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THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX I

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the Special Measure for a regional response to the Afghanistan refugee and displacement crisis for 2021

Action Document for Support to Afghan refugees and displaced people in Pakistan, Iran, Central Asia and Afghanistan

ANNUAL MEASURE

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and measures in the sense of Article 23(4) of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

1. SYNOPSIS

1.1. Action Summary Table

1. Title	Support to Afghan refugees and displaced people in Pakistan, Iran, Central Asia and Afghanistan CRIS number: 2021/043-546
CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act	Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)
2. Team Europe Initiative	Yes The Action will be part of the broader Regional Team Europe Initiative on the Afghan Displacement situation proposed in the Asia-Pacific regional MIP, should it be adopted by the College and subsequently materialise.
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The Action shall be carried out in Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan, with additional activities possible in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and other relevant Central Asian countries (tbc).
4. Programming document	Special measure for a Regional Response to the Afghanistan refugee displacement crisis for 2021
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results	N/A
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Migration and Forced Displacement DEV. Assistance: YES

7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	SDG 10.7 SDG 4 (Quality Education) SDG 5 (gender equality)			
8 a) DAC code(s) ¹	15190 – Facilitation of orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility (100%) 11220 – Primary Education 13010 - Population policy and administrative management 11330 - Vocational training 16020 - Employment policy 72010 - Material assistance to refugees and displaced persons			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel @	41000 - United Nations agency, fund or commission (UN)			
9. Targets²	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education ³ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance ⁴			
10. Markers ⁵ (from DAC form)	General policy objective @	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

¹ DAC sectors (codes and descriptions) are indicated in the first and fourth columns of the tab 'purpose codes' in the following document: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/dacandrcodlists.htm>

² Actual contribution to targets will be confirmed ex-post based on a standardised methodology.

³ This target is specific to INTPA. If the action is marked as contributing to the Education target, please make sure the target on "Social inclusion and Human Development" is also marked.

⁴ Thematic target for geographic programmes (at least 15%) in delegated act.

⁵ For guidance, see <https://www.oecd.org/development/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/> (go to "Data collection and resources for reporters", select Addendum 2, annexes 18 (policy) and 19 (Rio) of the reporting directive).

If an action is marked in the DAC form as contributing to one of the general policy objectives or to RIO principles as a principal objective or a significant objective, then this should be reflected in the logframe matrix (in the results chain and/or indicators).

	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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Internal markers⁶ and Tags⁷:	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Digitalisation @ Tags: digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship job creation digital skills/literacy digital services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <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"/>
	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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities (methodology for marker and tagging under development)	<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 line(s) (article, item): BGUE-B2021-14.020130-C1-INTPA BGUE-B2021-14.020131-C1-INTPA Total estimated cost: EUR 50 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 50 000 000			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
13. Type of financing⁸	Indirect management with the entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.1			

1.2. Summary of the Action

The proposed Action aims at enabling solutions for Afghan refugees in the countries neighbouring Afghanistan (i.e. Iran and Pakistan, and also if required Central Asian countries) and for returnees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other persons of concern in Afghanistan insofar as the situation in Afghanistan

⁶ The internal markers have been created to report on the implementation of the Commission's own policy priorities in areas where no DAC reporting tool is available. For the sake of consistency and comparability, the methodology is equivalent to the DAC markers, with three possible positions (main target, significant target, not targeted)

⁷ Methodology for additional tagging providing granularity on internal markers is under development.

⁸ Art. 27 NDICI

allows, without amounting to a recognition of the Taliban government. The Action aims at continuing EU support to uphold and protect Afghan refugees and returnees' rights for international protection and durable solutions in Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, i.e. through regional platforms. The Action will also provide needs-based support to Central Asian countries in appropriately accommodating Afghan refugees and migrants. To do so, the Action will support Afghan refugees in the region, and returnees and IDPs in Afghanistan, to access basic services and protection, in line with the priorities of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) and the work plan of the SSAR Core Group, chaired by the EU in 2021.

The Action is to be financed under the Special Measure for "Regional Response to the Afghanistan refugee and displacement crisis" for 2021.

The Action aims to address the challenges of irregular migration and forced displacement at different levels through a community-driven, needs-specific approach that focusses on medium and long-term impact. Implemented through a whole-of-community approach, and applying the human rights based approach and gender mainstreaming, the Action will provide support to Afghans on the move, i.e. refugees, IDPs, undocumented Afghans and returnees, through protection as well as provision of basic services (e.g. health and education) and livelihood opportunities. Special attention will be given to women and girls, children, the elderly and people with disabilities.

The underlying intervention logic reflects the well-established conclusion that a solution to Afghan displacement – even on the short and medium term – can only be accomplished through a regional approach that preserves protection spaces in neighbouring countries. At the policy level, the main forum for the EU for advocacy and dialogue will be the Core Group of the SSAR Support Platform. Current EU Member States members of the Core Group are Denmark and Germany, and there is significant Member States' interest in participating in the Regional Team Europe Initiative on the Afghan Displacement situation proposed in the Asia-Pacific regional MIP, should it be adopted by the College and subsequently materialise.

In addition to Iran and Pakistan, the Action will include the possibility to support relevant Central Asian countries. Complementarity and synergies will be ensured with ongoing and future actions addressing Afghan displacement situation at the national level, in particular in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. In particular, this action is complementary to a thematic support measure to the SSAR platform.⁹ This Action promotes furthermore the implementation of the external dimension of the EU's New Pact on Migration and Asylum¹⁰ proposed by the European Commission which foresees a strong cooperation with concerned partner countries.

The fluidity of the situation in Afghanistan has a strong impact on regional migration dynamics. The Action design is based on the best available predictions on migration dynamics and the needs of the population. Further adjustments to the Action will have to take place during the contract negotiations, building on the lessons learnt of the current migration and forced displacement portfolio and adapting to the evolution of the situation on the ground in the countries covered. The description of activities is therefore indicative at this stage.

As far as actions implemented in Afghanistan are concerned, this action would not amount to a recognition of the Taliban government. The action will be governed by strict principles governing the delivery of aid. These include that women, girls and minorities should have non-discriminated access to services, that support cannot be channeled through the Taliban (both in Kabul and on the local level) and their affiliates and that the Action maintains strict operational independence, notably on matters of recruitment policy, implementation and management of support mechanisms.

⁹ Contract with UNHCR 2020 / 415-054, implementing the Decision 2019 / 042-104 - AAP 2019 'Lives in Dignity Facility for Refugees'

¹⁰ COM(2020) 609 final of 23.09.2020 - Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a New Pact on Migration and Asylum,

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Context

Afghans are one of the largest protracted forcibly displaced populations in the world. For more than four decades, generations of Afghan refugees have lived in Iran and Pakistan. They have both benefitted from socio-economic support and protection services, as well as endured discrimination, hardship and exclusion. According to UNHCR, there are currently some 1.4 million officially registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan, the second largest refugee hosting country in the world, and 950 000 Afghan refugees officially registered in Iran, the fourth largest refugee hosting country in the world. Central Asian countries, especially Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, have not witnessed a large influx of Afghan refugees. In addition to the refugee population, Pakistan and Iran host large numbers of undocumented Afghans – an estimated 2 million in Iran and more than 1 million in Pakistan – of whom some may also be in need of international protection, even if not individually registered and recognised as refugees by the respective Governments.

In the first half of 2021, the increased violence by the Taliban and the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to a considerable increase in both internal and cross-border displacements: 20 000 to 30 000 persons (including 600 to 700 families, but the large majority individual migrants) have been leaving Afghanistan every week since in June, July and August 2021, most of them to Iran¹¹.

The military victory of the Taliban has fundamentally changed the security, political and economic situation in the country. On the one hand, hostilities between the Afghan National Army and the Taliban have stopped, considerably reducing the pressure on rural communities to flee the violence of military confrontation. On the negative side, the economic situation has deteriorated drastically: foreign aid has come to a halt and public officials report not having received their salaries. Banks face a shortage of cash and foreign currencies. This economic crisis is compounded by the disasters and climate change related events (droughts, floods, pests and diseases). The result is food insecurity, limited access to land, inadequate shelter, limited services including healthcare, education, legal assistance, identification, documentation, and very scarce livelihoods opportunities. All these factors have put pressure on the coping mechanisms of the population, resulting in further displacement as the last option for many. According to OCHA, 18.4 million Afghans are in humanitarian need, and more than a third of the population (14.1 million) is now facing emergency or crisis levels of food insecurity.

As the overall situation and its various components (political, economic and security) remain unpredictable, there is a high probability of large population movements into the neighbouring countries. Anecdotal evidence already suggests that increased numbers of Afghans are crossing the borders to Iran and Pakistan irregularly on a daily basis. Constrained humanitarian access and logistics - especially in remote and conflict-affected locations - are currently hindering more detailed needs assessments, thus preventing verification of the full extent of internal displacement and undermining the provision of assistance within Afghanistan. The prospect for safe and dignified return of Afghan refugees from the region to Afghanistan and their sustainable reintegration in the short- to medium-term is becoming less likely.

Despite the changed security situation, it is likely that Afghan migration dynamics will remain characterised by parallel out- and inflows: Not only is circular labour migration expected to remain a relevant phenomenon, especially in light of a deteriorating economy, but historic precedent also shows that some parts of the population are willing to return to Taliban held areas, if the situation is perceived as stable.

2.2. Problem Analysis

The Afghan context is projected to remain volatile and continue to be influenced by regional political configurations and the active conflict at a given time.

¹¹ Figures from International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

The Governments of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan had previously engaged in extensive dialogue around the issue of refugees through the existing quadripartite and tripartite mechanisms. It is unclear which shape cooperation will take with the Taliban in power. Nevertheless, having hosted millions of Afghan refugees for four decades, Iran and Pakistan are calling for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing and concrete actions. The COVID-19 pandemic and its economic consequences have also exacerbated the situation, with an increased request for more burden-sharing as a consequence.

Iran has been particularly vocal in requesting that the international community contributes to providing support to Afghan refugees in the country. Iran's economy suffers from the negative impact of the US imposed sanctions since 2018 and the COVID-19 pandemic, which are affecting the most vulnerable Afghans and Iranians alike. Despite the challenging geopolitical situation around Iran, the Government has so far adopted and implemented commendable inclusive social protection policies, providing Afghans access to national service structures, in particular in relation to health and education. However, the Government has also significantly increased deportations of undocumented Afghans and engaged in violent measures to halt or push back Afghans at the border. There is also significant social tension between the local population and Afghans, especially among the youth.

In **Pakistan**, the situation for Afghan refugees remains complex despite recent openings introduced by the Government, such as the possibility to open bank accounts and the documentation exercise launched in April 2021. Push and pull factors in Pakistan and Afghanistan respectively are likely to influence the return and mobility trends. As such, the situation remains fluid and actual return figures will not only depend on the solutions component of the strategy in Afghanistan, but also on the protection space and solutions in Pakistan. Forced returns to Afghanistan have occurred in the past, even at large scale, which are combined with complex circular flows, even for registered refugees. The building of the border fence (currently completed at 90%) may change some of the dynamics. In addition, the socio-economic, political, humanitarian, human rights and security situation in Pakistan will remain complex, volatile and unpredictable. Security-focused discourse on the presence of Afghans is often used for political purpose. Maintaining both a development and humanitarian perspective on the issue of refugees will remain a challenge.

Central Asian governments differ in their approach to the developing situation: Uzbekistan closed its borders while Tajikistan declared its willingness to accommodate 100 000 refugees. At the end of 2020, Tajikistan hosted 5 581 refugees and 408 asylum seekers from Afghanistan. These figures are likely to increase and according to UNHCR, there were more than 5 000 Afghan asylum seekers between January and April 2021. Afghan migrants with ethnic linkages to Central Asian countries usually entered the region with tourist and work visas and faced comparatively few obstacles to integrate themselves socially and economically. Lacking additional assistance, a sudden increase in numbers is likely to overburden host communities. Security concerns due to linkages between the Taliban and Islamist insurgents in Central Asia might lead to an increase in border security measures and even border closure, making it impossible for Afghans to access these countries. This might partially explain why Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan have started limiting the number of visas to Afghanistan nationals, with the consulate officials of Uzbekistan confirming that the issuance of tourist visas to Afghan citizens has been suspended.

In **Afghanistan**, the military defeat of the Afghan government has created a situation of political uncertainty. The Taliban have signalled their intention to maintain government functions and engage with the international community. However, lack of foreign funding and government expertise, in addition to an uncertain legal status of the Taliban government, might considerably limit their ability to address many of the country's problems. Internal divisions (e.g. with the Haqqani network) and conflicts with other insurgent groups (Islamic State-Khorasan) might further destabilise the situation. One must therefore expect an end of public sector investments and a strong weakening of service delivery. Unemployment, the lack of development, and minimal private sector investments are expected to contribute to the growth of the illicit economy.

The main interlocutors in Pakistan and Iran are respectively: the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions, including the Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees, the National Database and Registration Authority in Pakistan; and the Bureau of Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs in Iran.

In Afghanistan, it is unclear whether there are potential interlocutors within the Taliban government.

In Tajikistan, the Government department responsible is the Inter-Agency Working Group on Emergency Preparedness and Contingency Planning for Refugee Issues. The main body dealing with any kind of crisis is the Committee for Emergency situation. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Interior is in charge of the refugee camp being built close to the Afghan border.

In Uzbekistan, the responsible interlocutors are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Refugees are by nature of their situation living in some of the most vulnerable situations. Of these groups, women and girls, pregnant or lactating women, unaccompanied minors, people with disabilities and the elderly are especially vulnerable. Women and girls face higher protection risks and require special assistance including appropriate and safe shelter, sanitation and health facilities, protection from gender based violence and enhanced support for participation in decision making, education, skills development and access to opportunities.

The beneficiaries are refugees, asylum-seekers, undocumented Afghans, refugee returnees, undocumented returnees, IDPs and local host communities.

Generally, the stakeholders are:

- National, regional and local authorities;
- Community development structures (Community Development Councils, local Councils (Shuras), informal community groups)
- Development and humanitarian actors (UN agencies, International Financial Institutions, civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1. Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to enable durable solutions for Afghans on the move in Afghanistan and Afghanistan's neighbouring countries.

The Specific(s) Objective(s) (Outcomes) of this action are to

1. Improved access to basic services, increased economic self-reliance and protection for Afghans on the move and vulnerable Afghan population in the region and their host communities, with a focus on women, girls and the most vulnerable.
2. Increased resilience for Afghan returnees, IDPs and vulnerable host communities in Afghanistan through enhanced protection spaces, providing access to gender-responsive health services, education, and livelihood opportunities.

The outputs/results to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objectives (Outcomes) are:

Outputs contributing to SO 1 (Iran, Pakistan, Central Asia)

1. Cooperation among the Governments of refugees hosting countries in the region with regard to documentation and protection of Afghan nationals of all genders and socio-economic situations is promoted and supported. (output 1)
2. Basic services are provided and improved to the Afghan refugee population, undocumented Afghans and host communities. (output 2)
3. Livelihoods opportunities for Afghans on the move and host communities are improved, with a focus on socio-economic recovery activities, with a focus on women and youth. (output 3)
4. Sustainable gender-sensitive protection space for Afghan refugees and other segments of the Afghan population are enhanced. (output 4)

Outputs contributing to SO 2 (Afghanistan)

5. Self-reliance capacities of host-communities are strengthened and social cohesion within communities is fostered. (output 5)

Outputs and activities linked to this Action will be further defined based on the situation on the ground and discussions with the implementing partner(s). Activities will be further specified according to the evolution of situation in Afghanistan and the wider region.

3.2. Indicative Activities¹²

Iran, Pakistan, Central Asia

Activities related to Output 1:

- a. Advocacy with host countries to engage in multi-lateral discussions on a common approach to the Afghan displacement situation based on the respect of human rights, gender equality, international conventions and the protection of vulnerable populations.
- b. Where feasible, engagement with and support to national administrations in the region on strengthening support to documentation and Asylum procedures.
- c. Protection information management and mobility tracking to support evidence based advocacy.

Activities related to Output 2:

- a. Support for community based service-delivery systems targeting both forcibly displaced persons as well as their host/return communities; e.g. actions aiming at increasing access to gender-sensitive health (including mental and reproductive health) and education, comprising investment in host countries national systems where Afghans are included.
- b. Support to information campaigns, i.a. on health related issues (such as hygiene, vaccinations, reproductive health, etc.), the dangers of irregular migration, and education related issues.
- c. Based on needs assessments and lessons learned, provision of material support to Afghan refugees and their host communities.
- d. Gender-specific support to women and girls, including awareness raising on gender-specific issues among service providers, education on reproductive health, and economic empowerment.

Activities related to Output 3 :

- a. Support to community outreach activities women’s organization and civil society organisations to enhance trust and promote social cohesion at local level.

¹² Activities are indicative due to the fluidity of the security situation.

- b. Support for employment opportunities (which include opportunities for self-employment) for refugees, and their host communities, with a focus on women and youth. This includes supporting policy commitments for better regulatory environment for refugee employment, to be underpinned by labour market assessments.¹³
- c. Small grants mechanism for targeted hosting areas for community-driven programming.
- d. Enhanced Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and skills development opportunities to address specific needs of sustainable return, reintegration and socio-economic cohesion.
- e. Supporting economic opportunities for indebted families, to prevent children being sent to neighbouring countries for work.
- f. Support to women to address gender specific economic hurdles, such as access to finance, and financial literacy.

Activities related to Output 4 :

- a. Advocacy towards host governments and communities to provide sustainable settlement options to displaced Afghans in accordance with international humanitarian law.
- b. Information and legal counselling services on aspects related to forced displacement and return such as housing, land, property issues and management of potential debt arising from migration experiences.
- c. Specific support to women and girls to have access to gender appropriate protection spaces and receive gender specific forms of support (e.g. legal counselling).

Afghanistan

Activities related to Output 5:

- a. Support to community outreach activities to enhance trust and promote social cohesion at local level.
- b. Specific support to women and girls to achieve socio-economic reintegration and foster socio-economic independence.
- c. Information and legal counselling services on aspects related to forced displacement and return such as housing, land, property issues and management of potential debt arising from migration experiences.
- d. Support for gender responsive employment opportunities (which include opportunities for self-employment) for IDPs and their host communities.
- e. Small grants mechanism for targeted high return areas for community-driven programming.
- f. Support economic opportunities for indebted families, to prevent children being sent to neighbouring countries for work.

The commitment of the EU's contribution to the Regional Team Europe Initiative on the Afghan Displacement situation proposed in the Asia-Pacific regional MIP, should it be adopted by the College and subsequently materialise, will be complemented by other contributions from Team Europe partners. It is

¹³ Assuming a minimum level of stability in terms of security and opportunities for medium-long term investments, targeting criteria shall entail consideration on both vulnerability and capacity.

subject to the formal confirmation of each respective partners' meaningful contribution as early as possible. In the event that the TEIs and/or these contributions do not materialise the EU action may continue outside a TEI framework.

3.3. Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

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

The SEA screening concluded that no further action was required.

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

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

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

The CRA screening concluded that this action is 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. The current intervention is designed to protect female and male refugees.

The action will address female poverty and contributes to alleviate challenges and pressures on families due to their compulsorily negative coping mechanisms (e.g. child labour, early marriage, labour exploitation, debt, illegal activities, onward migration etc.) and secondary displacement, encompassing all human rights.

In addition, the project will address gender-specific needs through efforts to reach female community members through multiple interventions. Social resilience and awareness raising activities will include fostering dialogue between men and women to foster the agency of both and contribute towards gender equality.

The Action will also address female poverty by ensuring that the proportion of those receiving services and their access to livelihood activities is in line with the proportion of female refugees/IDPs/returnees. The different roles of women and men in community-based interventions, reintegration processes, livelihoods and development programmes are important to recognise, thus ensuring their inclusive and equitable participation in decision-making processes and project implementation. Specific vulnerabilities for women will be addressed, including for pregnant or lactating women, unaccompanied girls, women and girls with disabilities and the elderly women. The higher protection risks and special assistance required for women and girls will be addressed, including appropriate and safe shelter, sanitation and health facilities, protection from gender based violence and enhanced support for participation in decision making, education, skills development and access to opportunities.

Similarly, sex disaggregated data throughout the programme cycle (i.e. baseline and results) will help make clear to what extent the programme benefits women and men according to their needs.

The action will contribute towards the GAP III¹⁴ priorities: “ensuring freedom from gender based violence”; “promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights”; “strengthening economic and social rights and empowering girls and women”; “advancing equal participation and leadership” and “integrating the women, peace and security agenda”.

Human Rights

Given the nature of the action, the protection of human rights and due processes will be an integral part of the activities carried out. Protection of human rights for the different categories of "people on the move" and specifically for vulnerable categories, such as children, unaccompanied minors or disabled persons, will need to be specifically considered.

The action will apply the human rights based approach¹⁵ and its working principles (participation, non-discrimination, accountability and transparency) throughout.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1.

The project in addition focuses on including marginalized groups within returnee and IDP population, as well as within host families in the informal settlements, makeshift camps and per-urban settings.

Democracy

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

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

This action has been informed by the EU’s conflict analysis for Afghanistan. By supporting children, their families and host communities who have been displaced due to conflict and natural disasters, the action contributes to their resilience. It combines short and more long-term support and has been designed as an implementation of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

Disaster Risk Reduction

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

3.4. Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures

¹⁴https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/join-2020-17-final_en.pdf. The Gender Action Plan III was welcomed through [Presidency Conclusions](https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13947-2020-INIT/en/pdf) by 24 Member States (<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13947-2020-INIT/en/pdf>).

¹⁵https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/news/taking-forward-commitment-reducing-inequalities-human-rights-based-approach-toolbox-adopted_en

To the external environment.	Further deterioration in the security situation in Afghanistan resulting in increased internal conflicts causing additional internally displaced persons and possibly refugee outflows.	M	M	Contingency plans put in place by the implementing partner(s) as well as the Inter-Cluster Coordination Team; Enhanced protection monitoring system in place, which can also provide early warning on displacement; Specific needs of women and girls will be assessed and addressed; Identification of community focal points among community members.
To the external environment.	Sudden change in the political dynamics in the region, including e.g. in the bilateral relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan or Iran and the broader region.	H	M	Regular and close dialogue with relevant authorities and various stakeholders in Iran and Pakistan and the broader region, which will include women's groups. Exchange with non-government stakeholders in Afghanistan. Use of tripartite and quadripartite fora (SSAR) to mitigate possible adverse impact on protection space in case of deteriorating political dynamics in the region; Continuous assessments of the political developments with possible impact on protection space for Afghan refugees.
To people and the organisation.	Uncertain political environment combined with insecurity and conflict could limit access of implementing partners to beneficiaries.	H	H	Enabling field access by the implementing partner (s) and its partners by frequent programme criticality assessments; Adhering to the UN security protocol and duty of care for partner staff; Shift towards community acceptance.
To the external environment.	Hosting fatigue negatively affecting the public sentiment towards Afghans in Iran, Central Asia and Pakistan.	H	H	Continued protection-related advocacy/work with the Governments of hosting countries; Communication on the EU efforts in support of hosting countries; Sensitization of various stakeholders, including women, through briefing sessions for print, electronic and broadcast media.
To the external environment.	COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact negatively the entire region for a significant period of time	M	H	The action will encompass prevention and gender-sensitive socio-economic recovery activities.
To legality and regularity aspects.	Dissolution of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA)	M	M	JCPoA is EU's key security interest related to Iran and a base for EU-Iran cooperation. Contingency planning for EU engagement in Iran so that migration actions could be implemented.

Lessons Learnt:

This regional project will take into account insofar as possible the conclusions and recommendations brought forward by the Results Oriented Monitoring Mission of the existing regional project¹⁶ that took place at the end of 2020, which include developing a solid theory of change, developing a regional action plan with country offices, with consolidated timelines and deadlines and well identified activities, better linking the activities to Member State activities, increasing the partnership with humanitarian actors under a common plan and reinforcing cross-border activities.

It also takes account of changes in the context of the evolving situation in the Afghanistan/Pakistan/Iran/Central Asia region.

3.5. The Intervention Logic

The past years of conflict in Afghanistan have led to the acceleration of Afghan displacement inside Afghanistan and into Iran and Pakistan, while continuing to see Afghans crossing the borders back and forth. It is very likely that the coming months will see major movements of population inside and outside Afghanistan due to the military victory of Taliban and overall economic deterioration.

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

Implemented through a whole-of-community approach, that is both rights-based and gender sensitive, the Action will provide support to Afghans on the move, i.e. refugees, IDPs and returnees, through protection as well as economic inclusion and education assistance. By utilising existing structures for service provision the action avoids duplicating efforts and increases implementing efficiency.

The underlying intervention logic, taking into account lessons learnt and progress made since 2016, reflects the fact that a solution to Afghan displacement – even in the short and medium term - can only be accomplished through a regional approach that preserves protection spaces in neighbouring countries, whilst addressing the concerns of the neighbouring countries and supporting their efforts to host Afghan refugees.

The Action aims to address the challenges of irregular migration and forced displacement at different levels through a community driven, need specific approach that focusses on medium and long-term impact. At macro-level, the project activities are geared towards enhancing institutional frameworks and capacity of stakeholders to better address protection issues in the context of migration and forced displacement dynamics. This entails building the capacities of national and local authorities to deliver services and economic opportunities to host communities and the displaced/returnees, which are key elements of responsible migration management and effective public service delivery.

At micro-level, the intervention is designed to build the resilience and self-reliance of IDPs, returnees, and vulnerable women and girls, children, the elderly and people with disabilities on the move – including their host communities, to help beneficiaries to re-establish stable livelihoods and perspectives for the future and increase absorption capacity for returnees in their respective communities, thus fostering social cohesion. Access to gender sensitive services, such as health care and education is crucial, to assure that refugees, IDPs and returnees have a social safety net which allows them to focus their available resources productively on improving their socio-economic situation, not just on surviving.

3.6. Logical Framework Matrix

This indicative logframe constitutes the basis for the monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the intervention¹⁷.

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.

¹⁷ The Government reports, budget and national development plans mentioned in the “Sources of data” below refer to reports issued by recognised partner governments in Afghanistan’s neighbourhood. The action(s) will not refer to reports issued by the current de-facto authorities in Afghanistan.

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

Results	Results chain (e): Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (e): (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	Durable solutions are enabled for Afghans on the move in Afghanistan and Afghanistan's neighbouring countries.	Number of migrants, refugees, IDPs or individuals from host communities protected or assisted with Union support			Project reports Monitoring reports, surveys	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 1	Improved access to basic services increased economic self-reliance and protection for Afghans on the move and vulnerable Afghan population in the region and their host communities, with a focus on the most vulnerable.	% of targeted beneficiaries with access to protection; basic services (health, education); economic opportunities (livelihoods and market access); and documentations through project or provincial and national systems (disaggregated by sex, age, disability)			Government reports, budget and national development plans Project reports Monitoring reports, Surveys Protection monitoring and displacement tracking & analysis	National and local governments in neighbouring countries remain committed to well-managed migration policies, including protection and sustainable (re)integration and inclusion. Political stability in the country maintains project delivery Increased security issues and natural disasters do not divert the attention of national authorities

<p>Outcome 2</p>	<p>Increased resilience for Afghan returnees, IDPs and vulnerable host communities in Afghanistan through enhanced protection spaces, providing access to gender-responsive health services, education, and livelihood opportunities.</p>	<p>% of targeted beneficiaries with access to protection; basic services (health, education); economic opportunities (livelihoods and market access); and legal assistance (documentations) through provincial and national systems (disaggregated by sex, age, disability)</p>			<p>Project reports Monitoring reports, surveys</p>	<p>Political stability in the country allows project delivery Increased security issues and natural disasters do not divert the attention of national authorities</p>
<p>Output 1 related to Outcome 1</p>	<p>Cooperation among the governments of refugee hosting countries in the region with regard to documentation and protection of Afghan nationals of all genders and socio-economic situations is promoted and supported.</p>	<p>% of refugees/beneficiaries who report an improved sense of safety (and acceptance by host community) (disaggregated by sex, age, disability)</p>			<p>Government reports Project reports, Monitoring reports, surveys</p>	<p>Neighbouring governments remain committed to well-managed migration policies, including protection and sustainable (re)integration and inclusion. Political stability in the country maintains project delivery</p>
<p>Output 2 related to Outcome 1</p>	<p>Basic services are provided to the Afghan refugee population, undocumented Afghans and host communities, and further improved.</p>	<p>% of targeted beneficiaries disaggregated by sex, age and disability with access to basic services</p>			<p>Government reports, budget and national development plans Project reports Monitoring reports,</p>	<p>Neighbouring governments remain committed to well-managed migration policies,</p>

					surveys	<p>including protection and sustainable (re)integration and inclusion.</p> <p>Political stability in the country maintains project delivery</p> <p>Increased security issues and natural disasters do not divert the attention of national authorities</p>
<p>Output 3 related to Outcome 1</p>	<p>Livelihoods opportunities for Afghans on the move and host communities are improved, with a focus on socio-economic recovery activities, with a focus on women and youth.</p>	<p>Number of targeted beneficiaries who report increased in training and skills certification; education; and income - attributable to the project – disaggregated by sex, age, disability.</p> <p>Number of families received livelihoods support, disaggregated by the status i.e. IDP, returnee or vulnerable host community (disaggregated by sex, age, disability)</p>			<p>Government reports, budget and national development plans</p> <p>Project reports Monitoring reports, surveys</p>	<p>Neighbouring governments remain committed to well-managed migration policies, including protection and sustainable (re)integration and inclusion.</p> <p>Political stability in the country maintains project delivery</p> <p>Increased security issues and natural disasters do not divert the attention of</p>

						national authorities
Output 4 related to Outcome 1	Sustainable gender-sensitive protection space for Afghan refugees and other segments of the Afghan population are enhanced.	% of targeted beneficiaries with access to protection; basic services (health, education); economic opportunities (livelihoods and market access); and legal assistance (documentations) through provincial and national systems (disaggregated by sex, age, disability)			Government reports Project reports Monitoring reports, surveys	Neighbouring governments remain committed to well-managed migration policies, including protection and sustainable (re)integration and inclusion. Increased security issues and natural disasters do not divert the attention of national authorities
Output 1 related to Outcome 2	Self-reliance capacities of host-communities are strengthened and social cohesion within communities is fostered.	Number of host communities benefitting from activities fostering social cohesion.			Project reports Monitoring reports, surveys	Neighbouring governments remain committed to well-managed migration policies, including protection and sustainable (re)integration and inclusion. Political stability in the country maintains project delivery Increased security issues

							and natural disasters do not divert the attention of national authorities
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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.

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 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 measures¹⁸.

4.3.1. Indirect Management with an international organisation

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

- Pillar assessed
- At least 10 years of experience and a well-established presence in the Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan
- At least 5 years of experience and presence in Central Asia
- A proven, successful track record of engaging in refugee protection measures
- Experience with providing protection and basic services to vulnerable populations
- Experience in assisting host communities and promoting social cohesion
- Experience in engaging different governments on protection issues and coordinating development action with public policy

The implementation by this entity/ies entails achieving the objectives enumerated under 3.1 and implementing the activities enumerated under 3.2.

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

Exception to the non-retroactivity of costs:

Based on Art. 193 (2b) of the Financial Regulation, the Commission authorises that the costs incurred may be recognised as eligible as of 15 August /2021 because of the exceptionally urgent circumstances imposed by the situation in Afghanistan and the risks of further deterioration in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, the implications of which cannot be fully foreseen prior to the adoption of the Decision.

¹⁸ www.sanctionsmap.eu. Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

4.3.2. Changes from indirect to direct management mode due to exceptional circumstances

Change from indirect to direct management mode is foreseen in the event of exceptional circumstances that would render the execution of the current project, or distinguishable parts thereof, impossible.

Grants: (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

The grant would contribute to achieve Special Objectives 1 and 2, and pursue outputs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

Possible applicants for funding are international organisations and NGOs that through their expertise and geographic location can contribute to achieving the above mentioned objectives.

(c) Exception to the non-retroactivity of costs

Based on Art. 193 (2b) of the Financial Regulation, the Commission authorises that the costs incurred may be recognised as eligible as of 15 August 2021 because of the exceptionally urgent circumstances imposed by the situation in Afghanistan and the risks of further deterioration in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, the implications of which cannot be fully foreseen prior to the adoption of the Decision.

4.4. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply subject to the following provisions.

The Commission's authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of services in the markets of the countries or territories concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where application of the eligibility rules would make the realization of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult (Article 28(10) NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

4.5. Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
Indirect management with international organisation(s) - cf. section 4.3.1 ¹⁹	50 000 000
Objective 1: Improved access to health services and education, increased economic self-reliance and enhanced protection space are achieved for Afghan refugees and other segments of Afghan population in the region.	
Objective 2: Increased resilience for Afghan returnees and IDPs in Afghanistan through enhanced protection spaces, providing access to health services, education, and livelihood opportunities.	
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	Covered by another decision
Total	50 000 000

¹⁹ In case of change from indirect to direct management this amount would correspond to the global budgetary envelope for grants
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4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The Project Steering Committee set up to ensure overall coherence and coordination of activities and will oversee the implementation of this action. It will comprise relevant entities, other implementing partners, and the respective EU Delegations. The steering committee will meet at least once per year. The relevant line ministries in Pakistan, Iran and potentially concerned Central Asian countries will also be closely associated to the steering process of the project.

The Commission will work closely with the respective Governments to ensure that the activities are in line with their national priorities 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.

EU Delegations and ECHO offices in the countries where project activities are implemented will be invited to the Steering Committee meetings and informed of project implementation and progress.

4.7. Pre-conditions

There are no pre-conditions to this action.

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(s) 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.

Indicators shall be disaggregated by sex, age and disability at a minimum. All monitoring and reporting shall assess how the action is taking into account the human rights based approach and gender equality.

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

5.2. Evaluation

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

Mid-term evaluation will be carried out for problem solving and learning purposes, in particular with respect to adapting the action to the developing security situation, fostering coherence between the project and national policies, and creating synergies with other implementing partners working in the same space.

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 the action responds to a complex, regional project across an extended geographic area.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner(s) at least two months in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner(s) 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 dissemination²⁰. The implementing partner(s) 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.

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 VISIBILITY 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

Option 1: Action level		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single action	Present action: all contracts in the present action
Option 2: Group of actions level		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of actions	Actions reference (CRIS#/OPSYS#): <Present action> <Other action>
Option 3: Contract level		

²⁰ See best [practice of evaluation dissemination](#)

<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"/>	Single Contract 3	<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) #>