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ANNEX 5

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multiannual action plan in favour of Sub-Saharan Africa for 2024-2025

Action Document for Africa – Europe Partnership to Exchange on Education Reforms (PEERS)

MULTIANNUAL PLAN

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

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act	Africa – Europe Partnership to Exchange on Education Reforms (PEERS) OPSYS number: ACT-62418 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)
2. Team Europe Initiative	No
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The action shall be carried out in Sub-Saharan Africa in the following regions: Economic Community of West African States (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo) and East Africa Community (Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda).
4. Programming document	Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Sub-Saharan Africa 2021-2027
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results	This Action will contribute to the regional priority area “Human Development”. Specific Objective 2: Enhance regional and continental (Intra-Africa) integration for improved quality of education and skills development; and EU-Africa policy dialogue and coordination in the field of education, skills development, youth learning mobility, and teacher governance, leadership, training and professional development. Result 2.2: Enhanced regional and continental (Intra-Africa) integration and EU-Africa policy development and coordination in the field of education and skills development).
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Priority Area 1: Human Development – Education and Skills DAC Sector: Education – 110
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG: SDG 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

	Other significant SDGs (up to 9) and where appropriate, targets:: SDG 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development SDG 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls SDG 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts 13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning SDG 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries			
8 a) DAC code	11110 - Education policy and administrative management – 100%			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	Public Sector Institutions - 10000			
9. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
10. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective @	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	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"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Digitalisation @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Internal markers and Tags:		YES	NO	
	digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

	digital governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	digital entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	digital skills/literacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	digital services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Connectivity @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital connectivity	YES	NO	
	energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	education and research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Migration @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
12. Amounts concerned	Budget lines (article, item): 14.020120: EUR 10 000 000 14.020121: EUR 5 000 000 Total estimated cost: EUR 15 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 15 000 000			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
13. Type of financing	Indirect management with the entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.4.1.			

1.2 Summary of the Action

The Action aims at accelerating progress towards SDG 4 through enhanced regional cooperation in education in Africa and between Europe and Africa, notably by supporting two Regional Economic Communities (RECs), namely the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS, comprising 15 countries) and the East Africa Community (EAC, comprising 8 countries) in their coordination role and to increase their Member States' ownership and capacity in addressing the education agenda.

The Regional Economic Communities in Africa have a critical role to play in coordination and providing platforms for peer learning towards the implementation of Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA), SDG 4 and the education goals of the RECs themselves. However, they face several constraints limiting their ability to fully play such coordination role. These limiting factors are mainly related to institutional capacities; funding for coordination, peer learning and implementation of activities; conflicting priorities; poor coordination due to membership of Member States in several RECs and diverse languages; weak coordination and peer learning mechanisms amongst the RECs; and non-inclusion of RECs and member states in the AU clusters.

The European Union, through its active role in the SDG 4 High-Level Steering Committee, recognises the increasing role and responsibilities of regional organisations in the SDG 4 national benchmarking process. Moreover, the experience of the European Education Area, which has proved effective in promoting regional integration through the coordination of education policies, in particular with regard to digital education, stands as an inspirational reference framework for other regional organisations.

The Action responds to the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) Regional indicative programme (RIP) Result 2.2: Enhanced regional and continental (Intra-Africa) integration and EU-Africa policy development and coordination in the field of education and skills development. The three specific objectives of the Action are : 1) To enhance cooperation between and within the ECOWAS and EAC regions in the design, implementation and monitoring of quality, gender-responsive, inclusive, green and digital education policies; 2) To increase the mutual learning and the effective transfer of good practices and tools on quality, gender-responsive, inclusive, green and digital education between the EU, ECOWAS, EAC and their Member States; 3) To leverage evidence and promote knowledge exchange for enhanced evidence-based quality, inclusive, gender-responsive, green and digital education policies in ECOWAS and EAC regions.

The Action will complete other regional actions being developed under the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) Regional indicative programme (RIP) Result 2.2, targeting notably Higher education, VET and Teachers, and will therefore focus on basic education and more specifically: quality and inclusive education, green and digital education with a particular focus on girls and children from marginalised groups such as children with disabilities, migrant children, etc.

By encouraging peer learning and capacity building activities, as well as staff exchange, exchange of good practices based on evidence and research, and technical assistance when relevant, the Action will reinforce coordination mechanism operating at sub-regional level, thus contributing to regional integration through education and to build up effective communities of practices engaged in promoting quality and inclusive education and to bridging the gaps to achieve SDG 4 in Africa.

The Action contributes to the Education and Research pillar of the Global Gateway Africa – Europe Investment Package, by enhancing education reforms and contributing to investing in quality education, including digital education and skills, and in the inclusion of girls and women and vulnerable groups. Over the current multi-year programming period (2021-2027), the EU is focusing on strengthening education systems to respond to the low levels of learning outcomes, a main education challenge exacerbated by COVID-19.

1.3 Zone benefitting from the Action

The action shall be carried out in Sub-Saharan Africa in the following regions: Economic Community of West African States active member States at the time of the action¹ (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo) and East Africa Community (Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda).

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

This Action is aligned with the EU's development and cooperation policy framework as laid out in the European Consensus on Development (2017) and its core objectives of poverty eradication and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN 2030 Agenda. The Action contributes primarily to the achievement of SDG 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all), in particular to target 4.1 (Universal primary and secondary education) and indicator 4.4.1 (Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill), target 4.5 (4.5.1 equity) and 4.7 (skills for sustainable development) and to SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

The action contributes also to SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) and specifically targets 5.1 (End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere) and 5.b. (Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women)¹.

¹ https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5#targets_and_indicators

The Action is aligned with the comprehensive ten-year Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016 -25) adopted by the African Union Commission (AUC). The preparation of the 2nd 10-year action plan for education (2025-2034) provides the momentum to take stock of the lessons learnt from the previous 10 years action plan and engage the reflection on the way forward regarding targets, benchmarks and clusters related work, driven by the aspirations of Agenda 2063. The Action will be launched in 2024, which has been declared the African Union Year of Education.

The Action is aligned with the new OACPS-EU cooperation Agreement signed in Samoa, on 15 November 2023. The Agreement, including the Africa Regional Protocol, further commits the Parties to education, by improving social services, advancing digitalization, science, technology, research and innovation, and promoting economic opportunities for all by intensifying efforts in technical and vocational education.

The EU Strategy for Africa - Joint Communication “Towards a comprehensive strategy with Africa”, and Council Conclusions of 30 June 2020 - sets out key areas of the partnership. These include investing in people and supporting green and digital transitions. Inclusive and equitable quality education for all, with a particular focus on digitalization and education for sustainable development, is integral to addressing these challenges. The Conclusions of the 6th European Union – African Union Summit (held in February 2022) also refer to agreed investments in inclusive and equitable quality education by improving policy and legal frameworks, increasing access to teacher training, ensuring safe delivery of education services and curbing the gaps resulting from COVID-19. The EU Gender Action-Plan 2021-2025 (GAP III) recognises education as a key policy area to accelerate progress towards gender equality in EU external action. This action contributes particularly to two key thematic areas of the EU GAP III, *Addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities offered by the green transition and the digital transformation* and *promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women*. The EU Communication on Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises (2018) provides another important framework for EU commitments in education and reflects its efforts to increase funding and support to countries most in need and to children affected by conflict, violence and other crises. The G7 Ministerial Declaration on girls’ education (May 2021) recommends a focus on cementing girls’ education as central to COVID-19 recovery.

At the Summit, European and African leaders launched the Global Gateway Africa-Europe Investment Package (EUR 150 billion by 2027), which includes an Education and Research and a Digital Transition Package. It aims to support the shared ambition of building equitable and inclusive education systems for Africa's transformation, in line with the AU Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 (CESA 16-25) and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. The first Global Gateway Forum, which took place in Brussels on 25th - 26th October 2023, strongly highlighted the role of education to support the five pillars of the Global Gateway Strategy, and the importance of prioritising the human development dimension of the Strategy, alongside with hardware investments. This Action will contribute to Global Gateway area of education and research with a particular focus on investing in high quality education, focusing in particular on girls, women and vulnerable groups². Furthermore, gender is a cross cutting dimension through all the areas of intervention of Global Gateway, including digital and climate and energy sector. The action, focusing on Basic education will complete the EU comprehensive support to the education sector in Sub-Saharan Africa in link with other EU regional programmes targeting VET, higher education and teachers.

The Transforming Education Summit, held in the margins of the 77th UNGA in September 2022, gathered the global education community to renew its commitment to achieve SDG 4. The “Transforming Education in Africa” side-event co-hosted by the African Union (AU), the EU and UN partners also contributed to call on all education stakeholders to join forces for improving the resilience of Africa’s education systems. As one of the UN Five Education Champions, the European Union is fully committed to this collective effort to transform education, notably in Africa, by implementing its commitments at national, regional, and multilateral level.

This Action represents EU concrete response to the EU active commitment in the SDG 4 High - Level Steering Committee, recognizing the increasing role and responsibilities of regional organisations in the SDG4 national benchmarking process. The Data and Monitoring Technical Committee to the SDG 4 High-Level Steering Committee, where the European Commission is represented by DG EAC, proposed three additional benchmarks on green and digital education and youth participation. Commissioner Urpilainen represents the European Union at the SDG4-High level steering committee (SDG 4 - HLSC), together with the African Union, as regional organizations. In these capacities, the two Commissions are in a unique position to advocate and implement efforts at regional level.

² https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/global-gateway/education-and-research_en

The Action will be implemented in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and East Africa Community (EAC) regions. ECOWAS aims at fostering cooperation and integration leading to an economic union to enhance living standards of its people, enhance economic stability and relations among member states. One of the objectives of ECOWAS is the harmonization and coordination of national policies and promotion of integration programmes and activities in human resources, education, information, culture, science and technology. In its Vision 2050, ECOWAS puts significant focus on the advancement of youth and women through investments in education, skills development, science and technology. EAC aims at widening and deepening economic, political, social and cultural integration to improve the quality of life of the people of East Africa. In 2008, the EAC commenced the harmonization of the education systems of the partner states. This included harmonization of curricula, examination structures and frameworks, certification and accreditation of education systems and training curricula. Seven harmonization strategies were developed through this process covering the seven cycles of education i.e. pre-primary, primary, secondary, teacher education, TVET, adult, continuing and non-formal education, and special needs education. The harmonization strategies were adopted in 2010 by the Sectoral Council of Ministers responsible for education.

The European Education Area experience, tools and methods stands as an inspirational reference framework regarding the role played by education in regional cooperation and integration processes. This is what can position the EU more strongly in the regional discussions in the SDG4 High level Steering Committee as well as in the efforts to align action between partners in the preparation of the Summit of the Future and help Africa develop its position as a region.

This programme is also a contribution to the growing geopolitical dimension of the European Education Area (EEA) as underlined in the late EEA progress report. Cooperation in education and training is an essential instrument of EU external policies with the EEA vision guiding European international cooperation. In February 2021, the EU Member States endorsed their cooperation in the Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area (EEA) and beyond (2021 – 2030)³. With such strategic framework, EU Member States agreed that EU-level cooperation is an essential dimension also for the achievement of the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, both globally and within EU Member States. EU Member States and the European Commission soft methods of coordination have proven to be efficient in achieving their collective vision for an EEA at all education levels. The European Education Area strategic framework structures collaboration between Member States and key stakeholders by strengthening means of policy cooperation, enhancing synergies, identifying targets and indicators to guide work and monitor progress towards achieving the EEA.

The experience of the European Education Area and more particularly the Open method of coordination (OMC)⁴ model could be inspirational for increased and improved cooperation between AU Member States and stimulate progress towards the achievement of the SDG 4 regional benchmark indicators. By encouraging peer learning and capacity building activities, as well as staff exchange and exchange of good practices, as well as technical assistance when relevant, a reinforced soft coordination mechanism operating at sub-regional level will contribute to foster regional integration through education and to build up effective community of practices engaged in promoting quality and inclusive education and to bridging the gaps to achieve SDG 4 in Africa.

The European Education Area has demonstrated great achievements in the three main thematic priority areas of the programme, where the EEA resources and experience could be mobilised for increased impact.

In the field of digital education in particular, The EU Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027) highlights the importance of strengthening international cooperation on digital education to close the global digital divide. Strengthening digital skills both for citizens and ICT specialists builds on the insights and recommendations of the European Skills Agenda and the EU's 2030 Digital Compass. Finally, the proposed European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles for the Digital Decade recognises that "Everyone has the right to [digital] education, training and lifelong learning and should be able to acquire all basic and advanced digital skills". Specific measures with regard to digital education and skills are also included in EU policies that target particular vulnerable groups. Based

³ [Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond \(2021-2030\) 2021/C 66/01 - Publications Office of the EU \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁴ The 'open method of coordination' (OMC) is a form of EU soft law, a process of policymaking which does not lead to binding EU legislative measures nor require Member States to change their law. The open method of coordination (OMC) aims to spread best practices and achieve greater convergence.

on the EU experience on digital education, the Action can also support the AU digital strategy implementation at the level of the RECs.

Green education is a thematic area on which Europe can become the partner of choice of our partner countries by ensuring that it is mainstreamed into all of the priorities discussed above. The *acquis* of the European Education Area⁵ and closer cooperation under a Team Europe approach offers potential for mobilising European expertise for peer learning and sharing good practices. The EU is well placed to support equitable green transition under the Global Gateway for which local knowledge and green competences and skills are essential.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Education is at the heart of human development and is one of the most fundamental investments in building democratic, sustainable and resilient societies and economies. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated African education systems fragilities, putting at risk the achievement of universal basic education completion and the mastery of foundational learning. Despite countries' commitment to the rights to education and to the Agenda 2030 (Sustainable Development Goal 4) and to the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2025), achieving the goal of universal primary and secondary education remains a challenge. With 98 million out of school children and youth (age 6-18) in Sub-Saharan Africa - among which more than half are girls (UNESCO, 2022) - and with more than 17 million teachers needed, Africa is the highest negative contributor to SDG 4.

In the spirit of the EU-Africa partnership, the EU stands ready to support the Africa Union and its Member States in finding adapted solutions through an integrated continental approach to transformative education and training systems. Ensuring coherence at continental level in line with the global commitment to accelerate progress towards SDG4 requires increased ownership and long-term impact policy-making. It is where the lessons learnt from the EEA, and more particularly the European Union open method of coordination (OMC) model could be inspirational for increased and improved cooperation between Member States and stimulate progress towards the achievement of the SDG 4 targets, and more specifically the one related to quality and inclusive education, green education and digital education.

Quality and inclusive education

- Over the past two decades African countries achieved significant progress in terms of school enrolment, completion and quality of basic education (the current primary school enrolment rate is above 80% on average), yet inequalities and inefficiencies persist in this critical sector and disparities within and between countries remain. A major challenge facing the system is to support the children to progress through grades and to complete primary and particularly lower and upper secondary education often resulting in a large number of school-aged children leaving education before completion and ending up out of school.
- According to the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Sub-Saharan Africa has the largest out-of-school population and the highest rates of education exclusion globally. Over one-fifth of primary school aged children (18.8%) and one third lower secondary school aged adolescents (36.7%) are out of school. It is estimated that almost 60% of upper school aged youth are not in school. Among the benefits of completing secondary education are improved critical thinking, better health, increased civic engagement, and a high school diploma or equivalent can lead to better job opportunities and higher earning potential.
- Many children are facing difficulties in realizing their right to education especially girls, children from the poorest backgrounds, children with disabilities and displaced children. According to UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), 9 million girls on the continent between the ages of 6 and 11 will never attend school, compared to 6 million boys. By the time they become adolescents, girls have an exclusion rate of 36% compared to 32% for boys. The situation will likely get worse as the continent faces a rising demand for education due to a still-growing school-age population (the continent's population will double in the next 25 years). Children and youth living with disabilities in Sub-Saharan Africa are some of the most vulnerable in terms of education, innovation and adoption of emerging technologies. Estimations indicate that between 10% - 20% of the African population has a form of disability. Many African countries are guaranteeing the right to basic education, but this right is barely being

⁵ [GreenComp](#), the European reference framework for sustainability competences set out in the European Green Deal

respected for people living with disabilities⁶. For example, Africa contributes about 80% of the world's total 140 million out-of-school children, the majority of whom are girls and children living with disabilities⁷.

In such context, it is urgent that transformative measures are taken to enhance education system on the continent while paying special attention to those already marginalized and in disadvantaged situation, including girls. Promoting policies and investments for provision of equitable access to higher quality education will also encourage more children to stay in school and complete secondary education. Among the benefits of completing secondary education are improved critical thinking, better health, increased civic engagement, and a high school diploma or equivalent can lead to better job opportunities and higher earning potential. Education that provides equal opportunities for all can help individuals move up the social ladder, and thus help to create more equitable societies.

Those who are in school are not acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills, with the poorest children being the most excluded, limiting their ability to live productive lives as adults. Learning outcomes remain low in many parts of Africa and the education systems continue suffering with shortage of qualified teachers due to lack of professional development opportunities and low status and working conditions. Besides food insecurity affecting students' learning achievements and COVID-19 pandemic that aggravated the education situation, another challenge facing the continent is instability (multiple, protracted emergencies) that have seriously impacted the educational provision, including increased attacks to schools. Within this context, there is a visible gender divide among children and adolescents attending school. The data suggest that ICT skills are facilitated by schooling, but there may be gender-related barriers that prevent adolescent girls from developing these skills to the same extent as boys⁸.

- Despite efforts to improve security and promote peacebuilding, conflict and displacement continued to increase in many Sub-Saharan countries, reaching 28 million people in 2022. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is among the countries with most IDPs (recorded 4 million in 2022)⁹. Insecurity of war threatens or destroys access to food, shelter, education, social support and health care, and results in increased vulnerability in communities, especially for children. By the end of 2022, the number of displaced persons (IDPs, refugees and asylum seekers) across West and Central Africa was estimated at 15 million people, including over 9 million children¹⁰. The impact of conflict on education is also reflected in the closure of 14,000 schools by the end of 2022 in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, DRC and Nigeria.

Green education

- Education is at the heart of finding solutions to climate change and environmental degradation which, among other impacts, interrupt the education for 37 million children annually¹¹. Education can provide the knowledge, skills and attitudes to tackle sustainability challenges. Education can also promote behaviour change, shift consumption patterns and support green economies. There is also evidence that higher levels of education increase the adaptive capacity of a community.
- Almost half of the primary school in Africa lack handwashing facilities and/or a clean water supply. In addition to scarcity of water, food and the risk of extinction of animals and various plant species, desertification in Africa has profound impact on the society including mass migration, armed conflict for natural resources, outbreak of diseases like cholera and pandemic that brings chaos to public health. To minimize or solve the problems related to desertification directly or indirectly, it is necessary to invest on research on climate smart agriculture and drought resistant seeds and educate people to adopt individual habits that contribute to reducing the damages caused to the environment. However, acquisition of skills for green transition is yet not reflected in lower levels of education. Policy dialogue would be needed to promote revision of curricula to include climate change already

⁶ Ned, Lieketseng Y., Dube, Kudakwashe, & Swartz, Leslie. (2022). Challenges and opportunities of centring the African voice in disability research. *African Journal of Disability* (Online), 11, 1-4. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v11i0.1089>

⁷ *Fostering An Inclusive and Technology Responsive Education for Youth Living With Disabilities in Africa*, March 2023, <https://www.nepad.org/blog/fostering-inclusive-and-technology-responsive-education-youth-living-disabilities-africa>

⁸ *COVID-19 and education: The digital gender divide among adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa*, UNICEF, August 2020, <https://data.unicef.org/data-for-action/covid-19-and-education-the-digital-gender-divide-among-adolescents-in-sub-saharan-africa/>

⁹ [IDMC GRID 2023 Global Report on Internal Displacement LR.pdf](#)

¹⁰ <https://open.unicef.org/sites/transparency/files/2023-05/WCARO%20CER%202022.pdf>

¹¹ [Born into the Climate Crisis: Why we must act now to secure children's rights | Save the Children's Resource Centre](#)

from pre-primary education level. This is particularly important in the context of investing in resilient education systems.

- A just green transition, leaving no-one behind, must rely on the efficient functioning of the entire education system, providing green competences for all, particularly girls and children from marginalized groups, (systems-thinking, futures literacy, multi-disciplinary problem-solving, critical thinking, active learning). At the same time, integrating green skills and competences and sustainable learning components in the education sector must go hand in hand with integrating a green learning dimension in a number of other sectors. As we are coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic and with extreme weather events and other crises disrupting the education of children every year, it will be imperative for EU actions to systems resilience in a cross-sectoral approach – and this is true for education systems and infrastructure. Work on sustainable and green school infrastructure can encompass e.g. risk reduction strategies, sustainable materials, energy, water, sanitation and hygiene, nutrition interventions.

Digital education

- In most countries in Africa there is a lack of coherent policies on digital learning and ICT infrastructure, which limits the possibility of acquiring digital competences at school and of narrowing the vast digital divide within and across countries.
- The existing gaps between and within countries in relation to proportion of schools with access to electricity, computers, and the internet is remarkable. According to UNESCO report¹², in 25 of the 38 countries where data is available, less than half of the schools at the primary education level have access to electricity while in 7 countries more than 90% of primary schools do. In a few countries, availability of ICT-related infrastructure is particularly concerning where most children complete primary and secondary education without accessing a computer or the internet at their school. This is further stressed in new joint UNICEF-ITU report¹³ that two thirds of the world's school-age children have no internet connection in their homes. The digital divide is perpetuating inequalities. Globally, around 60% of school-age children in urban areas do not have internet access at home, compared with around three-quarters of school-age children in rural households. School-age children in sub-Saharan Africa are the most affected, with around 9 in 10 children unconnected. Given such differences, and as digitalisation increasingly permeates all spheres of life; including access to basic services and democratic participation, there is a risk that digitalisation could aggravate existing inequalities. Thus, it is crucial that governments develop and adopt digital education policies that are coherent implemented through a whole of government approach and impact-focused investments for school connectivity and devices, teacher training, curriculum revision to integrate digital competences and leveraging edtech for improved learning outcomes, hereby enabling high-quality, accessible, inclusive, gender responsive, and rights-based digital education. This having in mind the potential contribution of digital learning to reach the most vulnerable groups, including girls and children with disabilities and to make education more inclusive.
- Digital technologies and innovation have emerged as major drivers of transformation of societies and the world of work over the past decades. Strengthening digital skills is fundamental to enable and promote a human-centric digital transition in partner countries and is key for participation in today's society and economy. Moreover, digital competences are increasingly becoming a foundational learning skill that is fundamental for lifelong learning and participation in the knowledge society. The effective use of educational technologies can be helpful to expand access to education and training for students that live in remote locations or conflict affected areas or to increase access for learners with disabilities or special needs.

Coordination mechanisms for education policies in Africa

- The African Union recognises the importance of peer learning and accountability mechanisms for the implementation of CESA and SDG 4. Under the current Africa Union Ten Years action plan for education (CESA), the 12 CESA clusters bring together institutions and development partners to ensure coordination and implementation of CESA, monitor progress and bring together actors and stakeholders to share experiences from their member states and regions. However, the clusters have faced many challenges and some of the clusters are

¹² UNESCO Continental report 2023. Education in Africa: Placing equity at the heart of policy

¹³ Two thirds of the world's school-age children have no internet access at home, new UNICEF-ITU report says

yet to be fully operationalized. The challenges in coordination are due to inadequate capacity and funding to facilitate meetings and activities. These also include the non-participation of the member states and RECs in the convenings mainly due to funding and non-inclusion of member states in the structures of some of the clusters. Notwithstanding some progress made with the implementation of CESA, it might be a challenge to attain all the goals by 2025. The planned period of CESA strategy is coming to an end 2025 and an evaluation is foreseen to assess the status of implementation of CESA.

- The AU's endeavour to advance the AU CESA 16-25 and SDG 4 shared vision of education, through peer learning has materialized in the launching of the Leveraging Education Analysis for Result Network- LEARN, at the ADEA Triennale, held in Mauritius in October 2022. This African Union basic education peer-learning mechanism brings together the CESA implementation clusters on education planning, curriculum and teacher development and act as a catalyst for cross-cluster collaboration to address the critical issue for foundational learning in Africa, by promoting peer to peer knowledge-sharing and opportunities among AU member states, strengthening network of African researchers, contributing to alignment of education policies and strategies and identifying and proposing areas of common action.. The new partnership brings together the Global Education Monitoring Report Spotlight Series, the (ADEA) and the African Union.
- Most of these challenges affect the effective implementation of peer-learning at continental level and also within the RECS. Some important initiatives for coordination, peer-learning, capacity building and joint action to facilitate the realisation of national, regional and continental commitments on education have been undertaken.

The Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa have a critical role to play in coordination and providing platforms for peer learning towards the implementation of CESA, SDG 4 and the education goals of the RECs themselves. They are also key in ensuring implementation of regional harmonization frameworks and data reporting, and management among member states. Following consultations with regional EU Delegations and the recommendations of an internal report, based on geographical and effective commitment to education commitments, it was decided to target two RECs in the pilot phase of this Action. Namely, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the East African Community (EAC).

- The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has aligned its education programs and policies to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the AU Agenda 2063 and CESA 2016-2025 and has established Education Management Information Systems (EMIS), to monitor progress and achievements in implementation of education strategies and policies, and has put in place some peer learning mechanisms. ECOWAS covers 15 countries with diverse culture and languages which poses challenges to coordination and peer-learning. In addition, the lack of adequate financial resource for activities and staff, brings major challenge to the effectiveness of coordination and peer-learning mechanisms and attainment of results.
- The East African Community (EAC) recognises the fundamental role of education, training, science and technology in the achievement of EAC vision and pillars of integration. The harmonisation of the education systems of its member countries started in 2008 and included harmonisation of curricula, examination structures and frameworks, certification and accreditation of education systems and training curricula. However, the coordination of the other sectors of education including Early Childhood Education, Primary Education, Secondary Education Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and special needs education have not received the same attention as higher education and has therefore faced challenges in their operationalization. The technical committees could meet on regular basis during the process of harmonisation and as long as adequate funding was available. But since the completion of the harmonisation process, most of the technical committees, with the exception of TVET, have been “dormant” and have not been able to meet to follow up on the progress and commitments made.

Despite similar mandates and structures, and their alignment to the AU continental strategies, exchanges and peer-learning across the RECs is still limited to this day. Such enhanced cooperation across regional entities could strengthen the sub-regional pillars of the CESA and contribute to transform education system in Africa.

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

At continental/regional level

The African Union Commission and its department of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI) works around policy, knowledge and advocacy on education. The AUC-ESTI is responsible for driving the implementation of the CESA 16-25, which covers the 54 African Union Member States, divided into five geographic regions. CESA implementation is delegated to the 12 thematic clusters that convene multiple national, regional and continental players, programs, institutions and development partners. The CESA clusters are mostly related to the 12 CESA strategic objectives, roughly reflecting the seven SDG 4 benchmark indicators.

The Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are regional organisations of African states that were established to facilitate regional economic integration between members of the individual regions and through the wider African Economic Community (AEC), which was established under the Abuja Treaty (1991). Some of the them have also undertaken coordinating roles in social and educational matters although the focus has been more on higher education and VET. Thus, RECs not only provide support to Member States to develop strategies at national and regional levels for achieving CESA 16-25 goals, but have also a role in facilitating the implementation and monitoring of the CESA 16-25 and encouraging regional thematic networking to share experiences and complementarities. The Action will be implemented in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and in the East Africa Community (EAC).

The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) has a Secretariat comprised of African Ministers of Education and a broad network of policy-makers, educators and researchers. It acts as a forum for policy dialogue and exchange, and has a strong track record as a significant proponent of education-based reform. It includes organization around technical working groups / policy areas and the Triennale on Education and Training. ADEA is a credible organization, for which the EU has provided funding in the past.

The Global Partnership for Education/Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) is implemented by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). KIX operates through two mutually reinforcing mechanisms, namely exchange of knowledge and applied research projects, complemented by support for monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL), and communications and engagement. Sharing of information, innovations, and best practices for education policy and programming and informing knowledge gaps and policy priorities among country representatives are key functions of KIX.

Specialised agencies of the United Nations system with a strong track record of fostering policy dialogue at the regional level, producing knowledge and monitoring progress on education benchmarks and targets. Through its International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), UNESCO seeks to improve the quality, equity, and efficiency of education systems worldwide by providing technical assistance, conducting research, and offering training and education programmes. It also provides guidance and resources to help countries plan, manage, and evaluate their education systems. The annual Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM) has a global reach and provides evidence and analysis to support policy making, facilitate the sharing of good practices and hold relevant partners to account for their commitments. It bases its approach on the idea that by making rigorous evidence, data and recommendations on education available and accessible, the GEM Report will improve policy dialogue and peer learning and will strengthen education systems, plans, policies and budgets towards achieving SDG 4. The UNICEF Office of Research aims to enhance worldwide collaboration to strengthen the generation and use of knowledge in programmes of cooperation and policy advocacy, and support UNICEF's work for the most vulnerable children and women in more than 190 countries around the world.

At national level

EU Delegations/Focal Points for Education could be involved at various stages of the actions related to their geographic scope, as well as in the regional dialogues. They could co-lead the country-level dialogues with partner institutions, notably through their action within the Local Education Groups (LEGs), and contribute to monitoring and ensure visibility of the Action and complementarity with bilateral interventions. Their active participation will be crucial to the success of this Action. Particularly, EU Delegation Abuja will be responsible for the management of this Action.

Ministries of Education and Line Ministries of the chosen RECs Member States (Finance, Social Affairs, Youth, Health, Digital and Climate/Environment). The Ministries of Education are responsible for the implementation of education sector plans and information on the developments of the sector at national level. Their ownership of the forum for knowledge exchange at regional level is crucial. The Ministries of Education will be engaged in this Action to influence evidence-based dialogues, exchange tools for enhancement of policies and strategies towards achieving the SDG and CESA goals. The line Ministries could participate in national round table meetings to exchange knowledge and discuss synergies for effective advancement towards SDG and CESA goals.

Local authorities and CSOs, particularly youth, women and people with disabilities' CSOs are engaged in education at many levels, from working with communities and parents on the right to education and school accountability to national advocacy or direct service to community level. They could be associated in the implementation and the monitoring of the Action, as long as they have a role in the policy dialogue on education reforms at national level. In particular, CSOs might have a specific role in providing education services in the context of fragile and conflict affected situations (FCAS).

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to accelerate progress towards inclusive and equitable quality education within the ECOWAS and EAC regions.

The Specific Objectives (Outcomes) of this action are:

1. To enhance cooperation between and within the ECOWAS and EAC regions in the design, implementation and monitoring of equitable quality, gender-responsive, inclusive, green and digital education policies.
2. To increase the mutual learning and the effective transfer of good practices and tools on equitable quality, gender-responsive, inclusive, green and digital education between the EU, ECOWAS, EAC and their Member States.
3. To increase the use of scientific evidence in the design and harmonisation of equitable quality, gender-responsive, inclusive, green and digital education policies in ECOWAS and EAC regions.

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

Contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1):

- 1.1. Enhanced regional collaborative spaces for coordination, dialogue, peer learning and knowledge sharing.
- 1.2. Strengthened ECOWAS' and EAC's institutional capacity to coordinate, support, monitor and report education policies.
- 1.3. Strengthened ECOWAS and EAC Member States capacity to design, implement and monitor equitable quality, inclusive, gender responsive, green and digital education policies.

Contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2):

- 2.1. Increased opportunities for sharing the European Education Area coordination practices and tools with ECOWAS, EAC and their Member States.
- 2.2. Increased exchange of policies, practices and lessons learned on equitable quality, gender-responsive, inclusive, green and digital education between the EU, ECOWAS, EAC and their Member States.

Contributing to Outcome 3 (or Specific Objective 3):

- 3.1. Increased use of data for evidence-based policy making in the field of education within the ECOWAS and EAC regions and informing continental level discussions and decisions.
- 3.2. Improved support measures in the ECOWAS and EAC regions to disseminate scientific evidence on quality, gender-responsive, inclusive, green and digital education in both regions and in continental forums.

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities relating to Output 1.1:

- Support RECs member states active participation in peer learning activities such as workshops, conferences, exchanges, communities of practice, institutional cooperation, peer-to-peer exchange and mobility activities;
- Establish Working Groups on inclusive, green and digital education to promote the effective participation of line ministries, civil society and other relevant actors in education;

Activities relating to Output 1.2:

- Support RECs capacity for coordination with tools, models and experiences (study visits, webinars, participatory workshops)

Activities relating to Output 1.3:

- Support RECs capacity to inform regional education ministers' meetings and Heads of State meetings at AU level (e.g., STC-ESTI, C-10, Executive Council, Assembly) on the basis of the dialogue and country uptakes results
- Support to education policies aiming at strengthening quality education including green and digital skills for all, for girls and children and youth living in vulnerable situations in particular, e.g. integration of the education sector in climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies
- Support to policies aiming at addressing the opportunities and mitigating the challenges generated by green and digital transformations, with a clear focus on girls and the most vulnerable including migrant/displaced children and youth

Activities relating to Output 2.1:

- Promoting peer-to-peer learning in such exchanges to reflect the Team Europe approach added-value, the diversity of models and experiences that the EU can offer (on-the-job training, mobilisation of experts).

Activities relating to Output 2.2:

- Identifying EEA initiatives (and beyond) for cooperation in education that are relevant considering existing intra-Africa mechanisms

Activities relating to Output 3.1:

- Connecting to evidence and supporting knowledge exchange and mutual learning between education, education practitioners and researchers ensuring that ideas circulate are assessed, adapted, and adopted

Activities relating to Output 3.2:

- Providing small grants to support the generation of evidence on quality, inclusive, gender responsive green and digital education.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

The Action per se does not require a Climate Risk Assessment (CRA), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screenings (hence Category C applies). However, key environmental and climate-related aspects will be considered for mainstreaming whenever this is possible. Under green education component there are opportunities to bring about policies promoting curriculum/teaching materials that include educational information on sustainable management of natural resources and the impacts of climate change on school attendance and continuity and how to contribute to its mitigation and thus contributing to enhancing green competences among school leadership, students and teachers and school community in general.

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

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening concluded that [an SEA should be undertaken] [key environmental and climate-related aspects need be addressed during design] [no further action was required].

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

The EIA (Environment Impact Assessment) screening classified the action as [Category A (EIA will be undertaken)] [Category B (for which an EIA will be undertaken)] [Category B (not requiring an EIA, but for which environment aspects will be addressed during design)] [Category C (no need for further assessment)].

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

The Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening concluded that this action is [at risk (CRA will be undertaken)] [at risk (climate risk will be addressed as part of an EIA)] [no or low risk (no need for further assessment)]

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. There will be a strong focus to address gender disparities and improve gender equality in the education sector. The EU will ensure that all supported activities under this Action are inclusive and gender responsive with the goal of improving gender equity in education. It will be required that a gender dimension and analysis is mainstreamed throughout the Action interventions.

Human Rights

Quality education is a fundamental human right and one of society's great equalizers, a prerequisite for young people to be equipped to exercise their voice and contribute to society. Access for all to quality education is key in helping tackling today's most pressing global challenges, in eradicating poverty and in contributing to the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By investing in better coordination and peer learning mechanisms, the Action is contributing to improved education policies, performance and quality of education as well as equitable access to basic education.

The Action is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It embodies a human rights-based approach working both with right holders and duty bearers in education. It will promote pedagogical approaches and interventions that are child-centred.

The Action will also encourage the adoption of policies that promote gender responsive education, conflict management, and safe learning environments thus contributing to the children's psycho-social wellbeing.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. This implies that Disability is a significant objective of the programme. The inclusion of children with disabilities is an important element for reaching the results of a more inclusive and equitable education systems and ensure the right to education for this vulnerable and traditionally excluded group. The inclusive dimension in this action reflects the leave no one behind principle, meaning that the focus will be given particularly to marginalized groups such as girls, children with disabilities, migrant children, etc. Furthermore, accessibility to events, workshops and information of persons with disabilities will be promoted throughout the activities of the programme. In particular, their active participation in consultation processes with local communities and minorities will be promoted. Finally, where possible, indicators will be disaggregated by disability.

Reduction of inequalities

Level I on the Inequality-Marker (I-I) is identified for this Action: by increasing access to quality education and improving equity and gender equality, the Action has a potential to have an impact on the most vulnerable children. Moreover, one of the specific objectives is to strengthen cooperation in education policies between and within the ECOWAS and EAC regions in the areas of quality and inclusive education, green and digital education. Thus, a key feature of the overall intervention logic is that education as a fundamental human right and gender equality and empowerment of women and girls should be an anchor to support the development of more inclusive education policies in a broad sense. Following this logic, the Action will support across all interventions the adoption of more

inclusive and gender-responsive practices. Specific attention will also be given to groups in situation of vulnerability including children with disabilities and migrants to foster more inclusive and equitable education policies.

Democracy

The Action will encourage the integration of participatory approaches in decision-making processes by creating spaces for policy dialogue in education.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

The Action will address issues related to conflict as some of its the activities will be targeting fragile and conflict affected environments. When defining the interventions, the security situation and the related tensions in the countries/regions of intervention will be assessed, and there will be flexibility and adaptation to rapidly changing dynamics in the implementation approach. In addition, pedagogies related to conflict prevention and management and promotion of peace in education will be supported and will be part of the policy dialogue. Further, the implementing partners will need to adopt a conflict sensitive approach and take into account the International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Standards for Conflict Sensitive Education with the purpose of reducing conflict and doing no harm.

Disaster Risk Reduction

Through the topic on green education, the Action will also contribute to increasing the knowledge and capacities (of both children and teachers) to deal with the impact of climate change including its adaptation principles, especially as it relates to school safety.

Other considerations if relevant

N/A

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
Planning, processes and systems	Political shifts limit the effectiveness and sustainability of ongoing change processes	High	High	The interventions need to assure local ownership, and be sensitive to the political contexts in which they operate.
External environment	Political instability - risk of political coup and non-democratic changes; as well as worsening insecurity due to on-going armed conflict and/or other insurgencies. Health crisis (such	High	High	Robust monitoring of the situation so that decisions may be taken swiftly in view of any changes. Support provided by EU Delegations where country conflict analysis has been made and mitigation measures have been foreseen. The interventions in conflict and emergency contexts are designed to be flexible enough to react to rapidly shifting country contexts. Mitigation measures plans can be requested to implementing partners.

	as Covid-19, Ebola), and other natural disaster as floods or storms may affect the implementation of activities			
Planning, processes and systems	Limited or non-participation of target RECs member states in the implementation of the Action	Medium	Medium	The Action needs to assure ownership at both regional and national levels through prioritizing relationship building, networking and exchange to address potential reluctance at an early stage. Allow as well for meetings not only online but also presential.
Planning, processes and systems	RECs have limited capacity limitations and often encounter difficulty with coordination of programme activities and entities	Medium	Medium	Capacity building support will be provided to RECs to ensure effective coordination and monitoring of the programme and sustainability of its results.
Planning, processes and systems	Limited oversight and difficulty in articulating coherently the activities of the different channels of support	Medium	Medium	The Action will set up a steering committee involving all implementing partners to coordinate, steer and ensure coherence towards results of the programme.

Lessons Learnt:

Peer learning and accountability mechanisms are considered fundamental for the implementation of the African Union Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) and the Sustainable Development Goal – SDG 4. Significant initiatives for coordination, peer-learning, capacity building and joint action to facilitate the realisation of Africa national, regional and continental commitments on education have been undertaken.

The 12 CESA clusters were established to bring together institutions and development partners to ensure coordination and implementation of CESA, monitor progress and bring together actors and stakeholders to share experiences from their member states and regions.

The Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa are not only key in ensuring implementation of regional harmonization frameworks and data reporting, and management among member states but have also a critical role to play in coordination and providing platforms for peer learning towards the implementation of CESA, SDG4 and the education goals of the RECs themselves.

The RECs are making some progress in education despite numerous challenges and drawbacks. The limiting factors for peer learning and accountability mechanisms in Africa are mainly related to institutional capacities; funding for coordination, peer learning and implementation of activities; conflicting priorities; poor coordination due to membership of member states in several RECs and diverse languages, weak coordination and peer learning mechanisms amongst the RECs, and non-inclusion of RECs and member states in the AU clusters.

Learning from the experience from the European Education Area initiative (EEA) in support of European Union Member States work together to build more resilient, inclusive, digital and greener education and training systems, it shows that to achieve the set objectives a strategic framework for coordination needs to be in place including:

- Supporting EU Member States in their reforms of education and training systems
- Enhancing synergies with other policy areas such as research and innovation, social policy, employment or youth, and with EU funding instruments to better support national reforms,
- Identifying targets and indicators to guide work and monitor progress.

An important instrument used for coordination is the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) that helps member states to progressively develop their policies'; spread best practices and achieve greater convergence towards the main EU goals. The criteria for successful OMC were identified by a study commissioned by the Commission as:

- Preparatory political involvement
- Common concern
- High level of institutionalisation
- Availability of specific objectives, benchmarks and indicators
- Involvement and cooperation of stakeholders
- Presence of creative tension between MS with incentive to act

Thus, the Action will support RECs (ECOWAS and EAC) in enhancing their capacity to provide effective coordination and monitoring of the progresses in education of their member states. Exchanges with EU are foreseen for sharing practices and experiences on coordination to support education policies. Systematic information sharing about the actions in the pipeline and ongoing in ECOWAS and EAC countries must be established to ensure complementarity and avoid overlaps.

Hence, possibilities for synergies with EU-funded bilateral and regional programmes and Team Europe Initiatives in ECOWAS and EAC regions such as Teachers Initiative, Opportunity-driven skills and VET, ERASMUS + etc will be sought.

The Action will also ensure complementarities with existing peer learning and knowledge exchange initiatives such as the Leveraging Education Analysis for Result Network (LEARN) that is built on the new partnership between the Global Education Monitoring Report, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) and the African Union around the Spotlight Series on basic education completion and foundational learning in Africa published by the Global Education Monitoring Report at UNESCO.

The Spotlight reports, (continental and country reports, case studies and analysis) aim to present good practices so as to improve foundational learning and offers recommendations on key actions to support policy dialogue through established African Union peer learning mechanisms.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this Action is that to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education within the ECOWAS and EAC regions, stronger regional cooperation is needed. This can be achieved by supporting regional coordination mechanisms in education policies between and within ECOWAS and EAC, in the areas of equitable quality and inclusive education, green and digital education, with peer learning and policy dialogue based on evidence.

The Action is based on the general assumption that effective regional cooperation can promote peer learning, identification of good practice to support effective national education policy and regional integration.

Considering the above-mentioned logic, then:

Outcome 1 of the Action focusses on how to ensure effective cooperation in education policies in and between the regional economic communities (ECOWAS and EAC) with an emphasis on equitable quality, inclusive and gender responsive education, and green and digital education. Such efforts include enhancing existing regional platforms for coordination, dialogue, peer learning and knowledge sharing through: a) long term technical assistance placed in the two RECs to support the setting up of collaborative spaces for increased synergies and cooperation in the education sector as subregional level; and b) supporting RECs member states active participation in peer learning activities such

as workshops, conferences, exchanges, communities of practice, institutional cooperation, peer-to-peer exchange and mobility activities.

The Action will also provide ECOWAS and EAC with the tools to strengthen their capacity to coordinate, support, monitor and report education policies. The capacity of the two RECs and their member states will be reinforced as well to design, implement and monitor equitable quality, inclusive, green and digital education policies. Peer learning, exchange of good practice and progress assessment based on country uptakes will be stimulated.

THUS:

IF regional collaborative spaces for coordination, dialogue, peer learning and knowledge sharing are enhanced (Output 1.1); IF the institutional capacity of ECOWAS and EAC to coordinate, support, monitor and report education policies is strengthened (Output 1.2); AND IF the capacity of ECOWAS and EAC Member States to design, implement and monitor equitable quality, inclusive, gender responsive, green and digital education policies is strengthened (Output 1.3); THEN cooperation between and within the ECOWAS and EAC regions in the design, implementation and monitoring of equitable quality, gender-responsive, inclusive, green and digital education policies will be enhanced (Outcome 1), PROVIDED THAT regional and national institutions remain committed to the achievement of the SDG4 and its different targets (Assumption 1) and the competent authorities maintain their interest to incorporating best policy practices and tools on equitable quality and inclusive, green and digital education (Assumption 2).

Outcome 2 of the Action intends to promote policy dialogue between Europe and Africa by sharing practices and experiences on coordination to support inclusive and gender responsive education policies. Activities will thus address European Education Area coordination practices and tools to be shared with AU, ECOWAS, EAC and their Member States and policies, practices and lessons learned on education are exchanged for mutual learning between Europe and Africa. This implies a) sharing EU practices and experience for increased cooperation between national administrations at subregional level (study and field visit, webinars); b) Promoting peer-to-peer learning in such exchanges to reflect the Team Europe approach added-value, the diversity of models and experiences that the EU can offer (on-the-job training, mobilisation of experts); c) Designing collaborative space for increased synergies and cooperation between AUC and EC in the education sector; and d) identifying EEA initiatives and beyond for cooperation in education that are relevant considering existing intra-Africa mechanisms.

THUS:

IF the opportunities for sharing the European Education Area coordination practices and tools with ECOWAS, EAC and their Member States are increased (Output 2.1); AND IF the exchange of policies, practices and lessons learned on equitable quality, gender-responsive, inclusive, green and digital education between the EU, ECOWAS, EAC and their Member States is increased (Output 2.2); THEN the mutual learning and the effective transfer of good practices and tools on equitable quality, gender-responsive, inclusive, green and digital education between the EU, ECOWAS, EAC and their Member States will be increased (Outcome 2), PROVIDED THAT the RECs and the competent authorities of their member states remain committed to mutual learning and operation of the collaborative spaces (Assumption 1) and the EU member states remain committed to effective knowledge exchange and share of good practices and tools on the programme priority areas (equitable quality, gender-responsive, and inclusive education, green and digital education) (Assumption 2)

Outcome 3 of the Action complements the outcome 1 as it seeks to increase the use of scientific evidence in the design and harmonisation of equitable quality, gender-responsive, inclusive, green and digital education policies in ECOWAS and EAC regions. This will be done by leveraging disaggregated data on equitable quality, gender-responsive and inclusive education, green and digital education for evidence-based education policies, and by exchanging and disseminating knowledge to inform education policies in ECOWAS and EAC regions, and comparing education policies and assessing progress for better harmonisation of policies.

THUS:

IF the use of data for evidence-based policy making in the field of education is promoted within the ECOWAS and EAC regions (Output 3.1.), AND IF the support measures to disseminate scientific evidences on quality, green and digital education in the ECOWAS and EAC regions are improved (Output 3.2.), THEN the use of scientific evidence in the design and harmonisation of inclusive, green and digital education policies in ECOWAS and EAC regions will be increased (Outcome 3), PROVIDED THAT the competent authorities maintain their interest to incorporating best policy practices and tools on green and inclusive education (Assumption 1) and relevant and up-to-date data in the field of equitable quality, gender-responsive, inclusive, digital and green education are available (Assumption2) .

A key feature of the overall intervention logic is that education as a fundamental human right and gender equality and empowerment of women and girls should be an anchor to support the development of more inclusive education policies in a broad sense. Following this logic, the Action will support across all interventions the adoption of more inclusive and gender-responsive practices. Specific attention will also be given to groups in situation of vulnerability including children with disabilities and migrants to foster more inclusive and equitable education policies. Further, the Action will adopt a conflict sensitive approach given the crisis contexts and fragile environments of the regions where it will be implemented. Crises invariably transcend national boundaries and present common challenges which requires trans-national and regional solutions. The action will also contribute to climate change and environmental sustainability by fostering green education policies.

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

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

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

The indicative logical framework matrix may evolve during the lifetime of the action depending on the different implementation modalities of this action. The activities, the expected Outputs and related indicators, targets and baselines included in the logframe matrix may be updated during the implementation of the action, no amendment being required to the Financing Decision.

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

Results	Results chain (@): Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (@): (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	To accelerate progress towards inclusive and equitable quality education within the ECOWAS and EAC regions	1. 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 sex (SDG 4.1.1) 2. Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated (SDG 4.5.1) 3. Completion rate (primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education) (SDG 4.1.2)	TBD (2024)	TBD (2030)	Publications from reliable international sources (World Bank, ECLAC, UNDP, World Inequality Database, etc.)	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 1	1. To enhance cooperation between and within the ECOWAS and EAC regions in the design,	1.1 Number of initiatives reinforcing regional cooperation mechanisms in both RECs in	1.1 0 (2024)	1.1 TBD	EU interventions monitoring	ECOWAS and EAC, and the competent

	implementation and monitoring of equitable quality, gender-responsive, inclusive, green and digital education policies	<p>support of national education systems strengthening implemented with national budgets.</p> <p>1.2. Number of regional policies and/or strategies that have been harmonised between and within the ECOWAS and EAC regions</p> <p>1.3. Number of RECs member states that report an increase of the institutional cooperation, knowledge exchange and mobility activities with other peers</p> <p>1.4. Number of regional initiatives that have been promoted and implemented through the Working Groups</p> <p>1.5. Number of monitoring reports that have been published by the RECs and/or their member states on the progress of SD4 targets and objectives</p>	<p>1.2 0 (2024)</p> <p>1.3 0 (2024)</p> <p>1.4 0 (2024)</p> <p>1.5 0 (2024)</p>	<p>1.2 TBD</p> <p>1.3 TBD</p> <p>1.4 TBD</p> <p>1.5 TBD</p>	and reporting systems Programme reports and evaluations ECOWAS and EAC monitoring reports	<p>authorities of their member states remain committed to the achievement of the SDG4' targets and objectives, allocating technical and budgetary resources accordingly. The competent authorities of ECOWAS and EAC member states maintain their interest to incorporating best policy practices and tools on equitable quality and inclusive, green and digital education</p>
Outcome 2	2. To increase the mutual learning and the effective transfer of good practices and tools on quality, gender-responsive, inclusive, green and digital education between the EU, ECOWAS, EAC and their Member States.	<p>2.1 Number of people directly benefiting from EU supported interventions that aim to improve regional coordination in education sector (disaggregated by sex, age and region when possible)</p> <p>2.2. Number of regional and/or national institutions that have assumed specific roles and responsibilities for the operation of the collaborative spaces set up through the intervention</p> <p>2.3. Number of EEA's good practices and/or</p>	<p>2.1 0 (2024)</p> <p>2.2 0 (2024)</p> <p>2.3 0 (2024)</p>	<p>2.1 TBD</p> <p>2.2 TBD</p> <p>2.3 TBD</p>	EU interventions monitoring and reporting systems Programme reports and evaluations ECOWAS and EAC monitoring reports	ECOWAS and EAC and the competent authorities of their member states remain committed to mutual learning and operation of the collaborative spaces

		<p>successful models that have been endorsed by the competent authorities at the regional and/or national level</p> <p>2.4. Extent to which appropriate policies and measures are implemented by government to improve the access of girls and women to inclusive and quality education, including STEM fields and quality digital education and training (GAP III)</p>	2.4 0 (2024)	2.4 TBD		The EU member states remain committed to effective knowledge exchange and share of good practices and tools on the programme priority areas (equitable quality, gender-responsive, and inclusive education, green and digital education)
Outcome 3	3. To increase the use of scientific evidence in the design and harmonisation of equitable quality, gender-responsive, inclusive, green and digital education policies in ECOWAS and EAC regions	<p>3.1 Number of initiatives reinforcing gender disaggregated evidence-based uptakes in both RECs</p> <p>3.2. Number of RECs' working groups and/or member states' competent authorities that are referencing some of the evidence gathered through the intervention in their policies and/or strategies</p> <p>3.3. Number of institutions and/or stakeholders that continue collecting and reporting SDG4-related data on a regular basis</p>	<p>3.1 0 (2024)</p> <p>3.2 0 (2024)</p> <p>3.3 0 (2024)</p>	<p>3.1 TBD</p> <p>3.2 TBD</p> <p>3.3 TBD</p>	Programme reports and evaluations ECOWAS and EAC monitoring reports UNESCO Institute of statistics reports UNESCO GEM Spotlight reports	ECOWAS and EAC and the competent authorities of the member states maintain their interest to incorporating best policy practices and tools on equitable quality, gender-responsive, inclusive, green and digital education Relevant and up-to-date data in the field of

						equitable quality, gender-responsive, inclusive, digital and green education is available
Output 1 relating to Outcome 1	1.1 Enhanced Regional collaborative spaces for coordination, dialogue, peer learning and knowledge sharing.	1.1.1 Number of countries taking part to the regional cooperation mechanism with the support of the intervention 1.1.2. Number of collaborative spaces that have been set up with the support of the intervention 1.1.3. Number of line ministries, civil society organisations and other relevant actors that have been involved for the first time in the cooperation strategies with the support of the intervention	1.1.1 0 (2024) 1.1.2 0 (2024) 1.1.3 0 (2024)	1.1.1 80% of targeted countries 1.1.2 TBD 1.1.3 TBD	EU interventions monitoring and reporting systems Programme reports and evaluations ECOWAS and EAC monitoring reports	ECOWAS and EAC and the competent authorities of their member states remain committed to the enhancement of regional collaborative spaces for policy dialogue and knowledge exchange Decision makers and key political representatives continue interested in involving civil society organisations and other private stakeholders in the design, implementation and monitoring of education policies.

Output 2 relating to Outcome 1	1.2 Strengthened ECOWAS' and EAC's institutional capacity to coordinate, support, monitor and report education policies.	1.2.1 Number of ECOWAS and EAC representatives who participated in capacity building activities 1.2.2. Number of ECOWAS and EAC representatives that report improved skills in monitoring and report SDG4 achievements and challenges (by country, sex and type of organisation) 1.2.3. Number of successful models and experiences that have been shared and/or transferred through the study visits and workshops	1.2.1 0 (2024)	1.2.1 TBD	Programme reports and evaluations ECOWAS and EAC monitoring reports	ECOWAS and EAC remain committed to strengthening their roles for effective coordination support and monitoring of education policies ECOWAS and EAC continue interested in the tools and experience that have been shared and finding them relevant and useful for enhancing regional coordination in education sector
			1.2.2 0 (2024)	1.2.2 TBD		
			1.2.3 0 (2024)	1.2.3 TBD		
Output 3 relating to Outcome 1	1.3 Strengthened ECOWAS and EAC Member States capacity to design, implement and monitor equitable quality, inclusive, gender responsive, green and digital education policies.	1.3.1. Number of regional and/or national policy proposals that have been developed and/or shared with the support of the EU. Disaggregated by topic and area (green, digital, etc) 1.3.2. Number of ECOWAS and EAC Member States representatives that report improved skills in monitoring and report SDG4 achievements and challenges (by country, sex and type of organisation) 1.3.3. Number of measures taken by ECOWAS and EAC Member States to improve the access of women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, to basic	1.3.1 0 (2024)	1.3.1 TBD	Programme reports and evaluations ECOWAS and EAC monitoring reports	The ECOWAS and EAC member states remain committed to the mutual learning and implementation and monitoring of education policies for achievement of the SDG4' targets and objectives.
			1.3.2 0 (2024)	1.3.2 TBD		
			1.3.3 0 (2024)	1.3.3 TBD		

		digital education and training, disaggregated at least by sex (EU GAP III)				
Output 1 relating to Outcome 2	2.1 Increased opportunities for sharing the European Education Area coordination practices and tools with ECOWAS, EAC and their Member States.	2.1.1. Number of coordination practices and tools that have been put in place with the support of the programme 2.1.2. Number of national administrations at subregional level that have been actively involved in the coordination initiatives supported by the programme 2.1.3. Number of good practices that have been shared by EU member states in the framework of the programme	2.1.1 0 (2024) 2.1.2 0 (2024) 2.1.3 0 (2024)	2.1.1 TBD 2.1.2 TBD 2.1.3 TBD	EU interventions monitoring and reporting systems Programme reports and evaluations Notes from the workshops and study visits ECOWAS and EAC monitoring reports	EU member states, ECOWAS and EAC, and their member states remain committed to mutual learning and exchange for better regional coordination in education sector.
Output 2 relating to Outcome 2	2.2 Increased exchange of policies, practices and lessons learned on equitable quality, gender-responsive, inclusive, green, and digital education between the EU, ECOWAS, EAC and their Member States	2.2.1. Number of regional and national policy dialogue initiatives that have been strengthened and/or fostered with EU support 2.2.2. Number of EEA initiatives, relevant to the existing intra-Africa mechanisms, that have been replicated and/or scaled up with the support of the intervention to improve cooperation in education	2.2.1 0 (2024) 2.2.2 0 (2024)	2.2.1 TBD) 2.2.2 TBD	EU interventions monitoring and reporting systems Programme reports and evaluations ECOWAS and EAC monitoring reports	ECOWAS and EAC and the competent authorities of their member states maintain their interest in the tools and experience that have been shared and finding them relevant and useful for enhancing regional coordination in education sector
Output 1 relating to Outcome 3	3.1 Increased use of data for evidence-based policy making in the field of education within the ECOWAS and EAC regions and	3.1.1. Number of key SDG4 indicators with updated information to measure equitable quality,	3.1.1 0 (2024)		Baseline and endline studies conducted and	Relevant and up-to date data equitable quality and

	informing continental level discussions and decisions.	gender-responsive, inclusive, green and digital education 3.1.2. Number of new research and/or studies that have been disseminated with the support of the intervention. 3.1.3. Number of decision makers and/or staff of the competent authorities who have received and/or discussed the findings and recommendations of the publications	3.1.2 0 (2024) 3.1.3 0 (2024)	3.1.1. Increase by 50% (target for 2027) 3.1.2. TBD 3.1.3. TBD	budgeted by the EU-funded intervention Programme reports and evaluations ECOWAS and EAC monitoring reports UNESCO GEM and spotlight reports UNESCO Institute of Statistics reports	inclusive education, green and digital education are available and disaggregated (by sex, level of education, wealth/income/poverty score, ethnicity, type of communities, geographical location and region)
Output 2 relating to Outcome 3	3.2 Improved support measures in the ECOWAS and EAC regions to disseminate scientific evidences on equitable quality, gender-responsive, inclusive, green and digital education in both regions and in continental forums.	3.2.1. Number of competent authorities and/or other key stakeholders that have been involved in initiatives that support data leveraging 3.2.2. Number of policy proposals that have been promoted after the education policies comparative analysis	3.2.1 0 (2024) 3.2.2 0 (2024)	3.2.1 TBD 3.2.2 TBD	Programme reports and evaluations ECOWAS and EAC monitoring reports	ECOWAS and EAC and the competent authorities of member states maintain their interest to incorporating best policy practices and tools on equitable quality, gender-responsive, inclusive, green and digital education

4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the partner countries or regional economic communities.

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

4.3 Implementation of the Budget Support Component

N/A

4.4 Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures¹⁴.

4.4.1 Indirect Management with an entrusted entity

This action may be implemented in indirect management with an entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- Experience in implementing regional and/or country programmes supporting regional organisations in Africa to carry out their mandate on education policies.
- Experience working in Sub-Saharan countries and established relationships with European and African education organisations and engaging in north-south partnerships.
- Ability to engage and mobilise European public expertise in the areas of inclusive and quality education, green and digital education.
- Experience in implementing EU Team Europe approach programmes in the education sector.
- Experience in implementing regional cooperation programmes, including dialogue mechanisms and peer learning, capacity strengthening for coordination, monitoring and reporting on education policies

The implementation by this entity entails the whole Action.

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

If negotiations with the entrusted entity fail, this action may be implemented in direct management (grants). The purpose of the grants entails the whole Action. The type of applicants targeted would be: Public authorities and/or EU Member State agencies and associations operating in the field of education.

¹⁴ www.sanctionsmap.eu. Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

4.5 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).

4.6 Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.4	
Specific Objectives: 1. To strengthen cooperation in education policies between and within the ECOWAS and EAC regions in the areas of quality and inclusive education, green and digital education. 2. To share practices and experiences on coordination to support education policies between Europe and Africa. 3. To leverage evidence and promote knowledge exchange for enhanced evidence-based education policies in ECOWAS and EAC regions.	15 000 000
Indirect management with an entrusted entity - cf. section 4.4.1	15 000 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	May be covered by another Decision
Contingencies	-
Totals	15 000 000

4.7 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The entity in charge of the management of the contract is the European Commission. A programme Steering Committee will be set up and will meet at least twice a year to coordinate and follow progress in the implementation of the Action, and to provide overall strategic guidance on programme implementation.

The steering committee shall be made up of:

- Representatives of the AUC - Department of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation
- Representatives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
- Representatives of the East Africa Community (EAC)
- Representatives of European Commission
- Representatives of the EU Delegations to Nigeria/ECOWAS and to Tanzania/EAC
- Representatives of the EU Member State Agency (or Agencies) responsible for the implementation of the Action
- Representatives of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)

- Others if necessary, as members or observers

The terms of reference of the steering committee will be drafted by the EU and in consultation with the above-mentioned representatives. The terms of reference will be approved by the Steering Committee. The secretariat of the steering committee will be the responsibility of the EU.

The operational day-to-day management of the Action will be the responsibility of a Project Management Unit established by the EU Member State Agency (or Agencies) entrusted with the implementation of the programme.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the Commission may participate in the above governance structures set up for governing the implementation of the action and may sign or enter into joint declarations or statements, for the purpose of enhancing the visibility of the EU and its contribution to this action and ensuring effective coordination.

5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1 Monitoring and Reporting

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

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).

Monitoring and evaluation will assess gender equality results, an impact on rights of groups living in the most vulnerable situations and the implementation of the rights-based approach working principles and leave no one behind (applying all human rights for all; meaningful and inclusive participation and access to decision-making; non-discrimination and equality; accountability and rule of law for all; and transparency and access to information supported by disaggregated data). Monitoring and evaluation will be based on indicators that are disaggregated by sex, age, disability when applicable.

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring will be defined by the EU and the Entrusted entities and established under the contribution agreement.

5.2 Evaluation

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

The mid-term evaluation will be carried out for problem solving and learning purposes, in particular with respect to the extent to which the Action has contributed to promote regional cooperation and in particular inclusive, green and digital education policies in partner regions/countries. The evaluations shall assess how the Action is considering the principle of socioeconomic equality, gender equality, human rights-based approach, and rights of persons with disabilities including inclusion and diversity. When possible, depending on data availability, indicators shall be disaggregated by sex, age group, income level, ethnicity, area of residence, disability status.

The final evaluation will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the potential of the Action to be implemented in other Regional Economic Communities.

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 reports may be shared with the partners and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, apply the necessary adjustments.

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

5.3 Audit and Verifications

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

6 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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

In line with the 2022 “[Communicating and Raising EU Visibility: Guidance for External Actions](#)”, 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

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 Single Contract;

Action level (i.e. Budget Support, blending)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single action	Present action: all contracts in the present action
Group of actions level (i.e. top-up cases, different phases of a single programme)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of actions	Actions reference (CRIS#/OPSYS#):
Contract level		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	With EU Member State Agency (or Agencies)