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ANNEX 6

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multiannual action plan for the thematic programme on Global Challenges (Prosperity) 2023-2025

Action Document for Global Partnerships for Human-Centric information and communications technology (ICT) Standardisation –‘GIST’

MULTIANNUAL PLAN

This document constitutes the multiannual work programme within the meaning of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, within the meaning of Article 23 of the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act	Global Partnerships for Human-Centric information and communications technology (ICT) Standardisation –‘GIST’ OPSYS number: ACT-62059 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)
2. Team Europe Initiative (TEI)	No
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The action shall be carried out in Worldwide – Partner Countries
4. Programming document	NDICI- ‘Global Challenges’ Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 ¹
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results	Priority Area 3: Prosperity Digital Transformation
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Priority Area 3: Prosperity. Specific Objective 5: Digital Transformation. 220: Communications - Digital governance, Cybersecurity, New Technologies, Digital Public Goods, Digital Rights and Principles
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG (1 only): SDG 17 Strengthen global Partnerships Other significant SDGs (up to 9) and where appropriate, targets: SDG 4 Quality education SDG 5 Gender Equality

¹ C(2021)9157

	SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth SDG 9 Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure SDG 10 Reduce Inequalities within and among countries SDG 16 Peace Justice and Strong Institutions			
8 a) DAC code(s)	220 – Digital (Communications) 43081 - Multisector education/training 43082 - Research/scientific institutions			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	Non-governmental organisation (NGOs) and Civils Society - 20000 European Commission Budget – 42001 Central Government - 11001			
9. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
10. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective @	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment @	<input 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"/>
	Trade development	<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"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Internal markers and Tags:	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Digitalisation @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		YES	NO	

	digital connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	digital governance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	digital entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	digital skills/literacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	digital services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Connectivity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital connectivity	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
	energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	education and research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Migration @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
12. Amounts concerned	Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020242 Total estimated cost: EUR 10 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 10 000 000 The contribution is for an amount of EUR 6 500 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2023 and for an amount of EUR 3 500 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2024, subject to the availability of the appropriations for the respective financial years following the adoption of the relevant annual budget, or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
13. Type of financing	Direct management through: Grant			

1.2 Summary of the Action

Setting standards are a foundation of the EU Single Market and global competitiveness. This action promotes global human-centric, green and interoperable standards for digital technologies and services, including an open, free and trusted internet. It aims to strengthen the EU's partnerships with key stakeholders at global / multilateral, regional, national and sector level, lower technical barriers for digital products and services and foster global trade and innovation. The EU's ambitions towards a climate neutral, resilient and circular economy cannot be delivered without European standards on testing methods, management systems or interoperability solutions. The EU's policy ambitions on a resilient, green and digital economy will fall short if the accompanying standards are defined by other regions in the world. This action support the development and deployment of green digital solutions in a wide range of sectors with climate mitigation effect by setting global standards in line with EU values and priorities.

This action will contribute to the achievement of the 'Specific objective 5: Digital transformation' of the MIP Global Challenges.

This Action is aligned with the Global Gateway objectives to promote digital transformation and the development of Digital in partner countries, including through support for information and communications technology (ICT) / Digital standardisation. It aims to support the development of secure, interoperable, and accessible digital

technologies and services that support sustainable development and the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Action is aligned with the EU standardisation strategy² that recognizes the importance in third countries and seeks to establish partnerships and work with international standardisation organisations to advance these efforts.

This Action takes into account the importance given to digital standardisation in the EU-US and EU-India Trade and Technology Council (TTC) as well as the Digital Partnerships with Japan, South Korea and Singapore. It is aligned with the EU's ongoing contribution to the UN's Global Digital Compact.

The action is also fully aligned with various EU Digital Policies and Strategies, which it wishes to promote. This includes but is not limited to existing and currently being developed policies such as the GDPR³, the Data Governance Act⁴, the Digital Services Act (DSA)⁵ and Digital Markets Act (DMA)⁶, the AI Act⁷, the Cyber Resilience Act (CRA)⁸, the EU Web Accessibility directive⁹ and EU Accessibility Act¹⁰, as well as the EU Strategy on Standardisation. By supporting activities to reduce the digital divide, the action will contribute the EU Gender Action Plan III¹¹.

This intervention will primarily contribute to SDG 17 'Strengthen global partnership', SDG 16 'Peace, Justice and Strong institutions', SDG 11 'Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable', SDG 10 'Reduce inequality within and among countries', SDG 9 'Build resilient infrastructures, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation', SDG 5 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'.

The Action aims will be implemented through direct management.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

Through the EU Digital Strategy and digital partnerships, the EU seeks to develop a fair and inclusive digital economy that leaves no one behind and it offers its partners to share the European expertise in building a Digital Single Market.

Technologies of the future bring new challenges. We increasingly rely on standards to ensure that the development of products and services such as batteries or artificial intelligence reflect our democratic values and ensure they respect data protection, cybersecurity, environmental and other considerations. Europe's competitiveness, technological sovereignty and promotion of EU values, highest social and environmental ambitions will depend on how successful European actors are at international level. It is also essential in supporting European industry on the path of the digital and twin transitions.

Timely and harmonised setting of standards in the digital domain enable innovators, including those from the EU and its partner countries, to bring new products to global markets as well as the EU.

² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_661 [Accessed on 13/09/2023]

³ OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1–88

⁴ OJ L 152, 3.6.2022, p. 1–44

⁵ OJ L 277, 27.10.2022, p. 1–102

⁶ OJ L 265, 12.10.2022, p. 1–66

⁷ COM(2021)206

⁸ COM(2022)454

⁹ OJ L 327, 2.12.2016, p. 1–15

¹⁰ OJ L 151, 7.6.2019, p. 70–115

¹¹ https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-01/join-2020-17-final_en.pdf [Accessed on 13/09/2023]

[Accessed on

2.3 Problem Analysis

As highlighted in the EU Standardisation Strategy, the fast pace of innovation, the EU's green and digital ambitions and the implications of technological standards for fundamental values in general require an increasingly strategic approach to standardisation. Standards are the silent foundation of the EU Single Market and global competitiveness. They help manufacturers ensure the interoperability of products and services, reduce costs, improve safety and foster innovation. Standards are an invisible but fundamental part of our daily life: from mobile connectivity, Wi-Fi based applications, to connected toys, eHealth or translation apps, just to mention a few. Whereas ICT standards can contribute to socio economic development and global market integration and political alignment, a lack of coordination and understanding of threats and opportunities can lead to an erosion of the EU's political and economic interests. Furthermore, digitalisation carries the potential to bring positive and negative consequences to the environment. To fully exploit the environmental advantages of digitalisation, targeted policies and actions are needed.

The EU has been leading on various normative/regulatory aspects of the digital and green landscape, aiming at achieving the positive potential while avoiding the pitfalls, and advocating a human-centric view of global digital transformation. Similarly, the EU is a global economic power and important trading block. However, some important actors are actively supporting a digital agenda which is not aligned, or opposing, the EU's vision of a digital and green transition, based on human rights and fundamental values. This also applies to the development of standards on the international stage. Apart from the question of values, EU and global market access, as well as innovation, can be impeded for the EU as well as its partner's industries, following the developments and adoption of certain standards.

Since ICT standardisation is a quite technical domain, often monopolised by large private actors and/or organised state actors, and generally invisible to the public, and since the development of ICT is very high-paced, the implications may not always be fully understood by stakeholders. This is why strengthened interaction, capacity building and local research and development is needed.

Therefore, the EU's leadership through better global cooperation is necessary to ensure mutual understanding, and to grasp the opportunities that (EU-aligned) standardisation brings with it. This action supports efforts in line with the EU's Standardisation Strategy to strengthen the role of fundamental values, primarily human rights, in ICT standardisation, and strive to prevent the fragmentation of technical standards in strategic sectors.

The [Digital Services Act](#) (DSA) focuses on human rights norms, including transparency and accountability and supports the [Declaration on European digital rights and principles](#), axed along six main principles¹². The DSA will put in place among others measures to counter illegal goods, services or content online, effective safeguards for users, and reinforcement of the right to privacy in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the European Union's legislation on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data.

People in situation of vulnerability, including children, women, LGTBI+ and minorities are victim of violence and abuse in the digital world. Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TF GBV) are forms of violence that are directed against women and/or that affect women disproportionately and are often connected to violence in the offline world. The EU recognizes cyber-violence as a growing problem, particularly for women with intersecting identities, young women and women in public life. The EU is proposing that these forms of cyber-violence are criminalised¹³ and further measures are taken to prevent them.

¹² 1. Putting people at the centre of the digital transformation and their rights at the centre of the digital transformation; 2. Supporting solidarity and inclusion; 3. Ensuring freedom of choice online; 4. Fostering participation in the digital public space; 5. Increasing safety, security, and empowerment of individuals; 6. Promoting the sustainability of the digital future.

¹³ Proposal for a DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on combating violence against women and domestic violence COM/2022/105 final

In a world where 16% population has some sort of disability¹⁴ and at least 2.2 billion people have a near or distance vision impairment¹⁵, accessibility statistics show that worldwide millions of people with disabilities find it difficult and frustrating to access websites. The [EU Web Accessibility directive](#) and [EU Accessibility Act](#) directly promote and enhance the rights of people with disabilities ensuring accessible digital education, healthcare, art, culture, recreation, leisure, sport, and tourism¹⁶.

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

- EU Member States
- EU national standardisation bodies
- International/global Standard Developing Organisations, fora and consortia
- European Standardisation Organisations
- National standard-setting bodies in partner countries
- Regulatory bodies in partner countries related to digital standardisation
- Civil society organisations / Academia
- The private sector

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective of this action is to ensure a fair, inclusive and accessible, green, gender responsive and human centric digital transformation worldwide.

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

1. Strengthen long-term relationships between European Union (EU) standard-setting bodies and relevant standardisation and regulatory bodies in selected¹⁷ partner countries and regions.
2. – Promote EU digital standards and international digital standards aligned with EU values with green, gender responsive and human centric perspectives in each target country.

The Outputs to be delivered by this action and contributing to the corresponding Specific Objectives (Outcomes) are:

Output 1: Contributing to Specific Objective 1

- 1.1 Increased opportunities for collaboration and exchanges between standard-setting bodies and relevant bodies in selected partner countries.
- 1.2 Enhanced knowledge and understanding of the EU and international standardisation systems in the targeted countries, and
- 1.3 Increased promotion of alignment with EU positions in international standard developing organisations.

Output 2, Contributing to Specific Objective 2:

¹⁴ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health#:~:text=Key%20facts,earlier%20than%20those%20without%20disabilities>. [Accessed on 13/09/2023]

¹⁵ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/blindness-and-visual-impairment#:~:text=This%201%20billion%20people%20includes,well%20as%20near%20vision%20impairmentsheets/detail/disability-and-health#:~:text=Key%20facts,earlier%20than%20those%20without%20disabilities>. [Accessed on 13/09/2023]

¹⁶ Regulation 1025/2012 on European standardisation states: ‘(24) The European standardisation system should also fully take into account the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It is therefore important that organisations representing the interests of consumers sufficiently represent and include the interests of people with disabilities. In addition, the participation of people with disabilities in the standardisation process should be facilitated by all available means’.

¹⁷ Indicatively 5 partner countries. (1 Asia, 3 Africa, 1 Latin America). This indicative number can be revised upwards pending further discussions and analysis.

2.1 Strengthened capacities of local stakeholders including private sector, academia and civil society in standardisation processes in selected countries.

2.2 Increased availability of ICT standards aligned with EU values, standardisation policy and the Rolling Plan 2023¹⁸, particularly in respect of human rights, gender, and green transition priorities.

2.3 Improved understanding of common interests and practices for global standards among EU and selected partner countries.

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities relating to Output 1.1:

- Connect / enlarge European and partner countries' networks in the field of standardisation from each priority country.
- Organise multistakeholder conferences and workshops on ICT standards to strengthen relationship building between European, regional and local stakeholders, facilitate continuous exchanges. Promote the EU standardisation system and values. Support services and reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities will be considered.

Activities relating to Output 1.2:

- Consultation with relevant stakeholders, possibly training, and facilitation of access to European and international fora related to standard-setting. Support services and reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities will be considered.

Activities relating to Output 1.3:

- Facilitate coordinated action at ICT International Standard developing organisations, fora and consortia.

Activities relating to Output 2.1:

- Identify policy needs regarding technical standards in the selected partner countries.
- Perform research and strengthen research capacities of local technical experts, including through European private sector collaboration.
- Set up policy dialogues between stakeholders.

Activities relating to Output 2.2:

- Based on EU standardisation policy and [work programme](#), prioritise three key sectors and relevant standards per selected country to target¹⁹ and jointly develop, adapt and adopt.
- Promote adoption and use of EU and relevant international digital standards in target countries, in particular in those key areas.
- Drafting of joint ICT standards, in respect of human rights, gender, and aligned with green transition priorities.

Activities relating to Output 2.3:

- Consult European and partner countries' multistakeholder community in gender-inclusive workshops on common priorities related to e.g., gender cyber-violence, children and young-adult protection, accessibility and its role for people with disabilities. Support services and reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities will be considered.
- Strengthen exchanges at political level between stakeholders. Support services and reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities will be considered.

¹⁸ <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/rolling-plan-ict-standardisation/rolling-plan-2023> [Accessed on 13/09/2023]

¹⁹ Indicatively this can include , Artificial Intelligence, cybersecurity, secure communication, space technologies

When carrying out these activities, the action will coordinate with other initiatives aiming at promoting international coordination on ICT standardisation, such as StandICT.eu²⁰, relevant CSAs funded within Horizon Europe²¹, and build on the results of previous actions such as the InDiCo²² project. It will also take into account existing cooperation activities carried out by European and International Standardisation Bodies on international cooperation²³.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

Environmental Protection and Climate Change are targeted as significant priorities in this Action. Nevertheless, as this Action is in line with the EU Standardisation Strategy which aims at enabling a resilient, green and digital economy, the Digital and Green nexus is addressed. The EU's ambitions towards a climate neutral, resilient and circular economy cannot be delivered without European standards on testing methods, management systems or interoperability solutions. As addressed in the logframe, the action will deliberately consider environmental aspects at the level of the ICT standards themselves.

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 the Action is relevant to the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment and girls and especially the Thematic objective 'Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, can equally participate in shaping the digital world of tomorrow'. The Action will promote the active participation of women in ICT Standardisation by supporting to overcome occupational barriers in the ICT sector, including attendance to events, trainings and decision-making processes for the drafting and adaptation of ICT Standardisation. The Declaration on [Declaration on European digital rights and principles](#) – together with its accompanying regulations – sets the basis for fruitful advancements for the rights and well-being of women and other vulnerable groups victim of cyber-violence and the protection of children from any abuse this will be done by addressing participation to activities, as well as by applying gender-sensitive approach with regards to the ICT standards themselves. Sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive indicators will be privileged to make sure the contribution to gender equality can be well measured.

Human Rights

The Overall Objective of this action is to promote human-centric and green ICT standards for digital technologies and services. The human-centric approach in ICT standards includes the respect of fundamental values: for example, ICT standards that avoid internet fragmentation and assure adequate protection of privacy and security, as well as protection of minors. These are fundamental to Human Rights as well as the elements mentioned in the EU's declaration on digital rights and principles.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. This implies that the Action does not principally targets to specifically advance inclusion of people with disability, although individuals with disability might be among rights-holders of this Action, as they are considered part of the targeted vulnerable communities. This Action does promote a human-centric digital transformation, which emphasises digital inclusion, thereby also improving the conditions of people with disabilities. By favoring inclusion and participation, the Action will support inclusive activities to bridge the digital divide and improve involvement for people with disabilities. For example, during the organisation of the different events, it will consider support services and reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities, such as sign language interpreter for deaf persons or adapted software and assistive technology. Project communication activities will include production of accessible material. The promotion of ICT standards may include the EU experiences and standards related to the EU Web Accessibility Directive. Whenever possible, the Action will contribute to making visible the situation of

²⁰ <https://www.standict.eu/> [Accessed on 13/09/2023]

²¹ Actions HORIZON-CL4-2023-HUMAN-01-65: Support facility for digital standardisation and international cooperation in digital partnerships and HORIZON-CL4-2023-HUMAN-01-66: Promoting EU standards globally

²² <https://www.indico-ictstandards.eu/> [Accessed on 13/09/2023]

²³ Such as CEN-CENELEC with Africa, SESEI and SESEC, GSC, SPCG.

persons living with disability by using indicators disaggregated by disability status, and by promoting the collection and use of disaggregated data for policy-making.

Democracy

The topic of democracy lies at the core of this action, as the EU promotes a multistakeholder and multilateral approach to digital transformation, based on digital standards in respect of a human-centric view and fundamental values. This EU approach is different from what some important other geostrategic actors are promoting. Also, as referred in the Declaration of Digital Rights and Principles ‘access to diverse content contributes to a pluralistic public debate and should allow everyone to participate in democracy’. This relates for example to standards that avoid internet fragmentation, standards for ethical usage of Artificial Intelligence and that support privacy and security.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

This action does not target this topic directly. Nevertheless, a robust internet architecture and the tools and applications running on it, developed in a human-centric multistakeholder way, aiming to integrate markets, will fundamentally support resilience and peace.

Disaster Risk Reduction

Not directly targeted. Again, harmonised standards and interoperability will mitigate against disasters, in an ever more connected and online society. For example: eGovernance systems, big industry and sector-based platforms (eg. Governments, hospitals, industry) will be able to mitigate and recover faster from natural disasters if their systems have national/international redundancy and backup solutions and if the internet is not fragmented (and eg cloud systems).

Other considerations if relevant

N/A

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
Human resources	It may be challenging to find experts (including women) in this domain with an in-depth understanding of economic and political drivers globally, in Europe and in specific partner countries.	Medium	Medium	Consultative and participatory approach to assess and address needs and gaps, build trustful dialogue and coordination, tailored technical support. The Action intends to work with EU standardisation entities, which have experience in this domain.
Planning process	Coherence of interventions: coordination between national, regional and	Medium	Medium	During programme design and early phase of implementation, definitions and selection of priorities and key stakeholders will be stipulated to allow for strategic clarity. The project will be presented to the

	continental level might be lacking due to a plethora of stakeholders to be engaged at different levels, as well as diverging levels of priorities and socio-economic development.			relevant EU players (industry associations, and key R&I projects under Horizon, etc) to take into account their needs and concerns.
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Lessons Learnt:

This action builds upon previous programmes financed by the European Commission's services and Member States. While international digital cooperation on ICT standardisation as the focus of an EU action is not new, this particular action is possibly the first solely targeting developing countries on this topic. Lessons learnt drawn from past programmes financed by the European Commission and/or MS on support to ICT Standardisation in partner countries point to several organisational aspects. The working relationship with the Implementing Partner is key for the success of any action when the enhancement of links with partner countries is targeted. Therefore, clear and time-efficient planning procedures need to be in place to avoid any limitations on the process and impact of the implementation.

Active involvement and coordination from EU stakeholders (relevant European agencies and Commission services) are important to steer the project and maintain alignment with EU policies and Commission's priorities. For this action, relevant DGs have been consulted and involved in the planning to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication. Furthermore, insufficient internal communication affecting resource allocation or information exchange with local stakeholders will be avoided through properly mapping the respective role of stakeholders in terms of decision powers and budget resources. This will further help expectation and time management of the project's activities.

The continuous and sustained long-term engagement with partner countries is critical for achieving the desired outcomes in standardisation. Furthermore, it is important to mobilise policy-makers, standardisers and industrial stakeholders including R&I actors. This action focuses on long-term relationship building and careful consideration of key stakeholders to ensure the most impact.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is the promotion of human-centric and green digital transformation by engaging on processes and policy of standardization, and the promotion of EU standards as global standards for digital technologies:-

This action will be implemented through International Organisations, national standard-setting bodies, private sector and possibly academia and Civil Society. This approach will underline and strengthen the EU's multi-stakeholder approach and promote the EU's vision for ICT Standardisation at global level. The action is designed to build long-lasting relationships with existing and new partners in the target countries and to ensure sustainable outcomes that will last beyond the intervention period. To achieve the established objective, this action will envisage two pillars to work on:

1. Strengthen long-term relationships between EU standard-setting bodies and relevant bodies in selected²⁴ partner countries and a regional body.
2. Institutionalise EU harmonised digital standards with green, gender responsive and human centric perspectives in each target country.

As a fundamental basis for the successful development of common standards, opportunities for collaboration between relevant EU and partner countries' stakeholders in the field of standardisation will be strengthened and existing networks – if applicable - enlarged through activities such as multistakeholder workshops, possible trainings, regular exchanges and conferences on this topic. This will then enhance the common understanding of priorities and different national standardisation systems as well as help identify policy areas in which ICT standards should be jointly developed. Through these exchanges and targeted collaboration, partner countries will be working more closely with European entities and move towards a increased promotion of alignment with EU positions on the selected policy areas at international level. Hence, more coordinated action at international standard setting bodies would be facilitated.

In order to coordinate on common priorities regarding ICT standards with relevant national bodies and EU standard-setting bodies, the priorities as outlined in the EU standardisation strategy –possibly including space technologies and secure communications, Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity - are taken as a basis for the identification of joint development of standards. Particular needs regarding technical standards of the individual partner countries will be focused at to ensure the most targeted impact of this action. The increased availability of harmonised ICT standards between the EU's standardisation priorities , including human rights, gender and green transition fundamental values as the basis for drafting, adapting and adopting joint ICT standards. This lies at the core of this action and supports the sustainable life cycle of these standards at international level. Regular consultation of European and partner countries' multistakeholder community on common priorities will take place throughout the action as well as the strengthening of exchanges at political level with partner countries, to support horizontal long-term relationship building.

Owing to the importance of ensuring inclusive processes, the Action ensures activities will involve meaningful participation of all genders throughout the process. Other key assumptions for the Action include the substantial interest of relevant national stakeholders and policy-makers in the formulation and development of ICT standards with EU standard setting bodies.

²⁴ Indicatively 5 partner countries. (1 Asia, 3 Africa, 1 Latin America). This indicative number can be revised upwards pending further discussions and analysis.

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Results	Results chain (a): Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (a): (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	To promote human-centric and green ICT standards for digital technologies and services.	1. Country score on ICT Development Index (Aligned with GERF 1.10)	1. tbd in inception phase but based on most recent data (e.g. 2023)	1 tbd in the inception phase	1 . ITU ICT Development Index ²⁵	Not applicable
		2. Proportion of young people and adults with ICT skills, disaggregated by sex, age, type of skill and country (Aligned with GAP III, Digitalisation Impact and SDG 4.4.1)	2 Tbd in inception phase based on country data	2 tbd in the inception phase	2. The ITU ICT SDG indicators ²⁶	
Outcome 1	1 Strengthen long-term relationships between EU standard-setting bodies and relevant bodies in selected ²⁷ partner countries and a regional body.	1.1 Number of collaboration activities identified and implemented by the partner countries on their own initiative and using the increased capacities supported by this Action, disaggregated by type of activity 1.2 Level of reinforced relationships between European and local ICT standard bodies in partner countries.	1.1. 0 (2023) 1.2. low (2023)	1.1. X amount of activities 1.2 medium to high	1.1. evaluations, final reports 1.2 evaluations, final reports	Partner governments continue to prioritise digital transition and relevant infrastructure on national level.

²⁵ <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/IDI/default.aspx> [Accessed on 13/09/2023]

²⁶ <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/SDGs-ITU-ICT-indicators.aspx> [Accessed on 13/09/2023]

²⁷ Indicatively 5 partner countries. (1 Asia, 3 Africa, 1 Latin America). This indicative number can be revised upwards pending further discussions and analysis.

Outcome 2	3 Institutionalise EU harmonised digital standards with green, gender responsive and human centric perspectives in each target country.	2.1 Number of EU harmonised standards developed and/or adopted by partner countries on their own initiative and using the increased capacities supported by this Action	2.1. 0 (2023)	2.1. X number of standards developed	2.1 Progress and final report for the EU-funded intervention	Policy makers have an interest in the participatory development and implementation of ICT Standards.
		2.2 Number of countries supported by the Action to implement digital-related standards <i>(Aligned with GEF 2.10b)</i>	2.2. 0	2.2. 5	2.2 policy papers, legislation, standard proposals	
		2.3. Number of actions, taken by partner government, which contribute to the development of legal or regulatory frameworks governing online abuse, violence and bullying <i>(Aligned with GAP III, Digitalisation SOI)</i>	2.3 0	2.3 X number of action taken by partner government	2.3 policy papers, legislation, national strategies, standard proposals	
Output 1 relating to Outcome 1	1.1 Increased opportunities for collaboration and exchanges between EU standard-setting bodies and relevant national bodies in selected partner countries.	1.1.1 Number of relevant stakeholders in selected partner countries benefitting from exchange events on ICT standardisation, disaggregated by type of stakeholder and country.	1.1.1. 0 (2023)	1.1.1. 5	1.1.1 progress and final report of EU intervention	Political and economic conditions remain stability in the target countries.
		1.1.2 Number of new formalised partnerships / collaborations between standard setting bodies with the support of this Action	1.1.2. 0 (2023)	1.1.2. to be determined in inception phase	1.1.2 progress and final report of EU intervention	

Output 3 Relating to Outcome 1	1.2 Enhanced knowledge and understanding of the EU and international standardisation systems in the targeted countries	1.2.1 Number of partner countries' key stakeholders with improved knowledge on ICT standard systems, disaggregated by type of stakeholder, sex and disability, and country 1.2.2 Number of women's organisations and networks with increased capacity to participate in discussions on gender-responsive ICT policies and plans (GAPIII)	1.2.1 0 (2023) 1.2.2 0 (2023)	1.2.1. tbd in inception phase 1.2.2 tbd in inception phase	1.2.1. Participants' feedback surveys 1.2.2 . Participants' feedback surveys	Sufficient amount of technical experts in partner countries for regular participation in exchanges.
Output 4 Relating to Outcome 1	1.3 Increased promotion of alignment with EU positions in international standard-setting bodies.	1.3.1 Number of countries that are in consideration of alignment with EU positions on ICT Standards	1.3.1. tbd in inception phase	1.3.1. tbd in inception phase	1.3.1. Project specific reporting	Interest of partner countries' governments and policy-makers to further align with EU positions
Output 1 relating to Outcome 2	2.1 Strengthened capacities of local stakeholders including private sector, academia and civil society in standardisation processes in selected countries.	2.1.1 Number of representatives of key private sector, academic entities and civil society organisations who are able to support the development of ICT Standards, disaggregated by sex, age, type of stakeholder and country 2.1.2 Number of local technical experts with increased research skills in support of standardisation processes, disaggregated by sex and disability, age and country.	2.1.1. 0 (2023) 2.1.2. 0 (2023)	2.1.1. tbd in inception phase 2.1.2. tbd in inception phase	2.1.1 Notes and attendance records from the meetings. 2.1.2 Notes and attendance records from the meetings.	Substantial participation of private sector, academia and civil society throughout the process.

Output 2 relating to Outcome 2	2.2 Increased availability of ICT standards harmonised with EU standardization policy and Rolling Plan 2023 , particularly in respect of human rights, gender, and green transition priorities..	2.2.1 Number of standards jointly developed with the partner countries, disaggregated by focus/impact area, sustainability and country	2.2.1. 0 (2023)	2.2.1. 3 per country (Green transition: 1 per country) 2.2.2. 5	2.2.1. Progress and final report of the EU funded intervention	The aspect of environmental sustainability will be researched in at least 30% ²⁸ of standards drafted by this Action.
		2.2.2. Number of countries supported by the Action to develop and/or revise digital-standards <i>(Aligned with GEF 2.10a)</i>	2.2.2. 0 (2023)		2.2.2. Final report of the EU funded intervention.	Relevant stakeholders can reach a shared level of agreement to align on standardization priorities.
Output 3 Relating to Outcome 2	2.3 Improved understanding of common interests and practices for global standards among EU and selected partner countries.	2.3.1 Number of participating government representatives having better understanding of common interests and practices for global standards, disaggregated by country sex and disability	2.3.1. 0 (2023)	2.3.1. Number of relevant government representatives per country	2.3.1. Participants' feedback surveys	Interest from government entities on the alignment of ICT standards at international level.

4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

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

4.2 Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section three will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 60 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer by amending this Financing Decision and the relevant contracts and agreements.

4.3 Implementation Modalities

The Commission services 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 measures²⁹.

4.3.1. Direct Management (Grants)

Grants: (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

The grant will contribute to specific Objectives 1 and 2.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

The action will be implemented by European public organisations which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria : (i) extensive global experience in international standard-setting with partner countries, as well as long-term expertise on standards; (ii) ability to operate in partner countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

(c) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to one or more of the official European Standardisation Organisations - the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN), the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation (Cenelec) and the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI), possibly in a consortium.

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because these are the European standardisation organisations, as outlined in Regulation 1025/2012 on European Standardisation³⁰ in Art. (1), (4) and Annex I, which have the adequate degree of specialisation and technical competence (Art.195, f) of the financial regulation to implement the activities in the geographical areas of intervention. The indicative areas of standardisation (artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, secure communication and space technologies) require independence from non-European political interference as well as proven experience in these domains.

The Action has specific characteristics that require a particular type of body on account of its technical competence, and its high degree of specialisation. For the purpose of this proposed action, there are only

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ OJ L 316, 14.11.2012, p. 12–33

three European standardisation organisations (ESOs), which have an exclusive role to carry out standardisation work requested by the Commission in support of EU legislation and policies, including the actions concerned. Furthermore, only these three ESOs have the necessary credibility to engage on these topics as a certain authority and experience is needed to interact with partner countries' governments and other national organisations at international level.

While ICT standards play an essential role in achieving interoperability of new technologies and can bring significant benefits to both industry and consumers, they can also provide the context for promoting or abusing human rights. Over the past years, governments are increasingly aware that if a country's actors can influence standards in strategic industries, that country would likely obtain a significant advantage on the international stage.

Therefore, this geopolitical environment calls for a stronger role of the EU through the ESOs in engaging with partner countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This is also reflected in the EU's standardization strategy which includes the objective to promote EU standardization at international level, by promoting EU presence in SOs and countries. Given the dramatic pace and intensity of the international commercial and geopolitical competition and inherent risks for human rights and democracy, the EU intends to further its interests in this area. The EU is uniquely placed to promote the human-centric approach to digitalisation by sharing its values and standards, and standards and contributing to closing the digital divide.

Considering the political sensitivity and independence from non-European political interference, these actions can only be carried out through trusted European entities such as the three ESOs.

Moreover, the ESOs are known to the European Commission (DG CNECT, FPI) and have experience with previous and ongoing actions on standardisation with third countries to have global impact. The existing working relationships demonstrate a track record of successful collaboration between the ESOs and the European Commission but also among the ESOs themselves. Furthermore, the ESOs enjoy the European Commission's trust through transparency regarding their funding and clear mandate guided by EU interests.

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

With reference to section 4.3.1, following negotiations results, direct management may be implemented through indirect management in case of exceptional circumstances outside the Commission's control along defined criteria in section 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 in support to Objective 1 and 2.

In such a case, the entrusted entity will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria: (i) extensive global experience in international standard-setting with partner countries, as well as long-term expertise on standards; (ii) ability to operate in partner countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

4.4. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

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

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

4.5. Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR) 2023	EU contribution (amount in EUR) 2024
Output 1 & 2		

Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.1	6 500 000	3 500 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	may be covered by another Decision	may be covered by another Decision
Totals	6 500 000	3 500 000

4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The daily management of the Action will be ensured by the Commission which will associate concerned EU Delegations as well as other Commission services. Regular meetings will be organised with the Implementing Partners in order to ensure a smooth and responsive management of the project.

A dedicated Steering Committee (PSC) with the European Commission and the implementing partner(s) will be set up to ensure the overall guidance of this project. The implementing partner will support the organisation and the secretariat of PSC.

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

5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1. Monitoring and Reporting

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

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

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring: where appropriate, the Implementing Partners will be responsible for monitoring and reporting on indicators of the logframe matrix, including the collection of baselines and data collection in the inception phase of the Action. Indicator values will be measured at regional or country level, depending on the nature of the activities.

5.2. Evaluation

Having regard to the importance and nature of the Action, a mid-term and final evaluation may be carried out for this Action or its components via independent consultants or through a joint mission or via an implementing partner. A mid-term evaluation may be carried out for problem solving and learning purposes, in particular with respect to the effectiveness of activities implemented at the level of joint standards drafting, approaches and implementation modalities. The final evaluation will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the fact that the Action targets diverse stakeholders and beneficiaries in different regions.

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

The evaluation reports may be shared with the partners and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination. The Implementing Partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, apply the necessary adjustments. The financing of the evaluation may be covered by another measure constituting a Financing Decision.

All evaluations shall assess to what extent the action is considering the human rights based approach as well as how it contributes to gender equality and women's empowerment. Expertise on human rights and gender equality will be ensured in the evaluation teams.

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

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

Appendix 1 REPORTING IN OPSYS

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);

Action level (i.e. Budget Support, blending)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single action	Present action: all contracts in the present action