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**THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**ANNEX**

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the annual action plan in favour of the Republic of Moldova for 2024 – part I

**Action Document - Support for EU Integration**

**ANNUAL ACTION PLAN**

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

**1. SYNOPSIS**

**1.1. Action Summary Table**

<b>1. Title OPSYS Basic Act</b>	Support for EU integration Annual Action Plan in favour of the Republic of Moldova for 2024 – part I OPSYS business reference: NDICI/2024/ACT-62645 Support for EU integration ABAC Commitment level 1 number: JAD.1416499 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe).
<b>2. Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)</b>	Yes viii. Migration and mobility; x. Rule of law, governance and public administration reform
<b>EIP Flagship</b>	No
<b>3. Team Europe Initiative</b>	No
<b>4. Beneficiar(y)/(ies) of the action</b>	The action shall be carried out in the Republic of Moldova
<b>5. Programming document</b>	Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2021-2027 for the Republic of Moldova <sup>1</sup>
<b>6. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results</b>	Priority area 2: Accountable institutions, the rule of law and security

<sup>1</sup> Commission implementing decision of 29/06/2022 adopting a multiannual indicative programme for the Republic of Moldova for the period 2021-2027 - C(2022) 4323 final

<b>PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION</b>				
<b>7. Priority Area(s), sectors</b>	151 Government & Civil Society-general			
<b>8. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>	Main SDG: GOAL 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development Other significant SDGs: SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower women SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all SDG 10: Reduce inequalities SGD 16: Promote peaceful & inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.			
<b>9. DAC code(s)</b>	151 Government & Civil Society-general – 100% 15110 Public sector policy and administrative management – 72% 15111 Public finance management (PFM) – 7% 15130 Legal and judicial development – 16% 15190 Facilitation of orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility - 5%			
<b>10. Main Delivery Channel</b>	42000 – European Commission			
<b>11. Targets</b>	<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			
<b>12. Markers (from DAC form)</b>	<b>General policy objective</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>RIO Convention markers</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>

	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"/>
<b>13. Internal markers and Tags</b>	<b>Policy objectives</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	EIP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	EIP Flagship	<b>YES</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Tags	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>
	Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>		<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input 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 type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Digitalisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Tags	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>	
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 type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
digital services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Tags	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>	
digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Migration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	COVID-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET INFORMATION</b>			
<b>14. Amounts concerned</b>	Budget line: 14.020111 Eastern Neighbourhood Total estimated cost: EUR 25 000 000.00 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 25 000 000.00 <sup>2</sup>		
<b>MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>			
<b>15. Implementation modalities (management mode and delivery methods)</b>	<b>Direct management</b> through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Twinning grants</li> <li>- Procurement</li> </ul> <b>Indirect management</b> with the entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.3		

## 1.2. Summary of the action

This action contributes to achieving results under the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2021-2027<sup>3</sup>, notably priority area 2 on accountable institutions, the rule of law and security. It represents the first part of the Annual Action Plan in favour of the Republic of Moldova for 2024.

The Republic of Moldova (hereinafter “Moldova”) is committed to pursue reforms in line with its steadfast course towards the EU. For the country, the start of accession negotiations remains the main political priority in 2024 and the political leadership communicates intensively on the objective of being ready for EU membership by 2030. Efforts to achieve considerable progress on the EU integration process, including the harmonisation of the EU *acquis* of all negotiation chapters, have already started with the adoption of a “National Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova’s Accession to the EU for 2024-2027”<sup>4</sup>.

Therefore, a key part of this action aims to support the Moldovan authorities in developing their internal administrative capacity to deliver on reforms, in implementing the Association Agreement including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) and in aligning with and implementing the EU *acquis*. The support will include, but will not be limited to, the provision of expertise, both short and long term – including through the High-Level Advisors - to strengthen administrative capacity as well as the continuation of an internship programme to further attract Moldovan students to work in the public sector. In line with the support for Moldova’s EU integration process and the national institutions associated with this process, this action also supports the development of administrative capacity to manage economic reforms and public finances with the aim to better utilise economic resources, including those provided by the EU and other donors. This

<sup>2</sup> The amount is pending final approval

<sup>3</sup> Commission implementing decision of 29/06/2022 adopting a multiannual indicative programme for the Republic of Moldova for the period 2021-2027 - C(2022) 4323 final

<sup>4</sup> [https://gov.md/sites/default/files/pnarmue-1182-maeie-2023\\_0\\_1.pdf](https://gov.md/sites/default/files/pnarmue-1182-maeie-2023_0_1.pdf)

Action also envisages support for the newly created General Inspectorate for Migration and for the Moldovan justice reform including the digitalisation of the justice sector.

The specific objective of this Action is to provide support to the Moldovan authorities in implementing the country's reform agenda and in particular in developing the capacities required for the alignment with and implementation of the EU *acquis*. Specifically, the action aims at strengthening policy-making at sectoral level, strategic planning and policy management capacities, enhancing stakeholders' knowledge and awareness of EU policies, legislation and regulations and their capacity for alignment with the EU *acquis* and its implementation.

The targeted Sustainable Development Goals are 5, 8, 10, 16, and 17.

### **1.3. Beneficiar(y)/(ies) of the action**

The Action shall be carried out in the Republic of Moldova which is included in the list of ODA recipients.

## **2. RATIONALE**

### **2.1. Context**

In recent years, EU-Moldova cooperation has visibly intensified, notably gaining a strong momentum with the decision by the European Council in June 2022 to grant candidate status to Moldova<sup>5</sup>. In March 2023, the European Council reaffirmed that the EU would continue to provide support to strengthen Moldova's resilience, security, stability, and economy, as well as support on its accession path to the European Union<sup>6</sup>. The momentum was further strengthened with the European Council endorsing the Commission recommendation to open accession negotiations in December 2023<sup>7</sup>. Following a request from the European Council, and as announced by Commission President von der Leyen on 31 May 2023 in Chisinau, the Commission and the European External Action Service have put together a Support Package for Moldova to address the impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on Moldova and to bring the country closer to the EU<sup>8</sup>.

The current Moldovan government remains determined to advance on its reform agenda. Whilst addressing high levels of poverty, modernising the economy and pursuing crucial reforms on its EU accession path, including the fighting of corruption and comprehensive justice reform, Moldova continues to face multiple challenges, including an unprecedented flow of refugees from Ukraine triggered by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine as well as Russia's hybrid actions, including foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI). The challenges related to hybrid actions are expected to increase ahead of the presidential elections and referendum on EU accession in October 2024 as well as the parliamentary elections in 2025. Good economic governance is key to sustainable social and economic development and stability. In this context, the Report on Moldova as part of the 2023 Enlargement Package of 8 November 2023, has put renewed emphasis on the need for Moldova to improve its economic governance.<sup>9</sup> An independent judiciary working in line with democratic and professional standards is essential to ensure that all state institutions abide by the law and that everyone have access to justice and can exercise their rights fully. It is also an important basis for international cooperation and much needed economic development. In the Enlargement Report of 8

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<sup>5</sup> European Council meeting (23 and 24 June 2022) – Conclusions, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/57442/2022-06-2324-euco-conclusions-en.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> European Council meeting (23 March 2023) – Conclusions, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-4-2023-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>7</sup> European Council meeting (14 and 15 December 2023)–Conclusions, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/68967/europeanCouncilConclusions-14-15-12-2023-en.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> The EU presents a Support Package for the Republic of Moldova, 28 June 2023, [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-presents-support-package-republic-moldova-2023-06-28\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-presents-support-package-republic-moldova-2023-06-28_en)

<sup>9</sup> SWD(2023) 698 final 'Republic of Moldova 2023 Report - 2023 Communication on EU Enlargement policy'

November 2023, the Commission assesses that Moldova has some level of preparation in the area of the judiciary and that the country made good progress in the reform of the justice sector. Moldova has launched a series of judicial reforms aimed at strengthening the independence, efficiency, and effectiveness of the judiciary.<sup>10</sup>

The Government's Public Financial Management (PFM) reform agenda is set out in the 2023-2030 Public Finance Management Reform Strategy which was adopted in February 2023. The strategy was adopted following the publication of the new 2020 Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) assessment in July 2022, and was also based on already available Public Investment Management Assessment (PIMA) and independent evaluations in debt management, taxation, procurement and public investment management. In order to implement the strategy, the government elaborated several programmes including the one in the area of Public Internal Financial Control, which will be supported by this action.

Moldova experiences the highest level of labour and youth emigration in Europe, with a diaspora representing up to 28 % of its overall population. It is also facing significant challenges in preventing and fighting trafficking of human beings. These challenges are exacerbated by the war-induced mass displacement from Ukraine since 24 February 2022. Since the beginning of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, Moldova has registered an unprecedented flow of refugees, most of them are women and children and many still reside in Moldova. Nevertheless, the country is further progressing in reforming migration and asylum policies. The newly established General Inspectorate for Migration continues to implement its internal affairs strategy (2022-2030)<sup>11</sup> as well as its dedicated sectorial development strategy (2022-2025)<sup>12</sup>. Moldova continued its constructive engagement with EU Member States and EU law enforcement agencies and adopted, on 18 January 2023, an update of the Temporary Protection decision for displaced persons from Ukraine in Moldova, most recently revised and extended until March 2025.

The Annual Action Plan 2024 is complementary to the AAPs 2021, 2022 and 2023 in their contributions to the governance reforms and support for EU integration.

## 2.2. Problem Analysis

EU accession represents the most important policy priority for Moldova. All key institutions in the country are mobilised to work on the alignment of the national legislation with the EU *acquis* and on the implementation of reforms in the context of EU integration. Their efforts are underpinned by the strong political commitment of the country's pro-European leadership. The EU supports Moldova's reforms process which is at the core of the Association Agreement<sup>13</sup> and of the accession negotiations while also supporting the country to address disinformation, in particular on the benefits of EU integration. The EU's relationship with Moldova is based on the principle of conditionality and respect for the rule of law and democratic standards and delivering concrete benefits for the citizens, as outlined in the Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 for Moldova<sup>14</sup>.

However, in view of the EU integration process and implementation of the Association Agreement/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (AA/DCFTA), institutional capacities require additional reinforcement. A number of support measures are foreseen under this priority area, to support national authorities elaborate,

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<sup>10</sup>SWD(2023) 698 final 'Republic of Moldova 2023 Report - 2023 Communication on EU Enlargement policy'

<sup>11</sup>Strategy on the development of the field of internal affairs for the years 2022-2030, [https://mai.gov.md/sites/default/files/Activitatea/MIA\\_Home%20Affairs%20Strategy\\_ENG.pdf](https://mai.gov.md/sites/default/files/Activitatea/MIA_Home%20Affairs%20Strategy_ENG.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> [Strategia de dezvoltare a domeniului afacerilor interne pentru anii 2022-2030 | Ministerul Afacerilor Interne \(gov.md\)](https://mai.gov.md/sites/default/files/Activitatea/MIA_Home%20Affairs%20Strategy_ENG.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Association Agreement between the European Union the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Moldova, of the other part of 30.08.2014 – I. 260/4 - [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22014A0830\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22014A0830(01))

<sup>14</sup> Commission implementing decision of 29.06.2022 adopting a multiannual indicative programme for the Republic of Moldova for the period 2021-2027 - C(2022) 4323 final

deliver and communicate on reforms to address the Commission's recommendations and to align national legislation to the EU *acquis*. This Action will finance activities encompassing policy dialogue, public diplomacy, capacity building, and technical preparation. The Action will also support legal approximation to the EU *acquis* and technical standards through technical assistance, exchange of expertise and cooperation with the EU agencies.

The EU puts strong emphasis on the promotion of governance systems, including Public Finance Management and Public Administration Reform.

There is a constant need to improve both fiscal management and Public Internal Financial control (PIFC). Currently, Moldova's PIFC system faces challenges, including limited capacity, outdated procedures, and inadequate resources. The efficient implementation of managerial accountability remains a challenge for budget users at central and local levels. The role of Public Internal Financial Control to combat corruption needs to be strengthened, as well as its cooperation with state audit institutions. Support for the Ministry of Finance in developing PIFC systems will contribute to aligning Moldova with the requirements of the EU enlargement process in the *acquis* chapter on Financial Control by ensuring a higher level of compliance with EU regulations and directives. Taking initial steps towards setting up an independent fiscal council in the future will lead to further strengthening of accountability and transparency and help with achieving fiscal policy outcomes. In 2022, Moldova underwent a fifth Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) assessment, including a supplementary assessment on Gender Responsive Public Financial Management. The results indicated that Moldova does not have a comprehensive Gender Responsive Budget framework in place. The lack of guidance through a budget circular led to a non-systematic presentation of integrated information in budget documentation. The Ministry of Finance and line ministries lacked systematic information on gender-related spending.

In October 2023, the OECD/SIGMA programme finalised the assessment of Moldova's public administration and public finance management which generated a number of short-term and mid-term recommendations that are highly relevant in the context of this action. In particular, the policy planning and policy making procedures for aligning the Moldovan legislation with the EU *acquis* need to be built up in order to respect the standards of stakeholder consultation, regulatory impact assessment and democratic scrutiny. In addition, the SIGMA assessment outlines a number of improvements with regard to the functioning of the centre of government and the clarity in assignation of roles and competences among the public institutions and various regulatory authorities and, in the context of new requirements linked to the enlargement process, suggests a comprehensive review of the organisational and legislative framework in place for the central administration. Proper organisational framework is a key precondition for policy making that is both effective and in line with the European standards and will be the crucial enabler for the success of this action. The SIGMA programme, among other programmes and measures, will continue providing advice on the necessary reforms. The support given to the Moldovan administration to improve its administrative capacities will help ensure that these reform efforts are taken forward.

Justice reform and fighting corruption in the justice sector is a key priority within strengthening public administration, with a strong focus on restoring public trust in the judiciary. Since 2021, the Moldovan government has initiated a series of judicial reforms aimed at strengthening the independence, efficiency, and effectiveness of the judiciary. Moldova has adopted a comprehensive Strategy for Ensuring the Independence and Integrity of the Justice Sector 2022-2025, together with a corresponding Action Plan, the implementation of which is coordinated by the Ministry of Justice. As a result, the constitutional and legal framework for the judiciary has been brought closer to European standards. Law enforcement and judicial structures are being consolidated, competences and composition of the Supreme Court has been reformed, the judicial and prosecutorial councils have been strengthened and new members evaluated regarding their financial and ethical integrity. Vetting of certain categories of judges and prosecutors is ongoing. Continued assistance in this area is needed, including support to ensure alignment with European standards, to the implementation of the justice

reform strategy, more efficient and effective provision of judicial services including through a higher level of digitalisation of the justice sector.

Taking into account Moldova's geographical position, the unprecedented challenges it has been facing in the run-up to and since Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in February 2022 as well as its aspiration to join the EU, strengthening the modernisation process of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) in the migration field is essential to pave the way for structural and sustainable reforms at all levels as embedded in Chapter 24. At institutional level, the Bureau for Migration and Asylum has been upgraded to a General Inspectorate for Migration with a significant allocation of new personnel. At policy level, this new body is involved in the implementation of the recently adopted 2022-2030 MIA strategy and its dedicated sectorial strategies, and at legislative level – the alignment with EU *acquis* under Chapter 24. EU support is needed for the Inspectorate to be an operational institution considering its growing number of responsibilities.

The main stakeholders of this action are the Prime Minister's office, the Presidency, the Parliament, the State Chancellery, the Bureau for European Integration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Ministry of Justice, and its Court Administration Agency, Moldovan ordinary courts, the judicial councils, the prosecution services, and the National Institute of Justice, National Agency of Achieve and the National Agency of Penitentiaries, the Court of Accounts, the Center for Legal Approximation, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and its subordinated directorate, the General Inspectorate for Migration as well as other relevant institutions tasked with strengthening state and societal resilience, such as the National Cybersecurity Agency and the Center for Strategic Communication and Combating Disinformation.

### **2.3. Lessons Learned**

This intervention builds on complementarities with past and ongoing actions, lessons learned and identified good practices of EU-funded programmes or other development partners' initiatives. In response to the multiple crises and challenges (energy crisis, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and resulting refugee crisis in Moldova and the region, Russia's hybrid actions, including FIMI) as well as its efforts in aligning further with the EU *acquis*, a large number of humanitarian and development partners have mobilised substantial financial resources for Moldova. Additional partners are in the process of establishing their presence in the country. This has increased the complexity to coordinate support even further, especially considering the limited human resources and development of national systems. Strengthening inter-ministerial cooperation, avoiding overlapping and conflicting mandates are needed to increase the Government's capacity to respond to its short-, medium- and long-term priorities.

Technical and institutional capacities are constrained and do not always match reform ambitions: public administration employment salary packages remain much less attractive compared with those of international agencies, non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations and the private sector, resulting in both high vacancy rates and staff turnover. Technical expertise, especially on the EU *acquis*, requires additional reinforcement. Compensation of these shortfalls through short term external technical expertise risks to create dependency, without building institutional capacities in the medium term.

## **3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION**

### **3.1. Objectives and Expected Outputs**

The Overall Objective/Impact of this action is to enhance the capacity and sustainability of Moldova's EU integration process through building and supporting accountable and resilient governance systems.



The Specific Objective (Outcome) of this action is to:

1. Support to the Moldovan authorities in building accountable and resilient governance systems for European integration, including public finance management, justice and migration governance.

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

Contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1):

- 1.1 Increased level of administrative and institutional capacity to effectively align with and implement the EU *acquis*, successfully carry out accession negotiations and ability to take on the obligations of membership, in line with the Copenhagen criteria.
- 1.2 Increased state and societal resilience by supporting the priorities set out by the Moldova Support Package.
- 1.3 Development of the Public Internal Financial Control (PIFC) system through supporting the implementation of the new PIFC Strategy.
- 1.4 Strengthening economic governance and the fiscal framework by taking initial steps toward the establishment of an Independent Fiscal Council and improving the capacity to produce macroeconomic and fiscal forecasts.
- 1.5 Justice reform is supported including to increase the level of integrity, effectiveness, efficiency, and professionalism of justice actors.
- 1.6 The capacities of the General Inspectorate for Migration are strengthened, and reforms are adopted in alignment with EU *acquis*, while advancing gender equality and human rights.

### **3.2 Indicative Activities**

Activities related to Output 1.1:

- Provide capacity building, advisory actions and training; especially to but not limited to the Bureau for European Integration;
- Provide expertise for and direct transfer of know-how in line with the Specific Objective 1, including legislative and policy support;
- Facilitate cooperation with EU Member State experts and institutions by supporting study trips and participation in trainings organised by EU or Member State institutions;
- Implement internship programmes, in partnership with the Moldovan government, and when relevant, other innovative measures to increase merit-based and skilful civil service;
- Studies, assessments and reviews;
- Visibility and awareness events;

Activities related to Output 1.2:

- Provide capacity building, advisory actions and training to relevant stakeholders;
- Provide expertise and direct transfer of know-how in line with the Specific Objective 1, including legislative and policy support;
- Facilitate cooperation with EU Member State experts and institutions by supporting study trips and participation in trainings organised by EU or Member State institutions;
- Studies, assessments and reviews;
- Visibility and awareness events.

#### Activities related to Output 1.3:

- Development of modernised Public Internal Financial control procedures;
- Establishment of effective risk management practices;
- Improving internal audit capabilities;
- Enhancing accountability mechanisms, and increased oversight capacity of Ministry of Finance Central Harmonisation Unit.

#### Activities related to Output 1.4:

- Analyse the international practices related to the establishment of fiscal councils;
- Analyse domestic legislation and prepare legal framework for establishment of a fiscal council;
- Provide capacity building and training including in macroeconomic and fiscal forecasting;
- Studies, assessments and reviews;
- Visibility and awareness events.

#### Activities related to Output 1.5:

- Digitalization of the justice sector including development and installation of IT tools and platforms;
- Studies, assessments and reviews;
- Procurement of equipment;
- Support to existing and new court structures;
- Analysis and legislative reviews;
- Drafting support of legal and policy documents;
- Support to integrity checks of justice stakeholders and members of the Moldovan judiciary;
- Visibility and awareness events;
- Legislative and policy support;
- Support to the institutional functioning of justice stakeholders.

#### Activities related to Output 1.6:

- Provide technical assistance on the alignment process with the EU *acquis* (legislative, institutional and at operational level);
- Strengthen human resource capacities and support managerial reform process and improve interagency coordination, (including with regard to the key functions of the General Inspectorate for Migration which include but are not limited to migration, asylum, statelessness and foreigners);
- Consolidation of the law enforcement capacities and abilities in fighting organised crime, all forms of violence (including gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse), including trafficking in human beings, migrants smuggling, and irregular migration;
- Studies, assessments and reviews;
- Analysis and legislative reviews;
- Visibility and awareness events.

### **3.3 Mainstreaming**

#### **Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Biodiversity**

**Outcomes of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening** (relevant for budget support and strategic-level interventions)

The SEA screening concluded that no further action was required.

**Outcomes of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening** (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project).

The EIA screening classified the action as Category C (no need for further assessment).

**Outcome of the Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening** (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project).

The CRA screening concluded that this action is no or low risk (no need for further assessment).

### **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 the principles of gender equality and women empowerment are significant objectives to this Action.

The implementation of this action will be guided by the principles and objectives of the EU Gender Action Plan III<sup>15</sup>. A minimum share of female beneficiaries will be fixed in the indicators targets to be achieved. Data will be sex disaggregated, and impact of the Action on the status of men and women will be analysed.

### **Human Rights**

All activities included in this action will be designed and implemented in accordance with the principles of good governance, democracy and human rights. It will be based on a rights-based approach taking into account the obligations of duty bearers and the rights of the child and (groups of) persons (specifically members of vulnerable groups/people living in vulnerable situations – including refugees, Third-Country Nationals and asylum seekers, Roma, and people with disabilities) impacted by this Action.

The proposed action is consistent with the Human Rights Country Strategy for Moldova and addresses concerns raised by International Treaty Bodies as well as deficiencies identified by the European Court of Human Rights of the Council of Europe. This action protects and promotes non-discrimination and equal access to all services, focusing on children and people living in vulnerable situations, especially displaced and refugees. It will also support the reform of the justice sector, which will have a positive effect on the human rights situation in the country.

### **Disability**

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0.

### **Democracy**

The capacity building aspects of this programme will focus on supporting and strengthening the commitment and capacities of the Moldovan government to the principles of public administration developed by the European Commission in close cooperation with the 'Support for Improvement in Governance and Management'-Initiative (SIGMA) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The action supports reforms to improve the rule of law in the country.

### **Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience**

The 'do no harm' principle and conflict-sensitivity are embedded in the Action. It considers "benefits of peace" for the broader society which are important to support longer-term socio-economic development and resilience. A close attention will be given to conflict sensitivity in the priority area related to security and stability. The action supports capacity building of the security and migration sectors, including through civil society and community-based organisations. This programme intends to contribute to the extent possible to the implementation, sustainability, and institutionalisation of women, peace and security mainstreaming in Moldova. Specifically, it aims to strengthen the capacities of key actors such as government agencies in mainstreaming women, peace and security agenda into their policies, plans and programmes.

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<sup>15</sup> The Gender Action Plan III is a Joint communication by the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy which was welcomed through EU Presidency Conclusions of 16 December 2020. Drafting was led by the European Commission in close consultation with EU Member States, EEAS, civil society organisations, partner governments, and international organisations (UN entities, International Finance Institutions among others). The different parties contributed to the drafting of the document through meetings and through responses to a survey conducted during the process; [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-01/join-2020-17-final\\_en.pdf](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-01/join-2020-17-final_en.pdf)

## Disaster Risk Reduction

N/A

### 3.4 Risks and Assumptions

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
People and the organisation	Moldova does not continue in its path towards economic recovery, macro-financial stability and EU accession.	<b>L</b>	<b>H</b>	Intense political dialogue, close support for reforms, increased financial support
People and the organisation	Limited institutional and human resource capacities of public administration to benefit from provided expertise and implement reforms	<b>M</b>	<b>H</b>	Formalise national authorities' commitments to the modality of activities' implementation, especially mobilisation of external expertise. Concentrate activities and closely coordinate jointly (EU and Moldova) throughout the implementation of activities.
External environment	Increased refugee inflow from Ukraine due to the deterioration of regional and national security	<b>M</b>	<b>H</b>	Creation of response measures and preparedness of authorities to respond to threats. Activation of contingency measures and scaling-up of humanitarian assistance. Contribution to the fight against disinformation and FIMI.
External environment	Mass departure of Moldovan citizens to the EU Member States due to the deterioration of regional and national security	<b>L</b>	<b>H</b>	Policy dialogue and public awareness. Creation of response measures and preparedness of authorities to respond to threats. Contribution to the fight against disinformation and FIMI.
External environment	Reduced investments by businesses (domestic and foreign) due to uncertain regional security situation	<b>M</b>	<b>H</b>	Monitor investment climate and mobilise co-funding opportunities to help reduce investment costs.

	and worsened investment climate (high interest rates, political instability, increased migration and labour shortages)			
Planning, processes and systems	Weak coordination between the government and the donors, and/or between donors, leading to a duplication of efforts, and/or incompatibility of deployed means to the fast-evolving operating context.	<b>H</b>	<b>M</b>	Mobilise the whole EU toolbox and encourage the EU Member States contributions in coherence with formal and informal Team Europe initiatives with the objective to respond to the priority needs identified. Continue active engagement in Sector Coordination Platforms with Government and development partners. Align the EU contribution to national priorities and strategies.

### External Assumptions

Currently, there are no indications that Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine might also be extended to Moldova. However, a deterioration of the situation in Ukraine or change of the security situation in the Transnistrian region might cause additional pressures on the Moldovan government with intensified (out)migration or refugee inflow, which would require a concentration of Moldovan authorities’ financial and human resources to emergency measures and slow down initiated reforms.

### 3.5 Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that

*IF* Moldovan authorities are implementing the reform agenda and have the required capacities for the transposition and implementation of the EU *acquis* (Specific Objective 1); AND

*IF* Policy-making at sectorial level, strategic planning and policy management capacities are strengthened (Specific Objective 1);

*THEN* societal and state resilience will be reinforced creating the necessary conditions for a stable, democratic, sustainable development of Moldova, addressing the drivers of vulnerabilities, inequalities and emigration.

### 3.6 Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

Results	Results chain: Main expected results [maximum 10]	Indicators [it least one indicator per expected result]	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
<b>Impact 1</b>	To enhance the capacity and sustainability of Moldova's EU integration process through building accountable and resilient governance systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Global Competitiveness ranking of Moldova</li> <li>- Global Competitiveness score of Moldova</li> <li>- Global Peace Index score of Moldova</li> <li>- Score on the World Justice Project Rule of law Index</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>86 (2019)</li> <li>56,7 (2019)</li> <li>57 (2023)</li> <li>68 (2023)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>68 (2027)</li> <li>59 (2027)</li> <li>52 (2027)</li> <li>63 (2027)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Global Competitiveness Report of the World Economic Forum</li> <li>Global Peace Index (Report from the Institute for Economics &amp; Peace)</li> <li>World Justice Project Rule of law Index</li> </ul>	<i>Not applicable</i>
<b>Outcome 1</b>	Support to the Moldovan authorities in building accountable and resilient governance systems for European integration, in particular public finance management, justice and migration governance.	1.1 Considerable progress registered in the context of EU accession negotiations on at least 10% of the negotiating chapters.	1.1 0%	1.1 10%	EU and other international organisations monitoring reports, project reports	Political will and conducive environment for reforms and implementation of EU <i>acquis</i> approach. Security stability

<p><b>Output 1.1 related to Outcome 1</b></p>	<p>1.1 Increased level of administrative and institutional capacity to effectively align with and implement the EU <i>acquis</i>, successfully carry out accession negotiations and ability to take on the obligations of membership, in line with the Copenhagen criteria</p>	<p>1.1.1 80% of the civil servants involved in EU accession process have increased capacity to carry out negotiations, to align with and/or implement EU legislation and best practices. 1.1.2 At least 100 interns (disaggregated by sex) graduated the internship programme 1.1.3 Number of legislative acts in line with EU legislation prepared and ready for adoption 1.1.4 At least 80% of the short-term and mid-term recommendations stemming from the SIGMA assessment are addressed by the government.</p>	<p>1.1.1. 0% (2024) 1.1.2 0 (2024) 1.1.3 0 1.1.3 0</p>	<p>1.1.1 80% (2027) 1.1.2 100 (2027) At least 50% women 1.1.3 250 (2027) 1.1.3 80%</p>	<p>EU Enlargement and/or other reports, project reports. SIGMA assessments/reports</p>	<p>Continued political support for EU accession Security stability</p>
<p><b>Output 1.2 related to Outcomes 1</b></p>	<p>1.2 Increased state and societal resilience by supporting the priorities set out by the Moldova Support Package.</p>	<p>1.2.1 Number of legislative acts, primary and secondary on economic development and connectivity;</p>	<p>1.2.1 0 1.2.2 0 1.2.3 0</p>	<p>1.2.1 TBD (2027) 1.2.2 TBD (2027) 1.2.3 TBD (2027)</p>	<p>EU Enlargement and other monitoring reports, project reports</p>	<p>Continued political support for state and societal resilience, security and stability Security stability</p>

		1.2.2 Number of legislative acts, primary and secondary on energy security 1.2.3. Number of legislative acts, primary and secondary on security			Reports by International Organisations including OECD, CoE and the World Bank  Government Reports	
<b>Output 1.3 related to Outcome 1</b>	1.3 Public Internal Financial Control (PIFC) system was developed through implementation of the new PIFC Strategy	1.3.1 Modernised PIFC procedures developed and risk management practices established 1.3.2 Improved internal audit capabilities 1.3.3 Increased oversight capacity of MoF Central Harmonisation Unit (CHU).	1.3.1 0 modernised procedures 1.3.2 0 Internal Audits trained 1.3.3 Central Harmonisation Unit in place	1.3.1 New PIFC procedures developed 1.3.2 Internal Auditors trained 1.3.3 Central Harmonisation Unit operates based on EU <i>acquis</i> standards	SIGMA reports  GRECO reports  European Commission Enlargement Report	
<b>Output 1.4 related to Outcome 1</b>	1.4 Economic governance and fiscal framework were strengthened by provided support for the establishment of the Independent Fiscal Council and to improved	1.4.1 International practices related to the establishment of fiscal council analysed 1.4.2 Domestic legislation analysed and legal framework for establishment of the fiscal council prepared	1.4.1 Unclear on which model to apply in Moldova. 1.4.2 0 legislation analysed 1.4.3 0 institutions trained	1.4.1 International Practices Analysed 1.4.2 Legislation for setting up fiscal council developed 1.4.3 Institutions trained including on macroeconomic	SIGMA report  IMF reports  GRECO reports  Economic Review Programme reports	



	macroeconomic and fiscal forecasts	1.4.3. Capacity Building and Training Provided including on macroeconomic and fiscal forecasting		and fiscal forecasting	European Commission Enlargement report	
<b>Outcome 1.5 related to Outcome 1</b>	1.5 Justice reform was supported including to increase the level of integrity, effectiveness, efficiency and professionalism of justice actors	1.5.1 Level of Justice Strategy implemented  1.5.2 World Justice Project Rule of Law Index for Moldova (score, rank): Rule of Law, Civil Justice and Criminal Justice indices	1.5.1 Baseline study: see mid-term evaluation by OECD / EU-funded project carried out in 2024/2025  1.5.2 0.53 (68/142), 0.50 (79/142) and 0.41 (78/142) (World Justice Project MD indices for the Rule of Law, Civil Justice and Criminal Justice, respectively)	1.5.1 Improved level of implementation of the Justice Strategy (see final evaluation by OECD / EU-funded project carried out in 2026)  1.5.2 0.54 (66/142), 0.51 (78/142) and 0.45 (77/142) (World Justice Project MD indices for the Rule of Law, Civil Justice and Criminal Justice, respectively)	EU reports (public and non-public)  Reports by International Organisations including OECD, CoE and the World Bank  Government Reports  CSO Reports  CEPEJ	Continued political support for EU accession  Security stability

<p><b>Output 1.6 related to Outcome 1</b></p>	<p>1.6 The capacities of the General Inspectorate for Migration were strengthened, and reforms are adopted in alignment with EU <i>acquis</i>, advancing gender equality and human rights.</p>	<p>1.6.1 Number of laws/regulations developed/updated with support of the EU-funded intervention (laws/regulations; laws/regulations under development; laws/regulations adopted) with a gender and human rights approach.</p> <p>1.6.2 Number of active specialised units /personnel within the national law enforcement, judicial, labour authorities supported; number of investigations and prosecutions.</p> <p>1.6.3 Number of actions implemented to strengthen data bases related to migration.</p> <p>1.6.4 Number of preventive activities including awareness raising and information</p>	<p>1.6.1 2023 (0)</p> <p>1.6.2 2023 (0)</p> <p>1.6.3 2023 (0)</p> <p>1.6.4 2023 (0)</p>	<p>1.6.1 2027 +5%</p> <p>1.6.2 2027 +30 %</p> <p>1.6.3 2027 +10%</p> <p>1.6.4 2027 +5%</p>	<p>Government Decision National, civil society and project reports EU policy documents</p>	<p>The beneficiary institutions properly staffed and with necessary absorption capacity to receive and benefit from the proposed actions</p>
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		activities addressed to potential victims of trafficking, including vulnerable persons and communities.				
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## 4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

### 4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the Republic of Moldova.

### 4.2 Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3.1 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 72 months from the date of entry into force of the financing agreement.

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 Direct Management (Grants)

##### 4.3.1.1 Twinning Grant

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

A Twinning on Strengthening the Public Internal Financial Control system of Moldova will contribute to Outcome 1, Output 1.3 'Development of the Public Internal Financial Control (PIFC) system through the implementation of the new PIFC Strategy'.

###### b) Type of applicants targeted

Applicants must be EU Member State administrations or their mandated bodies.

##### 4.3.1.2 Twinning Grant

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

A Twinning on strengthening the capacity of the General Inspectorate for Migration will contribute to Outcome 1, Output 1.6 'The capacities of the General Inspectorate for Migration are strengthened, and reforms are adopted in alignment with the EU *acquis*, advancing gender equality and human rights'.

###### b) Type of applicants targeted

Applicants must be EU Member State administrations or their mandated bodies.

#### 4.3.2 Direct Management (Procurement)

**Procurements** will contribute to the achievement of the Specific Objective 1, (Outcome 1, Outputs 1.1 and 1.2) which aim to provide support the Moldovan authorities in the implementation of the reform agenda and in particular in developing the capacities required for the transposition and implementation of the EU *acquis*.

### **4.3.3 Indirect Management with a pillar-assessed entity**

#### **4.3.3.1 Indirect Management with a pillar-assessed entity**

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with a pillar-assessed entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- The worldwide sector and thematic expertise in the areas covered by the project and a record in supporting reforms in those areas in Moldova;
- Track record on assessment of the public finance systems in Moldova;
- Logistical and management capacities, notably via access to a worldwide network of experts in the area concerned.

The implementation by this entity entails contributing to Outcome 1, Output 1.4 'Strengthening economic governance and fiscal framework by supporting the establishment of an Independent Fiscal Council'.

#### **4.3.3.2 Indirect Management with a pillar-assessed entity**

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with a pillar-assessed entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- Proven knowledge and expertise in justice sector and in the procurement of digital services and equipment;
- A track record and the capacity to develop good working relations with local partners and;
- Demonstrated capacity to deliver work.

This implementation by this entity entails implementing activities under Specific Objective 1, Output 1.5 'Justice reform is supported including to increase the level of integrity, effectiveness, efficiency and professionalism of justice actors'.

### **4.3.4 Changes from indirect to direct management (and vice versa) mode due to exceptional circumstances**

If the implementation modality under indirect management as defined in section 4.3.3.1 cannot be implemented due to circumstances beyond the control of the Commission, the modality of implementation by grants under direct management would be used according to the section 4.3.2.

If the implementation modality under indirect management as defined in section 4.3.3.2 cannot be implemented due to circumstances beyond the control of the Commission, the modality of implementation by procurements under direct management would be used according to section 4.3.2.

If the implementation modality under direct management as defined in sections 4.3.1 or 4.3.2 cannot be implemented due to circumstances beyond the control of the Commission, the modality of implementation by indirect management with a pillar-assessed entity would be used according to section 4.3.3 using the following criteria:

- Technical expertise and proven experience;
- Operational and technical capacities required to efficiently deliver the envisaged outputs;
- Value added and synergy with ongoing EU and other development partner interventions;
- Independence and transparency.

#### 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

<b>Indicative Budget components</b>	<b>EU contribution (amount in EUR)</b>
<b>Implementation modalities</b> – cf. section 4.3	
<b>Outcome 1</b> ‘Provide support to the Moldovan authorities in the implementation of the reform agenda and in particular in developing the capacities required for the transposition and implementation of the EU <i>acquis</i> .’	<b>EUR 25 000 000.00</b>
Procurement (direct management) – (Output 1.1 and 1.2) cf. section 4.3.2	N/A
Twinning grants (direct management) (Outputs 1.3 and 1.6)	N/A
Indirect management with a pillar-assessed entity (Output 1.5)	EUR 4 000 000.00
Indirect management with a pillar-assessed entity (Output 1.4)	EUR 500 000.00
<b>Grants</b> – total envelope under section 4.3.1	<b>EUR 2 500 000.00</b>
<b>Procurement</b> – total envelope under section 4.3.2	<b>EUR 18 000 000.00</b>
<b>Evaluation</b> – cf. section 5.4 <b>Audit</b> – cf. section 5.5	will be covered by another Decision
<b>Strategic communication and Public diplomacy</b> – cf. section 6	will be covered by another Decision
<b>Contingencies</b>	N/A
<b>Totals</b>	<b>EUR 25 000 000.00</b>

#### 4.6 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The implementing entities will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the projects and mobilisation of all needed resources. The implementing entities will assist the project beneficiaries in establishing the project Steering Committees to guide the project implementation. The project Steering Committees will oversee and validate the overall direction and policy of the project (or other responsibilities to be specified).

The implementing entity will report regularly to the project Steering Committee, which will review the project progress and give guidance on key issues. The project Steering Committees shall meet on a regular basis, indicatively once or twice a year. Ad-hoc meetings can be convened in case of need. The project Steering Committee shall be made up of representatives of key stakeholders.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the EU Delegation 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:

1. Baselines setting: Baselines, targets and sources of data have been partially defined in the logframe. These will be reconfirmed or amended if necessary at the time of the contracting. If needed, additional studies will be commissioned.
2. Data collection and reporting: Data collection and reporting will be under the responsibility of the implementing partners.
3. Active and meaningful participation of stakeholders: This action has been designed based on consultations with a large group of stakeholders, including the Government, the business sector and the civil society. It is in line with many of the priorities identified as a result of the consultation and with Government strategies and programmes. It is expected that a large number of stakeholders will benefit from it and will be actively supporting it. Due care will be taken to raise awareness about the action and its benefits to ensure active stakeholders' participation.

### 5.2 Evaluation

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

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 follow up actions may be launched under some of the priorities.

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 30 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 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.

Evaluation services may be contracted under a framework contract.

### **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 contribution 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.



## 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;

<b>Action level</b> (i.e. Budget support, Blending)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single action	Present action: all contracts in the present action
<b>Group of actions level</b> (i.e: i) top-up cases, ii) second, third, etc. phases of a programme)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of actions	Actions reference (CRIS#/OPSYS#):
<b>Contract level</b> (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)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	Service contract
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 2	Grant (Twinning)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 3	Grant (Twinning)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 4	Contribution Agreement with a pillar-assessed entity
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 5	Contribution Agreement with a pillar-assessed entity
<b>Group of contracts level</b> (i.e: i) series of programme estimates, ii) cases in which an Action Document foresees many foreseen individual legal commitments (for instance four contracts and one of them being a Technical Assistance) and two of them, a technical assistance contract and a contribution agreement, aim at the same objectives and complement each other, iii) follow up contracts that share the same log frame of the original contract)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of contracts	