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ANNEX 4

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multiannual action plan in favour of
Sub-Saharan Africa for 2022-2026 Part 2

Action Document for “Support the Harmonization of pan-African Electoral Capacities”

MULTIANNUAL PROGRAMME

This document constitutes the multiannual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and action plans in the sense of Article 23 of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act	Support the Harmonization of pan-African Electoral Capacities OPSYS number: ACT-60984 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (<u>NDICI-Global Europe</u>).
2. Team Europe Initiative	No
3. Zone benefiting from the action	African Union. The action shall be carried out in Africa.
4. Programming document	Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa.
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results	Priority 2 “Governance, Peace and Security, Culture”. <u>Specific objective 1</u> : “Promote democratic governance, equality, the rule of law, the respect for human rights and international humanitarian law in Africa, and the engagement and inclusive participation of African citizens.” <u>Result 1.2</u> : The transparency and credibility of elections in Africa are improved. <u>Result 1.4</u> : The engagement and participation of African citizens is supported and increased.
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Priority area 2: Governance, Peace and Security, Culture DAC code 151 Government & Civil Society-general DAC code 152 Conflict, Peace & Security
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG (1 only): - Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions. Other significant SDGs (up to 9) and where appropriate, targets: - Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals.

	- Goal 5: Gender Equality.			
8 a) DAC code(s)	DAC code 151 Government & Civil Society-general – 80% DAC code 152 Conflict, Peace & Security – 20%			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel @	21000 International NGO			
9. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
10. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective @	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Internal markers and Tags:	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Digitalisation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Tags: digital connectivity		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital governance		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital entrepreneurship		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	job creation		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital skills/literacy		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital services		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Connectivity @ Tags: transport people2people energy digital connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Migration @ (methodology for tagging under development)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities (methodology for marker and tagging under development)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
12. Amounts concerned	Budget line(s) (article, item): West Africa (35%) BGUE-B2022-14.020120-C1-INTPA: EUR 3 500 000 East and Central Africa (35%) BGUE-B2022-14.020121-C1-INTPA : EUR 3 500 000 Southern Africa and Indian Ocean (30%) BGUE-B2022-14.020122-C1-INTPA : 3 000 000 Total estimated cost: EUR 10 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 10 000 000			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
13. Type of financing	Direct management through: - Grants			

1.2 Summary of the Action

Against a backdrop of democratic backsliding and shrinking civic space, aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the African Union Commission (AUC) struggles to fulfil its mandate of observing all national elections taking place on the continent.

The action will support AUC's revised approach to elections, which mixes governance and conflict prevention objectives, thus prioritising support to electoral processes in transitional contexts. It will address its institutional strengthening needs to consolidate its policy coordination and technical capacity to deploy adequate Election Observation Missions (EOMs) and will facilitate the provision of technical assistance by the AUC to promote the implementation of related recommendations and respond adequately to AU member states' requests for assistance. Besides, the action will substantially engage with other key electoral stakeholders operating at continental and regional levels.

In practice, the action will provide tailored assistance to the AUC department for Political Affairs Peace & Security (PAPS), to Regional Economic Communities (RECs), to some African Governance Architecture (AGA) organs and to networks of Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs). It will also make available substantial technical and financial support to pan-African and regional civil society initiatives involved in election observation and related advocacy activities. Besides it will promote the engagement of a wide range of African electoral practitioners to

consolidate nascent initiatives of knowledge exchange, mutual assistance and pooling of resources thus contributing to the harmonisation of electoral standards across Africa consistent with those promoted by the AU.

The overall objective of the action is to contribute to improving electoral processes in Africa, which is to be achieved by aiming at three complementary specific objectives. The first one is to strengthen the AUC/PAPS' capacities in electoral observation and in providing electoral assistance to AU member states to implement AU EOMs' recommendations at different phases of the electoral cycle (component 1: institutional strengthening). The second specific objective is to harmonize the approaches of regional organisations (i.e. RECs as well as networks of EMBs and civil society platforms) to encourage coordination and synergies in electoral observation and assistance based on shared knowledge and values, notably by means of animating and supporting a Continental Community of Electoral Practitioners to be driven by PAPS (component 2: Community of Practice). As for the third specific objective, it seeks to strengthen civil society capacities in electoral observation, conflict prevention, gender, youth and persons with disabilities (PWD) inclusion in electoral processes and related to support pan-African networks of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and multistakeholder advocacy coalitions on democracy at sub-regional and continental levels by means of capacity building and through grants (component 3: Civil society engagement).

The proposed Action has been designed in line with the European Democracy Action Plan¹ and integrates all key aspects of the EU Gender Action Plan², the Council Conclusions on Youth in external action³ and the Youth Action Plan⁴. It intends to contribute to priority 2 'Governance, Peace and Security, Culture' of the Sub-Saharan - Regional Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 and, more specifically, to its result 1.2: 'The transparency and credibility of elections in Africa are improved'. Besides, this action contributes to SDGs 16 (governance, including access to justice for all), 5 (gender equality), and 17 (partnerships for the Goals).

The action is also aligned with Aspirations 3 (good governance, democracy, respect for Human Rights, justice and the rule of law), 4 (Peace and security) and 6 (people-driven development, especially women and youth) of Agenda 2063.

The lead entity in charge of this action is DG INTPA Unit A2.

The entity of the contract management is the EUD @the AUC.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

During the sixth European Union - African Union summit, held in Brussels on 17 and 18 February 2022, the Heads of State or Government of the member states of the AU and the EU Member States reiterated their commitment to promote, among other shared values and common priorities, 'the security and prosperity of our citizens, the protection of human rights for all, gender equality and women's empowerment in all spheres of life, respect for democratic principles, good governance and the rule of law.'⁵ It must be noted that this declaration took place against a worrisome backdrop of unconstitutional takeovers of power in several African countries (Guinea, Mali, Sudan, Burkina Faso) that risks wiping away the democratic gains of the last decades, especially in a moment in which authoritarian regimes across the world are becoming increasingly assertive.

¹ Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions On the European democracy action plan COM/2020/790 final

² Eu Gender Action Plan (Gap) Iii – An Ambitious Agenda For Gender Equality And Women's Empowerment In Eu External Action Swd (2020) 284 final

³ pdf (europa.eu)

⁴ Youth Action Plan (YAP) in EU external action 2022 – 2027 – JOIN (2022) 53 final

⁵ 6th European Union – African Union Summit: A Joint Vision for 2030

Despite some democratic achievements, electoral integrity in the continent remains largely under question, with less than one in six national elections in Africa resulting in a full transfer of power⁶, which further undermines citizens' trust in ballots as the legitimate means to bring about political change. Moreover, the competition for influence by autocratic regimes contributes to the erosion of political freedoms and democracy, partly exemplified by an alarming increase in unconstitutional takeovers of power. The reported decline in support for elections among African citizens from 83% in 2013 to 74% in 2018 can be seen as the symptom of a deeper malaise.⁷

In such a context, the AUC mandate to observe all major elections in the continent is of the utmost importance, as their Electoral Observation Missions (EOMs) play a crucial role in ensuring the quality and credibility of electoral processes across Africa. Aware of this, the EU and some of its Member States (Germany, Denmark, Sweden, The Netherlands), together with other donors such as Norway or the United States, have been providing electoral support to the AU for more than a decade, either through technical assistance or by funding its electoral operations. More precisely, between 2016 and 2019 the EU supported the Democracy and Elections Units (DEU) through the action entitled "The African Union Capacity in Election Observation (AUCapEO)" so that the AU could conduct credible long term election observation according to international standards and promoting democratic, credible, transparent and peaceful elections on the continent.

However, important challenges remain. The celebrated African Charter on Democracy, Governance and Elections (ACDEG)⁸ has only been ratified by 33 out of 55 AU member states, and the implementation of electoral observation recommendations formulated by the AU and other international actors remains low and is seldom followed through in a consistent manner. This calls for the further strengthening of the DEU, as well as of other AU organs and non-state actors involved or interested in electoral and human rights matters to better raise awareness around AU EOMs' recommendations, promote engagement on electoral reforms and advocate for the ratification of ACDEG and contribute to monitor its implementation.

Non-state actors, including civil society, academia and the media indeed have a crucial role to play in overseeing the work of electoral authorities, in promoting the reform agenda and in holding public officials accountable. EMBs can also benefit from technical support and from sustained exchanges with their peers to overcome the variety of technical and political challenges they face, notably in transitional contexts. Besides, some of the AU organs under AGA such as the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), potentially bear an important role to play at different stages of the electoral cycle and should intervene in collaboration with the AUC according to their respective mandates and capacities.

In this regard, the ongoing reform of the AU and the merging of PAPS to foster synergies among AGA and APSA offer an opportunity to develop cooperation mechanisms that bring together a diversity of electoral practitioners under a common set of principles and objectives. To this end, it is important to engage more systematically with the RECs that also conduct electoral observation and to promote the harmonization of their electoral practices with those of the AU. The objective is to encourage the implementation of the principle of subsidiarity that could result in a more efficient division of labour between the continental and regional levels. For this purpose, a Continental Community of Electoral Practitioners should be established and strengthened to engage with RECs, as well as with AGA organs and a variety of other electoral stakeholders (civil society, EMBs, academia, experts, etc.) in a structured and collaborative fashion. Conceived as a dialogue space for the exchange of knowledge and best practices, as well as for the collective analysis of lessons learned resulting from electoral operations, such a Community of Practice (CoP) would contribute to improving multi-stakeholder and multilevel coordination and could eventually facilitate the pooling of resources.

The action thus intends to improve the linkages between the continental, regional and national levels of intervention. By adopting a multi-stakeholder approach that combines institutional strengthening, knowledge management and sharing, and civil society support, the action would simultaneously reinforce the different elements that conform the AU electoral system. Building on its long track record in providing substantial assistance for electoral observation and operations and for conflict prevention and peace building in Africa, the EU holds a unique position to accompany such concerted actions at multiple levels.

⁶ Elections in Africa – Playing the game or bending the rules?", ECDPM Discussion paper n° 261, October 2019

⁷ "Africans want open elections, especially if they bring change", Afrobarometer Policy Paper No. 58, June 2019

⁸ Charter on Democracy.doc (au.int)

2.2 Problem Analysis

Following a consultation process consisting of online interviews with over 40 stakeholders and a comprehensive desk-review of project reports, policy briefs and other background documents, the key problems identified are:

a. Conflicting mandates. AU electoral observation operations and provision of electoral assistance growingly pursue conflict prevention objectives. The merging of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and of Peace and Security (DPS) into a single directorate at the AUC (PAPS) generated substantial debate about the inherent risk of addressing governance matters from a security angle, an approach that is being criticized for its potential impact on the respect of electoral standards.⁹ This justifies involving additional independent electoral stakeholders to advocate for and ensure respect for electoral integrity.

b. Overwhelming expectations for AU EOMs. According to its mandate, the AUC has to observe all national elections taking place on the continent, i.e.: usually about 15 elections per year (to be determined by the Peace and Security Council according to the AU member states' electoral calendars). However, the DEU counts only on 8 staff members (3 permanent AU civil servants, 3 temporary agents and 2 seconded experts) and its annual budget remains unpredictable and oscillates between 3 and 6 million USD. Such a mismatch between mandate and resources results in bottlenecks and prevents the DEU to deploy enough long-term observation missions or follow-up activities.

c. Weak compliance with recommendations. The implementation of EOMs' recommendations requires domestic political will that requires the involvement of a variety of stakeholders. Some AGA Platform members as well as CSOs or EMBs can contribute to influence national governments to deliver change. The Pan African Parliament (PAP) can help mobilise the national networks of its present and past deputies, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) can foster a collaborative approach to improve adherence to governance indicators and the Banjul Commission (ACHPR) could better promote and monitor respect for civil and political rights. Similarly, compliance affects the ACDEG, a legally binding treaty which is seldom fully implemented by those AUMS that have ratified it.

d. Enduring capacity weaknesses. The AU reform process within PAPS remains unfinished as a number of senior positions are yet to be appointed, which has generated much internal ambiguity and disturbances. Like other services, the number of staff of the DEU will remain limited thus impacting its capacity to implement its ambitious mandate. RECs are considered as the "building blocks of the AU" but operate according to different mandates with uneven levels of development, with EAC, SADC and ECOWAS arguably the more advanced and respected in electoral observation. Most AGA organs are also confronted by internal capacity issues: PAP suffers from unstable leadership that has affected its popular credibility, APRM mostly addresses electoral matters via national self-assessment exercises, ACHPR struggles with weak resources to operate its ambitious mandate and has so far not been able to develop in-house electoral expertise, and ECOSOCC's involvement in electoral observation is limited to responding to AUC's requests for nominating civil society observers as per PAPS criteria, which has the final say and directly manages the deployed EOM staff. Strengthening their capacity and orchestrating their respective competitive advantages could however positively contribute to improving the influence of AU electoral operations, in partnership with external regional and domestic stakeholders such as EMB and CSO networks.

e. Difficult implementation of the subsidiarity principle. AUC's relations with the RECs in general and the harmonization of their electoral observation methodologies remain to be improved because of the strong disparities that persist among the latter. There are only a few RECs able to engage in electoral observation (mostly ECOWAS and SADC) and their relationships with the AUC is not straightforward despite efforts at coordinating their electoral activities.¹⁰ This calls for supporting efforts aimed at improving coordination to orchestrate institutional synergies coherent with the principles of subsidiarity.

⁹ From peace campaigns to peaceocracy: Elections, order and authority in Africa. Gabrielle Lynch, Nic Cheeseman and J. Willis, African Affairs, 2019.

¹⁰ The Memorandum of Understanding signed by the AU and eight RECs signed in 2008 to coordinate their activities with regard to peace and security only mentioned it in very vague terms, stating that the organizations should "adhere to the principles of subsidiarity, complementarity, and comparative advantage" (article 4.4). With no clear indications about when and how would each organization take precedence over others and without a common operational framework to prevent overlaps, the dynamics between RECs and the AU tends to gravitate more towards competition than towards collaboration.

f. Limited inclusivity across electoral operations. The political participation of women remains low in Africa. Female politicians are still too often subject to stereotyping, harassment and other forms of physical or symbolic violence. Thanks to previous EU support, the DEU adopted a series of gender indicators for its electoral observation operations, such as for selecting and training electoral observers to be deployed. However, the DEU and PAPS could formalize a more systematic approach to address the inclusion of women, youth, minorities and people with disabilities by promoting citizen engagement targeting these populations in particular.

The main stakeholders involved in electoral observation, electoral assistance and democracy support in the African continent which shall contribute to or benefit from the action are: AUC (PAPS and DEU in particular), the eight recognized RECs, AGA Platform members (notably the AUC's PAPS which hosts the AGA-APSA secretariat, PAP, ACHPR, APRM, ECOSOCC), national EMBs and related regional networks, panAfrican civil society organization, platforms and initiatives operating in fields related to democratic governance, human rights and peacebuilding.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to improve the transparency and the credibility of elections in Africa.

Specific Objectives (Outcomes) of this action are:

SO1: Harmonized approaches and strengthened institutional capacities of continental, regional and national authorities in electoral observation and in electoral assistance provision.

SO2: Strengthened capacity of civil society in electoral related issues in Africa.

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

1.1. The capacity of the AUC (PAPS) to deploy long-term electoral observations and follow-up missions is improved

1.2. The capacity of the AUC (PAPS) to answer AU member states' requests for electoral assistance to accompany national electoral processes and to implement AU EOMs' recommendations is improved.

1.3. A Continental Community of Electoral Practitioners is established and steered by PAPS.

1.4. Electoral observation and assistance approaches of regional organisations are consistent with the principles and methodologies promoted by the AUC.

2.1. Strengthened electoral capacities of pan-African/regional networks of CSO

2.2. Supported multilevel and multi-stakeholder advocacy coalitions on democracy support at sub-regional and continental level.

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1.1:

- Provide demand-driven embedded technical assistance to PAPS
- Support the AUC and RECs in exploring effective ways of implementing the subsidiarity principle and coordinating their respective EOMs.
- Provide technical assistance to ensure that electoral assistance addresses key gender aspects regarding electoral processes and streamline gender concerns across the electoral cycle and develop a Gender Strategy and a Youth Engagement Strategy for PAPS and, more specifically, for the AUC EOM and electoral assistance to AU member states.
- Provide technical assistance to design a strategy for post electoral follow-up and deliver capacity building to AGA organs, RECs and EMB networks to fulfil their respective roles along the electoral cycle,
- Support the harmonization and appropriation of AU electoral methodologies, tools and guidelines by RECs and relevant AU organs.

- On demand technical assistance to AUC and training of experts and facilitators (in English, French, Portuguese, Arabic, Spanish and Swahili) on institutional strengthening, electoral observation, gender, youth, minorities, digitalisation and other needs.

Activities related to Output 1.2:

- Support the AUC in developing its methodological and operational capacity to respond to requests for tailored electoral assistance from AU member states to implement EOMs' recommendations.
- Provide technical assistance in key areas (gender, data, legal) to be embedded in the AUC electoral assistance operations, while ensuring the transfer of knowledge to African experts through on-the-job training.
- Develop online learning modules aimed at electoral practitioners at continental, regional and national levels, and deliver a series of hybrid tailored training sessions.

Activities related to Output 1.3:

- Provide embedded assistance to design and operate a Continental Community of Electoral Practitioners (CCEP) driven by PAPS.
- Support the joint development of a common Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) for AUC and RECs electoral support.
- Developing and implementing a knowledge sharing and communication strategy for CCEP.
- Support the establishment of a research network to produce participatory policy papers on relevant issues identified by the Continental Community of Electoral Practitioners (CCEP).

Activities related to Output 1.4:

- Convene EMBs and associations of EMBs around key topics such as electoral dispute resolution, disinformation, youth engagement, etc.
- Facilitate cross-country exchanges to encourage peer to peer learning and ensure the AUC's participation in relevant international fora.
- Provide methodological support on dialogue facilitation, develop a knowledge exchange framework and broker joint multi-stakeholder initiatives among diverse electoral practitioners.
- Conduct participatory workshops to analyse existing methodologies and guidelines for EOM and foster synergies between African led EOMs through the joint adoption of international standards.

Activities related to Output 2.1:

- Project Management and Coordination to strengthen regional civil society networks working on electoral issues.
- Provide mid-term technical assistance monitoring and evaluation aspects
- Provide on demand technical assistance to Civil Society networks on institutional strengthening, electoral observation, gender, youth, digitalisation and other needs.
- Conduct a comparative study of AU member states' practices contributing to the shrinking of democratic space.
- Develop an online training module and an hybrid Training of trainers scheme for domestic electoral observation as per AUC/RECs harmonized electoral standards, including conflict prevention, advocacy, gender, inclusion, etc.
- Financial support to CSOs to promote the active participation of their representatives in the Continental Community of Electoral Practitioners.

Activities related to Output 2.2.:

- LTE to support civil society advocacy to promote domestic compliance to the ACDEG and with a gender focus.
- Design and administer grant funding schemes for regional CSO electoral observation and reform advocacy initiatives.
- Provision of short-term methodological assistance, dialogue facilitation and training (on leadership, networking and participatory research) to broker civil society-led partnerships to address EOM recommendations
- Provide grant funding (tentatively 5) civil society-led initiatives at continental or sub-regional levels aimed at promoting exchanges and developing mutual support mechanisms among domestic observation networks.

- Provide grant funding civil society-led electoral initiatives –including civic-tech– and Multi-stakeholder Partnerships to advocate for and monitor the implementation of AU EOM recommendations and to promote the role of civil society in electoral processes.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

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

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

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

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

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that gender equality is a significant objective and that a gender perspective is mainstreamed across the action.

With regards to its SO1 one of the activities consists of supporting the AUC in mainstreaming gender across all trainings, guidelines and procedures and in engaging women and youth on EOM. This will be achieved by providing dedicated technical assistance to mainstream gender concerns across the electoral cycle, and by reviewing Gender and a Youth Engagement Strategies for PAPS and for AU electoral observation and assistance operations. Under SO2, all the knowledge exchange activities and peer-to-peer events will ensure equal gender participation among attendants and will mainstream gender issues across the topics to be covered, following the guidelines in this regard to be produced by the CoP Coordinator during the inception phase of the action. Thematic meetings to be organized and participatory research activities shall also offer opportunities to deal with the topic of gender inclusion in electoral processes. As for SO3, dedicated gender expertise will be provided to support specific civil society advocacy efforts related to national compliance to the ACDEG with a gender focus.

Human Rights

Supporting African electoral processes pursue obvious objectives of promoting and protecting human rights on the continent, especially political and civil rights. Also, the action has been designed following the Human Rights based approach, whereby right-holders –represented by civil society– are empowered to demand action from their duty-bearers –national governments and EMBs– to ensure that elections are credible, free and fair and that their civic and political rights are fully respected. The action is informed by the imperative of protecting human rights in all African countries, even when there is a focus on pursuing conflict prevention objectives.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. This implies that AU electoral guidelines and EOMs, as well as its electoral assistance, will include considerations on accessibility and inclusion of people with disability, and dedicated technical assistance shall be provided in this regard. Similarly, SO3 puts a strong emphasis on inclusivity.

Democracy

The very purpose of this action is to promote, protect and support electoral processes in Africa as a central tool and practice of democratic governance.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

As reflected in the logic of intervention, the action aims at supporting the AU in the broader context of the AGA-APSA merger that led to the creation of a single PAPS department in the AUC, informed by the proximity of governance matters with peace and security related ones. The action will take a particular focus on supporting electoral observation operations and on providing electoral assistance to African countries that experience political

transitions, as a tool for strengthening resilience. Preventing electoral violence is also a core objective of this action, in contexts where elections can be potential triggers of conflict. SO2 and 3 contribute to strengthening the ability of multiple stakeholders, notably civil society actors, to advocate for peaceful elections and to contribute to conflict prevention activities.

Disaster Risk Reduction

When appropriate to local affected national and regional contexts, this action shall integrate and promote disaster risk reduction analysis and response.

Other considerations if relevant

As reaffirmed by the United Nations General Assembly in its Declaration resulting from the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels, "human rights, the rule of law and democracy are interlinked and mutually reinforcing and (...) belong to the universal and indivisible core values and principles of the United Nations".¹¹ Empirical research conducted by V-Dem has shown that "countries with high scores on V-Dem's Rule of Law Index generally have high scores on the Electoral Democracy Index and vice versa", which means that both dimensions are distinct but, besides a few rare cases such as Singapore or the United Arab Emirates, they tend to go hand in hand.¹² Therefore, democratic countries are likelier to offer a more conducive environment for the private sector and sounder legal guarantees to foreign investors, a crucial aspect for the EU's Global Gateway and the Commission's innovative financing and blending operations.

In that same vein, the EU's staunch support to digital transformation in Africa through initiatives such as the D4D hub and investments in digital infrastructure can have an impact on democratic and civic space, including on elections. The action will therefore address these aspects through its components 2 (Continental Community of Electoral Practitioners) and 3 (Civil Society Engagement), for example by strengthening the ability to react to internet shutdowns during the elections or to restrictions on online activists and civic-tech initiatives.

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating measures
1	Further democratic backsliding and unconstitutional changes of governments worsened by the dire socioeconomic conditions generated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the food crisis from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.	Medium	High	Alignment of the action with the AU's framing of EOM as a means of conflict prevention, albeit keeping the focus on electoral integrity as the key drivers of democratic consolidation.
2	Enduring uncertainties with regards to the AU reform process continue hampering the work of PAPS' staff and the DEU's capacities.	High	Medium	Proactive dialogue of EUD with PAPS facilitates pragmatic solutions. Continuous monitoring to introduce corrective measures and conducting a mid-term evaluation to reassess the action's logic of intervention.
3	Administrative and institutional capacity constraints of PAPS and of the DEU in particular.	Medium	High	The action expands the range of its beneficiaries while addressing both electoral observation and technical assistance provision and planning for

¹¹ "Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels" (A/67/L.1), 19 September 2012

¹² The Importance of the Rule of Law for a Robust, Functioning Democracy, Svend Erik Skaaning, V-Dem Briefing Paper #4

				multi-stakeholders' steering arrangement.
3	The inability of the AUC to promote electoral democratic standards across AUMS in a context marked by enduring security urgencies that it needs to respond to.	Medium	Medium	The action diversifies its entry points by addressing both the policy and technical levels within PAPS and by engaging regional CSO networks to carry out multilevel advocacy campaigns.
2	RECs remain reluctant or unable to engage in the harmonization of electoral practices and the implementation of the subsidiarity principle.	Low	Medium	The adoption of a bottom-up approach and use of peer-to-peer learning is to create conditions conducive to meaningful engagement and active participation.
4	Further shrinking of civic space in some countries affects the capacity of CSOs to engage in domestic observation and advocacy.	Medium	Medium	The action supports regional CSO networks to provide assistance and capacity building to national CSOs and advocate at supra-national levels for a more enabling environment to CS engagement in electoral processes.

Lessons Learnt:

The final evaluation of AUCapEO project stressed a number of issues that informed the design of this action:

- 'Institutional hindrances stemming from the DEU's strong dependency on external administrative services and higher policy-making offices within the AUC in key management matters, notably pertaining to budget and human resources.'¹³ These were the main reasons why the level of execution remained below 50%, even after the approval of a no-cost extension. An alternative external mechanism under the EU direct implementation modality was thus designed for this new action to strengthen the DEU while trying to avoid its internal bureaucratic constraints.
- The collaboration and coordination between RECs proved "*weaker than foreseen and a more comprehensive approach towards collaboration and cooperation needed to be adopted*". The action's second component, the Continental Community of Electoral Practitioners, aims at supporting a dialogue space for knowledge sharing and exchanging best practices between the AU, RECs and other electoral actors to promote operational convergence.
- The fact that "*key products*" from AUCapEO (such as the LTO manual) "*yet have to be formally validated by the AUC leadership*" hints at the political dimension underlying electoral observation. The action thus ambitions to embed its activities within the AUC's broader political objectives and to operate at adequate levels within PAPS.
- A diversity of stakeholders could contribute to overcome the AU's institutional and inherent political complexities. The action thus provides technical assistance to the AU but also supports regional CSO networks involved in electoral observation and advocacy for the implementation of the EOMs recommendations and the full enforcement of the AU's normative framework.

¹³ The Action 'African Union Capacity in Election Observation' (AUCapEO) mobilized a budget of EUR 6 million from 2015 to 2019, with the overall objective for the "AU to conduct credible long-term election observation to international standards, making an increased contribution to credible elections in Africa". To that end, the action pursued five specific objectives: (SO1) To support the AU at the institutional level in developing its human capacity; (SO2) To support the AU in developing its human and technical capacity for election observation at mission level and establishing a sustainable observer/expert training and coordination function to be managed by the DEAU; (SO3) To support the AU in refining its methodological and technical basis for the conduct of credible and long term election observation and other types of missions; (SO4) Support the AU in deploying its long-term EOMs and other types of electoral missions; and (SO5) To support the AU in further developing coordination and cooperation with other international observer groups through information and knowledge sharing.

- With regards to gender, the evaluation report stated that “*the action could have done more to ensure gender is thoroughly mainstreamed across all parts of the action.*” Building on what has already been achieved, this new action aims at developing a tailored gender strategy and providing expertise in the form of gender specialists. Besides, both component 2 (community of practice) and 3 (civil society engagement) have a strong gender dimension as mentioned above (section 3.3).

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that IF the capacities of the PAPS and the DEU to deploy electoral observation missions and to provide tailored electoral assistance to demanding African governments are strengthened, together with those of RECs and relevant AGA organs in a way that fosters operational coordination and synergies, and IF regional networks of EMBs and CSOs can better operate and support their domestic members thanks to the provision of tailored technical assistance, training and informed multi-stakeholders dialogue and dedicated support for electoral observations and advocacy operations, THEN a more efficient and effective institutional set up could emerge in Africa to support and observe national electoral processes in a way that promotes and protects electoral integrity standards and contributes to conflict prevention and stabilisation among AU member states.

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

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

On the basis of this logframe matrix, a more detailed logframe (or several) may be developed at contracting stage. In case baselines and targets are not available for the action, they should be informed for each indicator at signature of the contract(s) linked to this AD, or in the first progress report at the latest.

New columns may be added to set intermediary targets (milestones) for the Output and Outcome indicators whenever it is relevant.

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

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

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

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

	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 improve transparency and credibility of elections in Africa	Average of Free and Fair elections index for the region Number of elections appraised as credible, peaceful, transparent by domestic and international electoral stakeholders	Baselines by year will be defined at the inception phase	Targets by year will be defined at the inception phase	V-Dem, Free and fair elections Index Africa Integrity Indicators – Elections ¹⁴ Afrobarometer reports EOMs report	Not applicable
Outcome 1	Harmonized approaches and strengthened institutional capacities of continental, regional and national authorities in electoral observation and in electoral assistance provision.	1.1. Number of electoral processes and democratic cycles supported, observed and followed by means of Election Observation Missions	1.1. 1 (2021) = AUC EOM to Gambia	1.1. 3 (2023) 3 (2024) 3 (2025) 3 (2026)	1.1 EOM reports. AU records.	Security situation allows for civil society and citizens' participation. Conditions for safe engagement are assured.

¹⁴ <https://www.africaintegrityindicators.org/data>

		1.2 Proportion of AUC (and REC) EOM recommendations implemented by AUMS	1.2 TBD at the onset of the project.	1.2 TBD at the onset of the project.	1.2 Review of EOMs follow-up	
		1.3. Number of countries supported by the AU to conduct elections and/or improve their electoral process	1.3. 2 (2021) Somalia and Gambia	1.3. 3 (2023) 3 (2024) 3 (2025) 3 (2026)	1.3 EOM reports. AU records.	
Outcome 2	Strengthened capacity of civil society in electoral related issues in Africa	2.1. Number of CSOs actively integrated into panAfrican and/or regional networks implementing advocacy initiatives on democracy and elections	2.1. TBD on the onset of the project.	2.1.TBD on the onset of the project.	1.4 Mapping of CSO networks active on electoral related issue and assessment of their electoral capacities	RECs, EMBs and AUMs contribute proactively to knowledge sharing and remain open to the potential pooling of resources.
		2.2 Number of grants awarded and successfully implemented.	2.2. TBD on the onset of the project	2.2. 5 grants covering at least 15 CS umbrella organizations weave panAfrican or sub-regional networks dealing with democracy and elections	Evaluation reports and monitoring	Enough number of proposals received
Output 1 related to Outcome 1	1.1. The capacity of the AUC (PAPS) to deploy long-term electoral observations and follow-up missions is improved	1.1.1. Number of STOs and LTOs (in French, English, Arabic, Portuguese, Spanish and Swahili) trained in the AUC EO methods and ready to be deployed in EOM.	1.1.1. 153 Experts and Facilitators trained in English (79) and in French (74) by AUcapEO. 20% young facilitators.	1.1.1. At least 100 LTO and electoral experts trained at the continental and sub-regional levels (in French English, Arabic, Portuguese, Spanish and Swahili) by the end of the action. (of which 50% will be women). Percentage of youth facilitators.	1.1.1 Training reports, pre-and post-training surveys.	AU government staff remain sufficiently stable to make use of capacities developed.
		1.1.2. Status of a Gender Strategy for PAPS.	1.1.2. In 2022 0 – to be defined at the inception phase	1.1.2. 1 Gender Strategy for PAPS is operational 2025	1.1.2 Strategy and training modules developed and programme reports.	

Output 2 related to Outcome 1	1.2. The capacity of the AUC (PAPS) to answer AUMS' requests for electoral assistance to accompany national electoral processes and to implement AU EOMs' recommendations is improved	1.2.1. Status of Standard Operational Procedures to implement EOMs' recommendations.	1.2.1. AU Electoral Assistance Guide currently being validated (2023)	1.2.1. Standard Operational Procedures in place (based on the AU Electoral Assistance Guide) (2023)	1.2.1 Reports from the Electoral Assistance Facility AUMS requests EAO reports Technical expert reports	AUMS issue requests to PAPS for electoral assistance. AUMS, RECs and EMB officials are provided with sufficient time and other resources needed to effectively benefit from technical and training support.
		1.2.2. Number of AUMS supported per year	1.2.2. 2 (2023)	1.2.2. 3 (2023) 4 (2024) 4 (2025)	1.2.2. Reports from the Electoral Assistance Facility Technical experts report	
		1.2.3. Number of technical experts deployed to provide electoral assistance to AUMS to implement AU EOMs'	1.2.3. 5 (2022)	1.2.3. At least 7 technical experts deployed in 2023, 9 in 2024, 12 in 2025 and 15 in	1.2.3. Technical experts report	
		recommendations per year		2026 (of which 40% are women)		
		1.2.4. Proportion of gender sensitive issues addressed by the technical assistance provided (%)	1.2.4. One request (20%) from AUMS where gender was relevant (Somalia) (2021)	1.2.4. 30% (2025)	1.2.4. Reports from the Electoral Assistance Facility AUMS requests EAO reports	
		1.2.5 Number of practitioners reporting improved knowledge to implement EOMs' recommendations, disaggregated by sex	1.2.5. 0 (2022)	1.2.5 (2025)	1.2.5 Reports from the Electoral Assistance Facility EAO reports	
Output 3 related to Outcome 1	1.3. A Continental Community of Electoral Practitioners is established and steered by PAPS.	1.3.1. Number of participants engaged (registered and regularly interacting) in the Continental Community of Electoral Practitioners (disaggregated by sex, age).	1.3.1. 0 (2022)	1.3.1. At least 30 participants from AGA organs, 20 from RECs, 30 from EMBs and 60 from CS, think tanks and academia (from which 50% are to be women) (2024)	1.3.1. Programme reports Event reports (dialogue, learning, exchange). Statistics from the events (disaggregated by sex, age, stakeholder group).	Public health and security conditions allow for practitioners to travel. Home institutions (AU, RECs, EMBs, CSO, etc.) prioritize practice-sharing and allow their staff to fully engage in the CoP.
		1.3.2. Status of a Continental Community of Electoral Practitioners	1.3.2. 0 (2022)	1.3.2. A Continental Community of Electoral Practitioners is established and producing participatory research	1.3.2. reports/minutes of the Community are available	

Output 4 related to Outcome 1	1.4. Electoral observation and assistance approaches of regional organisations are consistent with the principles and methodologies promoted by the AUC.	1.4.1 Number of mechanisms promoted by the EU intervention to convene EMBs and associations of EMBs around key topics such as electoral dispute resolution, disinformation, youth engagement, etc.	1.4.1. 0 (2022)	1.4.1. to be determined (2023)	1.4.1. Programme reports.	Current collaborative dynamics among AU and RECs continue.
		1.4.2 Status of a knowledge exchange framework among electoral practitioners in the region	1.4.2 to be determined (20xx)	1.4.2 to be determined (2023)	1.4.2. Programme reports.	Public health and security conditions allow for EMB, AU and REC staff to travel.
		1.4.3 Number of methodologies/assistance approaches revised or updated in line with AUC principles with the support of the intervention	1.4.3 0 (20xx)	1.4.3 to be determined (2023)	1.4.3. Programme reports.	Technical standardization is endorsed at political level.
Output 1 related to Outcome 2	2.1.. Electoral capacities of PanAfrican networks of CSO are strengthened	2.1.1.. Number of continental and sub-regional CSO networks supported by the action (sub-granting)	2.1.1. 0 (2022)	2.1.1. 5 (2024)	2.1.1. Action reports. MoUs/grant agreements signed. Expert mission reports. Assessment report of the electoral tech-based tools shared in the framework of the action.	CSOs contribute proactively to the Continental Community of Electoral Practitioners
		2.1.2. Number of CSO representatives participating in exchange, learning and/or dialogue events conducted by the Continental Community of Electoral Practitioners (disaggregated by sex, age).	2.1.2. 0 (2022)	2.1.2. to be determined at the inception phase (2023) including % of youth organisations	2.1.2. Action reports. MoUs/grant agreements signed. Expert mission reports. Assessment report of the electoral tech-based tools shared in the framework of the action.	CSOs have the knowledge to share tech-based tools. Governments allow for engagement by their citizens and ensure civic space openness (including digital)
Output 2 related to Outcome 2	2.2. Strengthened multilevel and multi-stakeholder advocacy coalitions on democracy support at sub-regional and continental level.	2.2.1.. Number of subregional and continental CSO networks working on elections and governance with the support of the intervention	2.2.1. 0 (2022)	2.2.1. 5 (2025).	2.2.1. MSP agreements. MSP advocacy strategies. Outcomes harvesting and policy influencing assessments. Programme reports. Key stakeholder interviews.	CSOs contribute proactively to the Continental Community of Electoral Practitioners CSOs have the knowledge to share tech-based tools.

		2.2.2. Number of civil society-led electoral observation and advocacy initiatives on electoral reform implemented at the national, sub-regional and continental levels with the support of the intervention.	2.2.2 0 (2022)	2.2.2. 30 (2025)	2.2.2. MSP agreements. MSP advocacy strategies. Outcomes harvesting and policy influencing assessments. Programme reports. Key stakeholder interviews.	Governments allow for engagement by their citizens and ensure civic space openness (including digital)
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4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the African Union or other AU member states.

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 [For Budget Support only]

N/A

4.4 Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures¹⁵.

4.4.1 Direct Management (Grants)

Grants: (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

The 2 grants (one each specific objectives/SO) will contribute to achieve all the outcomes of the action as described in section 3 (Description of the action). Criteria for both SOs will be developed further in the Call for Proposals.

For the grant on component SO1 the criteria to select the grant beneficiaries will include thematic expertise, logistical and management capacities, and specific experience on coordinating multi-stakeholder continental/multiregional initiatives.

For SO2 the criteria to select the grant beneficiaries will include thematic expertise, logistical and management capacities, and specific experience on coordinating initiatives with civil society.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

The potential applicants for this grant funding are mainly specialised international NGOs, international organisations, and economic operators such as SMEs. Eligibility criteria will be detailed in calls for proposals and should include the following: having a unique/specific mandate and /or role with regards to promoting and supporting democratic governance, and relevant experience in advising on and implementing interventions related to electoral processes in Africa.

¹⁵ 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.

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

In case part of the action may not be implemented via direct grant, that part of the action may be implemented in indirect management with a pillar assessed entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria: having a unique/specific mandate and /or role with regards to promoting and supporting democratic governance, and can demonstrate relevant experience in advising on and implementing interventions related to electoral processes in Africa.

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 realization 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	
Harmonized approaches and strengthened institutional capacities of continental, regional and national authorities in electoral observation and in electoral assistance provision.	
Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.4.1	5 000 000
Strengthened capacity of civil society in electoral related issues in Africa	
Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.4.1	5 000 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	(will be covered by another Decision)
Totals	10 000 000

4.7 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The action seeks to strengthen the DEU without burdening it with further administrative obligations, while also separately supporting civil society electoral initiatives. The solution proposed to achieve this consists of establishing an external mechanism mobilised via two grant contracts under direct management by the EUD but jointly steered with PAPS. Therefore, two contracts will be awarded to two different consortiums of European and African specialised agencies: i. one that will be responsible for the provision of embedded (seconded staff) and short-term technical assistance, as well as the delivery of capacity building and related activities to the DEU (SO1), and another one ii. to steer and support electoral observation and assistance activities led by regional and pan-African CSOs (SO2). A Programme Steering Committee will be composed of a representative from each of the two consortiums (A and B), plus a representative from PAPS and another one from the Commission. This Steering Committee is to ensure the overall coherence of the action and to identify synergies amongst its different activities, acting as the highest governance structure and providing political guidance.

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.

4.8 Pre-conditions [Only for project modality]

N/A.

5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1 Monitoring and Reporting

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

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

Each implementing partner will have specific responsibilities for monitoring and reporting under this action. Common indicators will as much as possible be used in order to allow AD wide reporting. Indicator values will be measured at continental, regional or on a country-by-country basis depending on the nature of the activities. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning experts will closely work with both implementing consortiums to ensure that indicators are aligned to the INTPA results framework.

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a mid-term and a final evaluations 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 positioning of the support to the DEU in the context of AUC reforms (SO1), and its interactions with the support provided to other electoral practitioners (SO2) and to regional civil society on electoral matters (SO3).

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 fact that this support to continental electoral observation and assistance capacities integrates innovative elements related to the engagement of multiple stakeholders and via civil society actors via a dedicated sub-granting mechanism, both of which bear a pilot dimension for orchestrating complementary EU interventions at various levels.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 1 month in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination¹⁶. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

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

¹⁶ See best practice of evaluation dissemination

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.

It will remain a contractual obligation for all entities implementing EU-funded external actions to inform the relevant audiences of the Union's support for their work by displaying the EU emblem and a short funding statement as appropriate on all communication materials related to the actions concerned. This obligation will continue to apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, partner countries, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU member states.

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

Appendix 1 REPORTING IN OPSYS

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

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

The present Action identifies as

Action level		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single action	Present action: all contracts in the present action
Group of actions level		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of actions	Actions reference (CRIS#/OPSYS#): <Present action> <Other action>
Contract level		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	<foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract)>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 2	<foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract)>
	(...)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of contracts 1	<foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract) 1> <foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract) 2> <foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract) #>