marriage, gender-based violence...) while boys are more prone to engage in child labour and drop out of education, notably during harvesting season. The Ministry for Education and Higher Education started rolling-out its child protection policy in public schools, including training of teachers, Directors and supervisors, but this activity was suspended during schools closures.

Second, on the education supply side, schools are facing increased operational costs to cover afternoon shifts for refugees and morning shifts for Lebanese and refugees (fuel, electricity, water, maintenance, stationeries, etc.) due to the deepening economic and financial crisis. Despite recent salaries' increases, teachers and other educational staff do not still receive decent wages to make ends meet and motivate them to perform their functions.

Third, at education delivery level, learning losses are accumulating since 2019 and might be equal at least to ten months of learning over the last three years⁹ with school closures due to COVID-19 outbreak, social unrest, teachers' strikes and inability of the Minister of Education to put in place a sound distance learning strategy. Quality of teaching and learning in public schools is gradually decreasing as shown by international assessments¹⁰. Progress needs to be made towards modern structured pedagogy, increased use of formative learning assessment and digital learning.

Finally at governance and system level, the sector suffers from several structural weaknesses aggravated by the economic crisis and low public resources allocated to education. Since the beginning of 2023, the EU has supported a long-term technical assistance aimed at enhancing the capacities of the MEHE in strategic and operational planning, monitoring, public financial management quality teaching and learning, and performance of the Ministry. The public education sector requires most cost-efficient approaches accompanied by a rationalisation of schools and schools improvement plans, a better management of teachers, the finalisation of the revision of the curriculum, and the deployment of efficient multiple learning pathways for out-of-education children¹¹. Improvements are also to be made in the governance, implementation tracking and monitoring of the implementation of the Five-Year general education Plan 2021-25.

The education sector is facing utmost difficulties to ensure learning continuity for all children under a constantly deteriorating context. This action document, in complementary with the international community's

⁷ Disability Data Collection in Lebanon, September 2022, UNICEF, not published. Estimation of the number of children aged 0-17 living with disabilities on Lebanon, 2021, UNICEF, not published. Figures shared are a lower estimation from UNICEF. Calculations are based on an average of 13% of children with disabilities in the Middle East and Northern Africa region, reported to the estimated population of Lebanon for the aged group 1-17 years. Increasing the availability of disability data, nationally representative, accurate, reliable and comparative should be a priority.

⁸ The rest being other nationalities.

⁹ Local estimation from the World Bank, not published.

¹⁰ Notably TIMSS - Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study coordinated by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement <https://timssandpirls.bc.edu/timss2019/encyclopedia/lebanon.html>, and PISA - Programme for International Student Assessment assessments, piloted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA2018_CN_LBN.pdf. Report Jordan and Lebanon Performance in International Students Assessments, World Bank Group, 2022 <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/37631>

¹¹ Various sources including Rapid Education Diagnostic Assessment Lebanon, European Training Foundation, 2021, <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/document-attachments/rapid-education-diagnostic-assessment-lebanon> and Foundations for Building Forward Better: an Education reform Path for Lebanon, 2021, World Bank Group, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/35802?show=full>.

investment in the education sector, proposes to continue investing at specific levels– students and household, schools, quality, system strengthening and reforms – to improve access to education and teaching delivery.

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

The primary stakeholders and direct beneficiaries are vulnerable school-aged children (right-holders), both refugees from Syria and vulnerable children from host communities, in need of support for access and retention in public education. Public education is considered the only choice for vulnerable families that cannot afford private schools, especially after three years of learning discontinuity, strikes and closures in public schools. This action should support the enrolment of more than 200,000 Lebanese and non-Lebanese children per year¹². A specific emphasis will be put on children at risk of dropping out of education, notably girls engaged in child marriage or boys in child labour, through alternative pathways to education. Parents and other caregivers of students are indirect beneficiaries through support to subsidised education for their children and cash for education¹³.

Personnel in schools and in regional education offices are also among primary stakeholders and direct beneficiaries, vested with the mandate of teaching delivery and education governance. Notably, the salaries of special contracted teachers in charge of teaching refugees from Syria is expected to be fully covered by the EU, Germany and other donors¹⁴.

At the level of public education authorities, the main stakeholder and direct beneficiary will be the Ministry for Education and Higher Education (MEHE) as duty-bearer, and notably the Directorate General for Education and the Centre for Educational Research and Development. This action will accompany the Ministry for an efficient implementation and monitoring of the Five-Year general education plan 2021-25, pushing for more efficient education policies and reforms. It will contribute to building the resiliency of the national education system.

At implementation level, UNICEF has a core mandate and expertise on education in Lebanon and will implement main activities dedicated to access to quality public education and system strengthening.

2.3. Lessons Learned

At process, support modality and implementation level, this action is based on the lessons learned from the support to the national strategy Reaching All Children with Education (RACE) 2014-2021¹⁵, in order to design a new aid modality to the education sector, the Transition and Resilience Education Fund (TREF). This modality was officially launched in May 2022¹⁶ between UNICEF and the Ministry for Education and Higher Education (MEHE). It was designed through a close consultation between UNICEF, the EU and Germany as main donors to RACE, and the MEHE. The TREF aims at reinstating the trust with the MEHE through one education system addressing the RACE weaknesses in efficiency (with a parallel structure in place for education for refugees), transparency and financial accountability, governance, data collection, indicators and triggers for payments, and transfer modalities for support to the sector. It was recommended by the MEHE to develop a programme manual to reflect such processes and attribute clear roles and responsibilities. It resulted in the TREF operational handbook describing partnership governance and policy cycle dialogue; the fund allocation, financial management arrangement and disbursement; and the accountability framework and

¹² Approximately 100,000 each depending on exact enrolment figures and donors' attribution. Enrolment costs for refugees from Syria in afternoon shift in public schools is fully borne by the international community, while enrolment fees for Lebanese children in morning shift is supported by the Government of Lebanon with a complementary support from the international community.

¹³ Number of beneficiaries will depend on the new approach to cash for education.

¹⁴ At least for scholastic year 2023-24.

¹⁵ Mid-Term Review of the national strategy Reaching All Children with Education, Moot MacDonald trading as Cambridge Education, not published.

¹⁶ <https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/press-releases/ministry-education-launches-transition-resilience-education-fund-support-lebanons>

assurance mechanisms. As another lesson learned, the TREF presents a new costing model for coverage of enrolment fees adapted to the socio-economic situation. It also accompanies efforts for reforms, new policies and standard operating procedures while providing in parallel implementation support and capacity building to the MEHE. In particular, it is considered important to continue efforts under the back to school campaign ahead of each scholastic year to ensure the delivery of clear procedures for the registration of students, in particular non-Lebanese, through automatic waiving of requirements for documentation (identity documents, birth certificates, residency permits) and through revamped complaints mechanisms at first managed at local and regional levels. Reflecting the evolution of the RACE programme, the TREF is proposing a shift from a nationality approach to education, putting at its core education for refugees through a parallel system in the MEHE, to a vulnerability approach to education, covering the needs of both refugees from Syria and host communities vulnerable children, while also investing in quality education and system strengthening.

In its 2021 assessment¹⁷, the European Training Foundation highlighted the strengths of the education system related to resilience, resistance, adaptation and absorption capacities, collective willingness as well as reforms started at system-level. It also pointed out the weaknesses of the system in addressing inequalities in the access to the education system and learning outcomes, the need to work to improve sector governance, better budget consolidation and planning, teachers' management, use of data systems for policy making, need-based assessments of schools, and clear monitoring and reporting. It called for opening a policy dialogue on decentralisation, policy and budget planning, revision of the pedagogical framework and regulations of the private sector.

At activity-level, as a result of more than three years of education disruption due to COVID-19, social unrest and teacher's strikes due to the low value of their salaries, distance learning solutions put in place in public schools did not allow to reach the most vulnerable children. Education stakeholders recommend to implement different distance learning solutions, favouring no tech to low tech solutions under blended or full distance learning in case of protracted closure of educational centres, depending on ages of children, households' situations, parents' support and access to information technology. Establishment of pilot school connectivity hubs where teachers can deliver distance learning and children can download on and offline learning materials is also an option, while seeking at preparing schools for digital skills and digital learning needs for the 21st century.

The 'Non-formal education assessment Lebanon 2017-2020'¹⁸ highlighted important recommendations for the reform of non-formal education (NFE). Despite offering useful grounding on literacy and numeracy, with a rather good alignment between non formal and formal education curriculum, it is too rigid and does not fit the profiles of all children. A technical assistance supported by DG ECHO is accompanying MEHE's and UNICEF efforts to revise the NFE cycle and propose alternative learning pathways on certification benchmarks, tools, data system and Standard Operating Procedures. One of those pathways aims at reintegrating out-of-school children through extra cycles in selected private and private free schools to facilitate after completion their transition to formal education.

Transportation and other education-related costs are constantly identified¹⁹ as the first and second barriers in access to education for children. While there is a need to scale-up support to address such barrier, the EU is so far the only partner supporting this activity through cash for education with UNICEF as implementing agency. The UN agency conducted a final assessment of the cash for education programme for the scholastic year 2021-22 which showed a positive effect on the school attendance of beneficiaries (less than 4.5% children absent for more than ten consecutive days without justification, with 34% of them receiving a follow-up) and transportation modality (one child in ten walking to go to schools against one in three before the programme). Other impact evaluations show that children benefiting from cash for education are more likely to go to school,

¹⁷ Rapid Education Diagnostic Assessment Lebanon, 2021, European Training Foundation, <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/document-attachments/rapid-education-diagnostic-assessment-lebanon>.

¹⁸ <https://proman.lu/project/non-formal-education-nfe-assessment-in-lebanon/>

¹⁹ Notably under the VaSyR 2021- Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

less likely to be engaged in economic activities (child work), more likely to have three meals a day, own more basic school items, and less likely to show symptoms of depression and low self-esteem.

This action is also informed by the Outcome Evaluation of the EU Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, which assessed the outcomes achieved by EUTF Syria-funded interventions and identified lessons learned and possible gaps, to inform future programming processes planned as "Special Measures - Response to the Syrian Crisis", under the new financial instrument - Neighbourhood Instrument, Development, and International Cooperation (NDICI).

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1. Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to support vulnerable children in reaching their full potential through improved literacy and numeracy skills and qualifications delivered by a resilient and quality public education system.

The Specific Objectives (Outcomes) of this action are:

1. The completion of inclusive and equitable quality education for vulnerable children is improved.
2. The resilience of the education system at central, regional and school level to overcome the effects of crisis is enhanced.

The **Outputs** to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objectives (Outcomes) are:

1.1 contributing to Outcome 1: socio-economic barriers hampering the access to formal and non-formal education for targeted vulnerable boys and girls (Lebanese and non-Lebanese), including children with learning difficulties, are removed.

1.2 contributing to Outcome 1: a learning recovery strategy is implemented for targeted children to catch-up with learning losses and ensure their retention in formal and alternative education.

2.1 contributing to Outcome 2: sound data collection, analysis and evidence are used to inform education policies and strategic decisions.

2.2 contributing to Outcome 2: the capacities on financial management, monitoring and reporting at school, regional and central level are strengthened.

The objectives of the action contribute to the general objectives of the Team Europe Initiative – under consolidation - which aims at ensuring inclusive access to education and learning continuity in Lebanon. It intends at contributing to addressing the education needs of all children - Lebanese and refugee children – in a context of education disruption over the last three years, accumulating learning losses, and national education system deficiencies. It proposes to do so through a set of specific investments under commonly identified priorities shared by the Ministry for Education and Higher Education along its Five-Year general Education Plan, as well as joint advocacy and strategic dialogue with the authorities. It proposes to focus on five areas of investment: students and households, communities, schools, teachers and quality education, and system strengthening.

3.2. Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1.1:

- Coverage of enrolment fees²⁰ for refugees from Syria²¹ and host community²² boys and girls in public education (Kindergarten to G9) for the scholastic years 2024-25, 2025-26 and beyond²³.
- Cash for education to support vulnerable households and families (Lebanese and non-Lebanese) to cover education-related expenditures, including transportation.
- Coverage of enrolments fees and other costs for vulnerable boys and girls out of education to access alternative education through new pathways, notably in multi-service community centres²⁴ and private and free private schools²⁵.
- Provision of inclusive formal and non-formal education for children with learning difficulties and disabilities, whatever their nationality, in line with the national inclusive education Strategy.

Activities related to Output 1.2:

- Provision of homework and retention support to children refugees from Syria and Lebanese children at risk of dropping out of education and related training of teachers, school personnel and educators (quality learning recovery).
- Organisation of summer schools for children refugees from Syria and Lebanese children, and related trainings of teachers, school personnel and educators (quality learning recovery).

Activities related to Output 2.1:

- Support to the modernisation and functioning of the School Information Management System (SIMS) of the Ministry for Education and Higher Education.

Activities related to Output 2.2:

- Support to new procedures and tools and related capacity building for school personnel, regional education officers and central Ministry of Education and Higher Education (inter alia data entry, control and validation, budget planning, financial management, Standard Operating Procedures for enrolment...).

The commitment of the EU's contribution to the Team Europe Initiative to which this action refers, will be complemented by other contributions from Team Europe members. It is subject to the formal confirmation of each respective member's meaningful contribution as early as possible. In the event that the Team Europe Initiatives (TEI) and/or these contributions do not materialise, the EU action may continue outside a TEI framework.

3.3. Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Biodiversity

²⁰ Composed of School Fund allocation, Parents Council Fund allocation, and Human Resources Costs for morning and afternoon shift schools teaching refugees from Syria.

²¹ Full coverage by the international community.

²² Partial coverage by the international community through the support to the Parents Council Fund allocation only.

²³ The current aid modality links coverage of enrolment fees to attendance of teachers, attendance of children, and number of opening days of schools. Therefore, in case of limited attendance and opening days of schools, some financial resources for enrolment may be carried over for next scholastic years.

²⁴ The Multi-Service Community Centre (MSCC) approach aims to provide a comprehensive package of integrated services around education for out-of-school Lebanese and non-Lebanese marginalized and vulnerable children and youth, linking education, child protection, life skills, youth empowerment, health and nutrition, and parental and caregiver support in a unique setting.

²⁵ Notably through the reintegration of out-of-school Lebanese and non-Lebanese children in selected private and private free schools to follow extra cycles and, after completion, facilitate their transition to formal education. It proposes to focus on Foundational Literacy and numeracy, social emotional learning, gender transformative and inclusive teaching approaches, safe identification and early referral, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. It encompasses a financial support to the schools participating to this programme and at risk of closing due to economic constraints. It will build on the lessons learned from the first phase expected to be implemented in 104 schools in 2023 as validated by the Ministry for Education and Higher Education.

Outcomes of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening: the SEA screening concluded that no further action was required.

Outcomes of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening: the EIA screening classified the action as Category C (no need for further assessment).

Outcome of the Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening: the CRA screening concluded that this action is at no or low risk (no need for further assessment).

It is to be noted that the action will not include activities dedicated to the integration of environmental protection and climate change in the national curriculum, nor to educational policies in the field of environment and climate change, both led by UNESCO in Lebanon through an initiative launched in 2023.

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that a specific attention will be put on the child protection needs of boys' and girls' out-of-education (child marriage, child labour...) or at risk of dropping-out. This activity will contribute to ensuring gender equality in enrolment and retention of children in schools.

Human Rights

The action is aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and SDG Goal 4 on ensuring the right to access quality education. A focus will be put on equity and vulnerability.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. This implies that a specific component of this action is dedicated to access to inclusive education for children with learning difficulties and disabilities through a holistic approach.

Democracy

This action intends to support the Five-Year Education Sector Plan of the MEHE. It proposes to channel the funds through a new aid modality to the education sector, the Transition and Resilience Education Fund (TREF) which aims at improving the efficiency, governance, financial accountability and transparency, and monitoring and reporting of the education sector. This participates to democratic governance through improving the efficiency of a public entity delivering a social service for citizens.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

Both refugee and Lebanese children and youth will be targeted under a vulnerability approach. Specific activities will be implemented to avoid social tensions at local levels and through targeted communication.

3.4. Risks and Assumptions

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium / Low)	Mitigating measures
1- External environment	The deepening socio-economic crisis and competition over resources risks worsening the protection situation of refugees and increasing social	High	Medium	The EU will continue to advocate for Lebanon to adhere to obligations for refugee protection, as per international law. Continuous dialogue will be pursued during programme implementation, ensuring a clear framework is established to safeguard refugee protection and livelihoods.

	tensions and political opposition to the presence of refugees from Syria in Lebanon.			International partners to focus on greater recognition of Lebanese concerns, resilience, burden sharing and the temporary nature of Syrian displacement, emphasising solidarity with the refugee situation and highlighting support given to vulnerable Lebanese.
1- External environment	Further devaluation of the LBP resulting in high levels of inflation and increased levels of poverty among populations in Lebanon, Lebanese and refugees.	High	High	Mitigating measures to be seen from a systemic perspective, through the introduction of macroeconomic stability, monetary and fiscal measures and signature of an agreement with IMF. From an operational point of view, the implementing partners will favour direct payment to beneficiaries in fresh USD to the maximum extent.
1- External environment	USD/LBP exchange rate used by implementing partners differs from the open-market exchange rate, negatively impacting the overall efficiency of interventions.	Medium	High	Continued multi donor negotiations with the Lebanese Government to obtain an exchange rate which corresponds to the open-market rate. Facilitation to use USD as main currency for disbursement. At contracting stage, privilege USD for disbursement, where possible, while agreement on satisfactory exchange rate for assistance is pending.
1- External environment	Distorted communication and perceptions against the international community accused of insufficient support to the education sector given the increased needs.	High	Medium	Strategic communication campaign to be defined and launched in cooperation with the MEHE, UNICEF, the EU and other donors towards Lebanese citizens, parents, teachers and schools about the support provided, benefiting the whole Lebanese education sector and Lebanese children/families – not only refugees.
1- External environment	Limited access to and opening of schools due to a COVID-19 outbreak, educational staff strikes, and difficulties of families in affording education-related costs and of schools to cover their needs.	High	Medium	Three scenarios are developed to adapt to the learning situation, from public schools safe reopening to school-bridging programmes in private schools, and to education at home and in the community in case of partial/full closure of public schools. Full distance and blended learning strategies developed and to be reinforced. Support at the level of children, teachers and schools to remove barriers to education.
2- Planning, processes and systems	Bureaucratic impediments hampering access to public education for refugees from Syria (request for documentation, diplomas, birth certificate, unofficial registration fees...). Lack of efficient work with and inside	Medium	Medium	Reinforced coordination, effectiveness, accountability and governance mechanisms put in place under the Five-Year Education Sector Plan and programme implementation modalities through the Transition and Resilience education Fund (TREF). Revamped complaint mechanism during enrolment period putting more responsibilities in the follow-up of complaints at local and regional levels. Revision of Standard Operating Procedures for registration and enrolment in public schools.

	the MEHE. Lack of coordination and cooperation between the MEHE departments.			
2- Planning, processes and systems	Limited amount of the national budget allocated by the Government of Lebanon to the education sector.	High	Medium	Strategic dialogue on structural reforms for the education sector and advocacy for domestic resource mobilization supported by the international community.
2- Planning, processes and systems	Restricted financial transparency of MEHE expenditure and/or procurement	Medium	Medium	New modalities under programme implementation modalities through the Transition and Resilience education Fund (TREF) to strengthen financial assurances, including contracting a third party for data review, validation and verification of payments, annual external audit, and EU technical assistance to the MEHE on public financial management while building the capacities of MEHE on financial management and budgeting as well as Monitoring & Evaluation.
aaluat	Further deterioration of the quality of public services due to the deepening economic and financial crisis, decrease of the national budget allocated to education, and lack of motivation or shortage of teachers.	High	High	Access to quality education remains a priority for the government under the national budget, aligned with MEHE's priority under its Five-Year general education plan. Flexibility and adaptation of partners' support to the crisis and the needs at school, children and teacher level to address barriers to education. EU and its partners developing cost-efficient models for support to education with new programme modalities. Activities, adapted to different learning scenarios.

External Assumptions

The Five-year education sector plan of the Ministry for Education and Higher Education is implemented and tracked against progress, with coordination structures in place, even under a multiple crisis context and limited capacities of the Ministry.

The Transition and Resilience Education Fund (TREF) as new aid modality to support the education sector is implemented.

3.5. Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is to provide targeted and flexible support for vulnerable children in order for them to reach their full potential through improved literacy and numeracy skills and qualifications delivered by a resilient public education system under a multiple crisis context. Its requires short to longer term interventions to ensure learning continuity through providing access to quality and inclusive education for children (i.e. poorest, refugees, children with disabilities, vulnerable girls and boys), according to the possible learning scenarios. The latter are non-exclusive and range from schools and learning centres regularly opening with teachers back to teaching and children benefiting from face-to-face learning, to partial opening of schools and blended learning²⁶, and eventually support for learning at home and in the community if

²⁶ Combination of face-to-face learning and remote learning days during the week.

education facilities are fully closed due to strikes, social unrest or health outbreak. Therefore, the action will include strong contingency plans for learning continuity at implementation level.

The intervention logic considers complementarity with support provided under EU other ongoing programmes, notably interventions in the field of health (access to primary health care centres for vulnerable children and their families, routine immunization), social protection (targeting the most vulnerable refugees from Syria and host communities) and water, sanitation and hygiene (including sewage treatment from Informal Tented Settlements). It also considers, others partners' support through the Transition and Resilience Education Fund²⁷ and through other aid modalities²⁸. A closer strategic dialogue with the MEHE under the TREF and other education platforms for reforms is expected to favour a more conducive environment for the resilience of the public education system, calling for prioritizing education and improving the cost-efficiency of the education system, and leading to improved financial accountability and transparency, realistic costing, system reforms, performance-based and data-driven management. Current support from the EU and Germany under the TREF lead by UNICEF and the MEHE is yielding results linked to data collection and verification, school level financial management, reducing barriers in access to education and innovative programmes for out-of-school children. The long term technical assistance (40 months) deployed to the MEHE under EU support since 2023 aims in parallel at enhancing the capacities of the Ministry in strategic and operational planning, monitoring, public financial management, quality teaching and learning, and improved performance of the Ministry in implementing its Five-Year general education plan 2021-2025.

As a general assumption:

If the Ministry for Education and Higher Education continues to deliver on education policies and priorities identified in its Five-Year general education Sector Plan and Annual Work Plans,

If strategies are in place to ensure continuity learning to adapt to various teaching scenarios in case of full or partial school closures,

If, as a transversal approach, gender-sensitive, equitable and pro-vulnerable policies and practices are in place,

If the intervention is channelled through the Transition and Resilience Education Fund as new aid modality to the sector, joined by other donors,

And, as result of the intervention,

If vulnerable children (Lebanese and non-Lebanese) have their enrolment fees covered to access formal and alternative forms of education covered,

If vulnerable households benefit from cash for education support to cover their education related expenditures, including transportation as the first barrier in access to education,

If children with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from integrated services in schools and modern education,

If a learning recovery strategy is delivered through trained teachers for children in order to catch-up with learning losses and ensure their retention in formal and alternative education,

Then the demand for education will increase and children will be more likely to be retained in education and improve their learning outcomes.

And, as another result of the intervention,

If improved education data collection is in place, completed by the sound use of analysis and evidences to inform education policies and strategic decisions,

If the capacities of the Ministry for Education and Higher Education on financial management, monitoring and reporting at school, regional and central level are strengthened,

²⁷ See section 1.2 and 2.3 on the Transition and Resilience Education Fund (TREF) set as a new aid modality to support the education sector. It is currently supported by the EU and Germany while other partners are interested in joining (possibly France, Italy, Norway, Finland, Switzerland and United Kingdom).

²⁸ Multi-Year Resilience Programme (Education Cannot Wait) and Support to Race II (World Bank).

Then, the education system will show improved resilience, demonstrating strengthened efficiency, capacities, governance and delivery of education at the central, regional and local levels,
And then the education system will be perceived as a reliable, transparent, trust-worthy and a good steward of financial resources,

Ultimately, the intervention will contribute to children reaching their full potential through improved literacy and numeracy skills and qualifications delivered by a resilient education system under a multiple crisis context.

3.6. Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

Several indicators are taken from EU guidance on thematic results and indicators for education. Indicators on children enrolled in education will be disaggregated by sex and nationality, as well as grade level to the maximum extent. In case baselines and targets are not mentioned below, they will be identified at the latest during the inception phase.

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact 1	To support vulnerable children in reaching their full potential through improved literacy and numeracy skills and qualifications delivered by a resilient education system	<p>1. % of children graduating at Grade 9 (Brevet) and Grade 12 (Baccalaureate).</p> <p>2. % of children (3-14) out-of- learning or out of education.</p> <p>3. Lebanon score at TIMMS (Trends in International Mathematics and Sciences Studies) and PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment).</p>	<p>1. Brevet (grade 9): 2021-22: 80% in public schools (67% for refugees from Syria and 83% for Lebanese children). 2019-20: 92.8 % for first shift schools. 2018-19 50.1% for Syrian children in second shift schools. Baccalaureate (grade 12) 21-22: 92% success rate (93% for Lebanese children, 89% for Syrian children).</p> <p>2. Scholastic year 2020-21: 56 % of primary school aged refugee children out of school and 63% out of any learning (age 3-18). 22% of Lebanese children out of education. value UNICEF and/or MICS 2023)</p> <p>3. TIMMS 2019: average scale score of 377 for science international achievement et 8th grade. Average scale score of 429 at international mathematics achievement at 8th grade. PISA 2018: score of 353 for mean score in reading, 393 for mathematics, 384 for science for 15-year old students.</p>	<p>1. At least 80% for Brevet and 88% for Baccalaureate) Data consider learning losses for last years and may vary in case of new episodes of strikes or COVID-19 outbreak and hybrid-learning. 2. 12% for Lebanese children, 53% for Syrian. and/or MICS 2023. 3. TBC</p>		<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 1	1. The completion of inclusive and equitable quality education for vulnerable children is improved.	<p>1.1 Primary education completion rate disaggregated by sex.</p> <p>1.2 Dropout rate by grade in primary education disaggregated by sex.</p>	<p>1.1 Lebanese children: 90%, non-Lebanese children: 20%.</p> <p>1.2 For scholastic year 2018-19: Drop-out rate of 3.13% for first shift schools G1-G6 (average), 13% for first shift schools G7-G9 (average).</p>	<p>1.1 Lebanese children: 95%, Non-Lebanese children: 50%.</p> <p>1.2 TBC in the Description of Action (DoA).</p>	1.1 to 1.4. CERD annual report, School Information Management System.	The Five-year education plan of the Ministry for Education and Higher Education is implemented and

		<p>1.3 Survival rate by grade / Passing rate (success rate) by grade disaggregated by sex.</p> <p>1.4 Repetition grade by rate in primary education disaggregated by sex.</p> <p>1.5 Number of school open days during the scholastic year.</p>	<p>Scholastic year 21-22 AM shift compared to SY 20-21: 8.4% (10.6 % in public and 7.1% in private schools). More consolidated data expected end of 2023.</p> <p>1.3 Survival rate SY 2018-19 (average): 96.9% for first shift schools G1-G6, 87% for first shift schools G7-G9.</p> <p>Success rate (passing rate) end of year exams 2021-22: 73% (72% in 20-21, 76% in 19-20).</p> <p>More available data end of 2023.</p> <p>1.3 Available end of 2023.</p> <p>1.4 Baseline available for scholastic year 2021.22 per new costing model based on attendance of teachers.</p> <p>1.5 100 days in 2021-22</p>	<p>1.3. TBC when baseline available end of 2023 comparing scholastic years 2021-22 with 2022-23 (year 2020-21 cannot be considered as a reference given school, closure).</p> <p>1.4 same as 1.2</p> <p>1.5 TBC in DoA.</p>	<p>1.5 TREF quarterly and annual reports, project report.</p>	<p>monitored against progress on a yearly basis. Schools are open for face-to-face learning with the full curriculum delivered. Otherwise, MEHE/education delivery agencies are able to deliver effective hybrid/distance learning.</p>
Outcome 2	<p>2. The resilience of the education system at central, regional and school level to overcome the effects of crisis is enhanced.</p>	<p>2.1 Total public expenditure on education as percentage of GDP or total government expenditure.</p> <p>2.2 Number of schools with a quality annual expenditure plan.</p>	<p>2.1 Update USD 1,2 Billion in 2020 (less than 2% of the GDP)</p> <p>2.2 Baseline in 2023</p>	<p>2.1 TBD in the DoA (worldwide recommended target of 5%).</p> <p>2.2 Depending on baseline in 2023.</p>	<p>2.1 World Bank Public Expenditure Review,</p> <p>2.2 TREF quarterly and annual reports, project report.</p>	
Output 1 related to Outcome 1	<p>1.1 The socio-economic barriers hampering the access to formal and non-formal education for targeted</p>	<p>Disaggregated by sex and nationality</p> <p>1.1.1 Number of children enrolled in primary education with EU support (EURF indicator)</p>	<p>1.1.1 210,000 children in average per scholastic year since 2019.</p> <p>1.1.2 Scholastic year 2022-23 (ongoing): 100%. 403,000 children including approx. 200,000 for the EU. Scholastic year 2021-22: 415,900</p>	<p>1.1.1 Approx. 200,000 (EU share, less than 2022-23 due to new donors' contribution).</p> <p>1.1.2 TBC in DoA</p>	<p>1.1.1 to 1.1.5, TREF annual report, projects annual report.</p>	

	vulnerable boys and girls (Lebanese and non-Lebanese), including children with learning difficulties, are removed.	<p>1.1.2 Percentage of students enrolled in MEHE schools whose education-related costs are subsidised out of the total number of children in public schools.</p> <p>1.1.3 Number of students receiving cash assistance during SY 22/23 (Cash for education)</p> <p>1.1.4 Number of girls and boys enrolled in multiple flexible pathways to education.</p> <p>1.1.5 Number of children with disabilities enrolled in education / number of inclusive education schools.</p>	<p>(266,200 in AM shift and 149,700 in PM).</p> <p>1.1.3 Scholastic year 2021-2022: 89,042 children.</p> <p>1.1.4 1.1.4 5,000 children enrolled in Dirassa programme (alternative learning in private schools – not supported by the EU). 35,000 enrolled in non-formal education (EU and other donors).</p> <p>1.1.5 1.1.5 Special needs learners enrolled in schools in 2021-22: 1,326. Inclusive education schools: 60 in 21-22.</p>	<p>1.1.3 TBC in DoA.</p> <p>1.1.4 TBC in DoA</p> <p>1.1.5 TBC in DoA.</p>		
Output 2 related to Outcome 1	1.2 A learning recovery strategy is implemented for targeted children to catch-up with learning losses and ensure their retention in	<p>Disaggregated by sex and nationality.</p> <p>1.2.1 Number of girls and boys enrolled in Retention Support Programme.</p>	<p>1.2.1 Scholastic year 2021-22: 98,000 for summer school.</p> <p>1.2.2 Scholastic year 2021-22: 22,831 teachers trained in learning recovery in AM and PM shift.</p>	<p>1.2.1 TBC in DoA.</p> <p>1.2.2 TBC in DoA.</p> <p>1.2.3 TBC in DoA.</p>	1.2.1 to 1.2.3 TREF annual report, projects annual reports.	

	formal and alternative education.	1.2.2 Number of school personnel, teachers and educators trained. 1.2.3 Number of girls and boys provided with learning materials	1.2.3 328,000 children provided with learning recovery materials including Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, and psychosocial and social support (not under EU support).			
Output 1 related to Outcome 2	2.1 Sound data collection, analysis and evidences are used to inform education policies and strategic decisions.	2.1.1 Modernised unified school information management System (SIMS) in place. 2.1.2 Number of training for MEHE staff on SIMS at central, regional and national level.	2.1.1 Baseline 0 2.1.2 Baseline 0	2.1.1 Target:1 2.1.2 TBC in DoA.	2.1.1 to 2.1.2 TREF annual report, projects annual reports	
Output 2 related to outcome 2	2.2 The capacities on financial management, monitoring and reporting at school, regional and central level are strengthened.	2.2.1 Number of schools receiving Parents Council Fund and School Fund allocation based on quality annual expenditure plan. 2.2.2 Proportion of teachers whose salaries in paid on time (month +1).	2.2.1 Not available 2.2.2 Not available. 12,500 special contracted teachers supported by the EU and Germany for the scholastic year 2021-22.	2.2.1 95% 2.2.2 90%	2.2.1 to 2.2.2 TREF annual report, projects annual reports .	

4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1. Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the partner country.

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 sixty (60) 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 by amending this financing Decision and the relevant contracts and agreements.

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 measures.

4.3.1. Indirect Management with a pillar-assessed entity

4.3.1.1. Indirect Management with a pillar-assessed entity (UNICEF)

This action may be implemented in indirect management with the pillar-assessed entity UNICEF. The envisaged entity has been selected using the following criteria:

- Experience in the country: capacity to adapt to and address political, technical, logistical and institutional challenges of the education sector under a multiple crisis context;
- Specific expertise: capacity to engage with the Ministry for Education and Higher Education on a regular dialogue on strategies, policies and technical orientation and assistance; in complementarity with other agencies in support to the education sector;
- Logistical and management capacities: capacity to manage large-size education programmes at national and local level, with a presence at the level of regions or capacity to cover district and school levels;
- Continuation of an existing programme: knowledge and capacity to work with a network of international and local education organisations able to implement activities at community and school levels;

In case the envisaged entity would need to be replaced, the Commission's services may select another replacement entity using the same criteria. If the entity is replaced, the decision to replace it needs to be justified.

4.3.2. Changes from indirect to direct management mode due to exceptional circumstances

If the implementation modality under indirect management as defined in section 4.3.1.1 cannot be implemented due to circumstances beyond the control of the Commission, the modality of implementation by direct management through a grant would be used.

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) in 2024
Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.3	
Outcome 1 and Outcome 2	30 000 000.00
Indirect management with UNICEF – cf. section 4.3.2.1	30 000 000.00
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	may be covered by another Decision
Strategic communication and Public diplomacy – cf. section 6	may be covered by another Decision
Totals	30 000 000.00

4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The implementing partners will, be responsible for the management of the whole programme, including sub-contracting for activities, services, works and supplies in all of the components. Projects committees gathering the European Union Delegation, the implementing partners and the Ministry for Education and Higher Education (MEHE) shall be set-up to monitor progress and steer decisions. The project committee shall take stock of the progress of the action and facilitate its smooth implementation. It should provide guidance for the programme's activities, review programme achievements, discuss strategic issues, decide of corrective actions where needed or call for extra information and gathering of specific sub-committees attached to specific thematic issues. It should gather at a technical level on a regular basis at a fixed and recurrent date. It will be complemented by high-level political steering committees. The EU shall play an active role in the committees and sub-groups. Each member of the steering committee shall feel empowered with decision and guidance authority.

the coordination structures and processes will follow the ones planned under the Transition and Resilience Education Fund (TREF) set between the UNICEF and the MEHE: monthly technical strategic management boards, bi-annual high level strategic management board, yearly annual sector review, and work planning and budgeting sessions.

The EU will maintain a constant policy dialogue with national stakeholders to ensure the highest possible support and political commitment needed for successful implementation.

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 as 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:

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring are the responsibility of the implementing partner(s) which will be selected on the basis on proven sound monitoring capacities. The Transition and Resilience Education Fund foresees key assurance modalities for improved monitoring and reporting. Support is provided to modernise the official unified School Information Management System of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to collect sound and verified data for reporting and guiding evidence-based policies and strategies. Such support encompasses training of IT offers at school and regional level, as well as capacity-building on awareness-raising training on the use of data at central level. The TREF also established a third party mechanism aimed a reviewing and validating school-level data (attendance of teachers, attendance of children, opening days of schools, gross enrolment data...) and expenditures. An annual audit is planned as well as quarterly performance review reports and annual reports. In addition the EU is providing a technical assistance to the MEHE aiming at improving the Ministry's capacities for strategic and operational planning, evidence-based policies and reforms; monitoring, evaluation and reporting, for fiduciary systems and financial management; improved administrative management and business operating procedures; and performance-based support and on the job training, coaching and peer support.

As the TREF and EU Technical Assistance are being progressively put in place and building the capacities of the Ministry, and given that a UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey exercise²⁹ will take place in 2023, some baseline and target value of the logical framework of this action cannot be yet defined. Advancement on gender equality will be monitored and reported.

Under the Team Europe Initiative, each partner will carry out the monitoring and reporting activities of its respective components given that they can be of different nature. A joint reporting can however be envisaged based on the agreed intervention logic to inform policy dialogue and visibility communications.

5.2. Evaluation

Having regard to the importance of the action, a final evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the implementing partner

²⁹ It contains various indicators and data on education.

It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the fact that a new approach for the support to the education sector is implemented post 2021, anchored to the Five-Year Education Sector Plan 2021-2025 of the Ministry for Education and Higher Education, as the national Strategy Reaching All Children with Education (RACE) came to an end by December 2021.

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 evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country 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 partner country, 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 partner country, 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 delegation agreements.

For the purpose of enhancing the visibility of the EU and its contribution to this action, the Commission may sign or enter into joint declarations or statements, as part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union. Visibility and communication measures should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds. Effectiveness of communication activities on awareness about the action and its objectives as well as on EU funding of the action should be measured.

Implementing partners shall keep the Commission and the EU Delegation fully informed of the planning and implementation of specific visibility and communication activities before the implementation. Implementing partners will ensure adequate visibility of EU financing and will report on visibility and communication actions as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees.

For communication on Team Europe Initiatives, the EU and its Member States can rely on the specific guidance on the Team Europe visual identity.