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ANNEX 2

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the annual action plan in favour of the Republic of Malawi for 2023

Action Document for Scaling Up Homegrown School Feeding in Malawi – Tsogolo la Thanzi (TSOLATA) II

ANNUAL PLAN

This document constitutes the annual 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	Scaling Up Homegrown School Feeding – <i>Tsogolo la Thanzi (TSOLATA) II</i> Opsys number ACT-61753 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)
2. Team Europe Initiative	Yes: Team Europe Initiative (TEI) “Green Growth for Malawi”
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The action shall be carried out in Malawi, districts of Mzimba, Nkhata Bay, Rumphi, Chikwawa, Nsanje, Phalombe, Zomba. Activities at central level will be carried out in Lilongwe
4. Programming document	Republic of Malawi – Multi-Annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 ¹
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results	The Action contributes to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific objective 1.1: boosting productivity, resilience, diversification, value addition and commercialisation of agriculture and fisheries; expected results 1.1.1. (resilience and productivity in agriculture), 1.1.2 (agrifood value chains) and 1.1.3 (nutrition) - Specific objective 3.2: strengthening social protection systems; expected result 3.2.1: resilience of the most vulnerable enhanced, based on a multi-sector approach to social protection systems
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MIP Priority Area 1, Green and resilient economic transformation, <i>Agriculture, forestry and fishing (310)</i> - MIP Priority Area 3, Human development and social inclusion <i>Education (110)</i>
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG : 2 (end hunger); Other significant SDGs: 3 (Good health and well-being), 4 (Good education), 5 (Gender equality), 8 (Decent work and economic growth), 13 (Climate action), 15 (Life on Land) and 17 (Partnership to achieve the Goals).

¹ Commission Decision adopting a multiannual indicative programme for the Republic of Malawi for the period 2021-2027, C(2021)9116 of 21 December 2021.

8 a) DAC code(s)	310 – Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing: 31194 – Agriculture cooperatives, 40% 31191 – Agriculture services, 10% 110 – Education: 11250 – Basic Education – School Feeding, 45% 11240 – Basic Education – Early Childhood Development, 5%.			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	World Food Programme – 41140			
9. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Internal markers and Tags	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Digitalisation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship digital skills/literacy digital services	YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Connectivity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital connectivity energy transport health education and research	YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Migration @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Reduction of Inequalities @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
12. Amounts concerned	Budget line(s) (article, item): BGUE-B2023-14.020122-C1-INTPA Total estimated cost: EUR 27 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 27 000 000			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
13. Type of financing	Direct management through Grants Indirect management with the entity to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.4.2			

1.2 Summary of the Action

The Action will support the expansion of school meals in primary schools and Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres in seven districts of Malawi, while improving market opportunities for smallholder producers, as preferred suppliers to the schools. The Action will follow the Homegrown School Feeding (HGSF) approach, which is the Government's preferred modality for delivering school meals.

The Action will work with District Councils to ensure that school learners receive diversified school meals throughout the school terms. This will ensure regular access to healthy food for pupils, contributing to a better nutrition and better school performance. It will also increase school attendance, hence contribution to primary school completion rate, especially for girls who are most at risk of dropping out. As the nutritious food composition will be purchased from local farmer groups around the selected schools, the Action will boost agricultural commercialisation and increase income generating opportunities for smallholders, mostly parents of the pupils receiving school meals, triggering a virtuous cycle of socio-economic empowerment of the community. Through a crisis modifier, it will provide safety nets for households in times of crisis (should schools be closed again due to a pandemic or should farmers require support to face a challenging planting season).

This Action will expand the existing investment under the Tsogolo la Thanzi (TSOLATA) – “Healthy Future” intervention, implemented in four districts of the South of Malawi and 200 primary schools, adding three more districts and doubling the number of targeted primary school. It will also expand the school meals to ECD centres, following the MIP's priority of empowering women and girls throughout the lifecycle, which is in line with the Gender Action Plan III². Since it contributes to primary school completion, it also lays the foundations for the EU support to secondary education. The Action will seek to build synergies with ongoing programmes on sustainable agriculture and nutrition (Kulima and Afikepo programmes), supporting agricultural diversification and increased productivity and nutrition education at community level.

The Action contributes to MIP Priority Area 1, Green and Resilient Economic Transformation, in particular specific objective 1.1, Boosting productivity, resilience, diversification and commercialisation for agriculture and fisheries. It will also contribute to MIP Priority Area 3, Human Development and Social Inclusion, in particular specific objective 3.2, strengthening social protection systems.

With this Action, the EU will become the main partner for Government in the area of school meals and will reinforce the existing engagements in nutrition (Afikepo programme), agricultural diversification and support to smallholders (Kulima programme) and social protection (social cash transfers). Finally, as part of the TEI Green Growth, following a food systems approach, the Action will develop synergies with other nutrition interventions, and with activities in support of sustainable farming and agribusiness.

² EU joined communication on the EU Gender Action Plan - an Ambitious Agenda For Gender Equality And Women's Empowerment In EU External Action.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

On average 1 million Malawians need food assistance every year during the lean season, reaching however 3.7 million in the 2022/2023 season. In addition, 35.1% of children under 5 are moderately or severely stunted, and only 36% of primary school going children have access to safe, adequate, and nutritious foods and improved learning. Income generating opportunities for farmer organisations/cooperatives are limited in rural areas. Farmers have limited access to markets, due to physical distance and high transport costs, lack of information on commodity prices and potential buyers. Furthermore, because of limited storage facilities, farmers are obliged to sell right after harvest, when commodity prices are at their lowest.

This Action will support the expansion of school meals in primary schools and Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres, while improving market opportunities for smallholder producers, as preferred suppliers to the schools. Through the homegrown school feeding (HGSF) approach, the Action will work with District Councils to ensure that school learners receive diversified school meals throughout the school terms. This will ensure regular access to healthy food for pupils, contributing to a better nutrition and better school performance. It will also increase school attendance, hence contribution to primary school completion rate, especially for girls who are most at risk of dropping out. As the nutritious food composition will be purchased from local farmer groups around the selected schools, the Action will boost agricultural commercialisation and increase income generating opportunities for smallholders, mostly parents of the pupils receiving school meals, triggering a virtuous cycle of community socio-economic empowerment. Through a crisis modifier, it will provide safety nets for households in times of crisis (should schools be closed again due to a pandemic or should farmers require support to face a challenging planting season).

The Action contributes to **MIP Priority Area 1**, Green and Resilient Economic Transformation, specific objective 1.1, Boosting productivity, resilience, diversification and commercialisation for agriculture and fisheries. It will also contribute to **MIP Priority Area 3**, Human Development and Social Inclusion, specific objective 3.2 of strengthening social protection systems.

This Action seeks to build on existing investment under the Tsogolo la Thanzi (TSOLATA) – “Healthy Future” intervention, implemented by WFP and Ministry of Education, in 4 districts of the South of Malawi and 200 primary schools. It will expand this approach adding three more districts and doubling the number of targeted primary schools. It will also expand the school meals to ECD centres, following the MIP’s priority of empowering women and girls throughout the lifecycle. Since it contributes to primary school completion, it also lays the foundations for the EU support to secondary education. The Action will seek to build synergies with the ongoing programme Kulima and Afikepo, supporting agricultural diversification and increased productivity and nutrition education at community level.

The Action is in line with **Malawi’s international and national commitments with regard to school meals**: Malawi is among the African Union member states that in 2016 endorsed a commitment to promote nationally owned homegrown school feeding programmes to contribute to agriculture and economic empowerment of farmers as well as to improve nutrition and education of its children. The universal provision of school meals in all public primary schools was set as a Cabinet Directive in 2007.

Recognised for its multiple benefits on education, health and nutrition, social protection, and agriculture (when linked to a homegrown model), school feeding in Malawi is multisector in nature and it is enshrined in policy frameworks such as: National Multi-Sector Nutrition Policy (NMNP 2018-2022), National School Health and Nutrition Policy (SHNP 2017), National Education Sector Investment Plan (2020-2030), Malawi National Social Support Programme (MNSSP II) and National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development (2018–2023).

Malawi also participated in the discussions leading to the **United Nations Food Systems Summit** in 2021 and national-level consultations recognised the importance of a multi-sector approach in building healthier, sustainable and equitable food systems. The role of school meals was highlighted as one of the initiatives that will positively contribute to **Action Track 1 (Ensure access to safe and nutritious**

food for all). Furthermore, Malawi is joining the global “**School Meals Coalition: Nutrition, Health and Education for Every Child**”, which was launched during the Food Systems Summit to improve the quality and expand the scale of school meals programmes globally as a platform to reach communities, simultaneously transforming food, education, social protection and health systems.

Finally, the Government of Malawi has identified homegrown school feeding as a preferred model for school meals’ sustainability as it supports both education outcomes and local agricultural production and enhanced community participation. The Action contributes to the implementation of the **National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP, 2018-2023)**, in particular its Intervention Area 4 of diversification, availability and consumption of nutritious foods, which foresee smallholder farmers linked to food purchase for institutional feeding programmes. Moreover, the Action will address some of the critical aspects identified by the NAIP as limiting farmer’s capacities to break the poverty cycle. These are post-harvest losses, limited access to inputs, lack of market access and weak farmer organisations. The Action is in line with the **Malawi 2063 pillar 1** of agricultural productivity and commercialisation and it will contribute to the graduation of subsistence farmers to a more commercial model of production.

The Action contributes to the Global Gateway priorities of education and climate. It follows the Farm-to-Fork approach of the Green Deal and contributes to the **EC Nutrition Action Plan commitments**. The action will contribute to SDG 2 (Zero hunger), SDG 3 (Good health and well-being), SDG 4 (Good education), SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), SDG 13 (Climate action), SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 17 (Partnership to achieve the Goals).

With this Action, the EU will become the main partner (in financial terms) for Government in the area of school meals and will reinforce the existing engagements in nutrition (Afikepo programme), agricultural diversification and support to smallholders (Kulima programme) and social protection (social cash transfers). With an expansion to school meals to ECD centres, the Action follows the MIP’s priority of empowering women and girls throughout the lifecycle. Since it contributes to primary school completion, it also lays the foundations for the EU support to secondary education. Finally, as **part of the TEI Green Growth**, following a food systems approach, the Action will develop synergies with other nutrition interventions as well as activities in support of sustainable farming and agribusiness.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Agriculture in Malawi is largely dependent on rains and characterised by low productivity, low levels of improved farm input use, limited private sector investments and low mechanisation. Food production is further challenged by inadequate post-harvest storage and processing, with post-harvest loss estimated between 10-20 % along the maize value-chain alone. Environmental degradation also contributes to a higher exposure and vulnerability to extreme weather events which have increased in frequency and negatively affects agriculture.

More than half of the population of Malawi lives in poverty and over 20% of the population is considered ultra-poor and unable to meet essential food needs. Every year, at least one million people is unable to meet basic food needs during the lean season period (rising to 3.7 million people for the lean season of 2023). Despite improvements in addressing malnutrition in recent years, high levels of stunting persist and affects roughly one out of three children under five years of age. Dietary diversity for infants and young children is poor, leading to nutrient deficiency and increased health risks. The Cost of Hunger report estimated that Malawi loses 10.3 % of GDP annually, because of hunger.

Malawi is ranked 142 out of 174 countries in the World Bank’s Human Capital Index. A child born in Malawi today will be 41 percent less productive when she grows up as she could be if she enjoyed complete education and full health.

Although the provision of Early Childhood Development (ECD) is an important foundation for first grade of primary education, gross enrolment ratio for preschool shows that only 31 percent of eligible children aged 3–5 attends an ECD centre. Many children still enter primary education without cognitive, emotional, social and physical stimulation that lays the foundation for future education.

While enrolment at primary education level has been increasing steadily (except for a dip in 2020/2021 likely due to the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic) there is still a portion of children not accessing primary education evidenced by the net enrolment rate of 90 percent. Furthermore, the primary school completion is only 50 percent (for both boys and girls).³ Leaving aside the effects of COVID-19 on dropouts for the year 2021, the overall main causes of dropout are poverty, family responsibilities, sickness, pregnancy, poor school facilities (especially for girls) and early marriages.⁴

On academic performance, level of repetition in Malawi primary education system is high, at an average of 21 percent⁵, which can be linked to undernutrition. According to the Cost of Hunger in Africa study, pupils in Malawi who were stunted before the age of five are more likely to underperform in school, with 18 percent of school repetitions as a result of undernutrition. Furthermore, according to a National School Health and Nutrition Baseline Survey, and Tsolata I baseline study (2020), most Malawian children do not eat breakfast before school, which means that they have to learn on an empty stomach.

Despite the political commitments towards universal school meals across all education levels, school meals remain structurally underfunded and dependent on external support. Government annual financial allocation for school meals is on average EUR 106 000 or 0.03% of the total education budget⁶. This covers a very limited number of primary schools for just part of the academic year (generally only lean season months).

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

The main stakeholders of the Action comprise International Organisations, key Government Ministries, pre-school and primary school learners, and Farmers organisations as described below.

Ministry of Education – Department of School Health and Nutrition and HIV/AIDS (DSHNHA), responsible for the coordination and management of school meals programmes at national and district level. The Ministry facilitates coordination among key stakeholders to promote networking, information sharing and learning and policy coherence as school meals programme in the country is implemented by a number of actors, in support of the government's efforts. The Government of Malawi, through the Ministry of Education, implements a community-based homegrown programme whereby communities are assisted with agriculture inputs for cultivation of crops on school or community land for the school meals programme.

Ministry of Health – Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS (DNHA). The Ministry of Health remains a key stakeholder for providing technical support and overall policy direction and coordination of nutrition interventions (including school nutrition interventions) as per the institutional and policy set up in Malawi. In addition, the Ministry of Health provides complementary activities such as deworming, vitamin A supplementation and water, hygiene and sanitation services. Principal Nutrition and HIV/AIDS Officers (PNHAO) and the District Nutrition Coordination Committees (DNCCs) to ensure coordination of nutrition interventions at District level.

Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare. The Ministry has the responsibility for ECD centres. At national level, the Ministry ensure coherent implementation of actions targeting children 3-5 years, and at district level, through district social welfare offices, it oversee implementation and monitoring of ECD activities in pre-schools (community-based child-care centres - CBCCs), including ECD quality, standards and transition issues.

Ministry of Agriculture – through the District Agriculture Extension Services system (DAESS), to provide technical assistance and training to farmers, with a strong focus on technology transfers, promoting climate change adaptation practices and nutrition-sensitive production, prioritising the productive role and empowerment of women. The Ministry will support with identification and capacity

³ Ministry of Education – The 2020/2021 Education Sector Performance Report.

⁴ Ibidem.

⁵ 2021, Malawi Education Statistics Report, Ministry of Education.

⁶ Based on 2019/2020 Education sector allocation of MK 292 billion (2019/2020 Education Sector Performance Report).

development of farmer groups and irrigation schemes in critical areas of production, crop diversification post-harvest management, quality control, business management, linkage to markets, commodity price dissemination, development and utilisation of menus, and general monitoring and reporting of the intervention on the support to smallholder farmers component through the farmer field school approach within the framework of the District Agriculture Extension Services system (DAESS).

Farmers' organisations and groups will be critical stakeholders. They will be mobilised to supply food commodities to the schools. They will also benefit from capacity strengthening interventions to ensure they have the ability to produce the quality, variety and quantities of food required by the schools. Farmers' organisations in Malawi can be categorised into three main groups according to aggregation capacities, tertiary level (cooperatives; registered), secondary level (farmer associations; usually non-registered) and primary level (farmer clubs). This action will focus on existing cooperatives and farmer associations due to aggregation capacity, registration, and overall governance and business operations. Where possible, preference will be given to farmers groups that have been supported under the KULIMA ("Promoting Farming in Malawi") project or will be supported through the Greening and Growing programme.

The school meals programme will directly benefit **pre-school and primary school children**. School Management Committees are important actors responsible for the day-to-day management of the school meals programme, including cooking tasks, and proper storage and handling of food. The community members surrounding schools and ECD centres will be key through their participation in various school level and community interventions on nutrition, education and agriculture.

As implementing partner for this action, the **World Food Programme (WFP)** has been identified to support the Government to ensure multi-sector partnerships are in place to continue strengthening this homegrown school meals model. Implementation will be coordinated with actors from the public sector (Government institutions) as well as farmers' organisations and local communities. WFP is currently supporting approximately 520 primary schools in eight districts through decentralised homegrown school feeding (65 percent of targeted schools) providing diversified meals according to seasonal and localised sets of menus, and a centralised modality providing fortified corn-soya blend (35 percent of targeted schools). WFP plans to transition fully to homegrown by end of 2022.

WFP is already working with the **Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)** in the sector. Under TSOLATA/AFIKEPO, further synergies have been established to use the Farmer Field Schools Approach to increase agriculture productivity and production of diversified crops. Further information, education and communication materials developed under AFIKEPO and KULIMA will be used, also to promote appropriate nutrition-sensitive agriculture practices. Where feasible, further linkages will be established to enhance access to markets for value chains are developed or established by farmer groups supported by KULIMA for improved income.

The **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** and WFP are currently working together in 200 schools in four districts where WFP is implementing home-grown school feeding. This complementary partnership will be leveraged where feasible in the districts under this action focusing on improving quality of education, WASH facilities and promoting nutrition messaging for better dietary diversification

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The **Overall Objective** of this Action is to improve the nutrition and the education of school children and the food security and economic opportunities for smallholder farmers in the same communities.

The **Specific Objectives (SO) /Outcomes** of the action are to:

- SO1: Improve inclusive access of primary and pre-primary school girls and boys to nutritious and diversified food throughout the school year.

- SO2: Increase access of smallholder farmers, particularly women, to local food markets represented by schools implementing school feeding interventions
- SO3: Improve the management and ownership of the national school feeding programme by the national stakeholders and communities.

The **Outputs** to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Outcomes are:

Contributing to Outcome 1:

Expected output 1.1: A nutritious and diversified meal during school days provided to targeted primary school children (including in ECD centres).

Expected output 1.2: Increased sensitisation of targeted school committee members and parents on the importance of nutritious and diversified diets.

Contributing to Outcome 2:

Expected output 2.1: Increased smallholder-farmer's capacities, with a focus on women, to produce nutritious and diversified food, apt for the national school feeding programme.

Expected output 2.2: Strengthened capacities of smallholder farmers and their organisations on quality agricultural production and marketing, with a focus on women

Contributing to Outcome 3:

Expected output 3.1: Increased solid evidence for policy decisions on school meals

Expected output 3.2: Increased capacities of Government, at both national and district level, on coordination, planning, implementation and monitoring of the national school feeding programme.

Expected output 3.3: Increased mechanisms and tools for community support and contribution to the management and implementation of school meals.

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities related to output 1.1

Activities related to Output 1.1. and Output 1.2 will focus on ensuring children are provided with diversified and nutritious school meals, during school days (*an average of 200 days per school year*), incentivising access to education, especially for girls at risk of dropping out, and linking school meals to smallholder farmers through local purchases.

Activity 1.1.1 Provision of diversified and nutritious school meals.

Through the action, **400,000 children in primary schools and 13,000 children attending ECD centres** (or community-based child-care centres – CBCCs) will receive at least one diversified, nutritious and hot meal each school day.

Activity 1.1.2: Facilitate linkages between smallholder farmers and participating schools via decentralised tendering processes.

Capital and technical assistance to schools and district councils for the provision of school meals will be provided through the action. The action will empower district councils through schools and ECD centres to purchase food locally from organised farmer groups through competitive tendering processes. Relevant staff, school committee members and farmer organisations will be trained on procurement procedures and financial management according to developed standard operating procedures (SOPs).

Activities related to output 1.2

Activity 1.2.1: Use school feeding as a platform to increase awareness on health and nutrition.

Nutrition education will be promoted through both messages/nutrition talks and practical learning through school gardens, cooking demonstrations and promotion of hygiene and sanitation targeting children, their families and school committee members also using materials developed through Afikepo supported interventions.

Activities related to output 2.1

Supporting farmers, to women as a priority, with improved skills and knowledge, access to services (e.g., climate related information and extension services) to increase their productivity and enhance business and governance performance.

Activity 2.1.1: Strengthen production capacity of men and women small-holder farmers to enhance their ability to supply schools with local produce and to access other formal markets.

Areas where capacities of farmers will be strengthened include good agronomic practices, production entrepreneurial skills, and agribusiness. Farmers will be trained on adoption of good agriculture practices (application of organic fertilisers, compost making, crop rotation etc.) and linked to schools for supply of diversified food commodities through the facilitation of competitive tendering processes (link to Activity 1.1.1). Targeted farmers will be those belonging to organisations within a close radius of targeted schools and ECDs. They will be able to supply more and of better quality products to schools as well as in local markets, with ultimately an increase in their income opportunities.

Additional support to smallholder farmers will be related to farming as a business concept including contracting and pricing negotiation skills, and further linkages with KULIMA and other livelihood/food security programmes being explored.

Activity 2.1.2: Support to organised/group farming management and accountability. Promotion of women's participation as well as leadership roles within the farmers groups.

Organised farming is beneficial for smallholder farmers as it brings together collective expertise and combined efficiencies through aggregation, supporting access to more profitable markets. However, cooperatives become exponentially more complex to manage as they scale up and the administrative burden of large memberships creates an artificial limitation to their size.

Smallholder farmers, especially women will be empowered with skills to engage in cooperative/group farming, such as training on financial management and record keeping and exchanges forums.

Activities related to output 2.2

Activities related to Output 2.2. will focus on supporting farmers and their organisations to boost market-oriented agricultural diversification, mitigate post-harvest losses, and improve food safety and quality standards of the food supplied to schools and ECD centres for home-grown school feeding.

The Action will use a market oriented production concept, where farmers assess and analyse the market before production. Government adopted the Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion (SHEP) approach to support smallholder farmers. In addition to trainings, activities include participatory local Market Surveys, crop/enterprise selection and development of crop production calendar.

Activity 2.2.1: Support farmers and their organisations to improve management and quality of the produce.

Farmers will be trained on post-harvest management practices, including storage of commodities. Through monitoring by extension officers, commodities in storage will be regularly checked to ensure compliance with acceptable moisture levels. The activity contemplates awareness and promotion of techniques to control aflatoxin levels in production of maize and groundnuts, as well as the approach to tackle post-harvest losses, and integrates social behaviour change communication (SBCC), also utilising key influencers of smallholder farmers, field demonstrations, coaching of smallholder farmers, and promotion of hermetic storage solutions. About **20,000 smallholder farmers**, with a focus on women farmers, are planned to be supported through this action (activities related to outputs 2.1 and 2.2).

Activities related to output 3.1

Activity 3.1.1 Randomised control trial conducted. This activity refers to measuring nutritional, education and economic impact of school meals at community level.

Activities related to output 3.2

Activity 3.2.1 Provision of technical support to government (national and local level). The support will be provided for effective coordination, planning, implementation and monitoring of school feeding.

Activities related to output 3.3

Through the activities under Output 3.3, the action will build on these successes to maintain and increase the engagement of communities in the home-grown school meals programme.

Activity 3.3.1 Promote community contribution to school meals.

At community level, local leaders, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), School Management Committees (SMCs), student councils and mother groups will be trained in school meals management to sustain the programme. These structures are key for the implementation of the action (under Activity 1.1.1). In addition to the contribution already provided for the management and daily operations of the school feeding programme in schools, where feasible, this activity will combine the homegrown school feeding model (community-based and school grants/procurement from small-holder farmers).

Start-up activities may include:

1. National stakeholder meeting
2. Community and district consultations
3. Assessment and selection of new areas of intervention in the proposed districts.
4. Stakeholder / district entry meetings
5. Baseline study, including gender disaggregated analysis

The commitment of the EU's contribution to the Team Europe Initiative to which this action refers, will be complemented by other contributions from EU Member States and/or EU financial institutions. It is subject to the formal confirmation of each respective member's meaningful contribution as early as possible. In the event that the TEI and/or these contributions do not materialise, the EU action may continue outside a TEI framework.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

Outcomes of the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) screening

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

Outcome of the CRA (Climate Risk Assessment) screening

The Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening concluded that this action is a low risk project, (no need for further assessment). Incorporation of measures to mitigate and adapt to the impact of climate change and promote green initiatives will be central to the implementation of activities within the action. The action will implement best practices taken from livelihoods activities of its portfolio with regards to promotion among small-holder farmers of climate-smart agricultural practices to sustainably increase productivity through techniques (e.g. mulching, intercropping, conservation agriculture, crop rotation and improved water management), as well as making climate-sensitive choices on the variety of crops.

The action will promote cleaner production and natural resource efficiency with farmers groups along prioritised value chains. This includes good farming practices that facilitate improved soil fertility and increase agrobiodiversity.

The action will provide schools with fuel-efficient stoves and will promote woodlots and orchards through linkages with other partners and Government supported livelihood interventions. The action will also support communities around the participating schools on identifying and utilising improved labour and energy saving sources such as fuel-efficient stoves and support establishment of woodlots and orchards. The action will, in liaison with the Ministry of Energy, and in complementarity with the EU funded Wala Malawi energy programme further explore other means of protecting the environment and use of alternative sources of energy.

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 will promote equal participation of men and women in implementation, and increased decision-making by women and girls. Participation of female smallholder farmers will be prioritised and actively promoted to boost their incomes but also ensures they are better placed to make decisions that benefit their households and communities. The provision of school meals will support increased access for girls to their right to education and will contribute to keep them in the school system. Additionally, the action will apply protection measures to ensure the actions do not harm the safety, dignity and integrity of women, men, girls and boys and that the support is provided in ways respectful of their rights.

Human Rights - Accountability to affected populations

Ensuring interventions are accountable to affected people is a key aspect of rights-based programming. The action recognises the rights of affected people to participate, voice complaints and provide feedback on areas relevant to programme in a safe and dignified manner. In addition to the monitoring and reporting system for school meals, a formal complaint and feedback mechanism will be put in place.

Disaster Risk Reduction

A “Crisis modifier” is proposed to be included in this Action, as a mechanism to rapidly address and respond to short-term additional needs in the project areas, to protect the investment being made in promoting the uptake of better nutrition practices.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. This implies that the action will undertake measures to include people with disabilities to the extent possible.

Governance

Home-grown school meals is modelled around the primary school improvement planning and school improvement grants that enable schools to address gaps related to education access, quality and governance. The action requires proper management of funds and other resources including timely financial and activity reporting. The action will therefore promote good governance at community, farmers groups, school, district and national levels to ensure that proper financial management systems are strengthened for efficient utilisation of resources. Community committees such as parent-teachers-associations (PTA) and school meals committees will be trained on school meals management including time management to ensure classes are not interrupted. Corresponding standard operating procedures (SOPs) will be provided to all participating schools, farmers groups, districts to ensure adherence to standards and guidelines. The action will support strengthening of coordination structures at all levels and promote learning and information sharing amongst various stakeholders through joint planning, implementation and monitoring.

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating measures
External environment	Occurrence of shocks Economic shocks and climate shocks (such as droughts or flooding in disaster-prone areas) will affect food security and economic position	High	Medium	The Action foresees community engagement, through SBCC activities as well as practical engagement of community members through the school meals committees. When shocks occur, these structures and activities will reinforce messaging on the importance of education, especially for girls.

	of families of targeted beneficiaries – negative coping mechanisms might increase, such as taking children out of school to support the household; or engage girls in early marriage for economic purposes. With climate shocks, smallholder farmers benefitting from the programme may also be affected by reduced harvest.			<p>The Action strengthens the capacity of small-holder farmers to apply climate-smart techniques, crop-diversification, and reduction of post-harvest losses, which increase their resilience to shocks.</p> <p>Crisis modifier: Should farmers supplying schools be affected by climate-related shocks, support will be provided to affected farmers via market-based interventions (e.g. cash-based transfers for inputs) to recover and re-start agriculture activities.</p> <p>Rapid post-disaster assessment to quantify the extent of damage at farmers' organisations /clubs will be carried out to determine available capacity and needs.</p>
External environment	COVID-19 global pandemic or other health shocks	Medium	High	<p>Crisis modifier: Should schools be closed as a result of COVID-19 or similar health crisis, operations of the action will be adjusted, taking into account relevant guidance from Government (e.g., in 2020/2021 TSOLATA/Afikepo temporarily changed school meals to take-home ration support).</p> <p>Crisis modifier: In case of suspension of school feeding, support will be provided to affected farmers via market-based interventions (cash-based transfers) to cushion from loss of income/market.</p> <p>Monitor potential economic impacts of COVID-19, including a possible earlier onset of the lean season and higher food insecurity levels as these could have impact on smallholder farmers' capacity to supply schools.</p>
External environment	Unfavourable weather conditions (e.g., dry spells, pest attacks) affect production of crops from small-holder farmers and from community / school gardens	Medium	Low	<p>Rapid assessment to quantify the extent of damage at farmers' organisations /clubs will be carried out to determine available capacity.</p> <p>The action will promote the adoption of climate smart agriculture among targeted farmers' organisations/clubs.</p>

	(community contributions).			<p>Farmers' organisations/groups will be mapped in accessible areas not affected by shocks to complement targeted farmers' organisation capacity as interim measure.</p> <p>In the Action, community contributions are gradual (from year 2) and targeted to limited quantities and type of produce – hence the impact on overall availability of commodities for the meals would be minimal and temporary.</p>
External environment	High commodity prices from unfavourable weather conditions resulting in higher cost of meals	Medium	Low	Schools/districts will be supported to review the menus during the affected period to focus on combination of commodities that will be least affected by reduced availability and/or affordability (as a temporary measure).
People and organisation	<p>Fraud and corruption.</p> <p>HGSF can be vulnerable to fraud at school and district levels through procurement and fund utilisation processes.</p>	Low	High	<p>Provision of standard operating procedures and tools. Risk of fraud and corruption in processes followed by WFP or its partners in implementing any activity, including school meals, is assessed by WFP's country office's risk management focal points through periodic reviews.</p> <p>Training on accountability and resource management at district and school level.</p> <p>Implementing partners conduct spot-checks on resource management and programme implementation.</p> <p>Mainstream messages on community roles in resource management and accountability (whistle-blowers) within community engagement and sensitisation meetings.</p> <p>Beneficiary complaints and feedback mechanisms.</p>
External environment	Market disruptions	Low	Low	WFP, through its Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) unit, regularly analyses Malawi's agricultural production forecast and market information. Targeted value chains and school menus are selected based on market analysis and production, to ensure that there is sufficient production or potential

				in target areas and that programmes will not have adverse impact on local markets.
<p>Assumptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government's continued and increased commitment to support investments in school health and nutrition, education and agriculture sectors. • Functional delivery of social services at the decentralised level (capacity and continued commitment for implementation at district level). • Current COVID-19 pandemic and other health related shocks are adequately addressed by parallel interventions (COVID Response Plan) • National coordination mechanisms in place are operational and effective. 				
<p>Lessons Learnt: Investments in early childhood development and at primary school age are linked to improved health and nutrition, higher cognitive development and better school achievement. This contributes both to stronger human capital development and to overall national development priorities. Research indicates that school meals have high returns on investment, with USD 1 invested in school meals yielding a USD 20 return to education (through human capital) and to the local economy (through procurement and employment). A 2021 cost-benefit analysis on improvement of quality primary education in Malawi identified limited access to school feeding as one of the factors contributing to poor education outcomes, and estimated that school feeding has a good benefit-cost ratio as it may contribute to additional 0.7 years of learning and 7% increase in lifetime earnings.</p> <p>School meals interventions in Malawi started in 1999 as an emergency response with WFP support. The pilot showed a direct relationship between education and good nutrition, with positive result in increased enrolment and attentiveness. Since then, coverage of school meals programmes in the country has grown and more lessons and evidence have been documented, as described below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils are attracted and retained by school meals programmes. Evidence from WFP's school meals programme in primary schools in Malawi has shown that it reduced absenteeism by 5% and dropout rates by 3%⁷, and increased attendance from 77% to 92%⁸. Similarly, information from the Nutrition and Access to Primary Education (NAPE) programme implemented by GIZ under Afikepo indicates increase in attendance rates in supported schools of 22%⁹. • Evidence in Malawi also suggests <u>school feeding has a positive impact on literacy</u>. An evaluation of WFP's school feeding programme found significant improvements, particularly among girls in Standard 4, in initial letter sound observation, listening and reading comprehension. In targeted schools, 54% more children were reading fluently above benchmark than non-targeted schools¹⁰. • A 2018 evaluation found that school meals contributed to a <u>reduction in health-related school absences</u> by 11%¹¹. Additionally, school meals programmes have supported increased knowledge and awareness on nutrition and healthy dietary practices by learners and their families. Up to 77% of households reported changing their families' diets as they felt that diversified diets improve the health of their children, and 40% of farmers who sold nutritious 				

⁷ FP (2019) Evaluation of the School Meals Programme in Malawi with financial support from United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) 2016 to 2018.

⁸ WFP (2018) Final Evaluation of the School Meals Programme in Malawi with support from United States Department of Agriculture and the Governments of Brazil and the United Kingdom 2013 to 2015.

⁹ GIZ, Afikepo/NAPE 5th Annual Progress Report – Final Report (2021).

¹⁰ WFP (2018). Final Evaluation of the School Meals Programme in Malawi with support from United States Department of Agriculture, and the Governments of Brazil and the United Kingdom - 2013 to 2015.

¹¹ WFP (2018). Final Evaluation of the School Meals Programme in Malawi with support from United States Department of Agriculture, and the Governments of Brazil and the United Kingdom - 2013 to 2015.

foods to the schools stated they produced sufficient quantity for sale as well as home consumption¹².

- A 2019 evaluation also indicated a positive influence on farmers' income and livelihoods, with farmers reporting the advantage of delivering to a nearby school¹³. Before, they had to search for markets in faraway places and faced high communication and transport costs. Grouping in associations has further reduced the cost and strengthened their negotiation power. Several farmers reported having been able to start other income-generating activities, buy transport means, feed the family better and put their children in secondary school.
- Based on data from WFP's homegrown school feeding, most targeted farmers are able to sell to the schools soon after harvest, making on average a profit of EUR 220. When the lean season starts, about 50 percent of the farmers would access the market and make an average profit of about EUR 350. At the peak of the lean season (January – March), about 40 percent access the market with a profit of about EUR 440. Thus, a farmer who sells in all three school terms, on average, may earn a profit of about EUR 1000.

School feeding is one of the most effective safety nets. Particularly when integrated into a national social protection scheme as part of a lifecycle approach, school feeding can contribute to protect from and prevent deepening poverty and promote development. Associating school feeding with other social assistance programmes such as unconditional cash transfers, scholarships and public works provides opportunities to address the multidimensional social and economic vulnerabilities faced by children and their families and helps reinforce the impact of these programmes. In addition to reducing consumption gaps, by providing food transfers school meals improve access to and use of basic services including education, health and nutrition required for the development of long-term sustainable livelihoods.

A WFP analysis to estimate the impact on the household of suspension of school meals, as happened due to the COVID-19 school closure, found that for a household with 2-3 school aged children, the value of the one meal provided at school would amount to approximately EUR 4.40 per month. While this value may not seem substantial, an average rural Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) at the time of the analysis was about EUR 47/month (WFP MEB data, April 2020). Therefore, needing an additional EUR 4.40 per month to cover children's meals in the absence of school feeding programmes results in a reduction of total expenditure of approximately nine percent for the poor household. With take-home rations during school closure, Tsolata I helped cushion the effects of COVID on poor households.

Crisis modifiers also prove to be a valuable tool in response to weather-related shocks (Tropical Storm Ana, 2022), allowing for temporary horizontal expansion of school feeding through take-home rations for over 37,000 children, whose schools were damaged by the storm.

WFP's engagement with local communities related to school meals initiatives in Malawi is well documented. Evaluations show that as a result of community outreach and inclusion, community members become engaged participants, ready and willing to contribute firewood, assist financially where necessary and take active roles in the management of the school meals activities. Emerging lessons from the Afikepo/NAPE programme, showed that at school level school meals committees are a good platform for management of the programme and positive examples can be found in supported schools where community members, local leaders and teachers have worked hand in hand to establish productive school environment interventions and have mobilised resources. But it has also been highlighted how the level of engagement is very dependent on individual communities and dynamics and measures that can be put in place to enhance their participation.

Lessons from Afikepo/NAPE highlighted that spreading out targeting with a small number of schools per district increases operational costs and can have negative spill over effects such as

¹² WFP (2019) Evaluation of the Joint Programme for Girls Education (JPGE) with financial support from the Norwegian Government - July 2014 – October 2017 [Jointly commissioned by WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA and the Malawi Ministry of Education Science and Technology].

¹³ Ibidem

children moving to schools further away from their home within their district because of the pulling effect of school meals.

Implementing school feeding in Malawi is fragmented across different models and implementers and largely depending on external funding. There is need for a strong multi-sector partnership in support of the establishment of a wider national school meals programme, on the basis of the homegrown school feeding model. This will require gradual targets for expansion and progressive increase in public funding.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this Action is that human and economic development are strongly interlinked. A child without adequate nutrition in the first 8000 days will struggle in her education path, and her productive capacity of adult worker will be affected. At the same time, households need stable income to be able to adequately feed and send their children to school. Most of Malawian households rely on agriculture for their income. Homegrown school feeding model represent a win-win opportunity for children and farming households in poor rural areas of Malawi, tackling the demand and supply side for nutritious foods, as well as the need to increase income opportunities for smallholders.

The overall objective of the Action is to ensure that pre-primary and primary school children in targeted districts of Malawi have healthy and diversified diets, while boosting sustainable agriculture production and market opportunities for smallholder farmers, with a focus on women. On the one hand, the daily provision of a nutritious meal incentivises families to send their children to school, especially their girls, and allows pupils to learn better. On the other hand, schools will source the meals' ingredients locally and will become a stable market outlet for smallholder farmers operating in the area. The Action will improve access to education while retaining children in school, and will primarily benefit young girls, who are more at risks to drop out. This will contribute to increase the rate of primary school completion and the access to secondary education. The Action will also increase income generating opportunities for smallholders, mostly parents of the pupils receiving school meals, by triggering a virtuous circle of community socio-economic empowerment.

The main assumptions of the Actions are that i) political commitment to universal school meals remains high and that progressively trigger increased public finances; ii) homegrown school feeding model remains the preferred modality to provide meals to schools. The EU will engage Government in regular and structured policy dialogue around these priorities. Furthermore, the Action will be accompanied by evidence collection and analysis (randomised control study), providing solid evidence on impact of school meals on nutrition, education and economic status of targeted beneficiaries. This will feed valuable and objective information into the policy dialogue.

The Action will build on the current Tsolata school meals programme, which reaches 216 primary schools, 306,000 children, and supports about 20,000 smallholder farmers. The Action will expand to three more districts and reach 400,000 primary school children and 13,000 pre-school children in 416 schools and 120 ECD centres. It will also reach out to about 20,000 smallholder farmers, thus increasing demand for produce as well as coverage of the programme. The geographical targeting, in collaboration with Ministry of Education, takes into consideration education performance indicators, such as drop-out and repetition rates; vulnerability trends based on poverty rates, food security and nutrition indicators; and coverage of school feeding programmes to ensure equitable distribution of resources.

The Action takes a two-pronged approach, working at district level with school staff and pupils and smallholder farmers, and also strengthening capacities of the Ministry in charge of school meals and supporting evidence-based policy decision. The Action will support schools in the organisation and regular delivery of nutritious school meals in selected ECD centres and primary schools (SO1), boosting the demand side for food products, and at the same time it will work with smallholders farmers to increase supply and meet the demand (in terms of quantity and of food quality, SO2).

The Action will furthermore build upon other initiatives in the agriculture and nutrition sectors. This means that the Action will work with smallholders groups at a relatively high stage of development, because of the support received from other EU programmes. The action will strengthen synergies with

other nutrition-sensitive interventions, linking the targeted schools to the SBCC activities at community level. The Action will seek to build complementarities with the EU supported Gender Responsive Social Protection programme, part of AAP 2023.

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

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

Results	Results chain (@): Main expected results	Indicators (@): (per expected result)	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	Improve the nutrition and the education of school children and the food security and economic opportunities for smallholder farmers in the same communities of Malawi.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Change in enrolment (percentage) in targeted primary schools and ECD centres, disaggregated by sex 2. Change in graduation rate in targeted primary schools 3. % of primary school children in targeted schools who drop out during primary years, disaggregated by sex 4. Food Consumption Score (targeted farmers' households) 5. GERF 1.24 SDG 2.1.1 Prevalence of undernourishment (in the Districts where the Action is implemented) 6. GERF 1.1 SDG 2.3.2 Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex (in the Districts where the Action is implemented) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TBD in inception phase 2. TBD in inception phase 3. TBD in inception phase 4. TBD in inception phase 5. TBD in inception phase 6. TBD in inception phase 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TDB in inception phase 2. TBD in inception phase 3. TBD in inception phase 4. TBD in inception phase 5. TBD in inception phase 6. TBD in inception phase 	<p>Monitoring system of the implementing partners via a survey to be implemented by the action.</p> <p>Monitoring system of the implementing partners based on School records</p>	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 1	1. Improve inclusive access of primary and pre-primary school girls and boys to nutritious and diversified food throughout the school year.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 % of targeted schools that implemented the school feeding programme without interruptions during the school year. 1.2 % of students who receives school meals in targeted school (compared to total students in school) 1.3 Number of children benefitting from nutritious meals distributed with the support of the action (disaggregated by sex, category: primary schools, ECDs) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 TBD in inception phase 1.2 TBD in inception phase 1.3 TBD in inception phase 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. 413 000 1.2 TBD in inception phase 1.3 TBD in inception phase 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Monitoring system of the implementing partners based on School records 1.2 Monitoring system of the implementing partners based on School records 1.3 Monitoring system of the implementing partners based on School records 	<p>COVID-19: Epidemic control measures permit the functioning of schools, including the school feeding programme</p> <p>Farmers maintain and expand the use of sustainable and climate resilient production practices</p>

Outcome 2	2. Increase access of smallholder farmers, particularly women, to local food markets represented by schools implementing school feeding interventions	<p>2.1 Total purchases of school meal items sourced from smallholder farmers in Euros (disaggregated by sex of the smallholder)</p> <p>2.2 Number of smallholder farmers supplying food commodities to schools</p> <p>2.3 Average % change in income of smallholder farmers, from sales to schools, disaggregated by gender</p> <p>2.4 GERF 2.1 Number of smallholders reached with EU supported interventions aimed to increase their sustainable production, access to markets and/or security of land</p> <p>2.5 Percentage of targeted smallholder farmers reporting increased production, disaggregated by gender</p>	<p>2.1 TBD in inception phase</p> <p>2.2 . TBD in inception phase</p> <p>2.3 TBD in inception phase</p> <p>2.4 TBD in inception phase</p> <p>2.5 TBD in inception phase</p>	<p>2.1 TBD in inception phase.</p> <p>2.2 TBD in inception phase</p> <p>2.3 TBD in inception phase</p> <p>2.4 TBD in inception phase</p> <p>2.5 TBD in inception phase</p>	<p>2.1 Monitoring system of the implementing partners</p> <p>2.2 Monitoring system of the implementing partners</p> <p>2.3 Monitoring system of the implementing partners</p> <p>2.4 Monitoring system of the implementing partners</p> <p>2.5 Monitoring system of the implementing partners</p>	
Outcome 3	3. Improve the management of national school feeding programme by the national stakeholders and communities.	3.1 Number of national school health and nutrition policies, programmes, and systems components improved as a result of the Action	3.1 (0)	3.1 TBD in inception phase	3.1 Monitoring system of the implementing partners based on official records	
Output 1 relating to Outcome 1	1.1 A nutritious and diversified meal during school days (an average of 200 days per school year) provided to targeted school children, including in EDC centres	1.1.1 Percentage of the supported schools and ECD centres that offer at least three out of six food groups defined in Malawi	1.1.1 TBD in inception phase)	1.1.1 TBD in inception phase	1.1.1. Monitoring system of the implementing partners based on School records	The education community maintains the support to the school feeding programme throughout the school year

		1.1.2 Quantity of food (by commodity) provided through school meals per day.	1.1.2 TBD in inception phase	1.1.2 TBD in inception phase	1.1.2 Monitoring system of the implementing partners based on School records	
Output 2 Relating to Outcome 1	1.2 Increased sensitisation of targeted school committee members and parents on the importance of nutritious and diversified diets.	<p>1.2.1 Number of different nutrition, sanitation and hygiene messages developed and disseminated (including school menus with local recipes of diversified and nutritious meals).</p> <p>1.2.2 Number of schools promoting homegrown school meals, school nutrition, and hygiene, school gardens, orchards, and woodlots</p> <p>1.2.3 Number of people reached through interpersonal SBCC approaches on good nutrition, diversified diets (disaggregated by sex)</p>	<p>1.2.1 (0)</p> <p>1.2.2 (200)</p> <p>1.2.3 (0)</p>	<p>1.2.1 TBD in inception phase</p> <p>1.3.2 416 primary schools</p> <p>1.2.3 TBD In inception phase</p>	<p>1.2.1 Monitoring system of the implementing partners</p> <p>1.2.2 Monitoring system of the implementing partners</p> <p>1.2.3 Monitoring system of the implementing partners</p>	
Output 1 relating to Outcome 2	2.1 Increased smallholder-farmer's capacities, with a focus on women, to produce nutritious and diversified food, apt for the national school feeding programme.	<p>2.1.1 Number of smallholder farmers trained in sustainable practices with the support of the Action (disaggregated by sex)</p> <p>2.1.2 Number of smallholder farmers trained in governance, business and financial management (disaggregated by sex)</p>	<p>2.1.1 (0)</p> <p>2.1.2 (0)</p>	<p>2.1.1 (20,000)</p> <p>2.1.2 (20,000)</p>	<p>2.1.1 Monitoring system of the implementing partners</p> <p>2.1.2 Monitoring system of the implementing partners</p>	<p>There is a good acceptance of climate-resilient and environmentally friendly good practices by targeted farmers</p> <p>Commodity prices remain affordable in the event of extreme weather conditions</p>
Output 2 relating to Outcome 2	2.2 Strengthened capacities of smallholder farmers and their organisations on quality agricultural production and marketing, with a focus on women	<p>2.2.1 Number of smallholder farmers trained in post-harvest loss, handling and storage (messages and techniques). (disaggregated by sex)</p> <p>2.2.2 Number of farmers trained on diversification of production and quality standards (disaggregated by sex)</p>	<p>2.2.1 (0)</p> <p>2.2.2 (0)</p>	<p>2.2.1. (20,000)</p> <p>2.2.2. (20,000)</p>	<p>2.2.1 Monitoring system of the implementing partners</p> <p>2.2.2 Monitoring system of the implementing partners</p>	<p>Small-holder farmers have surplus to commercialise</p> <p>Food prices incentivise both production and consumption</p>
Output 1 relating to Outcome 3	3.1. Increased solid evidence for policy decisions on school meals	3.1 Number of RTCs carried out with the support of the Action that are	3.1 (0)	3.1 (1)	Monitoring system of the implementing	

		validated and disseminated throughout the duration of the Action			partners based on links to reports disseminated	
Output 2 relating to Outcome 3	3.2 Increased capacities of Government, at both national and district level, on coordination, planning, implementation and monitoring of the national school feeding programme	<p>3.2.1. Number of district officers trained in nutrition, hygiene, sanitation, commodity management, and cross-cutting issues with increased knowledge on the topics of the trainings</p> <p>3.2.2 Number of government staff engaged in capacity-strengthening initiatives facilitated through this Action to enhance management of school feeding</p> <p>3.2.3 Number of capacity needs assessments supported, and plans developed</p>	<p>3.2.1 (0)</p> <p>3.2.2 (0)</p> <p>3.2.3 (0)</p>	<p>3.2.1 TBD in inception phase</p> <p>3.2.2 TBD in inception phase</p> <p>3.2.3 TBD in inception phase</p>	<p>3.2.1 Monitoring system of the implementing partners based on pre and post training tests</p> <p>3.2.2 Monitoring system of the implementing partners</p> <p>3.2.3 Monitoring system of the implementing partners</p>	Transparent mechanisms and accountable management procedures are enforced at all levels of the national programme
Output 3 relating to Outcome 3	3.3. Increased mechanisms and tools for community support and contribution to the management and implementation of school meals.	3.3.1 .Number of school officials, teachers, committee members trained with the support of the Action with increased knowledge or skills on school feeding procurement, management, cooking and safe food preparation (by sex)	3.3.1 (0)	3.3.1 TBD in inception phase	3.3.1 Monitoring system of the implementing partners	

4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is 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 48 months from the date of entry into force of the financing agreement. Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer by amending this Financing Decision and the relevant contracts and agreements.

4.3 Implementation of the Budget Support Component

N/A

4.4 Implementation Modalities

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

4.4.1 Direct management (Grants)

(a) Purpose of the grant

The grant will contribute to achieve Specific Objective 3 of the Action, more specifically Output 3.1. With the purpose of providing solid evidence on HGSE as a tool to not only improve nutrition and education outcomes, but also to improve market opportunities for smallholder farmers, the grant will conduct randomised control trials in selected schools.

A baseline survey will be conducted in all selected schools and ECD centres, as well as with smallholders in their catchment areas. The baseline survey will measure the outcomes of interest, such as human capital outcomes for the children, and income, welfare and market participation among smallholders.

After the baseline survey, half of the schools and half of the ECD centres will be randomly selected to participate in the exercise, while the other half will be excluded. When the exercise is rolled out, the schools and ECDs that were not selected to participate in the programme (the control group) will be the ideal comparator to those that received the intervention (the treatment group).

After the exercise is rolled out and sufficient time has passed for its effects to start showing, a follow-up survey will be conducted in both the treatment and control groups. Changes in the human capital of children and welfare of smallholders since the baseline will be assessed. The differences in growth of these outcomes in the control and the treatment groups will reflect the true project impact.

This call has been launched on 15 March 2023 under a suspensive clause prior to the adoption of this Decision. This is justified because of the time sensitivity of the activities. The control group and the group of schools in which school meals are provided need to be randomly selected before the start of the academic year in October 2023 and the start of activities by WFP.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

Applicants will be international research institutions/ not for profit organisations

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.

4.4.2 Indirect Management with an entrusted entity

This action may be implemented in indirect management with **World Food Programme of the United Nations**. This implementation entails carrying out activities to achieving all outputs under this action, except Output 3.1. The envisaged entity has been selected using the following criteria: i) technical capacities aligned with the action (provision of school meals to primary schools and ECDs, support to farmer's organisations); ii) good knowledge of the Malawian context with good presence of staff on the ground; iii) previous successful experience managing EU funds in school meals in Malawi; iv) long-lasting working relations with the line ministries relevant to the action.

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

Exception to the non-retroactivity of costs

The Commission authorises that the costs incurred may be recognised as eligible as of 1st August 2023. This is justified by the nature of the activities, which need to follow the academic calendar (October year n to June year n+1). In order for the school meals to be ready in schools by October, activities needs to commence few months in advance.

4.5. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

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

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

4.6. Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (in EUR)
Objective 1: Improve inclusive access of primary and pre-primary school girls and boys to nutritious and diversified food throughout the school year, composed of	10 000 000
Indirect Management with an entrusted entity – cf. section 4.4.2	10 000 000
Objective 2: Increase access of smallholder farmers, particularly women, to local food markets represented by schools implementing school feeding interventions, composed of	10 000 000
Indirect Management with an entrusted entity – cf. section 4.4.2	10 000 000
Objective 3: Improve the management and ownership of the national school feeding programme by the national stakeholders and communities., composed of	6 500 000
Indirect Management with an entrusted entity – cf. section 4.4.2	5 000 000
Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.4.1	1 500 000
Grants – total envelope under section 4.4.1	1 500 000
Indirect Management with an entrusted entity: total under section 4.4.2	25 000 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.5 & Audit – cf. section 5.6	300 000
Contingencies	200 000
Total	27 000 000

4.7 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

A Programme Steering Committee (PSC) comprising all key stakeholders shall be established to oversee the implementation of the Action, meeting at least twice a year. Members of the Steering Committee will be (indicative list) National Planning Commission, because of its mandate to “oversee the implementation of long-term national vision and strategies and the medium-term development”, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health (Department of Nutrition), Ministry of Gender, representatives from the Districts where the Action takes place, EU and implementing partners.

In addition to the PSC, a Programme Technical Committee (PTC) shall be established to provide technical guidance and ensure that timely and appropriate decisions are made relating to challenges or issues emerging during programme implementation. The PTC shall also make recommendations to PSC when necessary. The membership of the PTC will mirror the PSC’s membership.

To the extent possible, existing coordination structures at District level will be used to plan and monitor activities related to the Action. The information will be relayed to PTC and PSC when necessary.

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

5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1 Monitoring and Reporting

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

The action will adopt gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation system and processes, ensuring that in all data collection and analysis processes assess at how things impact people differently because of their gender (i.e. through gender disaggregated data, gender analysis, etc.).

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:

WFP will be responsible for data collection on indicators of the logframe matrix. A baseline survey will be conducted within the first three months from the start of implementation of the action, focusing on new target areas whilst for areas with previous implementation through Tsolata I relevant end-line and progress reports data will be used as baseline unless for any new indicators introduced with this action. In the implementation phase WFP will guarantee technical and management support for enhancing institutional performance; management of the monitoring system; analysis of monitoring data and production of periodic monitoring reports.

Furthermore, the Action will be the object of a randomised control trial (specific output 3.1), which will monitor and evaluate impact of the Action (see also below).

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the importance of the action, mid-term and final evaluations will be carried out for this action or its components via an implementing partner.

The mid-term evaluation will be carried out for problem solving and learning purposes, in particular with respect to the involvement of smallholders organisations and with respect to how programme is faring in new districts and new schools and ECDs. 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 Government will build on this action to reach out to more schools.

The evaluations shall also assess to what extent the action is taking into account the human rights-based approach as well as how it contributes to gender equality and women's empowerment.

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 and, where appropriate, apply the necessary adjustments.

5.3 Audit and Verifications

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

6 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The 2021-2027 programming will adopts 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 are instead consolidated in a Cooperation Facility established by a support measure action document, allowing the Delegation 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 type="checkbox"/>	Single action	Present action: all contracts in the present action
Group of actions level (i.e. top-up cases, different phases of a single programme)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of actions	Actions reference (CRIS#/OPSYS#):
Contract level		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	Foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract) – grant – EUR 1 500 000
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 2	Foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract) – indirect management – EUR 25 000 000
	(...)	
Group of contracts level (i.e. series of programme estimates, cases in which an Action includes for example four contracts and two of them, a technical assistance contract and a contribution agreement, aim at the same objectives and complement each other)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of contracts 1	