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ANNEX IV

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multiannual action plan in favour of Asia-Pacific for 2024-2025 covering ASEAN, and migration, forced displacement and mobility

Action Document for “Regional Programme in support of durable solutions for displaced and returning Afghans and their host communities”

MULTIANNUAL 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

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|---|--|
| 1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act | Regional Programme in support of durable solutions for displaced and returning Afghan and their host communities OPSYS number: ACT-62793 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe) |
| 2. Team Europe Initiative | Yes, the action will be part of the Regional Team Europe Initiative on the Afghan regional displacement situation |
| 3. Zone benefiting from the action | The action shall be carried out in Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan, with additional activities possible in Central Asian countries as needed |
| 4. Programming document | Regional MIP for Asia-Pacific 2021-2027 |
| 5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results | Regional MIP for Asia-Pacific Priority Area 3 – Migration, Forced Displacement and Mobility SO 1 – Support durable solutions to existing and future forced displacement situations. SO 2 – Contribute to strengthening migration governance and management, to enable orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration (including labour migration) and mobility of people. |
| PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION | |
| 6. Priority Area(s), sectors | Migration and Forced Displacement DEV. Assistance: YES |
| 7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) | Main SDG (1 only): SDG 10 (reduction of inequalities). In particular, Target 10. 7 (facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies) Other significant SDGs (up to 9) and where appropriate, targets: |

| | | | | |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | SDG 1 (no poverty) SDG 3 (good health and well-being) SDG 4 (quality education) SDG 5 (gender equality) | | | |
| 8 a) DAC code(s) | 15190 – Facilitation of orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility 11220 – Primary Education 13010 - Population policy and administrative management 11330 - Vocational training 16020 - Employment policy 72010 - Material assistance to refugees and displaced persons | | | |
| 8 b) Main Delivery Channel | United Nations agency, fund or commission (UN) - 41000 Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) and Civil Society - 20000 | | | |
| 9. Targets | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" 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"/> |
| | Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Disaster Risk Reduction @ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Inclusion of persons with Disabilities @ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Nutrition @ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" 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"/> |
| | Policy objectives | Not targeted | Significant objective | Principal objective |
| | Digitalisation @ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Internal markers and Tags: | | YES | NO | |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | digital connectivity | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | / |
| | digital governance | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| | digital entrepreneurship | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| | digital skills/literacy | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| | digital services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Connectivity @ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | digital connectivity | YES | NO | / |
| energy | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| transport | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| health | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| education and research | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Migration @ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Reduction of Inequalities @ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Covid-19 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| BUDGET INFORMATION | | | | |
| 12. Amounts concerned | <p>Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020130 and 14.020131</p> <p>BGUE-B2024-14.020130-C1-INTPA: EUR 38 000 000</p> <p>BGUE-B2024-14.020131-C1-INTPA: EUR 10 000 000</p> <p>Total estimated cost: EUR 48 000 000</p> <p>Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 48 000 000</p> <p>This action is part of the Regional Team Europe Initiative on the Afghan Displacement situation, which amounts to an indicative contribution of over EUR 1 billion.</p> <p>TEI Members: Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, Ireland, Latvia, Netherlands, Slovenia, Sweden and the European Union Asylum Agency (EUAA).</p> | | | |
| MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION | | | | |
| 13. Type of financing | <p>Direct management through:</p> <p>Grants</p> <p>Indirect management with the entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.2.</p> | | | |

1.2 Summary of the Action

Afghan regional displacement crisis is one of the three major displacement crises in Asia and the largest protracted displacement situation in the world. There are millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) within Afghanistan. Over 7 million Afghans of different statuses have been living in Iran and Pakistan for decades, where they have both benefitted from socio-economic support and protection services, as well as endured discrimination, hardship and exclusion.

In Afghanistan, the population is facing increasing challenges since the Taliban takeover in 2021, further exacerbated by natural disasters which has afflicted the country. In Iran, Afghans are deported in large numbers

with some 500,000 undocumented Afghans at risk of deportation daily. As well, stricter border controls over the Iran-Afghanistan border persist, including the construction of a 74 km border wall from Dogharoun and Khaf city in Khorasan Razavi province. Furthermore, given the risk of potential rollout of Phase II of the ‘Illegal Foreigners’ Repatriation Plan’ (IFRP) in Pakistan forcing departures of many Afghans to Afghanistan, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as well as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) using the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) system, are actively monitoring the situation at the border and stand ready to activate contingency plans should the situation deteriorate.

This part of the regional Asia-Pacific MAAP 2024-2025 focused on Migration and Forced displacement responds to the geopolitical policy objective of the European Commission on migration and forced displacement in key countries for the EU. It caters for the EU’s strategic interests by addressing the regional Afghan displacement crisis within the sub-region, and aims to prevent further destabilisation in the neighbouring countries and supporting migration management at the regional and country level.

It does so by seeking durable solutions through sustainable (re)integration for displaced populations, returning migrants and vulnerable populations, including children and women, as well as support to host communities in priority countries affected by the above crisis (Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran and Central Asian countries).

The Action will be closely connected with relevant ongoing actions in the region and will be implemented in full complementarity with ongoing humanitarian assistance in a nexus approach. Priority areas of intervention will be on: (i) protection, (ii) access to basic services for displaced Afghans and their host communities.

While large parts of the action will be implemented in Afghanistan, the Action also aims to address the ongoing challenges faced by Afghan refugees, returnees, internally displaced persons, and other vulnerable populations in neighbouring countries, including Iran, Pakistan, and Central Asian countries. Emphasizing a regional approach, the Action seeks to uphold and protect the rights of Afghan refugees and support durable solutions, while also providing assistance to host communities and addressing the needs of returnees and IDPs within Afghanistan. The Action adopts a human rights-based and principled “for-women-by-women” approach putting notably women and girls at the centre of its interventions in Afghanistan, as well as other vulnerable groups. Through a community-driven and needs-specific approach, the Action will focus on enhancing access to basic services, protection, and livelihood opportunities, with a particular focus on women and girls, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. To do so, the Action will support Afghan refugees in the region, and returnees and IDPs in Afghanistan, to access basic services and protection. The Action will align with the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) and collaborate with regional platforms and initiatives, including the SSAR Global Core Group and the Regional Team Europe Initiative (TEI). Complementarity and synergies will be ensured with existing and future actions, promoting cooperation.

The Action has been designed in continuation with the EU’s decision to reorientate development aid towards basic needs and livelihoods support to the Afghan people both within and outside of Afghanistan, since the Taliban came to power on 15 August 2021. The Action is further guided by the Commission’s objectives and priorities, as well as Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions on Afghanistan of 21 September 2021¹ and 20 March 2023². Principles for delivery of aid in Afghanistan will be followed including: 1) women, girls and persons belonging to minorities should be able to access services in a non-discriminatory fashion; 2) support can only be given through multilateral organisations, NGOs or the private sector. No funds can be channelled through the Taliban de facto authorities neither in Kabul nor at the local level, neither directly nor through other actors; 3) the Taliban de facto authorities should not be involved in the hiring, recruitment policy, implementation or management of support mechanisms; and 4) a do-no-harm and conflict sensitive approach will be ensured.

In Iran, the increased number of families and children on the move³ has exacerbated a protracted, decades-long humanitarian crisis which has put an enormous strain on national social services from health to education.

¹ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11713-2021-REV-2/en/pdf>

² <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7264-2023-INIT/en/pdf>

³ Children on the Move is an umbrella term which describes children who have been directly or indirectly affected by migration and displacement. Therefore, Children on the Move may be categorized as child migrants, including Unaccompanied and Separated Children

Although the Children and Adolescents Protection Act (2020) in Iran provides de jure inclusive health, education, and child protection services for Afghan children in the country, in practice, significant barriers to accessing services remain and are at risk of being further rolled back. According to recent studies, barriers to access include lack of documentation, limited financial means, hesitation to approach public institutions due to fear of deportation, and lack of awareness about available health, education, and protection services among Afghans.

Iran is hosting the majority of Afghan's abroad. As such the action includes two components in Iran. The first component complements regional activities to increase access to essential services, improve protection as well as respect of their rights, and support their economic self-reliance as well as food security with a focus on the most vulnerable. The second component aims to improve the well-being of Afghan children and their families in Iran. This is done to address these barriers and facilitate access of Afghan children to key services in the areas of health and nutrition, education and employability, and child protection, while strengthening the continued provision of quality services for all children, notwithstanding their nationality.

In Pakistan this action will continue to support the work with the Government in Pakistan to preserve and enhance the protection environment, while seeking international solidarity and solutions in alignment with the longstanding Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR). Central to this effort is the pursuit of a national legal and administrative refugee. The action will also contribute to addressing legal, cultural and socio-economic barriers that hinder refugees and asylum-seekers from fully exercising their rights in Pakistan. The Action aims to bolster access to education for refugees and host communities, advocate to improve their access to public health and social protection services, support their livelihoods and self-reliance, provide access to clean and affordable energy, and strengthen prevention and response to gender-based violence and child protection programming..

1.3 Zone benefitting from the Action

The Action shall be carried out in Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan and Central Asian countries, which are included in the list of Official development assistance (ODA) recipients.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

The Afghan regional displacement crisis is one of the three major displacement crises in Asia and the largest protracted displacement situation in the world. There are millions of internally displaced within Afghanistan and over 7 million Afghans of different statuses that have been living in Iran and Pakistan for decades, where they have both benefitted from socio-economic support and protection services, as well as endured discrimination, hardship and exclusion.

The crisis evolved in October 2023 with the "Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan" (IFRP) put forward by the Government of Pakistan. The process has been chaotic and distressing for many, with over 600,000 people reported to have returned (or gone for the first time) to an impoverished Afghanistan, often with very little money and belongings, and no place to go to. The same period also witnessed an increased risk of refoulement from Iran. These massive returns/arrivals have caused a significant displacement crisis on Afghanistan's borders as well as further complicated the situation for host communities within the country and in the main return areas. In total, approximately 1 million Afghans returned/arrived from neighbouring countries in 2023.

Despite the pause in deportations in 2024, Pakistan may continue to use expulsions to put pressure on the Taliban de facto authorities (DFA) to make concessions in the security realm, notably on the issue of the Taliban Islamist

(UASC); children in need of international protection, such as refugees and asylum-seekers; internally displaced children; children indirectly affected by migration and displacement, such as children who stay behind while parents and/or caregivers migrate; stateless children in the context of migration and displacement, and child victims of cross-border trafficking. Despite any legal status ascribed by States or any categorizations applied, all children should enjoy the rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

armed group (TTP). The EU has taken a principled stance against forced deportations in the absence of adequate screening and registration mechanisms for those entitled to international protection. International partners have urged the Government of Pakistan to pause the deportations and to collaborate on establishing such systems, as well as to ensure the non-refoulement principle is respected.

In 2024, an estimated 1.46 million Afghans will return/arrive to the country from Pakistan (483,000) and Iran (978,000). Furthermore, the majority of returnees/arrivals are very low skilled and highly dependent on external assistance. The vast majority of returnees will likely settle at the urban periphery, as they lack the skillset to integrate themselves in the rural economy. Additional research points out that these areas also attract those escaping internal challenges like natural disasters and the recent ban on poppy cultivation.

Within Afghanistan, over 1.3 million IDPs have returned to their communities of origin since the end of the conflict, but an estimated 3.4 million remain internally displaced due to conflict, of whom 58% are children, further aggravating the already dire situation in host communities. IDPs have been put under pressure by DFA to return to their area of origin, although living conditions in those areas have not improved.

Such a situation requires EU intervention to expand and continue its ongoing support to vulnerable Afghans and their host communities, due to end between December 2024 and January 2025.

The Taliban DFA takeover in **Afghanistan** in 2021 exacerbated the vulnerabilities of a population burdened by decades of conflicts and internal displacement, the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic downturn, and a severe drought across the country. In many cases, this is accompanied by food insecurity, inadequate shelter, limited access to land and basic services including healthcare, education, legal assistance, documentation, and very scarce livelihoods opportunities. All these factors have put pressure on the coping mechanisms of the population (particularly for women and girls), resulting in further internal displacement as well as cross-border flows into neighbouring Iran and Pakistan and beyond. In 2024 and beyond, the situation in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries is expected to remain challenging. As highlighted by the UN Security Council, the human rights situation inside Afghanistan, especially related to the rights of women and girls and religious and ethnic minorities, remains dire. Some 23.7 million people (more than half of Afghanistan's population) require urgent humanitarian assistance to survive. Devastating natural disasters and climate-induced emergencies, including deadly earthquakes and floods in Afghanistan in 2022, 2023 and 2024 and floods and earthquakes in Pakistan and Iran in 2022, have compounded the situation.

Pakistan has historically hosted millions of Afghan refugees, with the last major wave arriving following the Taliban's return to power in August 2021. Currently, Pakistan hosts approximately over 3 million Afghan refugees and Afghans of other statuses (76% of whom are women and children). However, surges in violence within Pakistan, attributed by the government to groups with roots in Afghanistan, have led to a crackdown on Afghan nationals, including those with legal documentation. Despite promises, many Afghans, even those holding government-approved Afghan citizenship cards, have been forced or persuaded to leave following the Pakistani Government's adopted its Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan (IFRP). The situation has been exacerbated by allegations of police harassment and the high costs associated with obtaining visas and renewals, leading to a precarious existence for those still in Pakistan. Between September 2023 and May 2024, over 600,000 Afghans entered from Pakistan to Afghanistan. The rollout of a second phase of the IFRP in Pakistan has been postponed with potential to be resumed.

Iran has also been a major host for Afghan refugees and migrants for over four decades and is now hosting more than 4.5 million Afghans with various status, providing protection and support for education, health and other basic services. Despite the challenges, Iran has made efforts to integrate Afghan children and youth into its education system, reflecting the country's commitment to supporting Afghan refugees despite the complex dynamics of migration and displacement in the region, although amidst the economic downturns and increased social tensions, the Government of Iran has more recently introduced new practices limiting the possibilities for Afghan nationals to enjoy rights and has in parallel increased forced repatriations of undocumented Afghans. Following the Taliban DFA takeover of Afghanistan in 2021, there was a significant increase in the number of Afghan refugees seeking shelter in neighbouring countries, including Iran. While precise figures are challenging to determine, it is estimated that at least 1 million Afghans have crossed the border into Iran in search of safety since August 2021, and the figure may be as high as 2 million. Moreover, almost 3 years after the takeover, the number of new arrivals shows

no signs of decreasing. UNHCR estimates that still between 3,000 and 5,000 Afghans continue to come to Iran every day. The influx of Afghan refugees places a considerable burden on Iran's resources and infrastructure and has exacerbated a protracted, decades-long humanitarian crisis which has put an enormous strain on national social services from health to education.

In **Central Asia**, the situation of Afghan refugees and asylum-seekers varies by country, but the region has seen some new arrivals of Afghans fleeing the Taliban's return to power. Countries in Central Asia, situated at Afghanistan's northern border, serve as transit points for Afghans seeking refuge in Europe or other parts of the world. The response from these countries has been mixed, with some providing temporary refuge while others enforce strict border controls. Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan share borders with Afghanistan, and most refugees in Central Asia are from Afghanistan. Clashes along some of the shared borders which are not fully demarcated, and threats of internal conflict, changing climate and economic factors can result in internal displacement of communities.

Finally, it should be noted that the migration context previously described also presents complex inflows from Afghan populations temporarily moving to neighbouring countries, notably Iran and Pakistan, which is not necessarily framed as forcible displacement. This reality, which includes seasonal labour migration, adds another layer of complexity in understanding the Afghan regional displacement crisis and creates further pressure on the access of essential services, improved livelihoods and documentation. Furthermore, data shows slight variations depending on the source and target group analysed.

2.2 Problem Analysis

It is expected that the Afghanistan situation will continue to be volatile and be influenced by regional political developments. With the crisis now in its fifth decade, the Afghanistan situation remains the largest in the region. Deteriorating human rights (particularly for women and girls), economic instability, acute food insecurity, and severe climate shocks and natural disasters in Afghanistan could spell greater uncertainty in the region in 2024 and beyond. Significant levels of support are needed to match the scale of the humanitarian and development needs in Afghanistan and foster a recovery of stability in the region.

The Governments/authorities of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan had previously engaged in extensive dialogue around the issue of refugees through the existing quadripartite and tripartite mechanisms. Having hosted millions of Afghan refugees for four decades, Iran and Pakistan are calling for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing and concrete actions. The COVID-19 pandemic and its economic consequences have also exacerbated the situation, with an increased request for more burden-sharing as a consequence.

The situation of Afghan refugees and migrants in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, and Central Asia has been notably challenging, all the more with the return/arrival emergency in 2023, which saw great numbers of Afghans returning/arriving from Pakistan to Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, the return/arrival of Afghans from Pakistan has been part of a broader crisis impacting the country. The Islamic Republic of Iran has hosted forcibly displaced persons for over 40 years. Despite the challenges, refugee-inclusive policies on access to essential public services, such as health and education, have been maintained in the country.

The return emergency in 2023 highlights the complex and evolving dynamics of Afghan displacement. The crisis underscores the need for comprehensive international support and durable solutions for refugees and migrants, ensuring their safety, dignity, and rights are upheld. The Action assumes that returns/arrivals to Afghanistan especially from Pakistan and Iran will continue. At the same time, both countries as well as Central Asian countries are expected to continue to host large numbers of Afghans. Support is needed in all these countries to achieve a durable solution for Afghans that includes access to essential services, education and livelihood opportunities.

This Action will build on lessons learnt and experience gathered throughout the implementation of ongoing activities and will be closely linked to other EU funded actions, under a humanitarian-peace-development nexus.

As regards the Afghan displacement situation and given the rapidly changing context and the expected increase in forceful returns that could trigger a full-scale humanitarian and migration crisis, flexibility will be ensured in both the formulation and implementation phases, and activities will be closely monitored so to ensure rapid adaptation in

case of need.

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

Afghanistan: With the end of major hostilities in Afghanistan after more than 40 years and the consolidation of control by the Taliban de facto authorities (DFA) in August 2021, conflict is no longer the primary driver of displacement. However, 3.2 million Afghans remain displaced due to conflict within the country and over 5.53 million are registered refugees or Afghans in refugee-like situations in the region, predominantly in Iran and Pakistan. An estimated 52,000 refugees are living in Afghanistan's Khost and Paktika regions. Refugees and asylum seekers are among the most vulnerable groups in the absence of refugee laws. This despite Afghanistan having signed the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Refugees and asylum-seekers in Afghanistan have limited access to basic rights, including economic rights, documentation, education and protection from refoulement.

Afghanistan has not acceded to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, nor to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. However, the 2004 Afghan Constitution guarantees the right to nationality for all Afghans, while the 2014 Law on Registration of Population Records underscores the entitlement to a Tazkira⁴. Despite this legal framework, due to the suspension of the Constitution and related legislation by the DFA, citizenship and legal identity regimes remain uncertain.

Since the change in power in Afghanistan in August 2021, there has been a significant deterioration of socio-economic and human rights in the country. This has caused large outflow movements, particularly among skilled and educated Afghans, impacting the quality of services e.g. in education and health.

The DFA have systematically dismantled the human rights of women and girls. Violations are happening in the context of long-standing gender inequalities in Afghanistan, with high rates of intimate partner violence and early and forced marriage. Since August 2021, there have been more than 50 decrees that directly curtail the rights and dignity of women, including those banning girls from secondary school, women from universities and restricting access to economic opportunities. The Ministry of Women Affairs was abolished. Decrees restricting Afghan women employed by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and UN organisations have constrained access to vulnerable women and girls and impacted the delivery of services.

Environmental risks contribute to displacement and heightened vulnerability in Afghanistan. With its location in a seismically active region, Afghanistan remains highly susceptible to catastrophic damage due to earthquakes. At the same time, Afghanistan is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate shocks and among the least prepared. Related to conflict, a strengthened Islamic State Khorasan (ISK) may lead to some conflict related displacement.

It is against this background that the Afghan people experience drastic rises in poverty and malnutrition and a near collapse of the national public health system. In its Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024, the humanitarian country team estimates that 23.7 million people require humanitarian assistance in 2024. 15.2 million people are severely food insecure.

Pakistan started implementing its plans to deport 1.7 million foreigners, most of them Afghans, in November 2023. By June 2024, over 600,000 Afghans, including some 76,000 refugees, had returned/arrived for the first time in Afghanistan. Such large-scale return movements further strain already limited resources and put significant pressure on communities receiving returnees/arrivals. Some of those returning/arriving, including many who left after August 2021, may face serious protection risks. Returnees have lost social support networks, assets and property in Afghanistan, making restarting their lives in unfamiliar locations challenging. For others, this may be the first time setting foot in Afghanistan.

Despite their own needs, Afghan communities are welcoming IDP and refugee returnees/arrivals. Supporting them directly is imperative as without robust aid by the international community, local communities may become

⁴ The national identity document in Afghanistan.

overburdened, resulting in further poverty, protection risks and displacement forcing people to resort to harmful coping mechanisms. Against this background, pursuing the six transformative entry points, or key transitions towards the goals of the SDG is crucial in the Afghan context. Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration (PARRs) approach has demonstrated to be effective. The PARRs UNHCR developed under the umbrella of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) remain key to finding solutions. Through their whole-of-community focused design, PARRs exemplify the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) in action. By applying an area-based approach, the ability of host communities to welcome forcibly displaced people and returnees is strengthened.

Iran: The Action aims to strengthen the protection environment, enhance access to basic rights and promote self-reliance and enhance social protection and cohesion for the Afghan population. This includes to aiming to improve the well-being of Afghan children in Iran and their households by facilitating equitable access to vital health and nutrition services, enhancing employability through skill development, and fostering awareness and access to protection services. For this, the Action aims to address barriers of access to health services through leveraging partnerships with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MoHME) and Medical Universities. It will also create opportunities for Afghan adolescents along with investments in strengthening capacities of the vocation and educational training (TVET) and skills development system (Ministry of Education, Technical Vocational Training Organization, and youth NGOs) for provision of comprehensive transferable and technical skill packages. Further, it will collaborate closely with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MoHME) to foster community engagement in preventing violence against children. The Action will advocate and work to further expand access to asylum and documentation for people forced to flee, particularly for newly-arriving Afghans who may need international protection, and people at risk of statelessness. The prioritization of assistance and protection to the most vulnerable, such as women, girls and children, will remain central.

Pakistan: For more than four decades, Pakistan has shown generosity by providing refuge to millions of Afghans seeking safety. With uncertainty continuing to prevail in Afghanistan, the introduction of the Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan (IFRP) in 2023 brought unforeseen complexities to refugee protection within Pakistan. As the country grapples with soaring inflation and a deteriorating security situation, Pakistan's long-standing commendable tradition of hosting refugees is being challenged.

In an increasingly fluid operating context, this Action will continue to support the work with the Government in Pakistan to preserve and enhance the protection environment, while seeking international solidarity and solutions in alignment with the longstanding Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR). Central to this effort is the pursuit of a national legal and administrative refugee framework that would enable structured management of the asylum process, and in particular, identification of those in need of international protection through a screening mechanism. Robust advocacy on comprehensive refugee management policies will continue.

This Action will also contribute to addressing legal, cultural and socio-economic barriers that hinder refugees and asylum-seekers from fully exercising their rights in Pakistan. The Action aims to bolster access to education for refugees and host communities, advocate to improve their access to public health and social protection services, support their livelihoods and self-reliance, provide access to clean and affordable energy, and strengthen prevention and response to gender-based violence and child protection programming. To this end, efforts will continue to enhance coordination with and engagement of development actors to support national services and Pakistani communities in refugee hosting areas. Furthermore, this Action will focus on addressing the needs of refugee hosting areas and access of displaced people to national and provincial planning and programming, with careful consideration given to climate concerns.

Efforts to enhance access to sustainable solutions in safety and dignity, including local options, resettlement, and complementary pathways, will continue. This Action will help pursue solutions for refugees in Pakistan, provided returns are voluntary, safe and dignified, and without pressure, to ensure protection for those seeking safety. In parallel, international partners will advocate for a durable legal status for stateless people, including supporting access to civil registration and legal assistance.

Central Asia: Central Asian governments differ in their approach to the developing situation. With some cultural and religious linkages to Central Asian countries, as well as shared language with Tajikistan, Afghan citizens had previously entered the region for tourism, work or education purposes, and faced relatively few obstacles to integrate themselves socially. While Tajikistan initially declared its willingness to accommodate 100,000 refugees

from Afghanistan, all Central Asian countries essentially closed their borders to Afghan citizens in August 2021, with only holders of valid education, business or diplomatic visas permitted to enter. As of December 2023, Central Asia hosts 20,111 refugees, asylum-seekers, and people in a refugee-like situation – 99% of the 7,094 refugees and 1,389 asylum-seekers hosted in Tajikistan are from Afghanistan, with nearly half arriving since the start of 2021. Uzbekistan is the only Central Asian country not yet party to the Refugee Convention, and does not yet have a functional national asylum system. The only existing legal avenue is the 2017 Presidential Decree on Political Asylum, however refugees who have tried to apply through this process continue to be unable to lodge applications.

Central Asian governments are increasingly engaging with the DFA in Afghanistan – while still adhering to UN decisions and resolutions. At the end of 2023, Kazakhstan removed the Taliban from its registry of terrorist organizations, and in 2024 Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan agreed with the DFA in Afghanistan to establish transport corridors. Across Central Asia, the refugee protection framework continues to be viewed through a national security lens, preventing the attainment of a full, favourable protection environment. A lack of access to territory, asylum procedures and local integration, along with declining refugee recognition rates, restrict refugee protection.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective of this action is to ensure that durable solutions are achieved for Afghan refugees in the region as well as for internally displaced persons in Afghanistan.

The Specific Objectives of this action are:

1. Improved access to health services and education, increased economic self-reliance and enhanced legal protection are achieved for Afghan refugees and other segments of Afghan population in the region (Iran, Pakistan, Central Asia).
2. Access to sustainable livelihood opportunities, services and urgent needs assistance for Afghan returnees arriving in Afghanistan, with particular focus on vulnerable groups such as women headed households, unaccompanied minors and persons with disabilities. (Afghanistan).
3. Increased access of Afghans, especially children, in Iran to national services with a focus on education and health services while strengthening the resilience of the services.

The Outputs to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objectives are

- 1.1 contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1) Cooperation among the Governments of refugee hosting countries in the region with regard to documentation and protection of Afghan nationals of all genders and socio-economic situations is promoted and supported.
- 1.2 contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1) Basic services are provided and improved to the Afghan refugee population and host communities.
- 1.3 contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1) Livelihood Opportunities for Afghans on the move and host communities are improved, with a focus on socio-economic recovery activities, with a focus on women, youth and groups in vulnerable situations.
- 2.1 contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2) Increased access to livelihood opportunities through TVET, women's business centres, and midwifery training hubs, aimed at empowering women and girls and ensuring community resilience.
- 2.2 contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2) Refugees and communities are increasingly empowered to enrol more children, especially girls, in schools.
- 2.3 contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2) Refugees, returnees and IDPs, and refugee community structures are strengthened and contribute to community-based protection.
- 2.4 contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2) Data collection and analysis across different population types and partners is streamlined and reduces duplication of assessments and surveys.
- 3.1 contributing to Outcome 3 (or Specific Objective 3) Increased access to essential services, including education and health, for vulnerable Afghan refugees and host communities in Iran.
- 3.2 contributing to Outcome 3 (or Specific Objective 3) Fostering respect to the Rights and Dignity of Afghan refugees in Iran.
- 3.3 contributing to Outcome 3 (or Specific Objective 3) Improved self-reliance and economic resilience of

most vulnerable Afghan families through improved livelihoods, access to sustainable income and food security in Iran.

- 3.4 contributing to Outcome 3 (or Specific Objective 3) Strengthening the humanitarian response in Iran through enhanced adherence to humanitarian standards, national and international awareness raising and advocacy.
- 3.5 contributing to Outcome 3 (or Specific Objective 3) Enhanced sustainability (quality and quantity) of access points to health and nutrition services and information by strengthening service delivery to the Afghan population, with focus on children and women.
- 3.6 contributing to Outcome 3 (or Specific Objective 3) Enhanced employability of both marginalised documented Afghan and host community adolescents and young female heads of household through improved access to quality skills development opportunities.
- 3.7 contributing to Outcome 3 (or Specific Objective 3) Strengthened national child protection system for both Children on the Move (COM) and host communities.

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities relating to Output 1.1: In Iran, support workforce-registration for data collection, and increase resettlement quota. In Pakistan, help with registration and identity documentation. In Central Asia, improve the protection environment for refugees and asylum-seekers, with unhindered access to territory, efficient referral mechanisms and status determination procedures.

Activities relating to Output 1.2: In Iran, support Afghan refugees to access to primary and secondary education through construction of educational infrastructure, and support access to all three levels of healthcare. In Pakistan, support Persons of Concern (PoCs) access to education facilities and sustainable and affordable energy. In Central Asia, provide multi-purpose cash grants.

Activities relating to Output 1.3: In Iran, support to wage-earning employment, home-based enterprises and vocational training for refugees through the Technical and Vocational Training Organization (TVTO). In Pakistan and Central Asia, support access of refugees and asylum seekers to sustainable livelihoods and economic resilience.

Activities relating to Output 2.1: Support forcibly displaced with resilient livelihoods and skills through TVET.

Activities relating to Output 2.2: Empower refugees and communities to enrol more children, especially girls, in schools.

Activities relating to Output 2.3: Support forcibly displaced community structures and community-based protection.

Activities relating to Output 2.4: Implement coordinated methods of data collection and analysis aimed and tailored to all population types and partners present in the region.

Activities relating to Output 3.1: Increase access to quality (non-)formal education, retention and integration, as well as increase access to quality health care (including nutrition aspects) in host communities.

Activities relating to Output 3.2: Strengthen peaceful coexistence, protection mechanisms and resources and increase access to legal and Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights.

Activities relating to Output 3.3: Enhance self, economic and climate resilience of Afghan families, as well as employability and business opportunities.

Activities relating to Output 3.4: Advocacy and awareness raising with international actors and local stakeholders.

Activities relating to Output 3.5: Increase prevention and early-detection of severe acute malnutrition, providing training for health workers, strengthen care and nutrition of pregnant and lactating women.

Activities relating to Output 3.6: Improve skills-building capabilities, both staff and equipment of youth-oriented NGOs and TVET centres.

Activities relating to Output 3.7: Train frontliners in national organizations on child rights and access to justice for all children and develop Child Protection educational materials and trainings. Develop and pilot implement a community-based model for prevention of violence among Afghan children.

This Action complements the EU's lifesaving assistance provided through its humanitarian aid, and the EU's assistance through stability and resilience activities, thereby applying the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus approach in practice. The Action is in line with EU support announced at Global Refugee Forum 2023 to the ReSolve Multi-stakeholder Pledge for the Afghanistan Situation proposed by UNHCR. The Action contributes to the Regional Team Europe Initiative (TEI) on the Afghan displacement situation which gathers 13 EU Member States and the Union.

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

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

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

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening concluded that no further action was required.

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

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

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

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

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

The Action takes account of the 2024 Gender Country Profile for Afghanistan and will contribute towards the Gender Action Plan (GAP III) priorities: "strengthening economic and social rights and empowering girls and women" and "integrating the women, peace and security agenda".

As per the OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that the current intervention is designed to protect both female and male displaced populations, but that there will be a specific focus on women and girls and the specific discriminations they face. The Action will address female poverty and contributes to alleviate challenges and pressures on families due to their compulsorily negative coping mechanisms (e.g. child labour, early marriage, labour exploitation, debt, illegal activities, onward migration etc.) and secondary displacement, encompassing all human rights. In addition, the Action will address gender-specific needs through efforts to reach female community members through multiple interventions. Social resilience and awareness raising activities will include fostering dialogue between men and women to foster the agency of both and contribute towards gender equality. Similarly, sex disaggregated data throughout the programme cycle (i.e. baseline and results) will help make clear to what extent the programme benefits women and men according to their needs.

Human Rights

Given the nature of the Action, the protection of human rights and due processes will be an integral part of the activities carried out. Protection of human rights for the different categories of "people on the move" and specifically for vulnerable categories, such as children, unaccompanied minors or persons with disabilities, will need to be specifically considered. The Action will apply the human rights-based approach⁵ and its working principles (participation, non-discrimination, accountability and transparency) throughout. The Action is based on international human rights law as well as all relevant branches of international migration and refugee law, ensuring that migrants can have safe access to basic services, and in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Disability

As the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights underlines in its last report (A/HRC/55/80 – February 2024), persons with disabilities experience increased vulnerability including in terms of access to

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/news/taking-forward-commitment-reducing-inequalities-human-rights-based-approach-toolbox-adopted_en

essential services being necessary to shift away from a charity-based model towards a rights-based approach. As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this Action is labelled as D1. This implies that disability is a core component, and therefore this Action, in alignment with EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, will contribute to improve the lives of persons with disabilities, including through promoting health services and education. Disability inclusion will also be mainstreamed in livelihoods interventions and active participation of persons with disabilities and/or their organisations will be promoted.

Reduction of inequalities

As per Inequality Marker, this action is labelled as I-2. This implies that the general objective of the Action is to reduce inequalities and at least one of the specific objectives of the intervention is either to reduce inequality: i) in the country, ii) in a specific geographical area, or iii) in a specific sector. Due to the vulnerable and difficult socioeconomic situation of beneficiaries, this action addresses the bottom (poorest) 40% or socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals, households or groups through activities. As well, it's foreseen to include inequality reduction targets in the plan to evaluate results.

Democracy

Due to its nature, the Action has no direct impact on or linkages to democratic processes in Afghanistan or the region.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

The Action takes into account the latest update on the Human Rights Situation in Afghanistan regarding the restrictions on the rights of women and girls, particularly in education, as well as civil casualties resulting from improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and airstrikes. Furthermore, arbitrary detentions and threats persist against media workers and former government officials continue to occur. Given the context, the Action follows a human-peace-development nexus approach. In addition, as a continuation to the existing Afghan regional action on forced displacement, the Action is informed by the EU's conflict analysis for Afghanistan and designed regarding the evolution of the conflict within the country, as well as the latest regional forced displacement dynamics with Iran and Pakistan.

Disaster Risk Reduction

While this Action does not immediately contribute to disaster risk reduction, it mitigates the impact of natural and man-made disasters and increases the resilience of one of the most vulnerable groups. In terms of governance, the Action recognises the comprehensive approach required to address socio-economic inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in their host or return communities. The high numbers of new refugees, IDPs or returnees in certain areas may increase pressure on natural resources (e.g. water and fuel/wood). A managed approach to land allocation, with impact studies, will avoid installing populations in areas with insufficient resources, preventing future conflicts with the host and return communities.

Other considerations if relevant

N/A

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

| Country | Risks | Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low) | Impact (High/ Medium/ Low) | Mitigating measures |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Pakistan | Risk 1 Access to territory and | High | High | 1. Consistent advocacy with relevant government entities 2. Regular outreach to forcibly displaced and stateless persons, host communities, capacity |

| | | | | |
|-------------|--|---------------|-------------|---|
| | protection | | | <p>building of police and other law enforcement agencies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Regular engagement with the key non-government stakeholders 4. Conduct registration activities to ensure access to protection, assistance and solutions |
| Pakistan | <p>Risk 2</p> <p>Fraud and Corruption in procurement and recruitment</p> | Medium | High | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with pillar-assessed implementing partners which have robust anti-fraud policies and procedures in place |
| Pakistan | <p>Risk 3</p> <p>Compromised voluntary repatriation</p> | High | High | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage with relevant stakeholders to explore alternative solutions 2. Increase media campaign targeting the POR card holders 3. Scale up protection and border monitoring to support collection of data and ensure timely interventions and provision of services 4. Engage donors through the SSAR Support Platform Core Group in support of advocacy to the voluntary and dignified returns |
| Afghanistan | <p>Risk 1</p> <p>Interference and restrictions by the DFA</p> | High | High | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Involving and empowering community structures towards the ownership of solutions 2. Advocate together with UN Agencies for more flexibility in implementation of humanitarian programmes 3. Reallocation of resources from restricted locations to other accessible areas in the country 4. Coordination with donors and DFA on a clarity of use of resources and advocacy for continued support |
| Afghanistan | <p>Risk 2</p> <p>Limited capacity to respond to the humanitarian and basic needs related to forcefully repatriated Afghans</p> | High | High | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage partners to ensure security and coordinated approach at the transit points and in-country movements to areas of origin 2. Protection monitoring at the border crossing points and at the areas of return to ensure adequate access and delivery of protection 3. Encourage a coordinated approach to ensure shared responsibility among UN agencies and other actors at the areas of return as well as cross-border coordination 4. Enhanced communication with communities to share information at border points and areas of return |

| | | | | |
|--------------|---|--------|------|---|
| Iran | Risk 1 Deteriorating Protection Environment and Restricted Asylum Access | High | High | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementing partners to engage with relevant authorities through evidence-based advocacy messages 2. Enhance community-based protection approaches, communicating with communities and accountability to affected populations 3. Implementing partners to strengthen engagement with Provincial authorities 4. Support survivors of protection incidents through provision of services for physical and mental health, safety and protection, livelihoods, access to justice; enhanced communication and coordination with national entities for a comprehensive response |
| Iran | Risk 2 Reduced Government capacity to sustain and implement inclusive policies towards refugees or shift in their position | High | High | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementing partners advocacy and dialogue with Government to further emphasize that inclusion is less costly and a strategic measure from protection, and resource perspectives as well as for overall reputational importance for Iran 2. Continued advocacy with other donors including through joint interventions with other stakeholders to maintain / increase protection space enabling environment for refugees, especially through the Support Platform for the SSAR |
| Iran | Risk 2 Sharp increase in humanitarian needs of refugees and asylum-seekers as a result of a worsened operational environment or natural disaster | High | High | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Periodic security risk assessments and staff training, as well as periodic updates on planning and preparedness 2. Enhance communication between international community and implementing partners 3. Continuous monitoring and communication of socioeconomic situation of refugees, as well as political and security developments |
| Central Asia | Risk 1 Escalated refugee movement from countries impacted by Ukraine situation exceeds response capacities | High | High | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training of NGOs and other stakeholders on refugee influx response and preparedness. Ensure inclusion of clauses on prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in partnership agreements 2. Advocacy and networking with government officials and political opinion-makers. Support and promote the centrality of protection in all inter-agency processes 3. Conduct continuous protection monitoring and reporting (e.g. prevent refoulement, push-back at the border) 4. Implementing partners to undertake initial assessment and mapping of partners, reception facilities, resources and capacity to respond |
| Central Asia | Risk 2 | Medium | High | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct continuous protection monitoring and reporting (e.g. prevent refoulement, push-back |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|----------------|
| | Refugees lack access to territory and asylum | | | at the border) |
|--|--|--|--|----------------|

Lessons Learnt:

A Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) Exercise in October and November 2023 covered Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, and Central Asia, both via interviews and a field visit to Mazar-i-Sharif and Kunduz (Afghanistan), aligning with recommendations from previous ROM Reviews. The findings emphasized the effective design and implementation of the intervention, considering critical recommendations for a stronger regional dimension, engagement with the SSAR Support Platform, harmonization of data collection, and increased development expertise. Some key findings reflected in the ROM Report relevant to the good governance of the Action are that:

- Implementation: demonstrates flexibility and a strong connection to the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) Support Platform. Efforts to strengthen internal development expertise and partnerships, notably with IOM, are notable.
- Logical Framework: lacks a results-oriented focus, but it manages risks well without compromising principles. The intervention contributes to significant outcomes, with potential for expanded benefits pending government approval in host countries.
- Gender considerations and the human rights-based approach are integrated into programming, but reports to the EU lack meaningful analysis on these aspects. Suggestions for additional coordination in strategic messaging with the EU and SSAR framework.
- Recommendations: (i) revising the Logical Framework for more meaningful reporting; (ii) integrating a stronger gender perspective; (iii) facilitating collaboration on data collection with EU-supported organizations; and (iv) expanding advocacy efforts in reports to the donor on protection space and assistance for Afghans.

In Iran, relations and power dynamics with and among the authorities are constantly changing. The emergence of the National Organisation of Migration (NOM) during the current action, critically overlapping with the introduction of 2 new international Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), could simultaneously represent both a risk and an opportunity. Access has reduced over the period of the last 3 years, and of consistency and predictability has remained a key theme.

Successful implementation relies on maintaining a delicate balance and humanitarian organisations are continually challenged to uphold humanitarian principles while ensuring ongoing access to beneficiaries and of beneficiaries to humanitarian services. Approaching the authorities jointly with collective requests and advocacy has remained not an option, reflecting the preference of GIRI for bilateral relations. As a result, each agency has a unique dynamic and way of negotiating with the authorities.

Under the existing programme, the Steering Committee has served an important purpose to support the members to share information, best practices and to agree on what approaches should be held in common; this would continue in the proposed Action. At times adherence to humanitarian principle will and must result in an inability to implement and therefore to spend funds received.

The same shifting dynamics are also present in relations with local partners. Under the existing programme there has been a positive development in that the number of local NGOs with whom INGOs have permission to partner has been increased. Capitalising on that development, it is proposed to modify the approach to these local partners to focus increasingly on relationships that are more results-driven. For example, to deliver effective livelihoods support to vulnerable groups, it is preferable to partner with local partners that have technical expertise and familiarity with the province of implementation. For this to be possible, members will continue negotiating for a broadening of the local partner 'pool' and members will also seek to advocate for addition of Afghan civil society organisations to the list of approved entities, reflecting on the results of research under the current grant which highlighted the significant lack of trust among Afghans of any service providers beyond Afghan community networks, including INGOs.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this Action is that the recent years of conflict in Afghanistan have spurred significant displacement within Afghanistan itself and across its borders into Iran and Pakistan, with continual movements of Afghan populations. The recent political developments and economic challenges in Afghanistan are expected to further exacerbate displacement dynamics in the region.

Against this background, concurrent interventions in four areas - enhancement of protection space, search for durable solutions, building refugee resilience and support for host communities – are intended lead to the stability and improvement of the lives of forcibly displaced Afghans wherever they are, with the specific needs of women and girls and other vulnerable categories being addressed. The four areas are conceptually and operationally tied to one another with mutually reinforcing impacts.

The Action adopts a human rights-based and principled “for-women-by-women” approach putting notably women and girls at the centre of its interventions in Afghanistan, as well as other vulnerable groups. Through a community-driven and needs-specific approach, the Action will focus on enhancing access to basic services such as health and education, protection, economic inclusion and livelihood opportunities, with a particular focus on women and girls, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Leveraging existing service structures will ensure efficiency and avoid duplication of efforts.

Recognizing the regional nature of the Afghan displacement crisis, the intervention logic emphasizes a regional approach that upholds protection spaces in neighbouring countries while addressing the concerns of host countries and supporting their efforts to host Afghan refugees.

At the macro level, this Action will focus on enhancing institutional frameworks and stakeholder capacities to address protection issues in migration and displacement contexts. This includes building the capacity of national and local authorities in Pakistan and Central Asia to deliver services and economic opportunities to both host communities and displaced populations, essential for responsible migration management and effective public service delivery. As per Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions on Afghanistan of 21 September 2021⁶ and 20 March 2023⁷, there will be no involvement of the Taliban de facto authorities and no funds can be channelled through the Taliban de facto authorities neither in Kabul nor at the local level.

At micro-level, our intervention aims to build the resilience and self-reliance of IDPs, returnees, and vulnerable populations on the move, including women, girls, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. This will help beneficiaries establish stable livelihoods and prospects for the future, fostering social cohesion and increasing absorption capacity for returnees in their respective communities. Access to services such as healthcare and education through an intersectional approach, including gender and disability perspective, will be prioritized to ensure that refugees, IDPs, and returnees have the necessary social safety net to focus on improving their socio-economic situations and not just on survival.

⁶ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11713-2021-REV-2/en/pdf>

⁷ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7264-2023-INIT/en/pdf>

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) ⁸ | Baselines (values and years) | Targets (values and years) | Sources of data | Assumptions |
|---------|---|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Impact | To ensure that durable solutions are achieved for Afghan refugees in the region as well as for internally displaced persons in Afghanistan. | 1. % of persons of concern with improved protection and access to durable solutions 2. % of returnees who have successfully reintegrated. | 1. TBD 2. TBD | 1. TBD 2. TBD | Information management activities, implementation reports, monitoring and field visits | <i>Not applicable</i> |

⁸ Dissaggregation by sex, age, disability, (household) income level and refugee status should be included to the extent possible for beneficiary-related indicators.

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|------------------------|------------------------|--|---|
| Outcome 1 | 1. Improved access to health services and education, increased economic self-reliance and enhanced legal protection are achieved for Afghan refugees and other segments of Afghan population in the region. (Iran, Pakistan Central Asia) | 1.1 % of individuals with improved access to health 1.2 Number and details of support provided for refugee and asylum-seeking women's and girls' economic and social empowerment in the country of origin, in refugee camps, in transit or the country of destination. (WPS Ind. 28) (GAP III) ⁹ | 1.1 TBD 1.2 TBD | 1.1 TBD 1.2 TBD | Information management activities, reports, reports by implementing partners. Information is collected through monitoring and field visits by partner and implementing partners Age, gender, diversity disaggregated data. | Sufficient humanitarian access in all three countries, in particular Afghanistan. |
| Outcome 2 | 2. Access to sustainable, accessible and inclusive livelihood opportunities, services and urgent needs assistance for Afghan returnees arriving in Afghanistan, with particular focus on vulnerable groups such as women headed households, unaccompanied minors, and persons with disabilities. (Afghanistan) | 2.1. Proportion of people who self-report positive changes in their income compared to previous years, including disaggregated data (at least gender, age and disability status) 2.2. Extent to which measures supported by income level, age, sex, disability status, refugee status the EU to prevent and combat sexual and gender-based violence in situations of fragility and conflict are effective in preventing sexual and gender-based violence and providing services to survivors (GAP III) | 2.1 TBD | 2.1 TBD | Information management activities, reports, reports by implementing partners. Information is collected through monitoring and field visits by partner and implementing partners Results Monitoring Survey Age, gender, disability and diversity disaggregated data. | Sufficient accessible and inclusive humanitarian access in Afghanistan is granted, including for persons with disabilities, while women and men are equally allowed to work in humanitarian aid programmes. |

⁹ This indicator should also be collected for activities under Outcome 3 to the extent possible.

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|-----------|---|--|---|
| Outcome 3 | 3. Increased access of Afghans, especially children, in Iran to national services with a focus on education and health services while strengthening the resilience of the services. | 3.1 Global Europe Results Framework (GERF) 2.20 Number of migrants, refugees, and internally displaced people or individuals from host communities protected or assisted with EU support in Iran | 3.1 0 | 3.1 TBD | | |
| | | 3. 2 Percentage of assisted population reporting improved access to basic services (education, healthcare, Rights & protection, livelihood). | 3.2 N/A | 3.2 TBD | | |
| Output 1 relating to Outcome 1 | Iran 1.1.1 Registration–Workforce for enhanced registration and data collection. 1.1.1.2 Registration–Workforce to support the facilitation of increased resettlement quota. | 1.1.1 #of people registered on an individual basis | 1.1.1 TBD | 1.1.1 50,000 (2025); 50,000 (2026); 50,000 (2027) | Monitoring reports and data portal | Political, economic and security conditions in Iran remains conducive for continuing the implementation of the projects as planned. Context allows for physical visits. |
| | | 1.1.1.2 # of PoCs submitted for resettlement including through complementary pathways | 1.1.2 TBD | 1.1.1.2 4,000 (2025); 4,000 (2026); 4,000 (2027) | | |
| | Pakistan 1.1.2 Registration and documentation - Refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons in Pakistan have access to registration and identity documentation | 1.1.3 Proportion of refugees and asylum seekers registered on an individual basis | 1.1.3 70% | 1.1.3 100% (3 years) | Narrative internal and implementing partner reports Government data | Political and security situation in Pakistan remains stable. Political relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan remain stable, thus not impacting the refugees in Pakistan. |
| | | 1.1.4 Screening mechanisms are established (yes/no) | 1.1.4 No | 1.1.4 Yes | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| | Central Asia Protection and advocacy – 1.1.3 Improved protection environment for refugees and asylum-seekers, with unhindered access to territory, efficient referral mechanisms and status determination procedures, and access to social and economic rights accorded by the 1951 Refugee Convention. | 1.1.5 Advocacy for alignment of national legislation with the Refugee Convention and international standards to strengthen law and policies for protection of refugees and asylum-seekers | 1.1.5 36 months [12 months/ year] | 1.1.5 36 months [12 months/ year] | Narrative internal and implementing partners' reports.' |
| | | 1.1.6 Capacity strengthening with State institutions, civil society, academia and other partners, including on Refugee Status Determination, and application of international refugee and human rights law for the protection of forcibly displaced people | 1.1.6 36 months [12 months/ year] | 1.1.6 36 months [12 months/ year] | |
| | | 1.1.7 Advocacy for inclusion of forcibly displaced people and local integration through facilitated residency and naturalisation | 1.1.7 36 months [12 months/ year] | 1.1.7 36 months [12 months/ year] | |
| | | 1.1.8 Provision of legal assistance, counselling and asylum information to forcibly displaced people, and court representation in cases of negative decisions | 1.1.8 36 months [12 months/ year] | 1.1.8 36 months [12 months/ year] | |
| | | 1.1.9 Number of officials trained on Refugee Status Determination. | 1.1.9 105 [35/ year] | 1.1.9 105 [35/ year] | |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Output 2 relating to Outcome 1 | <p>Iran</p> <p>1.2.1 Education– support and extend access to primary and secondary education in public schools for Afghan refugees’ school-age children through construction of educational infrastructure</p> <p>1.2.2 Health– Support access to secondary and tertiary healthcare for Afghan refugees through the national health insurance system</p> <p>1.2.2.1 Health– Maintain and support the quality of primary healthcare provided to the Afghan refugee population (provision of essential medication and support to essential health personnel in health posts)</p> | <p>1.2.1 # of schools constructed/repared by area</p> <p>1.2.2 # of PoCs referred to secondary/tertiary healthcare</p> <p>1.2.2.1 # of health facilities supported by area</p> | 1.2.1 TBD | <p>1.2.1 5 (2025); 5(2026); 5 (2027)</p> <p>1.2.2 95,000 (2025); 95,000 (2026); 95,000 (2027)</p> <p>1.2.3 134 (2025); 134 (2026); 134 (2027)</p> | <p>Narrative reports and monitoring reports from MoHME</p> <p>Physical monitoring reports from the Iran Health Insurance Organization</p> <p>Weekly central ExCom meetings.</p> <p>Narrative reports and monitoring reports from MoE</p> <p>Physical monitoring visits.</p> | <p>Despite the challenging geopolitical situation of Iran, the Government will continue to implement inclusive social protection policies, providing Afghans’ access to national service structures, in particular in relation to health and education.</p> |
| | <p>Pakistan</p> <p>1.2.3 Education - PoCs access education facilities – primary, secondary, and tertiary – leading to higher education status among PoCs</p> <p>1.2.4 Energy - Refugees have sustainable and affordable access to energy.</p> | <p>1.2.3 %of children and young people enrolled in the national education system</p> <p>1.2.4 % of people that have energy to ensure lighting</p> | <p>1.2.3 14%</p> <p>1.2.4 26%</p> | <p>1.2.3 15% (2025), 18% (2026), 20% (2027)</p> <p>1.2.4 30% (3 years)</p> | <p>Partners’ reports</p> <p>Physical monitoring visits</p> <p>Reports</p> | <p>1.2.3 Government continues to allow refugee children to attend public schools.</p> |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|------------------------------|---|--|--|
| | Central Asia 1.2.5 Cash assistance – Basic needs of vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers are met through provision of multi-purpose cash grants. | 1.2.5 # of people who received cash assistance | 1.2.5 2903 people per year | 1.2.5 2,500 people per year | Narrative internal and implementing partner reports Government data | Governments are willing to extend protection space in line with international standards. |
| Output 3 Relating to Outcome 1 | Iran 1.3.1 Livelihoods–Access to wage earning employment facilitated: Support access to wage-earning employment or the establishment of home-based enterprises, small and business and manufacturing workshops for refugees. 1.3.1.2 Livelihoods–Vocational Training/technical skills provided: Support government-certified technical and vocational training for refugees through the Technical and Vocational Training Organization (TVTO) | 1.3.1 # of people served 1.3.1.2 # of PoCs enrolled in formal national certified skills training. | 1.3.1 TBD 1.3.1.2 TBD | 1.3.1 60 (2025); 60 (2026); 60 (2027) 1.3.1.2 800 (2025); 800 (2026); 800 (2027) | Narrative reports and monitoring reports from MoHME Physical monitoring visits Narrative reports and monitoring reports from the Iran Health Insurance Organization Weekly central ExCom meetings Narrative reports and monitoring reports from MoHME, physical monitoring visits, UNHCR Data Portal Iran Monitoring reports Physical monitoring visits Narrative reports from partners | The Government is likely to be open to livelihoods opportunities for refugees. |

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|---|---|---|----------------------------|---|---|--|
| | Pakistan 1.3.2 Livelihoods and Self-Reliance Refugees and asylum seekers have increased access to sustainable livelihoods opportunities and economic inclusion | 1.3.2 # of people who benefitted from livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions | 1.3.2 5,000 | 1.3.2 21,000 (3 years) | Partners' report Physical ground verification | Sufficient humanitarian access. The political and security situation in Afghanistan remains favourable for continued voluntary repatriation. |
| | Central Asia 1.3.3 Livelihoods – Refugees and asylum-seekers have access to an increased number of livelihood opportunities to support their resilience and self-reliance | 1.3.3 # of people who benefitted from livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions | 1.3.3 608 people per year | 1.3.3 900 individuals (some who may benefit from multiple interventions) | Narrative internal and implementing partners' reports | Governments of related countries will continue to gradually expand space for livelihoods opportunities for refugees, recognising refugee's contribution to the national economy, while equipping them with market driven skills. |
| Output 1 relating to Outcome 2 | 2.1.1 Livelihoods– More forcibly displaced have access to diversified and resilient livelihoods, including microfinance. 2.1.2 Livelihoods–Refugees/IDP returnees have their skills upgraded through TVET and other employability enhancement schemes. | 2.1.1 # of people who benefitted from livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions 2.1.2 # of people reached with technical, vocational and educational training (TVET) and employability enhancement initiatives. | 2.1.1 TBD 2.1.2 TBD | 2.1.1 32,000 (2025); 33,000 (2026); 34,000 (2027) 2.1.2 9,900 (2025); 11,220 (2026); 13,200 (2027) | Livelihoods programming administrative data Monitoring reports | Direct or indirect access to the people served in Afghanistan will remain possible. |
| Output 2 relating to Outcome 2 | 2.2.1 Education–Refugees and communities are increasingly empowered to enrol more children, especially girls, in schools. | 2.2.1 # of people who benefitted from education programming. | 2.2.1 TBD | 2.2.1 2,000 (2025); 5,000 (2026); 6,000 (2027) | Narrative internal and implementing partners' reports | Direct or indirect access to the people served in Afghanistan will remain possible. |

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|---|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| Output 3 relating to Outcome 2 | 2.3 Community-based Protection and resilience— Refugees, returnees and IDPs, and refugee community structures are strengthened and contribute to community-based protection. | 2.3.1 # of people who received protection services through a community-based approach. | 2.3.1 TBD | 2.3.1 9,900 in the 3 years. | Narrative internal and implementing partners' reports | Direct or indirect access to the people served in Afghanistan will remain possible. |
| Output 4 relating to Outcome 2 | 2.4 Data enhancement: Data collection and analysis across different population types and partners is streamlined and reduces duplication of assessments and surveys. | 2.4.1. # of joint assessments and analysis partner participates in / contributes to. | 2.4.1 TBD | 2.4.1 2 assessments/surveys (2025); 2 (2026); 2 (2027) | Narrative internal and implementing partners' reports | Direct or indirect access to the people served in Afghanistan will remain possible. |
| Output 1 relating to outcome 3 | 3.1 Increased access to essential services, including education and health, for vulnerable Afghan refugees and host communities in Iran. | <p>3.1.1 Number of migrants, refugees, and internally displaced people or individuals from host communities assisted to access essential services with EU support.</p> <p>3.1.2 Percentage of Afghan children enrolled in school who complete the school year (disaggregated by sex).</p> <p>3.1.3 Percentage of beneficiaries reporting access to appropriate healthcare related services.</p> | <p>N/A – this refers only to the beneficiaries supported during this project</p> <p>N/A – this refers only to the children to be enrolled during the project</p> | <p>3.1.1 89,020</p> <p>3.1.2 60%</p> <p>3.1.3 80%</p> | | |

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|--------------------------------|--|---|-----|--|--|--|
| Output 2 relating to outcome 3 | 3.2 Fostering respect to the Rights and Dignity of Afghan Refugees in Iran | <p>3.2.1 Number of people who have benefitted from Protection including Case Management Individual Protection Assistance, PSS, Referrals, PFA, information, counselling and legal assistance on documentation, essential services and HLP rights.</p> <p>3.2.2 Percentage of beneficiaries reporting that cash assistance and PSS are delivered in a safe, accessible, accountable, and participatory manner.</p> <p>3.2.3 Percentage of children who showed improved psychosocial well-being after participating in Child Friendly Spaces activities.</p> <p>3.2.4 Percentage of participants/individuals who report that assistance received contributed to preventing eviction.</p> <p>3.2.5 Percentage of project participants who report/are observed taking appropriate action to obtain refugees status, immigration and/or residency, legal identity or civil documentation, securing employment-related rights and access essential services</p> | N/A | <p>3.2.1 10,200</p> <p>3.2.2. 70%</p> <p>3.2.3 50%</p> <p>3.2.4 60%</p> <p>3.2.5 80%</p> | | |
|--------------------------------|--|---|-----|--|--|--|

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|---------------------------------------|--|--|-----|--|--|--|
| Output 3 relating to outcome 3 | 3.3 Improved self-reliance and economic resilience of most vulnerable Afghan families through improved livelihoods, access to sustainable income and food security in Iran | <p>3.3.1 Number of Afghan nationals and members of host communities who received support in the area of livelihood creation from the EU by sex, age and disability.</p> <p>3.3.2 Percentage of beneficiaries showing improvement in self-sufficiency three months after assistance (Self Reliance Index).</p> <p>3.3.3 Percentage of beneficiaries reporting increased income (Disaggregated by Gender, Disability and Type of Livelihood Intervention).</p> | N/A | <p>3.3.1 1,335</p> <p>3.3.2 60%</p> <p>3.3.3 60%</p> | | |
| Output 4 relating to outcome 3 | 3.4 Strengthening the humanitarian response in Iran through enhanced adherence to humanitarian standards, national and international awareness raising and advocacy | 3.4.1 Number of advocacy activities implemented including awareness raising, coordination, fundraising, and situation reports. | N/A | 3.4.1 66 | | |

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|---------------------------------------|--|--|-----|---|--|--|
| Output 5 relating to outcome 3 | 3.5 Enhanced sustainability (quality and quantity) of access points to health and nutrition services and information by strengthening service delivery to the Afghan population, with focus on children and women. | <p>3.5.1 Number of primary health care service centers (PHCs) supported by area</p> <p>3.5.2 Provision of free routine pregnancy tests to pregnant women supported</p> <p>3.5.3 Number of nutrition experts in the PHC to deliver quality nutrition services to caregivers of malnourished children trained.</p> <p>3.5.4 Number of trainings to enhance health frontline workers and health promoters (Safiran Salamat) knowledge and skills, including community engagement, communication, and digital skills, for provision of gender-responsive and inclusive services delivered.</p> | N/A | <p>3.5.1 5</p> <p>3.5.2 3,000</p> <p>3.5.3 TBD</p> <p>3.5.3 TBD</p> | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|-----|---|--|--|

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|---------------------------------------|---|---|------------------------|--|--|--|
| Output 6 relating to outcome 3 | 3.6 Enhanced employability of both marginalised documented Afghan and host community adolescents and young female heads of household through improved access to quality skills development opportunities. | 3.6.1 Number of youth NGOs working with vulnerable adolescents to provide comprehensive skills development packages for adolescent girls and boys strengthened. 3.6.2 Number of adolescents, in both formal and non-formal settings, that benefit directly from the training programmes. 3.6.3 Number of TVET centers provided through the action with equipment by area 3.6.4 Number of TVET instructors participating in training 3.6.5 Number of adolescent expression and innovation kits distributed to vulnerable adolescents in youth NGOs | N/A | 3.6.1 5 3.6.2 1,800 (dissaggregated by sex and age) 3.6.3 15 3.6.4 100 3.6.5 100 | | |
| Output 7 relating to outcome 3 | 3.7 Strengthened accessible and inclusive national child protection system for both Children on the Move (COM) and host communities. | 3.7.1 Gender-responsive and disability-inclusive Child Protection educational materials and training programmes developed 3.7.2 Community-based model for prevention of violence among Afghan children and the host community developed and pilot implemented | 3.7.1 0 3.7.2 0 | 3.7.1 1 3.7.2 1 | | |

4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this Action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement.

4.2 Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this Action, during which the activities described in section 3.3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 60 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.

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

4.3 Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures¹⁰.

4.3.1 Direct Management (Grants)

Grants: (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

The grant would contribute to achieve Special Objectives 3, and pursue outputs 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

The applicants targeted are international Non-Governmental Organisations (INGO) active in the sector of migration and forced displacement.

(c) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to international Non-Governmental Organisations (INGO) active in the sector of migration and forced displacement, selected using the following criteria:

- At least 10 years of experience and a well-established presence in Iran
- A proven, successful track record of engaging in refugee protection measures specifically targeting minors
- Experience with providing protection and basic services to vulnerable populations
- Experience in assisting host communities and promoting social cohesion

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because Iran is in a crisis situation with an active crisis declaration covering support offered with this Action, and there are a very limited number of INGOs which have authorisation to work in Iran. Furthermore, in line with Art 195(f) of the Financial Regulation, the activities to be carried out have specific characteristics that require a migration-focused INGO on account of its technical competence, and its high degree of specialisation.

The part of the Action under the budgetary envelope reserved for grants may, partially or totally and including where an entity is designated for receiving a grant without a call for proposals, be implemented in indirect management with an entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services the criteria defined in section 4.3.1.c above.

¹⁰ www.sanctionsmap.eu. 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.

4.3.2 Indirect Management with an entrusted entity

This Action may be implemented in indirect management with several entities, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

For the indirect management component of specific objective 1 and 2 on Iran, Pakistan, Central Asia and Afghanistan:

- At least 10 years of experience and a well-established presence in Afghanistan, Iran and/or Pakistan
- At least 5 years of experience and presence in Central Asia
- A proven, successful track record of engaging in refugee protection measures
- Experience with providing protection and basic services to vulnerable populations, including children
- Experience in assisting host communities and promoting social cohesion

The implementation by these entities entails achieving the objectives under section 3.1 and activities under section 3.2.

If negotiations with the above-mentioned entity/ies fail and/or circumstances in the country do not allow for implementation through an International Organisation, (that part of) this action may be implemented in direct management in accordance with the implementation modalities identified in section 4.3.2.

4.3.3 Changes from indirect to direct management mode (and vice versa) due to exceptional circumstances (one alternative second option)

The part of the Action under the budgetary envelope reserved for direct management may partially or totally be implemented in indirect management with an entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the criteria defined in section 4.3.1. The same will apply to the opposite case where the part of the action reserved for indirect management may be implemented in direct management (grants) following the criteria mentioned under 4.3.1 will apply.

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) |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Budget support | N.A. |
| Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.3 | |
| Objective/Outputs 1 Improved access to health services and education, increased economic self-reliance and enhanced legal protection are achieved for Afghan refugees and other segments of Afghan population in the region (Iran, Pakistan, Central Asia) composed of | 36 000 000 |
| Objective/Outputs 2 Access to sustainable livelihood opportunities, services and | |

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| urgent needs assistance for Afghan returnees arriving in Afghanistan, with particular focus on vulnerable groups such as women headed households and unaccompanied minors (Afghanistan) composed of | |
| Prize (direct management) | N.A. |
| Indirect management with an IGO - cf. section 4.3.2 | 36 000 000 |
| Objective/Outputs 3 Increased access of Afghans, especially children, in Iran to national services with a focus on education and health services while strengthening the resilience of the services composed of | 12 000 000 |
| Indirect management with an IGO- cf. section 4.3.2 | 2 000 000 |
| Grant (direct management) with an INGO - cf. section 4.3.1 | 10 000 000 |
| Procurement (direct management) | N.A. |
| Implementation through Service Level Agreement with | N.A. |
| Grants – total envelope under section 4.3.1 | 10 000 000 |
| Procurement | N.A. |
| Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3 | covered by another Decision |
| Totals | 48 000 000 |

4.6 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The Project Steering Committees (PSCs) set up to ensure overall coherence and coordination of activities and will oversee the implementation of this action and its subcomponents. The PSCs will comprise relevant entities, other implementing partners, and the respective EU Delegations and/or Headquarters services. The PSCs will meet at least once per year. Where possible, the authorities of Pakistan and Central Asia will also be closely associated to the steering process of the action. Project Steering Committees involving the Taliban de facto authorities are not envisaged.

EU Delegations, and INTPA HQ for what concerns Iran, as well as ECHO offices in the countries where project activities are implemented will be invited to the Steering Committee meetings and informed of project implementation and progress.

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 and may sign or enter into joint declarations or statements, for the purpose of enhancing the visibility of the EU and its contribution to this action and ensuring effective coordination.

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 (for project modality) and the partner's strategy, policy or reform action plan list (for budget support).

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).

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring:

Monitoring will assess gender equality and disability inclusion results and the implementation of the rights-based approach working principles (applying all human rights for all; meaningful, accessible and inclusive participation and access to decision making; non-discrimination and equality; accountability and rule of law for all; and transparency and access to information supported by disaggregated data). Monitoring will be based on indicators that are disaggregated by income level, sex, age, and disability when applicable. All monitoring and reporting shall assess how the action is taking into account inequality reduction. The Distributional Impact Assessment tool (DIA) will be applied to the extent possible, as a data source whenever other sources (national, regional, local data) are not available to monitor whether expected outputs have, to a large extent, benefited socio-economically disadvantaged groups, households and individuals. The DIA can also be performed to the extent possible at the start of the implementation phase to a) locate where the most vulnerable live and target them geographically; b) identify main drivers of inequalities (e.g. reasons for not accessing some services) c) unveil intersectionalities (e.g. bottom 40 income who are women, children, persons with disabilities, etc.).

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring is with the implementing partner. The implementing partner will sub-contract a third party service provider, with a strong analytical credentials and substantial experience in the field to help with analysis and with organising active and meaningful participation of stakeholders in Afghanistan and – to the extent that conditions allow - Iran, as field visit cannot be meaningfully organised by EU staff at the current moment. The third party service provider will be chosen in coordination with the managing EU Delegation, to assure impartiality in the assessment and alignment with EU operational needs.

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the importance of the Action, a final evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components contracted by the Commission. It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the fact that this Action is focusing on aid delivery in an extremely volatile and fragile context. The lessons learnt from this Action could support development cooperation efforts not only in Afghanistan, but also in other fragile contexts. The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least two months in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation plan (or component in the foreseen evaluation) should assess the distributional impact of activities undertaken on the socio-economically disadvantaged individuals, households or groups. This should be done to the extent possible through the Distributional Impact Assessment tool (DIA). The DIA analysis looks at the effective targeting of beneficiaries of development interventions, identifying if more than 40 per cent of beneficiaries are at the bottom two quintiles of the income or wealth distribution. It also allows to evaluate whether effective targeting has been done towards women, children and youth or other disadvantaged groups (e.g. ethnic minorities) or at territorial level. Expertise on inequality reduction will be ensured in the evaluation teams.

The evaluation reports may be shared with the partners and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, apply the necessary adjustments. 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 will adopt a new approach to pooling, programming and deploying strategic communication and public diplomacy resources.

In line with the 2022 “Communicating and Raising EU Visibility: Guidance for External Actions”¹¹, it will remain a contractual obligation for all entities implementing EU-funded external actions 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. 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.

However, action documents for specific sector programmes are in principle no longer required to include a provision for communication and visibility actions promoting the programmes concerned. These resources will instead be consolidated in Cooperation Facilities established by support measure action documents, allowing Delegations to plan and execute multiannual strategic communication and public diplomacy actions with sufficient critical mass to be effective on a national scale.

Any communication related to this specific action must be undertaken prudently and attentively, demonstrating the EU’s direct support to the population and distancing from the Taliban de facto authorities.

¹¹ [Communicating and raising EU visibility: Guidance for external actions - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

Appendix 1 REPORTING IN OPSYS

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

Articulating Actions or Contracts according to an expected chain of results and therefore allowing them to ensure efficient monitoring and reporting of performance;

Differentiating these Actions or Contracts from those that do not produce direct reportable development results, defined as support entities (i.e. audits, evaluations);

Having a complete and exhaustive mapping of all results-bearing Actions and Contracts.

Primary Interventions are identified during the design of each action by the responsible service (Delegation or Headquarters operational Unit).

The level of the Primary Intervention chosen can be modified (directly in OPSYS) and the modification does not constitute an amendment of the action document.

The intervention level for the present Action identifies as (tick one of the 4 following options);

| | | |
|--|----------------------|--|
| Action level (i.e. Budget Support, blending) | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Single action | Present action: all contracts in the present action |
| Group of actions level (i.e. top-up cases, different phases of a single programme) | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Group of actions | Actions reference (CRIS#/OPSYS#): <Present action> <Other action(s)> |
| Contract level | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Single Contract 1 | <foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract)> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Single Contract 2 | <foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract)> |
| | (...) | |
| Group of contracts level (i.e. series of programme estimates, cases in which an Action includes for example four contracts and two of them, a technical assistance contract and a contribution agreement, aim at the same objectives and complement each other) | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Group of contracts 1 | <foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract) 1> <foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract) 2> <foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract) #> |

Appendix 2 COMMISSION DECISION & TECHNICAL and ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

| | Project modality (Incl. thematic and regional programmes, as well as calls for proposals) | | Budget support | | No activities to be implemented by, and no funds to be transferred to, the Partner country, with signature of a Financing Agreement based of the 'simplified' template | |
|--|--|---|---------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Action Document | Annex Commission Decision | Technical and Administrative Provisions (TAPs) | Annex Commission Decision | Technical and Administrative Provisions (TAPs) | Annex Commission Decision | Technical and Administrative Provisions (TAPs) |
| 1. SYNOPSIS | | | | | | |
| 1.1. Action Summary Table | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| 1.2. Summary of the Action | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 2. RATIONALE | | | | | | |
| 2.1. Context | Yes | N/A | Yes | N/A | Yes | N/A |
| 2.2. Problem Analysis | Yes | N/A | Yes | N/A | Yes | N/A |
| 2.3. Additional Areas of Assessment [For Budget Support Actions only] | N/A | N/A | Yes | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 2.3.1. Pre-condition on Fundamental values (for a SDG contracts only) | N/A | N/A | Yes | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 2.3.2. Public Policy | N/A | N/A | Yes | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 2.3.3. Macroeconomic Policy | N/A | N/A | Yes | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 2.3.4. Public Financial Management | N/A | N/A | Yes | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 2.3.5. Transparency and Oversight of the Budget | N/A | N/A | Yes | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION | | | | | | |
| 3.1. Objectives and Expected Outputs | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| 3.2. Indicative Activities | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| 3.3. Mainstreaming | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| 3.4. Risks and Lessons Learnt | Yes | N/A | Yes | N/A | Yes | N/A |
| 3.5. The Intervention Logic | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| 3.6. Logical Framework Matrix | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| 4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS | | | | | | |
| 4.1. Financing Agreement | Yes | N/A | Yes | N/A | Yes | N/A |
| 4.2. Indicative Implementation Period | Yes | N/A | Yes | N/A | Yes | N/A |
| 4.3. Implementation of the Budget Support Component | N/A | N/A | Yes | Yes | N/A | N/A |

| | Project modality (Incl. thematic and regional programmes, as well as calls for proposals) | | Budget support | | No activities to be implemented by, and no funds to be transferred to, the Partner country, with signature of a Financing Agreement based of the 'simplified' template | |
|--|--|--|---------------------------|---|--|--|
| Action Document | Annex Commission Decision | Technical and Administrative Provisions (TAPs) | Annex Commission Decision | Technical and Administrative Provisions (TAPs) | Annex Commission Decision | Technical and Administrative Provisions (TAPs) |
| (and subsections) | | | | | | |
| 4.4. Implementation Modalities (and subsections) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| 4.5. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| 4.6. Indicative Budget | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| 4.7. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | If applicable and relevant | If applicable and relevant |
| 4.8 Pre-conditions [only for project modality] | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A | Yes | If relevant and applicable |
| 5. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT | | | | | | |
| 5.1. Monitoring and Reporting | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| 5.2. Evaluation | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| 5.3. Audit and Verifications | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| 6. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY | | | | | | |
| 6. Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| APPENDICES | | | | | | |
| Appendix 1 Reporting in OPSYS | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Appendix 2 Commission Decision and TAPs | Delete and replace with Appendix for Blending if applicable | N/A | N/A | Delete and replace with Appendix for Budget Support if applicable | N/A | N/A |
| Other: Appendix only for Blending: List Lead Finance Institutions | To be added | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Other: Appendix only for Budget Support (Disbursement Arrangements, Conditions and Performance Indicators) | N/A | N/A | N/A | To be added | N/A | N/A |