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

**ANNEX**

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the Annual Action Plan in favour of Belize for 2023 to be financed from the general budget of the Union

**Action Document for “Effective and sustainable management of southern and western part of Belize”**

**ANNUAL PLAN**

This document constitutes the annual work programme within the meaning of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and an action plan within the meaning of Article 23(2) of the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

## 1 SYNOPSIS

### 1.1 Action Summary Table

<b>1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act</b>	Effective and sustainable management of southern and western part of Belize OPSYS number: ACT 62002 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)
<b>2. Team Europe Initiative</b>	No
<b>3. Zone benefiting from the action</b>	The action shall be carried out in Belize.
<b>4. Programming document</b>	Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2021-2027
<b>5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results</b>	The proposed action will cover the two priority areas of the MIP for Belize 2021-2027 “Green growth and sustainable socio-economic development” and “Border Management and Regional integration”
<b>PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION</b>	
<b>6. Priority Area(s), sectors</b>	Priority area 1: “Green growth and sustainable socio-economic development” and priority area 2: “Border Management and Regional integration” Indicative sectors (DAC Codes): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DAC code 150 - Government &amp; Civil Society;</li> <li>• DAC code 311 - agriculture</li> <li>• DAC code 430040 - Rural development</li> <li>• DAC code 330 - Trade Policies and Regulations;</li> <li>• DAC code 410 - Environmental Protection.</li> <li>• DAC code 33120 - Trade facilitation</li> </ul>

<b>7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>	The Action will contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SDG 1 Zero poverty</li> <li>• SDG 2 No hunger, food security, improved nutrition and sustainable agriculture</li> <li>• SDG 5 Gender equality</li> <li>• SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth</li> <li>• SDG 10: Reduce inequality</li> <li>• SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities</li> <li>• SDG 14: Life below water</li> <li>• SDG 15: Protection of terrestrial ecosystems</li> <li>• SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions</li> </ul>			
<b>8 a) DAC code(s)</b>	Indicative sectors (DAC Codes): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DAC code 150 - Government &amp; Civil Society (34%);</li> <li>• DAC code 330 - Trade Policies and Regulations (16%);</li> <li>• DAC code - 410 Environmental Protection (33%).</li> </ul>			
<b>8 b) Main Delivery Channel</b>	Third Country Government (Delegated co-operation) -13000 OAS - 47079			
<b>9. Targets</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Inequality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
<b>10. Markers (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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>RIO Convention markers</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Biological diversity @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>	
	digital connectivity energy transport health education and research	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"/>	/
	Migration @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Reduction of Inequalities @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET INFORMATION</b>				
<b>12. Amounts concerned</b>	Budget line(s) (article, item): BGUE-B2023-14.020141 : EUR 10,300,000 BGUE-B2023-14.020140 : EUR 2,300,000 Total estimated cost: EUR 12,600,000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 12,600,000			
<b>MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>				
<b>13. Type of financing</b>	<b>Direct management</b> through: - Grant <b>Indirect management</b> with the entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.4.3			

## 1.2 Summary of the Action

Belize's natural ecosystems are degrading at an alarming rate due to overfishing, uncontrolled wildlife trafficking and natural habitat destruction. In its new Medium-Term Development Strategy 2022-2026<sup>1</sup>, the Government decided to prioritise investment and economic activities in rural communities through a green growth model (striking a balance between economic growth and the protection of the natural resources), in particular for the South (poorest and most vulnerable part of the country). In this context, the planning of interventions in the forested areas along the border must involve local communities, seeking a balance between biodiversity conservation and the promotion of income-generating activities in a complex landscape (encompassing protected areas and communal lands owned by indigenous people).

Furthermore, the long-term claim of Belizean territory by Guatemala that affects around 50% of the country's terrestrial and maritime territories, has negatively impacted relations between the two countries and has prevented the development on Belize's western and southern borders. Both countries voted to settle the issue at the International Court of Justice (ruling is expected in 2025). The resolution of the territorial dispute is bound to strengthen confidence in expanding socio-economic activity, opening new economic and trade opportunities. A border managed by effective and accountable institutions able to provide security, and trade benefits, and a local development planning with the local populations are essential for creating the foundations for sustainable growth and economic development.

The **overall objective** of the Action is to reduce inequality and enhance the sustainable management of the southern and western regions of Belize. The two **specific objectives** are (1) promoting inclusive development, with particular regard to women, youth and indigenous people, based on a green growth model and a territorial approach (shared responsibility across levels of government) and (2) increasing border management, security and trade facilitation capacities at land and maritime borders.

To achieve the **specific objective 1**, the Action will (1) promote participatory local development planning involving women and youth, (2) facilitate the adoption of sustainable practices in the agriculture sector to preserve forests and marine ecosystems and accelerate the development of local value chains, and (3) create a farming and business mentorship programme that assists community members.

Under **specific objective 2**, the action contributes to stability and sustainable development of Belize and regional economic integration. It will strengthen the capacity of government institutions responsible for integrated border control planning and management, environmental protection along the border and trade facilitation. It will also support the continuity of the Organisation of American States (OAS) peace-building mission in the Adjacency zone of Belize and Guatemala and promote the dialogue between both countries including operational cross-border cooperation.

Overall, the two combined components will be mutually reinforcing and improve the management of the southern and border areas, reducing inequalities, creating an enabling environment for infrastructure investments and economic development, for opening up trade with Guatemala and for protecting the rich biodiversity of the area.

The scope and content of the action is in line with the European Union's Global Gateway strategy, inasmuch as it fosters Belize's economic growth in a sustainable fashion, supporting the creation of an enabling environment for larger infrastructure investments. The activities of the **Global Gateway Investment Agenda for Belize** (on digital, access to credit for small businesses and small infrastructure for communities) necessitate the regularisation of the border area and correct land development planning; for this reason, interventions in the two Priority Areas of the MIP 2021-27 for Belize intend to lay the foundation for investments in areas that are relevant for the Government of Belize.

## 2 RATIONALE

### 2.1 Context

With a population of 441,714 inhabitants at the end of 2022,<sup>2</sup> Belize has the lowest population density in Central America and about half of the population is under 25-years-old and resides in rural areas. The Belizean population

<sup>1</sup> MTDS 2022-2026. Available at: <https://edc.gov.bz/elibrary/record/view?id=25>

<sup>2</sup> Data from the Statistical Institute of Belize, 2022.

is a mix of diverse origins composed of Mestizos (majority), Krioles (25%), Mayans (11%) and Garifuna (6%), and about 4% of the population are German-speaking Mennonites.

Belize's social structure is marked by persistent inequalities: **women** face barriers to socio-economic empowerment and are the main victims of gender-based violence (GBV). **Poverty and gender** intersect and affect individuals' conditions in education, health, community life, and family life. There is chronic **intergenerational poverty**, reinforced by the low levels of literacy and skills, and the lack of access to land and to social services. Toledo district has the highest number of children living in poverty at 72% in 2018.<sup>3</sup> It also has the lowest labour force participation rate (39%) in the country. Although more women are obtaining secondary or higher level education, this is not translating into lower unemployment or higher positions for women in the labour force.

The Government of Belize (led by the People's United Party) has managed to significantly decrease the country's public debt. In 2021, the economy rebounded by 15% and for 2022, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had estimated a growth of real GDP of 11.4%, with unemployment figures to continue decreasing to 5%<sup>4</sup>. In early 2023, the debt situation has again significantly improved (64% debt to GDP ratio<sup>5</sup>) further to the signing of a debt-for-nature swap with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) referred to in short as "blue bond" (debt restructuring for marine conservation<sup>6</sup>) coupled with fiscal discipline measures.

Belize is party to several treaties such as the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM) and the European Union (EU). A preliminary trade agreement signed with neighbouring Mexico in 2022 is seen as a major achievement by the Government, as it will allow (at least temporarily) exporting its agricultural products, mostly cattle, free of tariffs and other cooperation agreements were also concluded for tourism, training and education in agro-silvopastoral production systems. Belize also has an ongoing negotiation on the Partial Scope Agreement with Guatemala which needs to be reactivated.

The Government under its Plan Belize 2030 and its Medium-Term Development Strategy 2022-2026, aims to boost private sector investments, seeking a more robust economic regional integration particularly with its neighbour countries, and to diversify and expand production and export. To this end, it is relaxing regulations and promoting investment in agriculture, industry and tourism, while at the same time protecting natural resources. This offers new economic prospects to the region along the border with Guatemala and in particular to the Toledo District in southern Belize, which historically has been the most underserved district with limited private sector development, poor access to finance and where the poorest share of the population resides.

Belize forest covers 70% of the territory and its barrier reef is the third largest in the world. Belize is part of the Meso-American Biodiversity hotspots. The remaining primary rainforests (notably the Selva Maya and the Chiquibul Forests) on the Guatemalan border, remain important biodiversity hotspots and strongholds for irreplaceable and endangered species (such as jaguar, tapir, scarlet macaws) that are under threat due to illegal cattle ranching, agriculture development and poaching, which are exacerbated by uncontrolled intrusions at the porous border of populations from Guatemala<sup>7</sup>. In its new Medium Term Development Strategy (2022), the Government has decided to engage the country in a process of transformational change to increase investment and economic activities in rural communities through a green growth model, in particular for the south. In this context, any rural transformation interventions in the forested areas along the border should be carefully planned with the communities, seeking a balance between biodiversity conservation and local livelihoods in a complex landscape encompassing protected areas and communal lands owned by indigenous people and managed under ancient customary practices, and linking income generation to forest conservation and sustainable management of natural resources.

The border security and regional integration are priorities for the Government. The long-term territorial claim of Belizean territory by Guatemala has negatively impacted relations between the two countries and held back the development of the south and of Belize's border regions. Guatemala maintains a claim on around 50% of Belize's territory and did not recognise Belize as a different sovereign and independent state until 1991. In 2008, it was agreed to refer the territorial issue to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), subject to positive outcomes in referenda. The

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Data is based on IMF estimates provided in February 2023. Consolidated figures for 2022 will be published at the end of 2023.

<sup>5</sup> IMF February 2023 ART IV mission.

<sup>6</sup> IMF News, 2022, 4 May). *Belize: Swapping Debt for Nature*. Available at : <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2022/05/03/CF-Belize-swapping-debt-for-nature>

<sup>7</sup> WCS estimated that between 2000 and 2015 the forest areas have reduced by 23%.

decision was confirmed by referenda in both countries in 2019 and the case was lodged before the ICJ, where a ruling is expected in 2025.

With the installation of the Belize-Guatemala Joint Commission, dialogue and relationship between both countries have been strengthened.

Belize' constitution recognizes the role of civil society as pivotal in the country's pursuit of development, which is reflected in CSO representation in the Senate. The majority of CSOs are engaged in service delivery, some with specific mandates targeting vulnerable groups in the south. In February 2023, the EU launched the development of an EU Roadmap for engagement with Civil Society in Belize, which will further inform the development of EU interventions.

There is no EU Member State in Belize which reduces opportunities to develop and implement a Team Europe approach in Belize. On the other hand, the prospective cooperation with the European Investment Bank in the context of the MIP 2021-2027 opens up new horizons.

## 2.2 Problem Analysis

The southern region of Belize encompassing the Toledo and Stann Creek districts, where the proposed programme will be implemented, is considered underdeveloped but with a high potential to develop sustainable agriculture, ecotourism, agroforestry and other forest-based and non-timber-based products, and to participate in trade expansion with Guatemala and other Central American Countries. The local populations are mainly Mayan and Garifuna indigenous peoples which constitute 17.4% of Belize's overall population and are among the poorest in the country. The socio-economic situation of these communities is precarious due to unemployment and lack of access to basic services like roads, education, health, water, sanitation, and electricity. The geographic dispersion of the small communities, the topography and land coverage as well as the distances are the main obstacles for the costly investments that are required to reach the population.

Access to land in the Toledo district is governed by customary land rights. Following the response to the recognition<sup>8</sup> of Maya customary land tenure in the entire Toledo district by the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), in January 2021 the Government created for the first time an Office of the Commissioner for Indigenous People's Affairs under the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples Affairs, that in 2022 started the application of a recently developed national Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) Protocol which now imposes a consultation procedure to all projects to be established within the Indigenous communities in the south, in order to obtain consent for the same. This requirement extends to development projects funded by donors. Overall, progress in the implementation of the protocol consultations and in obtaining consent of the indigenous populations remain slow due the lack of capacities from all parties involved.

Agriculture, which is the mainstay of local populations, has a low productivity due the lack of development planning, weak administration support and advisory services and due to the absence of financial services. Local communities encounter difficulties to access the market and food value chains. Linkages to tourism, the green economy, climate-smart options, business development, access to financing and credit, access to water are relevant issues, especially for indigenous groups, women and youth. Addressing these challenges will require strengthening mandates, structures, and services of public institutions, the civil society, establishing an inclusive process for Local Development Planning.

In relation to gender equality, access to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities including access to business mentorship and financing remain an issue in the districts targeted by the Action. 80% of the people employed in the service sector are women, but a high percentage work in the informal economy<sup>9</sup>. The development and provision of incentives to encourage women's entry into the green economy and the circular economy is necessary to promote and achieve equal opportunities. Due to the absence of data available **it is foreseen to undertake a sector specific gender analysis for both components** of the Action at the inception of the related interventions.

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<sup>8</sup> 2015 CCJ Ruling

<sup>9</sup> Statistical Yearbook 2022 edition. Department of economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division.

The prolonged territorial dispute between Belize and Guatemala has produced years of bilateral tensions, eroding mutual trust that hindered the potential of cross-border cooperation. The lack of clear delimitation along the border with Guatemala has prevented effective border control and resulted in lacking the environmental protection, planning of infrastructure and weak overall socio-economic development of these areas, in particular of southern Belize.

Belize's natural ecosystem is particularly rich and diverse along the border. The natural habitat of endangered wildlife is under threat due to uncontrolled agriculture development and illegal cattle ranching, exacerbated by uncontrolled intrusions of individuals from Guatemala exploiting natural resources and carrying out other illegal activities with an increase of smuggling and drug farming. The southern region and border has far weaker state administration presence and resources, more limited border control capacities and border control infrastructure than the rest of the country. This situation prevents the public services from carrying out effective community development planning for better service delivery, and properly administering the land use and the sustainable use of natural resources, to promote economic activities, to regulate migration, and to formalise trade.

For the Southern region of Belize, the regularisation of the border would end decades of economic and societal stagnation, complicated further by lawlessness and insecurity caused by trans-border threats pouring over. The resolution of the territorial dispute is bound to strengthen confidence in expanding socio-economic activity, opening new economic and trade opportunities. A border managed by effective and accountable institutions able to provide security, and trade benefits accompanied by local development planning with the local populations are essential for creating the foundations for sustainable growth and economic development.

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

The **Ministry of Economic Development** and the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** are key stakeholders for coordination of and communication with Belize national institutions involved in this Action.

The key stakeholders associated to the activities for **Green Growth and socio-economic development priorities** for the south will be the **central Government and Agencies**: Ministry of Rural transformation (MRT), Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Blue economy, Ministry of Sustainable Development Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, the National Women's Commission, the Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs under the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs, Forestry Department. **Beltraide** will be an important interlocutor as the main agency for assisting the development of MSMEs.

**Local producers' groups, women and youth organizations, indigenous representative organizations and other local CSOs** including disability organisations will play an important role in the consultation process and implementation of territorial and local development planning, in service delivery, to ensure full inclusion of all populations including young people, persons living with disabilities, women, and indigenous groups. The programme will develop a gender-sensitive local development approach and gender inclusive financing. CSOs with expertise in local planning with communities, sustainable agriculture and forest conservation will have a key role in the programme, as well as local CSOs promoting human rights in Belize, gender equality and women's empowerment. Furthermore, CSOs will be involved in order to ensure inclusiveness, transparency and accountability in the delivery of the government agenda and commitments to relevant policies and across the EU funded programme.

Access to additional financial resources for financing small infrastructures and access to credit will be leveraged through the partnership and complementarity with other **IFIs**.

The main government institutions that are key stakeholders for the **Integrated Border Management priority** and related conservation and trade facilitation activities proposed under the action:

The **Belize-Guatemala Joint Commission** plays a central role in improving bilateral relations in the forefront of resolving the border dispute and producing concrete progress for the inhabitants of both countries, particularly in the border regions. To operationalise the mandate of the Joint Commission, the **Belize National Commission for Regional Integration, Border Management and Security** is being created for concrete actions of promoting cross border trade, designing efficient border management and contributing to migration control.

Other government agencies related to Integrated Border Management in this Action include:

- **Customs and Excise Department** reports to the Minister of Finance. Collect duties and taxes on imported foreign goods and process legitimate goods in a facilitated manner. In addition to operating control posts, the Customs also participate in patrols and surveillance of the green border to deter the smuggling of goods, often in inter-operable teams with other border agencies.
- **Immigration Department** reports to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Overall responsibility of managing in and out flows of persons travelling to Belize. Responsibility for facilitated processing of low-risk bona fide travellers, and for maintaining robust measures to combat and apprehend unlawful attempts to cross the border, such as undocumented migrants, document fraud or migration-related crime as migrant smuggling or trafficking in women and children.
- **Belize Border Management Agency** who reports to the Minister of Tourism. The function is to operate and manage the border stations at Belize's three official sea and land border crossings and collect the border management fees charged to non-residents who visit Belize.
- **Forest Department** reports to the Ministry of Sustainable Development. It plays a key role in environmental protection in border areas. It prevents and combats illicit trans-border trafficking of endangered species, in line with CITES international obligations. Enforces laws and regulations in the protected areas along the border. Roving mobile teams in the border areas, individually or in joint teams with other Integrated Border Management (IBM) agencies.
- **Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA)** regulates and inspects the imports, exports and transit of plants, animals, and food products and by-products.
- **Belize Defence Force (BDF)** provides support to mobile inter-agency border surveillance teams when necessary.
- **Belize Police Department** plays a key role in mobile patrols in the border area to prevent and combat trans-border threats.

CSOs with specialized expertise in human rights, protection and gender equality, will be associated under the integrated border management priority in activities related to human rights training and education, among others. Furthermore, CSOs will be associated to ensure monitoring and compliance with international human rights standards in border operations by all border and security agencies concerned and overall accountability in the implementation of the EU funded programme.

The **Organization of American States (OAS)** has been playing an active role in dispute resolution, conflict prevention, and peace building in the Adjacency Zone (AZ).

### 3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

#### 3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective of this action is to:

Reduce inequality and enhance the sustainable management of the southern and western regions of Belize.

The Specific Objectives of this action are:

1. A coordinated and inclusive development, in particular with regards to women, youth, and indigenous people is promoted based on a green model and a territorial approach;
2. Border management capacities, security and facilitation are increased at land and maritime borders

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

- 1.1 An inclusive, rights-based gender responsive local development planning and land use is developed and implemented.
- 1.2 Community based gender and indigenous responsive landscape/seascape preservation is planned and developed.
- 1.3 Community Development facilitation and local skills are developed.
- 2.1 Effective Integrated Border Management (IBM) governance and inter-agency cooperation strengthened.
- 2.2 Enhanced regulatory framework and procedures for commercial and regional integration.
- 2.3 Strengthened confidence and relations between Belize and Guatemala maintaining peace in the Adjacency Zone.



## 3.2 Indicative Activities

### **Activities relating to Output 1.1**

1. Establishing an integrated community-based planning mechanism through the creation of Local Action Groups
2. Training and enhancement of capacities of Line Ministries (MRT & MED, Office of the Commissioner on Indigenous Peoples' Affairs) for Local Development Planning
3. Training and enhancement of capacities of local CSO in Community Led Local Development (CLLD) planning.

### **Activities relating to Output 1.2**

1. Design Community Led Local landscape/seascape preservation and development Plans in pilot geographical areas.
2. Design of Small infrastructure projects in support of Community Local Development Planning
3. Development of local added-value chain/Market Support Development.

### **Activities relating to output 1.3**

1. Capacity building of agricultural and community field agents, including gender mainstreaming.
2. Technical/business network/platforms for local community and credit union operators.
3. Establishment of local Public-Private Partnerships using Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) aiming at win-win cooperation with local communities.

### **Activities relating to Output 2.1**

1. Establish a whole-of-government Integrated Border Management Coordination Structure and provide technical expertise.
2. Develop a National Strategy on Integrated Border Management in Belize, to provide strategic direction for the work of the Integrated Border Management Coordination Structure.
3. Capacity building (workshops, site visits) on Integrated Border Management and inter-agency confidence-building events (to support the above activities), including visit to other country to show good practices.
4. Technical advisory to strengthen the Belize National Commission for Regional Integration, Border Management and Security mandate.
5. Preparation of capacity building of government agencies for future boundary delimitation and demarcation.
6. Establish effective in-house training capabilities and develop trainers' resources and curricula for interdisciplinary human rights based and gender-sensitive training for identified priorities in the areas of border management, such as mainstreaming gender in border management, human rights and indigenous rights at borders and in relevant protected and forested areas, counter migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons, alternatives to detention in the context of migration, community engagement and policing, awareness of indigenous peoples' rights (including land rights) and data management and analysis.
7. Promote a gender-equality approach in the personnel policy of border agencies.
8. Provide equipment (radio communications, means of transport, etc.) to agencies at border control posts and patrol teams to enhance their operational capacity and to prevent and combat trans-border threats.
9. Formalise inter-agency cooperation and coordination between relevant institutions for joint activities concluding Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) and developing Standard Operating Procedures for inter-agency patrol and enforcement teams.
10. Updating the Border Management Information System (MIDAS) at all border crossing points, conducting refresher trainings for users, developing a Standard Operating Procedures and maintenance plan at border crossing points.
11. Developing and updating sustainable management plans for conservation and protected areas. Provide equipment and capacity building for the management of those areas in the southwest border zone, inclusive of Forest Rangers.

### **Activities relating to Output 2.2:**

1. Support informed policy making through feasibility studies for enhancing trade facilitation in priority areas.
2. Develop and streamline a regulatory framework conducive to enhancing trade facilitation and future implementation of the Single Trade Window.
3. Provide hardware and inspection equipment, e.g., for the implementation of the electronic phytosanitary certificate system for the Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA) and for the Risk-based Sanitary and Phytosanitary Import and Export Control System for Belize.
4. Develop studies to identify main infrastructure constraints to trade facilitation and causes of cargo bottlenecks at the Western Border Control Post, and develop a technical plan for implementing remedies to trade facilitation, including design for infrastructure of customs and quarantine inspection area for cargo.

**Activities relating to Output 2.3:**

1. In the Adjacency Zone Belize Guatemala, strengthen cross-border cooperation and coordination and technical consultations between border institutions, support the verification process of incidents in the Adjacency zone. Continue the peace building process between both countries currently facilitated and coordinated by OAS.
2. Perform monitoring, investigations and verifications of incidents in the Adjacency Zone and mitigate potential conflicts.
3. Develop specific measures, mechanisms or processes aimed at preventing or resolving conflictive issues.

### 3.3 Mainstreaming

#### Environmental Protection & Climate Change

##### Outcomes of the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) screening

The EIA (Environment Impact Assessment) screening classified the action as Category B (not requiring an EIA, but for which environment aspects will be addressed during design).

##### Outcome of the CRA (Climate Risk Assessment) screening

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

As per OECD DAC codes, this Action is labelled as 410, implying that **General Environment Protection** is a major purpose. This Action directly contributes to environmental efforts to protect conservation of forest and marine areas in the South of Belize. Through its focus on green territorial development, the action will plan interventions within buffer zones of protected areas (marine and terrestrial) and will contribute to preserve the flora and fauna contributing to Belize's international biodiversity commitments<sup>10</sup>. It will also support the capacity building of government institutions, border control and security agencies and NGO/CSOs for enforcing environmental legislation and preventing violations in the conservation areas. Improvement of border control management would also have positive impacts on the fight against environment-related illegal trafficking (e.g., wildlife trafficking and illegal movements of waste and chemicals, including pesticides).

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**Climate change** is not identified as a significant component in this Action, even though Southern Belize will inevitably face major climate changes by 2060. The Action will be focused on mobilizing communities and individuals within these communities to implement a series of agro-ecological farming practices (including agro-forestry, layered permaculture farming and integrated farming) aimed at conserving soils and water and gradually improving soil fertility. This will contribute to help rural communities to adapt and improve their overall climate resilience. When designing or investing in new value adding processes or rural infrastructures, design criteria will need to take into account the likely natural hazards associated with the disaster prone profile of the country and expected increased rainfall and temperatures.

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

As per the OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that Gender equality is a significant objective. The Action is aligned with the EU's Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Relations 2020–2025 (GAP III) and the Country Level Implementation Plan of the Gender Action Plan, the National Gender Policy of Belize, the National Gender Based Violence Action Plan.

It will promote gender equality, women and girls' human rights and participation through gender mainstreaming into the planning, assessment, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of all activities. The action will establish a suitable foundation for mainstreaming gender equality in the future, training both women and men, old and young. It will support programme beneficiaries in combating all forms of discrimination. **A sectoral gender analysis will be implemented for each of the two components of the Action at the inception of the respective interventions to gather precise baseline data, stakeholder analysis, inform the design and ensure the interventions adopts a "do not harm approach," including the definition of appropriate gender responsive targets and indicators.**

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<sup>10</sup> Belize has committed to have 30 % of its territory (land and marine) under protected areas by 2030.

The evaluation and monitoring framework of the action will consider gender-disaggregated indicators. Furthermore, the activities will integrate a gender perspective that will be coherent with the EU Gender Action Plan III.

Project activities with a particular gender dimension focus on promoting women economic empowerment, including to grasp green and digital opportunities, particularly: (i) community based skills development activities will promote girls' and women's participation both in the young farmers output and for the community-based facilitators, involving women more in leadership, community governance and decision-making processes; (ii) direct involvement of women networks and groups during Local Development Planning and implementation, with women and youth being part of the Local Action Groups; promotion of women run/managed/based green income generating activities, enhancing women's entrepreneurship; and (iv) gender-sensitive curricula will be developed and delivered for Integrated Border Management inter-agency training, and developing Standard Operation Protocols for joint patrol teams. Gender mainstreaming in border operations will be enhanced through training of border personnel on vulnerability identification, gender and human rights considering border dynamics. Furthermore, focal points for gender-related issues and awareness raising will be introduced at the level of the border and security agencies at border crossing points. In the design of the IBM intervention, consultations with local women, men and youth to improve understanding of their gendered security concerns will be undertaken.

Beneficiary identification and targeting for the components on green growth and socio-economic development of the south will target particularly women-led businesses and MSMEs employing women. Involvement of local civil society organisations with special technical expertise on gender will be ensured in the design of the future projects that will be developed under this Action in collaboration with the EU implementing partners. The action will promote participatory methods at community level and the mainstreaming of women's and indigenous rights, involving the active participation of local and feminist Civil Society Organisations, in order to protect biodiversity and respect Mayan ancestral domain and customary land tenure of other indigenous groups (including landscape/cultural preservation).

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## **Human Rights**

The implementation of both components of the Action is aligned with the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 and the Human Rights and Democracy Country Strategy and upholds a human rights based approach.

With respect to the first specific objective of the Action, Local Development Planning involving the communities of Indigenous people, any decision-making process requires a high degree of intercultural community participation, avoiding any perception of benefitting the members of one village or community over the other. To avoid risks of intra- and inter-community conflicts in the distribution of the benefits of the project, it is necessary to conduct stakeholder consultations from the design stage and during the implementation of the project to ensure the inclusion of local government representation at the village level, such as but not limited to the leaders under the Alcalde System as well as a balanced and broad representation of women, youth, persons living with disability and other groups to ensure inclusion and equal opportunities and benefits for all under the project. Subsequently, once these communities have been identified, it is important to carry out an internal process to determine the specific family/association/cooperative beneficiaries by consensus. Political affinity is always perceived as a risk factor on the part of community members; however, the project can mitigate this risk by following the broad community participatory process, consulting with the village leaders (Alcaldes), with Commissioner of Indigenous People's Affairs under the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs and ensuring proper implementation of the FPIC principles, protocol and process. It is suggested that the consultations promote and ensure the participation and voice of women, including more vulnerable groups such as widows, single women, the elderly and young women, LGBTI persons and persons with disabilities.

The second specific objective of the Action strengthens good governance in border management and regional integration, including the promotion of the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The project will promote and advocate for professionalisation of border management in line with best EU practices, thus building an increasingly service-oriented and accountable administration based on professional and ethical standards with respect to human rights. Effective and accountable border management and customs controls allow better compliance with human rights standards, notably protection of victims of trafficking and other crimes, migrants, as well as other vulnerable and at risk groups.

In the design of the future projects that will be developed under this Action in collaboration with the EU implementing partners, partnership with local civil society organizations with special technical expertise on human rights mainstreaming will be assured.

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## Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0. This implies that the action is not considered relevant for inclusion of persons with disabilities. However, given the hard economic and discriminatory disadvantages faced by people with disabilities, they will have a high level of priority in the selection of project beneficiaries, and the project will take care to ensure to gather data on the needs of persons with disabilities and that their specific needs are not overlooked. In Belize, it is estimated that 60,000 persons live with a disability (15%) which tends to be much higher than the global average of 2-4%. People with disability are largely invisible in the country based on a culture of fear, shame, stigma and discrimination. This vulnerable population therefore stays at home and are hidden in their communities; they do not attend schools, and predominantly do not access health services. Limited information on this demographic therefore provides little knowledge on the gender distribution of the grouping and while government policies on the group have been developed, implementation has been most sustained by non-state actors and civil society groups.

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## Reduction of inequalities

The last comprehensive poverty assessment in Belize estimated the poverty rate at 55% of the population in the Toledo district<sup>11</sup>. However there is a significant **difference in poverty levels across different ethnic groups**, with the study estimating the poverty rate for the indigenous Maya population at 68%, which is significantly higher than other ethnic groups, followed by the Garifuna who account for 39% of the poor population. As the majority of the population in the main intervention areas are indigenous Mayan and Garifuna communities that suffer from social and political exclusion and high degrees of poverty, the intervention targets the inclusion of these groups into the Belizean society and contributes directly to poverty reduction utilizing a rights based approach.

The main economic sectors in South Belize are tourism and agriculture and they provide jobs to the majority of people residing in rural areas. **Rural poverty** is still high due to a low productivity of farms generating few surplus, little income and few economic spin off. The main issues identified are the lack of financial inclusion of rural populations, the absence of extension services and access to markets and technologies to take full advantage of the availability of land. In the Mayan communities, women access to land is also further constrained by the prevailing social norms.

Private banks are hesitant to provide affordable finance to farmers owing to a lack of legal status and civil registration, lack of credit histories, high price volatility of the agricultural products, uninsured natural or pest hazards, and the lack of secure property rights. Furthermore, many indigenous people may not hold birth certificates or social security cards, the latter being a requirement to access credit/loan opportunities. Banks and credit unions are therefore demanding for collateral and interest beyond what smallholders can afford, while farmers are generally unwilling to take out loans unless they are able to manage the risks associated with these. Only 6% of adults in Belize reported accessing credit for starting, operating, or expanding a farm or business. The Plan Belize Women's Agenda calls for creating a credit window within existing government lending institutions so that women can access credit that is of low interest and requires limited collateral.

Similarly the agriculture advisory services are constrained. There is not an agriculture learning system that is integrated into formal education; farmers have to upgrade their skills in agriculture through a insufficiently staffed network of agricultural extension services. Those services (Ministry of Agriculture) are not integrated with other existing supports (NGOs, private sector organizations and international organizations training programs).

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<sup>11</sup> UNDP 2021

Ensuring full inclusion of young people including those with disabilities and bridging the digital gap in underserved areas will be key to reducing inequalities. Accordingly, the development of the Action has considered key national policies including the National Youth Policy of Belize and the Belize National Digital Agenda 2022-2025.

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## Democracy

Through its activities the Action promotes good governance and democracy in the areas related to regional cooperation, border management and prevention of cross-border threats as well as participatory democracy and decentralisation through the Local Development Planning at the level of the communities. In addition to strengthening the effectiveness of border institutions, the Action also promotes the accountability of government agencies through the monitoring role of NGOs.

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## Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

A conflict sensitivity approach will be mainstreamed throughout the programme. The action directly contributes to the mitigation and resolution of the Belize-Guatemala border dispute. It builds the capabilities of border control agencies and cross-border dialogue in a dispute-sensitive manner to minimise risks and prevent escalation of conflict while the International Court of Justice ruling is pending. The action also strengthens the government's capacity for post-ruling border delimitation and demarcation, key steps in consolidating bilateral relations and implementing the court ruling in practice. The action will continue to support the OAS intervention for Peace monitoring at the Adjacency Zone with Guatemala. Lastly, the action will contribute to appeasing existing tensions between the Government institutions and the Mayan communities through a better participatory consultative process of Local Development Planning and the integration and implementation of the FPIC protocols in the action.

The action will also support greater resilience of the local communities through economic development and environmental protection.

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**Disaster Risk Reduction** is not identified as a significant component in this Action; even though Southern Belize faces regular natural disasters such as hurricanes, flash floods and landslides. The Action will be focused on ensuring that disaster risk management is part of the Local Development Planning process and that design criteria enable floods to be mitigated and soil is conserved through erosion prevention measures, hedges and sustainable land use methods. Land use plans will seek to protect forest covers and to minimise the use of lands prone to natural risks, applying natural hazard sensitive planning. Measures will be taken to encourage agroforestry and sustainable agricultural practices (notably varieties tolerant to floods). The programme will promote hurricane proofed technical specifications for infrastructure.

## 3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigation measures
<b><u>External environment</u></b>	Extreme weather events may impact the programme through the destruction of crops or infrastructures.	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	The programme will design local development and land use plans which seek to protect forests cover and minimize the utilization of land prone to natural risks. Measures will be taken to encourage agroforestry, reforestation and sustainable agricultural practices (use of varieties tolerant to floods, drought, soil conservation techniques). The programme will promote hurricane proofed technical specifications for infrastructures.

	Deterioration of Belize-Guatemala diplomatic relations. The Adjacency Zone is a political, social and economic volatile area. An incident occurring at the site by any of the two parties could trigger a chain reaction and paralyze the work of the Joint Commission.	M	H	The continuing peace-building process supported by the OAS which this action will contribute to sustaining is a vital factor for the trust-building relationship between both countries. The support to the Belize Commission on Border Management will contribute to mitigate the potential impact on the Joint Commission work.
	The weak public administration and the low level of decentralisation could hinder the process of identifying and implementing local development.	H	H	A specific EU support measure to the MRT, and MED is designed to strengthen their capacities in coordinating and monitoring the EU programme together with line agencies. A Programme Estimate is financed in parallel to this programme under the EU Support Measures to complement this action.
<b><u>Planning, processes &amp; systems</u></b>	The institutions involved in Integrated Border Management have a wide range of uneven capabilities.	H	M	Project activities (capacity building and provision of equipment) will focus on the main capacity gaps in order to make their capacity more uniform for the purpose of increased coordination and interoperability.
	The sensitivity of land and indigenous rights is associated with any development intervention in Southern Belize where indigenous communities make up the majority of the social fabric.	H	H	Capacity of key personnel across relevant line Ministries involved in the programme (rural transformation, agriculture, among others) will be built to ensure the proper implementation of FPIC consultations with local communities. Communication and transparency have to be ensured with the Government and all stakeholders involved. Local Development Planning will be adapted to the local context taking into account the specificities of indigenous communities and their governance mechanisms and will ensure an upstream consultation with Communities and avoid conflicts. Conflict sensitivity approaches will be incorporated as appropriate, not least in relation to potential land and land-use conflicts.
	Women are prevented from participating equally in green economy for multiple reasons, including harmful social and cultural stereotypes and norms about women and masculinity, harmful gender norms, inadequate legal frameworks and protection mechanisms, low access to education and land ownership rights and practices. The risk is related to persons with disabilities.	M	M	The Community based skills development activities will promote women's participation and the Local Development Activities will empower women to participate in leadership and community governance. During Local development planning and implementation, women groups and networks will be part of the consulted groups, enhancing women's participation in decision-making, planning and access to economic, livelihood, training and credit opportunities. Disability CSOs will be consulted in design and implementation.
	Existing NGO/CSOs operating in the targeted region are overstretched.	M	M	NGO/CSOs capacity will be strengthened through close coordination frameworks, clear MoUs and funding mechanisms; and a common technical platform for NGO/CSOs and Credit Unions. An existing project under the Civil Society Thematic Programme which began in April 2023 helps promote improved CSO coordination

### Assumptions

- There is a continuous commitment from the key stakeholders of Belize to the project objectives, including sharing information, harmonising procedures, making relevant policy and regulatory changes and working together.
- There is a large acceptance of community groups of the national FPIC protocol to ensure smooth roll out and planning of the FPIC process. Furthermore this is adequately fine-tuned to local land/seascape conditions.
- The Belize government will expand the role of an existing project management unit within the MED to ensure the overall coordination through the MRT of the programme whilst embedding its close interactions with the other on going funded rural development Programmes - IFAD, IDB and WB programmes.
- Sufficient numbers of relevant staff will be mobilized for the various programme activities and coordinated whilst still working in their institutions for sufficient time so that the skills and knowledge obtained will be properly applied and transferred to colleagues.
- All commercial and infrastructures type of activities as identified by the programme will be funded through loans or specific small grants from on-going rural/agricultural/natural resources funds.
- The ICJ ruling expected in 2025 will be widely accepted by all stakeholders it affects in both countries and will trigger the full transformational potential of the EU support to border management, regional integration & facilitation.
- The Government of Belize is willing to create a whole-of-government Integrated Border Management and coordination structure.
- The political-diplomatic process involving Belize and Guatemala progresses and OAS continues maintaining close relations with both governments.
- The linkage between the regional programme “Five Great Forests of Mesoamerica” and the action is coordinated effectively.
- The Government continues to seek means to pursue regional integration with its Central American neighbour countries.

### Lessons Learnt

Outcome One – is built on the lessons learnt from the various previous EU funded interventions in Southern Belize (EDF 11, Belize Rural Development Programme, and Banana Accompanying Measures) and the lessons from other IFAD and IDB programmes in the agricultural/rural sector:

- Flexibility is important: donors and implementing agencies must ensure that projects can be easily adapted to changing political circumstances and situations on the ground. They must be able to revise objectives and methodologies as the community-based Local Action Groups, Local Action Programmes and Value Chain based initiatives evolve over time.
- Investments and support to poor and remote areas where the presence of the Government is not fully accepted or is contested (in relation to land ownership by indigenous people and cultural sensitivities) takes time and must first successfully build up trust and understanding before engaging in consistent interventions that can contribute to bridging the development gap and catch-up with the rest of the country.
- Indigenous People are often not properly considered in the development process as their governance mechanisms, way of understanding and reaction are different. They are usually very dedicated to implement their choices although they cannot compete under modern ways of making business. Their wishes are often neglected. The Local Development Planning is a way to improve their involvement, but it needs also to be a learning path for the IP communities to maintain and develop their indigenous ways of cooperating and coming together.
- A Government that is not able to deliver services to the population promotes lack of social cohesion, insecurity and radicalisation. Co-management type interventions with CSOs are essential to local led development.
- The gender perspective is a key and complex element when embedded in a traditional patriarchal gender system, where gender roles are often traditionally projected and accepted. Mainstreaming a human rights based approach, gender equality and non-discrimination is key. Addressing the gender divide but also transgenerational issues between young and old is essential.

<sup>12</sup> NDICI CSO/2023/442-840 Strengthening civil society participation in democracy through effective, inclusive, good governance reform and oversight.

- Finally, there is a need to increase the visibility of Southern Belize by facilitating a cultural awakening, a cultural awareness and pride through sharing local experiences and traditional knowledge and maximising opportunities for jointly working with other communities and partners within the Region.

Outcome Two - is built on the lessons learnt from 2019 EU supported peace-building measures in the Adjacency Zone implemented through the Organisation of American States and Civil Society Organisations.

- Informal inter-agency cooperation in border management exists in Belize up to some extent in practice, without any regulatory and administrative foundations. The application of the various aspects of Integrated Border Management (IBM) often remains limited and inconsistent. Most forms of co-operation are often seen as “pilot modes” rather than institutionalised practices. A comprehensive government coordination structure and IBM strategy are essential.
- Targeting assistance to different law enforcement agencies proved an effective tool in facilitating trade and curbing border security threats (smuggling, trafficking in human beings, controlling food safety and countering public health threats, etc.). However, a more inclusive approach by partner institutions in line with IBM principles needs to be promoted, notably in the fight against trans-border threats.
- In Belize many transactions such as trade, employment or crossing the border are “grey” and informal. In this context, modern and digitised tools may be failing not because of lack of technology or know-how, but rather public reluctance to use digital tools that create verifiable records which some day may be used to tax their activities.

### 3.5 The Intervention Logic

The proposed action will support the economic and social development of the Southern part of the country along the Adjacency Zone with Guatemala on the basis of a green growth model and in line with the commercial drivers (agriculture and tourism), with the EU Green Deal priority, the EU Council Conclusions on Indigenous peoples<sup>13</sup>, the EU’s Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in External Relations 2020–2025 (GAP III)<sup>14</sup>, the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024<sup>15</sup> and the Youth Action Plan in EU external action 2022-2027<sup>16</sup>.

**Outcome 1** of the action will improve the socio-economic situation of the communities in Southern Belize thanks to local development planning, the adoption of sustainable practices in the agriculture sector, and the development of local value chains with short market systems. Provided the roll out of the FPIC process is smooth, the development of local development plans, community-based preservation plans and the facilitation of local skills can result in the realisation of the specific objective (promotion of a coordinated and inclusive development).

- The **process of consultation and planning** will contribute to empower local indigenous communities and uphold land rights. It will involve the indigenous Maya communities, the coastal Garifuna communities and the local migrant communities. It will support national institutions, the local Government Unit, Alcalde and local communities to design participatory Local Action Plans with the assistance of CSOs whereby historic, cultural and unique landscape or sea scape management will be promoted. It will entail land use planning in the medium term, will plan the need for small infrastructure investment for better service delivery, the development of economic activities within the communities and will set rules for preservation, restoration of natural resources.
- Further, the intervention will support the **mapping of local value chains** focusing on specific lead crops (cardamom, coconut for water and VCO, cocoa, turmeric, seaweed, etc.) or in local tourist related value chains (non-timber forest products (NTFP), Mayan handicrafts, etc.). It will contribute to the identification of micro projects.
- The **business mentorship programme** will assist community members, in particular women and youth, to develop farming/forestry management best practices and to develop entrepreneurial skills and expand access to

<sup>13</sup> Conseil of the European Union (2015, 15 May). *EU Council Conclusions on Indigenous peoples*. Available at: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8814-2017-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>14</sup> European Commission (2020, 25 November). *EU Gender Action Plan (Gap) III – An Ambitious Agenda For Gender Equality And Women’s Empowerment In Eu External Action*. Available at: [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-01/join-2020-17-final\\_en.pdf](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-01/join-2020-17-final_en.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> European Commission (2020, 25 March). *EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024*. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=JOIN:2020:5:FIN>

<sup>16</sup> European Commission (2022, 4 October). *Joint Communication - Youth Action Plan in EU external action 2022 – 2027*. Available at: [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/document/fe1bcd30-58da-4a37-ab2a-61848789da60\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/document/fe1bcd30-58da-4a37-ab2a-61848789da60_en)



financing opportunities in the targeted region. The intervention will be designed with a minimum of possible environmental impact.

**Outcome 2** of the Action contributes to stability and sustainable development of Belize and regional economic integration. It will strengthen the capacity of government institutions responsible for border control management, environmental protection and trade facilitation.

The creation of an **Integrated Border Management coordination mechanism**, and the **development of strategy for commercial and regional integration**, will result in enhanced border management security and capacities. It will also support the work of the to-be-established Belize National Commission for Regional Integration, Border Management and Security in tasks under its mandate, including mapping out the capacities of government agencies for the future border delimitation and demarcation, contributing to the normalisation of relations with neighbouring countries.

At operational level, the action will strengthen the regulatory and operational capacity of border control agencies to prevent and combat trans-border threats at border crossing points and through inter-agency patrol teams along the western and southern borders. Activities comprise both capacity building through training in priority areas as well as the provision of equipment. The intervention will include providing equipment and training for the management of conservation and protected areas in the border zone, including training for Forest Rangers and developing and updating management plans. The activities will complement the EU regional Five Great Forests of Mesoamerica intervention<sup>17</sup>.

Strengthening cross-border cooperation in border controls (and protecting conservation areas) is a key dimension of the Integrated Border Management framework. Action under this Annual Action Programme will **strengthen regular cross-border policy and technical consultations between border institutions under the ongoing OAS Confidence building measure programme in the Adjacency Zone (currently managed by FPI and to be continued under this Action)**<sup>18</sup>. It foresees activities that will take place to succeed the FPI-led action in the Adjacency Zone.

The action will also **strengthen policies and the regulatory framework for regional integration and trade facilitation**. The support on Trade Facilitation and Regional Integration reinforces the strengthened capacities at the border. It will also promote informed policy-making based on feasibility studies on different topics as regional and trade policies with focus on Guatemala and other Central American states, and trade and market intelligence infrastructure for penetrating the Secretaria de Integracion Economica Centroamericana (SIECA), Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Mexican markets.

There are important steps that can be undertaken only after the International Court of Justice ruling such as border delimitation, demarcation, and establishing a control and surveillance system along the green border.

As supporting measure, the Civil Society will be mobilised under the two priorities of the Programme. Under the envisaged indirect management proposed for implementation by international organisations, strategic partnerships will be devised and sub-grants envisaged with civil society organizations to achieve the action's outcomes, involving wherever possible local CSOs having specialized technical expertise in the specific areas of intervention and crosscutting issues. Furthermore civil society will have an important expertise function that may be associated and include – but not limited to – empowerment of women and young people, promotion of Human Rights, facilitation of the consultation with indigenous people, FPIC training, gender sensitive trainings for security forces, Productive Organization for Women in Action, actions for conservation, community development and natural resource management.

### 3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

This indicative logframe constitutes the basis for the monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the intervention. On the basis of this logframe matrix, a more detailed logframe (or several) may be developed at contracting stage. In case baselines and targets are not available for the action, they should be informed for each indicator at

<sup>17</sup> Five Great Forests of Mesoamerica (OPSYS ACT-61449) is a EU regional initiative aiming at protecting the 5 remaining primary forests in Central America (Budget EUR 25.5 million).

<sup>18</sup> LA/2018/402-905 and NDICI CRISIS FPI/2023/442-462 “Support to confidence building measures and mediation between Belize and Guatemala”.

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.

Results	Results chain (@): Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (@): (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baseline s (values and years)	Targets 2027	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	Reduce inequality and enhance the sustainable management of the southern and western regions of Belize.	1. Proportion of population of southern Belize below the international poverty line (** GERF 1.23 1.1, SDG 1.1.1) Data disaggregated by gender, age and social/ethnic identity.	55% in 2021, 68 % for Mayan and 39 % for Garifuna	38 %	UN Common Country Analysis	<i>Not applicable</i>
		2. Percentage of monetary increase of commercial flows from Belize to neighbouring countries.	0%	15%	Ministry of Finance	
Outcome 1	A coordinated and inclusive development, in particular with regards to women,youth, and indigenous people is promoted based on a green model and a territorial approach.	Level of satisfaction in the development process and the preservation of its resources for the project locations (scoring method from 1 to 10). Level of satisfaction of women and youth. Data disaggregated by gender, age and social/ethnic identity.	Baseline survey at the beginning	8 (score)	Baseline and end of project survey	Key stakeholders' commitment and acceptance of community groups. Management unit will interact closely with MRT and Indigenous people's commission to ensure planning FPIC procedures are fine-tuned to local land/seascape conditions
Output 1.1	An inclusive, rights-based gender responsive local development planning and land use is developed and implemented	1. specific gender analysis for the priority area. (** GAP III 5.2.)  A specific gender responsive Community Led Local Development (CLLD) framework and funding mechanism is established in Southern Belize	None  None	1  1	Annual Progress reports from MRT	Sufficient staff mobilized and coordinated whilst still working in their institutions
		3. Community development facilitators identified, trained and mentored % women, youth in Local Action Plans	10	100 of which 50 women and 30 youth		
		4. An effective and integrated Geographic Information System district/community based data/map system is operational	0	1		
Output 1.2	Community based gender and indigenous responsive landscape/seascape preservation	1. Local Communities' Action Groups (LAG) operational and supported – incl. % women, % youth participating in LAGs	none	40  50% women,	Annual Progress reports from MRT	All commercial and infrastructures type of activities will be funded through loans or specific small grants from on-going

	is planned and developed			30% youth participating in LAGs		rural/agricultural/natural resources funds after the programme has facilitated the design and submission of ad-hoc grant/loan applications.
		2. Number of Local Land/Seascape driven Development/Action Plans (LAP) implemented (including FPIC procedure )	none	10		
		3. Number of Households that have adopted climate resilience and agro-ecological farming practices	none	500		
		4 Number of beneficiaries with access to financial services with EU support: (a) firms, (b) people (all financial services), (c) people (digital financial services) disaggregated at least by sex  ( **GERF 2.17 and GAP III)	none	500 Households  50% of women and 30 % youth		
		5. Number of local Value Chain (VC) maps	none	6		
<b>Output 1.3</b>	Community Development facilitation and local skills are developed with gender mainstreaming	1. Young farmers receive specific farm based training and mentoring – incl.% women	none	400 young farmers  30% women	Annual Progress reports from MRT	
		2. Number of communities that have implemented Farmers Field School, % women	none	10, 50 % women		
		3. Technical platforms are set up around local credit unions.	None	2		
		4. % women and youth participation in these platforms	None	50 % women and 30 % youth		
<b>Outcome 2 (Specific objective)</b>	2. Border management capacities, security and facilitation are increased at land and maritime borders.	2.1 Number of state institutions and non-state actors supported on security, border management, countering violent extremism, conflict prevention, protection of civilian population and	0	5 institutions (Customs, Migration, BAHA, Border		The ICJ ruling expected in 2025 will trigger the full transformational potential of the EU support to border management, regional integration & trade? facilitation.

		human rights (**GERF 2.23)		Management Agency, Police)		
		2.2 Number of processes related to partner country practices on trade, investment and business, which have been influenced (GERF 2.15)	0	2		
<b>Output 2.1</b>	Effective Integrated Border Management governance and inter-agency cooperation strengthened.	2.1.1. Conduct a sector specific gender analysis for the priority area. (** GAP III 5.2.)	None	1		The Government of Belize creates a whole-of-government Integrated Border Management Coordination Structure, with the Belize National Commission for Regional Integration, Border Management and Security.
		2.1.2 Integrated Border Management strategy including aspects of environmental protection, security, migration, gender sensitivity and mainstreaming.	No strategy	IBM strategy developed and adopted by the government	Adopted strategy, working documents	
		2.1.3 A national IBM border management coordination mechanism established	No border management coordination mechanism exists	A border management coordination mechanism created and functioning	Government documents on establishing the coordination mechanism, minutes of meetings	Border agencies provide sufficient staff for trainings and workshops and follow a gender responsive capacity building strategy for their staff, including the application of the new skills and its transfer to colleagues.
		2.1.4 Status of delivered trainings to staff (women, men) of border agencies considering professional and ethical standards with respect to human rights, gender, and treatment of migrants.	No curricula for training on border management	Curricula/trainers resources for training on border management developed	Training curricula; numbers of male and female officers and institutions trained, gender responsive training plans and reports	
		2.1.5 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) including Standard Operating Procedures for inter-agency patrol and enforcement teams in implementation.	No MoU	Two MoUs on inter-agency operations by 2024	MoUs concluded, lists of joint patrol operations; Operative and periodic reports/statistics of border authorities.	
		2.1.6 Frequency of joint cross-border actions and technical meetings	Only ad hoc	Structured regular bilateral	OAS- and IOM-supported reports	

		between border institutions of Belize and Guatemala.		cross-border meetings between main border agencies		maintaining close relations with both governments.
		2.1.7 Number of updated management plans for conservation areas at the western border.	0	4	Updated management plans provided by the 5 great forests programme and stakeholders involved	The linkage between the regional programme “Five great forests” and the action is coordinated effectively.
<b>Output 2.2</b>	Enhanced the regulatory framework and procedures for commercial and regional integration.	2.2.1 Number of sectoral, bilateral and regional feasibility studies for enhancing trade facilitation and regional integration developed.	No relevant studies exist to inform policy making on trade and regional integration	Three studies developed	Studies, consultation reports	The Government continues to seek for regional integration with its Central America neighbour countries.
		2.2.2 Duration of selected procedures supported by the action at border checkpoints.	Time to be determined of selected procedures	25% less than determined time	Reports, measurement	
<b>Output 2.3</b>	Strengthened confidence and relations between Belize and Guatemala maintaining peace in the Adjacency Zone.	2.3.1 No. of carried out verifications per year	Yearly average 2020/2021: 40	40	Reports	The political-diplomatic process progresses and OAS continues maintaining close relations with both governments.
		2.3.2 Frequency of joint cross-border actions and technical meetings between border institutions of Belize and Guatemala.	Not regular	Structured regular bilateral cross-border meetings between main border agencies	Reports	

## 4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

### 4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with Belize.

### 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 **48 months** from the date of entry into force of the financing agreement. Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer in duly justified cases.

### 4.3 Implementation of the Budget Support Component

n/a

### 4.4 Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures<sup>19</sup>.

#### 4.4.1 Direct Management (Grants)

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

**(a) Purpose of the grant:** To continue the peace building mission in the Adjacency zone and contribute to interinstitutional coordination and joint operations of border agencies of Belize and Guatemala (Output 2.3).

**(b) Justification of a direct grant (Article 195.C (FR)):** Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to the Organisation of American States (OAS)<sup>20</sup>.

#### 4.4.2 Direct Management (Procurement)

Procurement will be used for audit and final evaluation. Procurement with private entities (service and works) may be used in case indirect management as identified under 4.4.3 with entrusted entities fails.

#### 4.4.3 Indirect Management with an entrusted entity

A part of this action, outcome 1 may be achieved through implementation in indirect management with an entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria: (i) being familiar with the context of the intervention (Belize, Indigenous People, Rural/agriculture development) (ii) having in country operational capacity and (iii) being Pillar Assessed. The implementation by this entity entails the achievement of outputs 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3.

A part of this action, the Integrated Border Management component as part of specific objective 2 (Output 2.1), may be implemented in indirect management with an entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria: (i) financial and operational capacity; (ii) demonstrate technical capacity and experience in the relevant fields concerned including international experience in developing and implementing border management interventions based on international standards; (iii) demonstrated operational capacity to deliver projects in alignment

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<sup>19</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.

<sup>20</sup> OAS is the only competent Organisation able and recognized by both parties (Belize and Guatemala Governments) to monitor the referendum at border. The action is to support the OAS mandate, derived from the 2005 Agreement on a Framework for Negotiations and Confidence Building Measures, to mediate and foster confidence-building measures in the protracted territorial dispute between Belize and Guatemala. This operation was initiated since 2003 and implemented by OAS.

with national priorities; and (iv) demonstrated ability to lead policy dialogue with national counterparts in the relevant fields concerned.

A part of this action regarding Specific Objective 2 for Trade and regional integration (Output 2.2) may be implemented in indirect management with an entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria: (i) financial and operational capacity; (ii) demonstrate technical capacity and experience in the relevant fields concerned; (iii) demonstrated operational capacity to deliver projects in alignment with national priorities; and (iv) demonstrated ability to lead policy dialogue with national counterparts in the relevant fields concerned.

In case the envisaged entities would need to be replaced, the Commission's services may select replacement entities using the same criteria. If the entity is replaced, the decision to replace it needs to be justified.

If negotiations with any of the above-mentioned entities fail, that part of this action may be implemented in direct management in accordance with the implementation modalities identified in section 4.4.2

#### 4.4.4 EFSD+ operations covered by budgetary guarantees

A part of this action ESFD+ operations may be implemented through budgetary guarantees and blending operations. 28% of the bilateral MIP has been allocated for such types of operations.

**Under, Outcome 1**, three operations are currently envisaged:

- "Digital Innovation to Boost Economic Development in Belize", targeting better business and innovation climate for MSMEs through the adoption of digital solutions, including licensing processes and civil registration services and services to support women-led MSMEs located in rural communities with the uptake of digital technologies. It is a cornerstone of the Global Gateway Investment Agenda for Belize (identification phase ongoing), delivering on the expected result "technological innovation and digitalisation of services improved" (MIP Belize, paragraph 2.1.2, Expected Result B.3)
- Possible blending operation with EIB, to finance micro projects that are identified as a result of the activities of this AAP (in relation to Output 1.2).
- Possible guarantee scheme (access to credit), facilitated by EIB and channeled through local credit unions. This project is part of the Global Gateway Investment Agenda for Belize.

This section is included for information purposes only. Comprehensive action plans covering all EFSD+ budgetary guarantees and the financing decision for the entire annual commitment under the EFSD+ budget line are adopted separately.

#### 4.4.5 Changes from indirect to direct management mode due to exceptional circumstances (one alternative second option)

In case that part of the specific objectives cannot be implemented in indirect management, a service and supply contract under direct management are envisaged.

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

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

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



#### 4.6. Indicative Budget

<b>Indicative Budget components</b>	<b>EU contribution (amount in EUR)</b>
<b>Implementation modalities</b> – cf. section 4.4	
<b>Objective 1:</b> composed of	<b>4,200,000</b>
Indirect Management with an entrusted entity –cf. section 4.4.3	
<b>Objective 2:</b> composed of	<b>8,300,000</b>
Indirect Management with an entrusted entity –cf. section 4.4.3	5,300,000
Grant (direct management) cf. section 4.4.1 to OAS	3,000,000
<b>Evaluation</b> – cf. section 5.2	<b>50,000.00</b>
<b>Audit</b> – cf. section 5.3	<b>50,000.00</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>12,600,000</b>

#### 4.7 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

Two separate Programme Steering Committees (PSCs) will be set up, one for priority I chaired by Ministry of Economic Development and another one for priority II chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Migrations. In both Committees, the EU will be a full member. The Committees shall be set up to oversee and validate the direction and policy of the project. The PSCs shall meet once a year at a minimum and be composed of the main Ministries and Central agencies involved in the implementation of the Programme, the representatives of CSOs contracted under the programme and representing Indigenous People, women and youth, and a representative of the Private sector (Belize Chamber of Commerce).

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 partners shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (Outputs and direct Outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix (for project modality). Indicators shall be disaggregated at least by sex. 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).

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring:

Each Entity contracted under the intervention will have the responsibility of the collection of data, reporting and monitoring of the indicators, including baseline indicators, as designed under their separate contract.

The active and meaningful participation of stakeholders will be ensured through their participation to Project Steering Committees which will be separately established for outcome 1 and outcome 2. An overall monitoring framework will be established within the ODA unit of the Ministry of Economic Development effectively overseeing the different cooperation programmes, and informing on the achievements of the targets under the National Development Strategy (Medium Term Development Strategy) and coordinating EU Cooperation Programmes with other Development Partners to align them to the national development objectives.

## 5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a final evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants through a joint mission contracted by the Commission.

In case a final or ex-post evaluation is envisaged: 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 an innovative action or a pilot being tested.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 2 months 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.

## 5.3 Audit and Verifications

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

# 6 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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

In line with the 2022 “Communicating and Raising EU Visibility: Guidance for External Actions”<sup>21</sup>, 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. Accordingly, provision is made under the TCF allocation foreseen in this Action Document for the Delegation to contract one multi-annual contract for communication and visibility services that will include a Strategic Communications approach and also include public diplomacy initiatives.

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<sup>21</sup> European Commission (2022). Communicating and Raising EU Visibility: Guidance for External Actions. Available at: [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-04/communicating-and-raising-eu-visibility-guidance-for-external-actions-july-2022\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-04/communicating-and-raising-eu-visibility-guidance-for-external-actions-july-2022_en_0.pdf)

## Appendix 1 REPORTING IN OPSYS

A Primary Intervention (project/programme) is a coherent set of activities and results structured in a logical framework aiming at delivering development change or progress. Identifying the level of the primary intervention will allow for:

Articulating Actions or Contracts according to an expected chain of results and therefore allowing them to ensure efficient monitoring and reporting of performance;

Differentiating these Actions or Contracts from those that do not produce direct reportable development results, defined as support entities (i.e. audits, evaluations);

Having a complete and exhaustive mapping of all results-bearing Actions and Contracts.

Primary Interventions are identified during the design of each action by the responsible service (Delegation or Headquarters operational Unit). The level of the Primary Intervention chosen can be modified (directly in OPSYS) and the modification does not constitute an amendment of the action document.

The intervention level for the present Action identifies as (tick one of the 4 following options);

<b>Action level (i.e. Budget Support, blending)</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single action	Present action: all contracts in the present action
<b>Group of actions level (i.e. top-up cases, different phases of a single programme)</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of actions	Actions reference (CRIS#/OPSYS#):
<b>Contract level</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	Contribution Agreement with an entrusted entity
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 2	Contribution Agreement with an entrusted entity
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 3	PAGODA with an international organisation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 4	Direct Grant to Organisation of American States (OAS)
<b>Group of contracts level (i.e. series of programme estimates, cases in which an Action includes for example four contracts and two of them, a technical assistance contract and a contribution agreement, aim at the same objectives and complement each other)</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of contracts 1	