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

**ANNEX 7**

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the action plan for the Resilience Rapid Response Pillar for 2024 – Part 1

**Action Document for Expert Support Platform for Resilience (ESPRE)**

**ANNUAL PLAN**

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and action plans in the sense of Article 24 of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

## 1 SYNOPSIS

### 1.1 Action Summary Table

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>1. Title</b><br><b>CRIS/OPSYS</b><br><b>business reference</b><br><b>Basic Act</b> | Expert Support Platform for Resilience (ESPRE)<br>OPSYS number: ACT-62675<br>Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument ( <u>NDICI-Global Europe</u> ) |
| <b>2. Team Europe Initiative</b>  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not applicable<br><input type="checkbox"/> Supporting (inter alia) TEI   |
| <b>3. Zone benefiting from the action</b>   | The action will be carried out globally  |
| <b>4. Programming document</b>  | Rapid Response Pillar (RRP), Resilience and linking humanitarian and development actions component   |
| <b>5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results</b>                     | N/A  |
| <b>PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION</b>  |  |
| <b>6. Priority Area(s), sectors</b>   | Not applicable   |
| <b>7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>  | Main SDG: SDG 16 (Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies)<br>Other significant SDGs:<br>SDG 1: No poverty<br>SDG 13: Climate action  |
| <b>8 a) DAC code(s)</b>   | 15220 Civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution<br>73010 Immediate post-emergency reconstruction and rehabilitation<br>74020 Multi-hazard response preparedness                   |
| <b>8 b) Main Delivery</b>   | Private sector in provider country - 61000   |

|  |  |                          |                                |                              |                            |
|--|--|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Channel</b>                               |  |                          |                                |                              |                            |
| <b>9. Targets</b>                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Migration<br>X Climate<br>X Social inclusion and Human Development<br>X Gender<br><input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity<br><input type="checkbox"/> Education<br>X Human Rights, Democracy and Governance |                          |                                |                              |                            |
| <b>10. Markers</b><br><b>(from DAC form)</b> | <b>General policy objective @</b>  | <b>Not targeted</b>      | <b>Significant objective</b>   | <b>Principal objective</b>   |                            |
|  | Participation development/good governance  | <input type="checkbox"/> | X                              | <input type="checkbox"/>     |                            |
|  | Aid to environment @   | X                        | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>     |                            |
|  | Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment   | <input type="checkbox"/> | X                              | <input type="checkbox"/>     |                            |
|  | Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health  | X                        | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>     |                            |
|  | Disaster Risk Reduction @  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>       | X                            |                            |
|  | Inclusion of persons with Disabilities @   | X                        | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>     |                            |
|  | Nutrition @  | <input type="checkbox"/> | X                              | <input type="checkbox"/>     |                            |
|  | <b>RIO Convention markers</b>  | <b>Not targeted</b>      | <b>Significant objective</b>   | <b>Principal objective</b>   |                            |
|  | Biological diversity @   | X                        | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>     |                            |
|  | Combat desertification @   | X                        | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>     |                            |
|  | Climate change mitigation @  | X                        | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>     |                            |
|  | Climate change adaptation @  | X                        | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>     |                            |
|  | <b>11. Internal markers and Tags:</b>  | <b>Policy objectives</b> | <b>Not targeted</b>            | <b>Significant objective</b> | <b>Principal objective</b> |
|  |  | Digitalisation @         | X                              | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| digital connectivity                         |  | YES<br>X                 | NO<br><input type="checkbox"/> |                              |                            |
| digital governance                           |  | X                        | <input type="checkbox"/>       |                              |                            |
| digital entrepreneurship                     |  | X                        | <input type="checkbox"/>       |                              |                            |
| digital skills/literacy                      |  | X                        | <input type="checkbox"/>       |                              |                            |
| digital services                             | X  | <input type="checkbox"/> |                                |                              |                            |
| Connectivity @                               | X  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>       |                              |                            |

|                                      |   |                          |                                |                          |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
|                                      | transport   | YES<br>X                 | NO<br><input type="checkbox"/> |                          |
|                                      | people2people   | X                        | <input type="checkbox"/>       |                          |
|                                      | energy  | X                        | <input type="checkbox"/>       |                          |
|                                      | digital connectivity  | X                        | <input type="checkbox"/>       |                          |
|                                      | Migration @   | X                        | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                      | Reduction of Inequalities @   | <input type="checkbox"/> | X                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                      | Covid-19  | X                        | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>BUDGET INFORMATION</b>            |   |                          |                                |                          |
| <b>12. Amounts concerned</b>         | Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020320<br>Total estimated cost for 2024: EUR 2 000 000<br>Total amount of EU budget contribution for 2024: EUR 2 000 000 |                          |                                |                          |
| <b>MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION</b> |   |                          |                                |                          |
| <b>13. Type of financing</b>         | <b>Direct management</b> through: procurement   |                          |                                |                          |
| <b>14. Type of measure</b>           | X Cooperation facility<br><input type="checkbox"/> Measures in favour of Civil Society  |                          |                                |                          |

## 1.2 Summary of the Action

Implementing meaningful actions to build resilience, strengthening the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDP nexus) and ensuring conflict sensitivity require relevant and specific assessments, in-depth analysis and expert know-how. The creation of a dedicated Expert Support Platform for Resilience (ESPRE) is key to ensuring the timely and swift delivery of this thematic support, and complements the expertise and capacities in the EU Delegations and Headquarters.

The ESPRE will be formed by a pool of experts providing methodological and thematic support for (i) the three main components of the HDP nexus, (ii) the six dimensions of fragility (economic, environmental, human, political, security and societal), and (iii) conflict sensitivity in programming. It will enable relevant expertise to be mobilised at short notice using a simple pre-established procedure (hence considerably reducing bureaucratic hurdles). The duration of the assignments will be flexible (from 2 weeks to approximately 6 months) and will depend on the nature and scale of the needs of the EU Delegation, strategic considerations and specific aspects of fragility and its dimensions.

The nature of the specific assignment will depend on the different fragility contexts and will take into account the priorities identified in the MIP/RIP or in specific RRP actions and complementary programmes. In other words, the work of the ESPRE can cover a wide range of different assignments and topics. Despite their different nature, all the assignments share underpinning objectives: reducing fragility, strengthening resilience, ensuring conflict-sensitive programming<sup>1</sup> and sustaining peace.

The action will contribute to SDG 16 'Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

<sup>1</sup> As per the requirements on conflict-sensitive programming in the NDICI-GE Regulations

## 2 RATIONALE

### 2.1 Context

Protracted crises and conflicts are becoming increasingly complex and multilayered. Against this backdrop, the EU and its Member States have set out their external policy framework, ‘The EU Global Strategy’<sup>2</sup>, which includes the strengthening of state and societal resilience as part of its response. Moreover, the EU Integrated Approach to Conflict and Crises recommends more systematic conflict analysis to enable conflict-sensitive approaches to all external action. This is in line with the New EU Consensus on Development, which refers to the need to include conflict-sensitive approaches into development interventions. It also emphasises that poverty, conflict, fragility, and forced displacement are deeply interlinked and must be addressed in a coherent and comprehensive way, also as part of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

In accordance with the EU Global Strategy, the 2017 Joint Communication ‘A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU’s external action’<sup>3</sup> defines resilience as:

- the adaptability of states, societies, communities and individuals to political, economic, environmental, demographic or societal pressures, in order to sustain progress towards national development goals.
- the capacity of a state – in the face of significant pressures – to build, maintain or restore its core functions, and basic social and political cohesion, in a manner that ensures respect for democracy, rule of law, human and fundamental rights and fosters inclusive long-term security and progress;
- the capacity of societies, communities and individuals to manage opportunities and risks in a peaceful and stable manner, and to build, maintain or restore livelihoods in the face of major pressures.

The May 2017 Council Conclusions on Operationalising the Nexus<sup>4</sup> outlined and launched a pilot exercise involving the EEAS and Commission services, as well as the EU Member States.

The NDICI-GE mainstreams resilience and conflict sensitivity in all EU actions in conflicts and in fragile and conflict-affected countries. It also provides an RRP with a specific component that aims to strengthen the resilience of crisis-affected countries. The rapid response actions referred to in this document are designed to effectively strengthen resilience and to increase coordination, coherence and complementarity between humanitarian aid, development actions and, where relevant, peacebuilding. They can address these issues in a conflict-sensitive manner more quickly than geographic and thematic programmes.

### 2.2 Problem Analysis

#### **Short problem analysis:**

To provide swift and efficient support to partner countries recovering from a shock or suffering a protracted crisis or conflict, it is vital to be able to mobilise the right expertise at short notice. The aim of this action is to enable the EU to have at its disposal and to provide rapid, flexible and tailored expertise to help strengthen resilience in partner countries and link humanitarian, development and peace actions in a conflict-sensitive manner.

The activities of the proposed expert facility will help to implement actions under the resilience component of the RRP as well other actions under the MIPs and RIPs implemented in fragile and/or conflict-affected countries and/or countries affected by a shock. The expert facility will step in where the existing resources, technical assistance or support measures are unable to provide sufficient or sufficiently swift specific thematic and

<sup>2</sup> [eugs\\_review\\_web\\_0.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [join\\_2017\\_21\\_f1\\_communication\\_from\\_commission\\_to\\_inst\\_en\\_v7\\_p1\\_916039.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Council conclusions on operationalising the humanitarian-development nexus \(europa.eu\)](#)

methodological expert support.

In other words, the experts will be assigned according to: (i) the needs for support identified by EU Delegations, Headquarters and partner countries and the actions taken under the resilience component of the RRP to address these needs, (ii) actions taken under the MIPs and the RIPs in countries affected by fragility and conflict, and (iii) the overall fragility situation of the beneficiary country.

This action will therefore complement the technical assistance available to EU Delegations at country and Headquarters level. In addition, wherever possible and relevant, this action will create links with other actions implemented by DG ECHO, FPI and the EEAS using an HDP nexus approach.

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

The action mainly involves EU staff in EU Delegations, INTPA Headquarters, ECHO (field offices and headquarters), FPI (Headquarters and regional offices) and the EEAS. Depending on the specific assignment, there can also be other stakeholders, such as EU Member States' representatives in partner countries and their cooperation agencies, other international donors, civil society and (national and local) institutions in partner countries.

### 3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

#### 3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The overall objective of this action is to increase the EU's capacity to strengthen resilience and better link humanitarian, development and peace actions (HDP nexus approach) in a conflict-sensitive way in fragile and conflict-affected countries, and in partner countries affected by a sudden shock that makes the population and/or the State more vulnerable.

The Specific Objectives of this action are to:

1. **Equip EU bodies** across the HDP nexus to better understand and address the main challenges related to reducing fragility and to strengthening resilience, promoting peace and conflict sensitivity, where relevant.
2. **Strengthen the EU's ability** to react swiftly and adapt its actions to shocks or rapid changes in fragile and conflict-affected partner countries, in a conflict-sensitive manner.
3. **Strengthen the EU's role and profile** as a user of the HDP nexus approach with a particular conflict-sensitive focus on resilience and peace in each context.

The outputs to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding specific objectives are:

- 1.1. Contributing to outcome 1 (or specific objective 1) by improving the EU's capacity to analyse resilience, peace and security, conflict sensitivity and the HDP nexus.
- 2.1. Contributing to outcome 2 (or specific objective 2) by deploying short to mid-term expertise (at short notice), including deployment to help identify, design, monitor and/or adapt actions that support the implementation of the HDP nexus, peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity.
- 3.1. Contributing to outcome 3 (or specific objective 3) by improving EU staff's knowledge, awareness and skills in areas related to conflict sensitivity, resilience and peacebuilding, and their ability to work on those topics with those involved.

#### 3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1.1.

- Provide thematic analysis, studies and expert assessments on resilience and conflict sensitivity (also through field research) and by implementing relevant EU tools and guidance.

- Help to draw up the HDP nexus collaborative frameworks in relevant contexts.
- Conduct tailored conflict analysis (on specific thematic areas) to ensure conflict-sensitive programming or to follow up on recommendations from conflict analysis screening processes.

Activities related to Output 2.1.

- Ensure tailored support across the intervention cycle management, including support for policy dialogue (e.g. priorities, indicators, etc.), programming (including joint programming) and identification of sustainable and inclusive actions in contexts affected by dimensions of fragility.
- Inform, from a resilience and peace perspective, results-based project management, monitoring and evaluation and reporting, intervention logic, result chains and indicators, also in the context of Commission's approach to results-based management and implementation of existing guidance.
- Support awareness-raising actions drawing on the recommendations and lessons learnt.

Activities related to Output 3.1.

- Preparation of communication materials (institutional, technical and ad hoc) in relevant thematic or sectoral areas.
- Identification of learning needs for staff and managers in the Commission and the EEAS, and design and delivery of learning materials, courses and events to address them.
- Organisation and/or facilitation of meetings, peer-to-peer events, workshops, thematic or regional seminars, training sessions and other gatherings.

### 3.3 Mainstreaming

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

The 2017 Joint Communication 'A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's external action' highlights that 'climate change, natural hazards and environmental degradation are interlinked and have a far-reaching impact on the resilience of communities and the ecological support systems upon which life depends. They are cause or contributing factors to many conflicts worldwide'. This idea is reflected in the INTPA methodological guidance on resilience analysis and the INTPA Conflict Sensitivity Guidance Notes. The effects of climate change and environmental degradation are also consistently considered in the conflict analysis screening processes. Understanding and operating on the interface between the effects of climate change, natural resources, conflict risks and resilience opportunities is becoming increasingly relevant for the EU's HDP nexus strategies.

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

The action will promote gender mainstreaming and conflict sensitivity in actions related to resilience, security and the HDP nexus. This will be done, for example, by providing gender-responsive conflict analysis, sharing comparative examples and best practices on how to increase women's resilience in fragile contexts, providing training courses on gender and conflict sensitivity and promoting the Women, Peace and Security agenda more broadly and systematically.

#### **Reduction of inequalities**

According to the World Bank, 800 million people currently live in countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence. Poverty rates are 20% higher in countries affected by repeated cycles of violence<sup>5</sup>. By 2030, an estimated 46% of the world's poor will live in areas characterised as fragile or conflict-affected. Strengthening resilience, peace and security in fragile and conflict-affected countries will help to address some of the root causes of poverty and inequality worldwide.

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

Ensuring conflict sensitivity, sustaining peace and resilience and strengthening security are the main objectives of this action. It will take stock of existing guidance and methodologies in these areas and ensure that they are

<sup>5</sup> [Fragility, Conflict and Violence \(worldbank.org\)](https://www.worldbank.org/fragility)

implemented more consistently and systematically.

### Disaster risk reduction

Disaster risk reduction is at the core of the 2017 Joint Communication on A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's external action. This action will aim to make the State, communities and individuals in beneficiary countries better able to absorb and adapt to different shocks and, where possible, even to reduce the likelihood of the same or similar shocks occurring in the future.

## 3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

| Category | Risks   | Likelihood<br>(High/<br>Medium/<br>Low) | Impact<br>(High/<br>Medium/<br>Low) | Mitigating measures  |
|----------|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| External | Evidence from primary sources is scarce and/or institutional partners and NGOs are unwilling to take part in the interviews or other activities needed for the field research.                  | <b>L</b>                                | <b>M</b>                            | When possible and relevant, the EU Delegations will help establish the connections with the relevant interlocutors.  |
| Internal | EU Delegations do not have sufficient human resources and time to train and/or collaborate with experts during their assignments.   | <b>L</b>                                | <b>M</b>                            | The experts will need to show flexibility to adapt the timing and the scope of their assignments to any time and human resources constraints on the targeted EU Delegations. DG INTPA will also consult with the relevant EU Delegations before requesting specific expert assignments.  |
| Internal | It is increasingly difficult to find experts with the required combination of skills and knowledge and to mobilise them at short notice to work on a wide range of subjects and thematic areas. | <b>L</b>                                | <b>H</b>                            | The contractor will be required to set up a pool of pre-identified experts with potentially suitable profiles and be prepared to seek additional experts to provide tailored support measures. In addition, DG INTPA will work closely with the contractor to select the expert(s) for each specific assignment as soon as there is a new request. |
| External | Lack of security, and high levels of instability in targeted countries.   | <b>M</b>                                | <b>M</b>                            | The implementing partner will introduce the necessary security provisions and risk management measures according to the security contexts and the level of threat,   |

|          |  |   |   |   |
|----------|--|---|---|---|
|          |  |   |   | following do-no-harm and conflict-sensitivity principles.                         |
| External | Travel restrictions prevent some field visits from taking place. | M | M | Activities will be adapted as needed, in order to achieve the project objectives. |

#### Lessons Learnt:

Strengthening resilience and conflict-sensitive approaches in fragile and conflict-affected countries, or countries that have recently suffered a sudden shock, requires specific methodologies and close attention to the ‘do-no-harm’ principle and practices. In 2020 DG INTPA developed specific methodological and technical guidance on resilience analysis as well as on conflict sensitivity. Based on different pilot assessments, these experiences demonstrated the need to combine sector-specific expertise and country experience with in-depth knowledge on analytical and methodological tools adapted to the situation in fragile countries and countries recovering from a shock. DG INTPA has produced Guidance Notes on Conflict Sensitivity and has implemented conflict-sensitivity assessments through various framework contracts, as well as being the hub for thematic iterative training courses. Since 2020, DG INTPA and other EU services have also gained substantial experience during the implementation of approximately 60 conflict analysis screenings to support the conflict-sensitivity requirements in the NDICI-GE Regulation. In this way, they are actively working to reduce the risk of doing harm and triggering unintended negative impacts.

In addition, between 2018 and 2022, the EU officially piloted the HDP nexus in several countries. The results of this pilot phase showed the HDP nexus to be a useful way of working in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Therefore, the leadership of the relevant EU services (HR/VP together with the Commissioners for International Partnerships and for Humanitarian Aid) have promoted the widespread implementation of the nexus where relevant. In order to do this more effectively, it is fundamental to build on the lessons learnt from the pilot experiences and other contexts where the nexus is being implemented. These lessons learnt have been systematically collected by policy units in charge of the nexus in the relevant EU services. This has been achieved through overall policy support and regular knowledge exchange opportunities for EU colleagues, discussions with Member States at the Council and with other external bodies, and a study conducted throughout 2022.

### 3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying logic of the action is that:

IF the EU has timely access to expert knowledge on resilience/conflict sensitivity/peace/security/HDP nexus and  
IF the EU staff is better trained to deal with situations of fragility and protracted crisis,  
THEN the EU has greater capacity to deliver effective aid in fragile and conflict-affected countries.  
And THEN partner countries are better equipped to reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen the existing factors of resilience in a conflict-sensitive manner.

### 3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

Given the nature of this action, a logical framework matrix is not required at action level.

## 4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

### 4.1 Financing agreement

To implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the territory.

### 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 40 months from the date the Commission adopts this financing decision.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer in duly justified cases.

### 4.3 Implementation arrangements

The Commission will ensure that the EU rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are followed, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures<sup>6</sup>.

#### 4.3.1 Direct Management (Procurement)

All objectives/results listed in Section 3 will be supported via direct management through contracts for the procurement of services.

### 4.4 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

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 applies, subject to the following provisions.

The Commission's responsible authorising officer may extend the geographical eligibility in urgent cases, cases where services are unavailable in the markets of the countries or territories concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where applying the eligibility rules would make it impossible or exceedingly difficult to carry out this action (Article 28(10) NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

### 4.5 Indicative Budget

| Indicative budget components  | EU contribution<br>(amount in EUR) |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Procurement (direct management) – cf. Section 1                       | 2 000 000                          |
| <b>Evaluation</b> – cf. Section 5.2<br><b>Audit</b> – cf. Section 5.3 | May be covered by another Decision |
| <b>Total</b>  | 2 000 000                          |

<sup>6</sup> [www.sanctionsmap.eu](http://www.sanctionsmap.eu). Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). Where there is a discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website, it is the OJ version that prevails.

## 4.6 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The action is managed by DG INTPA as the contracting authority. To promote links with other actions, other relevant Commission services and the EEAS will be regularly updated.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the EU, the Commission may participate in the above-mentioned structures for governing the implementation of the action and may sign or enter into joint declarations or statements to increase the visibility of the EU and its contribution to this action and to ensure effective coordination.

## 5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

### 5.1 Monitoring and Reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process and is part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this end, the implementing partner must establish a permanent internal, technical, and financial monitoring system for the action and write regular progress reports (at least one per year) and final reports. Every report must provide an accurate account of the implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, and changes made.

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

### 5.2 Evaluation

Owing to the nature of this action, an evaluation will not be carried out for this action.

In case an evaluation is not planned, the Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner.

The evaluation reports may be shared with the partners and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination<sup>7</sup>. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, apply the necessary adjustments.

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

### 5.3 Audit and Verifications

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

## 6 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The 2021-2027 programming cycle has adopted a new approach to strategic communication and public diplomacy activities at country, regional and global level. This means that Action Documents for specific country, regional or global sector programmes are no longer required to include a provision for communication actions promoting the programmes concerned. Regional and global strategic communication activities will not be

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<sup>7</sup> See best [practice of evaluation dissemination](#)

supported via this Action.

Regional and global strategic communication and public diplomacy funds will be managed from headquarters.