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

**ANNEX I**

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multiannual action plan in favour of Paraguay for 2024 and 2025

**Action Document to reduce inequalities in education through improved access and quality**

**MULTIANNUAL PLAN**

This document constitutes the 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

<b>1. Title</b> <b>CRIS/OPSYS business reference</b> <b>Basic Act</b>	<b>Boosting opportunities through education: EDU-Impulsa Paraguay</b> <b>“Impulsando oportunidades a través de la educación: EDU-Impulsa Paraguay”</b>  OPSYS number: ACT-62535  Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument ( <u>NDICI-Global Europe</u> )
<b>2. Team Europe Initiative</b>	No
<b>3. Zone benefiting from the action</b>	The action shall be carried out in Paraguay
<b>4. Programming document</b>	Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 <sup>1</sup>
<b>5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results</b>	Priority Area 2 - Fight against inequalities  Specific Objective 1: To promote the inclusiveness of the education system through improved access and reduction of exclusion of the most vulnerable children and adolescents from school”. It complements other “equality builders” under the same priority area such as social protection and gender equality.
<b>PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION</b>	
<b>6. Priority Area(s), sectors</b>	<b>110 - Education</b>

<sup>1</sup> C(2021) 8988 final

<b>7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>	<b>Main SDG:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</li> </ul> <b>Other significant SDGs:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere</li> <li>SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries</li> </ul>			
<b>8 a) DAC code(s)</b>	<b>110 – EDUCATION</b> 11260 – Lower Secondary Education (20%) 11320 – Upper Secondary Education (40%) 11330 – Vocational Training (40%)			
<b>8 b) Main Delivery Channels</b>	40000 – Multilateral Organisations 60000 – Private Sector Institutions 90000 – Other			
<b>9. Targets</b>	Please, indicate (if relevant) to which target(s) (including NDICI-Global Europe Regulation, EU targets) this action is contributing to (indicatively) <input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
<b>10. Markers (from DAC form)</b>	<b>General policy objective</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>RIO Convention markers</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Biological diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>11. Internal markers and Tags:</b>	<b>Policy objectives</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Digitalisation @		X	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship digital skills/literacy digital services	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Connectivity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital connectivity energy transport health education and research	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Migration (methodology for tagging under development)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities @ (methodology for marker and tagging under development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>BUDGET INFORMATION</b>	
<b>12. Amounts concerned</b>	<p>Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020140</p> <p>Total estimated cost: EUR 12,473,685</p> <p>Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 12,000,000</p> <p>This action foresees a contribution from the entrusted entities of EUR 473,685</p> <p>The EU contribution is for an amount of EUR 7,000,000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2024 and for an amount of EUR 5,000,000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2025, subject to the availability of appropriations for the respective financial years following the adoption of the relevant annual budget, or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.</p>
<b>MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>	
<b>13. Type of financing</b>	<p><b>Direct management</b> through:</p> <p>Procurement</p> <p><b>Indirect management</b> with the entrusted entities to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.4</p> <p>Contribution Agreements</p>

## 1.2. Summary of the Action

<p>The Action will contribute to reducing inequalities by promoting greater access, inclusion, and quality in the education system, with a focus on the needs of the most vulnerable groups in society. It will contribute to the development of human capital through access and retention of students in the education system and to strengthening the quality of lower and upper secondary education in its various modalities. It will consolidate the national system of professional qualifications and focus on improving technical and vocational education and training in its three levels of attention: basic vocational training, intermediate vocational training and technical baccalaureate and higher technical training.</p> <p>This action is aligned to the national constitution, government plans and priorities and to the new Paraguayan Education Sector Plan known as the Education Improvement Program 2023-2028 “Ñamombarete Tekambo’e”. This plan aims to enhance the quality of education through improved access and learning outcomes for all students, strengthened teacher training, greater vocational education and better education management.</p> <p>The project will have an impact at national level as it promotes improved Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) education policy and at a local level as pedagogic innovations will be implemented in the selected regions of Concepción, San Pedro and Amambay. These three regions experience high levels of inequality (poverty, ethnicity, and rurality) and will face many challenges and opportunities in the coming years due to the potential impact of significant planned investments. The action will focus on the most disadvantaged groups; children, adolescents, youth and adults in urban, rural areas, indigenous communities, people living in poverty and students with disabilities.</p> <p>The overall aim is to reduce the inequalities that persist in the education system and that have led to unsatisfactory learning outcomes, low achievement levels and high dropout and exclusion rates for marginalised students. Socio-economic status, ethnicity and geographical location continue to be powerful determining factors in the completion of lower and upper secondary education, perpetuating and deepening existing inequalities.</p> <p>The intervention will be aligned with the national constitution, government plans and priorities. The expected results include:</p>
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- a) Improvement of the development of training and certifications that can be used for labour insertion linked to the different investments in the targeted territories,
- b) Strengthening of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) with the consolidation of the National System of Qualifications and the dynamic updating of professional profiles
- c) Strengthening of the TVET institutional framework with established links between the Ministry of Education and Science (MEC) and the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security (MTESS) and the productive sector
- d) higher access and retention rates (with a focus on lower and upper secondary education) with respect to the most vulnerable (girls, indigenous population, people living in poverty, people with disabilities, etc.),
- e) better learning outcomes for the most vulnerable (girls, indigenous population, people living in poverty, people with disabilities, etc.)
- f) increased capacities at the level of the MEC to design and implement educational proposals relevant to the contexts of vulnerability at lower at upper secondary level and in the various learning modalities.

### **1.3 Zone benefiting from the action**

The action shall be carried out in Paraguay, which is included in the list of Official Development Assistance (ODA) recipients.

## **2. RATIONALE**

### **2.1. Context**

Paraguay is a politically and macro-economically stable country with solid economic growth until 2019 (4% of GDP growth on average) that contributed to raising living standards of Paraguayans over a decade. Following a low growth period during 2020-2023, there is a strong upturn with 3.8% GDP growth forecast for 2024. With a per capita income of over US\$5,700, Paraguay is an upper middle-income country. The country has a considerable endowment of natural resources, enormous energy potential, ample fertile land, and a youthful population.

Although economic growth has been consistently above the regional average, several analysts recognise the need to diversify economic production, formalise the economy and integrate marginalised populations that are excluded from productive employment (poor, rural, remote and indigenous populations). It is necessary to move from a limited production matrix to a more diversified and sustainable one, through the design and implementation of development strategies that include education and social welfare at their core.

Given the potential youth dividend in Paraguay with approximately 50% of the population below the age of 27, human capital development, which enhances the skills, knowledge, and abilities of the workforce, is a significant driver of economic growth. By investing in education and training Paraguay can improve the productivity and efficiency of its workforce, leading to higher economic output and improved living standards. Greater education attainment can similarly help lift people out of poverty by providing them with the skills and resources they need to secure better-paying jobs and access essential services. This, in turn, can reduce income inequality and improve social mobility in Paraguay.

The Paraguayan education system is composed of 10,156 educational institutions (MEC, 2023) located in 9,197 educational premises, which in turn have 1,543,057 students enrolled in the different levels and modalities. The education system has 93,117 teachers, of which 77,822 are classroom teachers, 11.7% in Early Education (EI), 62% in Basic School Education (EEB) and 19.6% in Secondary Education (EM) (MEC, 2021) with the remaining proportion in lifelong learning for adults.

Education in Paraguay faces several challenges, among others:

Access, coverage and attainment: Despite efforts to improve access to education, marginalised groups such as poor, rural and indigenous communities suffer significant disparities in educational coverage, learning outcomes and completion rates.

Educational quality: Despite a number of initiatives aimed at improving the quality of education, including teacher training and curriculum updating, problems persist in relation to the relevance of education and the failure to offer differentiated approaches for specific territorial and socio-economic needs. Learning results remain poor as evidenced in regional and international assessments, with the vast majority of teenagers unable to solve basic mathematical operations nor to comprehend what they are reading.

Socio-economic inequalities: Education in Paraguay is affected by socio-economic inequalities, with disparities in access to quality education between different income and ethnic groups in society.

Bilingualism and indigenous education: Paraguay is a multilingual country with a significant indigenous population. However, bilingual education for indigenous communities is limited and faces challenges in terms of quality resources and government support.

School infrastructure: Many schools in Paraguay face serious infrastructure problems, such as lack of adequate classrooms, lack of access to basic services such as clean water and sanitation, and shortages of educational materials.

Inadequate resources for education: Despite government efforts to increase investment in education, resources are insufficient to address the needs of the education system with approximately 3% GDP devoted to education.

Poor management of the educational offer: Paraguay is going through important socio-economic changes linked to new investments and a changing labour context, which generate internal and external migration processes, but also present new professional opportunities. To accompany these changes, each region or district must equip itself with management instruments that allow adjustments to the educational offer to reflect territorial expectations and needs.

Faced with the above realities, recent governments are making efforts to attract investors and grow economically. Investment projects require various levels of skilled labour both in the short term for the construction of infrastructure and in the medium term for the generation of new types of professions. It is necessary to expand the supply of educational services in investment-affected areas to cover the demand and the new professional profiles required through improvements to TVET educational offer and to ensure equity of outcomes for more marginalised communities.

This action is designed to contribute to the strengthening of technical and vocational education, as well as to improve access, learning results and retention of the most vulnerable groups. The proposed Action will have a geographic focus in the areas of Concepción, San Pedro, and Amambay.

The action contributes to the MIP 2021-2027 Priority Area 2 - Fighting against inequalities, and in particular to Specific Objective 1: To promote the inclusiveness of the education system through improved access and reduction of exclusion of the most vulnerable children and adolescents from school". It complements other "equality builders" under the same priority area such as social protection and gender equality.

The Action will have a duration of 5 years with a budget of EUR 12,473,685 of which EUR 12,000,000 is the EU Contribution.

## 2.2. Problem Analysis

Paraguay ranks 105 out of 191 countries on the UNDP development index. Over a quarter of the nation (26.91%) live in poverty. Informality and limited diversification of the economy hinder sustainable and inclusive development. Inequalities have been further exacerbated by COVID-19 and recent inflation. Despite a reduction of income inequality between 2003 and 2020, significant inequality persists. 1% of the population possesses almost 20% of national income, with the wealthiest 10% holding more than 50% (World Inequality Database, 2023) of income, implying that the poorest quintiles of the population have benefited little from recent decades of economic growth. Indigenous people (120,000 representing 1.6% of the population) are the most affected by different types of inequalities.

Given its demographic dividend and the need to harness human capital for inclusive growth, Paraguay should develop policies to increase retention in school, especially for the most vulnerable students. Net enrolment and completion rates have to be improved for more marginalised students allowing them to complete education cycles in a timely manner and avoid learning lag, overage students and dropouts. Roughly 22% of

students in Paraguay have at some point repeated at least one grade and this is considerably higher for marginalised children (28.3%). Repeating a grade is more prevalent among boys (26.5%) than girls (19.3%) and higher among indigenous communities. Socio-economic and cultural factors also play a role as 28.3% of disadvantaged students repeated at least one grade in primary or secondary school. According to the regular Household Survey (EPHC) 2022, the average number of years of study of the population aged 15 and over is 9.9 years as a national average, with a strong variation in rural and regional areas where the average is 8 years compared to urban areas (average 11 years). Limited access to education and barriers persists related to the hidden costs to education that families must bear and the failure to offer alternative education paths, which include TVET for labour insertion.

Integration into the labour market for students leaving school after twelve years of formal education is a key indicator of the quality and relevance of education and skills acquired. The adolescent dropout rate remains high and is greater in certain regions and among poorer children. There is an urgent need for enhanced vocational training in the formal education system provided by MEC and for stronger links to initial and continuing vocational training systems provided by MTESS to ensure a joined-up approach to improve the skills and opportunities of different socio-economic segments. Coupled with the lack of updated and pertinent TVET studies, there are multiple inequalities that hamper the access and retention of vulnerable children in the school system (rurality, poverty, ethnicity, disability).

People transition from school to the labour market at a relatively young age in Paraguay with the highest dropout rates at the transition stage between middle and secondary school, at the age of 15. Surveyed adolescents justify dropping out by underlining the need to find income and support their parents and family members, and the lack of relevance of education. Young Paraguayans from disadvantaged backgrounds have difficulties transitioning from school to the labour market and invariably join the informal economy where they have no social protection, poor working conditions and little chance of career development. There is a need for MEC to identify more opportunities for marginalised students and to identify ways in which to work better with the private sector to ensure appropriate vocational and technical education tailored to private sector needs.

The USD 3.8 billion private investment undertaken by PARACEL (Global Gateway project) in the region of Concepción, with zones of influence covering San Pedro and Amambay, will be a game changer. The location of the new Paracel Industrial plant will be 22 km from the town of Concepción and there is an urgent need for the education system to provide the necessary technical and vocational education required by this and other private investments to provide more employment opportunities for learners on completion of their studies.

In the targeted Regions of Concepción, San Pedro and Amambay, issues relating to inequalities and education challenges are particularly acute. These regions will be subject to substantial economic growth and social changes due to the PARACEL and other planned private sector investments. Issues affecting this region include:

Access and Completion rates: In the region of Concepción: only 44.5% of those who enrolled in first grade in 2011 managed to graduate from secondary education in 2022, in the region of San Pedro it is 41.6%, and in the region of Amambay, it is 35%. This means that out of 100 children who entered first grade in 2011 in the region of Amambay, only 35 will complete secondary education in 2022. The exclusion rates in rural areas are explained in part by the socio-economic conditions, but above all by the lack of supply of secondary and tertiary education opportunities with the need to travel to urban areas to continue schooling. These figures are even worse for students whose predominant language of use is Guaraní (and indigenous languages at home). For marginalised students, it is necessary to strengthen pedagogical strategies relevant to their contexts to guarantee their rights to access and remain in the education system.

Rural schools: Rural schools are small: in Paraguay, almost 80% of schools have fewer than 200 students and approximately 38% have fewer than 50 students (MEC RUE data, 2023), with the result that multi-grade education is prevalent in rural areas. This data forces us to think about adapted pedagogical modalities based on this reality. In Concepción, 84% of the schools have fewer than 200 students and 36% have fewer than 50 students. In San Pedro, 91% of the schools have fewer than 200 students and 39% have fewer than 50, and in Amambay, 74% have fewer than 200 students and 40% have fewer than 50. The isolation of rural schools

can be reduced with the appropriate use of new technologies. For both lower and upper secondary education, it is necessary to strengthen existing offers through Open Secondary Education (Escuelas Abiertas).

**Indigenous education:** Despite the adoption of the National Plan for Indigenous Peoples and the enactment of the Indigenous Education Act, indigenous peoples remain the most vulnerable group and need specific attention. 90% of the indigenous population lives in rural areas and only 7.3 per cent in urban areas with 66 % living in poverty and 34 % in extreme poverty. In 2007, the General Directorate for Indigenous School Education (DGEEL) initiated the design of curricula relevant to the 19 Peoples to encourage teaching in all indigenous educational institutions to begin in the mother tongue, to continue in the higher grades and courses, and to choose one of the two official languages as a second language. To achieve this, it is necessary to strengthen teacher training and support teachers in the implementation of coherent pedagogical innovations. In Concepción in 2022, there were 366 indigenous students (including 157 from the Pai Tavytera People and 135 from the Mbya People). In the region of Amambay in 2022, there were 2,008 indigenous students (including 1914 from the Pai Tavytera People). In the region of San Pedro in 2023, there were 1,299 indigenous students (including 713 from the Ava Guaraní People and 390 from the Mbya People).

Preparing disadvantaged young people from Concepción, San Pedro and Amambay to be the workers and active citizens of tomorrow is critical to inclusive growth in Paraguay. Integration into the labour market is a key indicator for the relevance of learned skills hence the focus on improved technical and vocational education, which can reinforce skills and competences to provide better futures for students completing compulsory schooling. The curriculum for technical diplomas has to be tailored to the changing needs of the private sector and other stakeholders. In practice, the production sector should be more directly involved in curriculum planning and in the work carried out to formulate the national qualifications framework.

Promoting and strengthening the Paraguayan national qualifications system (NQS) is critical to developing a structured and more relevant vocational training system. Such a national system will mean the identification of skills and competences relating to different qualification levels and families of professions. The EU will continue to promote the NQS, and the certification of skills acquired outside formal environments to ensure greater opportunities. Technical education must be tailored to the changing needs of the private sector and other stakeholders and more directly involved in the planning and content of curriculum together with the definition of the NQS.

## **Stakeholder analysis**

### *Duty bearers (institutional stakeholders)*

- The Ministry of Education and Science (MEC) is responsible for management of the sector, including planning, financial and economic management. MEC human resources are mostly centred in Asuncion, although it has de-centralised supervising bodies in each of the 17 Regions. The capacities of the sector are mostly concentrated at the central level. Decentralisation efforts need to be accelerated. The Organic Law of 2017 sets the basis for a reorganisation and restructuring of MEC. Strengthening of MEC capacities and de-concentration of control at the decentralised level will be critical for education reform. At the central level, MEC capacities are weak, also due in part to very frequent changes in authorities.
- Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security (MTESS) guides labour policy and articulates public and private efforts to expand access to formal employment, job training, to promote adequate working conditions and labour rights. (MTESS) is the institutional reference for the promotion of employability and self-employment and manages both the National System of Professional Promotion (SNPP) and the National System of Labour Training (SINAFOCAL). Together with the technical and vocational schools of the MEC that are part of the formal education system and serve the secondary level, MTESS are key actors in the National System of Qualifications (SNC) and will work in a close-knit manner with MEC in relation to formal, informal, and non-formal TVET.
- Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) was established in 2023 and is responsible for the overall management of public finances, the planning of economic policies, the administration of tax and revenues and spending. It has the mandate to promote further PFM reforms and to ensure the sound monitoring of the implementation of substantive education programmes in the national budget. In



recent years, it was responsible for administering FONACIDE funds, which in part are used for educational purposes.

- The National Council for Education and Labour (CNET) was established under the MEC Organic Law of 24/01/2017. It is the consultative MEC-MTESS bi-ministerial body for education and labour matters. Its main objective is the consolidation of a National Education and Labour System. CNET requires strengthening for the establishment of a NQS and will be supported by the new action.
- FONACIDE is a fund created from royalties from the Itaipú binational hydroelectric dam established by Law 4758/2012. 30% of FONACIDE funds go by law to the “Fondo para la Excelencia de la Educación e Investigación” (FEEI) and 25% to Regional and Municipal governments, who must use at least 50% of the former for investment in education infrastructure (construction, maintenance, equipment) and 30% for school lunches for vulnerable children. The recently adopted Law N° 7264 known as “zero hunger” aims to ensure greater efficiency and efficacy in the use of public funds for school feeding programmes.
- Local Authorities: Regional governments and municipalities have certain responsibilities in defining local education needs along with the construction and maintenance of educational infrastructure and the provision of school feeding (partly through the use of FONACIDE). Despite improvements in micro-planning, new strategies must be implemented to strengthen and reinforce the management capacities of these local levels of government and ensure greater articulation with MEC central government.
- Teachers are largely dissatisfied with their working conditions. Teachers, most of whom are out of date and in the process of retirement, are key to improve learning. It is important to accompany them in their role as agents of change, especially those working with the most vulnerable groups, and to ensure social dialogue with their representative associations and unions, which are often very resistant to change. School principals and supervisors must assume a greater leadership and pedagogical role to improve quality at the local level.

#### *Rights Holders*

- Private sector including:

Education and Entrepreneurial Advisory Councils (Consejos Educativo- Empresariales) – several Advisory Councils have been constituted in Concepción. The Government aims to expand the network with the purpose of meeting regularly with the productive sector to better understand local, territorial needs and the professional profiles required for current and future jobs.

#### Paraguayan Industrial Union (UIP)/ Rural Association of Paraguay (ARP)

UIP is the most representative industrial business organisation. It brings together medium and large companies and was founded in 1936. Its mission is to protect and promote the interests and rights of its members. The aim is to associate the UIP to several TVET actions and particularly with aim of ensuring the relevance of technical education and the buy-in of the private sector in relation to on-the-job training and sandwich courses. Similarly, the ARP is a significant and influential organisation representing the livestock industry. The ARP not only enhances agricultural productivity and sustainability but also contributes to the broader economic and social development of Paraguay.

- Civil society organisations working in the education sector play a multifaceted and critical role in education policy. The engagement of civil society organisations (CSOs) and stakeholders in education helps to ensure that policies are inclusive, effective, and reflective of the needs and aspirations of the communities they serve. Through advocacy, monitoring, service delivery, and capacity building, civil society organisations aim to ensure that education policies meet the needs of students and contribute to the overall development and empowerment of local communities.
- Parents’ organisations, which have specific roles attributed by MEC for channelling and managing small budgets for school refurbishment and school lunch projects.

- Students, particularly those at the high school level who have been active in seeking improvements in school budgets, infrastructure and teaching.
- Academia and tertiary education, whose aim is to promote better quality in initial and in-service teacher training which is provided by both universities and teacher training institutes. Specialised teacher training in literacy, science and mathematics needs to be enhanced.

### 3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

#### 3.1. Objectives and Expected Outputs

This Action will accompany Paraguay's recently adopted Sectoral Education Plan known as the Education Improvement Programme 2023-2028 “Ñamombarete Tekombo’e”, whose overall objective is to improve the quality of education through better access and learning outcomes for all students, strengthening teacher training, increased coverage of technical and vocational education and training, and improved educational management at all levels and modalities.

Zones of intervention of the Action: national but with a particular focus on the regions of Concepción, San Pedro, and Amambay.

**The overall objective** (impact) of this Action is to contribute to reducing inequalities in Paraguay through the development of human capital that allows access to more job opportunities with a focus on the three regions of Concepción, Amambay, and San Pedro.

**The specific objectives** of this action are:

1. Strengthen technical and vocational education and training and consolidate the National Qualifications System to take advantage of labour market demand and in particular Concepción, Amambay, and San Pedro.
2. Improve access and retention in the education system to increase learning outcomes with a focus on the most vulnerable groups in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.

The **outputs** that contribute to **specific objective no. 1** are the following:

- 1.1 Improvement of the development of training and certification of competences, through TVET interventions in its three levels of attention: basic vocational training, intermediate vocational training and technical baccalaureate and higher technical training with a focus on needs in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.
- 1.2 Strengthening of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) with the consolidation of the National Qualifications System and the regular updating of professional profiles.
- 1.3 Strengthening of the institutional framework in the sector of Technical and Vocational Education and Training with established links between the Ministry of Education and Science (MEC), the Ministry of Labour (MTESS), and the private sector.

The **outputs** that contribute to **specific objective no. 2** are the following:

- 1.1 Increased access and retention rates for the most vulnerable (girls, indigenous population, poor, disabled, etc.) with a special focus on lower and upper secondary education in its various modalities in the intervention areas.
- 1.2 Improvement in the educational outcomes for the most vulnerable groups by focusing on educational institutions with low efficiency results in the zones of intervention.
- 1.3 Increased capacities at the MEC level to design and implement education proposals relevant to the contexts of vulnerability with a focus on basic and secondary education in its various modalities in the zones of intervention.

### 3.2. Indicative Activities

**Output 1.1: Improved development of training and certification of competencies through Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) interventions at the three levels of provision: basic vocational training, intermediate vocational training and technical baccalaureate, higher technical training with a focus on needs in Concepción, Amambay, and San Pedro:**

Activity 1.1.1 Design and implementation of the curricular model associated with the catalogue of professional profiles in TVET levels and modalities relevant to labour demand and opportunities in Concepción, Amambay, and San Pedro.

Activity 1.1.2 Design and implementation of an agro-ecological TVET programme for indigenous communities in Concepción, Amambay, and San Pedro.

Activity 1.1.3 Training of trainers: implementation of initial and in-service training programmes for TVET trainers.

Activity 1.1.4 Strengthening of Educational Centres offering TVET in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.

Activity 1.1.5 Establishment of a TVET educational centre in Concepción, offering three levels of education, with STEAM methodology.

**Output 1.2: Strengthening TVET with the consolidation of the National Qualifications System and the regular updating of professional profiles.**

Activity 1.2.1 Review and update of regulations related to TVET.

Activity 1.2.2 Development of the profiles linked to professional groupings to be implemented in Concepción, Amambay, and San Pedro through consultation mechanisms between the state, the private sector and public-private partnerships.

Activity 1.2.3 Implementation of experimental training actions with full certification, partial certification, or micro-certification per training unit according to needs with a focus on needs in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.

Activity 1.2.4 Implementation of the qualification framework with certification of competences in the professional groupings of agriculture, food industries, hospitality, among others.

Activity 1.2.5 Accompanying the Ministry of Education General Directorates together with the regional and district education authorities in the implementation of curricular innovations in Concepción, Amambay, and San Pedro.

**Output 1.3: Strengthening of the institutional framework for the TVET sector with established links between MEC, MTESS and the private sector.**

Activity 1.3.1 Strengthening of the National Council for Education and Labour (CNET), the Inter-ministerial Technical Units (UTI) of the MEC, the MTESS and the various bodies that implement TVET.

Activity 1.3.2 Strengthening and expansion of public-private linkages through the Business Education Councils/ “Consejos educativos empresariales” (CEEs) and other relevant exchange bodies, particularly in Concepción, Amambay, and San Pedro.

Activity 1.3.3 Establishment of the Public-Private Leadership Network linking business education councils.

Activity 1.3.4 Strengthening of the Information and Quality Assurance System linked to the National Qualifications System.

Activity 1.3.5 Establishment of a MEC and MTESS institutional communication campaign to promote TVET.

**Output 2.1: Increased access and retention rates for the most vulnerable children (girls, indigenous population, poor, disabled, etc.), with special attention to basic and secondary education in its various modalities, in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.**

Activity 2.1.1 Accompanying Plurigrade Schools in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro, with particular attention to rural contexts.

Activity 2.1.2 Strengthening of education inclusion care centres for children with special needs including disabilities (based on accompaniment, qualified human resources, management, work with families, etc.) in the various districts of the region of Concepción (one per district).

Activity 2.1.3 Development of pedagogical innovations through curriculum design and programmes for indigenous peoples (Pai Tavytera and Guanpa) through participation, teacher training and implementation of intercultural innovations in indigenous communities in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.

Activity 2.1.4 Strengthening work with families and community organisations (ACEs) in the educational institutions involved in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.

Activity 2.1.5 Strengthening the capacity of the regional Education authorities to manage, monitor, evaluate and report on the results of the pedagogic innovations implemented in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.

**Output 2.2: Improvement in the educational outcomes for the most vulnerable groups by focusing on educational institutions with poor learning results in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.**

Activity 2.2.1 Implementation of proposals relevant to the different contexts, with emphasis on rural areas: pluri-multigrade modality, IPA, EBA, EMA, Programmes for the completion of Basic and Secondary Education for Young People and Adults in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.

Activity 2.2.2 Strengthening of indigenous, multi-ethnic or multicultural educational institutions in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.

Activity 2.2.3 Design and implementation of initial and continuous training programmes for teachers focusing on vulnerable groups (indigenous education, rural education, inclusive education, etc.) in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.

Activity 2.2.4 Support for research and systematisation carried out by specialised Teacher Training Institutes (IFDs) or Universities on innovative practices developed in the project.

Activity 2.2.5 Development of management and accompaniment workshops for school directors in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro

**Output 2.3: Increased capacities at Ministry of Education level to design and implement education proposals relevant to the contexts of vulnerability with a focus on lower and upper secondary education in its various modalities in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.**

Activity 2.3.1 Accompaniment to the different MEC General Directorates for the design or adjustment of the proposals for lower and upper secondary education in its various modalities in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.

Activity 2.3.2 Design of a relevant educational proposal for Plurigrade Rural Schools based on the systematisation of historical experiences of this modality in Paraguay (Escuela Nueva, Escuela Activa, etc.) and the integration of technological tools in in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.

Activity 2.3.3 Design and implementation of continuous training programmes from training institutes (IFDS) or specialised centres (CEFEDs) to accompany the implementation of innovations in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.

Activity 2.3.4 Support to regional and district education authorities and councils in planning for the creation or adaptation of educational offers (regional and district education plans).

### 3.3. Mainstreaming

#### **Environmental Protection & Climate Change**

##### Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) results

The EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) screening classified the action as Category C (no need for further assessment). The environmental impact of certain activities will be taken into account during the start-up or inception phase of the Action.

##### Outcome of the climate risk assessment (CRA)

The climate risk assessment (CRA) concluded that this action is null or low risk (no need for further assessment). However, the intervention funded on a case-by-case basis under the different Outcomes, especially Outcome 3, may require an ERC or an ERC as part of an EIA.

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

As per the OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the main reason for undertaking the project/program.

The empowerment of women and girls in accordance with the National Constitution will be crucial as the education system has to be accessible to both girls and boys without discrimination and must provide a teaching and learning space that promotes gender equality. Strengthening the education policy will give more opportunities for girls and women to complete their basic general education and achieve a dignified labour insertion in the sustainable and inclusive economy.

#### **Human Rights**

Human rights and education are deeply interconnected, as education is recognised both as a fundamental human right in itself and to realise other human rights. The right to education is enshrined in various international legal frameworks and declarations, reflecting its importance in promoting individual dignity, social inclusion, and sustainable development.

The action will apply a human rights-based approach and contribute to improving opportunities by overcoming barriers to access to education in an effort to reach the most vulnerable, the disadvantaged and ethnic minorities in society.

This action is aligned to the EU's Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024.

#### **Disability**

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. This implies that disability is an important and deliberate objective, but not the main reason for undertaking the project/program.

Disability is a significant objective of this Action. A disability inclusion approach will be taken into account in the component of each action with the aim of generating solutions that contribute to and benefit persons with disabilities along with others. The strengthening of Inclusion Care Centres will be promoted as a specific activity with the aim of fulfilling educational access for all and ensuring that children with special needs including disabilities have greater access to education.

Accessibility to seminars, events, workshops and information for people with disabilities will also be promoted throughout the programme activities.

#### **Reducing Inequalities/Equal Opportunities**

This action is oriented towards supporting Paraguayan public social policy and aims to reduce the gaps in living conditions between sectors of the population. It seeks to compensate for historical inequalities, which still have a considerable weight in Paraguay's social structure.

Specifically, this action to improve equity through support to the education sector in Paraguay will seek to reduce the gaps between the sectors of the population with multiple resources and those sectors that, due to

their origins, are unable to access more educational opportunities, especially technical and vocational education, and training.

Inequality in the exercise of rights to education is a central challenge that society and democracy have not yet managed to reduce or compensate for disadvantaged sectors.

### **Democracy**

Education is essential to the functioning of a healthy democracy, as it equips citizens with the knowledge, skills, and critical thinking skills necessary for informed participation.

Democratic values drive the creation of inclusive and equitable education systems that serve all segments of society, including marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

The main limit to the exercise of citizenship rights in Paraguay is inequality of opportunities and especially of results. Strengthening democratic institutions means promoting the exercise of citizenship rights that results in the participation and social control (“social accountability”) of public officials (elected and career), public decision-makers and institutions that manage state resources.

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

The action seeks to contribute to the generation of employment and well-being through education and thus impact on indicators of economic inclusion of the population and social well-being. The reduction of inequalities, the reduction of poverty and the improvement of living conditions contribute to peaceful and stable societies and reduce the possibility of social unrest.

### **Disaster Risk Reduction**

N.A.

### **Other considerations if relevant**

N.A.

## **3.4. Risks and Lessons Learnt**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Likelihood (High / Medium / Low)</b>	<b>Impact (High / Medium / Low)</b>	<b>Mitigating measures</b>
<b>Internal</b>	The recently adopted MEC sector plan fails to have the intended impact on improvements to learning results nor to the management of the education system.	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>	Integrate the main lessons learned into the design of the sector plan to ensure sustainability of actions and action in relation to lessons learned.
<b>External</b>	Political discourse and negative campaigns against civil society actors who work in support of the education sector.	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Medium</b>	Maintain regular communication with all relevant stakeholders. Reinforce dialogue with the most critical sectors.
<b>Internal</b>	The state does not assign adequate resources to the education sector.	<b>High</b>	<b>High</b>	Promote an education resource management plan that foresees adequate financing for the targeted regions that form part of the zones of intervention.

<b>Internal</b>	Lack of continuity of commitments made in relation to education policies.	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Medium</b>	Involve the different regional and district education councils in planning for the improvement of educational services.
<b>Internal</b>	Migration processes and socio-economic changes generate new school exclusions in the target areas. MEC does not have educational plans capable of accompanying socio-economic and cultural changes.	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>	Support MEC Central in the design of educational strategies in the context of vulnerability, including the analysis of new forms of school exclusions.
<b>Internal</b>	Notwithstanding the enactment of the Indigenous Education Act, access and retention rates for indigenous children and youth remain the lowest in the education system.	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>	Strengthen the Directorate General DGEI's capacity to implement actions to strengthen indigenous schools and teacher training.
<b>External</b>	Lack of or low interest/ buy in from the private sector in promoting greater technical education.	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	Awareness raising campaigns on the importance and benefits of the full involvement of the private sector in TVET at regional level and involvement in relevant activities in the new EU programme to support the education sector.

### 3.5. The Intervention Logic

This action aims to improve the skills and knowledge of the Paraguayan population by improving the equity of the education system in Paraguay with a focus on technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Equity will be achieved by improving access and retention of students from vulnerable sectors in secondary education.

The focus will be on two key areas identified in the sector plan of the 'Programa de Mejoramiento Educativo 2023-2028 "Ñamombarete Tekombo'e", namely technical and vocational education and training and improving access, retention and educational outcomes for the most vulnerable groups in the intervention areas.

The development and implementation of a broad and relevant offer in the contexts of vulnerability will help to strengthen the capacities of the MEC and associated Ministries (MTESS) to provide a relevant and pertinent educational offer for labour market insertion.

There will be specific support to ensure inter-institutional coordination (MEC/MTESS etc.) at both central and regional, regional levels and the mobilisation of high-level external expertise to provide the necessary know-how to carry out far-reaching reforms.

The involvement of the private sector, civil society organisations and academia throughout this intervention will be decisive in making education policy more participatory and relevant and will further enhance the importance of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as a key component of the education policy.

Technical assistance will be made available to the MEC to strengthen MEC management tools (e.g., the Single Student Register (RUE) at all levels and other educational data systems) to improve the efficiency of the education system.

Activities will be accompanied by dissemination, awareness raising and a communication strategy to ensure transparency and greater ownership.

The intervention has been formulated under the leadership of the MEC, and with public institutions with responsibility in the sector such as MTESS, SNJ, MEF, SNJ, to ensure that the programme is aligned with national legislation, government plans and sectoral plans. The goal is to improve the effectiveness of the education system in terms of access, retention and completion of the most vulnerable group



### 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.

<b>Overall Objective (IMPACT)</b>	Contribute towards reducing inequalities in Paraguay through the development of human capital that allows access to more job opportunities.	<p>1. Number of adolescents, young people and adults who complete Technical and Vocational Education and Training programmes in the 3 target regions.</p> <p>2. Number of young people and adults accessing and enrolling in technical and vocational education and training programmes in the 3 target regions.</p>	<p>1. RUE 2023 data: graduation rate 12 years (2012-2023): Concepción 7.1%, San Pedro 7.2%, Amambay 3.9%.</p> <p>2. RUE 2023 data: enrolment Technical Baccalaureate + Secondary Vocational Training + Continuing Education Vocational Training: Concepción: 2.431, San Pedro 4.664, Amambay: 600</p>	<i>to be determined during the inception phase in 2025</i>	<p>RUE/ Unique Student Registry</p> <p>RUE - MEC</p> <p>Monitoring and reporting systems for EU interventions (progress and final reports of the intervention)</p>
<b>Specific Objective 1</b>	Strengthen technical and vocational education and training and consolidate the National Qualifications System to take advantage of the labour market demand in the intervention areas and in particular Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.	<p>a. Retention of students in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions in the targeted regions increases by 15%</p> <p>b. Increase in graduates from technical and vocational education and training programmes in the regions of</p>	<p>1.1 % Retention rate of students in TVET institutions in the targeted regions in 2023.</p> <p>1.2 X/ Number of graduates from technical and vocational education and training programmes in the regions of Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.</p>	<i>to be determined during the inception phase in 2025</i>	<p>RUE/ Unique Student Registry</p> <p>RUE - MEC</p> <p>Monitoring and reporting systems for EU interventions (progress and final reports of the intervention)</p>

		Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.			
<b>Specific Objective 2</b>	Improve access and retention in the education system to increase learning outcomes with a focus on the most vulnerable groups in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.	<p>a. Increase in the rate of access to basic education (lower and upper secondary in all modalities) for vulnerable groups (rural, indigenous, disabled) in the regions of Concepción, San Pedro and Amambay.</p> <p>b. Reduction of repetition rates in basic education (lower and upper secondary in all modalities), in educational institutions with emphasis on rural and indigenous contexts in the regions of Concepción, San Pedro and Amambay.</p>	<p>a. Access rate 2023 basic education in rural and indigenous areas of the regions of Concepción, San Pedro and Amambay.</p> <p>b. Repetition rate 2023 of basic education in rural schools in the regions of Concepción: 2%, San Pedro: 2.2% and Amambay 3.3%. Indigenous schools: Concepción: 0.6%, San Pedro 3.4%, Amambay: 0.2%.</p>	<i>to be determined during the inception phase in 2025</i>	<p>MEC data</p> <p>Ad hoc report generated by the Programme on the results of the different actions and Programme monitoring reports.</p>
<b>Output 1 relating to Outcome 1</b>	1.1 Improved development of training and certification of competencies through Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) interventions at the three levels of provision: basic vocational training, intermediate vocational training and technical training with a focus on needs in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro:	<p>1.1.1. New TVET offers associated with the catalogue of professional profiles in Concepción, San Pedro and Amambay.</p> <p>1.1.2. TVET provision relevant to indigenous contexts is available in in Concepción, San Pedro and Amambay.</p> <p>1.1.3. Number of TVET teacher trainers trained in in Concepción, San Pedro and Amambay.</p> <p>1.1.4. Increase in the number of educational centres offering TVET at the three levels of attention.</p> <p>1.1.5. One TVET educational centre in the region of Concepción</p>	<p>1.1.1 List of current offers</p> <p>1.1.2. There is no TVET provision specific to indigenous contexts.</p> <p>1.1.3. Number of TVET teacher trainers from the 3 regions trained by 2023</p> <p>1.1.4. Number of schools with TVET provision</p> <p>1.1.5. Currently there is no TVET educational centre in the region of Concepción operating with STEAM methodology.</p>	<i>to be determined during the inception phase in 2025</i>	<p>MEC data</p> <p>Ad hoc report generated by the Programme on the results of the different actions and Programme monitoring reports.</p>

		implementing the STEAM methodology.			
<b>Output 2 relating to Outcome 1</b>	1.2 Strengthening of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) with the consolidation of the National Qualifications System and the regular updating of professional profiles.	<p>1.2.1. Updated regulations related to TVET.</p> <p>1.2.2. At least 3 profiles of vocational families to be implemented in in Concepción, San Pedro and Amambay.</p> <p>through the concertation mechanisms.</p> <p>1.2.3. Number of TVET students with certification in in Concepción, San Pedro and Amambay.</p> <p>1.2.4. Qualification framework with certification of competences in the vocational families implemented.</p> <p>1.2.5. Number of MEC staff at central and at regional level in Concepción, San Pedro and Amambay trained to implementation TVET curricular innovations</p>	<p>1.2.1 TVET-related regulations outdated.</p> <p>1.2.2. Number of vocational profiles to be implemented by 2023.</p> <p>1.2.3. Number of TVET students certified by 2023.</p> <p>1.2.4. No qualification framework with certification of competences in the vocational families in the 3 regions.</p> <p>1.2.5. MEC staff at central and at regional level in the three targeted regions, trained in TVET during 2023.</p>	<i>to be determined during the inception phase in 2025</i>	<p>MEC data</p> <p>Ad hoc report generated by the Programme on the results of the different actions and Programme monitoring reports.</p>
<b>Output 3 relating to Outcome 1</b>	1.3 Strengthening of the institutional framework in the sector of Technical and Vocational Education and Training with established links between the Ministry of Education and Science (MEC), the Ministry of Labour (MTESS), and the private sector.	<p>1.3.1. Increase in the number of meetings of the National Council for Education and Labour (CNET) and of the different mission bodies.</p> <p>1.3.2. Increase in the number of Business Education Councils/ “Consejos educativos empresariales” (CEE) in Concepción, San Pedro and Amambay.</p>	<p>1.3.1. Number of meetings of the National Council for Education and Labour (CNET) during the year 2023.</p> <p>1.3.2. Number of Business Education Councils (BECs) in the 3 regions in 2023.</p> <p>1.3.3. There is no Network of Business Education Councils.</p>	<i>to be determined during the inception phase in 2025</i>	<p>MEC data</p> <p>Ad hoc report generated by the Programme on the results of the different actions and Programme monitoring reports.</p>

		<p>1.3.3. Network of Business Education Councils in operation.</p> <p>1.3.4. Strengthening of the Information and Quality Assurance System linked to the National System of Professional Qualifications (NSPQ).</p> <p>1.3.5. MEC and MTESS Communication campaigns accompany TVET implementation</p>	<p>1.3.4. Availability of information generated by the NSPQ System.</p> <p>1.3.5. Communication campaigns undertaken</p>		
<b>Output 1 relating to Outcome 2</b>	<p>2.1 Access and retention rates for the most vulnerable (girls, indigenous population, poor, disabled, etc.) with a special focus on the final primary school cycle and secondary education in its various modalities in Concepción, San Pedro and Amambay.</p>	<p>2.1.1. Number of multi-grade schools supported in Concepción, San Pedro and Amambay.</p> <p>2.1.2. At least one Education Inclusion Care centre (EIC) strengthened in each of the main districts of the region of Concepción.</p> <p>2.1.3. Number of educational institutions in indigenous contexts of the Pai Tavytera and Guana Peoples implementing the specific curriculum of the People.</p> <p>2.1.4. Number of ACEs trained in the targeted institutions in in Concepción, San Pedro and Amambay.</p> <p>2.1.5. Number of school Directors and technical staff trained in Concepción, San Pedro and Amambay.</p>	<p>2.1.1. There is no specific support for multi-grade schools.</p> <p>2.1.2. Number of EICs in each of the districts of the region of Concepción in 2023.</p> <p>2.1.3. In 2023, indigenous schools do not implement a specific curriculum.</p> <p>2.1.4. Number of ACEs recognised in the targeted institutions in 2023.</p> <p>2.1.5. Number of school Directors and technical staff trained in the 3 regions in 2023.</p>	<p><i>to be determined during the inception phase in 2025</i></p>	<p>Ad hoc reports generated by the Programme on the results of the different actions and Programme monitoring reports.</p>

<b>Output 2 relating to Outcome 2</b>	<p>2.2 Improvement in the educational outcomes for the most vulnerable groups by focusing on educational institutions with poor learning results in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.</p>	<p>2.2.1. List of updated modalities of care for vulnerable audiences from different contexts in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.</p> <p>2.2.2. Proposal for accompaniment for multi-ethnic or multicultural indigenous educational institutions designed in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.</p> <p>2.2.3. Number of teachers trained through the programmes designed to cater for groups in vulnerable situations in the three regions.</p> <p>2.2.4. Number of research reports and systematisation of practices carried out by specialised Teacher Training Institutes (IFD) or universities.</p> <p>2.2.5 Number of Directors of educational institutions in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro who have completed management workshops.</p>	<p>2.2.1. List of the modalities of attention for vulnerable audiences in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.</p> <p>2.2.2. The DGEEI does not have a proposal for support for multi-ethnic or multicultural indigenous educational institutions in the three regions.</p> <p>2.2.3. There are no teachers trained through the programmes designed to cater for groups in vulnerable situations in the three regions.</p> <p>2.2.4. List of Universities or IFDs/CEFEDs with specialisations in the subjects addressed by the project.</p> <p>2.2.5 List of Directors having completed managerial workshops</p>	<p><i>to be determined during the inception phase in 2025</i></p>	<p>Ad hoc reports generated by the Programme on the results of the different actions and Programme monitoring reports.</p>
<b>Output 3 relating to Outcome 2</b>	<p>2.3 Increased capacities at the MEC level to design and implement education proposals relevant to the contexts of vulnerability with a focus on basic and secondary education in its various modalities in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.</p>	<p>2.3.1. Number of teachers from various MEC Directorates trained in the design of relevant programmes in contexts of vulnerability.</p> <p>2.3.2. The MEC has a relevant design in educational institutions of the multi-grade modality with the use of new technologies in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.</p>	<p>2.3.1. There is no mainstreaming of training across MEC Directorates trained in the design of relevant programmes in contexts of vulnerability.</p> <p>2.3.2. MEC does not have an updated design for multi-grade schools.</p> <p>2.3.3. There are no in-service training programmes for teachers working in vulnerable contexts in the 3 regions.</p>	<p><i>to be determined during the inception phase in 2025</i></p>	<p>Ad hoc reports generated by the Programme on the results of the different actions and Programme monitoring reports.</p>

		<p>2.3.3. List of the continuous training programmes implemented by the IFDs or specialised Universities in relation to the innovations carried out by the project in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.</p> <p>2.3.4. The 3 targeted regions have a plan for the strengthening of their educational offer built in a participatory way.</p>	<p>2.3.4. The 3 regions do not have an updated educational strengthening plan.</p>		
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## 4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

### 4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is envisaged to conclude a Financing Agreement with Paraguay.

### 4.2 Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 60 months from the date of entry into force of the financing agreement.

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

### 4.3 Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures<sup>2</sup>.

#### 4.3.1 Direct Management (Grants)

N.A.

#### 4.3.2 Direct Management (Prize(s))

N.A.

#### 4.3.3 Direct Management (Procurement)

Technical Assistance will be implemented through the procurement of services and will contribute in a cross-cutting manner to the specific objectives and expected results in this Action with a focus on TVET needs in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro.

Technical Assistance will support the Ministry of Education and Culture at the central level in the definition and design of educational reforms and in improving the management, effectiveness and efficiency of TVET educational provision.

There will also be a focus on the development and optimisation of integrated information systems for decision-making, monitoring and evaluation, micro-planning and improvements to the Single Student Register (RUE) at its various levels (e.g. initial, primary, secondary and higher education).

#### 4.3.4 Indirect Management with an entrusted entity

Activities under Specific Objective 1 will be implemented under indirect management with a pillar-assessed entity, to be selected by the Commission services on the basis of the following criteria: technical competence in regional and local interventions targeting the field of education; facility to identify and recruit experts, including those from the public and private sector for exchange and peer learning; and strong administrative and financial capacity.

Activities under Specific Objective 2, will be implemented in indirect management with a pillar-assessed entity, to be selected by the Commission services on the basis of the following criteria: technical competence in regional and

<sup>2</sup> [www.sanctionsmap.eu](http://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.

local interventions targeting the field of education; facility to identify and recruit experts, including from the public sector and civil society for exchange and peer learning; and strong administrative and financial capacity.

#### 4.3.5 EFSD+ operations covered by budgetary guarantees

NA.

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

In exceptional circumstances, where it is not possible to continue implementation by indirect management, the Commission will implement the action under direct management mode, by means of public procurement (technical assistance to public institutions).

#### 4.3.7 Other actions or expenditure

N.A.

### 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)	Third-party contribution, in currency identified
<b>Implementation modalities</b> – cf. section 4.3		
<b>Objective 1:</b> Strengthen technical and vocational education and training and consolidate the National Qualifications System to take advantage of the labour market demand in the intervention areas.	<b>6 000 000</b>	315 790
<i>Indirect Management with an entrusted entity - cf. section 4.3.4</i>	6 000 000	
<b>Objective 2:</b> Improve access and retention in the education system in order to increase learning outcomes with a focus on the most vulnerable groups in the intervention areas.	<b>3 000 000</b>	157 895
<i>Indirect Management with an entrusted entity - cf. section 4.3.4</i>	3 000 000	
<b>Procurement total envelope under section cf. section 4.3.3</b>	<b>2 000 000</b>	
<b>Evaluation</b> cf. section 5.2	<b>200 000</b>	<b>N.A.</b>



<b>Audit</b> cf section 5.3		
<b>Contingencies</b>	<b>800 000</b>	<b>N.A.</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>12 000 000</b>	473 685

#### 4.6 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The Action will be overseen by a Steering Committee in charge of strategic guidance to ensure the achievement of the expected results.

It will be led by the Ministry of Education and Science in partnership with the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security and the Private Sector. In principle, it will have the following members:

- The Minister of Education and Science (MEC) or a duly designated representative, who will chair the Committee,
- The Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MTESS) or a duly designated representative,
- The Head of the Delegation of the European Union in Paraguay or a duly designated representative,
- One representative for each Executing Agency responsible for SO1 and SO2,
- A representative/s from the private sector.
- Other associated Ministries may be invited as necessary

The Steering Committee should meet at least twice per annum and provide overall guidance, coherent guidelines and coordination with other institutions, as well as ensure that follow-up actions are carried out with relevant stakeholders. Representatives of other public or private institutions and other stakeholders, as appropriate, may be invited to attend specific sessions of the Steering Committee, depending on the agenda of the meetings.

A Technical Committee will then be established for each Specific Objective of the programme to oversee the implementation and the annual work plans to ensure coordination and coherent action among the partners involved.

At the first meeting, the Steering Committee will establish the members of each Technical Committee, which will be composed of the Focal Point for the Ministry of Education and Science, the Focal Point for the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, a representative of the EU Delegation and of the implementing entities in charge of implementing the action. The Technical Committee should aim to meet on a quarterly basis. The Technical Committee may invite representatives of other public institutions, public and private bodies to attend specific sessions of the Technical Committee, depending on the agenda of the meetings.

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.

#### 4.7 Pre-conditions [Only for project modality]

N.A.

## 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 partners' responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partners 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).

Indicators shall be disaggregated at least by income. All monitoring and reporting shall assess how the action is taking into account inequality reduction. The Distributional Impact Assessment tool (DIA) will be applied, 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 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 etc.).

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

## 5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, mid-term and final evaluation(s) may be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.

It will be carried out for problem solving and learning purposes with a gender-responsive approach, in particular with respect to assessing the continued relevance and the progress made towards achieving its planned objectives providing an opportunity to make modifications to ensure the achievement of the objectives and in the event a second phase of the action might be envisaged.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 30 days 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 can be done 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.

Evaluation services may be contracted under a framework contract.

## 5.3 Audit and Verifications

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

## 6. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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“, 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.

## 7. 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);

<b>Action level (i.e. Budget Support, blending)</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single action	Present action: all contracts in the present action
<b>Group of actions level (i.e. top-up cases, different phases of a single programme)</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of actions	Actions reference (CRIS#/OPSYS#):
<b>Contract level</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	<foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract)> SO1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 2	<foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract)> SO2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 3	<foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract)> Procurement
<b>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)</b>		
<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) #>