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

**ANNEX II**

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the annual action plan in favour of Iraq for 2023

**Action Document for Promoting Girls' Education in Iraq**

**ANNUAL PLAN**

This document constitutes the annual work programme within the meaning of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and an action plan within the meaning of Article 23(2) of the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

**1 SYNOPSIS**

**1.1 Action Summary Table**

<b>1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act</b>	Promoting Girls' Education in Iraq OPSYS number: ACT-62222 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 Iraq
<b>4. Programming document</b>	Multi-annual Indicative Programme for Iraq (2021-2027)
<b>5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results</b>	<b><i>Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Iraq</i></b> The Action contributes to the Iraq Multi-Annual Indicative Programme's (MIP) priority area 2 Human development and social contract. Specific objective 2.1 <i>Improve quality, equality and digitalisation of the education system including technical education and vocational training.</i> Expected result 2.1.1 <i>Improved access and completion of inclusive and equitable primary and secondary and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) education with focus on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), refugees, returnees girls and children with disabilities and direct link to labour market (for TVET).</i> Expected result 2.1.3 <i>Improved quality of education and learning outcomes at each level of education (primary, secondary and TVET).</i>
<b>PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION</b>	
<b>6. Priority Area(s), sectors</b>	MIP Priority area 2 <i>Human development and social contract</i> – sectors <i>Inclusive education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (DAC 110 Education)</i>
<b>7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>	Main SDG: 4 Quality education Other significant SDGs:

	5 Gender equality 10 Reduced inequalities 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions			
<b>8 a) DAC code(s)</b>	DAC 11220 – Primary Education – 50% DAC 11260 – Lower Secondary Education – 50%			
<b>8 b) Main Delivery Channel</b>	20000 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society			
<b>9. Targets</b>	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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>
Digitalisation @		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
digital connectivity		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	/
digital governance		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
digital entrepreneurship		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	/
	energy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	transport	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	health, education and research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Migration @ (methodology for tagging under development)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>
<b>BUDGET INFORMATION</b>				
<b>12. Amounts concerned</b>	Budget line (article, item): 14 02 01 30 NDICI Middle East and Central Asia Total estimated cost: EUR 1 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 1 000 000			
<b>MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>				
<b>13. Type of financing</b>	<b>Direct management</b> through Grants			

## 1.2 Summary of the Action

Following two decades of conflict, but despite improved security conditions since the territorial defeat of Da'esh, Iraq (Upper Middle-Income Country with substantial resources) is still fragile and challenged by both internal and external political instability, economic instability, poor public service delivery and low institutional capacity. The Iraqi population in general, and in particular groups in vulnerable situations such as children, youth, women and displaced populations (refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees)<sup>1</sup> are affected by significant poverty and unemployment. Distrust in state institutions and the lack of basic services remain a threat to Iraq's social cohesion.

This Action intends to support access to quality education for girls. There are significant gender gaps in education in Iraq. As an example, only one in two girls complete primary education compared to three out of four boys. These gaps are accentuated with age. At age 13, only 40 percent of girls still attend school whilst 80 percent of boys do; and these gaps are even more striking for girls in rural areas, who begin to drop out of school at the age of nine, as well as displaced girls, girls pertaining to minorities and girls with disabilities. While almost all children (92%) are enrolled in primary school in Iraq, just over half of children from poorer backgrounds complete their primary education. The gap widens in upper secondary school, where less than a quarter of poor children graduate, compared to three-quarters of children from wealthier backgrounds.<sup>2</sup>

This Action aims at contributing to girls accessing and completing primary and lower secondary education. Mindful of the large EU programmes in support of the national reform process for access to quality basic education in partnership with Government institutions at federal and decentralised level, this Action provides for complementary partnerships with civil society for creating awareness for the importance of girls' education among communities, for promoting access to and completion of education with parents, and for the monitoring of education service provision by civil society. This engagement with communities is important in view of ensuring access to quality education for girls, reducing girls' dropout rates and discrimination of girls, as well as enabling girls' to seize their human right and constitutional right to education. The Action addresses key drivers of gender inequality in the country, using an integrated gender-transformative approach. The promotion of education for girls represents a strategic contribution to achieving gender equality and human capital development in Iraq as an integral part of implementing the national vision for a prosperous and developed Iraq. As an Action with gender as principal objectives (G2) and with the focus

<sup>1</sup> Please note that across this Action document the terms "displaced populations", "displaced persons" and "displaced girls" always refer to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and (Syrian) refugees in line with the EU commitment of the Syria Conferences and EU commitment to the triple Nexus, as well as always refer to returnees from Europe and elsewhere in line with the commitment to supporting their integration.

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF (2018) 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS6) Briefing

on education for girls, the Action contributes to the EU priority of human development, ensuring consistency with the Iraq MIP and its objective for promoting access to quality education, as well as the Iraq Gender Action Plan (GAP) Country Level Implementation Plan (CLIP).<sup>3</sup>

## 2 RATIONALE

### 2.1 Context

Following two decades of conflict, Iraq remains fragile<sup>4</sup> despite Iraq's designation as an Upper Middle-Income Country (UMIC) with substantial resources<sup>5</sup>. Iraq ranked only 115 out of 165 in the SDG Index Dashboard Report of 2023<sup>6</sup>, mainly as a result of past conflict and structural deficiencies. The country is challenged inter alia by political instability, economic recessions and poor public service delivery.

Iraq's economy remains heavily dependent on oil exports, which accounts for 90% of Government revenue, and is therefore strongly affected by the sharp fluctuations in oil prices. The fragmented political landscape undermines effective Government action, security, and transparent governance. With continuous popular demonstrations since 2019, it is imperative for the Iraqi Government to deliver faster on political and socio-economic reforms, in order to avoid a resurgence of unrest and violence. In 2023, the global recession, high inflation, and the global food crisis affect the wellbeing of the population, notably vulnerable and displaced populations, despite the high oil price.

The Iraqi Government struggles to provide adequate basic services ranging from access to justice, to safe drinking water, electricity, health services, but also a just comprehensive social safety net, employment and educational opportunities for the growing youth population. Poverty is rising (estimated at 42% in 2023<sup>7</sup>), severely affecting the Iraqi population and in particular groups in vulnerable situations such as women and children, and displaced populations. This shows in the increase in the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance (2.5 million<sup>8</sup>). Iraq has a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.686, which is relatively high when comparing with the rest of the countries from the Arab Region. However, when adjusting for inequality (IHDI), the index decreases to 0.554.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, vulnerability is higher for those living in rural areas, as well as for children 0 to 14 years old.<sup>10</sup>

The effects of climate change in Iraq further exacerbate the challenges of existing natural hazards, and have already an impact on the country's overall stability and prosperity with continued water shortages and constantly rising temperatures that are placing considerable pressure on basic resources and reducing opportunities for livelihoods in sectors that used to be very productive, such as agriculture. These difficulties in delivering basic services and providing decent work to the fast-growing and vulnerable population, are further compounded by the continued challenge of displacement. Whilst the number of IDPs has drastically reduced since the defeat of Da'esh in 2018 from 5.8 million (16% of the population) to 1.17 million in 2022<sup>11</sup>, the number of Syrian refugees in the Kurdistan region remains stable at around 245.000 persons since 2015.

<sup>3</sup> The [Gender Action Plan III](#) is a Joint communication by the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy which was welcomed through [EU Presidency Conclusions](#) of 16 December 2020. Drafting was led by European Commission in close consultation with EU Member States, EEAS, civil society organisations, partner governments, and international organisations (UN entities, International Finance Institutions among others). The different parties contributed to the drafting of the document through meetings and through responses to a survey conducted during the process.

<sup>4</sup> [World Bank list of fragile and conflict-affected situations FY2024](#) and [World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicator](#) "political stability and absence of violence/terrorism" Iraq percentile rank of 1.89 (out of 100, where 0 corresponds to the lowest rank)

<sup>5</sup> [World Bank data dashboard](#): Iraq's GNI PPP amounted USD 10.820 in 2022. According to the [WB definition](#), upper middle-income economies are those with a GNI per capita between USD 4,046 and USD 12,535. Iraq thus finds itself in the upper bracket of upper middle income economies. This however needs to be balanced against Iraq GINI

<sup>6</sup> [SDG Index Dashboard Report of 2023](#)

<sup>7</sup> Estimate of multi-dimensional poverty of UNICEF

<sup>8</sup> Humanitarian Needs Overview for Iraq of March 2023: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/iraq/document/iraq-humanitarian-needs-overview>

<sup>9</sup> Inequality-Adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI) of UNDP 2021

<sup>10</sup> Poverty and Inequality Platform of the World Bank.

<sup>11</sup> IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (3% of the population) versus 242.000 by national authority surveys (0.5% of the population) Ministry of Migration and Development displacement survey of 2021

This situation of deteriorating socio-economic conditions for the Iraqi population, and the challenging perspectives for Iraq's Youth and women, in turn has the potential of fuelling violence thereby perpetuating the conflict cycle. Moreover, the conditions and lack of perspectives in Iraq motivates thousands of Iraqis, including many women, to leave their country in pursuit of better living conditions. The burden of this protracted crisis is particularly affecting the most vulnerable: female-headed household, women, and girls who are socio-economically exposed compared to male populations<sup>12</sup>. Children too are exposed to threats<sup>13</sup>. While statistics are uncertain, it is likely that persons with disabilities represent at least 15% of the Iraqi population<sup>14</sup>.

The succession of wars, sanctions and conflict took particularly affected Iraqi women and girls. Between the 1960s to the 1980s Iraq's women and girls had witnessed good access to education, healthcare and employment, but their conditions began to significantly deteriorate as of the Iran–Iraq war.

Today, the situation of women and girls in Iraq is critical as confirmed by international indices. Iraq ranks 146<sup>th</sup> on the UN Gender Inequality Index (GII) of 2019, far behind its regional MENA peers<sup>15</sup>, and last among its peer upper middle-income countries. This is further confirmed by the Global Gender Gap Index of 2020 where Iraq ranks last as 152<sup>nd</sup>. Together these testify to the long road for achieving gender parity. The position of women and girls in Iraq is challenged by engrained attitudes, strong cultural beliefs and societal structures that perpetuate patterns of discrimination, gender-based violence and gender-based human rights violations (civic, political and socio-economic rights). At the same time, a new generation of strong and vocal Iraqi women and girls claim empowerment. They are seizing their rightful place across the political, social and economic sphere and put in question traditional gender roles and claim their own identities, both literally and figurative. In this context, working with girls constitutes an investment in future generations.

There is a growing understanding that the perpetuation of gender stereotypes traps both women and men causing long-term costs on societal, community, but also individual level. This ongoing renegotiation of gender norms in Iraq is partly due to economic necessity. More women find themselves in the position as heads of households as a result of their determination, and, equally as a result of the armed conflict and migration of the formerly male head of household. While this does not necessarily indicate a shift in social norms, as an increase of the incidence of sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls showed, it offers an entry-point that is being seized by Iraq's strong and determined women. The gender gaps in education and the consequences of non-completed general education - only one in two girls complete primary education and only 40% of girls attend lower secondary education - structurally impede girls from pursuing upper secondary education, from pursuing higher education, from engaging in formal decent employment and from seizing their full democratic rights as citizens, including their political rights. This applies in particular to girls in rural areas, displaced girls, girls pertaining to minorities and girls with disabilities.

This Action for girls' education in Iraq is aligned with the policy priorities of the Commission for 2021-2027, notably the EU GAP III and the GAP CLIP that sets out to ensure that "*women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, fully enjoy and exercise their equal civic, political economic, social, labour and cultural rights across Iraq*".<sup>16</sup> In line with the NDICI regulation, this Action constitutes the mandatory MIP Action with the principal objective of gender equality (OECD gender marker G2).

But the Action also provides an entry point to discuss gender equality with Iraq's Government notably but not exclusively in the field of girls' education. It responds to a gender gap in Iraq in the field of girls' education. Despite

<sup>12</sup> According to the GBVIMS 3rd Quarter Analysis Report (2022), this results in higher food insecurity, and more frequent use of harmful coping strategies, which also compromises women and girls' mental, sexual, and reproductive health with life-threatening consequences, including child marriage. Women have also reported limited/restricted access to protection, cash, livelihood, shelter, specialized mental health, and legal assistance while for example 2022 recorded a significant increase of gender-based violence reported incidents (63% more compared to the same period in 2021).

<sup>13</sup> According to UNICEF (press release June 2023), since 2008 to the end of 2022 in Iraq, over 9 000 children were killed or maimed. Despite the considerable reduction on the number of reported cases in the last years, the overall number represents, on an average, more than one child killed every other day and one child maimed daily over the reported period

<sup>14</sup> Given that the rate of disability is likely higher in humanitarian settings, it is probable that Iraq's estimate exceeds the global average of 15%. Similarly, in 2019, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities stated that Iraq has one of the largest populations of persons with disabilities in the world (IOM, 2021 Persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in Iraq: barriers, challenges, and priorities)

<sup>15</sup> Saudi Arabia (56), Lebanon (96) and Iran (113)

<sup>16</sup> [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-01/join-2020-17-final\\_en.pdf](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-01/join-2020-17-final_en.pdf)

the relatively small funding allocation for the Action, it is nonetheless meaningful because it complements the larger EU engagement of structural reform of basic education in Iraq and the EU's gender mainstreaming efforts across all areas of engagement.

The Action will also contribute to realising the European Consensus on Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its pledge to leave no one behind. The Action equally contributes towards SDGs 5 (gender equality) and SDG 4 (quality education) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions). At the same time, the Action contributes to meeting the aggregate target for migration and forced displacement for the Asia-Pacific region by supporting displaced girls (IDPs, refugees, returnees).

Applying a triple Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus approach, the action capitalises on prior and ongoing EU's interventions. It places the needs of Iraq people and notably girl's needs at the centre of policy decisions. To ensure effectiveness and sustainability, the Action emphasises on civil society promoting community and youth volunteering for the benefit of girls' education in Iraq. Crosscutting principles, such as the rights-based approach and conflict sensitivity to programming are also key in the implementation of this Action. Climate action is promoted throughout the Action when it comes to climate change awareness. In this sense, the action is based on the EU Gender Action Plan III for 2021-2025, the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2021-2024, applicable Human Rights covenants and the international conventions. It also aligns with the EU's objectives under the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with Iraq.

#### ***Public Policy of the partner country***

This Action is based on Iraq's National Development Plan (NDP 2018). To date, structural challenges identified in the NDP continue to hamper the development process include low efficiency of institutional performance, an inflated public sector, administrative and financial corruption, and a myriad of economic shortcomings such as the deterioration of the investment climate, a lack of access to finance, the distortion of sectoral structure, trade imbalance, and an imbalanced budget structure. A number of sector strategies complements the NDP. The NDP ensures the mainstreaming of gender strategies into national policies and the inclusion of programmes aimed at protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. The action specifically supports the implementation of the Iraq National Education Strategy (2023), the National Enrolment Strategy (2021) and the National Framework for Inclusive Education (2021), as well as the second Iraq National Action Plan (2020) for UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325).

#### ***Complementarity, synergy and donor coordination***

The international cooperation landscape in Iraq still encompasses humanitarian, stabilisation and development programmes. However, with increasing donor fatigue, humanitarian and classical stabilisation programmes are phasing out. There is a strong momentum for the international community to engage with the Government in a coherent, coordinated partnership to implement a broad reform agenda for sustainable development, structural reforms and durable solutions for displaced populations on the basis of Iraq's new policies. In light of this challenging yet changing context, the EU has been shifting from post-crisis recovery support through Special Measures to long-term development programming through a dedicated MIP and Annual Action Plans (AAP). The Action is linked to priority area 2 (human development and social contract) of the MIP for Iraq 2021-2027. This Action builds on and is fully complementary to EU bilateral MIP actions in the field of general education sector reform<sup>17</sup>. Concrete synergies with other EU interventions are sought notably via the Annual Action Plans of 2021<sup>18</sup> and the sizable programme for general education reform. In the education sector, a sector coordination platform co-chaired between the Iraqi Ministry of Education, the Prime Minister's Advisory Council and the EU serves as the national forum for coordination and for donor coordination, together with the dedicated working group on general education.

## 2.2 Problem Analysis

The Iraqi population, and in particular groups in vulnerable situations such as youth, women and children as well as displaced populations (internally displaced persons, refugees, returnees), have been severely affected by a significant

<sup>17</sup> In line with the division of labour in place with EU Member States and with all EU services operating in Iraq based on the triple Nexus strategy for Iraq, only EU bilateral MIP actions provide support to Iraq's general education reform.

<sup>18</sup> AAP 2021 "Support to durable solutions for Iraq's displaced populations: integration into the national labour market and national systems for education and social protection"

rise in poverty (from 20% in 2018 to an estimated 42% by 2023 in terms of multi-dimensional poverty<sup>19</sup>), an increase in the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance (2.5 million in 2023), and an increase in unemployment and underemployment in a country marked by a predominantly informal private sector. Risks of radicalisation are still present, especially among marginalised youth. Equally, the EU conflict analysis (2021) suggests that an important risk factor for the social stability and social cohesion in Iraq is the lack of jobs for Iraq's youth. Equally, the pending full integration of displaced people remains a key driver of conflict.

There is a long road for achieving gender parity. The position of women and girls in Iraq is challenged by engrained attitudes, strong cultural beliefs and societal structures that perpetuate patterns of discrimination, gender-based violence and gender-based human rights violations (civic, political and socio-economic rights). This includes the Right to Education that is enshrined in the Iraqi Constitution.

Women and girls in Iraq are suffering from widespread and normalised Gender-based violence including domestic violence, honor killings, genital mutilation/cutting, child marriage, human trafficking, abuses of women IDPs and refugees, and of women of African descent. Women's labour force participation in Iraq is extremely low at 10.6% and women who seek employment face numerous obstacles. This is particularly detrimental to young and adolescent population. Moreover, even women participating in the workforce are often unemployed or underemployed. Iraq has one of the highest inequalities in time spent on unpaid care work between men and women. It is estimated that women spend up to 10,5 more weeks on unpaid work than men. Family obligations and care for children and elderly often lead women to abrogate gainful employment<sup>20</sup>.

Even though Iraqi women are entitled by law to land, property and housing ownership, in reality women are often excluded from ownership by their husbands and/or family and lack the knowledge and the avenues to claim their rights<sup>21</sup>. Women entrepreneurs lack access to financing, even though this is not a gendered but common issue for Iraqi SMEs. Digitalisation could offer a viable alternative to grow women's entrepreneurship and businesses, but this requires urgently increasing Iraqi women's ICT literacy skills<sup>22</sup>. Illiteracy and innumeracy are very high in Iraqi women population, especially in rural areas where it reaches 50%, as well as for displaced girls, girls pertaining to minorities (notably those minorities targeted by Da'esh), and girls with disabilities. Girls are often taken out of school on or before the age of 13, usually to get married.

Almost half of all illiterate women in Iraq marry before they are 18. Women academics are discriminated against and often have to sacrifice their careers due to family obligations<sup>23</sup>. Women are largely absent from high-level positions, in both the public and private sector. Even though there is a quota of 25% participation of women in the Council of Representatives, no such quota exists for the Council of Ministers or other government bodies. Moreover, Iraq abolished the Ministry of Women Affairs in 2015 - a body that had to work from its very start as understaffed and underfunded and that never had any influence. Subsequently, in 2017, the women affairs were placed under the auspices of the General Secretariat of the Council Ministers. Women engaged in politics and public affairs in any capacity often in fear for their lives, are subjected to personal attacks, smear campaigns and harassment<sup>24</sup>.

While Iraq was the first Middle Eastern/Northern African country to have prepared a National Action Plan for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 for Women, Peace and Security, its implementation to date faces many challenges including the lack of a budget and a dedicated staff. However, women's organisations in Iraq supported its implementation through mainly voluntary work<sup>25</sup>.

Concerning the green transition, the most pressing issue facing Iraq is climate change, which particularly affects women and girls living in rural areas and compounding the trifecta of poverty, powerlessness and gender inequality<sup>26</sup>. At the same time, a new generation of strong and vocal Iraqi women and girls claim empowerment. They are seizing

<sup>19</sup> UNICEF estimate of multi-dimensional poverty to be confirmed by the MICS survey of 2023

<sup>20</sup> Iraqi Labour Force Survey 2021, Central Statistics Organization, Kurdistan Regional Statistics Office, and ILO. The female labour force participation rate is particularly low (10.6 percent), compared with the male labour force participation rate (68.0 percent).

<sup>21</sup> Broken Home: women's housing land and property rights in post-conflict Iraq. Norwegian Refugee Council, 2020.

<sup>22</sup> Priority Financing Needs of Iraqi SMEs report. GIZ Iraq, 2023.

<sup>23</sup> The Right to education in Iraq. UNAMI and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2021.

<sup>24</sup> Strengthening women's political participation, UNAMI, ESCWA, and Iraq Foundation 2021.

<sup>25</sup> INAP 1325 for 2014-2028; INAP 1325 for 2021-2024.

<sup>26</sup> UNICEF CLAC 2023.

their rightful place across the political, social and economic sphere and put in question traditional gender roles and claim their own identities, both literally and figurative. There is a growing understanding that the perpetuation of gender stereotypes traps both women and men causing long-term costs on societal, community, but also individual level.

This ongoing renegotiation of gender norms in Iraq is partly due to economic necessity. More women find themselves in the position of heads of households as a result of their determination, and, equally as a result of the armed conflict and migration of the formerly male head of household. While this does not necessarily indicate a shift in social norms, as an increase of the incidence of sexual and gender- based violence against women and girls showed, it offers an entry-point that is being seized by Iraq's strong and determined women.

With regards to **education**<sup>27</sup>, the Iraqi Government's persistent prioritisation of defence expenditure has resulted in a squeezed education budget of less than 6% of the national budget and limited to operational expenses, with alarming consequences for equity and quality of education. With ten million students enrolled in basic and secondary education, 3.2 million children out of school, dropout rates between 13% and 16% at primary and secondary levels, and access challenges for displaced populations, girls and children with disabilities (approximately 355,000 displaced children are not attending school), Iraq's literacy rate now stands at 85% for a country that used to be the gold standard for education in the Middle East. There is also a lower rate of enrolment of girls at the primary, intermediate and secondary levels and higher dropout rates for girls, which are directly proportional to the level of education. Students with disabilities face many barriers in accessing education. The quality of education is further compromised by weak curricula and teaching capacities in addition to the absence of a functional quality assurance system. Despite a strong reform agenda and sustained efforts supported by the EU programmes since 2009, the need for accurate data to design fact-based policies and strategies, modern curricula, modern teaching methodologies, improved teaching capacities and a functional education management and quality monitoring system remain substantial. In addition, rebuilding and renovating school infrastructure remains a challenge especially when it comes to creating learning environments that are child friendly and non-discriminatory especially for girls, children with disabilities and traumatised children. The COVID-19 crisis has also revealed a lack in capacities within the education system in terms of planning, crisis management and teachers' abilities to develop and adopt remote learning methodologies. The problem of low-quality learning outcomes also persists due to the absence of a national quality assurance system and the need to roll-out the national education management system country-wide.

There are also **significant gender gaps in education in Iraq**<sup>28</sup>. Only one in two girls complete primary education compared to three out of four boys. These gaps are accentuated with age – at age 13, only 40% of girls still attend school whilst for boys it is 80% - and these gaps are even more striking for women and girls in rural areas, who begin to drop out of school at the age of nine. Factors affecting low enrolment and high dropouts of girls in Iraq include concerns over safety (in traveling to school), family and household responsibilities, child marriage, lack of availability of schooling infrastructure, combined with the consequences of years of unrest and conflict, and socioeconomic conditions.. Lack of access to education results in 26.4% of Iraqi women estimated to be illiterate, but this percentage is believed to be much higher in rural areas, reaching up to 50% and making the rural women amongst the most affected populations in Iraq. Women and girls with disabilities, women and girls who pertain to minorities, women and girls from poorer backgrounds, displaced women and girls as well as those who lived under Da'esh occupation have extremely limited access to education. The post-conflict context of Iraq has contributed to the current situation through destroyed infrastructure, loss of qualified personnel and massive displacement. In addition to gender disparities, other factors such as poverty, conflict, and geographic location clearly play a role, calling not just for a focus on gender but for vulnerabilities. Despite the right to education being enshrined in the Iraqi Constitution, these structural challenges tend to impede girls from completing primary and lower secondary education, which in turn impedes from pursuing upper secondary education, from pursuing higher education, from engaging in formal decent employment. Ultimately this impacts girls and women capacity to claim and seize their full democratic rights as citizens, including their political rights.

**Identification of main stakeholders and corresponding institutional and/or organisational issues to be covered by the action:**

The main counterparts in the Government are the following:

<sup>27</sup> Iraq National Education Strategy 2022-2030.

<sup>28</sup> Gender Action Plan III – 2021-2025. Country Level Implementation Plan (CLIP) for Iraq

- The Ministry of Planning (federal Iraq and Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)) is the main government counterpart for international partners in Iraq and the national authority for development planning. The Human Development Directorate is involved in education policy development with the Ministry of Education.
- The Women Empowerment Directorate at the Council of Ministers Secretariat and the High Council for Women Affairs in Kurdistan lead on women affairs and women empowerment.
- The Central Statistics Organisation and Kurdistan Regional Statistics Office are responsible for collecting, processing and analysing national statistics, including education data in cooperation with the Ministry of Education.

Local and regional authorities are key stakeholders of this action because of the decentralized nature of education under Law 21. The coordination and involvement of these actors ensures buy-in, legitimacy and sustainability. Key stakeholders are equally communities and the civil society, including women’s organisations, organisations representing the rights of persons with disabilities, and volunteer groups. Together with academia, these will be key actors in the implementation of the Action as well as in the social dialogue and benefit from capacity building.

This action will benefit girls; including girls pertaining to forcibly displaced populations including (Syrian) refugees, Iraqi IDPs, as well as returnees; girls pertaining to minority groups; girls in vulnerable situations.

### 3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

#### 3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The **Overall Objective (Impact) of this Action** is: To improve the literacy, numeracy, skills and qualifications of girls, including displaced girls, girls pertaining to minorities, disabled girls and girls living in vulnerable situations<sup>29</sup>

**The Specific Objectives of this action are:**

1. Improved access and completion of inclusive, equitable primary and secondary education of girls, including displaced girls, girls pertaining to minorities, disabled girls and girls living in vulnerable situations<sup>30</sup>
2. Improved learning outcomes for girls, including displaced girls, girls pertaining to minorities, disabled girls and girls living in vulnerable situations<sup>31</sup>

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

- 1.1 Increased awareness and voice of civil society, parents, local communities, and private sector on the importance of education for all and their roles in supporting and monitoring.<sup>32</sup>
- 1.2 Increased awareness of education staff on equity and inclusion, with strategies to address gender and inclusion barriers to quality education.<sup>33</sup>
- 1.3 Increased awareness of opportunities for lifelong learning, re-entry into to formal education and alternative pathways opportunities for girls who have dropped out of school.
- 2.1 Improved teaching and learning environment with use of gender and equity responsive and learner-centred pedagogies, well-equipped classrooms, remote/digital learning, and safe facilities.<sup>34</sup>
- 2.2 Improved strategies and resources for school management and autonomy focused on learning, equity and engagement with local communities and civil society.<sup>35</sup>
- 2.3 Increased availability of good quality, inclusive and gender and equity sensitive curricula, teaching and learning resources, including the appropriate use of digital and remote learning, digital innovations and improved connectivity through Civil Society public campaign, as well as preventing radicalisation.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>29</sup> EU education results chain, adapted, CAP4DEV

<sup>30</sup> EU education results chain, adapted, CAP4DEV; MIP expected result 2.1.1

<sup>31</sup> EU education results chain, adapted, CAP4DEV; MIP expected result 2.1.3

<sup>32</sup> EU education results chain, adapted, CAP4DEV

<sup>33</sup> EU education results chain, adapted, CAP4DEV

<sup>34</sup> EU education results chain, adapted, CAP4DEV

<sup>35</sup> EU education results chain, adapted, CAP4DEV

<sup>36</sup> EU education results chain, adapted, CAP4DEV

## 3.2 Indicative Activities

### ***Activities related to Output 1.1 to 1.3 may include:***

- Fostering the role and capacities of communities and civil society in back-to-school campaigns in areas most affected, including areas of the displacements and return and related host communities, with the focus girls, girls with disabilities, and displaced girls (IDPs, refugees and returnees).
- Fostering the role and capacities of civil society in the collection and dissemination of data relating to school attendance and drop outs, gender disparities, quality of education services, et al.
- Conducting dialogue between public authorities and local organisations on education issues and in particular on education for girls and students related to vulnerable groups, including ethnic and religious minorities
- Identifying champions for the cause of girls' education in Governorates and local authorities that can serve as allies to civil society
- Conducting gender and inequality analyses and gender equality awareness (e.g. benefits of girls' education) targeting community (households and schools)
- Providing support to civil society for advocacy, awareness and empowerment efforts on education policies
- Supporting community initiatives for improved provision of sex-separated and safe WASH facilities and associated training and awareness programmes in all schools
- Creating community awareness of the effects on education of child marriage and early pregnancy
- Creating community awareness and support for the needs of children with disability
- Contributing to the Government's development of a strategic plan that evaluates the state of schools in the most vulnerable regions in order to inform future Government action to increase number of schools and capacity extension and rehabilitation of existing ones.

### ***Activities related to Outputs 2.1 to 2.4 may include:***

- Fostering the role and capacities of civil society to advocate for improved teaching and learning environment with use of gender and equity responsive, inclusive and learner-centred pedagogies, well-equipped classrooms, remote/digital learning, and safe facilities
- Fostering the role and capacities of civil society to advocate for the provision of textbooks / learning materials to primary and secondary schools, including foundational literacy / numeracy and but also human rights and climate awareness materials
- Fostering the capacities of civil society to monitor the quality of the learning environment and learning outcomes
- Identifying champions for the cause of girls' education in Governorates and local authorities that can serve as allies to civil society
- Creating opportunities for dialogue, direct engagement and collaboration between local education authorities, schools and civil society
- Creating the capacities of civil society to monitor and shadow report on the implementation of the Iraq National Education Strategy as well as create opportunities for advocacy by civil society to local and federal authorities
- Support the set-up of girls learning groups and other volunteer supported learning initiatives

## 3.3 Mainstreaming

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

This action focusses on promoting access to and completion of education for girls in Iraq. Education plays a paramount role in raising awareness and promoting behavioural change for environment and climate change mitigation and adaptation. It helps to increase resilience and adaptation capacity of communities by enabling individuals to make informed decisions. In this regard, the proposed action promotes innovative ways of thinking and problem solving to equip young people with knowledge, skills, and habits that will build their capability to cope over time with the challenges that define our era: global warming, integrity of ecosystems, social justice, sustainable food systems, and biodiversity.

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

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

**Outcome of the Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening** (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project) The CRA screening concluded that for this action is no or low risk (no need for further assessment).

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

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G2. This implies that promoting gender equality in education is the principal objective of the Action. Promoting access to education, completion of education, and learning outcomes for girls (including vulnerable and displaced girls) is at the core of this action. The Action will also support the protection of girls to ensure that are not victims of abuse, discrimination or forced to labour, or forced to early marriage. The action produces gender analysis when needed, as well as sex-disaggregated data when available and it will monitor and evaluate the results of the gender sensitive indicators in line with the GAP III. In this sense, the Action is fully aligned with the country implementation plan for Iraq under the EU Gender Action Plan III for 2021-2024<sup>37</sup>.

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### **Human Rights**

This Action is based on the implementation plan for Iraq under the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2021-2024)<sup>38</sup>, applicable human rights covenants and the international conventions. The Action takes a rights-based approach putting the Right to Education at the forefront, focusing specifically on safeguarding and promoting the rights of girls, displaced girls, girls pertaining to minorities, and girls with disabilities. The action adopts a human rights-based approach by focusing on capacity building of the duty-bearers (parents, communities, educators) and the rights holders (girls), creating opportunities of participation for their associations and by fostering the working principles of applying human rights for all.

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### **Disability**

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this Action is labelled as D1. The Action will provide for measures that ensure girls with disabilities are able to contribute to and benefit from the project equally with others and are able to be active participants of the activities. Access to quality education for disabled girls as well as the adaptation of services to the needs of girls with disabilities will be pro-actively advanced through this Action, and assessed through indicators measuring outcomes on girls with disabilities.

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### **Reduction of Inequalities**

As per the Inequality Marker, this Action Document has been labelled as an I-2. Reduction of inequalities is a principal objective of the Action. Girls, including displaced girls, girls pertaining to minorities, disabled girls and girls living in vulnerable situations are mostly affected social inequality resulting in a lack of school attendance and education completion. The multidimensional vulnerability index for Iraq shows that 42% of the population is deprived in more than one dimension, including education, health, living conditions and financial security. In addition, another 30% of the population is extremely vulnerable, with a high risk of falling into poverty and food insecurity. By increasing access to education for girls in a rights-based approach, the Actions supports vulnerable populations and contributes to reducing social inequalities. It promotes the full participation in the social rights of the most vulnerable and provide an opportunity to reduce inequalities among the targeted groups.

The Action provides a detailed analysis on the levels, drivers, and determinants of inequality in Iraq. The overall objective is to reduce inequalities and the specific objectives are set to reach socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals, households or groups. Furthermore, inequality indicators, with targets, are set for directly measuring the effects of the intervention on the bottom 40% or socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals, households or groups. As part of the larger EU support to education, a comprehensive evaluation is planned to assess the EU education interventions' impact on socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals, households or groups.

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<sup>37</sup> Joint Communication on the EU Gender Action Plan III from November 2020, JOIN (2020) 17. Source: [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/join-2020-17-final\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/join-2020-17-final_en.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> Joint Communication on the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024, JOIN (2020) 7. Source: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:e9112a36-6e95-11ea-b735-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC\\_3&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:e9112a36-6e95-11ea-b735-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC_3&format=PDF)

## Democracy

The focus of this Action is on improving education sector governance by strengthening the advocacy capacities of civil society and local communities. This will contribute to increasing the compromised legitimacy of the state. At the same time, effective education quality service delivery, respect of girls' right to education, and the integration of displaced and minority girls into education contributes to improving social cohesion.

## Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

Conflict sensitivity and a people-centred approach underpin this Action, addressing the root causes of conflicts while social cohesion is mainstreamed throughout. Equally, the Action centrally builds on the findings of the conflict analysis screening (CAS) for Iraq that identified underlying conflict drivers/triggers and provided a series of recommendation for conflict sensitivity and identified specific peace-building opportunities.

The recommendations of the CAS highlight that education should be inclusive of girls, vulnerable population and minorities, including displaced children. It also stipulates that the education system should be responsive to crises and shocks, as well as cultural and religious diversity. Complementarity is sought also with the EU support to social protection reform that supports families and communities, at national level (conditional social transfers) as poverty is actually the main driver of early marriage.

A conflict sensitive approach also ensures a balance between educational services provided girls and girls in vulnerable situations as well as children alike to foster social cohesion and inter-group dialogue.

In terms of peace-building opportunities, this Action directly contributes to four objectives notably *Support genuine reforms by focusing on the most promising change agents and bridging short-term conflict resolution with long-term governance efforts; Accompany dialogue efforts at different levels; Work with the education system to promote inclusive citizenship; All relevant recommendations for conflict sensitivity mitigation measures relating to the themes of Reinforcing a highly corrupt, underperforming, contested political system; Exacerbating inter-group rivalries; Fuelling the negative perception of international support to Iraq; Sector- and action-specific risks* are taken into account for this action and are fully integrated into the design of the programmes.

## Disaster Risk Reduction

The Action aims to improve the shock resilience of national systems and thus contributes to disaster risk reduction. The Action specifically aims to improve the preparedness and shock-responsiveness and the ability of the Iraqi governance mechanisms, labour market, and education system to expand and taper assistance in response to the onset and abatement of crises for the systems to be equipped with tools and capacity to assess needs and expand the coverage as crises such as climate change, conflict or natural hazards-induced disasters occur.

### 3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High / Medium / Low)	Impact (High / Medium / Low)	Mitigating measures
External environment	Risk 1: <i>A worsening security situation</i>	High	Medium	Political dialogue by the EU (including the European Union Assistance Mission (EUAM) and EU Member States
	Risk 2: <i>An increasingly unstable political situation</i>	High	Medium	Political dialogue / support to elections by the EU and EU Member States
	Risk 3: <i>Endemic corruption in Government Public Finances impacting service provision</i>	High	Low	Indirect management modality with pillar-assessed organisations reduces fiduciary risk. PFM projects provide reform support.
	Risk 4: <i>Weak capacities of implementing partners and their sub-grantees</i>	High	High	Choice of implementing partner; regular monitoring, assessment and evaluation of the quality of services provided.
	Risk 5: <i>Increased resistance to women empowerment</i>	Medium	High	Pro-active political outreach, strong coordination and continued policy dialogue

	Risk 6: <i>Increased geographic access constraints for partners and Civil Society</i>	Medium	High	Political outreach by the EU, EU Member States; Choice of implementation partners; Continued strong advocacy.
	Risk 7: <i>Resistance to include a Human Rights based approach including gender, disability and minorities.</i>	Low	High	Awareness-raising sessions, analysis and recollection of disaggregated data on gender, disabilities and minorities. Reinforcement of the participation and representativeness of their community associations.
	Risk 8: Difficulties to reach the most vulnerable girls.	Low	High	Baseline study that maps the most vulnerable girls. Strong Monitoring & Evaluation framework that monitors whether the actions are benefiting the most vulnerable. Flexible plan that allows for reallocation of activities if required. Implement a Distributional Impact Assessment (DIA) to effectively target the most vulnerable.

**Assumptions:**

- No additional external factors affecting recovery and social stability;
- National and local security situation allows for safe implementation on the ground;
- National and local authorities' support, full engagement and ownership continue;
- Favourable government displacement, governance, macro-economic and fiscal policies;
- The national education systems are ready to absorb the project's support and allow for policy/management reforms, as well as improvements in terms of delivered services and infrastructures.

**Lessons Learnt:**

Lessons learnt from the past and ongoing engagement stress that the EU needs to maintain a prominent leading role, actively engaging in political dialogue and using its joint leverage, thereby accompanying its programmes with pro-active outreach to relevant political, religious and tribal actors at federal and local level in order to create buy-in and overcome obstacles. Pro-active and constant policy dialogue with the government at decision-maker and technical level, at federal and local level, is required to ensure that EU interventions support priority-setting, policy development and their implementation, as well as create the much-needed space for Civil Society to engage at policy level. Direct work and coordination with Government institutions at federal and local level as well as civil society is indispensable to ensure sustainability of EU interventions. At the same time, constantly ensuring adequate EU visibility is paramount.

### 3.5 The Intervention Logic

In line with Priority Area 2 of the MIP, the proposed intervention intends to support human development, focusing on the promotion of girls' quality education as a fundamental human right and an enabler for economic development. Mindful of the large ongoing EU programme for access to quality basic education that targets government policies (AAP 2021), this intervention is of a relatively small amount but designed as a complementary action, to be implemented through civil society organisations. It will mobilise Iraqi civil society to carry out public advocacy campaigns for girls' access to quality education, including for rural, displaced and disabled girls as well as girls pertaining to minorities, reducing dropout rates and discrimination in early childhood, primary and secondary education. It will also support citizens' and civil society's capacities of service provision monitoring as a means of claiming Government's accountability with respect to the human right to education and national policies for inclusive access to education. This Action is aligned with the policy priorities of the Commission for 2021-2027, and will contribute to implementing the EU Gender Action Plan III notably with respect to dedicated engagement for gender equality in the Iraq CLIP that sets out to ensure that "women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, fully enjoy and exercise their equal civic, political economic, social, labour and cultural rights across Iraq". This includes the Right to Education that is enshrined in the Iraqi Constitution. This Action provides an entry point to discuss with Iraq's Government on gender equality issues notably in the field of education. It responds to a gender gap in Iraq in the field of girls' education. The Action will also contribute to realising the European Consensus on Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its pledge to leave no one behind. The Action will equally contribute towards SDG 4 (quality education).

***The underlying intervention logic for this action is that:***

*IF* the activities of fostering the role and capacities of communities and civil society, and the measures related to reinforcing schools in vulnerable settings are undertaken addressing the needs and interests of the target groups *AND* the assumptions regarding the willingness of local communities to engage for gender equality in education hold true, *THEN* the Outputs relating to increased awareness and improved learning environment will be produced.

*IF* the Outputs relating to increased awareness and improved learning environment *AND* the assumptions at the level of Outputs regarding favourable local government to education for girls hold true, *THEN* the Outcomes relating to improved access and completion of education, as well as improved learning outcomes, will be realised, *BECAUSE* past experience with EU programmes in these specific thematic areas suggest that this change is possible.

*IF* the Outcomes relating to improved access and completion of education, as well as improved learning outcomes are achieved *AND* the assumptions at this level regarding external factors, the security situation, communities and authorities' full engagement and ownership hold true, *THEN* the action will contribute to the desired Impact of improving the literacy, numeracy, skills and qualifications of girls, including displaced girls, disabled girls and girls living in vulnerable situations. This is *BECAUSE* of the momentum for gender equality and women empowerment, as well as the joint action of the EU and EU Member States.

### 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.

Results	Results chain (@): Main expected results	Indicators (@):	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	To improve the literacy, numeracy, skills and qualifications of girls, including displaced girls, girls pertaining to minorities, disabled girls and girls living in vulnerable situations (EU results chain education, adapted)	1. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) Youth literacy rate (disaggregated by income level, sex, migration status, minority, disability, geographical location - region, urban/rural) (GERF 1.28; OPSYS core indicator)	1. 2023: NA	1. 2027: to be determined during inception phase	1. UIS, Census, National Household Surveys	Not applicable
		2. Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional numeracy skills (disaggregated by income level, sex, migration status, minority, disability, geographical location - region, urban/rural) (SDG indicator 4.6.1)	2. 2023: NA	2. 2027: to be determined during inception phase	2. UIS, Census, National Household Surveys, SDG report	
		3. Proportion of children and young people (a) in Grades 2/3, (b) at the end of primary and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics (%), by income level, sex, migration status, minority, disability, geographical location - region, urban/rural (SDG 4.1.1.; GAP Specific thematic objective 6, key thematic outcome indicators)	3. 2023: NA	3. 2027: to be determined during inception phase	3. UIS, Census, National Household Surveys, SDG report	

		4. Extent to which curricula and learning materials are free from discriminatory social, ethnic and religious norms and gender stereotypes (GAP Specific thematic objective 6, key thematic outcome indicators)	4. 2023: NA	4. 2027: to be determined during inception phase	4. UIS, Census, National Household Surveys, SDG report	
<b>Outcome 1</b>	1. Improved access and completion of inclusive, equitable primary and secondary education of girls, including displaced girls, girls pertaining to minorities, disabled girls and girls living in vulnerable situations (EU results education, adapted, MIP expected result 2.1.1)	1.1 Number of students enrolled in education with EU support: (a) primary education, (b) secondary education (disaggregated by income level, sex, migration status, minority, disability, geographical location - region, urban/rural) (GERF 2.36; OPSYS core indicator)	1.1 2023: 0	1.1 2027: to be determined during inception phase	1.1 Baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	No additional external factors affecting socio-economic conditions;  National and local security situation allows for safe implementation;
		1.2 Primary completion rate or Gross intake rate in the last grade of primary school (disaggregated by income level, sex, migration status, minority, disability, geographical location - region, urban/rural, access to Early Childhood Education, wealth quintile) (SDG 4.1.2; OPSYS core indicator)	1.2 2023: NA	1.2 2027: to be determined during inception phase	1.2 Education for All Global Monitoring Report (EFA GMR), UIS, Education Management Information Systems (EMIS), SDG report	Adequate allocations to the sector in the national budget.
		1.3 Secondary completion rate, lower or upper (disaggregated by income level, sex, migration status, minority, disability, geographical location - region, urban/rural, access to Early Childhood Education, wealth quintile) (SDG 4.1.2; OPSYS core indicator)	1.3 2023: NA	1.3 2027: to be determined during inception phase	1.3 EFA GMR, UIS, EMIS, SDG report	National and local authorities' support, full engagement and ownership continue;
		1.4 Drop-out rate by grade in primary education/secondary general education (disaggregated by income level, sex, migration status, minority, disability, geographical location - region, urban/rural, access to Early Childhood Education, wealth quintile)	1.4 2023: NA	1.4 2027: to be determined during inception phase	1.4 UIS, national statistics offices Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS)	Favourable government education and gender equality policies;
		1.5 Gender parity in school enrolment and primary and secondary completion rates (GAP specific thematic objective 6 outcome)	1.5 2023: NA	1.5 2027: to be determined during inception phase	1.5 EFA GMR, UIS, EMIS, SDG report	

<b>Outcome 2</b>	2. Improved learning outcomes for girls, including displaced girls, girls pertaining to minorities, disabled girls and girls living in vulnerable situations (EU results education, adapted; MIP expected result 2.1.3, adapted)	2.1 Total number of hours spent in class with a teacher (disaggregated by income level, sex, migration status, minority, disability, geographical location - region, urban/rural, access to Early Childhood Education, wealth quintile)	2.1 2023: NA	2.1 2027: to be determined during inception phase	2.1 UIS, national education ministry (EMIS), baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	<i>(as here above)</i>
		2.2 Educational wastage rate by level of education (Percentage) (disaggregated by income level, sex, migration status, minority, disability, geographical location - region, urban/rural, access to Early Childhood Education, wealth quintile)	2.2 2023: NA	2.2 2027: to be determined during inception phase	2.2 UIS, national ministry of education, national statistics offices, baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	
		2.3 Extent to which government policy creates a supportive environment for pregnant girls to remain in, or to return to school (GAP specific thematic objective 6 outcome)	2.3 2023: NA	2.3 2027: to be determined during inception phase	2.3 baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	
		2.4 Extent to which government has implemented infrastructure policies that are supportive of girls' school attendance, such as safe schools close to where children live or affordable school transport (GAP specific thematic objective 6 outcome)	2.4 2023: NA	2.4 2027: to be determined during inception phase	2.4 baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	
		2.5 Extent to which government legislation and its implementation support and deliver accessible infrastructure and materials for girls and boys children with special needs, e.g. children with disabilities (GAP specific thematic objective 6 outcome)	2.5 2023: NA	2.5 2027: to be determined during inception phase	2.5 baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	
<b>Output 1 relating to Outcome 1</b>	1.1 Increased awareness and voice of civil society, parents, local communities, and private sector on the importance of education for all and their roles in supporting and monitoring (EU education results chain adapted)	1.1.1 Number of civil society representatives, parents, teachers and private sector representatives attending networking events organized by the Action (disaggregated by sex and type of participant) (CAP4DEV)	1.1.1 2023: 0	1.1.1 2027: to be determined during inception phase	1.1.1 baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	Absorption capacities of civil society, local education authorities and schools.
		1.1.2 Number of civil society organization representatives trained by the Action for implementing or	1.1.2 2023: 0	1.1.2 2027: to be determined during inception phase	1.1.2 baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	

		monitoring activities in the field of education (CAP4DEV)				
<b>Output 2</b> relating to <b>Outcome 1</b>	1.2 Increased awareness of education staff on equity and inclusion, with strategies to address gender and inclusion barriers to quality education (EU education results chain adapted)	1.2.1 Number of teachers and school personnel trained periodically by the Action in conflict sensitive education with an increased knowledge (disaggregated by income level, sex, type of contract - teacher or administrator, geographical location - region, urban/rural, and by level of education) (CAP4DEV)	1.2.1 2023: 0	1.2.1 2027: to be determined during inception phase	1.2.1 baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	
		1.2.2 Number of education staff, children and parents participating in events organized by the Action to support access to education for all children (disaggregated by income level, sex, age and type of participant - teacher, administrator, child) (CAP4DEV)	1.2.2 2023: 0	1.2.2 2027: to be determined during inception phase	1.2.2 baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	
<b>Output 3</b> Relating to <b>Outcome 1</b>	1.3 Increased awareness of opportunities for lifelong learning, re-entry into to formal education and alternative pathways opportunities for girls who have dropped out of school	1.3.1 Number and type of activities undertaken in community centres, schools and other educational institutions that raise awareness about opportunities for lifelong learning, re-entry into to formal education and alternative pathways opportunities for girls who have dropped out of school	1.3.1 2023: to be determined during inception phase	1.3.1 2027: to be determined during inception phase	1.3.1 Baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	
		1.3.2 Number and type of activities undertaken in schools and other educational institutions that raise awareness about violence against women and girls and promote the rights of women and girls by governorate (CAP4DEV)	1.3.2 2023: to be determined during inception phase	1.3.2 2027: to be determined during inception phase	1.3.2 Baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	
<b>Output 1</b> relating to <b>Outcome 2</b>	2.1 Improved teaching and learning environment with use of gender and equity responsive and learner-centred pedagogies, well-equipped classrooms, remote/digital learning, and safe facilities. (EU education results chain adapted)	2.1.1 Number and percentage of staff trained on gender and inequality issues in education (pre-service or in-service) and having increased their knowledge (disaggregated by sex and governorate) (CAP4DEV)	2.1.1 2023: 0	2.1.1 2027: to be determined during inception phase	2.1.1 Baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	(as here above)
		2.1.2 Number of schools with gender specific features (e.g. separate latrines for girls, access to water, security in dorms)	2.1.2 2023: 0	2.1.2 2027: to be determined	2.1.2 Baseline and endline surveys conducted and	

		made available with EU support by governorate (CAP4DEV)		during inception phase	budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	
<b>Output 2</b> relating to <b>Outcome 2</b>	2.2 Improved strategies and resources for school management and autonomy focused on learning, equity and engagement with local communities and civil society. (EU Education results chain adapted)	2.2.1 Number of civil society representatives, parents, teachers and private sector representatives attending networking events organized by the Action (disaggregated by sex and type of participant) (CAP4DEV)	2.2.1 2023: to be determined during inception phase	2.2.1 2027: to be determined during inception phase	2.2.1 Baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	
		2.2.2 Number of civil society organization representatives trained by the Action for implementing or monitoring activities in the field of education (CAP4DEV)	2.2.2 2023: 0	2.2.2 2027: to be determined during inception phase	2.2.2 Baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	
<b>Output 3</b> relating to <b>Outcome 2</b>	2.3 Increased availability of good quality gender and inequality sensitive curricula, teaching and learning resources, including the appropriate use of digital and remote learning, digital innovations and improved connectivity through Civil Society public campaign, as well as preventing radicalisation. (EU Education results chain adapted)	2.3.1 Number of education officials trained by the Action and having increased their knowledge on management with focus on pro-poor, vulnerable and/or disadvantaged group funding (disaggregated by governorate, sex and level of administration) (CAP4DEV)	2.3.1 2023: to be determined during inception phase	2.3.1 2027: to be determined during inception phase	2.3.1 Baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	
		2.3.2 Number of parents, students, volunteers and teachers trained on the use of innovative teaching and learning resources in education (pre-service or in-service) and having increased their knowledge (disaggregated by governorate, sex) (CAP4DEV)	2.3.2 2023: 0	2.3.2 2027: to be determined during inception phase	2.3.2 Baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	

## 4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

### 4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the partner country.

### 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>39</sup>.

#### 4.3.1 Direct Management (Grants)

##### **Grants: (direct management)**

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

The purpose of the grant is to contribute to the achievement of the Overall Objective (Impact) of this Action, i.e. To improve the literacy, numeracy, skills and qualifications of girls, including displaced girls, disabled girls and girls living in vulnerable situations

##### **(b) Type of applicants targeted**

The applicants targeted consist of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) active in the field of education in Iraq and registered as NGOs with the Iraqi federal and KRI authorities and/or other international organisations.

#### 4.3.2 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).

### 4.4 Indicative Budget

<b>Indicative Budget components</b>	<b>EU contribution (amount in EUR)</b>
<b>Implementation modalities – cf section 4.3.1</b>	
Specific objective 1 <i>Improved access and completion of inclusive and equitable primary and secondary education with focus on displaced and/or disabled girls</i> composed of	1 000 000
Grants - cf. section 4.3.1	
<b>Grants – total envelope under section 4.3.1</b>	<b>1 000 000</b>

<sup>39</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.

<b>Evaluation</b> – cf. section 5.2	To be covered by another Decision
<b>Audit</b> – cf. section 5.3	
<b>Totals</b>	1 000 000

#### 4.5 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The Iraqi Ministry of Planning (MoP) is the signatory of the financing agreement. A programme steering committee (SC) will be formed for each component of this action and will meet at least once per year to endorse strategic orientations, oversee programme execution, and facilitate implementation of activities, approve work plans and oversee coordination of the different stakeholders in the programmes. The SC will comprise representatives from MoP, the Ministry of Education, the EU Delegation to Iraq and its cooperation section, representatives from implementing partners per component and the relevant national and local stakeholders.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the Commission participates 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 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. This shall include surveys to establish the baseline and endline data. 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.

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).

A robust Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation system will be put in place to track project implementation progress, and document valuable lessons and experiences learnt. At the inception phase, baseline surveys and assessments will be carried out, a verification of the anticipated risks, including the introduction of necessary amendments to the set of indicators based on the prevailing conditions in the context of implementing the project. Local authorities and communities will be strongly involved in the monitoring of the activities performed, when possible. Likewise, all monitoring and reporting shall assess how the Action is considering the principle of gender equality, human rights-based approach, and rights of persons with disabilities including inclusion and diversity. Indicators shall be disaggregated at least by sex, geographic area and income level.

### 5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, mid-term and / or final evaluation(s) may be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission. Mid-term evaluation(s) may be carried out for problem solving and learning purposes. Final evaluation(s) may be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision). The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least one month 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 reports may be shared with the partners and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination. The implementing partners 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. Evaluation services may be

contracted under a framework contract. In addition, all evaluations shall assess to what extent the action is taking into account the human rights-based approach as well as how it contributes to gender equality and women's empowerment and disability inclusion Expertise on human rights, disability and gender equality will be ensured in the evaluation team.

### 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.

## Appendix 1 REPORTING IN OPSYS

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

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

The present Action identifies as

<b>Action level</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single action	Present action: all contracts in the present action
<b>Group of actions level</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of actions	Actions reference (CRIS#/OPSYS#): <Present action> <Other action>
<b>Contract level</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	Legal commitment / contract 1 relating to Specific objective 1 - cf. section 4.3.1 – grants
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 2	Legal commitment / contract 1 relating to Specific objective 1 - cf. section 4.3.1 – grants
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 3	Legal commitment / contract 1 relating to Specific objective 1 - cf. section 4.3.1 – grants
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 4	Legal commitment / contract 1 relating to Specific objective 1 - cf. section 4.3.1 – grants