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

**ANNEX II**

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

**Action Document for Supporting Civil Society’s Role in Nutrition**

**MEASURE**

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and support measure in the sense of Article 23(1) of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

**1 SYNOPSIS**

**1.1 Action Summary Table**

<b>1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act</b>	Supporting Civil Society’s Role in Nutrition OPSYS number: ACT-62210 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 <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting (inter alia) TEI.
<b>3. Zone benefiting from the action</b>	The action shall be carried out in Nepal
<b>4. Programming document</b>	Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for Nepal 2021-2027
<b>5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results</b>	The action aims to contribute to MIP priority area 2 Specific Objective 1.a: “In line with the National Development Plan, to support inclusive and equitable quality education, to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, and to support quality and equitable nutrition services” and to its result 1.c “Increased access to nutrition services”.
<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 (1 only): 17 (partnerships for the goals) Other significant SDGs (up to 9) and where appropriate, targets: SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) and SDG 16 (strong institutions).
<b>8 a) DAC code(s) )</b>	15112 Decentralisation and support to subnational government (50%) 16050 Multisector aid for basic social services, including 12240 basic nutrition (30%) 43010 Multisector aid (20%)
<b>8 b) Main Delivery Channel</b>	20000 NGOs and Civil Society

<b>9. Targets</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
<b>10. Markers</b>  <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"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	<b>RIO Convention markers</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Biological diversity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>11. Internal markers and Tags:</b>	<b>Policy objectives</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Digitalisation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship digital skills/literacy digital services	YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	/
	Connectivity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	transport people2people energy	YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	/

	digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Migration @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET INFORMATION</b>				
<b>12. Amounts concerned</b>	<p>Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020131 (South and East Asia)</p> <p>The contribution is for an amount of EUR 1 900 000 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2024, subject to the availability of appropriations for the respective financial year following the adoption of the relevant annual budget, or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.</p> <p>Total estimated cost: EUR 1 900 000</p> <p>Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 1 900 000</p>			
<b>MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>				
<b>13. Type of financing</b>	<b>Direct management</b> through: - Grants			
<b>14. Type of measure</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation facility <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Measures in favour of Civil Society			

## 1.2 Summary of the Action

<p>Nepal's Constitution (2015) has enshrined the right to food and the right to basic health care services as a fundamental human right for every citizen. The support measure addresses these rights and is closely aligned with the objectives of Nepal's 15<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan. It also contributes to the EU's priority on nutrition (2013 Communication on Enhancing Maternal and Child Nutrition and the corresponding Action Plan on Nutrition) and it is aligned with the European Consensus on Development, the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, the Gender Action Plan III and the Communication on the roots of Democracy.</p> <p>Nepal has demonstrated considerable advancement in the continued reduction of child stunting and is one of the few least developed countries in the world broadly on track to meet the World Health Assembly (WHA) 2025 stunting target. However, important nutrition inequalities as well as the complex interaction of different forms of malnutrition persist. Wide geographic disparities still exist: in rural areas of Karnali Province almost one in two children under five are stunted, while in Lumbini Province wasting prevalence (16%) routinely exceeds that is typically considered to be the international threshold for emergency intervention.</p> <p>The Scaling-Up Nutrition (SUN) movement strategy 2021-2025 emphasises that actions to improve nutrition cannot achieve lasting success without addressing gender inequalities and human rights in access to power, food and health care. Unequal nutrition outcomes are rooted in deeper inequities. Persistent inequities take considerable effort and time to change. The strategy concludes that the role of CSOs to address the immediate and midterm nutritional consequences of these inequities is vital.</p> <p>This support measure is part of the complementary measures of the MIP, in favour of civil society. It will also contribute to reinforce the nutrition intervention part of the MIP priority 2 area (human capital development) and particularly to its Specific Objective 1 "In line with the National Development Plan, to support inclusive and equitable quality education, to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, and to support quality and equitable nutrition services". It will support the third phase of Nepal's Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan (MSNP-III: 2023 - 2030), which frames nutrition as the foundation of human rights and sustainable development and has as its goal 'to improve nutrition status throughout the life cycle by ensuring universal access to quality nutrition-specific and</p>
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sensitive services<sup>1</sup> and strengthening enabling environment for nutrition' with an explicit focus on the most vulnerable areas and groups. The plan contributes to guiding Nepal towards the achievement of the SDGs (in particular SDG 2 – Zero Hunger, SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being, SDG 5 – Gender Equality, SDG 6 – Clean water and sanitation, SDG 10 – Reduced Inequality and SDG 16 – Strong institutions).

With this support measure, grant(s) will be awarded to CSOs to support advocacy and accountability on equity and inclusion. The complementarity of the different implementing modalities will reinforce the EU policy dialogue at federal, provincial and local level with the support of the technical assistance and in partnership with the CSO.

This support measure will target political dialogue, advocacy and inclusion complementing the budget support intervention, with a focus on supporting transformative approaches to tackle inequalities relating to socio-economic, disability, gender, disadvantaged castes and indigenous communities so as to address the drivers of malnutrition in all its forms. This will be achieved by strengthening the participation of civil society, including women's rights organisations and those representing the rights of people living in vulnerable situations, in advocacy and awareness activities, inclusive and participatory planning processes and accountability mechanisms. The focus will be on inclusiveness of the nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive services and the good governance in the sector, using the comparative advantage of the CSO in supporting the implementation of the new Multi Sector Nutrition Plan (MSNP-III, 2023-2030).

The Overall Objective of this action is to increase the inclusion and effectiveness of the Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan 2023-2030 (MSNP III) and its implementation processes.

Its Specific Objectives of this action are to strengthen civil society engagement (including women's rights organisations and those representing the rights of people living in vulnerable situations) in nutrition planning, policy dialogue and monitoring to end all forms of malnutrition; and to strengthen civil society's role in promoting equitable and inclusive access to nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive services, transparency and accountability in the implementation of the Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan III.

## 2 RATIONALE

### 2.1 Context

Nepal is a Least Developed Country (LDC) located in the Himalayas, endowed with an extremely diverse geography, climate, population and very biodiverse. It is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, ranking 10<sup>th</sup> in terms of climate risk according to the 2021 Global Climate Risk Index.<sup>2</sup> The government of Nepal decided to postpone the graduation from the LDC list till December 2026 – a move that should allow the economy to recover from external shocks, such as the pandemic and the 2022 spike of energy and food prices provoked by the Russian aggression against Ukraine. However, regional disparities continued increasing and could put the sustainability of the graduation at risk. It nevertheless presents an opportunity to tackle the disparities and create an enabling environment for economic growth.

Local elections in May 2022 have put in place mandate holders for the next 5 years. This should lead to more stability during that period, and facilitate partnerships for Development Partners. However following the provincial and federal elections in November 2022, a new government was formed in December 2022 under Prime Minister Dahal, supported by a fragile coalition, imposing several changes in the cabinet of ministers. The consequence of this political instability is a legislative impasse which is considerably slowing down the reform processes. Among the outstanding reforms, the Civil Service Act, the TVET Act and the Education Act, are crucial for EU supported reforms.

Nepal's Constitution (2015) has enshrined the right to food and the right to basic health care services as a fundamental human right for every citizen. The support measure addresses these rights and is closely aligned with the objectives of Nepal's 15<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan. It also contributes to the EU's priority on nutrition (2013 Communication on Enhancing Maternal and Child Nutrition and the corresponding Action Plan on Nutrition) and it is aligned with the European Consensus on Development, the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable

<sup>1</sup> Nutrition specific services address the direct causes of malnutrition and are delivered through the health system, while nutrition sensitive services address the underlying causes and are delivered through other sectors.

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.germanwatch.org/sites/default/files/Global%20Climate%20Risk%20Index%202021\\_2.pdf](https://www.germanwatch.org/sites/default/files/Global%20Climate%20Risk%20Index%202021_2.pdf)

Development Goals, as well as the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, the Gender Action Plan III and the Communication on the roots of Democracy.

The EU remains a solid partner for Nepal for Human Capital Development, which is led with like-minded Development Partners. EU-Nepal cooperation and dialogue has been constructive, and the EU is the largest provider of grant support to the country. In the field of nutrition, the EU has a long history of collaboration with national authorities and has supported the implementation of the MSNP I and II through project-based and budget support approaches which contributed to improve human capital development as indicated by the SDG and Human Development Index (HDI) progress. The EU intends to remain a key actor and partner in this field. The EU-Nepal engagement on nutrition contributes to the MIP priority area 2 (Human Capital Development). It will support the delivery of nutrition services and will contribute to achieving the expected results of the MIP of increased access to inclusive and equitable nutrition services. The plan contributes to guiding Nepal towards the achievement of the SDGs (in particular SDG 2 – Zero Hunger, SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being, SDG 5 – Gender Equality, SDG 6 – Clean water and sanitation, SDG 10 – Reduced Inequality and SDG 16 – strong institutions. Besides contributing to both World Health Assembly and SDG nutrition related targets as well as HDI progress, the support measure will facilitate the federalism reform with strengthening local services provision. Improving the nutritional status of the population will require to tackle the entrenched political, economic and social inequalities that underpin malnutrition, including those relating to income, wealth, gender, caste, ethnicity, age and geographic location. It is seen as a prerequisite to promote sustainable and inclusive growth in Nepal.

The government, with support from the EU (and other partners), has designed and implemented a series of national plans – Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan MSNP-1 (2013-2017) and MSNP-II (2018-2022) - which aimed at addressing malnutrition and which contributed to reducing undernutrition, inequalities, improving governance, and effective/efficient financing mechanisms for nutrition interventions. However, challenges remain in terms of nutrition outcomes and equity, especially for women and marginalised groups. MSNP-III (July 2023 to Jul 2030) has been designed by the government to address these challenges.

The reduced enabling environment for civil society remains a concern, and is being partly addressed with actions from the Civil Society Organisations thematic budget line. The use of support measures is necessary because the government is reluctant to sign a financing agreement with implementation by NGOs. It will complement the main implementing modality of the EU to support MSNP-III, which will be budget support (Sector Reform Performance Contract) to support the sector policy dialogue. Complementary measures comprise technical assistance at federal, provincial and local levels, supporting amongst others, data management, knowledge generation and need based planning capacity.

With this support measure, grant(s) will be awarded to CSO to support advocacy and accountability on equity and inclusion. The complementarity of the different implementing modalities will reinforce the EU policy dialogue at federal, provincial and local level with the support of the technical assistance and in partnership with the CSO.

## 2.2 Problem Analysis

Short problem analysis:

Nepal has demonstrated considerable advancement in the continued reduction of child stunting and is one of the few least developed countries in the world broadly on track to meet the WHA 2025 stunting target. Nepal Ranks 116<sup>th</sup> out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2023 and 113<sup>th</sup> out of 191 countries in the Gender Inequality Index 2021. However, important nutrition inequalities as well as the complex interaction of different forms of malnutrition persist. Women's nutritional status in the country remains poor, being associated with both the order of household eating and dietary diversity<sup>3</sup>.

Wide geographic disparities still exist: in rural areas of Karnali Province almost one in two children under five are stunted, while in Lumbini Province wasting prevalence (16%) routinely exceeds that is typically considered to be the international threshold for emergency intervention<sup>4</sup>. At the same time, there is the steadily growing consumption of relatively low price and convenient but highly processed and unhealthy packaged snack food, resulting in an increase in prevalence of overweight and obesity.

<sup>3</sup> Article “Do changes in women's household status in Nepal improve access to food and nutrition?” (2021)

<sup>4</sup> NDHS 2022. At the same time, it should be emphasised that the majority of stunted children (both moderately and severely stunted) live in other provinces.

The negative developmental, economic, social, and medical impacts of this national triple burden of malnutrition are serious and lasting for individuals and their families, for communities – ultimately threatening to undermine progress towards inclusive and sustainable development.

The Scaling-UP Nutrition (SUN) movement strategy 2021-2025 emphasises that actions to improve nutrition cannot achieve lasting success without addressing gender, socioeconomic inequalities and human rights in access to power, food and health care. Unequal nutrition outcomes are rooted in deeper inequities and structural causes of gender inequality. Persistent inequities take considerable effort and time to change. Therefore, the role of CSO, including women's rights organisations and those representing the rights of people living in vulnerable situations, to address the immediate and midterm nutritional consequences of these inequities is vital. For this, the national SUN Civil Society Networks (including Nepal Network) are committed to hold stakeholders accountable for commitments and actions in support of country priorities and to boost the advocacy capacity of the network, bringing the grassroots and community perspective to national and global decision-makers as duty bearers and prioritising women and those people living in vulnerable situations, as rights holders.

In Nepal, civil society organisations have proven to be stalwarts of gender equality and inclusion, with very granular and nuanced understanding of the cultural and social underlying dynamics at local level that are at the root of unequal development outcomes, including nutrition.

National CSOs have the possibility to raise concerns related to the impact of the policies on women and the marginalised groups' nutritional situation in the country. National CSOs are particularly important when they are representative of women in all their diversity and those people living in vulnerable situations and therefore have stronger legitimacy to talk on their behalf. CSOs can contribute with valuable information and arguments for shaping the nutrition policies in favour of the most vulnerable and marginalised population groups, and following up on these policies locally. CSOs often have closer contacts with communities, and can be the bridge so that their concerns about the access and quality of the nutrition services reach policy makers. CSOs are also well placed to generate data and evidence through data collection (including data disaggregated at least by sex, age and disability) from communities and analysis, research and evaluation activities in their respective communities.

The Nepali civil society can play a key role by offering support, constructive critique and knowledge for the government to ensure good nutrition for all. However, in order to be able to fulfil these roles, the CSOs need to be able to operate and they need to be strong and well-prepared with knowledge on technical topics. The EU's support aims at strengthening the organisations (in particular the women's rights organisations and those representing the rights of people living in vulnerable situations) and enabling them to actively participate with constructive critique, proposals and knowledge in policy discussions on nutrition; fulfil an important social accountability role and advocate for improvements in the delivery of nutrition services, including by testing multidimensional solutions that can be scaled up. With the support, it is expected that the CSOs together can help moving the national nutrition policies closer to reaching the goal of fulfilling the right to food and the right to basic health care services for all, and leaving no one behind.

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

The key stakeholders for this support measure are, as rights holders, the most disadvantaged and vulnerable sections of society experiencing the intersection of multiple inequalities, with special attention to women, adolescent girls and children under five, as well as community-based organisations that represent them (including youth organisations).

The NGO Federation of Nepal is a stable network established in 1991 with a large number of Nepali NGOs. The Association of International NGOs (AIN) is an important network of 118 organisations created in 1996, which has 13 working groups, some of which relate to nutrition (e.g. health, child protection or GESI). As part of the Scaling-Up Nutrition (SUN) movement, a SUN civil society network of organisations working on nutrition is well established (Civil Society Alliance for Nutrition Nepal, CSANN). Other SUN networks include the business network, the donor network and the UN network.

Other stakeholders include: National NGOs and CBOs representing minorities and marginalized groups (Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities, the National Federation of the Disabled Nepal, Nepal Disabled Women Association, Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization and the Feminist Dalit Organization, to name a few); the government of Nepal, as duty bearers, in particular: local and provincial governments, and at federal level, the National Planning Commission (coordination role) and the 6 Ministries directly involved in MSNP

implementation (Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA), Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD), Ministry of Education and Science & Technology (MoEST), Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizen (MoWCSC), and (6) Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (MoWSH). The private sector companies, especially those participating in the food systems, play a key role in term of nutritional quality of food put in the market.

### 3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

#### 3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective of this action is to increase the inclusion and effectiveness of the Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan 2023 - 2030 (MSNP III) and its implementation processes, with a focus on the most vulnerable.

The Specific Objectives of this action are to:

1. Strengthen civil society's engagement, including women's rights organisations and those representing the rights of people living in vulnerable situations, in the nutrition sector including planning, policy dialogue and monitoring to end all forms of malnutrition.
2. Strengthen civil society's role in promoting equitable and inclusive access (gender, disability, socioeconomically marginalised groups) to nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive services, transparency and accountability in the implementation of the Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan III.

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

1.1 Contributing to Specific Objective 1: Improved participation of CSOs, including the women's rights organisations and those representing the rights of people living in vulnerable situations in the implementation, monitoring and accountability of MSNP-III at federal, provincial, and local levels.

2.1 Contributing to Specific Objective 2: Improved CSOs' capacities, in particular those of women's rights organisations and organisations representing groups in vulnerable situations, for advocacy and for designing initiatives to increase the quality and equal access to nutrition services for women, adolescent girls and children under 5, particularly from socially and economically disadvantaged groups, from marginalised groups or people with disabilities.

#### 3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1.1:

- Bi-annual participation to National Nutrition and Food Security Coordination Committee meetings in order to share the lessons learned and best practices and to improve the policy dialogue with the government and other stakeholders ensuring that the voices of all are included in the dialogue.
- CSO support, including women's rights organisations and those representing groups in vulnerable situations, to the provincial governments, local governments and wards in the coordination and implementation of MSNP-III, including emergency and disaster management.
- Improve the capacities of local governments, wards and CBO in good governance, transparency and social accountability.
- Enhance the capacities of local governments to become "nutrition friendly local government".

Activities related to Output 2.1:

- Increase CSO capacities to support screening and early referral of all boys and girls with acute malnutrition.
- Implementation of strategies for bringing nutrition services to the "unreached" ("leave no-one behind").
- Improve CSO capacities, in particular those of women's rights organisations and organisations representing groups in vulnerable situations, to support local governments in implementing an inclusive strategy, promoting social justice, supporting persons with disabilities, addressing the root causes of gender discrimination and gender disparities and promoting multi-sectorial collaboration.

- Capacity building of local CBOs, including those led by women, to improve their role in the nutrition sector.
- Develop operational gender transformative and inclusive research and innovative work to support the implementation of MSNP-III.
- Outreach, information and dissemination campaigns and advocacy to end all forms of malnutrition.

### 3.3 Mainstreaming

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

**Outcomes of the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) screening:** Category C: an EIA is not required.

**Outcome of the CRA (Climate Risk Assessment) screening:** Climate low-risk project: no further action; climate risk aspects will be addressed during the design of the action.

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

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that gender equality is an important and deliberate objective of the programme and mainstreamed throughout the activities of the programme.

Recognising that gender discrimination and social exclusion are major drivers of poverty and malnutrition, gender equality is among the core values that MSNP-III is committed to contribute to. Women's control over decision-making in general, and on health and nutrition related issues in particular is low, and this is worsened by intersecting forms of discrimination. MSNP-III has adopted a gender transformative approach over the gender-sensitive approach undertaken by MSNP-II, as a part of a continuum of gender integration into all aspects of the nutrition programme and policy development, implementation, and evaluation. This approach has been embraced to address the existing gender inequality in accessing and utilizing health and nutrition-related services, challenge harmful gender norms that affect the utilisation of services, promote gender-equitable attitudes and behaviours, and increase women's access to resources and decision-making power.

As highlighted by the detailed EU country level Sector Gender Analysis (2022) these challenges can be considered as root causes and hence prerequisites for ending malnutrition and strengthening the gender responsiveness of sectors beyond a narrow approach that primarily concentrates on improved nutrition services for women in the context of their reproductive roles as mothers<sup>5</sup>.

Therefore, the action contributes to the EU Gender Action Plan III, in particular to the thematic areas “Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women” and “Promoting equal participation and leadership”.

#### **Human Rights**

The Constitution of Nepal has enshrined the right to food and the right to basic health care services as fundamental human rights. MSNP-III explicitly highlights ‘respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights’ as a core value and guiding principle for implementation.

Given that the root causes of malnutrition include multi-dimensional poverty, inequality and discrimination, the proposed action builds on the commitment of the Commission to adopt a human rights-based approach to development cooperation by applying its five working principles from the implementation to the evaluation of the action paying particular attention to ensure that the action: contributes to build the capacities of duty-bearers to fulfil human rights obligations and gender equality commitments; raises awareness of rights holders about their rights and strengthens their capacities to claim them rights (in particular in relation to nutrition and food security); strengthens a meaningful participation and cooperation; incorporates a ‘do no harm’ approach to prevent harmful outcomes; and promotes transparency and equal access to information (including disaggregated data at least by sex, age and disability status).

#### **Disability**

<sup>5</sup> As the study pointed out, unfortunately the situation of ‘men’s indifference to nutrition’ persists and there is a pressing need to sensitise men to engage in and assume co-responsibility for the nutrition agenda

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. This implies that specific attention will be given to the commitment of MSNP-III to support “a disability friendly continuum of care and services”, as part of its promotion of Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI).

Analysis of disability issues impacting nutritional status and norms/root causes of the discriminatory practices, to identify specific social barriers for persons with disabilities will be included in the advocacy intervention to be delivered by the CSO selected for these support measures. Specific interventions should be promoted to address these barriers in implementation and monitoring, leading to progress towards transformative change. Systematic collection of disability disaggregated data is foreseen in the monitoring framework of MSNP-III for all impact indicators and will also have to be integrated in the monitoring framework of the grant(s).

### **Reduction of inequalities**

As per the Inequality Marker, this Action Document has been labelled as an I-2. National data on inequalities in terms of various nutrition outcomes reveals a picture of stark disparities and highlight the entrenched intersection of wealth, gender, education, caste, ethnic and spatial inequalities. CSOs could be asked to generate more disaggregated data at the local levels to drive political commitment and accountability and ensure that marginalised and vulnerable populations are not left behind. At the same time, in the context of Nepal it will be important to promote evidence to demonstrate the advantages of a rights based and inclusive lifecycle approach to tackling inequalities, whereby the risks of exclusion, stigma, high costs and corruption associated with a more rigid poverty or geographically targeted strategy may be avoided.

### **Democracy**

The emphasis of the systems strengthening in the nutrition sector is primarily aimed at the local level to ensure that the democratically elected local governments are enabled to exercise their roles and responsibilities as per their constitutional mandate.

Democratic discourse, engaging with multiple stakeholders from the government, civil society, and private sector transparently and collaboratively, giving all voices a space for the greater good, is also among the core value and guiding principles of MSNP-III.

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

The action will contribute to strengthen the nutritional services at local government level and to reduce disparities between them, contributing to a decrease of the flaring up of political agitation and conflict. Respecting local differences and allowing local governments and communities to make their own informed choices is a guiding principle for the implementation of the plan. This support measure will facilitate conflict-sensitive measures at the local level, ensuring buy-in for outcomes targeting the most deprived in the communities. It is also understood that CSOs could also act in a more culturally sensitive ways, or flag what could be culturally appropriate approaches, while ensuring gender empowerment.

### **Disaster Risk Reduction**

MSNP-III explicitly incorporates enhanced nutrition preparedness and response during emergency as a core component. Strengthening functional capacities of nutrition clusters at provincial level and ensuring that local governments have developed nutrition-sensitive emergency contingency plans are key indicators included in the results framework of the MSNP-III.

## 3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

<b>Category</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)</b>	<b>Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)</b>	<b>Mitigating measures</b>
External environment	Risk 1: Local capacities do not develop as required by the federalisation process, increasing inequalities	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>	Focusing on greater capacity and institutional development efforts for local governments and community involvement.

	between different parts of the country			Local priorities to be taken into account in area selection. Cross-visits to areas performing well.
External environment	Risk 2: restrictive enabling environment for civil society	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	Selection of organisations with successful experiences with local authorities. Formal memorandum of understanding signed by all actors prior implementation. Particular attention will be paid to ensure that women's rights organisations and organisations representing groups in vulnerable situations are fully involved.
External environment	Risk 3: Resource duplication within CSOs	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Medium</b>	Ensure that coordination and reporting systems follow the coordination and M&E mechanisms foreseen in MSNP-III.
External environment	Risk 4: low engagement of rights holders and marginalized communities	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>	Building advocacy skills and ensure meaningful participation of the rights holders in the design, implementation and evaluation of the intervention as well as in the decision-making processes.
External environment	Risk 5: pandemics	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>	Ensure implementation of health and other mitigation measures (building on measures developed during MSNP-II, (such as family MUAC <sup>6</sup> ) for risk reduction; ensure flexibility in planning to cope with potential delays.

**Lessons Learnt:**

There are considerable opportunities for the MSNP-III to continue to benefit from a number of important lessons that have been learnt in the context of the MSNP-II review process, some of which are already acknowledged and reflected in the design of the new plan. These include the following (not exhaustive):

- The need to further strengthen local government ownership of the multi-sectoral nutrition agenda, such that the importance of investments in areas other than infrastructure is better understood;
- The need to enhance the effectiveness of Provincial Government's role as liaison between local and federal levels;
- Data on the nutritional status of vulnerable communities (such as Dalit and Muslim communities) should be more widely available at various levels and generated in the context of a broader initiative to strengthen information management (and including disaggregated data regarding coverage of various interventions);
- The need for greater clarity regarding the role of civil society in the overall governance of the MSNP-III and the added value of such engagement;
- The need to improve the ownership and to strengthen the accountability of the key sectors involved in the implementation of MSNP-III is essential for effective program delivery;
- To achieve better results and improved nutrition outcomes through an integrated approach, convergence and complementarity of efforts across the nutrition actions and activities implemented by the government, development partners and other relevant stakeholders including civil society organizations need to be improved.

<sup>6</sup> Mid-Upper Arm Circumference, an indicator of malnutrition.

### 3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is to support the EU-Nepal partnership. It will enable the EU to reinforce and complement the policy dialogue in the nutrition sector implemented by other modalities (budget support and complementary measures), by supporting the meaningful participation and inclusion of civil society.

This support measure will target political dialogue, advocacy and inclusion complementing the budget support intervention, with a focus on supporting transformative approaches to tackle inequalities relating to socio-economic, disability, gender, disadvantaged castes and indigenous communities so as to address the drivers of malnutrition in all its forms. This will be achieved by strengthening the participation of civil society, including women's rights organisations and organisations representing groups in vulnerable situations, in advocacy and awareness activities, participatory and inclusive planning processes and accountability mechanisms. The focus will be on inclusiveness of the nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive services and the good governance in the sector, using the comparative advantage of the CSO in supporting the implementation of the new Multi Sector Nutrition Plan (MSNP-III, 2023-2030).

CSOs, in their interactions with the different actors of the nutrition sector (government administration as duty bearers, private sector and services providers as well as the rights holders, in particular women, adolescent girls and children under 5) can contribute to improve the planning, transparency and the social accountability processes in the nutrition sector, the equal access to nutrition services for socially and economically disadvantaged persons, from marginalised groups or with disabilities, leaving no one behind, in particular the bottom in most vulnerable situations 40%.

### 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

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the partner country.

### 4.2 Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 5 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 Budget Support – NOT APPLICABLE

### 4.4 Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures<sup>7</sup>.

#### 4.4.1 Direct Management (Grants)

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

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

The grant(s) will contribute to achieve the two specific objectives of the action (see 3.1).

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

The potential applicants for funding will be local or international NGOs or consortia thereof.

<sup>7</sup> [www.sanctionsmap.eu](http://www.sanctionsmap.eu). Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

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

The alternative option to direct management could be indirect management with an entrusted entity, which will be selected by the Commission’s services using the following criteria:

- Internationally recognised expertise and extensive working experience in the nutrition sector as well as experience in the integration of the gender, disability inclusion and right-based approaches;
- Experience in advocacy and policy dialogue in Nepal;
- Managerial capacity, expertise and long-standing experience of at least 3 years in directly designing, implementing and monitoring nutrition interventions and liaising with relevant stakeholders (including government institutions, NGOs, and local communities) in Nepal.

The implementation by this entity entails contribution to the two specific objectives described in section 3.1.

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

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

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

#### 4.6 Indicative Budget

<b>Indicative Budget components</b>	<b>EU contribution (amount in EUR)</b>
<b>Implementation modalities</b> – cf. section 4.3	
<b>Grants</b> – total envelope under section 4.4.1	1 900 000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1 900 000</b>

#### 4.7 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

A separate, tailor-made steering system will be set up for the action in order to ensure the interaction of different actors at federal, provincial and local levels and will include an active and meaningful participation of key stakeholders, including rights holders such as youth, women organizations and organizations representing vulnerable and marginalized groups and will as well provide reasonable accommodation to allow participation of persons with disabilities.

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

## 5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

### 5.1 Monitoring and Reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner’s responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced.

All monitoring and reporting shall assess how the action is considering the principle of gender equality, human rights-based approach and rights of persons with disabilities including inclusion and diversity. Indicators shall be disaggregated at least by income level, sex, area of residence, ethnicity and age, and disability if possible.

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 nature of the action, a final evaluation may be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants. It 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 could include innovative strategies.

Evaluation shall also assess to what extent the action is taking into account the human rights-based approach as well as how it contributes to gender equality and women's empowerment and disability inclusion. Expertise on human rights, disability and gender equality will be ensured in the evaluation teams.

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

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

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

The evaluation plan could assess the distributional impact of activities undertaken on the bottom (poorest) 40% or socio-economically disadvantaged individuals, households or groups. This can be done through an ex-post Distributional Impact Assessment tool (DIA). The DIA analysis looks at the effective targeting of beneficiaries of development interventions, identifying if more than 40 per cent of beneficiaries are at the bottom two quintiles of the income or wealth distribution. It also allows to evaluate whether effective targeting has been done towards women, children and youth or other disadvantaged groups (e.g. ethnic minorities) or at territorial level.

## 5.3 Audit and Verifications

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

# 6 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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

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

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