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

**ANNEX I**

**to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the 2024 annual action plan part II in favour of the Regional South Neighbourhood**

**Action Document for Neighbourhood Investment Platform (NIP) for 2024 in favour of the Southern Neighbourhood**

**ANNUAL ACTION PLAN**

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and action plan 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>	Neighbourhood Investment Platform (NIP) for 2024 in favour of the Southern Neighbourhood 2024 annual action plan part II in favour of the Regional South Neighbourhood OPSYS business reference: ACT-62542 ABAC Commitment level 1 reference: JAD.1408755 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe).
<b>2. Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)</b>	Yes Transport; Energy; Environment and climate resilience; Digital; Economic development (incl. private sector, trade and macroeconomic support); Human Development (incl. human capital and youth); Health resilience; Agriculture, food security and rural development
<b>EIP Flagship</b>	Yes.
<b>3. Team Europe Initiative</b>	Yes Projects under this Action may contribute to Team Europe Initiatives.

<b>4. Beneficiary(y)/(ies) of the action</b>	<p>The action shall be carried out in the following locations:</p> <p>(a) European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) South countries with an ENP Association Agenda/Action Plan in force: Egypt, Israel<sup>1</sup>, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine*, and Tunisia.</p> <p>(b) Other ENP South countries<sup>2</sup>.</p>
<b>5. Programming document</b>	Multi-annual Indicative Programme for the Southern Neighbourhood (MIP) 2021-2027 <sup>3</sup>
<b>6. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results</b>	This action contributes to the 2021-2027 Multiannual Indicative Programming's objectives under priority areas 2: 'Strengthening resilience, build prosperity, and seize the digital transition'; and 4: 'Green Transition'
<b>PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION</b>	
<b>7. Priority Area(s), sectors</b>	<p>120 – Health</p> <p>140 – Water Supplies &amp; Sanitation</p> <p>160 – Other Social Infrastructures &amp; Services</p> <p>210 – Transport and Storage</p> <p>230 – Energy</p> <p>240 – Banking and financial services</p> <p>250 – Business and other services</p> <p>310 - Agriculture, forestry, fishing</p> <p>321 – Industry</p> <p>410 – General Environment Protection</p> <p>430 – Multisector</p> <p>520 - Development Food Assistance</p>
<b>8. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>	<p>Main SDG: Goal 17 – Partnerships for the goals</p> <p>Other significant SDGs and where appropriate, targets:</p> <p>Goal 3 – Good Health and wellbeing</p> <p>Goal 4 – Quality education</p> <p>Goal 5 – Gender equality</p> <p>Goal 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation</p> <p>Goal 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy</p> <p>Goal 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth</p> <p>Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities</p> <p>Goal 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production</p> <p>Goal 13 – Climate Action</p>

<sup>1</sup> See Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards on [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013XC0719\(03\)&from=en](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013XC0719(03)&from=en). Israel is usually only eligible under regional projects, having the status of developed country.

\* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

<sup>2</sup> Algeria, Libya and Syria, taking into account that co-operation with the Government of Syria has been suspended since 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Commission Implementing Decision adopting a multiannual indicative programme for the Southern Neighbourhood Region for the period 2021-2027 C(2021) 9399

	Goal 14 – Life under water			
<b>9. DAC codes</b>	11120 - Education facilities and training 12110 - Health policy and administrative management 14010 - Water sector policy and administrative management 14020 - Water supply and sanitation – large systems 14022 - Sanitation - large systems 14030 - Basic drinking water supply and basic sanitation 14050 - Waste management/disposal 15110 - Public sector policy and administrative management 15170 - Women's equality organisations and institutions 16020 - Employment creation 16050 – Multi-sector aid for basic social services 21010 – Transport policy and administrative management 22020 – Telecommunications 23010 – Energy policy and administrative management 23183 - Energy conservation and demand-side efficiency 23210 - Energy generation, renewable sources - multiple technologies 23630 - Electric power transmission and distribution 24030 - Formal sector financial intermediaries 25030 - Business development services 31110 - Agricultural policy and administrative management 31120 - Agriculture development 32130 – SME development 41010 – Environment policy and administrative management 52010 – Food assistance			
<b>10. Main Delivery Channel</b>	13000 – Third Country Government (Delegated cooperation) 40000 – Multilateral organisations 42000/42004 – European Investment Bank (EIB) 46000 – Regional Development Bank 46015 – European Bank for Reconstruction and Development 47000 - Other multilateral institution			
<b>11. Targets</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input 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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	governance			
	Aid to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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	<div>YES</div> <div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></div> <div>NO</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/></div>		
	Tags	<div>YES</div> <div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></div> <div>NO</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/></div>		
	transport	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	energy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	environment, climate resilience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	economic development (incl. private sector, trade and macroeconomic support)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	human development (incl. human capital and youth)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	health resilience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	migration and mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	agriculture, food security and rural development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	digital governance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	digital entrepreneurship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	digital skills/literacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	digital services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Connectivity @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Tags	YES	NO	
	digital connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	energy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	transport	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	education and research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Migration @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	COVID-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET INFORMATION</b>				
<b>14. Amounts concerned</b>	Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020110 Total estimated cost: EUR 200 500 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution : EUR 200 500 000			
<b>MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>				
<b>15. Implementation modalities (management mode and delivery methods)</b>	<u>Indirect management</u> This contribution to the Neighbourhood Investment Platform (NIP) shall be implemented in indirect management by the entities indicated in appendix 1 of this Action document in accordance with the Neighbourhood Investment Platform's award procedure.			

## 1.2. Summary of the Action

The present action is part of the Regional South Action Programme for 2024, which reflects the EU priorities under the *Joint Communication on a Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood*<sup>4</sup> and its *Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)*<sup>5</sup>. The objectives of the AAP 2024 are also aligned with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) political framework.

This action implements the *Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for the Southern Neighbourhood (2021-2027)*<sup>6</sup> under its Priority Area 2: 'Strengthening resilience, build prosperity, and seize the digital transition'; and 4: 'Green Transition'. It contributes to numerous EIP flagships, in particular Flagships 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12.

<sup>4</sup> JOIN (2021) 2 final of 09.02.2021

<sup>5</sup> SWD(2021) 23 final

<sup>6</sup> C(2021) 9399 final

The Neighbourhood Investment Platform (NIP) is a blending facility, combining European Union grant contributions or financial instruments, with other public and private sector resources such as loans and equity in order to leverage additional non-grant financing. It forms part of the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+) as foreseen in Article 32 of the NDICI – Global Europe Regulation<sup>7</sup>.

The key objective of the NIP is, within the framework of the NDICI – Global Europe Regulation, the EuroMed partnership and the European Neighbourhood Policy to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), creating sustainable jobs and infrastructures, and addressing root causes of migration.

To achieve this objective, vital capital investments must be made to rehabilitate, modernise or build essential infrastructures needed for safe and efficient transport of goods and people; enhance food security and resilience to shocks; safe production, transport and consumption of energy; effective environmental protection (in particular to ensure the quality of air, water and soil); sustainable waste management; climate change-related issues, digital transformation of societies especially with regard to access to digital tools, digital skills training and better business environment for SMEs and start-ups; as well as economic growth through the support to private sector development. In addition, capital is needed for the provision of basic social services such as health and education; as well as economic growth through the support to private sector development, in particular micro, small, and medium size enterprises (MSMEs).

### **1.3. Beneficiaries of the action**

The Action shall be carried out in the Southern Neighbourhood countries, all of which (except Israel) are included in the list of ODA recipients.

The final beneficiaries of the NIP will be the partner countries directly or indirectly, either through their central, regional and local administrations or semi-public institutions. Other beneficiaries will be the private sector, and in particular MSMEs, for categories of operations dedicated to the private sector development. Multilateral, national, International and European development finance institutions will be direct partners and crucial stakeholders of the Platform.

## **2. RATIONALE**

### **2.1. Context**

In accordance with Regulation (EU) No 947/2021 of the European Parliament and the European Council ('NDICI – Global Europe Regulation'), the European Union shall seek the most efficient use of resources available in order to optimise the impact of its external action. That should be achieved through coherence and complementarity between the Union's instruments for external action, as well as the creation of synergies between the instruments, and, where appropriate, the use of financial instruments that have leverage effect. Furthermore, in accordance with Art. 8 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU), the Union shall develop a special relationship with neighbouring countries, aiming to establish an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness, founded on the values of the Union and characterised by close and peaceful relations based on cooperation.

The adoption of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 and the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe has set a new legal framework whose objective is

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<sup>7</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument.

to uphold and promote the Union's values and interests worldwide, in order to pursue the objectives and principles of its external action, as outlined in the Article 3(5), 8 and 21 of the TEU.

When establishing its relations with the Southern Neighbourhood, the Union has adopted and is currently reviewing joint documents, while at regional level, the UfM Roadmap, as well as other regional priorities, will continue to inspire the identification of regional interests and activities for the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. This partnership remains a strategic imperative for the Union, as the challenges the region continues to face require a common response, especially considering the conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza and the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the enclave itself, following the Hamas led attack on Israel on 7 October 2023, as well as the long and short-term effects of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The *Joint Communication of the Commission and the High Representative on a Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood and its Economic and Investment Plan* was adopted on 9 February 2021. It proposed a new, ambitious and innovative Agenda for the Mediterranean drawing on the full EU toolbox in order to relaunch our cooperation turn the common challenges into opportunities and realise the untapped potential of our shared region. It also focused on measures aiming to mitigate the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and reflected the Commission's objective of ensuring a recovery in a sustainable manner.

In December 2021, the Joint Communication "Global Gateway"<sup>8</sup> has underlined the ever-growing necessity for countries to invest and develop the infrastructure they need to create sustainable prosperity, jobs and services for their local communities. This global need for infrastructure not only holds the key for sustainable development across the world but is a crucial part of the puzzle for fighting climate change and protecting the environment, improving global health security and boosting the competitiveness of the world economy.

Global Gateway aims at working around the world, adapting to the needs and strategic interests of different regions, while remaining values-driven. It focuses on physical infrastructure – such as fibre optic cables, clean transport corridors, clean power transmission lines - to strengthen digital, transport and energy networks. It also provides an enabling environment to make sure projects deliver, by offering attractive investment and business friendly trading conditions, regulatory convergence, standardisation, supply chain integration, and financial services.

Blending, via the NIP still aims at mobilising private and public investments to partly implement the objectives of the Joint Communication of the Commission and the High Representative on a renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood and its Economic and Investment Plan, and the Global Gateway for the Southern Neighbourhood region.

Finally, the conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza and the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the enclave itself, as well as Russia's unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine since 24 February 2022 have contributed to the emergence of a new diplomatic landscape, where risks of fragmentation are exacerbated by the increasingly severe economic consequences of the conflicts on numerous countries: food insecurity, limited access to energy and raw materials due to trade disruptions, as well as macro-economic repercussions such as high inflation and rising debt levels are affecting many countries directly or indirectly, and the Southern Neighbourhood is one of the regions severely affected. The economic consequences of these adverse supply shocks could in some countries spark social unrest and political destabilisation. In this challenging context it is crucial for the EU to pursue its engagement with

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<sup>8</sup> Global Gateway – JOIN(2021)30 final (01/12/2021)

third countries as a reliable partner and a constructive global actor striving for the cohesion of the international community.

Based on the above-described context, the European Commission renews the NIP through the NDICI, in support to the implementation of the cooperation frameworks defined for bilateral assistance such as Partnership Priorities (or equivalent documents) and the NIP Strategic Orientations for 2021-2027 (being approved by the NIP Board on 16 June 2022).

## **2.2. Problem Analysis**

### Short problem analysis

The Joint Communication highlights as one of the priorities of the EU cooperation with Southern partner countries to spur their long term socio-economic recovery and to strengthen their resilience, to support the green and digital transition by investments; and to develop employment opportunities, in particular for the youth and women. The spill-over effects of the conflict between Israel and Hamas on the Middle East and the dramatic impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on Southern partner countries' socioeconomic context can only but reaffirm these priorities. The EU is committed – in partnership with European and International Finance Institutions – to promote investments and development initiatives that contribute achieving inclusive growth and to improving the living conditions of citizens, in line with the principles outlined by the European Green Deal<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, actions to strengthen partnerships with the private sector should be promoted, and the use of innovative approaches such as blending grants, loans, and guarantees, as an essential way of leveraging additional resources and increasing the impact of the EU's aid should be fostered.

For many years, the Southern Mediterranean region is facing governance, socio-economic, climate, environmental and security challenges, many of which result from global trends and call for joint action by the EU and Southern Neighbourhood partners. Protracted conflicts continue to inflict terrible human suffering, trigger significant forced displacement, and weigh heavily on the economic and social prospects of entire societies. Economic growth in the Southern Neighbourhood has not kept pace with demographic growth. The region has one of the lowest levels of regional economic integration in the world. Unsustainable use of natural resources and climate change jeopardise access to water, food, and energy, accelerate desertification and loss of biodiversity, and threaten lives and livelihoods. Significant economic and gender inequalities persist, and governments struggle to meet the aspirations of today's youth.

This fragile situation has been aggravated by the impact of Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine and the full consequences of the conflict between Israel and Hamas are still unfolding in the Southern Neighbourhood. The disruptions of supply chains and trade flows have put huge pressure on the markets, finances, stocks, producers, and consumers in the region. Moreover, prices for food, commodities and energy have risen. The economic impact of the war on the region is already very significant and visible as many countries have close economic ties with and dependencies on Russia and Ukraine.

Moreover the Southern Neighbourhood region is one of the most food imports-dependent regions in the world. Food essentials' shortage, rising commodity and food prices or reduced subsidies may not only lead to economic crisis, but also to hunger among the poor; particularly in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. Combined with a severe drought in some countries, these dynamics affect heavily the already fragile post-COVID-19 recovery and may cause social unrest and in some instances tensions between local and refugee populations. In addition, oil-poor countries are negatively affected by rising

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<sup>9</sup> The European Green Deal – COM(2019)640 final (11/12/2019)



energy prices and might have to devalue their national currencies' exchange rates to compensate for rising prices.

The current state of the legal and regulatory framework, the fragile public finance situation, the war in Ukraine and reduced fiscal space of many partner countries tend to limit both the private and public sectors' investment capacities and level of borrowing. Furthermore, some countries are already nearing the debt ceilings agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Therefore particular attention should be paid when approving specific proposals in order to help preserving the long-term debt sustainability.

The NIP will continue to be used to mobilise funding for the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of the war in Ukraine in the Neighbourhood, following a Team Europe approach. It is crucial for EU relations with Neighbourhood partner countries that necessary financial support is provided, in particular public infrastructure investments and private sector development, mitigating the economic downturn and reducing adverse long-term impact. This response will build on existing NIP instruments and facilities that can deliver fast and tangible results. The NIP will also contribute to the efforts to get back to a normal functioning of societies and economies and to sustainable growth, integrating inter alia the green transition and the digital transformation in the Neighbourhood region.

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

The main stakeholders of this Action are the Lead Finance Institutions listed in section 4.3.1 here under. They develop NIP projects that are being submitted to a NIP Technical Assessment process followed by a NIP Board (composed of EU Member States, the European Commission and the European External Action Service). Approved projects are then implemented by these Lead Finance Institutions.

### **2.3. Lessons Learned**

From 2008 until 2022, allocations to the NIP from the Union's budget have reached a total of EUR 2,023 billion for the Southern Neighbourhood. Additionally, Member States have contributed to the NIP Trust Fund with a total of EUR 87.75 million. This has enabled the launching of 128 projects with NIP support. The NIP has succeeded in mobilising approximately EUR 16.6 billion of financing from European and International Financial Institutions since 2008 for the Southern Neighbourhood, with a total investment amount of circa EUR 27.1 billion, leveraging approximately 12.1 times in investment for every euro provided by the NIP.

An overall evaluation on blending, for assessing the impact of NIP projects in the period 2015-2021, was made available in January 2024. The findings of the evaluation presented the following recommendations on how to further improve the use of blending for the achievement of EU policy objectives:

- Enhance the use of EU blending inputs, by better recognising its added value (focus on additionality), identifying opportunities regarding financial leverage and strengthening the use of technical assistance;
- Tighten the focus on EU policy objectives, in line with the "policy first" principle, including by promoting risk taking by International Financial Institutions and Private Financial Institutions;
- Strengthen monitoring, reporting and learning at both intervention and portfolio levels;
- Invest in upstream support in order to ensure faster onset of activities and stronger quality at entry, including by financing more upstream technical support;
- Better recognise the role of in-country based stakeholders, by reinforcing the role of EU Delegations and enhancing the engagement of national partners, including by seeking political backing by high level decision makers (not only line ministries).

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

NDICI-Global Europe defines the scope of geographic programmes, under which the NIP is financed, as including the following sectors: a) good governance, democracy, the rule of law and human rights, including gender equality; b) eradicating poverty, fighting against inequalities and discriminations, and promoting human development; c) migration, forced displacement and mobility; d) environment and climate change; e) inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent employment; f) peace, stability and conflict prevention; and g) partnerships.

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

The key objective of the NIP is, within the framework of the objectives of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the Global Gateway strategy, and the NDICI, to contribute to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thus creating sustainable jobs, focusing on promoting additional investments in sustainable infrastructure in transport, energy, environment, contributing to mitigation and adaptation to climate change, and addressing root causes of migration. The NIP will furthermore support social and private sector development in the Neighbourhood. In particular the NIP will support the growth of MSMEs by making available a range of financial instruments, notably through risk-sharing capital mechanisms under the EFSD+ guarantee mechanisms.

From an economic point of view, blending and budgetary guarantees will serve distinct purposes and will be complementary to each other. The main purpose of the NIP is to provide concessionality ('softening' of financial terms) to investment projects through blending grants, notably technical assistance grants and investment grants. The EU contribution should be the minimum necessary in order to render the project in question economically and financially viable, as per the principle of 'minimum concessionality'. The key objective of EFSD+ guarantees is to reduce risk for implementing partners and/or other investors in order to increase investment capacity in the region and crowd in public and private sector investments.

Depending on the nature of the investment project or investment programme in question, the EFSD+ will make it possible to combine blending interventions with budgetary guarantees.

The leverage effect of the NIP funding is expected to be at least 4 to 5 times the amount of the NIP contributions. The input of the Finance Institutions will increase the leverage effect on policy dialogue and additional resources to be directed towards the Neighbourhood beneficiary countries. Operations financed by Finance Institutions pooling their loan resources in combination with NIP support will allow increasing risk and crediting ceilings to the benefit of the partner countries and promote the financing of categories of investments, which at present cannot be financed either by the market or by development Finance Institutions separately.

The objectives and expected outputs are also based on the NIP Strategic Orientations for 2021-2027, which take into account:

- Previous sets of NIP Strategic Orientations (2007-2010; 2011-2013; 2014-2020);
- Evaluations of the NIP Operations in the period 2014-2020, including the 2014 European Court of Auditors' Special Report on the Commission's external blending instruments, the 2016 DEVCO Strategic Evaluation of Blending (2007-2014), including the NIP and the 2021 Results Data Collection (RDC) exercise for the Neighbourhood region;

- EFSD+ ex-ante assessment discussing the most efficient ways of deploying budgetary guarantees and blending support in the period 2021-2027, based on an analysis of market failures and suboptimal investment situations.

These conditions will be consulted with the relevant regional operational boards.

Priorities in the Southern Neighbourhood have been further developed along key cooperation sectors: a) green, blue and natural resources, b) transport, connectivity and municipal infrastructure, c) private sector development, d) public and social sector developments, e) digital transition and f) food security.

## **Priority areas for support**

The NIP will support projects prepared by eligible European and International Financial Institutions, in line with the key strategic objectives of the EU aiming to contribute to achieving the SDGs.

### **a. Green transition and natural resources:**

Investments in this sector will address the following SDGs: No 6 “Clean water and sanitation”; No 7 “Affordable and clean energy”; No 9 “Industry, innovation and infrastructure”; No 13 “Climate action”; No 14 “Life below water”; and No 15 “Life on land”.

Key investment areas will include renewable and sustainable energy (including clean hydrogen), enhanced electricity interconnections, with the finality of greening the energy mix, boosting energy efficiency and ensuring energy security in the Southern Neighbourhood.

Projects in natural resources management will include safeguarding water, particularly in rural areas. Water sector infrastructure investments will continue being highly relevant for all countries in the Southern Neighbourhood, where water scarcity is a major burden for economic growth.

Investments will, to the maximum extent, account for research and innovation actions, particularly in the context of the UfM adopted roadmaps on renewable energy and climate change<sup>10</sup>, acknowledged in the declaration adopted at the 1<sup>st</sup> UfM Research and Innovation Ministerial meeting (June 2022).

Increasing urbanisation in many Southern Neighbourhood countries also requires enhanced infrastructures for the provision of public services such as waste management, wastewater treatment and overall demand-side management of resources. Investments will thus also target regional development and enhanced municipal services, notably via the implementation of Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs) and urban residential rehabilitation programmes.

Significant opportunities exist to use digital technologies to support the green and blue transition, i.e. by better monitoring the environment, increasing the transparency of the environmental footprint, optimising the value chains and supporting citizen-driven approaches.

### **b. Transport, connectivity and municipal development**

This domain will address the following SDGs: No 9 “Build resilient infrastructures”; No 10 “Reduced inequalities”; No 11 “Sustainable cities and communities”.

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<sup>10</sup> [https://ufmsecretariat.org/platform/ufm-regional-platform-on-research-and-innovation/ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2021-06-21\\_UfM-Platform\\_Theories-of-Change-and-IPs\\_and\\_Horizontal-Integration\\_Final-Version.pdf](https://ufmsecretariat.org/platform/ufm-regional-platform-on-research-and-innovation/ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2021-06-21_UfM-Platform_Theories-of-Change-and-IPs_and_Horizontal-Integration_Final-Version.pdf)

Investments in this sector aim to strengthen core transport links at continental, regional (including via the future Trans-Mediterranean Transport Network to be connected with the TEN-T), national and local levels (such as sub-national regions and tier-2 cities) by promoting access for all to qualitative infrastructures based on digital and low carbon emission solutions. Cooperation in this sector also has the key finality of improving air, road, rail, maritime, and inland waterway connections, and the usage that people and businesses can make of these connections.

c. Private sector

This domain will contribute towards all SDGs, as all operations will chiefly be aimed at crowding in private sector actors and investments. Activities in this sector will particularly contribute towards SDGs No 8 “Decent work and economic growth”; No 9 “Industry, innovation and infrastructure”; No 12 “Responsible consumption and production”.

Support to MSMEs will feature highly, as these are the main employment providers in the Neighbourhood region. Activities will support MSMEs capacity in accessing finance by improving their bankability variables (such as their financial sustainability, collaterals and compliance with financial regulatory requisites), and therefore opportunities for financial inclusion. Activities will pay particular attention to underserved market segments — such as women-owned business and young entrepreneurs—, social businesses; as well as innovative, digitally-enabled and climate-smart companies.

Targeted beneficiaries will be at different development stages (e.g. start-ups, business angel investors, venture capital and mature equity). Activities will also strive to integrate MSMEs in value chains ecosystems within the EU, allowing them to increase their value-adding potential.

d. Public and social sectors (including health)

This domain will directly contribute to SDGs No 3 “Good Health and wellbeing”, No 4 “Quality education” and 10 “Reduced inequalities”. It includes all topics addressing social impact, including social protection (protection or assistance systems), education (including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), secondary and higher education), sanitary (health), living conditions (affordable and green housing, urban residential rehabilitation) and provision of e-services, including e-health, in particular to remote and rural communities.

e. Digital transition

This domain will address the following SDGs: No 8 “Decent work and economic growth”; No 9 “Industry, innovation and infrastructure” and 10 “Reduced inequalities”.

Investments in this area will aim to accelerate universal access to affordable broadband and open internet. This will not only allow citizens to move into the digital age, but also provide opportunities for companies to improve their use of key digital technologies (including Cloud, AI, Big Data), facilitate access to finance and business support services to boost digitally enabled entrepreneurship. E-services will be deployed at a faster pace, contributing to the development of digital economies for achieving SDGs.

At the same time, projects in this sector will feed the objectives of other priority areas in this NIP.

f. Food security

This domain will address the following SDGs: No 2 “Zero hunger” and 10 “Reduced inequalities”.

Investments in this area will aim at supporting people – and specifically the most vulnerable groups (women, children, refugees) - in meeting their basic needs (in particular considering the impact of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine on food security). Actions will also contribute to enhancing

countries' resilience to commodity shortage emergencies, while implementing more sustainable agricultural practices (improved agriculture yields thanks to modernised equipment along the whole value chain, larger and more climate-resilient storage capacities, better access to market for seeds and green fertilizers, agriculture diversification...). Investments will also provide gender-sensitive innovative solutions to the lack of financing mechanisms adapted to farmers, fishermen and agri-entrepreneurs, particularly for smallholders, cooperatives and agricultural MSMEs.

The expected results of the NIP are increased investments in the above-mentioned sectors, contributing to:

a. Better and more sustainable energy infrastructure, notably:

- Greening of the energy mix (solar, wind, renewable hydrogen),
- Decentralised renewable energy and industrial decarbonisation,
- Increased energy efficiency in key sectors of the economy,

Increased protection and restoration of the environment and biodiversity, and resilience against natural and man-made disasters, in synergy with low-carbon development, notably:

- Better and more sustainable use of land,
- Increase of nature-based solutions,
- Enhanced water sector management (supply and demand),
- Better waste and wastewater management systems, in line with the principles of circular economy, including necessary related infrastructures,
- Better irrigation systems (nexus food-water-energy),
- Implementation of Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs),
- Protection and restoration of biodiversity,
- Promotion of climate change-related public and private investments through blending grants.

b. Better and more sustainable transport infrastructures, notably:

- Increase of sustainable and smart mobility (including the Trans-Mediterranean Transport Network) with a focus on active mobility,
- Better regional transport infrastructures, as identified in the "Strategic Corridors and Urban Systems in Africa" (CUSA), the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), the Union for the Mediterranean Regional Transport Action Plan (UfM RTAP) and other sub-regional plans, including the links with the adjacent strategic corridors in Sub-Saharan Africa,
- Promotion of low-carbon emission solutions,
- Adoption in infrastructure projects of international transport standards, regulations to ensure optimum interoperability and maintenance measures, in line with those arising from the relevant component of the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) negotiations and the deployment of the Single African Transport Market (SAATM).

c. Creation and growth of MSMEs, and improvement of the employment situation and support to trade facilitation, notably:

- Foster the capacity of MSMEs to match eligibility criteria by financial service providers to pave the way for financial inclusion (financial sustainability, collaterals, regulatory pre-requisites),
- Support to MSMEs through the use of risk-sharing mechanisms by investing in private equity, venture capital funds, microfinance, guarantees, and other innovative financial instruments,
- Support to human capital development, TVET, higher education, and specialised infrastructure.

d. Improved social services and infrastructures, notably:

- Better access to healthcare and improved health services infrastructures in both urban and rural areas,
- Improved education and TVET facilities,

- Improved vocational training facilities.
- e. Sustainable, human-centric digital transformation, notably:
- Development of secure and sustainable digital infrastructures, available across territories,
  - Reduction of the digital divide and increased access to digital services for women, youth and rural communities
  - Increased opportunities for digital skills development in formal education and TVET, and funding for digital entrepreneurship,
  - Increased uptake of digital technologies by companies, in particular SMEs,
  - Increased availability of digital public services, including e-health, in particular for rural populations.
- f. Food security, notably:
- Reduced number of people in malnutrition,
  - Increased agricultural yields, output and income together with increased agriculture diversification,
  - Increased local food conservation (e.g. climate resilient storage facilities...), processing and value adding,
  - Number of new sustainable jobs and income-generating activities in rural and peri-urban areas,
  - Better access to financing mechanisms adapted to farmers, fishermen and agri-entrepreneurs, particularly for smallholders, cooperatives and agricultural MSMEs.

### **3.2. Indicative Activities**

This Action Document concerns the 2024 EU contribution to the NIP for the Southern Neighbourhood, amounting to EUR 200 500 000 and subject to a possible rectification in the course of the year. The contribution includes funds from the Southern Neighbourhood regional and bilateral programmes. The 2024 EU contribution for the Southern Neighbourhood includes the following:

- An allocation of EUR 80 000 000 from the NDICI to the NIP, in order to support investments in line with the NIP Strategic Orientations;
- An allocation of EUR 1 500 000 from the Southern Neighbourhood regional co-operation programme to the NIP, to support indicatively SME's/private sector development and/or investments in renewable energy/energy efficiency;
- An indicative allocation of EUR 44 000 000 from Morocco bilateral cooperation, for investments in sectors to be defined in the course of the year;
- An indicative allocation of EUR 10 000 000 from Tunisia bilateral cooperation, for investments in sectors to be defined in the course of the year;
- An indicative allocation of EUR 50 000 000 from Egypt bilateral cooperation, for investments in sectors to be defined in the course of the year;
- An indicative allocation of EUR 15 000 000 from Jordan bilateral cooperation, for investments in sectors to be defined in the course of the year.

Also, it is possible that, in the near future, additional contributions from the bilateral envelopes will be added to the above-mentioned total amount.

Considering the Union's indicative commitment to dedicate at least 40% of budget expenditure under the NDICI – Global Europe Regulation to climate objectives, and EU's objective to ensure that all financial flows are aligned with the Paris Agreement, a substantial contribution to EU's commitment in terms of international climate finance contribution will be sought through blending operations under the NIP.

Interventions financed by the NIP will be aligned as much as possible with partner countries' climate objectives, as for instance expressed in the Nationally Determined Contributions and/or Climate Adaptations Plans.

IFIs and partner countries will be encouraged to propose specific interventions that are fully supportive of the objectives of the Paris Agreement. This shall help reaching the paradigm shift needed for effective climate action. And EU's Taxonomy (Climate Delegated Act) shall provide relevant criteria for defining if and how much a specific intervention will be considered as contributing to the minimum 40% target.

The types of operations which can be financed under the NIP are the following:

- Direct investment grants;
- Interest rate subsidies;
- Guarantees;
- Technical assistance;
- Risk capital operations;
- Any other risk sharing mechanisms.

Risk capital operations, guarantees or any other risk sharing mechanisms should be structured in such a way as to ensure alignment of interest with entrusted entities.

The deployment of EFSD+ guarantees schemes at regional level will require dedicated technical assistance to accompany the guarantees' implementation. This Action shall provide the necessary funding for such technical assistance, subject to the favourable opinion of the EFSD+ Regional Operational Board.

### **3.3. Mainstreaming**

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

According to Article 25.5 of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation: "Appropriate environmental screening, including for climate change and biodiversity impacts, shall be undertaken at the level of actions, in accordance with the applicable legislative acts of the Union, [...], comprising, where applicable, an environmental impact assessment, including the impact on climate change, ecosystems and biodiversity, for environmentally sensitive actions, in particular for major new infrastructure".

#### **Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls**

The Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Action 2021-2025<sup>11</sup> aims at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment throughout all EU external action. Furthermore, in the sustainable development framework, gender equality is a specific goal and cross-cutting vector for achieving the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development (SDG No 5 "Gender equality").

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G.1. This implies that gender equality and empowerment of women and girls will be mainstreamed and integrated in the design of individual actions, whenever relevant, and will be included in the set of indicators accompanying each action.

#### **Disability**

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<sup>11</sup> EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III – An ambitious agenda for Gender Equality and women's empowerment in EU external action – JOIN(2020)17 final (25/11/2020)

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0. This implies that disabilities will be mainstreamed where relevant in the design of individual actions, but will not be included in the sets of indicators accompanying these actions.

### Other considerations

Human Rights, democracy, conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience and disaster risk reduction will be integrated in the design of individual actions, whenever relevant, and will be included in the set of indicators accompanying these actions.

### 3.4. Risks and Assumptions

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
1 <sup>12</sup>	External debt unsustainability as some countries in the Southern Neighbourhood are already close to the debt limit set by the IMF	Moderate to high	Moderate to high	Regular monitoring in line with IMF guidelines and recommendations

### External Assumptions

- A stable political and security climate at regional level in general and at country level in particular is needed to promote and secure investments.
- Partner countries are ready to increase the level of investments on their own resources as well as through loans.
- The pipelines of operations are of sufficient quality and volume and provide sufficient added value.
- Partner countries and other local beneficiaries are supportive to the projects prepared by the eligible Finance Institutions.

### 3.5. Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that – in line with section 4.3.1 – each Lead Financial Institution will be awarded a contract for an individual operation, based on its operational and financial capacity and reflecting the overall NIP Strategic orientations. Each individual action will be accompanied by a set of indicators adapted to the specificities of this action.

The strategic orientations and the implementation modalities of each action will be discussed with beneficiary countries in dedicated strategic meetings, under the ownership principle of the EU's development cooperation. Strategic discussions with Member States, beneficiary countries and relevant regional organisations will take place. Financial Institutions will participate to the discussions as observers.

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<sup>12</sup> Risk related to the external environment



### 3.6. Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

N/A as will be defined for each individual project.

## 4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

### 4.1. Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, financing agreements may be concluded with the partner countries.

### 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 180 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer in duly justified cases.

### 4.3. Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures<sup>13</sup>.

#### 4.3.1. Indirect Management with a pillar-assessed entity: Contribution to the Neighbourhood Investment Platform (NIP South)

This Contribution to the Neighbourhood Investment Platform (NIP South) (a blending facility within the meaning of Article 162 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509) may be implemented under indirect management with the entities, called Lead Finance Institutions identified in Appendix 1.

### 4.4. Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
Indirect management with pillar assessed entities: Contribution to the Neighbourhood Investment Platform (NIP South) cf. section 4.3.1	200 500 000
<b>Evaluation</b> – cf. section 5.2 <b>Audit</b> – cf. section 5.3	Will be covered by another Decision
<b>Strategic communication and Public diplomacy</b>	N.A.

<sup>13</sup> [EU Sanctions Map](#). Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

<b>Contingencies</b>	N.A.
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200 500 000</b>

#### 4.5. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The NIP operates under the governance of the NDICI blending framework. Under the NDICI instrument, blending operations shall be implemented in accordance with the principles laid down in Article 209(1) of the Financial Regulation, and whenever possible, under the lead of the EIB, or a bilateral European finance institution – as detailed in section 4.2.1 – and possibly pooled with other forms of financial support, both from Member States and third parties.

The NIP is characterised by open and transparent project selection and decision-making processes. The European Commission chairs the **NIP Board**, which draws members from the **Commission**, EU Member States and the **European External Action Service (EEAS)** as voting members, and **Implementing Partners, as observers**.

The **NIP Secretariat** acts as the entry point for grant requests and follows up the entire assessment and decision-making process, involving different entities as needed. Implementing Partners interested in financing a NIP blending operation, individually or as a consortium, identify a project based on the partner country's priorities and in dialogue with the **EU Delegation** and local partners in that country.

Eligible finance institutions then submit project concepts into a pipeline to the Regional Coordinators and NIP Secretariat which are regularly reviewed. Only projects that have been identified as priorities and are part of the pipeline can be proposed for funding. For this purpose a lead finance institution is designated to submit the proposal using a standardised **Project Application Form** and presents the project to the **Technical Assessment Meeting (TAM)**, a group chaired by the Commission and including all eligible finance institutions. Projects are assessed for their relevance and contribution to EU Neighbourhood policy objectives, to Action Plans agreed between the EU and the partner country, and to NIP strategic priorities and eligibility criteria.

The group also considers justifications for the NIP contribution request, how it adds value to the project per se. Lead finance institutions then present the mature requests for contribution to the NIP Board, which issues an opinion as to which projects will benefit from NIP funding.

Beneficiaries participate indirectly, via the project definition process in their exchange with the implementing partners in country and in cooperation with EU Delegations. Beneficiary countries are not invited to participate in the Board meetings.

The operational governance of the NIP is organised in a two-level structure:

- Opinions on projects are formulated by the NIP Board, held whenever possible back to back with the NDICI committee. The Secretariat of the Board is responsible for providing an annual indicative timetable for those meetings;
- Such opinions will be prepared in dedicated Technical Assistance Meetings, chaired by the European Commission. Such meetings are held on regular basis depending on the needs, and in any case before each meeting of the NIP Board to prepare its deliberations on project proposals.

The NIP Board is one of the Regional Operational Boards of the EFSD+, within the meaning of Article 34 of the NDICI – GE Regulation. It is chaired by the Commission and is composed of representatives of the Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU Member States as voting members and

International and European Finance Institutions as observers. In principle, the Operational Board aims to deliver opinions on project proposals by consensus. If no consensus can be found, the Operational Board will vote. EUFIs will be present mainly for the purposes of presenting their proposals and responding to any request for clarifications on proposals submitted but not present during the formal formulation of opinions by the Operational Board. The part of the meeting where opinions on Union contribution requests are expressed will be restricted only to voting members. The conclusions including their justifications will be subsequently communicated to the EUFI in writing.

The Operational Board will also be responsible for:

- Providing guidance to participating institutions on appropriate future financing proposals (based on the NIP Strategic Orientations), monitor and review the pipeline of projects, based on the results of the discussions at the technical level;
- Examining project related results (including the NIP annual report) and monitor the portfolio of approved projects;
- Promoting exchanges of best practices;
- Drawing upon the specific expertise of the finance institutions as appropriate and respect the appropriate division of labour;
- Examining the involvement of non-European FIs, in particular regional banks, to act as lead FIs, following a targeted approach on the basis of the specific added-value brought in.

The functioning of the NIP Board is regulated by the Rules of Procedure, adopted by the Board itself on 27 November 2015, amended by the NIP Board meeting of 13 December 2018 and superseded by the Rules of Procedure for EFSD+ Regional Operational Boards, adopted at these Boards' joint meeting on 6 April 2022. 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.

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

## **5. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT**

### **5.1. Monitoring and Reporting**

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its Outputs and contribution to the achievement of its Outcomes, and if possible at the time of reporting, contribution to the achievement of its Impacts, as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

Arrangements for monitoring and reporting, including roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring: At the level of individual operations, data collection, analysis and monitoring will be carried out under the responsibility of the Lead Financial Institution, and will be organised according to the

requirements of each project. These elements will be communicated to the Commission through the release of annual project reports.

## **5.2. Evaluation**

Having regard to the importance and 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).

In 2021, an evaluation was launched of the implementation of blending in the EU Neighbourhood between 2015 and 2021. Results were made available in January 2024 and will be considered for the preparation of subsequent NIP programmes and projects.

At the level of individual operations, evaluation and audit tasks will be carried out under the responsibility of the Lead Financial Institution and will be organised according to the requirements of each project. In addition, the Commission reserves the right to undertake external evaluations and audits in accordance with international standards, and in that case it may be financed by other financial sources.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination<sup>14</sup>. 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.

## **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 the 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.

Communication and visibility measures may be funded from the amounts allocated to the action. 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

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<sup>14</sup> See best [practice of evaluation dissemination](#)

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 concerned EU Delegation/Office fully informed of the planning and implementation of specific visibility and communication activities before work starts. 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: INDICATIVE LIST OF LEAD FINANCE INSTITUTIONS**

The following European Lead Finance Institutions are recognised as eligible, provided that they have fulfilled relevant conditions under the pillar assessment process and show full policy alignment with EU's objectives:

- European Investment Bank (EIB)
- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
- Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO)
- Agence Française de Développement (AFD)
- Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)
- Österreichische Entwicklungsbank AG (OeEB)
- Società Italiana per le Imprese all'Esteri (SIMEST)
- Sociedade para o Financiamento do Desenvolvimento (SOFID)
- La Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID)
- Nederlandse Financierings-Maatschappij voor Ontwikkelingslanden (FMO)
- Cassa di Risparmio di Padova e Rovigo (CRP)
- Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego (BGK)
- Agenzia Italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (AIS).

Proposals from other European Lead Finance Institutions that have fulfilled relevant conditions under the pillar assessment process shall also be welcomed, in the spirit of Article 8(7) of the NDICI – Global Europe Regulation.

In addition, the following International Lead Finance Institutions are recognised as eligible provided that they have fulfilled relevant conditions under the pillar assessment process. Their involvement as lead implementing partners is foreseen subject to the provisions of Article 27(7) of the NDICI – Global Europe Regulation:

- International Finance Corporation (IFC)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- African Development Bank (AfDB).

## Appendix 2: 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 Contracts	Around 10 contracts are foreseen
<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	