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ANNEX V

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multiannual action plan for the thematic programme on human rights and democracy for 2022-2024

Action Document for the European Union Human Rights Defenders Mechanism 2022-2027

MULTIANNUAL PLAN

This document constitutes the multiannual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and action plans in the sense of Article 23 (2) of Regulation 2021/947.

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act | The European Union Human Rights Defenders Mechanism 2022-2027 CRIS reference 2022: 043-837 OPSYS reference: ACT-60820 / JAD.971945 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (<u>Global Europe</u>) |
| 2. Team Europe Initiative | No |
| 3. Zone benefiting from the action | Global |
| 4. Programming document | Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for the Thematic Programme on Human Rights and Democracy 2021-2027 |
| 5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results | Priority 1: Protecting and empowering individuals Axis of action iii.: Support human rights defenders and counter shrinking space for civil society. Specific objective: To protect and empower Human Rights Defenders and civil society to continue with their work in spite of threats and spearhead positive changes. Expected results: Effective protection of and material support to Human Rights Defenders as well as their families. Strengthened capacities of human rights defenders and civil society, including strategic litigation, advocacy and public awareness, to work in contexts where restrictive laws and policies, coupled with funding restrictions, prevail. |
| PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION | |
| 6. Priority Area(s), sectors | 150 - Government & Civil Society - general |
| 7. Sustainable Development Goals | Due to its human-rights focus, the action contributes to the implementation of the 2030 agenda as a whole. However, it makes a direct contribution to one main goal and two |

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| (SDGs) | secondary goals. As a main goal, the direct contribution is to SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development; provide access to justice for all; and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. As secondary goals, the direct contributions are: - SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; - SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries. | | | |
| 8 a) DAC code(s) | 15160 – Human rights | | | |
| 8 b) Main Delivery Channel @ | 2000 – Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society | | | |
| 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input 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 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 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 @ Tags: digital connectivity digital governance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |

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|--------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| | digital entrepreneurship job creation digital skills/literacy digital services | | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Connectivity @ Tags: transport people2people energy digital connectivity | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Migration @ (methodology for tagging under development) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Reduction of Inequalities (methodology for marker and tagging under development) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Covid-19 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| BUDGET INFORMATION | | | | |
| 12. Amounts concerned | Budget line 14.020211 Total estimated cost: EUR 31 530 000 The EU contribution is for an amount of EUR 30 000 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2022 Contribution from third parties: EUR 1 530 000 (ProtectDefenders.eu Consortium) | | | |
| MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION | | | | |
| 13. Type of financing | Direct management through: - Grants (direct award) | | | |

1.2 Summary of the Action

Full enjoyment of human rights cannot be achieved unless the defence of those rights is ensured. In the past decade, the European Union (EU) has progressively developed a comprehensive support to human rights defenders (HRDs), most notably through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), thanks to which the EU became a leading actor in this area at global level. Support to HRDs remains a top priority of the EU external human rights policy and action. Building on past achievements and lessons learned of the EIDHR, the Action will fund a comprehensive flagship programme providing direct support to human rights defenders at risk worldwide.

The 'EU Human Rights Defenders Mechanism' will provide multifaceted support to HRDs under threat globally through the provision of emergency assistance, support to organisations and groups, holistic temporary relocation programmes, shelter initiatives support, capacity-building, monitoring, advocacy and outreach. The Mechanism will also further develop protective legal actions, the provision of psychosocial support, how to address crisis and longer term needs, and the strengthening of HRDs protection networks. Specific attention will be given to different needs and actions pertaining to various categories of HRDs at risk, such as young activists, women human rights defenders, LGBTIQ, environmental, land and indigenous peoples' rights defenders, trade unionists, journalists, etc. Emerging categories of HRDs facing increased threats will also need attention: defenders combatting corruption, digital rights defenders (combatting surveillance and online censorship) and labour rights defenders among others.

Support to and synergies with EU institutions, and in particular delegations will be enhanced. The provision of multifaceted, including direct, support to HRDs (individuals, groups and organisations) at risk worldwide, aims to protect and empower HRDs, as well as improve their working environment, so that they are enabled to continue their work for the promotion, protection and realisation of human rights.

Since 2015, the EU Human Rights Defenders Mechanism is successfully managed by the ProtectDefenders.eu Consortium, which is composed of international human rights NGOs specialised in the protection of HRDs at risk and uniquely combining thematic and geographic expertise. The Consortium established itself as a key actor in the provision of multifaceted support to HRDs including in most difficult situations. The ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat is partnering with the EU to operate the EU Emergency Fund for HRDs at Risk since 2019. The ProtectDefenders.eu Consortium will therefore continue implementing the EU HRDs Mechanism in an integrated and reinforced manner for the upcoming period.

The action will contribute to the following specific objective and result of the human rights and democracy thematic programme multi-annual indicative programme: to protect and empower Human Rights Defenders and civil society to continue with their work in spite of threats and spearhead positive changes.

The EU support will contribute to the whole SDG framework and in particular SDG 16, 5 and 10.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

General Context

Protecting and promoting human rights and democracy, founding values of the European Union, is a key priority of EU's external action and a pre-condition for sustainable development and for building more inclusive, open and resilient societies. Articles 2, 3 and 21 of the Treaty of the European Union (TEU) constitute the legal basis for the EU's human rights policy in external actions. In particular, Article 21 of the TEU states that 'the Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, (...) democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms...'.¹

The EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for the period 2020-2024, adopted by the Council¹, is the compass for the EU's external action in this field. The Action Plan identifies, as part of its priorities and key actions for the next five years, to '*support and protect human rights defenders (HRDs) and their legal representatives, and address the impact of their work on their families. Ensure assistance via the EU human rights defenders protection mechanisms. Take into account the particular risk that certain human rights defenders face, including women HRDs and environmental HRDs.*

Regulation (EU) 2021/947 states as an objective the 'protection of human rights defenders including in the most difficult circumstances and urgent situations' (Article 3(2)). The Regulation foresees in its Article 27(3)(a), the use of direct award procedure for 'low-value grants to human rights defenders to finance urgent protection actions and needs, including through mechanisms for the protection of human rights defenders at risk'. Annex III of the Regulation stipulates that areas of intervention for the thematic programme on human rights and democracy should include 'protecting and empowering human rights defenders worldwide, in particular where disrespect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is particularly pronounced and systematic, including where restrictive measures have been introduced to limit their actions and their action is critical to reinforce the institutional and legal human rights framework'. Most importantly, Annex III provides that 'emergency, medium-term and long-term assistance as well as sustainable measures shall be given to human rights defenders and civil society, in particular local human rights defenders and civil society, including through a **dedicated mechanism for the protection of human rights defenders**, to carry out their work unhindered'.

2020 was the first year since 2001 in which the majority of the world's countries were autocracies. The downward trend follows a similar pattern in many countries – repression of civil society, media and human rights defenders;

¹ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12848-2020-INIT/en/pdf>

undermining of the rule of law and separation of powers; and hollowing out of democratic institutions and elections. The average citizen's experience of democracy is back to levels of the 1990s².

Human rights defenders, including journalists are increasingly persecuted, defamed, harassed, arbitrarily arrested and imprisoned, tortured, and even killed. As human rights defenders have become more effective in challenging injustice, oppression and brutality, so has the repression against them. A pervasive climate of impunity has often led to a vicious cycle of abuse. The effectiveness of accountability mechanisms has faltered, and the international accountability framework continually challenged on its credibility and effectiveness. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated risks and threats to human rights defenders, as well as restrictions on their work.

This Action is aligned with the Agenda for Change³, the New European Consensus on Development⁴, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Gender Action Plan III⁵ and the European Commission's Joint Communication on strengthening the EU's contribution to rules-based multilateralism⁶. The Action contributes to achieve the objectives of the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders (2004, revised in 2008)⁷.

Specific Context

Human rights defenders (individuals, groups and organisations) are key vectors of human rights, democracy and the rule of law and are essential partners of the EU in defending these values worldwide. Considering the intensifying crackdown on HRDs and other independent civil society actors, the EU has significantly developed the magnitude of its assistance to HRDs. Effective support for human rights and their defenders in situations where they are most at risk has been an EU priority since 2004.

In 2015, the EU established the EU Human Rights Defenders Mechanism managed by ProtectDefenders.eu Consortium to scale up support provided through its EU Emergency Fund for HRDs at Risk. Since 2014, these two global programmes supported over 46 000 HRDs at risk, allocating crucial emergency assistance, enabling organisations to carry out their activities in extremely challenging conditions, temporarily relocating HRDs away from danger and managing the EU Temporary Relocation Platform (EUTRP), enhancing shelter capacities, providing training and building capacities of HRDs, conducting outreach to remote and marginalised HRDs, monitoring the situation of HRDs and advocating to address urgent cases. The EU Human Rights Defenders Mechanism proved to be a key partner for EU Delegations working in difficult and/or crisis contexts.

2.2 Problem Analysis

The situation of human rights and their defenders has globally deteriorated. This is being exacerbated by restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. A higher number of human rights organisations and defenders are in very difficult and helpless situations. Independent civil society actors face significant restrictions on their working environment and operating capacity, *inter alia*: legislation severely limiting access to funding, as well as freedoms of association, assembly and expression; administrative obstacles to register; criminalisation of dissent; blocking access to websites and social media. Independent civil society actors are often the target of smear campaigns and stigmatisation, abusive administrative and financial procedures, unjustified closures or just expelled. On-line threats and attacks, as well as judicial harassment targeting HRDs and their organisations are on

² VDEM 2021 Annual report

³ COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change {SEC(2011) 1172 final} {SEC(2011) 1173 final}

⁴ JOINT STATEMENT of 26/6/2017 BY THE COUNCIL AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION THE NEW EUROPEAN CONSENSUS ON DEVELOPMENT 'OUR WORLD, OUR DIGNITY, OUR FUTURE'

⁵ JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL EU GENDER ACTION PLAN (GAP) III – AN AMBITIOUS AGENDA FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN EU EXTERNAL ACTION {WD(2020) 284 final}

⁶ JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL on strengthening the EU's contribution to rules-based multilateralism JOIN(2021) 3 final 17.2.2021

⁷ EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), 2008.

the rise.

Independent civil society actors including human rights defenders, such as journalists, media workers, trade unionists, lawyers and other individuals promoting and defending human rights and fundamental freedoms face more intense repression by State and Non-State actors. This includes increased surveillance, travel bans and asset freeze, confiscation and destruction of working materials, physical and psychological threats, harassment, and attacks, arbitrary arrest, detention and imprisonment, torture and ill treatment, enforced disappearances, and even extrajudicial execution. Between 2015 and 2019, the Office of the UN High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR) recorded 1,323 killings of HRDs, stressing that environmental human rights defenders were the most affected category⁸. Front Line Defenders reported that at least 331 HRDs have been killed in 2020, out of which 69% worked on land, indigenous peoples' and environmental rights⁹. This highlights the need to further work with these categories of HRDs.

Specific groups of human rights defenders are particularly vulnerable, such as those working on environmental and land rights, indigenous peoples' rights, labour rights, women human rights defenders and LGBTI defenders, young human rights defenders, and those pursuing accountability for grave human rights violations and transitional justice, as well as journalists. Human rights defenders working in areas affected by crisis and conflict are particularly at risk. A major problem is the lack of accountability and the absence of legal remedies for violations and abuses against human rights defenders. This difficult situation is compounded by the erosion of funding sources for human rights organisations and defenders.

This Action will provide crucial support to human rights defenders at risk in the face of worsening situation, threats and attacks. This will allow them to increase their security and to continue their human rights work in spite of the challenges they face. Besides direct financial support, the Action will provide key accompaniment, services and institutional support. The EU Human Rights Defenders Mechanism will be reinforced in order to address increasing needs of HRDs in a holistic manner.

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

Key stakeholders are local and grass-roots human rights defenders and independent civil society organisations promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law, as they are direct beneficiaries of the Action. International and regional human rights NGOs play a major role as they provide crucial support to HRDs at risk on the ground. The action will focus on the most difficult situations and prioritise human rights defenders of all ages who are most at risk and vulnerable, as well as human rights organisations facing very restrictive working conditions. Particular attention will be devoted to the needs of women and LGBTI HRDs (gender sensitive EU HRD Mechanism) and to the situation of environmental, land and indigenous peoples' rights who are particularly affected by attacks, including killings.

Consistent with the principles contained in the UN Declaration on HRDs ("Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms")¹⁰, the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders¹¹, the EU considers "human rights defenders are those individuals, groups and organs of society that promote and protect universally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms. Human rights defenders seek the promotion and protection of civil and political rights as well as the promotion, protection and realisation of economic, social and cultural rights. Human rights defenders also promote and protect the rights of members of groups such as indigenous communities. The definition does not include those individuals or groups who commit or propagate violence".

Other actors active on HRDs protection are the UN (human rights treaty bodies and special procedures, in particular the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders) and regional organisations having

⁸ *Final warning: death threats and killings of human rights defenders*, [Report](#) of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Mary Lawlor, A/HRC/46/35, presented at the 46th session of the Human Rights Council (22 February-19 March 2021), p. 4.

⁹ Front Line Defenders, [Global Analysis 2020](#), published in 2021, p.2.

¹⁰ Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 53/144 of 9 December 1998.

¹¹ <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/GuidelinesDefenders.pdf>

mandates on HRDs (Council of Europe, OSCE, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights). EU Member States and other like-minded countries (US, Canada, the UK and Switzerland) are also engaged politically and financially on some activities linked to HRDs protection, and some of them cooperate with and draw inspiration from ProtectDefenders.eu in the framework of HRD protection schemes. By further developing flexible, comprehensive, rapid and direct support to HRDs at risk, the Action will allow the EU to maintain its political and financial lead on this EU external action priority and ensure impact and added value.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to foster an enabling environment for HRDs, so that they are able and empowered to continue their work for the promotion and protection of human rights for all.

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

1. Enable human rights defenders to operate and to enhance their protection when they are at risk
2. Increase capacity of and HRD access to temporary relocation and shelter programmes
3. Strengthen resilience and capacity of human rights defenders to operate in difficult contexts

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

- 1.1 Increased direct emergency assistance and holistic protection measures for HRDs at risk
- 1.2 Enhanced direct financial and material support to local human rights organisations and groups under threat
- 2.1 Improved access of HRDs at risk to multifaceted temporary relocation programmes and resources
- 2.2 Increased shelter capacities available, in particular at the local and regional levels
- 3.1 Enhanced awareness, knowledge, skills and capacities of HRDs and their networks in the field of protection and human rights work
- 3.2 Improved accompaniment of HRDs through monitoring, reporting, advocacy, coordination and outreach

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1.1:

- Emergency support is allocated to HRDs at risk to implement security and holistic protection measures (e.g. legal assistance, medical treatment and rehabilitation, urgent relocation, physical and digital security measures, subsistence and basic needs, family support, etc.).
- Longer-term support is provided in accordance to the needs of HRDs and scope/duration of threats and attacks (e.g. long term judicial harassment and imprisonment) with a strong focus on well-being (e.g. access to psycho-social support) and the development of protective legal actions (access to judicial and non-judicial remedies), also with a view to prevent further deterioration.
- Particular attention will be devoted to the situation and needs of environmental human rights defenders.

Activities related to Output 1.2:

- Financial assistance, material support and accompaniment provided to local HRD organisations, groups and communities at risk so that they can continue operating and mitigating threats (e.g. activities, core funding, capacities, etc.).

Activities related to Output 2.1:

- Temporary relocation programme grants and accompaniment provided to HRDs at risk in close coordination with members of the EU Temporary Relocation Platform (EUTRP).
- Management and coordination of the EUTRP.

Activities related to Output 2.2:

- Funding and capacity building of new shelter initiatives and temporary relocation programmes, with a focus at the regional and local levels.

Activities related to Output 3.1:

- Training programmes and capacity development initiatives made available to HRDs at risk according to their needs and vulnerability (e.g. risk prevention and security, including digital security, as well as human rights monitoring, documenting, reporting and advocacy).
- Reinforcing HRD protection networks especially at local level with grassroots actors.

Activities related to Output 3.2:

- Implementation of monitoring activities, including field missions (e.g. comprising prison visits and trial monitoring), which will feed reporting and advocacy initiatives (e.g. reports on the situation of HRDs as well as new trends and crisis situations, provision of referenced data to inform decision-makers and policies, publication of urgent appeals and thematic analysis, lobbying for pro-HRD laws and protection frameworks, promoting dialogue with and access to international and regional human rights mechanisms and procedures, etc.).
- Outreach and coordination activities involving inter-alia grassroots HRDs, international non-governmental and inter-governmental actors.
- Increase coordination and interaction with EU institutions and EU Delegations as well as UN presence on the ground with regards to specific cases of concern, crisis situations and policy exchanges.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

Human rights defenders working inter-alia on environmental, land rights and indigenous peoples rights are prominently targeted by threats and attacks worldwide. During previous phases of the EU HRD Mechanism, this category of human rights defenders increasingly benefited from support. Considering that Aid to environment, Biological diversity and Climate change mitigation are significant objectives for this action, the latter intends to devote particular attention to the situation and needs of environmental human rights defenders through multifaceted support under the various components (e.g. emergency assistance, holistic protection including well-being, protective legal actions, training and capacity building, monitoring, advocacy and outreach).

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that activities will place special emphasis on addressing the situation and protection needs of women human rights defenders, and HRDs working to advance women's rights and gender equality. During the previous phase of the EU HRDs Mechanism, the ProtectDefenders.eu Consortium implemented a gender-sensitive approach tailoring support delivered to the situation and needs of women rights defenders and LGBTI rights HRDs who represent over half of beneficiaries (e.g. reinforced outreach to women groups and support to WHRDs protection networks, enhanced inclusion of family members in support provided, stronger attention to gender-based attacks, etc.).

Human Rights

The action will contribute to the defence of the rights of those who are most at risk, vulnerable and marginalised by supporting the work of HRDs and providing assistance to the most affected ones, such as members of minority communities, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, women, children and others affected by discrimination. The action will strive to provide them access to the support and activities delivered by the EU HRDs Mechanism, in line with the human rights-based approach¹².

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/rights-based-approach-development-cooperation_en

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

| Category | Risks | Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low) | Impact (High/ Medium/ Low) | Mitigating measures |
|---------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| External environment | HRDs are increasingly persecuted, defamed, harassed, arbitrarily arrested and imprisoned, tortured and even killed. Pervasive impunity leads to a vicious cycle of abuse. | H | M | The EU HRD Mechanism will address this growing and overwhelming demand to provide urgent assistance thanks to its experience and additional resources. Confidentiality and flexibility are crucial to act adequately in the context of emergency and sensitive situations. |
| Planning, processes and systems | Risk of harm to HRDs in danger in case protection programmes are not implemented adequately (e.g. gap in funding or in continuity of programmes). | M | H | This will be mitigated thanks to continuous and strong commitment of the EU, in close cooperation with its member states, to the protection of HRDs and support to their work. |
| Planning, processes and systems | Difficulty to provide financial support due to foreign funding bans/restrictions; freezing or interception of funds; potential misuse of funding and fraud; impediments on funding delivery channels. | M | L | Consortium partners are able to provide funding in most countries in a low profile manner, regularly assessing ways to channel funding in restrictive environments. Strict due diligence is conducted when selecting beneficiaries. Implementing partners collect relevant information and documentation before, during and after transfer of funds. Precautionary measures and mitigating measures in place to prevent fraud and misuse of funds. |
| External environment | Numerous human rights crisis significantly affecting HRDs erupt in a short timeframe draining important resources | M | M | This will be mitigated by the implementation of additional tailored and country-specific actions to support HRDs at risk in coordination with the concerned EU Delegations and services. Complementarity will be ensured with other actions such as the Human Rights |

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| | from the Mechanism (e.g. Afghanistan) and possibly impacting its ability to address needs of HRDs worldwide. | | | Crises Facility, the thematic country allocations, the thematic programme on Peace, Stability and Conflict Prevention, etc. |
| External environment | Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions: exacerbated threats and attacks targeting HRDs, reduced relocation opportunities, impediments in conducting human rights activities due to limitations of fundamental freedoms. Lack of visa availability. | H | M | EU HRDs Mechanism continued to operate at good pace from start of the pandemic. It re-oriented affected activities, e.g. increasing on-line work, amending temporary relocation plans for HRDs at risk and adapting scope of emergency grants. ProtectDefenders.eu demonstrated necessary flexibility in this unprecedented context. Consortium members partnered effectively with the EU and other relevant actors on visa allocation. Further efforts will be needed to cope with effects of the pandemic. |
| People and the organisation | Challenges to effective and swift decision-making/action posed by complex Mechanism composed of several partners, managing various components at global level | M | L | Since 2015, ProtectDefenders.eu Consortium significantly increased integration of its work, level of cooperation among partners and coordination. This allowed to intervene in a more swift and effective manner in diverse difficult situations, thanks to geographic and thematic expertise available. |
| Communication and information | Security and political risks related to the provision of direct support | M | H | This will be mitigated by confidentiality policy, use of encrypted means of communication and management of the Action at the level of DG INTPA HQ and EU Delegations. |

Lessons Learnt:

From 2014 to 2020, the EU Emergency Fund for HRDs at Risk (managed by the EU with the support of UNOPS and then the Fondation Internationale pour les Défenseurs des Droits de l'Homme, which is ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat) and ProtectDefenders.eu initiative, launched in 2015 and managed by an NGOs consortium, provided multifaceted urgent support to over 46 000 human rights defenders at risk because of their human rights work, as well as their family members (1 200 for the EU Emergency Fund and 45 000 for ProtectDefenders.eu). The progressive development and integration of these two EU global HRD support programmes strongly contributed to establishing EU political and financial lead on this top external action priority. It is therefore crucial to continue supporting and developing the EU HRD Mechanism (composed of ProtectDefenders.eu NGO Consortium and the

EU Emergency Fund for HRDs at Risk), including by allocating increased resources. This will allow to pursue the strong EU engagement in supporting the work of HRDs and protecting those most at risk, in line with EU policy framework. In particular:

- The EU HRD Mechanism enabled HRDs to better answer to and counter security threats through the provision of crucial assistance, which contributed to save their lives in numerous cases (e.g. thanks to emergency assistance, temporary relocations, accompaniment, advocacy, etc.). The Mechanism was also instrumental in providing lifeline support to local human rights organisations and groups at risk of ceasing their activities so that they could continue operating and strengthen their capacity to do their work on sensitive issues (e.g. organisational grants, capacity building, etc.).
- The Mechanism's range of components and flexible application made it highly relevant to answer to HRDs' needs (e.g. combination of emergency and longer term support, range of thematic and geographic expertise, etc.) and to respond to crisis situation on the ground thanks to partners' networks on the ground.
- Work within the Consortium structure led to greater coherence, efficiency and effectiveness among partner organisations, generally improving working relationships among them and the answer to HRDs needs. The operation of the EU Emergency Fund for HRDs at Risk by the ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat enhanced coherence and synergy among HRD support activities.

At the same time, the EU HRD Mechanism has been working on several recommendations to be considered in the future design, in order to improve its action:

- Increase resources available to the Mechanism given the high level of demand and the limited offer available, as well as considering that the programme is now well-known and established.
- Continue improving efficiency of the EU HRD Mechanism by increasing strategic coordination among Consortium partners,
- The ProtectDefenders.eu consortium has more capacity than the EU Emergency Fund for HRDs at Risk in addressing individual cases. It is therefore suggested to further streamline the two actions through an integrated contractual arrangement whereby the bulk of cases would be processed by the Consortium and a limited number through the Emergency Fund with strengthened operational and administrative support from the ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat.
- Establish specific tools to address long-term threats and challenges affecting HRDs and their family members (e.g. lengthy imprisonment and court cases), as well as resulting needs.
- Enhance coordination and develop relationship with the EU at HQ and Delegation level in order to improve support to HRDs in specific countries and contribute to better inform and contribute to strengthen EU action in favour of HRDs.
- HRDs emphasised the importance of psycho-social support, particularly in regards to their ability to continue their work under stressful conditions. Include greater resources, information and access to services for psychological support for HRDs.
- Develop legal protective strategies to answer to increasing judicial harassment and criminalisation of HRDs.
- Improve the ability of the Mechanism to answer to crisis contexts where there is a sharp deterioration as regards human rights and the situation of their defenders.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The EU HRD Mechanism will be operated by the 'ProtectDefenders.eu'¹³ NGO Consortium, as the main implementing partner of EU emergency assistance to Human Right Defenders under EIDHR. Most individual cases will be identified and managed by protectdefenders.eu directly. The Commission will be able to directly select and process with support of the consortium a limited number of priority cases for EU institutions and, in particular, EU Delegations. These two components within the Action will be the following:

- The Emergency Fund for human rights defenders at risk, under which the EU provides direct support through low-value grants of a maximum of 10 000 EUR to individual human rights defenders and organisations who are most at risk because of their work and in need of urgent support, on the basis of a political decision taken by the EU. The ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat will assist in implementing a smooth and efficient allocation of the grants in close coordination with the EU. This relates to activities under Output 1.1 (emergency support).
- The ProtectDefenders.eu programme offering multifaceted and comprehensive support to HRDs at risk managed by all Consortium partners, relating to activities under all Outputs.

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that:

The action will increase emergency assistance and holistic protection avenues for human rights defenders at risk, including longer term support with the development of components dedicated to psycho-social support and legal protective actions. Support to HRD organisations and groups facing pressure and difficulties to operate in the context of shrinking civic space and restrictions of rights and freedoms, will be further developed. Temporary relocation programmes for HRDs who need to move away from danger and/or recover from threats and attacks will be further adapted to the situation and needs of HRDs. The action will also contribute to increase shelter initiatives and temporary relocation programmes, mostly at the local and regional level. Training and capacity-building activities will help HRDs to improve their protection and empower them in their human rights work. HRD protection and solidarity networks will be reinforced. The action will further develop monitoring, reporting, advocacy, field accompaniment and outreach to vulnerable HRDs. The action will provide support to operate the EU Emergency Fund for HRDs at Risk and increase interaction, exchanges and synergies with EU actors.

It is assumed that needs of HRDs at risk will increase further to growing pressure, harassment, threats and attacks worldwide, and that they still willing to engage in human rights work despite these obstacles. It is also assumed that ProtectDefenders.eu Consortium remains interested and able to implement, develop and reinforce the EU HRDs Mechanism and that HRDs are able to continue engaging with international support programmes. Another assumption is that the EU continues to keep a strong level of political and financial commitment to human rights and their defenders.

If these assumptions hold true, HRDs at risk will be able to have increased access to multifaceted and holistic support in order to continue their work and enhance their security. HRDs and their organisations will reinforce their skills, capacity and resilience in the face of increased restrictions. A broader range of relocation programmes and opportunities will be available to those HRDs who are not able to stay in their countries.

HRDs supported through the EU HRDs Mechanism will be enabled and empowered to promote and protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law, provide assistance to victims of human rights violations as well as members of vulnerable groups, and hold state and non-state duty-bearers to account for alleged abuse and improve human rights legal and policy protection frameworks.

¹³ <https://protectdefenders.eu/about-us/>

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

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 (2019-2020) | Targets (values and years) | Sources of data | Assumptions |
|---------------|--|---|---|---|--|-----------------------|
| Impact | To foster an enabling environment for HRDs, so that they are able and empowered to continue their work for the promotion and protection of human rights for all. | <p>1 Extent to which the need for protection of HRDs is recognised and addressed by national authorities (e.g. enabling frameworks and protection mechanisms are in place)</p> <p>2 Number of HRDs victims of human rights violations directly benefiting from assistance funded by the EU, disaggregated by sex and age</p> <p>3 Percentage of HRDs disaggregated by sex and age able to perform human rights work thanks to the support of EU HRD Mechanism</p> | <p>1 New indicator</p> <p>2 New indicator</p> <p>3 Over 80%</p> | <p>1 Depending on first assessment</p> <p>2 Depending on first assessment</p> <p>3 Over 80%</p> | <p>1 UN reports (e.g. UN Special Rapporteur on HRDs), EU reports on human rights and democracy, Front Line Defenders Global Analysis, CIVICUS Monitor</p> <p>2 Reports of the EU HRD Mechanism</p> | <i>Not applicable</i> |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|--|--|--|
| <p>Outcome 1</p> | <p>1 Enable human rights defenders to operate and to enhance their protection when they are at risk</p> | <p>1.1 Percentage of HRDs who are able to enhance their protection thanks to EU HRD Mechanism support disaggregated by sex and age</p> <p>1.2 Percentage of local human rights organisations and groups who are able to continue operating thanks to EU HRD Mechanism support</p> | <p>1.1 Over 90%</p> <p>1.2 New indicator</p> | <p>1.1 Over 90%</p> <p>1.2 Depending on assessment</p> | <p>1.1 Project reports, grants databases, questionnaires, feedback from beneficiaries, etc.</p> <p>1.2 Ibid.</p> | <p>EU HRD Mechanism able to deliver support. Individuals, groups and organisations still willing to act as HRDs in the face of restrictions and attacks. HRDs at local level still able to engage with international actors.</p> |
| <p>Outcome 2</p> | <p>2 Increase capacity of and HRD access to temporary relocation and shelter programmes</p> | <p>2.1 Percentage of HRDs who increased their security thanks to EU temporary relocation programme support disaggregated by sex and age</p> <p>2.2 Number of HRDs who benefited from shelter initiatives supported by EU HRD Mechanism disaggregated by sex and age</p> | <p>2.1 Over 90%</p> <p>2.2 Over 75 annually</p> | <p>2.1 Over 90%</p> <p>2.2 Over 90 annually</p> | <p>2.1 Project reports, grants databases, questionnaires, feedback from beneficiaries, etc.</p> <p>2.2 Ibid.</p> | <p>HRDs willing to use temporary relocation programmes in emergency situations. Restrictions related to the pandemic will ease. HRDs continue to seek relocation at regional and country level when possible.</p> |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| Outcome 3 | 3 Strengthen resilience and capacity of human rights defenders to operate in difficult contexts | <p>3.1 Number of HRDs who enhanced their skills and knowledge thanks to EU HRD Mechanism support disaggregated by sex and age</p> <p>3.2 Extent to which HRDs reported positive impact of advocacy and field accompaniment support</p> | <p>3.1 Over 80%</p> <p>3.2 New indicator</p> | <p>3.1 Over 80%</p> <p>3.2 Depending on assessment</p> | <p>3.1 Project reports, grants databases, questionnaires, feedback from beneficiaries, etc.</p> <p>3.2 Ibid.</p> | Individuals, groups and organisations still willing to act as HRDs in the face of restrictions and attacks. Local HRDs able to engage with international actors. Restrictions linked to the pandemic will ease. |
| Output 1 related to Outcome 1 | 1.1 Increased direct emergency assistance and holistic protection measures for HRDs at risk | <p>1.1.1 Number of HRDs and their family members who benefited from emergency and longer term assistance through direct support disaggregated by sex and age</p> <p>1.1.2 Number of grants allocated by categories (emergency, long-term, legal, medical, etc.)</p> | <p>1.1.1 New indicator</p> <p>1.1.2 New indicator</p> | <p>1.1.1 Depending on assessment (at least 50% should be women)</p> <p>1.1.2 Depending on assessment</p> | <p>1.1.1 Project reports, grants databases, questionnaires, feedback from beneficiaries, etc.</p> <p>1.1.2 Ibid.</p> | EU HRD Mechanism able to allocate grants despite growing restrictions on access to funding and restrictive legislation and policies adopted at country level. |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| Output 2 related to Outcome 1 | 1.2 Enhanced direct financial and material support to local human rights organisations and groups under threat | 1.2.1 Number of grassroots civil society organisations benefitting from (or reached by) EU support (e.g. direct financial support) 1.2.2 Percentage of grants allocated by categories (core funding, activities, training) | 1.2.1 127 annually 1.2.2 Advocacy, campaign and networking (35%), lifeline support (23%), security reinforcement (15%), monitoring/reporting/fact-finding (7%), other (16%) | 1.2.1 Over 130 1.2.2 Advocacy, campaign and networking (over 20%), lifeline support (over 20%), security reinforcement (over 20%), monitoring/reporting/fact-finding (over 10%), training (over 10%) other (20%) | 1.2.1 Project reports, grants databases, questionnaires, feedback from beneficiaries, etc. 1.2.2 Ibid. | |
| Output 1 related to Outcome 2 | 2.1 Improved access of HRDs at risk to multifaceted temporary relocation programmes and resources | 2.1.1 Number of HRDs and their family members receiving support to temporarily relocate disaggregated by sex and age 2.1.2 Percentage of temporary relocation taking place at international, regional and in-country level | 2.1.1 258 individuals (HRDs and family members) 2.1.2 International relocations (59%), regional relocations (32%), in-country relocations (9%) | 2.1.1 300 2.1.2 Over 50% relocations happening at regional or in-country level | 2.1.1 Project reports, grants databases, questionnaires, feedback from beneficiaries, etc. 2.1.2 Ibid. | Temporary relocation remains a viable option for HRDs at risk during the project period, HRDs can access visas and travel when required. |
| Output 2 related to Outcome 2 | 2.2 Increased shelter capacities available, in particular at the local and regional levels | 2.2.1 Number of shelter initiatives supported by the EU HRD Mechanism 2.2.2 Number of HRDs temporarily relocated to shelter initiatives supported by the EU HRD Mechanism disaggregated by sex and age | 2.2.1 Over 10 shelter initiatives supported 2.2.2 Over 75 HRDs supported by the shelter initiatives | 2.2.1 Over 15 shelter initiatives supported 2.2.2 Over 80 HRDs supported by the shelter initiatives | 2.2.1 Project reports, grants databases, questionnaires, feedback from beneficiaries, etc. 2.2.2 Ibid. | New shelter initiatives at regional and local level continue to develop. |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|---|
| Output 1 related to Outcome 3 | 3.1 Enhanced awareness, knowledge, skills and capacities of HRDs and their networks in the field of protection and human rights work | 3.1.1 Number of training and capacity-building support delivered to HRDs 3.1.2 Number of HRD protection networks supported | 3.1.1 40-50 training and capacity-building initiatives 3.1.2 New indicator | 3.1.1 50 training and capacity-building initiatives 3.1.2 Depending on assessment | 3.1.1 Project reports, grants databases, questionnaires, feedback from beneficiaries, etc. 3.1.2 Ibid. | Partners continue to deliver workshops and training events despite security concerns, restricted space. |
| Output 2 related to Outcome 3 | 3.2 Improved accompaniment of HRDs through monitoring, reporting, advocacy, coordination and outreach | 3.2.1 Number of advocacy initiatives undertaken by EU Mechanism in favour of HRDs (materials published, meetings) 3.2.2 Number of field accompaniment provided to HRDs at risk (field missions, outreach) | 3.2.1 New indicator 3.2.2 New indicator | 3.2.1 Depending on assessment 3.2.2 Depending on assessment | 3.2.1 Project reports, grants databases, questionnaires, feedback from beneficiaries, etc. 3.2.2 Ibid. | |

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 3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 78 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.

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

4.3 Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures¹⁴.

4.3.1 Direct Management (Grants)

Grants: (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

The objective of the grant is to achieve the objectives and outputs set out in 3.1. *supra*.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

This action will be implemented by the ProtectDefenders.eu Consortium, which is composed of 12 specialised international human rights NGOs and the Secretariat of the Consortium. ProtectDefenders.eu implements the EU Human Rights Defenders Mechanism since 2015 addressing the most difficult situations faced by human rights defenders with worldwide coverage. ProtectDefenders.eu (1) provides direct and multifaceted support to HRDs at risk and their family members, including small grants emergency assistance, (2) relocates HRDs and their families away from danger and supports shelter capacities, (3) carries out training, monitoring, advocacy and outreach. The ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat (Fondation Internationale pour les Défenseurs des Droits de l'Homme), with the support of ProtectDefenders.eu Board, operates the EU Emergency Fund for Human Rights Defenders at Risk, thus being in a unique position to ensure coordination and synergy between the two global HRD support mechanisms funded by the EU.

(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 the ProtectDefenders.eu Consortium. The recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified in line with circumstances listed in Article 195 of the Financial Regulation. Indeed, as foreseen in Article 195(c), the beneficiary is in a factual monopoly situation, holding unique know-how, experience and coverage, both in terms of type of assistance offered and geographic reach. The Consortium presents a unique combination of thematic expertise (specialised know-how in several areas of HRD work, e.g. focus on professional and non-professional journalists, women HRDs, LGBTI persons'

¹⁴ 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.

rights activists, economic, social and cultural rights, combating torture and ill treatment as well as impunity for serious human rights violations), and regional specialisation through its members networks and field presence (in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe). The ProtectDefenders.eu Consortium therefore holds a de facto monopoly in broad-scope and worldwide HRD protection. ProtectDefenders.eu Consortium intervenes in crisis situations and priority countries where the situation of human rights defenders and civil society is extremely difficult. In that context, ProtectDefenders.eu provides those in need with vital emergency support and lifeline to HRD organisations facing restrictions to operate. The consortium also implements a comprehensive temporary relocation programme for HRDs in need.

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.

4.5 Indicative Budget

| Indicative Budget components | EU contribution (amount in EUR) | Third-party contribution, in currency identified |
|---|--|---|
| Direct grant: ProtectDefenders.eu Consortium | 30 000 000 | 1 530 000 |
| Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3 | will be covered by another Decision | will be covered by another Decision |
| Totals | 30 000 000 | 1 530 000 |

4.6 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

European Commission Headquarters will carry out the contracting and management of the grant resulting from this decision. The EU will be part of the Steering Committee of the EU HRD Mechanism and interact on a regular basis with the Board members and the Secretariat/s with a view to ensure adequate implementation of the Action. As mentioned above, the EU will be responsible for the selection procedure and the political decision on allocating direct support to human rights defenders at risk under the Emergency Fund, and therefore be directly involved in the implementation and management of this component.

The ProtectDefenders.eu Consortium is composed of 12 organisations and a Secretariat. The Consortium Board guides and supports the Secretariat in the day-to-day running of the EU HRD Mechanism. The Board meets on a monthly basis and the Consortium convenes twice a year to agree on strategic approach and implementation of the Mechanism (e.g. annual workplans, implementation review, etc.). Final beneficiaries (HRDs at risk, including those belonging to vulnerable groups) participate in the action through regular feedbacks they provide on the implementation of support to HRDs and annual consultations.

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.

4.7 Pre-conditions

N/A

5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1 Monitoring and Reporting

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

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (Outputs and direct Outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators and baseline data, using as reference the logframe matrix. Reporting will be done in accordance to the requirements set in the General Conditions.

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 lies with the EU HRD Mechanism.

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the importance of the action, mid-term and final evaluations may be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission and/or via implementing partners. Adequate expertise on gender equality as appropriate will be ensured in monitoring and evaluation teams.

Mid-term evaluation may be carried out for problem solving and learning purposes and will feed in the preparation of the next components and follow-up phases of the action. It will take stock of the implementation of recommendations made in the framework of the external evaluation conducted in 2019-2020.

Appropriate expertise on gender equality will be ensured in evaluation and monitoring teams

Final evaluations may be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the fact that actions targeting HRD support are a key priority of the Thematic Programme on Human Rights and Democracy and are on the rise at HQ and EU Delegations level.

The financing of the evaluation contracted by the Commission shall be covered by another measure constituting a Financing Decision.

5.3 Audit and Verifications

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

6 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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

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

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. This measure does not apply to the present Action whose purpose is to provide support to HRDs at risk. The action to be successful requires activities implemented and tools put in place by the beneficiary to this end (e.g. website with necessary information and resources for those in need of urgent support, advocacy and outreach actions, etc.). Partial confidentiality of the Action will be ensured whenever needed (e.g. to ensure the necessary confidentiality of some individual cases).

Appendix 1 REPORTING IN OPSYS

An Intervention (also generally called project/programme) is the operational entity associated to a coherent set of activities and results structured in a logical framework aiming at delivering development change or progress. Interventions are the most effective (hence optimal) entities for the operational follow-up by the Commission of its external development operations. As such, Interventions constitute the base unit for managing operational implementations, assessing performance, monitoring, evaluation, internal and external communication, reporting and aggregation.

Primary Interventions are those contracts or groups of contracts bearing reportable results and respecting the following business rule: 'a given contract can only contribute to one primary intervention and not more than one'. An individual contract that does not produce direct reportable results and cannot be logically grouped with other result reportable contracts is considered a 'support entities'. The addition of all primary interventions and support entities is equivalent to the full development portfolio of the Institution.

| Group of actions level | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Group of actions | Actions reference: 412-887 and 410-910 |