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THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX II

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the annual action plan in favour of Lao People’s Democratic Republic for 2022

Action Document for “Citizen Engagement for Good Governance, Accountability and Rule of Law-phase II (CEGGA II)”

ANNUAL PLAN

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

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act	“Citizen Engagement for Good Governance, Accountability and Rule of Law – phase II (CEGGA II)” OPSYS number: ACT-60739 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (<u>NDICI-Global Europe</u>).
2. Team Europe Initiative	Yes. Partial contribution to the Green TEI for the Lao PDR as green catalyser through the provision of small grants to local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the area of environment and sustainable management of natural resources, including forestry and climate change.
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The action shall be carried out in the Lao PDR
4. Programming document	2021-2025 European Joint Programming Strategy (EJPS) for Lao PDR 2021-2027 Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Lao PDR
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results	MIP Specific Objective 6: To contribute to good governance, the rule of law and human rights in Lao PDR MIP Expected Result 6.3: Enabling environment for civil society and citizens’ engagement for sustainable development and accountability MIP Expected Result 6.4: Consolidated rule of law and human rights.
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Good governance (151 – Government and civil society)

7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG: SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions Other significant SDGs and, where appropriate, targets: SDG 5 – Gender Equality SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities			
8 a) DAC code(s)	15150 – Democratic participation and civil society – 80% 15130 – Legal and judicial development – 20% 15160 – Human rights – cross-cutting			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	Third country government (delegated co-operation) – 13000			
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 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 @ digital connectivity digital governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

	digital entrepreneurship		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital skills/literacy		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital services		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Connectivity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	transport		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	people2people		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	energy		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital connectivity		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Migration @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	(methodology for tagging under development)			
	Reduction of Inequalities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	(methodology for marker and tagging under development)			
	Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
12. Amounts concerned	<p>Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020131 South and East Asia</p> <p>Total estimated cost: EUR 9 000 000</p> <p>Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 2 000 000.</p> <p>This action is co-financed in joint co-financing by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Germany (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development - BMZ) for an amount of EUR 2 500 000; and - Switzerland (Swiss Development Cooperation - SDC) for an amount of EUR 4 500 000. 			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
14. Type of financing	Indirect management with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ).			

1.2 Summary of the Action

This governance action is the second phase of a flagship joint programming initiative of the EU, Germany and Switzerland, with the overall objective of increasing citizens' engagement in inclusive national development of the Lao PDR. Building upon the results achieved by CEGGA I from 2017 to 2022 (OPSYS ref. ACT-D-37777-00; ACT-D-39158-00), the proposed action will promote more inclusive and responsive national development processes within the framework of rule of law and human rights principles, by pursuing increased citizen-state interaction in the civil society, parliamentary and justice sectors. It will promote increased policy dialogue between CSOs and government institutions; strengthened decision making processes of the National Assembly (NA) and Provincial Peoples' Assemblies (PPAs) on behalf of citizens; and strengthened access to justice for citizens within the justice sector.

CEGGA I contributed particularly in improving the organisational capacities of Lao CSOs and their cooperation with Government and local authorities, increasing regulatory quality, and building the functions of key institutions, including the Parliament.

The action will contribute to Outcome 6 of the 9th NSEDP 2021-2025 (Public governance and administration is improved, and society is equal, fair, and protected by the rule of law), the Justice Ministry Action Plan 2021-25, and the implementation of Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations. The action falls under the EJPS/MIP's priority area 3 "Good Governance" and contributes to the expected result ER 6.3 (Enabling environment for civil society and citizens' engagement for sustainable development and accountability) and ER 6.4 (Consolidated rule of law and human rights). It addresses SDG 16 (Peace, Democracy and Strong Institutions), as well as SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) through its promotion of inclusive policies and processes in civil society, parliaments and the justice sector, and will showcase examples of gender-responsiveness and environmental protection.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

The EU intends to deepen its engagement with partners, including Lao PDR, to promote a rules-based international order, a level playing field, as well as an open and fair environment for trade and investment, tackling climate change and supporting connectivity with the EU, in accordance with its new Indo-Pacific¹ and Global Gateway² Strategies. Governance and human capital are supportive sectors for the EU's overarching goal of promoting a green and inclusive economy in Laos in the EJPS 2021-2025.

Improving governance remains a significant challenge in the Lao PDR, a politically stable, single-party authoritarian state. Decision-making is highly centralised without adequate division of powers, transparency or accountability, in spite of the Government's stated commitment to improve the rule of law. Political and civil freedoms are limited, and the space for civil society remains tightly controlled. Yet, a welcomed gradual opening of the policy space for CSOs has been observed in recent years, notably thanks to Development Partners' projects related to good governance and CSO capacity building. In addition the Party leadership and the new Government in place since the first quarter of 2021 have shown encouraging signs of commitment to improve good governance and strengthen the rule of law, by actually implementing and enforcing laws and regulations, with particular emphasis on improving the efficiency of the public administration and preventing fraud and corruption. This is reflected in the Justice Ministry Action Plan 2021-25, and more broadly in the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) 2021-2025, which fully embraces the Agenda 2030 and seeks to foster sustainable, green and inclusive growth. The Government acknowledges the role of social protection in reducing poverty, inequality, and vulnerabilities and in promoting socio-economic development and social cohesion. In particular, outcome 6 of the 9th NSEDP focuses on improving good governance with the objective that Public governance and administration is improved, and society is equal, fair, and protected by the rule of law. Under the same outcome, the Government also commits to continue to coordinate with relevant parties in the implementation of various international obligations, including the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and other Human Rights instruments ratified by the Lao PDR. In 2018 Lao PDR participated in constructive dialogue with treaty bodies on the basis of its initial report on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the combined third to the sixth Child Rights Convention reports, and the combined eighth and ninth reports on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. Lao PDR has a Gender Inequality Index (GII) value of 0.463, ranking it 110 out of 162 countries in the 2018 index. Since the 2021 elections, 21.95% of parliamentary seats are held by women.

Good governance remains a key priority policy objective of European Partners in Laos, as outlined in the Strategy for Democracy and Human Rights 2021-2024³, and the Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society in Laos 2021-

¹ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/jointcommunication_2021_24_1_en.pdf

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/joint_communication_global_gateway.pdf

³ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eu_action_plan_on_human_rights_and_democracy_2020-2024.pdf

2025⁴. It forms part of the “Peace” pillar of the European Consensus on Development and is one of the six overarching NDICI policy priorities. The objective is aligned with the global Aid Effectiveness agenda and the EU Council Conclusions on a Rights-Based Approach (2014). The EU is a key partner of Laos in the governance sector and is the largest donor to local CSOs.

The action falls into the EJPS’ Priority Area 3 (Good governance). It contributes to SO6 (To contribute to good governance, the rule of law and human rights in Lao PDR), and addresses ER 6.3 (Enabling environment for civil society and citizens’ engagement for sustainable development and accountability); and ER 6.4 (Consolidated rule of law and human rights). At the same time, the action contributes to Outcome 6 of the Government’s 9th NSEDP 2021-2025, the action plans for 2021-2025 of MoHA and MoJ, and implementation of relevant UPR recommendations.

Working in the governance sector in Laos remains challenging, given the complexity and cross-ministerial nature of many key issues, the limited space for civil society and human rights, and uncertain commitment and capacities to implement reforms in the justice sector. However, CEGGA I is appreciated by the Government and has strengthened trust with key institutions in the governance sector, as an essential step in pursuing more substantial policy dialogue on improvements in the sector. In particular, CEGGA I has been instrumental in strengthening CSOs’ capacities and creating the enabling conditions for improved cooperation between CSOs and citizens with the Government, local authorities, and NA and PPAs.

In the context of encouraging signs from the Government to strengthen the rule of law, this action jointly pursues in Team Europe approach with Germany (BMZ) and Switzerland (SDC) the goal of more inclusive and responsive national development policies and implementation to benefit all citizens. Building upon the positive results of CEGGA I and the recommendations of the project’s near-end evaluation, the action seeks to foster increased CSO-Government interaction and dialogue for inclusive national development, strengthened oversight and representative functions of parliaments at the national and sub-national levels, and better access to justice for citizens, by strengthening the capacities of citizens and civil society (rights-holders) to exercise their rights, and civil servants and parliamentarians (duty-bearers) to uphold those rights. While continuing to support institutional capacity development at the central level, the action intends to strategically focus also at the subnational level, where national regulatory frameworks and processes strengthened in Phase I still need to be effectively implemented.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Overall, governance reforms continue to lag behind economic development in Laos. There is limited space for opinions other than those of the Party-State, which potentially affects the inclusiveness of state policies and processes, and the responsiveness of the state (duty-bearer) to the concerns of citizens (rights-holders). The formal operating space for **civil society** is tightly regulated, coordination is ad hoc, and there are few opportunities for CSOs to engage in CSO-Government dialogue on substantive, policy-related topics. This situation presents obstacles to the formulation and implementation of inclusive development policies and processes that are responsive to the needs and views of citizens. The **National Assembly’s** technical capacities for informed oversight and deliberation of legislation is relatively weak and the majority of information is sourced from the Party-State, with only limited access to independent expert information and/or the views of the citizens it is mandated to represent. This affects the quality of work of NA Committees as well as the engagement of NA and PPA members with citizens. **Access to justice** is extremely limited for all citizens, and especially those from vulnerable groups, despite an expanding amount of legislation in Laos. Legal knowledge of civil servants (including legal practitioners) and citizens is low, and there is a scarcity of lawyers. There is a need to increase citizen-state interaction in these three sectors of the public sphere with a view to make national development policies and processes more inclusive and responsive to citizens’ concerns. Women’s representation in national parliament is 21.95% since the 2021 election, equal to the ASEAN average but a reduction in women’s representation from the previous legislature. Women face additional legal obstacles, including discriminatory gender stereotypes and limited legal literacy. Moreover, women remain under-represented in senior government positions (10% in 2018).

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/mip-2021-c2021-9087-laos-annex_en.pdf

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

Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) – The MoHA Cabinet Office has been mandated as the project’s overall coordinating partner. More specifically, the Civil Society Division within MoHA’s Department of Public Administration Development (DPAD) has the mandate to regulate civil society, which encompasses Non Profit Associations (NPAs) and Foundations. (Development partners tend to work with NPAs rather than Foundations.) The Division coordinates with the LCCC, individual CSOs and CSO contact points within other ministries and local authorities, which often have limited access to resources and correspondingly weak capacity.

Lao Civil Society Coordination Committee (LCCC) and the associated Lao Civil Society Coordination Office (LCCO) – Formed in 2019, the LCCC facilitates coordination among Lao CSOs, with the state, and with development partners. The LCCC enjoys a trusted relationship with MoHA. Committee members comprise a mix of retired civil servants and younger people with no previous experience working inside government. As a relatively new organisation, the LCCC/LCCO would greatly benefit from targeted capacity building support to improve their coordination role.

Lao CSOs including women’s organisations and other organisations representing vulnerable groups – MoHA reports approximately 230 CSOs currently registered in Laos, of which approximately 190 are NPAs. They work almost exclusively in service delivery, assisting marginalised communities including women, youth, ethnic minorities, disabled people, and poor people access basic services. Vientiane Capital has the highest concentration of CSOs, but many implement projects at sub-national level. The more mature CSOs possess sound organisational skills and technical capacity, and would benefit from technical assistance to develop their research and communications skills for policy dialogue, whereas the less mature organisations would benefit from foundational organisational development to raise their general capacity.

International NGOs – INGOs may be contracted by the implementing partner as service providers, for the provision of targeted organisational support and capacity building to Lao CSOs, as well as for the management of the small grants mechanism foreseen under Output 1.

National Assembly (NA) – The NA continues to develop in its role as an official space for Party-sanctioned critical reflection and a standard-setter in Laos’ quest to become a rule of law state. The NA’s ninth legislature of 164 members (158 LPRP members, 6 independents) was elected in March 2021 to serve a 5-year term. The proportion of women members decreased from 27.5% to 21.95% (below the global average), and the Women’s Caucus was disbanded. The NA meets for two ordinary sessions per year to deliberate legislation. It also conducts citizen engagement activities, and occasional intersessions to inform its members on selected topics of interest.

Provincial Peoples’ Assemblies (PPA)– The PPAs are attempting to replicate the role of the NA at provincial level, with one PPA in each province. There are a total of 480 PPA members in Laos’ 18 provinces. Approximately two thirds of PPA members are also NA members. PPAs tend to have lower institutional capacity than the NA, due to their more recent re-establishment in 2016, but more potential to engage with citizens and respond to their concerns.

Ministry of Justice (MoJ) – The MoJ’s Department of International Cooperation has the mandate to coordinate DP support to the justice sector, and other MoJ departments have responsibilities to monitor and support the operations of Legal Aid Offices nationwide. Staff capacity is generally weak, and there is scant budget for their monitoring and support role.

Selected **Legal Aid Offices** at sub-national level (to be decided) – The MoJ has been establishing Legal Aid Offices at provincial and district level since 2019, most often with international assistance. Very little data is available about the staffing and actual operations of the offices, including staff skills and experience, size of caseloads, most common legal problems, methods of follow up, and success rates. CEGGA II is well-positioned to provide targeted quality support to Legal Aid Offices, in addition to the existing and complementary support from LuxDev and The Asia Foundation (TAF).

National Institute of Justice (NIJ) – The NIJ is the MoJ’s tertiary law school, and has four campuses: Vientiane Capital, Luang Prabang, Savannakhet and Pakse. Male and female NIJ students have been engaged in a Clinical Legal Education module with support from CEGGA I to provide legal information in local village settings. This approach has a two-fold benefit: it brings legal information directly into the village environment, and also sensitises students to the practical legal concerns of citizens.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In continuation with CEGGA I, the MoFA Department of Treaties and Law will be supported by the Action mainly to provide Human Rights trainings and awareness raising to sector ministries and CSOs, Human Rights seminars for NA, and Human Rights inputs to public awareness materials developed for Access to Justice activities.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The **Overall Objective (Impact)** of this action is:

“To promote good governance, human rights and the rule of law in Lao PDR, as laid out in the policies and strategies of the Government of Lao PDR.”

The **Specific Objective (Outcome)** of this action is:

1. “Citizen-state interaction is enhanced for inclusive national development.”

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

- Output 1.1: The dialogue between CSOs and state institutions has improved in frequency and substance.
- Output 1.2: Citizen-oriented decision-making processes of the NA and PPAs in selected partner provinces are implemented; and
- Output 1.3: Access to Justice is strengthened.

Outputs 1.1 and 1.2 address DAC code 15150 (Democratic participation and civil society), and Output 1.3 addresses DAC code 15130 (Legal and judicial development). All three Outputs address SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) as they engage with key institutions within the governance sector. SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and DAC code 15160 (Human rights) are mainstreamed within the project design, and the specific objective of inclusive national development aligns with SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1:

- Facilitation of the application of Decree 238 on Associations beyond MoHA;
- Capacity development of MoHA, including skills for GoL-CSO dialogue;
- Capacity development of local CSOs including women’s organisations and organisations representing vulnerable groups, and the Lao Civil Society Coordination Committee (LCCC)
- Dialogue between CSOs including women’s organisations and other organisations representing vulnerable groups and relevant line ministries and sub-national authorities;
- Facilitation of opportunities for contributions of CEGGA-supported CSOs to dialogue platforms;
- Strengthening of CSO networks as fora conducive to support inclusive national development; and
- Small grants and tailored support to both more mature and less mature CSOs, including women’s organisations.

Activities related to Output 2:

- Technical capacity development of NA members, particularly on human rights (including women rights) obligations and the integration of rule of law principles into NA work;
- Thematic hearings and independent expertise for NA members on environmental protection, human rights, gender, and vulnerable groups;
- Facilitation of the exchange of expertise and experience between NA members and other stakeholders, including between NA Committees and respective line ministries, Think Tanks, and CSOs;

- Trainings for PPAs on application of the new Public Engagement Toolkit, including sensitization to the specific needs of women and vulnerable groups, and scaling up of public engagement efforts;
- Support to female parliamentarians and staff, through training and coaching in “soft skills” such as networking and communication, and identification of PPA processes and dynamics which disadvantage the ability of female parliamentarians to fulfil their roles as PPA members.

Activities related to Output 3:

- Support to MoJ/selected Legal Aid Offices to develop and implement tailor-made outreach strategies to reach vulnerable target groups, including development of information materials for specific target groups;
- Dialogue between Legal Aid Offices, PPAs and provincial administrations in 2 provinces to strengthen responsiveness to citizens’ legal requests to all public institutions at provincial level;
- Support to establish effective information flow between MoJ and provincial Legal Aid Offices, in 2 provinces, including data collection, analysis and management support;
- Strengthening of the NIJ’s Clinical Legal Education (CLE) approach, focusing on rural field work for students on legal topics related to gender, vulnerable groups, and environmental protection;
- Provision of training for civil servants in CEGGA partner ministries and provincial authorities on rule of law development methodologies in public administration;
- Promotion for domesticated human rights legislation to be applied by Legal Aid Offices, PPAs and provincial administrations.

The commitment of the EU’s contribution to the Team Europe Initiative foreseen under this action plan will be complemented by other contributions from Team Europe partners. It is subject to the formal confirmation of each respective partners’ meaningful contribution as early as possible. In the event that the TEIs and/or these contributions do not materialise the EU action may continue outside a TEI framework.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

The action will make available to local CSOs small grants to also work on issues such as natural resource management, climate change and the green economy. When possible, activities will have specific focus on environmental protection (including adaptation to climate change and protection of natural resources) to showcase the implementation of CSO-state interaction and the application of the rule of law with the use of specific sectoral examples. The action will also support thematic hearings and independent expertise for NA members on environment matters.

Outcomes of the SEA screening: The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening concluded that no further action was required.

Outcomes of the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) screening: (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project)

The EIA (Environment Impact Assessment) screening classified the action as Category C (no need for further assessment).

Outcome of the CRA (Climate Risk Assessment) screening (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project)

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

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 in line with the GAP III and article 8.3 of the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation, and SDG 5 - Gender Equality, the action will promote gender equality, and in particular women’s and girls’ participation and leadership, by providing specific capacity building for women leaders, sensitisation of local authorities to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment, strengthened access to justice for women, and small grants reserved specifically for women’s organisations and gender equality actions. The Action will contribute to the Gender Action Plan III

(2021-2025) and especially to the thematic area “Promoting equal participation and leadership”. The logframe measures multiple gender-relevant results at specific objective and output level, and data will be sex-disaggregated wherever possible.

Human Rights

The project formulation has been guided by a rights-based approach and the principles of ‘do no harm’ and ‘leaving no one behind’, in line with the action’s focus on governance, rule of law and human rights. The action will focus on citizens' interactions with the state, in terms of contributing to policy processes and implementation, and utilisation of citizens’ rights in the parliamentary and justice sectors. Each output includes activities which specifically address human rights: training on human rights for civil servants and staff of CSOs; seminars on human rights for parliamentarians; and the development and dissemination to citizens of public information materials on selected human rights issues. Additionally, proposed programme activities contribute to the implementation of multiple UPR recommendations supported by the Lao PDR in an implicit manner.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. This implies that Laos’ well-established disability-focused CSOs will be eligible to apply for small grants and capacity building opportunities, the events and training programmes will be facilitated for people with disabilities and access to justice to people with disability will be facilitated, to the extent possible, through the legal aid offices, despite disability issues not being the main focus of the action. Lao PDR ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 15 September 2009.

Democracy

The action implicitly addresses democratic governance processes by supporting increased citizen-state interactions, civil society, parliamentary accountability and a more effective administration of justice to facilitate more inclusive and responsive national development. As such, it is well-aligned with SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and Objective 3 under Outcome 6 of the Government’s 9th NSEDP which aims to ensure political stability, peace and order, democracy, unity, justice and civilization within Lao society.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

Overall the domestic situation is stable, and the risk of a violent conflict with neighbouring countries or due to international or domestic terrorism in the next 12-24 months is minimal. Therefore, no negative impact is expected.

Disaster Risk Reduction

Not applicable.

Other considerations if relevant

The action will involve **youth** (NIJ students) as agents for change in the provision of legal information to citizens, and expose them to the practical legal concerns of citizens through village-based Clinical Legal Education activities. The action will also engage with citizens from **ethnic groups**, who are disproportionately affected by poverty and marginalisation in Laos. The Action will also support the **digitalisation** of processes within the partner institutions in order to enhance collection, management, analysis and accessibility of information and more effective communication between stakeholders. Inclusivity of marginalised communities, minorities, the poorest, indigenous peoples, peoples with disabilities and people living in severe poverty, vulnerable women, children and youth will be taken into account when designing specific activities, in line with SDG 10 – Reduced Inequality.

Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating measures
	Change in the political engagement from the top Party leadership and key state partners’ institutions to	Low	Medium	The project is fully aligned with the national priorities and strategies already identified for the next five years, including the 9 th NSEDP which aims to implement the Resolution of

External environment	continue improving public governance and rule of law, in line with the national policies			the 11 th Party Congress as well as to continue the implementation of the 10-year National Strategy on Socio-Economic Development 2016-2025 and Vision 2030 of the Lao PDR.
Planning, processes and systems	Weak capacity of national actors in planning and monitoring processes and systems.	High	Low	The project design assumes weak capacity of national actors. It provides technical support with capacity building and soft skills trainings to address this risk.
Planning, processes and systems	Weak cross-sectoral coordination reduces the potential of the project to make meaningful impact.	Medium	Medium	The project will maintain close, regular, and pro-active communications with all project partners, and organise regular cross-sectoral meetings to bring project partners together. The annual Advisory Board meetings will provide the opportunity for higher-level cross-sectoral coordination within the scope of the project.
People and the organisation	CSOs are unable to absorb funds.	Medium	Medium	To ease absorption capacity, the project will prioritise coordination with other grant-providing donors. It proposes to utilise a sectoral theme for the provision of small grants, which will assist coordination with other donors. In addition, it will employ different funding strategies depending on whether the programme will target ‘mature’ and developed CSOs (for research, advocacy and communications) or ‘less mature’ and younger CSOs (for basic organisational development) to also assist with absorption capacity.
Legality and regulatory aspects	Lao state partners are reluctant to agree on CEGGA’s implementing strategy to work in close partnership with INGOs and local CSOs.	Medium	Medium	The GoL has participated in the design of the Action since its outset and coordination will be ensured also during the implementation of the project activities, including those implemented by CSOs. CEGGA II also benefits from the positive relationships and momentum produced by CEGGA I.
Communication and information	Weak or irregular flow of information within project stakeholders, including communication to central-level ministry counterparts	Medium	Medium	The management structure of the Action will ensure a participatory and inclusive approach, to prevent this risk and be able to manage it if happening. Reporting formats and schedules will be established at the start of the project, to ensure that data required for project reporting is being gathered, processed and provided at each level of GoL.

Lessons Learnt: The near-end evaluation (2021) identified key lessons learnt from CEGGA I’s experience, which focused mainly on regulatory frameworks and institution-building at central level. **Taking time to build relationships**

was essential for creating trust and ownership of partners. The **interactive process of developing the implementation approach** and designing activities with partners successfully built joint understanding among programme implementers. **Remaining flexible** in preparing operations plans was essential, and **selecting the right entry points** unlocked the opportunity to extend the project's scope of work. **NA and PPA support was instrumental in generating synergies between components** as the NA passes legislation prepared by the project's partner ministries (MoJ, MoHA). GIZ's collaboration with the NA resulted in strong national ownership and buy-in of the NA, vis-à-vis agreed project activities. CEGGA's support to MoJ helped gradually to build the capacity of the Ministry's staff and increase their ownership for future activities. The **multi-layered steering structure** led to a high level of ownership and strong commitment from all stakeholders. CEGGA successfully used up-scaling approaches in all components. In component 1 awareness raising and dialogue sessions between authorities and CSOs were first conducted in five provinces and then rolled out to all provinces. In component 2 the knowledge transferred to NA members through previous projects by Germany and Switzerland was scaled up to PPAs under FAs with the NA. In component 3 scaling up happened through replication of CEGGA's approaches for clinical legal education and legal aid by other agencies, mainly TAF, and to some extent also LuxDev. On a more critical level, **plans need to have a realistic timeline**, and it is crucial to **agree on project indicators with core partners already** in the design stage.

These lessons have been fully integrated into the design of CEGGA II, where the replication of successful approaches has been ensured, and key stakeholders have been consulted since the beginning. Based on these lessons, CEGGA II will also refocus its engagement from the central to the sub-national level to promote the translation of governance policies and principles into more tangible and practical outcomes for citizens at local level.

3.4 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that:

- *IF* CSO capacities, including the capacities of women’s organisations, and the capacities of MoHA and other selected ministries and local authorities are strengthened, *AND* CSO-GoL interactions take place on a regular basis, *THEN* CSO-GoL interactions will become more substantive and provide a greater diversity of views and experiences to GoL;
- *IF* the capacity of NA/PPA members and staff to perform oversight and representative functions is strengthened, *AND* they are willing and able to promote transparent and accountable governance mechanisms within the state sector, *THEN* they will be able to serve as genuine representatives of all citizens, including women, youth, ethnic groups and other vulnerable groups, and contribute to the rule of law and human rights; and
- *IF* the technical and administrative capacities of MoJ and Legal Aid Office staff (duty-bearers) are improved and citizens (rights-holders) are more aware of their legal rights through a variety of awareness raising mechanisms (eg: from NIJ students, CSOs, etc), *AND* Legal Aid Offices have the required minimum resources to provide responsive legal aid, *THEN* citizens (rights-holders) will be able to obtain better access to justice, including gender-sensitive justice, and human rights and the rule of law will be enhanced.
- *IF* one or more of the three components above are effective (eg: CSO-GoL interaction is more substantive and diverse; NA/PPAs serve as genuine representatives of all citizens; and citizens are able to obtain better access to justice), *AND* the GoL and/or parliaments integrate the voices and concerns of citizens and civil society, *THEN* national development will be more inclusive.

The overall assumption is that the combination of increased citizen-state interactions will enable citizens (rights-holders) to voice their opinions and exercise their rights vis-à-vis the State more often, and facilitate the adoption by the Party-State (duty-bearers) of more inclusive and responsive policies and processes in national socio-economic development, based on their exposure to a greater diversity of views from citizens and CSOs.

Fully involving the Government of Lao PDR during CEGGA I’s design and implementation has produced positive outcomes so far. In particular, this highly visible governance programme appreciated by the Government, has been instrumental in strengthening CSOs’ capacities and in creating the conditions for improved cooperation with the Government, local authorities, and national/provincial Assemblies. CEGGA I also helped to strengthen trust with key institutions in the governance sector, such as the Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs and Justice Ministries, and the National/Provincial Assemblies, as an essential step in pursuing policy dialogue on designing and implementing governance reforms. Building upon the positive results achieved and the recommendations of 2021 CEGGA I near-end evaluation, the EU, Germany and Switzerland will seek to continue strengthening capacities of both rights holders and duty bearers, support legal and judicial development, reinforce the role of the National Assembly at national and provincial levels, and foster a gradual opening of the enabling environment for CSOs (including women’s organisations and other organisations representing vulnerable groups.). This will contribute to promote good governance, and strengthen human rights and the rule of law in Lao PDR, through more inclusive and responsive national development processes.

3.5 Logical Framework Matrix

This indicative logframe constitutes the basis for the monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the intervention. On the basis of this logframe matrix, a more detailed logframe (or several) may be developed at contracting stage. In case baselines and targets are not available for the action, they should be informed for each indicator at signature of the contract(s) linked to this AD, or in the first progress report at the latest. New columns may be added to set intermediary targets (milestones) for the Output and Outcome indicators whenever it is relevant.

At inception, the first progress report should include the complete logframe (e.g. including baselines/targets). Progress reports should provide an updated logframe with current values for each indicator. The final report should enclose the logframe with baseline and final values for each indicator. The indicative logical framework matrix may evolve during the lifetime of the action depending on the different implementation modalities of this action. The activities, the expected Outputs and related indicators, targets and baselines included in the logframe matrix may be updated during the implementation of the action, no amendment being required to the Financing Decision.

Results	Results chain (a): Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (a): (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	To promote good governance, human rights and the rule of law in Lao PDR, as laid out in GoL's policies and strategies	Strengthened good governance, including increased representation of women and ethnic groups, and implementation of the rule of law and human rights	X in 3/2022 1. political climate for citizen engagement: 2. mechanism for state-citizen dialogue: 3. seizing state-citizen dialogue opportunities: 4. Inclusiveness: 5. Rule of law: 6. Human rights:	Y in 2025 1. political climate for citizen engagement: 2. mechanism for state-citizen dialogue: 3. seizing state-citizen dialogue opportunities: 4. Inclusiveness: 5. Rule of law: 6. Human rights	Focus group discussion to assess the progress using rubrics scale and questionnaire methodologies among relevant stakeholders	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome	1 Citizen-state interaction is enhanced for inclusive national development.	1.1 Number of CEGGA-supported CSOs that contribute to multi-stakeholder dialogue (of which X contributions reflect on impact of gender equality or rights). **1.2 Number of draft legislations that were deliberated during Ordinary sessions of the NA, to which independent experts and/or CSOs had provided gender-related inputs. *1.3 The percentage of number of issues raised by citizens through public engagement tools that are followed through by CEGGA-supported Provincial People's Assemblies (PPAs). **1.4 Number of citizens (sex-disaggregated) who received legal aid in selected provinces. 1.5 Percentage of women in CEGGA-supported partner institutions/ organisations with a positive perception on their influence	1.1 X (2022) 1.2 X (2022) 1.3 Average (all provinces): 70.6% (2019) 1.4 X (2022) 1.5 X (2022)	1.1 Y (2025) 1.2 Y (2025) 1.3 90% (2025) 1.4 Y (2025) 1.5 Y (2025)	1.1 Attendance lists of meetings; qualitative interviews with participating CSOs. 1.2 NA reports on Ordinary Sessions. 1.3 PPA operational assessments; NA/PPA Reports. 1.4 Lists of cases; FGDs with Legal Aid Office staff. 1.5 Survey of female Legal Aid Office staff, female NA/PPA members and staff, female CSO staff, female NIJ students.	The GoL and parliaments integrate the voices and concerns of citizens and civil society into national development policy and processes.

		in political, economic or public life at all levels.				
Output 1	1.1 The dialogue between CSOs and state institutions has improved in frequency and substance.	<p>1.1.1 The number of meetings/year between state institutions (MoHA, line ministries, people’s assemblies on national and provincial level) and CEGGA-supported CSOs has increased.</p> <p>1.1.2 The number of technical/qualitative inputs on environmental issues, gender equality, and inclusion of vulnerable groups of CEGGA-supported CSOs to meetings between state institutions and CSOs has increased.</p> <p>1.1.3 Number of CSO projects implemented, contributing to inclusive socio-economic development and generating experiences and insights for policy dialogue (% women’s organizations).</p>	<p>1.1.1 X (2022) National/Provincial</p> <p>1.1.2 X (2022)</p> <p>1.1.3 X CSO projects (2022)</p>	<p>1.1.1 Y (2025)</p> <p>1.1.2 Y (2025)</p> <p>1.1.3 Y CSO projects (2025)</p>	<p>1.1.1 Regular meetings (MoHA, line ministries), sector working groups, RTMs, joint GoL/CSO project visits, CSO Fairs, joint small project workshops.</p> <p>1.1.2 CSO briefing notes, videos, statements, research results presented during meetings with GoL (see sources for indicator 1.1).</p> <p>1.1.3 CSO project documentation; related inputs to policy discussion</p>	<p>Civil Society Organisations are invited to contribute to multi-stakeholder dialogue.</p> <p>Covid-19 Restrictions allow for small project implementation.</p> <p>CSO-GoL interactions take place on a regular basis</p>
Output 2	1.2: Citizen-oriented decision-making processes of the NA and PPAs in selected partner provinces are implemented.	<p>1.2.1. Two selected NA Committees (Law Committee; Justice Committee) utilise existing mechanisms for demand-oriented information resources to seek 14 inputs on CEGGA-II-focused topics (i.e. citizen-state interaction, vulnerable groups, gender equality, environment) from independent experts, CEGGA-II-supported LCCC / CSOs, and showcasing experiences in CEGGA II partner provinces.</p> <p>1.2.2 The operational guide for post-legislative scrutiny has been applied in one additional legislative process of the NA.</p> <p>1.2.3 PPA members (female and male) have elaborated 4 successful instances and</p>	<p>1.2.1 Two selected NA Committees have sought 1 independent expert input (petitions), 0 CSO contributions and 0 showcasing experiences (2021)</p> <p>1.2.2 11 (2022)</p>	<p>1.2.1 Two selected NA Committees have sought 6 independent expert inputs, 4 CSO contributions and 4 showcasing experiences (2025)</p>	<p>1.2.1 Monitoring data from the NA’s Institute of Legislative Studies (ILS) & from thematic hearings.</p> <p>1.2.2 Interviews with PPA staff involved in the elaboration of showcases during workshops; workshop reports; documented stories (eg: via social media).</p>	<p>Inputs provided through existing mechanisms for demand-oriented information resources are citizen-oriented (women and vulnerable groups in particular) and draw synergies with other areas of engagement</p>

		<p>processes which showcase gender-responsiveness related to their PPA work.</p> <p>1.2.4 Percentage of trained PPA staff (sex-disaggregated) reporting to support PPA members in applying mechanisms to engage with citizens as described in the public engagement toolkit.</p>	<p>1.2.3 0 successful instances and processes which showcase PPA gender-responsiveness (2022)</p> <p>1.2.4 X of X% of trained PPA staff (2022)</p>	<p>1.2.2 11 (2025)</p> <p>1.2.3 4 (2025)</p> <p>1.2.4 Y of Y% trained PPA staff (2025)</p>	<p>1.2.3 4 successful instances and processes which showcase PPA gender-responsiveness (2025)</p> <p>1.2.4 Interviews with PPA staff on application of the mechanisms and the content (showcasing application of toolkit).</p>	<p>and the showcasing approach.</p> <p>Citizens in the partner provinces are aware of public engagement mechanisms with the PPA and use them.</p> <p>The NA and PPAs are willing (internal) and able (external) to promote accountable governance mechanisms within the state sector.</p>
Output 3	1.3 Access to Justice is strengthened.	<p>1.3.1 The number of citizens (sex-disaggregated) who received legal information from X Provincial and Y District Legal Aid offices in the selected 2 Partner Provinces has increased by x%.</p> <p>1.3.2 Percentage of CLE/NIJ students (sex-disaggregated) able to provide a concrete example of where they provided information to a citizen on a gender-related legal issue. (showcasing).</p> <p>1.3.3 Number of public officials and NA/PPA members (sex-disaggregated)</p>	<p>1.3.1 X (2022);</p> <p>1.3.2 X% of X students (2022)</p> <p>1.3.3 X (2022)</p>	<p>1.3.1 Y (2025)</p> <p>1.3.2 Y% of Y students (2025)</p> <p>1.3.3 Y (2025)</p>	<p>1.3.1 Statistics/ reports of selected Provincial & District Legal Aid Offices.</p> <p>1.3.2 Qualitative survey as part of the clinical legal education (CLE)/NIJ curriculum after village visits.</p> <p>1.3.3 MoJ/NAPPA statistics or</p>	<p>Citizens are using legal aid services: legal aid services meet citizens' legal needs.</p> <p>The selected Provincial Legal Aid</p>

		<p>aware of rule of law development methodologies in public administration as a principle for access to justice increased by x%.</p>			<p>attendance lists of participants (training, information events, discussion fora).</p>	<p>services are operational.</p> <p>MoJ is committed to engage in RoL development methodologies in public administration.</p> <p>Covid restrictions allow NIJ students to visit the field.</p> <p>MoJ</p>
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4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this Action, it is envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the Lao PDR.

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 72 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 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 measures⁵.

4.3.1 Indirect Management with a pillar assessed entity

This action may be implemented in indirect management with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ).

This implementation entails a contribution to the achievement of the specific objective (outcome) and the three corresponding outputs specified in 3.1.

The envisaged entity has been selected using the following criteria:

- i) experience working in the governance sector;
- ii) experience in promoting alignment of EU interests, policies and values in partner countries; and
- iii) expertise in providing advisory services, capacity building and/or technical assistance to the public and civil society sectors.

On i) GIZ has demonstrated experience in Laos and in the region, for example with the Mekong River Commission and ASEAN. GIZ has been active in the Lao PDR since 1993, with an increasing engagement in the governance sector including in the field of administration, law and justice. Besides, it has already implemented the first phase of the CEGGA programme between 2017 and 2022.

On ii) GIZ, as part of the German Development Cooperation, is fully integrated in the planning and implementation of the European Joint-Programming process in the Lao PDR, including the current Team-Europe Strategy 2021-2025. Under delegated cooperation arrangements, GIZ is also accredited to manage European Commission funds set aside to support partner countries. As such, it has proven experience in focusing on common goals while promoting alignment of EU interests, policies and values.

On iii) GIZ has demonstrated its capacity to provide advisory services, capacity building and technical assistance through its work in partnership with the Government of Lao PDR and partners, enabling smooth facilitation of policy dialogue, advisory services and capacity development.

Therefore, indirect management through this EU Member State organisation is assessed to be the best option to ensure a fully integrated and coherent implementation of all components of the Action, while also ensuring full compliance with the EU's requirements of minimum contract size and EU visibility. Germany (BMZ)

⁵ 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.

and Switzerland are anticipated to contribute respectively 27% and 50% of the total cost of the proposed action which will be channelled through and implemented by GIZ.

If negotiations with the above-mentioned entity fail, that part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with Lux-Development S.A. (LuxDev) or UNDP. The implementation by these alternative entities would be justified because of the following criteria: i) both have long experience in the governance sector in the Lao PDR; ii) LuxDev, as the agency of an EU Member State, has significant experience in promoting alignment of EU interests, policies and values, while UNDP has previously implemented EU funded governance programs, and so has similar experience in Laos and other partner countries; and, iii) both have expertise in providing advisory services, capacity building and/or technical assistance to the public and civil society sectors.

In case the envisaged entity and the replacement entity mentioned above would need to be replaced, the Commission's services may select another 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 01st November 2022 in the event that the corresponding financing decision is not adopted prior to that date. This is justified because of the necessity to ensure financial and operational continuity with the previous phase (CEGGA I), which will end on 30.10.2022.

4.4 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

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

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

4.5 Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Third-party contribution (amount in EUR)
Indirect management with GIZ cf. section 4.3.1	2 000 000	7 000 000
Audit – cf. section 5.3	May be covered by another decision	N.A.
Contingencies	N.A.	N.A.
Totals	2 000 000	7 000 000

4.6 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The action's coordinating **partner** at policy level will be the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), represented by the MoHA Cabinet Office, which has been mandated by the Government of the Lao PDR to lead the overall coordination of the CEGGA II project on behalf of the Lao side. The Contracting Authority (EU) is managing this action in indirect management. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit

GmbH (GIZ) is identified as implementing agency. The co-funding partners, **Germany and Switzerland**, will have separate contracting arrangements with GIZ.

The governance mechanism of the Action (Secretariat and Steering structure) that was established with agreed terms of reference under CEGGA I and proved to be successful shall be maintained with updated membership in CEGGA II.

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

There are no legal pre-conditions for this action.

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 M&E plan. Building on CEGGA I, GIZ will develop a results-based monitoring system to monitor progress against the agreed outcome, component objectives and indicators, as presented in the Logical Framework. Where practical, elements of the GoL's M&E framework for its 9th NSEDP will be incorporated. Process indicators will also be identified, agreed and jointly monitored in Technical Coordination Meetings and by the Advisory Board in the form of annual milestones that allow for consistent progress monitoring joint tracking of process steps towards achieving the component objective indicators. The main implementing partners will share responsibility in monitoring progress of CEGGA II. In collaboration with Lao main implementing partners of CEGGA II, GIZ will collect comprehensive baseline data at the start of CEGGA II. The monitoring data will be used for steering the CEGGA II implementation and serve as a basis for reporting as well as reviews and evaluations. Data collection for the purpose of monitoring progress will be conducted according to needs, but at least every 6 months, in order to assure timeliness of data. Data will also be collected, whenever feasible, in a disaggregated manner (gender, vulnerable groups, and region). Where possible, existing data from partner systems will be used. In case of challenges in accessing sufficient partner data for the baseline or monitoring, this matter shall be raised via the coordination structure, such as the Technical Coordination Mechanisms and the Advisory Board, in order to identify and agree solutions or alternative measurements. Indicators shall be disaggregated at least by gender. All monitoring and reporting shall assess how the action is taking into account the rights-based approach and gender equality.

Results-oriented reporting system: Progress of CEGGA II will be reviewed jointly in the Technical Coordination Mechanism meetings per Output that are part of the CEGGA Coordination Structure. The Secretariat will report annual progress of overall CEGGA II to the Advisory Board for overall CEGGA II.

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a mid-term evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the implementing partner. It will be carried out for problem solving and learning purposes, in particular with respect to progress against each project component.

A final evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the implementing partner. It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the scope of future actions and Team Europe approaches in the governance sector.

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

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

5.3 Audit and Verifications

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

6 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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

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

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