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ANNEX 12

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multiannual action plan for the thematic programme on Global Challenges (People) for 2022-2024

Action Document for Universal Social Protection 2030 (USP 2030)

ANNUAL PLAN

This document constitutes the multiannual work programme within the meaning of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, within the meaning of Article 23 of the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act	Universal Social Protection 2030 (USP 2030) OPSYS number: ACT-61053 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)
2. Team Europe Initiative	No
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The Action shall be carried out globally
4. Programming document	NDICI Global Challenges Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP 2021-2027)
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results	Within the framework of the MIP for Global Challenges, the priority area on People focuses on global level action to address gaps and challenges in relation to health, education, gender equality, social protection, children, youth, culture and migration. This Action will contribute to Specific objective 6 (Social protection, inequality and inclusion) of the People priority of the Global Challenges MIP.
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Priority area 6 – INEQUALITIES and INCLUSION
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG: SDG 1 SDG 1.3 (Social Protection and Poverty) Other significant SDGs: 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17

8 a) DAC code(s)	16010 – Social/Welfare Services			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	International Organization and/or EU Member State Agency			
9. Targets	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
10. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective @	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	11. Internal markers and Tags	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective
Digitalisation @		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 checked="" 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"/>
	digital connectivity energy transport health education and research	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Migration @ (methodology for tagging under development)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities @ (methodology for marker and tagging under development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
12. Amounts concerned	Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020240 – Global Challenges People Total estimated cost: EUR 18 million Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 18 million. The contribution is for an amount of EUR 18 million from the general budget of the European Union for 2024, subject to the availability of appropriations for the respective financial years following the adoption of the relevant annual budget, or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
13. Type of financing	Indirect management with an International Organisation and/or EU MS agency			

1.2 Summary of the Action

Universal Social Protection 2030 (USP2030), as called for by the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), aligned with digital transformation, is fundamental to achieving the Agenda for Sustainable Development in all its dimensions.

This Action will contribute to the establishment of globally recognised digital standards for social protection systems, to increase the efficiency, effectiveness and coverage of national social protection systems and global development cooperation to significantly contribute to the attainment of USP2030, (SDGs 1.3 and 10.4), digital transformation (SDG 9) and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the people living in poverty and in vulnerable situations.

The Action will support the development and management of a repository of digital standards and support partner countries adopt and integrate the standards, cohesively and consistently advanced at partner country, regional and global levels. This intervention is aligned with the EU's recognition, as articulated in the EU 'Global Challenges' thematic programme that 'highly specialised knowledge and technical assistance will be required to deliver on the international dimension of EU priorities' and to 'project the EU's interests and values in support of universal global

agendas and initiatives, multilateralism and the rules-based global order, and position the EU as a global leader spearheading collaborative and transformative changes that will help us to ‘build back better’.

The action will contribute to three strategic objectives. 1) Support the development and sharing of knowledge and best practice in the implementation of global digital social protection standards. 2) Support the coordination and governance of global efforts to harmonise globally recognised digital standards for social protection. 3) Support partner countries to use international social protection digital standards and promote interoperability of digital social protection systems.

The expected outcome targets include, among others, that partner countries national social protection systems are strengthened by their application of globally recognised digital standards using open-standards-based software, and interoperability between national digital systems and social protection ecosystems is significantly strengthened and expanded. A global repository of globally interoperable standards, including building blocks, is effectively managed and best practice and knowledge sharing of lessons learned is developed and widely disseminated. The support to the DCI is increased and it informs the ongoing development of standardisation and interoperability, with the aim to make information solutions products readily accessible to partner countries and their social protection partners, and relevant regional and global organisations.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

The Action constitutes an initiative under the Global Gateway¹ by helping ‘partner countries, including through building international partnerships, address the digital divide and further integrate into the global digital ecosystem.’ It will also contribute to the Gender Action Plan III 2021-2025², and the Joint Communication on the Global EU Response to COVID-19³, and its social protection standards and approaches as reflected in the Communication on Social Protection 2012, and the Communication⁴ on decent work worldwide for a global just transition and a sustainable recovery.

It will promote a human-centric and human rights based model of digital development and alignment or convergence with EU regulatory norms and standards on issues such as data protection, privacy and data flows, cybersecurity and trust, and supporting the development of eGovernment as set out in the EU Communication, ‘2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade.’^[3] It will complement and strengthen country, multi-country and regional actions to further support truly global action and initiatives, promoting the EU’s priorities and values by strengthening the EU contribution to address the global challenge of the standardisation of digital social protection. It will further contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals for which social protection is recognized as an important accelerator and catalyst.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/joint_communication_global_gateway.pdf

For more information on the Global Gateway strategy priorities see https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway_en
https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway_en

² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_2184

³ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal_content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020JC0011

⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=25260&langId=en>

Universal Social Protection 2030 (USP2030), as called for by the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), aligned with digital transformation, is fundamental to achieving the Agenda for Sustainable Development in all its dimensions:

- It has impact on the **social dimension** by reducing poverty and inequality, achieving health outcomes (SDG 3) and improving food security and nutrition (SDG 2) and overall well-being, e.g., contributing to improving access to water and sanitation (SDG 6). Through well-coordinated fiscal, wage and social protection policies, greater equality (SDG 10), including gender equality (SDG 5) can be achieved.
- It contributes to **inclusive, sustainable growth** and thus the economic dimension of the Agenda by improving employability through skills development (SDG 4), facilitating the transition from the informal to the formal economy, by encouraging risk-taking and entrepreneurship (SDG 9), by smoothing consumption and aggregate demand and by strengthening decent work (SDG 8).
- It enhances equity by ensuring no one is left behind and that social protection programmes reach those in need and effectively address inequalities (SDG 5/10).
- It facilitates a just transition to more environmentally sustainable consumption and production patterns, thus touching on the **environmental dimension** (SDGs 12, 13, 14 and 15).
- It promotes **peaceful and inclusive societies**, through addressing vulnerabilities, economic opportunities and the development of effective, accountable, and transparent institutions (SDG 16).

The essential need for the attainment of USP2030 (SDGs 1.3 and 10.4) was underscored globally as multilateral institutions and partner countries rapidly sought to strengthen and expand national social protection systems to meet gaps in coverage. The COVID 19 outbreak highlighted both the importance and crucial gaps in social protection systems.

Expanding coverage and improving the design and delivery of social protection interventions can protect people, particularly women and those in vulnerable situations, during challenging times. Moreover, digital systems that pay explicit attention to reducing and removing barriers based on gender or disability, among others, can offer relevant opportunities to promote inclusion, as well as enable a more tailored response of social protection systems to the needs of specific groups.

Efforts to date have been significantly impeded by the patchwork of digital social protection standards and platforms which are not able to communicate across social protection systems, and with other relevant social and economic development systems. In recognition of this global challenge, the global and multilateral forum USP2030⁵ established the global ‘Digital Convergence Initiative’ (DCI) to develop globally recognised standards for digital social protection systems to improve at national, regional and global levels social protection outcomes and public expenditure, with the overall objective of contributing to the achievement of USP2030 and the SDGs (notably SDGs 1.3.1 and 10.4).

The Action will support the programme of work of the DCI. The overall objective of the Action will be to contribute to the achievement of USP2030 through the standardisation and interoperability of social protection digital systems at partner country, regional and global levels.

Further, the UNSG launched at the margins of the UNGA 2021 an ‘Accelerator’ for Jobs and Social Protection. The ILO, mandated with its design, is working on the details of the Accelerator.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Short problem analysis

Over the last years, partner countries have invested substantially in building national social protection systems, and at global level, significant resources were dedicated to supporting partner countries develop social protection legislation and policies and to strengthen governance, capacity, coordination, and financing. The recent Covid-19

⁵ Members include EU, government development agencies – including of EU MS, regional governmental organisations, UN, international development banks, CSOs, research institutes et al.

pandemic has shown the importance of functioning social protection systems in supporting individuals and households to cope with the crisis. Similarly, USP will be key to ensuring an inclusive and sustainable recovery. Digital solutions to improve the provision of services through supporting essential social protection information management, registries and delivery becoming increasingly important; yet they are widely ad hoc and disjointed due to the absence of a common digital standards. Consequently, the effectiveness of social protection systems is weakened as poor digital interoperability fragments social protection systems and hinders adequate and timely information sharing across social protection programmes and with other relevant national social policy, budget, and finance systems. This lack of harmonisation and interoperability negatively impacts on social protection outcomes such as reducing multi-dimensional poverty; it also exacerbates inequalities and leads to wasted public expenditure.

In recognition of the global challenge, the Global Partnership for USP2030⁶ launched in September 2021 the Global Digital Convergence Initiative (DCI).⁷ The DCI is a working group including members and non-members of the USP2030 Partnership which develops globally recognised standards for digital social protection information systems which allow for interoperability with other related social information systems, such as the payment, identifications, civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) and management information systems of other social protection programmes.

The challenge arising is that, while globally recognised standards are being developed, no body or organisation is yet in charge to store, manage the global repository of standards, or promote the implementation of the digital standards, or share best practice and lessons learned. Furthermore, as the standards are rolled-out in partner countries, it is likely that the standards will evolve over time. The DCI's capacity to govern the growing repository of global standards and to develop and share knowledge/lessons learned between partner countries and relevant regional and international partners needs to be strengthened.

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

At global level, the Action will engage **key international development partners** with proven expertise in the interface of social protection and digital solutions using a gender sensitive and human rights based approach to improve: interoperability and harmonisation of digital standards; social policy linkages; global coordination; development and sharing of knowledge and emerging best practice, and the promotion of South-South and Triangular Cooperation; the development of global feedback mechanisms from countries to inform standards setting, and common approaches. Through the provision of support to partner countries to adopt and integrate digital social protection standards, the Action will strengthen effective development cooperation, including strengthening coordination, and the effective use of resources.

The Action will draw from the **knowledge and expertise of the USP2030 partners**, and in particular the DCI Steering Group, the ILO, the World Bank, EU Member States', and other development partners.

At regional level, the Action will support regional organisations contribute towards achieving USP2030 through the promotion of the exchange lessons learned and knowledge of rights-based good practices on key issues related to digital interoperability (between e.g. systems for payment, identification, civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS), information management, and public health), leverage regional resources to support capacity strengthening of national and local level professionals, and tackle common policy challenges such as the inclusion of cross-border migrants.

At country level, in countries preferably but not limited to those benefiting from EU social protection programmes and/or budget support, the Action will target ministries and public agencies responsible for

⁶ USP2030's mission is to achieve SDG 1.3: "Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable." See <https://usp2030.org/>

⁷ See <https://sp-convergence.org/>

social protection institutions and programmes, social policies (health, labour, social welfare, women, etc.), finance, administration and planning. It will also target and benefit civil society, workers' and employers' organisations. The Action will promote and enhance, through its support to the generation of interoperable digital standards, the alignment and coordination of gender sensitive cross-sector policy development, implementation and budget planning.

Individuals and households in partner countries will ultimately benefit from strengthened social protection systems. The Action will reinforce the implementation of the right to social protection for all, with special attention to women and vulnerable persons, in particular children, persons with disabilities, workers in the informal economy and migrants, and the bottom 40 per cent of real per capita income distribution in respective partner countries; this focus will contribute to the reduction of inequalities. The Action will also serve to strengthen the social contract between the state and its citizens.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The **Overall Objective (Impact)** of this Action is to contribute to the achievement of USP2030 through the standardisation and the interoperability of inclusive social protection digital systems at partner country, regional and global levels.

The Specific Objectives (Outcomes) of this action are:

SO1. To support the development and sharing of knowledge and best practice in the implementation of global digital standards for social protection and harness its potential to reduce inequalities, including gender inequalities.

SO2. To support the coordination and governance of global efforts to harmonise globally recognised digital standards for social protection.

SO3. To support partner countries, adopt and implement international social protection digital standards and promote the interoperability of digital social protection systems.

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

Contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1):

1.1 A knowledge base on the application at country and regional levels of globally recognised inclusive digital standards for social protection has been created and updated to provide knowledge to country, regional and global partners to advance interoperability of relevant digital solutions for social protection.

1.2 Best practice and lessons learned, and models and building blocks are developed, and have been made freely and readily accessible to partner countries, and to relevant regional and global organisations.

Contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2):

2.1 Developed inclusive social protection digital standards, and enabled partners to use open-source software solutions.

2.2 A global repository of interoperable digital standards, including building blocks, has been effectively maintained and is governed by the USP 2030 Digital Convergence Initiative.

Contributing to Outcome 3 (or Specific Objective 3):

3.1 Globally recognised digital standards have been progressively integrated in partner countries social protection systems and are recognised by regional and global partners.

3.2 Standards and open-standards-based software in partner countries have strengthened social protection systems and addressed inconsistencies in the use of language, data formats, and information records, including civil registration systems.

3.3 The USP2030 DCI structure has provided timely and adequate technical support to partner countries, regional organisations and global partners to effectively resolve, or followed-up as appropriate, inconsistencies in the use of language, data formats and definitions for social protection across the competent public agencies at country, regional and global levels.

3.4 Partner countries who have received technical assistance through this Action have been sensitised by the USP2030 DCI structure to ensure that the use of digital social protection solutions do not discriminate against those who are unable to use basic digital tools and protects beneficiaries right to privacy and data protection.⁸

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities relating to Output 1.1 (The knowledge base on interoperability founded on international social protection standards is expanded).

1.1.1 Support the development of country case studies and lessons learned on multiple subjects, including on the effect of digital social protection on targeting the reduction of income and gender inequality.

1.1.2 Support multi-stakeholder dialogue in improving targeting, delivery and monitoring processes, including to assess the distributional impact of social protection processes.

1.1.3 Promote learning and exchange of experiences among partner countries and facilitate cooperation in the application of standards, including through South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

Activities relating to Output 1.2. (Best practice and lessons learned knowledge is developed and readily accessible to partner countries, and to relevant regional and global organisations).

1.2.1 Support the USP2030 DCI structure to develop a communications and knowledge management plan to effectively communicate best practices and learning materials at country, regional and global levels.

1.2.2 Establish monitoring and reporting mechanisms to gauge progress on the development and sharing of knowledge.

Activities related to Output 2.1 (Developed inclusive social protection digital standards, and enabled partners to use open-source software solutions).

2.1.2 Support the adaptation of open-source software solutions to the defined standards.

2.1.3 Explore partnerships with globally recognized standard setting bodies.

2.1.4 Support the establishment of a Secretariat to coordinate between the technical sub-group and the stakeholders of the USP2030 DCI.

Activities related to Output 2.2 (A global repository of global interoperable digital standards, including building blocks, is effectively maintained and governed by the USP2030 Digital Convergence Initiative structure).

2.2.1 Support the evolution of the USP2030 DCI into a more permanent structure.

⁸ United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Philip Alston. Note transmitted to UNGA 74th Session on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights (11 October 2019) UN doc A/74/493. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N19/312/13/PDF/N1931213.pdf?OpenElement>

2.2.2 Support USP2030 develop a sustainable governance and financing architecture for the management and administration of the USP2030 DCI structure and the repository of globally recognised digital social protection standards.

2.2.3 Draw-on expertise of a globally recognised standardisation body to inform best practice for the structure and management of a global repository of digital social protection standards.

2.2.4 Support the development of the DCI into a more permanent repository for the developed standards under USP2030.

Activities related to Output 3.1 (Globally recognised digital standards are progressively integrated in partner countries social protection systems).

3.1.1 Respond to a limited number of partner country requests to review the digital architecture for social protection and develop a future approach compliant with the developed standards.

3.1.2 Support selected partner countries in implementing the developed approach, drawing on existing standard compliant digital systems.

3.1.3 Engage in policy dialogue and advocacy with governments, development agencies and vendors to enhance cooperation for interoperability.

Activities related to Output 3.2 (Standards and open-standards-based software in partner countries have strengthened social protection systems and address inconsistencies in the use of language, data formats, and fill in information, including civil registration systems).

3.2.1 Strengthen partners' capacities at national and subnational level in collaboration with USP2030 structure to monitor and report the roll-out and implementation of standardised and interoperable digital social protection systems.

3.2.2 Support the set-up of regular M&E mechanisms that help to ensure transparent and traceable processes to analyse the transformation of digital social protection systems in partner countries and provide corrective action.

3.2.3 Identify applicable and relevant lessons learned and best practice from highly successful convergence initiatives in public finance (PEFA) or health, such as IHL and HL7 that include public and private partners as equal stakeholders.

Activities related to Output 3.3 (The USP2030 DCI structure provides timely and adequate technical support to partner countries, regional organisations and global partners to effectively resolve, or follow-up as appropriate, inconsistencies in the use of language, data formats and definitions for social protection across the competent public agencies at country, regional and global level).

3.3.1 The USP2030 DCI establishes processes and mechanisms to provide timely and adequate technical support to partner requests to effectively resolve, or follow-up as the USP2030 considers appropriate, inconsistencies in the use of language, data formats and definitions for social protection across the competent public agencies at country, regional and global level.

3.3.2 Establish independent and transparent monitoring, reporting and evaluation on the effectiveness and responsiveness of the USP2030 DCI structure's technical advice and support to partner countries, regional organisations and global partners.

3.3.3 Support the USP2030 DCI structure develop and establish sustainable resourcing and governance from USP2030 partners.

Activities related to Output 3.4 (Country partners are sensitised to ensure that the use of digital social protection solutions do not discriminate against those who are unable to use basic digital tools at all, or effectively and efficiently due to a lack of digital literacy and/or a wide range of barriers and protects their right to privacy and data protection).

3.4.1 Provide technical and capacity development through implementing partners and the USP2030 DCI structure to all partner countries receiving technical assistance from the Action on: the establishment of genuine, non-digital registry, grievance and delivery options for beneficiaries; promote that digital social protection programmes are

accompanied by programmes designed to promote and teach the digital skills needed and to ensure reasonable access to the necessary equipment, as well as effective online access.

3.4.2 Ensure that, in order to reduce the harm caused by incorrect assumptions and mistaken design choices, digital standards are co-designed by their intended users, including women, the elderly, people living with disabilities, people from minority communities, among other groups and evaluated in a participatory manner.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

Outcomes of the SEA screening NA.

Outcomes of the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) screening NA.

Outcome of the CRA (Climate Risk Assessment) screening NA.

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per the OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that the Action will pay particular attention to the transformative gender role of social protection to contribute to fundamental and sustainable shifts in underlying social norms and behaviours. In this respect the Action recognises and advances girls' and women's rights by strengthening social protection systems so that they can contribute to the reduction of inequalities by mitigating the specific risks and vulnerabilities across women's life cycle, including unpaid care work; and in recognition that women are disproportionately reliant on public services and social protection while at the same time often facing greater barriers to access them.^[1] These barriers result for example from the discrimination against women in the labour market, which means they are over-represented in the informal economy and more often trapped in precarious jobs with low remuneration and little social protection coverage. This highlights the need to develop gender-sensitive targeting in the delivery of digital social protection solutions. Partner countries directly benefiting from the Action will disaggregate by gender and age of recipients in the data on end users benefiting from the implementation of the Action. The action will also promote women and girls' participation in the design and evaluation of digital standards.

By supporting social protection systems, the action contributes to the implementation of the Gender Action Plan III by increasing access for women, in all their diversity, to coverage by non-discriminatory and inclusive social protection systems.

Human Rights

The Action will promote that partner countries, regional and global organisations integrate human rights-based approach in the development of digital social protection standards and interoperability to ensure that digital social protection solutions do not discriminate against those who are unable to use basic digital tools at all, or effectively and efficiently due to a lack of digital literacy and/or a wide range of barriers and protects their right to privacy and data protection without compromising their right to social protection.

The action will implement the human rights based approach working principles, including by encouraging the participation of rights-holders in the design of digital social protection systems' and promoting their transparency.

Disability

As per the OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as [D1]. This implies that this Action supports the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities, but they are not the main target group of this programme. Persons with disabilities will especially benefit from inclusive social protection digital standards of which accessibility is an important aspect. Partner countries directly benefiting from the Action will disaggregate persons with disability data in the data on end users benefiting from the implementation of the Action.

Democracy

NA.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

Through strengthening social protection systems and contributing towards USP, the Action will support social cohesion, strengthen the social contract between the State and its' citizens, and build the resilience of individuals, communities, partner countries and regions by tackling grievances and reducing vulnerability of marginalised groups.

Disaster Risk Reduction

NA.

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
Operational	Low support from digital technology vendors in providing open-based systems.	Medium	Medium	<p>Encourage USP2030 DCI to continue engagement communication and outreach to digital vendors.</p> <p>Where needed and appropriate encourage agencies/organisations to commit to integrate into their work programmes, advocacy and technical resources to support for global roll-out and adoption of digital social protection standards.</p> <p>Leverage synergies at country with EU frameworks such as the Global Gateway and the Digital for Development Hub to promote digital transformation involving EU vendors.</p>
Political	A significant proportion of partner countries do not agree to support the development and adoption of digital social protection standards.	Low	Medium	<p>Evidence-based advocacy, policy dialogue and communication with partner governments and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Ensure USP2030 is seen as politically neutral and associating partner countries in the design phase.</p>
Political	Lack of political will by partner countries to invest in inclusive digital social protection systems.	Low	Medium	<p>Mobilise and leverage EU delegation (EUD), EU MS and other relevant partners policy and political dialogues with relevant partner country governmental and civil society actors to conduct evidence-based advocacy.</p> <p>Support early and sustained clear communication and visibility (translated as needed) of the DCI to partner countries and</p>

				involve them in, relevant regional and global fora. Demonstrate the business case and value added to partners of standardisation.
Contextual	Country, regional and global shocks and crises interrupt the adoption of standards at national level.	Medium	Medium	EU and partners encourage partner countries through policy dialogues to develop contingency plans to support crisis preparedness and ensure the sustainability of the Action.
Operational	Inadequate national capacity for the monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the integration and adoption of digital standards and interoperability and building blocks.	Medium	Medium	Facilitate and advocate that relevant partners, including CSOs and other partners, assess partner countries' capacity to monitor and evaluate, take action to strengthen monitoring, reporting (including for grievances) and evaluation of systems.
Operational	Demand for the technical assistance from partner countries limited.	Medium	Medium	<p>A pro-active strategy will be adopted at the beginning of the Action to ensure that EUDs, and partner countries and development partners are sufficiently aware of the available services. This includes a communication strategy coupled with efforts to network with key stakeholders.</p> <p>Regional meetings and events will be used to advertise these services.</p> <p>The Action's design includes a monitoring mechanism to activate corrective measures to stimulate demand if needed.</p>

Lessons Learnt:

The Action builds upon experience and knowledge gained through the ongoing and previous EU programmes on social protection, including the Global Action "Improving synergies between Social protection and Public Finance Management"- SP&PFM (DCI-HUM/2018/408-767). The SP&PFM programme supports 24 countries in the design, implementation and monitoring of inclusive and shock-responsive national social protection systems while ensuring financial sustainability and macroeconomic stability.

Previously, the EU Social Protection System (SPS) initiative (DCI-HUM/2013/026-212) supported national, regional and international institutions in their efforts to develop inclusive and sustainable social protection systems in terms of assessments, research and capacity development. The initiative supported 11 partner countries and provided global research. It successfully promoted e.g. South-South Cooperation and substantially contributed to the African Union's flagship programmes on social protection to informal and rural workers.

Lessons learned from INTPA social protection actions and thematic programmes include:

- **Joint ownership and funding, and equal partnership.** Global commitment to the development of standardisation needs to be accompanied by joint ownership from the beginning, and joint funding based on equal partnership as well as structural pragmatic implementation processes. Consequently, this Action will support implementation processes of the USP2030 DCI sub-structure and partner country adaption and adoption of digital social protection standards.
- **Broad participation and stakeholder engagement.** The need to engage early with all key stakeholders, including but not limited to civil society stakeholders, private sector, academia, funding and social policy making organisations and other relevant development partners from the earliest stages of the planning, design and development of social protection systems strengthening to ensure that the social protection systems and processes ‘do no harm’, are gender-sensitive, rights-based and meet the priority needs of women and persons in vulnerable situations, including migrants, persons with disabilities and those in hard-to-reach places.
- **Alignment with national priorities, needs and capabilities.** Reflecting the principles of development effectiveness support to partner countries must be aligned with national social protection priorities, needs and capabilities. Consequently, the time scale and resources needed to support partner countries to strengthen social protection systems can vary significantly, and this needs to be reflected in the Action’s project documents.
- **Suitable governance and management processes of initiatives.** Special attention is required on governance structures and management processes for overseeing initiatives. It is often necessary that the overall governance of an initiative, such as the DCI, is conducted by representation of all partners. While the governance of a specific technical design initiative to achieve technical social protection objectives is governed by those partners with a specific interest and expertise in the topic. Consequently, a second-tier sub-structure of the DCI is required. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the work of the technical body, relies on appropriate management support and special support for the inclusion of partner countries, particularly those of Least Developed Countries.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this Action is that it will contribute to the establishment of globally recognised digital standards for social protection systems, which will increase the efficiency, effectiveness and coverage of national social protection systems and global development cooperation to significantly contribute to the attainment of USP2030, (SDGs 1.3 and 10.4), digital transformation (SDG 9) and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of people living in poverty and in vulnerable situations.

The Action will strengthen the established USP2030 DCI structure with two key purposes.

The first purpose is that the USP2030 DCI structure has the capacity to govern and manage the emergent and growing repository of global digital social protection standards. The repository is needed so that all partner countries and regions and relevant international and multilateral actors can access these standards. Access to the standards will support these standards being harmoniously applied to strengthen and build partner country digital social protection systems, with the result that digital social protection systems are interoperable. The application of interoperable standards by partners further supports effective development cooperation and the efficient and effective use of limited resources.

The second purpose of strengthening the DCI structure is to enable it to responsively support partner countries requests for the standards. The DCI will provide, facilitate and deploy as appropriate technical advice and guidance to partner countries who request assistance for the integration of digital standards in their respective national social protection digital systems. The DCI structure will promote digital standards, share lessons learned and best practice, including between partners countries, including South-South and Triangular Cooperation. The impact will be that inclusive digital social protection standards will be cohesively and consistently advanced at partner country, regional and global levels.

This intervention is aligned with the EU's recognition, as articulated in the EU 'Global Challenges' thematic programme that 'highly specialised knowledge and technical assistance will be required to deliver on the international dimension of EU priorities' and to 'project the EU's interests and values in support of universal global agendas and initiatives, multilateralism and the rules-based global order, and position the EU as a global leader spearheading collaborative and transformative changes that will help us to 'build back better'⁹.

The DCI structure will support multilateralism and contribute to three strategic objectives. 1) Support the development and sharing of knowledge and best practice in the implementation of global inclusive digital social protection standards. 2) Support the coordination and governance of global efforts to harmonise globally recognised digital standards for social protection. 3) Support partner countries to use international social protection digital standards and promote interoperability of digital social protection systems.

The longer-term aim is that the adoption of global inclusive digital social protection standards will promote and advance the implementation of sustainable solutions to strengthen national social protection systems using a human rights-based approach and supporting the delivery of the SDGs and achieve significant impact on poverty eradication, reduction of inequalities and green economies.

⁹ Global Challenges, pp. 24, 25.

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

This indicative logframe constitutes the basis for the monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the intervention.

On the basis of this logframe matrix, a more detailed logframe (or several) may be developed at contracting stage. In case baselines and targets are not available for the action, they should be informed for each indicator at signature of the contract(s) linked to this AD, or in the first progress report at the latest. New columns may be added to set intermediary targets (milestones) for the Output and Outcome indicators whenever it is relevant.

- At inception, the first progress report should include the complete logframe (e.g. including baselines/targets).
- Progress reports should provide an updated logframe with current values for each indicator.
- The final report should enclose the logframe with baseline and final values for each indicator.

The indicative logical framework matrix may evolve during the lifetime of the action depending on the different implementation modalities of this action.

The activities, the expected Outputs and related indicators, targets and baselines included in the logframe matrix may be updated during the implementation of the action, no amendment being required to the Financing Decision.

PROJECT MODALITY (3 levels of results / indicators / Source of Data / Assumptions - no activities)

Results	Results chain (a): Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (a): (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	To contribute to the achievement of USP through the standardisation and interoperability of inclusive social protection digital systems at partner country, regional and global levels.	<p>IMP.1 Digital standards for interoperability have been developed and agreed by the USP2030, and have been recognised as global standards at partner country, regional and global levels by USP2030 partners.</p> <p>IMP.2 Demonstrated strengthening of capacities of partner countries at national and sub-national levels to plan, deliver monitor and report on inclusive social protection programmes.</p> <p>IMP.3 A significant number of countries have adopted and or integrated the DCI standards in their national social protection systems.</p> <p>IMP.4. Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, new-borns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable (SDG 1.3.1/(GAP III indicator).</p>	<p>IMP.1 Ongoing dialogue on management information and payment layer.</p> <p>IMP.2 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, new-borns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable.</p> <p>IMP.3 To be informed in the inception phase/first year of operation. No digital standards agreed (April 2022).</p>	<p>IMP.1: Sets of standards are developed and widely agreed by the DCI.</p> <p>IMP.2: To be drawn from partners' strategies. Implementation of adopted standards in the selected partner countries of the Action by 2028.</p>	<p>USP2030 reports and membership base.</p> <p>SDGs Voluntary National Reviews.</p> <p>DCI reports.</p> <p>To be agreed by implementing partners.</p>	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 1	1 Has supported the development and sharing of knowledge and best practice in the implementation of global digital social protection standards and harness its potential to	1.1 The number and frequency of knowledge sharing communications and publications has increased and	1.1 To be informed in the inception phase/first year of operation. No	1.1 To be informed in the inception phase/first year of operation.	1.1 USP2030 DCI structure reports.	Consensus on standards for digital convergence has been

	reduce inequalities, including gender inequalities	<p>events were held with the support of this Action.</p> <p>1.2 The number of relevant knowledge sharing and best practice materials developed.</p> <p>1.3 Selected partner countries supported by this Action have been informed and applied the knowledge on global digital standards in social protection policies.</p>	<p>communication or publications developed.</p> <p>1.2 No knowledge materials developed.</p> <p>1.3 No list of countries identified.</p>	<p>Knowledge on civil registration and payments developed and shared by 2026.</p> <p>1.2 Demand for knowledge attended by implementing agencies.</p> <p>1.3 Capacity development activities attended the demand of all selected countries.</p>	<p>1.2 USP 2030 DCI list of knowledge activities and resource materials.</p> <p>1.3 USP2030 sub-structure country progress reports.</p>	reached in least civil registration and payments tiers.
Outcome 2	2 Has supported the coordination and governance of global efforts to harmonise globally recognised digital standards for social protection.	<p>2.1 A repository of global standards has been established.</p> <p>2.2 The USP2030 DCI structure continues to function.</p> <p>2.3 Formal cooperation mechanisms in place for coordinated standardisation efforts.</p>	<p>2.1 To be informed in the inception phase/first year of operation.</p> <p>No repository Exists.</p> <p>2.2 The USP2030 DCI technical structure is insufficiently resourced to meet future operational needs.</p> <p>2.3 DCI working groups and technical debates at an ad hoc basis (1 country case</p>	<p>2.1. To be informed in the inception phase/first year of operation.</p> <p>2.2 Standards for civil registration and payments in place by 2025; consensus on the building blocks for digital social protection by 2028.</p> <p>2.3 Monthly technical debates and global community of practice under DCI is active in the development of standards.</p>	<p>2.1 The repository of global standards is governed and managed by the DCI -structure.</p> <p>2.2 Support of DCI by USP2030 members and stakeholders.</p> <p>2.3 DCI work plan and activity report; reporting implementing agencies.</p>	Partnerships and collaborations under DCI mobilize action and promote consensus and knowledge for standardisation of digital social protection.

			presented; 1 interoperable open-source debate; April 2022).			
Outcome 3	3 Has supported partner countries in the adoption and implementation of internationally agreed standards for digitalisation of social protection systems and promoted interoperability.	3.1 Number of partner countries directly supported by the action have applied the digital standards in their national social protection systems.	3.1 To be informed in the inception phase/first year of operation. No digital standards agreed for application in partner countries (April 2022).	3.1 To be informed in the inception phase/first year of operation. Number of partner countries developing digital systems to strengthen nationally owned social protection systems following agreed standards or following best practices models in place by 2026.	3.1 Report on progress from implementing agencies on activities in selected partner countries. 3.2 To be agreed by implementing partners.	EU partner countries are open to digital transformation and adaptation of information systems according to existing standards and/or best practices recognised by DCI.
Output 1 relating to Outcome 1	1.1 A sustainable and living good and best practice knowledge base on the application at country and regional levels of globally recognised inclusive digital social protection standards has been created and updated to provide knowledge to country, regional and global partners to advance interoperability of relevant digital solutions for social protection.	1.1.1 Increase of the number of countries and key partners contributing to the convergence of digitalisation with USP2030 principles through consensus on standards and knowledge on interoperability. 1.1.2 Increased access of governments and stakeholders to the USP2030 knowledge base with information on country, regional and global partners.	1.1.1 to be informed in the inception phase/first year of operation. USP2030 Membership as of 13 April 2022: 47. 1.1.2 1 dialogue series; 1 workshop on open-source solution providers conducted (13 April 2022).	1.1.1 USP2030 membership is significantly increased and the partnership framework is supported by key vendors of digital/information systems by 2028. 1.1.2 The knowledge base available on sp-convergence.org is increased significantly.	1.1.1 Mapping of stakeholders of DCI is in place and at least two surveys to collect views of stakeholders are conducted by the USP2030 DCI structure by 2028. 1.1.2 Reported figures on number of users and access to resources.	Activities of DCI are supported by USP2030 members and non-members. DCI identifies partnership framework to build consensus on standards and interoperability.

Output 2 relating to Outcome 1	<p>1.2 Best practice and lessons learned, and models and building block knowledge are developed, and have been made freely and readily accessible to partner countries, and to relevant regional and global organisations.</p>	<p>1.2.1 Number of best practice and lessons learned, and models and building block knowledge products published.</p> <p>1.2.2 Number of dialogues increased to share knowledge and collect doubts from participants to contribute to the identification of the needs of the sector.</p> <p>1.2.3 Number of partner countries supported by EU Multiannual Indicative Programmes (MIPs) contribute to the knowledge base and identification of lessons.</p>	<p>1.2.1 To be informed in the inception phase/first year of operation.</p> <p>1 country example – India; 21 March 2022.</p> <p>1.2.2 1 dialogue – India; 21 March 2022.</p> <p>1.2.3 no partner country sharing experiences from MIPs.</p>	<p>1.2.1 Significant increase of country examples is noted, including countries from Sub-Sahara Africa region.</p> <p>1.2.2 Significant increase of participation of partner countries in knowledge sharing activities.</p> <p>1.2.3 Partner countries with digital and social protection components supported by activities under this Action.</p>	<p>1.2.1 USP2030 publications and knowledge products available to the global community through the DCI.</p> <p>1.2.2 Mapping of stakeholders and report of activities.</p> <p>1.2.3 USP2030 report of activities and report of implementing agencies.</p>	<p>Countries, development agencies and vendors contribute to the knowledge base of DCI and collaborate with knowledge exchange. EU partners support and participate in knowledge sharing activities promoted by DCI.</p>
Output 1 relating to Outcome 2	<p>2.1 The development of inclusive social protection digital standards to enable partners to use open-source software solutions.</p>	<p>2.1.1 Consensus on standards for digital social protection has been reached in strategic areas of social protection programmes’ delivery chain such as civil registration and delivery of payments.</p> <p>2.1.2 Ratio of the adaptation of social protection programmes to open-source software solutions using agreed standards and promoted among partner countries and members of USP2030.</p>	<p>2.1.1 To be informed in the inception phase/first year of operation - No consensus on standards in place.</p> <p>2.1.2 Multiple components of social protection programmes are connected by open-source solutions</p>	<p>2.1.1 Consensus on digital standards is in place and disseminated by DCI.</p> <p>2.1.2 Partner countries acknowledge better access to digital solutions which enable programs to mix and match different components of social protection systems</p>	<p>2.1.1 Report USP2030 DCI.</p> <p>2.1.2 Project reports from implementing agencies.</p> <p>2.1.3 Country policy and programmatic documents available.</p> <p>2.1.4 DCI data basis and/or ISSA data on ICT frameworks and system development.</p>	<p>DCI continues to advance consensus building for standardisation for interoperability to foster an ecosystem for innovation by ICT solution providers. ICT providers build products that are interoperable, easy to use, integrate,</p>

			meeting agreed standards. 2.1.3 Mapping of initiatives following agreed standards to be developed.	independent of the supplier.		maintain and scale up.
Output 2 relating to Outcome 2	2.2 A global repository of global interoperable digital standards, including building blocks, has been effectively maintained and governed by the USP2030 DCI structure.	2.2.1 An electronic repository is established by USDP2030 partners of good and best practice knowledge on the application at country and regional levels of globally recognised digital social protection standards has been created.	2.2.1 to be informed in the inception phase/first year of operation.	2.2.1 to be informed in the inception phase/first year of operation.	2.2.1 Project progress report. 2.2.2 Survey with stakeholders. 2.2.3 DCI portal, statistical records of visitors and use.	USP2030 members and partners cooperate in building up the knowledge base for repository of standards and information on building block is available.
Output 1 relating to Outcome 3	3.1 Globally recognised digital standards are progressively integrated in partner countries social protection systems.	3.1.1 Number of partner countries directly supported by the Action and have applied agreed digital standards in their national social protection systems.	3.1.1 To be informed in the inception phase/first year of operation.	3.1.1 To be informed in the inception phase/first year of operation. Social protection systems are interoperable.	3.1.1 Country policy and programmatic documents available. 3.1.2 ISSA data on ICT frameworks and system development. 3.1.3 USP2030 DCI Steering Committee.	The coordination of consensus on digital standards is ensured in a cooperative manner by DCI stakeholders, including wide participation of partner African countries.
Output 2 relating to Outcome 3	3.2 Standards and open-standards-based software in partner countries have strengthened social protection systems and addressed inconsistencies	3.2.1 Increased number of national schemes or programmes with improved digital administrative and	3.2.1 to be informed in the inception	3.2.1 to be informed in the inception	3.2.1 Project reports demonstrating progress in	The coordination of the digital tiers being considered for

	in the use of language, data formats, and information records, including civil registration systems.	delivery mechanisms or M&E frameworks. 3.2.2 Proportion of lessons learned and practices from convergence initiatives in public finance or health applied in partner countries.	phase/first year of operation.	phase/first year of operation.	partner countries. 3.2.2 Country policy and programmatic documents officially published.	implementation phases of the DCI is ensured in a cooperative manner by stakeholders.
Output 3 relating to Outcome 3	3.3 The USP2030 DCI structure has provided timely and adequate technical support to partner countries, regional organisations and global partners to effectively resolve, or followed-up as appropriate, inconsistencies in the use of language, data formats and definitions for social protection across the competent public agencies at country, regional and global levels.	3.3.1 Limited number of partner country requests review the digital architecture for social protection and develop comprehensive, interoperable and sustainable approaches for digital social protection systems. 3.3.2 Number of policy dialogues enhance DCI's knowledge base for exchange and consensus on standards for digital social protection including EU partner countries.	3.3.1 To be informed in the inception phase/first year of operation. No sub-structure is operating. 3.3.2 Monthly policy dialogues have been set up since March 2022.	3.3.1 To be drawn from partners' digital social protection strategy. 3.3.2 Cross-country studies analyse best practices and building blocks for standards.	3.3.1 Partner country progress reports. 3.3.2 Project progress reports. 3.3.3 DCI Dialogues and research. 3.3.4 Key USP2030 stakeholders	Partner countries and USP2030 are responsive to the needs of collaboratively work to build consensus on building blocks and standards for interoperability of social protection programmes.
Output 4 relating to Outcome 3	3.4 Partner countries who have received technical assistance funded by this Action have been sensitised by the USP2030 DCI structure to ensure that the use of digital social protection solutions do not discriminate against those who are unable to use basic digital tools and protects beneficiaries' right to privacy and data protection.	3.4.1 Number of partner countries supported by the USP2030 DCI structure in the establishment of genuine, non-digital registry, grievance and delivery options for beneficiaries. 3.4.2 Number of government officials participating in capacity development activities. 3.4.3 Demonstrated results on universal coverage, leaving no one behind due to lack of access to digital technology.	3.4.1 To be informed in the inception phase/first year of operation.	3.4.1 To be informed in the inception phase/first year of operation.	3.4.1 TA reports, policy documents or presentations by government actors responsible for digitalisation of social protection programmes. 3.4.2 Research protocols, publications, study reports, other evidence materials developed.	Relevant institutions participate in the capacity development activities and adhere cooperatively in setting up interoperable measures in social protection programmes.

					3.4.3 To be agreed by implementing partners.	
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4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this Action, it is not envisaged to conclude a Financing Agreement with partner countries.

4.2 Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3.2 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 72 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer by amending this Financing Decision and the relevant contracts and agreements.

4.3 Implementation Modalities

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

4.3.1 Indirect Management with a pillar assessed entity

This action will be implemented in indirect management with an International Organisation and/or an EU MS agency which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria: knowledge on digital standards for social protection, capacity to support the coordination and governance of global efforts to harmonise globally recognised digital standards for social protection and support partner countries to adopt and implement these standards.

The entrusted lead entity would carry out the following budget-implementation tasks: manage and implement the provision of expertise in fields covered by the action.

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

In case the above implementation modality of indirect management as described in section 4.3.1 cannot be implemented due to circumstances outside of the Commission's control, direct management through the award of grant contracts and/or procurement will be applied for the implementation of the programme.

4.4 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply, subject to the following provisions.

The Commission's Authorising Officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of services in the markets of the countries or territories concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where application of the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult (Article 28(10) NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

4.5 Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
	EUR 18 million
Implementation modalities	Indirect Management
Indirect management with International Organisation and/or EU MS agency - cf. section 4.3.1	EUR 18 million
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	Covered by another financing decision
Contingencies	N.A.
Totals	EUR 18 million

4.6 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

A **Project Steering Committee (PSC)** will be established at the beginning of the project. It will support the project implementation, provide overall strategic guidance, assess and if necessary, adapt, activities. With this aim, the PSC will:

- Examine the annual progress reports, review and approve the joint annual work plans; provide advice on project work and express recommendation on future directions.
- Identify and suggest to the lead Implementing Partner(s) (hereafter referred to as IP) potential synergies between the Action and other relevant initiatives.
- If deemed necessary, the PSC can instruct the IP to abandon, reorient or adapt activities if they are not aligned to the Action objectives.
- Assess and approve partner country requests for technical support for the integration and application of digital standards into their national social protection systems.

The PSC will indicatively meet twice a year or on an ad hoc basis if requested in writing by two of its members. The PSC will be chaired by the European Commission (DG INTPA) and will be composed of statutory members, each one with a voting right. These are the European Commission, an international organisation and/or an EU MS agency, and one representative of a civil society organisation among others to be further defined at the inception and contracting phase.

Decisions in the PSC will be made by unanimity with an option of simple majority voting of all statutory PSC members, if requested by one member. Relevant Commission Services, EU Delegations of the partner countries benefitting from the Action and individual USP2030 members may also be invited to participate in the PSC as observers. The PSC will be provided full access to all technical and financial information necessary regarding the project context, the demand for, the assessment, launch and management of all project activities.

The **lead IP** will be responsible for the overall day-to-day operational management of the Action. The lead IP will ensure the overall coordination of activities implemented by the IPs. The lead IP will provide operational and administrative assistance to the PSC and assume the **Secretariat of the PSC**; the lead IP may share these responsibilities with others, if any, IPs of the Action, subject to the PSC's agreement. Overall, the Secretariat will coordinate and liaise between the PSC, the DCI-structure, and USP2030 partners (CSOs, governments, regional and global organisations) to support this Action.

The lead IP will ensure quality, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting of the Action to the European Commission.

The lead IP, in coordination and cooperation with the PSC and other IP of the Action, will organise calls for technical support inviting countries to submit their requests. The lead IP will assume the Secretariat for the call(s) and all

related matters, as determined by the PSC, and support the PSC in approving partner countries' requests for project based technical support, and the communication and visibility of the programme and its outputs under this Action.

The template for the proposals will ask countries to propose the activities' objectives, scope, methodology and potential work plan. The lead implementing partner will facilitate the selection process of the operational committee.

The EUD of the country action to be proposed will always be invited as observers of discussions. Accordingly, the partner country requests may be submitted by EUDs and government institutions from countries that are eligible under the NDICI – Global Europe. Proposals should aim to support the adoption or adaption of digital tools to strengthen social protection systems and shall integrate globally recognised digital social protection standards for interoperability promoted by the DCI.

The detailed standard operating procedures (SOPs) concerning the calls, application and selection of countries will be elaborated by the lead IP during the inception phase and are subject to approval by the PSC. The SOPs will include indicative timelines and a clear description of the process regarding the call, the selection and the implementation process.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the EU, the European 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 results (Outputs and direct Outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix.

Indicators shall be disaggregated at least by sex. All monitoring and reporting shall assess how the action is taking into account the human rights based approach and gender equality.

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).

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a mid-term and a final evaluation will be carried out for this Action via independent consultants selected by the Commission. The mid-term evaluation and final evaluation will be carried out to inform policy and programming at various levels (including for policy and programming revision).

All evaluations shall assess to what extent the action is taking into account the human rights-based approach as well as how it contributes to gender equality and women's empowerment. Expertise on human rights and gender equality will be ensured in the evaluation teams.

The implementing partners 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 may be shared with the key stakeholders. The implementing partners and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the mid-term evaluations and, where appropriate, in

agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

The financing of the evaluation may be covered by another measure constituting a Financing Decision.

5.3 Audit and Verifications

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audit or verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

6 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The 2021-2027 programming cycle has adopted a new approach to pooling, programming and deploying strategic communication and public diplomacy resources.

Action documents for specific sector programmes are no longer required to include a provision for communication and visibility actions promoting the programmes concerned.

However, in line with Article 46 and subject to Article 47 of the NDICI Regulation, all entities implementing EU-funded external actions shall take all reasonable measures to publicise the European Union support. This obligation will continue to apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, partner countries, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU member states.

Appendix - REPORTING IN OPSYS

An Intervention (also generally called project/programme) is the operational entity associated to a coherent set of activities and results structured in a logical framework aiming at delivering development change or progress. Interventions are the most effective (hence optimal) entities for the operational follow-up by the Commission of its external development operations. As such, Interventions constitute the base unit for managing operational implementations, assessing performance, monitoring, evaluation, internal and external communication, reporting and aggregation.

Primary Interventions are those contracts or groups of contracts bearing reportable results and respecting the following business rule: 'a given contract can only contribute to one primary intervention and not more than one'. An individual contract that does not produce direct reportable results and cannot be logically grouped with other result reportable contracts is considered a 'support entities'. The addition of all primary interventions and support entities is equivalent to the full development portfolio of the Institution.

The present Action identifies as

Action level		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single action	Present action: all contracts in the present action
Contract level		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 2	International Organisation and/or EU MS agency