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ANNEX

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multiannual action plan in favour of Kazakhstan for 2024-2027

Action Document for EU–Kazakhstan Cooperation Facility 2024-2027

MULTIANNUAL PLAN

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

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act	EU-Kazakhstan Cooperation Facility 2024-2027 OPSYS number: ACT-62828 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)
2. Team Europe Initiative	No
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The action shall be carried out in Kazakhstan
4. Programming document	Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Kazakhstan 2021-2027
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results	The Cooperation Facility will support the implementation of the EU-Kazakhstan Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA) ¹ , which entered fully into force on 1 March 2020. It will include support for capacity development and institution building, support for policy dialogues leading to policy reforms and engagement with governments and other stakeholders, support to facilitate Team Europe coordination at country level, actions to support the participation of Kazakhstan in EU Programmes and cooperation with EU Agencies, where relevant, as well as financing strategic communication and public diplomacy activities to promote EU cooperation priorities in Kazakhstan.
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	43010 – Multi-sector
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG: SDG 17 Partnership for the Goals Other significant SDGs: (5) gender equality, (7) clean energy, (8) decent work and economic growth, (9) industry, innovation and infrastructure, (11) sustainable cities and communities, (12) sustainable consumption and production, (13) climate action, (15) life on land, and (16) peace justice and strong institutions.

¹ [Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Kazakhstan - European External Action Service \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)

8 a) DAC code(s)	DAC 43010 – Multisector			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	Other Multilateral Institution - 47000			
9. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate <input 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"/>
	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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	11. Internal markers and Tags:	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective
Digitalisation @		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship digital skills/literacy digital services		YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	/
Connectivity @		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
digital connectivity		YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	/

	energy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	/
	transport	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	education and research			
	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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
12. Amounts concerned	Budget line: 14.020130 Total estimated cost: EUR 11 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 11 000 000			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
13. Type of financing	Direct management Grants Procurement Indirect management with the entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.3.			

1.2 Summary of the Action

As Kazakhstan's foremost investment and trading partner, the EU is the most relevant standard setter and an important partner in the country's reform processes. In addition to its role as a key energy supplier, Kazakhstan is of interest to the EU to develop the market for European products and services in the country, while increasing cooperation on climate action and low carbon development in line with the Paris Agreement. At the same time, the EU has an interest in supporting the country's continued development as a secular democratic state respecting human rights and the rule of law and supporting a rules-based global order.

The government has formulated objectives that are generally aligned with those of the EU, reflecting common challenges (e.g. environment and water management, climate change, migration, countering transnational organised crime, trafficking, including in human beings, violent extremism and terrorism, promoting intra-regional trade and connectivity) to ensure stability and security in Central Asia. Having achieved a relatively high level of human capital development and poverty reduction, Kazakhstan is well placed to be a leading force in promoting intra-regional integration and share experiences and good practices with its neighbours. Kazakhstan has also maintained a steady women's labour-force participation rate, nevertheless, the gap between male and female labour force participation and wages is not narrowing.

The proposed action will follow the priorities set by the Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for 2021-2027, by supporting the **implementation of the EPCA and strengthen EU-Kazakhstan relations**, and will include:

- Support for capacity development and institution building, including through technical assistance and exchange of public expertise, e.g. through twinning-like arrangements.
- Support to facilitate Team Europe coordination at country level.
- Support for policy dialogues: events, conferences, studies, fellowships, exchange platforms to support sector dialogues leading to policy reforms and engagement with governments and other stakeholders.
- Financing strategic communication and public diplomacy activities to promote EU cooperation priorities in Kazakhstan.

The Cooperation Facility will focus on **two priority areas: Sustainable Economic Growth and Rule of Law**.

The objective of the first area, **Sustainable Economic Growth**, is to promote a more diverse, green and circular economy, support a transition from coal to green alternatives, and support electricity market integration, through investments and support to a green, more digital and more inclusive private sector. In terms of the focus of specific interventions, the Cooperation Facility will be guided by the provisions of the EPCA and EU commitments to cooperate or provide support laid down therein. Particularly, it will focus on trade, sustainable economic growth (including in the area of critical raw materials), development of the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor, climate change mitigation and adaptation, environment protection.

The objective of the second area, **Rule of Law**, is to support the strengthening of the legal framework and institutions in place to ensure the respect of human rights, including labour rights, and justice for all. Similar to the first priority area, the focus of specific interventions under the Cooperation Facility will be guided by EPCA commitments. In particular it will support the strengthening of the legal framework, institutions, and systems in place to ensure justice for all and the respect of human rights, with focus on enhancing the capacities of the Constitutional Court of Kazakhstan and, possibly, of the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsperson) Institute. Fight against corruption will also be supported under this component. The programme will support as well ongoing constitutional reforms for the transfer of management responsibilities on local affairs to local authorities of middle and small size cities and of villages.

The Cooperation Facility will implement work on these two priorities through three specific objectives: Specific Objective 1: Increased cooperation and trade between the EU and Kazakhstan in key economic and business sectors, such as critical raw materials and the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor, Specific Objective 2: Increased green and climate-smart standards of the Kazakh economy in line with its international and domestic obligations on climate change, energy and environmental protection and Specific Objective 3: Improved legal and institutional framework that guides equal access to justice and human rights protection, including the subnational and local levels.

This multisector action will contribute directly to SDG 17 Partnership for the Goals, as well as (5) gender equality, (7) clean energy, (8) decent work and economic growth, (9) industry, innovation and infrastructure, (11) sustainable cities and communities, (12) sustainable consumption and production, (13) climate action, (15) life on land, and (16) peace justice and strong institutions. It will also support general Environment Protection, trade policies and regulations and government and CSO's efforts for better governance. A gender responsive approach will be mainstreamed in all areas of work.

CSOs will continue to play their role as partners of the Government and the EU through their monitoring of and support to the implementation of Kazakhstan's international and constitutional commitments. This will include promotion of continued engagement with the social partners.

The Cooperation Facility will apply several tools, initiatives and activities to achieve its objective. The facility will also support enhanced strategic communication efforts of the EU in Kazakhstan in key areas of its partnership.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

Kazakhstan is the 9th largest country in the world, an economic leader in Central Asia and a dynamic partner to the European Union for over 30 years. The EU is main trading partner and biggest investor in Kazakhstan. Our relations are based on the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA), first of its kind in Central Asia, fully in force since 2020. However, due to its geography and history, Kazakhstan remains closely linked to Russia through the Eurasian Economic Union, the Community of Independent States (CIS) and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), while also deepening its economic and political relations with its other big neighbour China.

After the tragic January 2022 events, and particularly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Kazakhstan is seeking to rebalance its foreign policy, diversify its economy and intensify its multi-vector relations with other partners,

including (but not limited to) the European Union. Due to its clear stance in support of the UN Charter, its good record of cooperation, its interest in enhancing the Western dimension of its foreign policy and its role in the region, Kazakhstan was selected as one of several key countries by the EU for the development of mutually beneficial cooperation in 2023. The continuation of this work – keeping Kazakhstan firmly supportive of the UN Charter, and deepening political, economic and people-to-people contacts between Kazakhstan and the EU - will be the key feature of EU's relations with Kazakhstan in the coming years.

In November 2022, Kazakhstan became the first country in Central Asia to sign a Memorandum of Understanding on critical raw materials (CRM), batteries and green hydrogen. The roadmap for the implementation of the MoU was endorsed in May 2023 at the EU – Central Asia Economic Forum (Almaty, Kazakhstan). In February 2023, Kazakhstan adopted a national Strategy on Achieving Carbon Neutrality by 2060, which sets net-zero carbon goals and identifies key technological transformations needed for the country's decarbonization. Kazakhstan ratified the Paris Agreement in December 2016 and also joined the Global Methane Pledge in December 2023.

In a number of areas, the Kazakh government has formulated objectives that are generally aligned with those of the EU, reflecting common challenges (e.g. environment and water management, climate change, migration, countering transnational organised crime, trafficking, including in human beings, violent extremism and terrorism, promoting intra-regional trade and connectivity, with specific focus on digital and transport connectivity) to ensure stability and security in Central Asia, as well as to strengthen the resilience of Kazakhstan in the complex geopolitical context created by the change of political regime in Afghanistan in 2021 and by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Having achieved a relatively high level of human capital development and poverty reduction, Kazakhstan is well-placed to be a leading force in promoting intra-regional integration and share experiences and good practices with its neighbours. Kazakhstan has also maintained a steady women's labour-force participation rate. However, the gap between male and female labour force participation and wages is not narrowing.

The development goals of the Government of Kazakhstan are set out in a number of strategies and programs. "Kazakhstan 2050" presents the overarching, long-term vision, while the "Strategic Development Plan 2025" (SDP 2025) defines the mid-term implementation strategy and guides the accompanying sectoral programs. SDP 2025 sets out the objectives of modernising the economy and strengthening institutions and competitive businesses in a sustainable way. Thus, the overarching objective is to place Kazakhstan in the top 30 most developed countries in the world by 2050. SDP 2025 explicitly refers to the SDGs as key markers for Kazakhstan's development with specific reference to human capital development, improving the well-being of citizens and limiting the negative impact on the environment. The strategies set out in the various national development documents respond well to the development challenges of Kazakhstan and Central Asia and are generally well aligned with the EPCA as well as the Global Gateway and the EU's 2019 Central Asia Strategy². In the area of rule of law, Kazakhstan adopted in December 2023 a Presidential Action Plan on Human Rights and the Rule of Law. The action plan addresses diverse subjects including gender equality, the fight against domestic violence, children's rights, the fight against corruption, freedom of association, the fight against torture and other aspects of human rights in business activities.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Kazakhstan's economy is heavily reliant on the extractive industry and financially dependent on international commodity prices, mainly oil, minerals and agricultural products.

High energy intensity of the Kazakh economy makes it the largest emitter of carbon dioxide in Central Asia and the 14th in the world with the carbon intensity of Kazakhstan's GDP is two times higher than the world average and three times higher than the EU. 80 percent of all CO₂ emissions in Kazakhstan come from the Energy Sector heavily dominated by coal generation.

The national development documents recognise those risks and vulnerabilities, which are the main justification for prioritising economic diversification and modernisation efforts. In 2016 **Kazakhstan ratified the Paris Agreement, and set in** an unconditional nationally determined contribution (NDC) of a 15% greenhouse gas reduction target by 2030. Also, in 2020 Kazakhstan proclaimed its commitment to **achieve carbon neutrality by 2060** and in 2023 on COP-28 in Dubai it **joined the Global Methane Pledge**.

² JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL The EU and Central Asia: New Opportunities for a Stronger Partnership - JOIN/2019/9 final of 15.5.2019

Particular emphasis is placed on the inclusive green transition, including decent job creation, through attracting investments and providing support to SMEs, and for digitalisation, together with social protection measures, additional reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and a progressive shift to renewable energy sources, including renewable hydrogen.

In 2013 Kazakhstan introduced its Emissions Trading System (ETS) which currently applies to large installations in the power, centralized heating, extracting industries, and manufacturing sectors and covers around half of the country's emissions. The Kazakh Emissions Trading System (ETS), with an average CO2 allowance price of EUR 1 in 2023, against EUR 83 in the European Union is however not sufficiently effective. Its modernisation would support creating a stronger carbon price signal that would both facilitate meeting Kazakhstan's domestic and Paris Agreement commitments, and also lean towards the objectives of the European Green Deal and its Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.

Kazakhstan enshrined its net-zero 2060 target into law in February 2023, however plans to build new coal and gas fired power generation capacity with a lifetime presumably spanning well beyond 2060.

In the green transition area, the most effective support should be linked to the decarbonisation of the energy intensive industries and of the power sector, also due to the application of CBAM and other EU policies stemming from the European Green Deal. Key activities can include further development and alignment of the Kazakh ETS with the EU ETS.

Regarding rule of law, following constitutional amendments in 2022, the new Constitutional Court and the Commissioner for Human Rights under their new mandate started operating as of 1 January 2023. The country pursued efforts to fight violence against women, in line with the President's position to toughen the punishment for domestic violence. Amendments were made to legislative acts on human rights in criminal proceedings, prevention of ill-treatment and degrading treatment, liability for acts of torture and criminalisation of ill-treatment. In 2023, the General Prosecutor's Office has been designated as the main coordinator and sole responsible body for investigating allegations of ill-treatment and torture.

Kazakhstan has accelerated the implementation of the recommendations of the first and second joint evaluation reports of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) through legislative amendments. In addition, in September 2023, the country established with the support of the EU a Register of Beneficial Owners of Legal Entities.

Amendments to the Anti-Corruption Law were adopted in January 2023, introducing the liability of civil servants and assimilated persons for unjust enrichment. These amendments also aim to strengthen the protection of whistle-blowers and citizens who report facts of corruption, by introducing measures to protect the labour rights of whistle-blowers and ensure their safety.

As confirmed by the Results Oriented Monitoring review (ROM) conducted for the Rule of Law Program in Central Asia in December 2023, there is a growing demand for up-to-date anti-corruption legislation, setting standards for private sector integrity; whistle-blowing as well as related protection mechanisms; conflict of interest (CoI); asset declarations, aiming to identify illicit enrichment and asset recovery. With regard to Anti Money Laundering and Combatting the Financing of Terrorism, priority issues relate to data collection and processing; risk identification in analysing financial flows and suspicious transactions in the financial sector; addressing ineffective inter-agency coordination that often leads to a gap between competent authorities, financial intelligence services

Kazakhstan authorities are keen on cooperation with the EU with a view to the professionalize their respective administrations through approximation to EU and international standards, and eager to increase their legitimacy at home, as well as prestige and credibility on the international scene. Kazakhstan authorities appear to be genuinely committed to the promotion of business integrity and anti- corruption activities, as well as anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism.

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

The Cooperation Facility will be able to respond to requests for support from a variety of stakeholders including the Government of Kazakhstan as a main stakeholder and partner for policy dialogue and implementation. Other actors will be involved in the policy dialogue with the government, such as International Financial Institutions, in particular European Development Financing Institutions (DFIs), CSOs, including social partners, especially those involved in work on policies of EU interests, global challenges or fundamental values of the EU, and Kazakh and European private sector, which will play a key role in strengthening the achievement of objectives across all priority areas.

The Cooperation Facility will maintain an open approach to engage and benefit a wide range of stakeholders as appropriate.

The action will support an enabling environment for civil society in line with the civil society roadmap and the country level implementation plan (CLIP) for gender equality. Strengthening the capacity of civil society and ensuring meaningful dialogue and engagement will be sought through different components of the action. The Kazakh civil society views the relation with the EU favourably and positively. Support will focus on capacity building, outreach and inclusion of the most marginalised in society. A specific focus will be placed on the youth and women through the meaningful participation of women's and youth organisations.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to ensure sustainable development in Kazakhstan in line with the green transition and the rule of law, following the objectives of the EU-Kazakhstan EPCA

The Specific Objectives (Outcomes) of this action are to:

Specific Objective 1: Increase trade and cooperation between the EU and Kazakhstan in key economic and business sectors such as critical raw materials and transport, along the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor (TCTC);

Specific Objective 2: Increase green and climate-smart standards of the Kazakh economy in line with its international obligations and national commitments on climate change, energy and environmental protection;

Specific Objective 3: Strengthen legal and institutional framework to ensure the respect of human rights and the transfer of management on local affairs to local authorities.

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

Output 1.1. The capacities of public institutions and other relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation of the economic/trade aspects of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA) with the EU are strengthened;

Output 2.1. The capacities of public institutions and other relevant stakeholders involved in Kazakhstan's work to comply with obligations under the Paris Agreement and further national commitments on climate change, including on greenhouse gas emissions reduction, notably methane, renewable energy, including renewable hydrogen, and energy efficiency, are enhanced;

Output 3.1. The opportunities for policy dialogue and knowledge exchange on human rights protection measures and the transfer of competencies to local authorities are increased.

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1.1: The capacities of public institutions and other relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation of the economic/trade aspects of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA) with the EU are strengthened.

- 1.1.1 Policy dialogue to monitor the effective implementation of the EPCA and identify areas/needs for financial and technical assistance, focusing on areas not yet covered by other (including regional) programmes and initiatives (e.g. agriculture, rural development, consumer protection, subsidies, environment); technical capacity building activities in strategic areas such as critical raw materials and transport/Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor to improve regulation harmonisation with EU standards;
- 1.1.2 Technical Assistance interventions with close involvement of EU Member States experts and institutions related to rule of law, business climate, the protection of foreign investment, or other areas;
- 1.1.3 Where relevant, data-driven public awareness campaigns, particularly targeting younger audiences, designed and implemented to increase awareness, understanding and perception of the EU-Kazakhstan cooperation priorities.

Activities related to Output 2.1: The capacities of public institutions and other relevant stakeholders involved in Kazakhstan's work to comply with obligations under the Paris Agreement and further national commitments on climate change, including on greenhouse gas emissions reduction, notably methane, renewable energy, including renewable hydrogen, and energy efficiency, are enhanced

- 2.1.1 Scientific and technical capacity building activities to support Kazakhstan to, inter alia, further develop and revise its Emissions Trading Systems, introduce measures aligned with the EU Methane regulation and support activities under the Global Methane Pledge, and comply with its commitments and obligations under the Paris agreement on Climate Change, including achieving its nationally determined contributions, and its long-term strategies, and meet renewable energy (to support the decarbonisation of Kazakhstan's energy sector) and energy efficiency objectives;
- 2.1.2 (if relevant) Strategic communication activities designed and implemented to raise awareness and understanding of EU-Kazakhstan partnership on climate, energy and environment.

Activities related to Output 3.1: The opportunities for policy dialogue and knowledge exchange on human rights protection measures and the transfer of competencies to local authorities are increased.

- 3.1.1 Policy dialogue to monitor the effective implementation of the EPCA in the field of rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, with particular focus on the Constitutional Court;
- 3.1.2 Strengthen capacity of local authorities and provide technical expertise to support the transfer of management responsibilities on local affairs to local authorities.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

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

N/A

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

N/A

Climate change mitigation and adaptation and environmental protection feature prominently in the proposed intervention and will be specifically addressed during the implementation of relevant components of the Cooperation Facility. In particular, this Action will support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, including methane emissions and compliance with key obligations under Paris Agreement.

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 a gender responsive approach will be applied throughout implementation in all activities undertaken under the Cooperation Facility.

In line with the EU Gender Action Plan 2021-2025 (GAP III)³, the action will contribute in particular to the thematic area of promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women and, to some extent, to the thematic area of addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities offered by green transition and digital transformation.

Human Rights

Respect for human rights is a fundamental value of the European Union. Strengthening the human rights dialogue with Kazakhstan and aligning the legal frameworks (ratification of international human rights treaties) are key activities under the EPCA cooperation facility.

The Action adopts a human rights based approach (HRBA) and promotes the fulfilment of the human rights (adequate standard of living, the right to work, access to justice, etc.) of all, with a focus on women, youth and individuals living in vulnerable situations. All activities will be designed taking into account the *do-no-harm* principle. The HRBA's five working principles (a) applying all human rights for all; b) meaningful and inclusive participation and access to decision-making; c) non-discrimination and equality; d) accountability and rule of law for all; and e) transparency and access to information supported by disaggregated data) will be promoted throughout.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. This implies that all possible measures will be taken to ensure an inclusive policy dialogue. Therefore attention will be paid to ensure and enable the participation of people with disabilities.

Reduction of inequalities

This action is marked as I-1. It will support Kazakhstan in improving its sustainable economic development, benefitting the bottom 40% of the population with more decent job opportunities in strategic sectors such as critical raw materials and transport, traditionally precarious and dangerous. It will also support the reduction of methane emissions and Climate Change mitigation and adaptation, improving the health of vulnerable segments of the population. Moreover, strengthened rule of law and increased devolvement of responsibilities to local authorities will also help the development of regions outside of the big cities, where the most vulnerable population resides.

Democracy

All activities, including policy dialogues with the Government of Kazakhstan will aim at strengthening the democratic system of Kazakhstan to ensure that the country stays on the path of democratisation. This is also supported by strengthening the inclusiveness of the dialogue as well as focusing on respect for human rights, good governance, transparency, anti-corruption and the importance of the rule of law.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

³ [IMMC.JOIN%282020%2917%20final.ENG.xhtml.1_EN_ACT_part1_v8.docx \(europa.eu\)](#)

The Gender Action Plan III is a Joint communication by the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy which was welcomed through EU Presidency Conclusions of 16 December 2020 endorsed by 24 Member States.

Building resilience and preventing conflicts are primarily relevant in Kazakhstan for conflicts linked to environmental considerations. Protecting the environment, adapting to climate change and building resilience are key issues of thematic funding in Kazakhstan as well in the foreseen increased policy dialogue.

Disaster Risk Reduction

Building resilience and preventing disaster are primarily relevant in Kazakhstan for conflicts linked to environmental resources. Protecting the environment, mitigating and adapting to climate change and building resilience of communities at risk are key issues of thematic funding in Kazakhstan as well as in the ongoing policy dialogue. Following the COVID-19 pandemic and in the perspective of building back better public health and crisis response in the case of global pandemic will be relevant crosscutting issues.

Other considerations if relevant

N/A

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
Political stability	The political environment is unstable and cooperation can be volatile.	Medium	High	Flexibility under the Cooperation Facility will allow us to respond and adapt to these changes and to include new or rapidly expanding areas of potential cooperation.
Involvement	Stakeholders disengage in the dialogue	Medium	High	A pipeline of mutual priorities and strategic initiatives will be developed to ensure the authorities' involvement and engagement.
Credibility	Public diplomacy efforts lack credibility	Low	Medium	Public diplomacy and policy outreach are more effective and credible if designed and implemented in partnership with Kazakh stakeholders and platforms that share EU values and interests.
Coordination	Multi-country programmes duplicate activities and/or do not effectively supplement country specific projects	Low	Medium	The effective coordination with other, including regional projects, programmes and initiatives, will be facilitated through the disciplined implementation of the regional coordination mechanism for Central Asia organised in Planet, People & Prosperity and Peace programme clusters.
Credibility	Kazakhstan carries on with plans to build new coal-fired power generation capacity, thus	Medium	Medium	Potential support dedicated to renewable energy will be re-assessed.

	renewable capacity doesn't effectively lead to decarbonising the energy sector			
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Lessons Learnt:

Kazakh authorities highly value the EPCA. In 2021, Kazakhstan established a working group to specifically monitor the implementation of the agreement. However, experience shows that frequent rotation of public servants can impact on the implementation of engagements taken on by Kazakh interlocutors. Although civil society representatives are regularly invited to various policy discussions, oftentimes their point of view is not taken into account by decision makers. Given the lengthy process of adoption for the previous Financial Agreement and posterior design phase of its correspondent programme, this Action will aim for an amendment of the existing Agreement and a parallel design phase, to avoid lengthy gaps. The Action will also seek to focus on the most strategic actions only, ensuring effective coordination with regional programmes covering areas not supported by these, that are critical for the strengthening of EU-Kazakhstan partnership.

Flexibility and adaptability are very important for the successful implementation of Cooperation Facility, ensuring it meets the needs and expectations of beneficiaries while accounting for national and regional contexts. Continuous face-to-face bilateral engagement with beneficiary institutions, combined with coordination efforts with EU Member States and other international organizations active on the ground, is essential to enhance particularly the visibility of the Rule of Law component and tailor its implementation to local or specific circumstances. The key to success lies in setting priorities aligned with ongoing legislative and administrative reforms and maintaining close contact with beneficiaries through on-the-ground experts. The use of the Kazakh language is particularly effective for reaching a broader audience among target beneficiaries, though the Russian language remains a crucial communication tool for certain groups. The EPCA EU–Kazakhstan Subcommittee on Justice and Home Affairs should continue to serve as the primary forum for discussing, monitoring, and advancing the Rule of Law component.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that IF the capacities of public institutions and other relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation of the economic/trade aspects of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA) with the EU are strengthened (Output 1.1.), THEN trade and cooperation between the EU and Kazakhstan in key economic and business sectors such as critical raw materials and transport will increase (Specific Objective 1).

In addition, IF the capacities of public institutions and other relevant stakeholders involved in Kazakhstan's work to comply with obligations under the Paris Agreement and national commitments, including on methane emissions reduction, renewable energy, including renewable hydrogen, and energy efficiency, are enhanced (Output 2.1.), THEN the green and climate-smart standards of the Kazakh economy in line with its international obligations on climate change, energy and environmental protection will increase (Specific Objective 2).

Finally, IF the opportunities for policy dialogue and knowledge exchange on human rights protection measures and the transfer of competencies to local authorities are increased (Output 3.1), THEN the legal and institutional framework to ensure the respect of human rights and the transfer of management on local affairs to local authorities will be strengthened (Specific Objective 3).

This will be achieved PROVIDED THAT the National Government remains committed to the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and of the Global Methane Pledge (Assumption 1) and decision-makers and competent institutions continue to be interested in improving inter-institutional cooperation and sectoral coordination in the framework of the EPCA (Assumption 2).

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

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

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

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

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

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

	Results chain: Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators: (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	Ensure sustainable development in Kazakhstan in line with the green transition and the rule of law, following the objectives of the EU-Kazakhstan EPCA	<p>1. Total greenhouse gas emissions per year in Kazakhstan (OPSYS pre-defined indicator & SDG 13.2.2)</p> <p>1. Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita (OPSYS pre-defined indicator & SDG 8.1.1)</p> <p>2. World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) Rule of Law Score (GERF 1.20)</p>	EPCA provisions for which EU commitments to cooperate and provide support has already been met or partially met at the end of 2024	All EU commitments in EPCA to cooperate and provide support have been fully met by 2027	Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention	Continued and sustained Kazakh government commitment to implement EPCA
Outcome 1	Increased trade and cooperation between the EU and Kazakhstan in key economic and business sectors such as critical raw materials and transport	<p>1.1. Number of jobs supported/sustained by the EU disaggregated for green/digital/female jobs (disaggregated by sex, age, disability)</p> <p>1.2. Number of EPCA provisions that have been effectively implemented</p> <p>1.3. Number of processes related to partner country practices on trade, investment and business, or promoting the external dimension of EU internal policies or EU interest, which have been influenced (GERF 2.15)</p> <p>1.4 Number of regulations and standards relating to trade, investment and business in</p>	<p>1.1. 2% (est.) in 2021</p> <p>1.2. 200 in 2021</p> <p>1.3 tbc in the inception phase</p> <p>1.4 0</p>	<p>1.1. 4 % in 2027</p> <p>1.2. approximately +1% per year</p> <p>1.3 tbc in the inception phase</p> <p>1.4 6 by 2027</p>	<p>1.1 and 1.2 Official Statistics of Kazakhstan, World Bank</p> <p>https://ourworldindata.org/</p>	Financial institutions and private investors continue to be interested in supporting women-led MSMEs and economic initiatives and increasing the investment in innovative and climate-smart business models

		partner countries which have been aligned to EU/international standards				
Outcome 2	Increased green and climate-smart standards of the Kazakh economy in line with its international obligations and national commitments on climate change, energy and environmental protection	<p>2.1. Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions avoided (tonnes CO2eq) with EU support (GERF 2.27)</p> <p>2.2 Total volume of methane emission in Kazakhstan in the last year</p> <p>2.2. Number of regulations and standards relating to trade, investment and business in Kazakhstan which have been aligned to EU/international standards (OPSYS pre-defined indicator)</p> <p>2.4. Number of beneficiaries with access to financial services with EU support: (a) firms, (b) people (GERF 2.17)</p>	<p>2.1. 246 Mt (2022) – EU Contribution tbc during the inception phase</p> <p>2.2 76.38 Mt in CO2eq (2021)</p> <p>2.3 tbc in the inception phase</p> <p>2.4 tbc in the inception phase</p>	<p>2.1. 209 Mt (15% reduction) by 2027 – EU contribute to 25% of reduction</p> <p>2.2. 61 Mt in CO2eq (20% reduction) by 2027</p> <p>2.3 tbc in the inception phase</p> <p>2.4 tbc in the inception phase</p>	<p>2.1 Emissions Database for Global Atmospheric Research https://edgar.jrc.ec.europa.eu/</p> <p>2.2 Climate Watch https://www.climatewatchdata.org/ghg-emissions</p> <p>2.3 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p> <p>2.4 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p>	Competent institutions and decision-makers keep committed to accelerating the transition into a green and sustainable economic model, encouraging policy reforms and new investment projects
Outcome 3	Strengthened legal and institutional framework to ensure the respect of human rights and the transfer of management on local affairs to local authorities	<p>3.1. Number of laws or policies adopted or revised by the State, aligned with ratified International Human Rights Treaties, disaggregated by category of document (OPSYS pre-defined indicators)</p> <p>3.1. Number of government policies developed or revised with civil society organisation participation through EU support (GERF 2.29)</p> <p>3.2. Number of recommendations from regional and international oversight mechanisms (regional human rights courts, UN</p>	<p>3.1. tbc for 2024 during the inception phase</p> <p>3.2 tbc for 2024 during the inception phase</p> <p>3.3 tbc for 2024 during the inception phase</p> <p>3.4 tbc for 2024 during</p>	<p>3.1 tbc during inception phase</p> <p>3.2 tbc during inception phase</p> <p>3.3 tbc during inception phase</p> <p>3.4 tbc during inception phase</p> <p>3.5 tbc during inception phase</p>	<p>3.1 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p> <p>3.2 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p> <p>3.3 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p> <p>3.4 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p> <p>3.5 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p>	Relevant institutions, including at high political level in the presidential apparatus, keep committed to engaging with the EU on rule of law.

		<p>Special Rapporteurs) acted upon</p> <p>3.3. Number of local authorities that have assumed new competencies and responsibilities in the framework of the decentralisation process</p> <p>3.5. Number of laws and policies where recommendations made by women's rights organisations have been taken on board by regional, national and local government bodies during the drafting or revision process, including in conflict-affected contexts (OPSYS pre-defined indicator)</p>	<p>the inception phase</p> <p>3.5.: tbc for 2024 during the inception phase</p>			
Output 1 related to Outcome 1	<p>The capacities of public institutions and other relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation of the economic/trade aspects of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA) with the EU are strengthened</p>	<p>1.1.1. Extent to which the EU-funded intervention supported the implementation of standards related to the sustainable development chapter of trade agreements (OPSYS pre-defined indicator)</p> <p>1.1.2. Number of people trained by the EU-funded intervention who increased their knowledge and/or skills (disaggregated by sex and age) (OPSYS pre-defined indicator)</p> <p>1.1.3. Number of institutions, organisations and company representatives engaged in institutional coordination mechanisms on Inclusive Green Economy (IGE) established with support of the EU-funded intervention, disaggregated by</p>	<p>1.1.1. tbc in the inception phase</p> <p>1.1.2 tbc in the inception phase</p> <p>1.1.3 tbc in the inception phase</p> <p>1.1.4 tbc in the inception phase</p> <p>1.1.5 tbc in the inception phase</p>	<p>1.1.1 tbc in the inception phase</p> <p>1.1.2 tbc in the inception phase</p> <p>1.1.3 tbc in the inception phase</p> <p>1.1.4 tbc in the inception phase</p> <p>1.1.5 tbc in the inception phase</p>	<p>1.1.1 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p> <p>1.1.2 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p> <p>1.1.3 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p> <p>1.1.4 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p> <p>1.1.5 Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p>	

		sex and sector (OPSYS pre-defined indicator) 1.1.4. Number of studies supported (technical, economic, and environmental, gender) (OPSYS pre-defined indicator) 1.1.5. Number of policy dialogue initiatives supported (of which number of those that include dialogue on gender equality) (OPSYS pre-defined indicator)				
Output 1 related to Outcome 2	The capacities of public institutions and other relevant stakeholders involved in Kazakhstan's work to comply with obligations under the Paris Agreement and further national commitments on climate change, including on greenhouse gas emissions reduction, notably methane, renewable energy, including renewable hydrogen, and energy efficiency, are enhanced	2.1.1. Number of people reached with EU-funded awareness-raising campaigns (disaggregated by sex and age) (OPSYS pre-defined indicator) 2.1.2. Number of MSMEs favouring green and circular business models whose capacity has been strengthened through investment support (OPSYS pre-defined indicator) 2.1.3. Number of stakeholder representatives attending EU-funded networking events on green economy (OPSYS pre-defined indicator) 2.1.4. Volume of new loans and other sources of financing to relevant target group, disaggregated by sex, age (15-30 years) and regions (OPSYS pre-defined indicator)	2.1.1. tbc in 2024 during the inception phase 2.1.2. tbc during the inception phase 2.1.3. tbc during the inception phase 2.1.4 tbc during the inception phase	2.1.1. tbc during the inception phase 2.1.2. tbc during the inception phase 2.1.3. tbc during the inception phase 2.1.4 tbc during the inception phase	2.1.1. Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention 2.1.2. Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention 2.1.3. Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention 2.1.4. Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention	

<p>Output 1 related to Outcome 3</p>	<p>The opportunities for policy dialogue and knowledge exchange on human rights protection measures and the transfer of competencies to local authorities are increased.</p>	<p>3.1.1. Number of state institutions and non-state actors supported on security, border management, countering violent extremism, conflict prevention, protection of civilian population and human rights (GERF 2.23) 3.1.2. Number of local authorities that have implemented self-development projects with the technical and/or financial support of the EU 3.1.3. Number of civil society organisations participating in national human rights dialogues (OPSYS pre-defined indicator) 3.1.4. Number of victims of human rights violations directly benefiting from assistance funded by the EU (GERF 2.30) 3.1.5. Number of people trained by the EU-funded intervention who increased their knowledge and/or skills (disaggregated by sex and age) (OPSYS pre-defined indicator)</p>	<p>3.1.1. tbc during the inception phase 3.1.2. tbc during the inception phase 3.1.3. tbc during the inception phase 3.1.4. tbc during the inception phase 3.1.5. tbc during the inception phase</p>	<p>3.1.1. tbc during the inception phase 3.1.2. tbc during the inception phase 3.1.3. tbc during the inception phase 3.1.4. tbc during the inception phase 3.1.5. tbc during the inception phase</p>	<p>3.1.1. Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention 3.1.2. Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention 3.1.3. Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention 3.1.4. Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention 3.1.5. Progress reports for the EU-funded intervention</p>	
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4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is envisaged to amend the existing financing agreement with the Government of Kazakhstan.

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 60 months from the entry into force of the amendment to 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 rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures⁴.

4.3.1 Direct Management (Grants)

Grants: (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

Grants may be awarded to support the achievement of Specific Objective 3: Improve legal framework, institutions and systems in place to ensure justice for all and the respect of human rights and improve local self-development.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

The potential applicants could be local authorities, public bodies, international organisations, CSOs, and economic operators such as SMEs. In the case of twinning grants, applicants must be EU Member State administrations or their mandated bodies.

4.3.2 Direct Management (Procurement)

A service contract will be signed to support the achievement of Specific Objective 1 and 2: Improve sustainable economic growth in Kazakhstan, including in the area of critical raw materials (CRM) and the development of the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor (TCTC); improve the greening of the Kazakh economy and compliance of the Kazakh Government with its international and national commitments in the areas of climate change, energy and environment protection. A separate procurement contract will be envisaged for the implementation of Outcome 4.1: Strategic Communications Cooperation Facility.

4.3.3 Indirect Management with entrusted entity

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with one or more entities, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

⁴ 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.

For Specific Objective 3: proven experience working with the Kazakh government on issues such as strengthening of rule of law and local self-development, technical expertise and ability to strengthen capacity.

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

If activities foreseen under Direct management in 4.3.1 (Grants) and/or 4.3.2 (Procurement) cannot be implemented due to circumstances outside of the Commission's control, they may be implemented in indirect management with an entrusted entity.

If activities foreseen under Indirect management in 4.3.3 cannot be implemented due to circumstances outside of the Commission's control, they may be implemented in Direct management (grants) applying the criteria set out in chapter 4.3.1

4.4. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

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

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

4.5. Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.3	
Specific Objective 1. Improve sustainable economic growth in Kazakhstan composed of	2 700 000
Procurement (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.2	2 700 000
Specific Objective 2. Improve compliance of the Kazakh Government with its international obligations and national commitments in the areas of climate change, energy and environment protection composed of	2 000 000
Procurement (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.2	2 000 000
Specific Objective 3. Improve legal framework, institutions and systems in place to ensure justice for all and the respect of human rights and improve local self-development composed of	6 000 000
Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.1	2 000 000
Indirect management with one or more entrusted entities – cf. 4.3.3	4 000 000
Strategic Communications and Public Diplomacy, Evaluation, audit	300 000
Contingencies	N.A.
Totals	11 000 000

4.6 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The Cooperation Facility will be subject to an advisory mechanism. This group will discuss and provide on a bi-annual basis the strategic and policy guidance needed to ensure smooth project implementation. It will

review and endorse annual work plans, monitor project outputs and achievements and not least provide advice on how to address obstacles and challenges identified during implementation. The group should have participation from the main sections of the Delegation.

Sub-groups of the advisory mechanism group may be set-up for specific areas of the Cooperation Facility, such as, but not necessarily limited to, strategic communication and public diplomacy and/or twinning activities.

The Cooperation section in the EU Delegation will facilitate the meetings, under the guidance of the Head of Delegation.

For possible Twinning activities, the organisation set-up and responsibilities will be defined in accordance with the applicable Twinning Manual.

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.

The strategic communication and public diplomacy envelope will be managed by the Head of Cooperation, in agreement with the responsible communication unit in DG INTPA, fully respecting the cooperation facility guidelines.

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 partners' responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partners shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every implementing partner will be responsible for reporting on the activities under their contract. 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). It should also include data disaggregation reflecting the mainstreaming of climate change mitigation and gender responsive approach in the implementation.

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).

The implementing partner is responsible for day to day monitoring and reporting based on the agreed indicators in the logframe. Adjustments to the agreed indicators will be subject to a discussion and approval of the advisory committee. The contracting authority will be responsible for the approval of annual reports.

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a mid-term evaluation(s) will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.

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 facility incorporated a number of different implementation modalities and covered a wide variety of issues.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least one month in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the

evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

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

Evaluation services may be contracted under a framework contract.

5.3 Audit and Verifications

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

6 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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

In line with the 2022 “[Communicating and Raising EU Visibility: Guidance for External Actions](#)”, it will remain a contractual obligation for all entities implementing EU-funded external actions to inform the relevant audiences of the Union’s support for their work by displaying the EU emblem and a short funding statement as appropriate on all communication materials related to the actions concerned. This obligation will continue to apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, partner countries, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU member states.

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