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ANNEX 3

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the
financing of the multiannual action plan in favour of Sub-Saharan Africa for 2022-2024 Part 1

**Action Document for Harmonisation Quality Assurance and Accreditation in African
Higher Education Initiative (HAQAA3)**

MULTIANNUAL PLAN

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and action plans in the sense of Article 23(2) of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act	Harmonization Quality Assurance and Accreditation in African Higher Education Initiative (HAQAA3) OPSYS 60626 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)/ Overseas Association Decision/European Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation Regulation
2. Team Europe Initiative	No
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The action shall be carried out in Africa (African Union).
4. Programming document	Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa 2021-2027
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results	Priority Area 1: Human Development, Education Result 2.3: Regional and continental integration mechanisms to contribute to a more inclusive knowledge-based society and economy are promoted.
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Priority area 1: Human Development 114 – Post Secondary Education - 100% 11420 - Higher education – 100%
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG (1 only): Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. SDG Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls SDG Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth

	SDG Goal 9: Foster innovation				
8 a) DAC code(s)	114 – Post Secondary Education - 100% 11420 - Higher education – 100%				
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	European Commission 42001				
9. Involvement of multilateral partners	No				
10. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance				
11. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective @	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective	
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Aid to environment @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Trade development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Disaster Risk Reduction @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Nutrition @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective	
	Biological diversity @	<input 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"/>	
	12. Internal markers and Tags:	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
		Digitalisation @ digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship digital skills/literacy digital services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

	Connectivity @ transport people2people energy digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Migration @ (methodology for tagging under development)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities (methodology for marker and tagging under development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
13. Amounts concerned	Budget line(s) (article, item): West Africa : BGUE-B2022-14.020120-C1-INTPA: EUR 3,500,000 East and Central Africa : BGUE-B2022-14.020121-C1-INTPA : 3,500,000 Southern Africa and Indian Ocean : BGUE-B2022-14.020122-C1-INTPA : 3,000,000 Total estimated cost: EUR 10,000,000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 10,000,000			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
14. Type of financing	Direct management by DG EAC through procurement (cross-sub-delegation in 2022 transformed into co-delegation type II as from 2023)			

1.2 Summary

Africa's development highly relies on higher education and research systems that play a key role in knowledge-based economic growth strategies. The HAQAA initiative was conceived in 2014 as an EU cooperation project with Africa based on the idea that “Higher education” has a particularly important role to play in enhancing citizenship and democratic values as well as providing a country with the skilled workers, managers and administrators that will foster sustainable development and encourage the trade and investment needed” (para 50 of the EU – Africa Summit’s 2014 Declaration). HAQAA seeks to improve the quality and harmonisation of African higher education and support students’ employability and mobility across the continent, operating at three levels: higher education institutions, quality assurance agencies and at cross-regional and continental level.

HAQAA-3 will be built on five essential pillars: 1) continue to support capacity building for Quality Assurance (QA) systems for higher education in Africa, notably through the promotion of the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in higher education (ASG-QA) at quality assurance agency level and also at the level of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs); 2) consolidate the work undertaken to support the establishment of the Pan-African Continental Accreditation Agency (PAQAA) through, notably, supporting the African Union

Commission (AUC) in the development of the statutes and regulations for governance and operations; 3) carrying forward the proposal for the African Credit Transfer System as another important action line of the Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF); 4) building up the capacity for informed and evidence-based policy making for higher education at continental level, linked to regional and national capacity, and align it to continental objectives for higher education (HE); 5) continued support to the HE cluster and its sub-clusters of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 (CESA), in promoting regional integration frameworks for higher education, targeted at public officials and university leadership but also in key areas of the continental agenda (i.e. connectivity and digitalization).

HAQAA-3 builds on the successful results of HAQAA-1 (2015-2018) and the very positive implementation of HAQAA-2 (2020 – 2022). The revision of HAQAA-2's workplan integrates already the work carried out by TUNING-1 and TUNING-2 concerning the setting up of an African Credit Transfer System (ACTS) that takes its inspiration from the European Credit Transfer System. HAQAA-1 and HAQAA-2 outputs have been endorsed by the African Union, which has also adopted the decisions that are needed to give the adequate institutional foundation of HAQAA-2' implementation, mainly as far as the setting-up of a Pan-African Continental Quality Assurance Agency (PAQAA) is concerned. HAQAA-3 assumes that this positive dynamic will continue and can serve the objectives defined by the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation and the Joint Communication "Towards a Comprehensive Strategy for Africa" by becoming a very valuable platform for relationships with the African Union and, in particular, the African Union Commission in the area of education and youth.

HAQAA-3 will be one of the main new instruments for regional cooperation with Sub-Saharan Africa to face two of the Global Challenges considered by art.11 d) of the NDICI_Global regulation: Education and Youth. The project's scope goes much further than the area of Quality Assurance (the main focus of HAQAA-1) as they include building the capacity of the higher education sector (including policy makers) on issues related to regional integration and to carry out evidence-based and informed policy making with a view to regional and continental integration, enhancing the sector's responsiveness and contribution to socio-economic challenges. However, the project is not overambitious as the logic of the intervention is to make a meaningful regional contribution that a) complements the actions at national level, which will always remain essential, and b) favours regional and continental integration processes and the progressive enlargement of their scope to the area of education.

HAQAA3 is rooted in the regions and their higher education stakeholder organisations as building blocks for the progressive construction of an African Continental Higher Education area. Indeed, the lessons learnt in HAQAA-1 and 2 prove that, in order to achieve impact and sustainability, regional organizations and inter-regional activities constitute a necessary intermediary level between the continental and the national ones. The regional level has also appeared as the more apt to promote student exchanges, one of the main areas to be considered for youth mobility. Whilst it is important to build on the regional (and national) foundations, the overriding framework is to harmonise across regions, so effectively building upon and integrating the diversity of systems and using the common denominators to facilitate progress and quality enhancement, cross-border recognition of quality assurance and accreditation decisions and foster a shared quality culture, contributing therefore to the Continental Strategy for Education in Africa (CESA 16-25).

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

Africa's development highly relies on higher education and research systems that play a key role in knowledge-based economic growth strategies. This in turn contributes to the constitution of human capital by training a qualified workforce; building public goods; and supporting innovation. Support to innovation entails creating a culture of innovation; creating new knowledge, accessing global knowledge reserves and adapting this knowledge for local use. Improving this sub-sector will also enhance the acquisition, building and validation of scientific knowledge; building competitive advantages (i.e. innovation for the benefit of companies); and disseminating scientific expertise for the benefit of the society.

The Sustainable Development Goal on Education (SDG4), the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 (CESA 16-25), the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA 2024), and the African Union Commission's Agenda 2063: "The Africa We Want" illustrate a clear desire to establish an "African Higher Education, Research and Innovation Space" that would enable African states to ensure their competitiveness and growth. Indeed, the guarantee of sustainable development is a world characterized by an economy based essentially on knowledge, well-trained and highly qualified human resources. It is now established that education in general, and higher education in particular, are determining factors for economic growth, job creation, competitiveness in the global market, socio-cultural revitalization, and improved living standards. In most countries of the world – and particularly in Africa – the major challenge is to improve access to higher education, while ensuring the quality of training (measurable by internal efficiency, based on success and graduation rates) and external efficiency (integration of graduates into the job market). For Africa, it is a question of defining the ways and means to equip the continent with a competitive and efficient higher education system, capable of producing qualified and operational graduates; and of producing relevant and innovative knowledge that meets the needs of African societies. The achievement of these objectives requires the creation of synergies at the level of higher education, the harmonization of training, and the facilitation of academic and scientific exchanges.

The HAQAA Initiative has always been aligned, since its inception, with the priorities defined by the European Union as well as with the African Union (AU) key continental policies, notably Agenda 2063 and, since 2016, and in the specific area of education, the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2025). In fact, it was conceived in 2014 based on the idea that “Higher education has a particularly important role to play in enhancing citizenship and democratic values as well as providing a country with the skilled workers, managers and administrators that will foster sustainable development and encourage the trade and investment needed” (para 50 of the EU – Africa Summit’s 2014 Declaration). HAQAA-2 notably responded to the course of action in the Communication on a new Africa – Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs (COM(2018) whereby “the contents of tertiary education programmes and skills acquired by university students will be made more relevant to labour market needs and the harmonisation of higher education across the continent will be supported aiming to ensure the recognition of qualifications within Africa” and HAQAA-3 must now take into account the new developments in both frameworks.

On the EU side, HAQAA-3 will address two of the global challenges underlined by art. 11 d) of the NDICI-Global regulation (Education and Youth) and orient its workplan in the direction of the 10 actions put forward by the Joint Communication “Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa”, particularly Action 5 (Rapidly enhance learning, knowledge and skills, research and innovation capacities, particularly for women and youth) but also Action 3 (regional and continental economic integration, particularly through the African Continental Free Trade Agreement). Furthermore, HE cooperation will certainly feed into actions 2 (digital transformation) and 7 (Integrating good governance, democracy, human rights, the rule of law and gender equality in action and cooperation).

On the African side, HAQAA-3 will also take into account the very recent operationalization (January 2021) of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) and the signature in January 2018 of the Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community relating to Free Movements of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (Protocol (Protocol on Free Movement) – not yet entered into force because of the lack of the necessary minimum number of ratifications. This involves, first, giving a greater emphasis to the issue of workers and professional mobility and the underlying one of recognition of professional qualifications, an area in which the situation in the different African States is confused (because the issues of recognition of *academic* and *professional* qualifications are most often not adequately distinguished) and extremely diverse: to-date only 12 countries have ratified the Addis Convention on the recognition of higher education qualifications; and only 23 African countries have legally-established quality assurance agencies able to give a solid foundation to recognition. Second, those developments oblige to focus the interaction between the continental and regional integration processes, in general as well as in the area of Higher Education. It will also maintain and enhance close linkages with the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) project and the Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme Programme, both funded by the EU in partnership with AU.

Furthermore, HAQAA-3 must also be able to adapt to the outcomes of the European Union – African Union Summit in 2022. As an external factor, the COVID-19 pandemic has also induced deep changes in HE, some of them very welcome as they strengthen processes of innovation and digitalization. They must be introduced into

previous lines of thought concerning digitalization, equal access, employability, etc.

HAQAA-2 has already revised in 2021 its workplan to take into account these developments and strengthen its policy dimension. In order to complete all the required adaptations and face all these challenges, HAQAA-3's implementation must a) enhance its capacity of analysis and production of materials well adapted to policy design and implementation as well to capacity building at the level of HE institutions and policy makers; and b) integrate the regional University Associations that embrace Sub-Saharan Africa: Western, Central, Eastern and Southern. This is also required because of the change in the programming framework in the EU side: from the Pan-African to the Sub-Saharan. Therefore, the role of the regional HE organizations that have already been strategic implementing partners of HAQAA-2 should be upgraded. HAQAA-3 must also fully integrate the work developed by the two TUNING projects on the African Credit Transfer System (ACTS). This is the principal reason for the increase of budget between phase 2 and 3 since the ACTS proposal will be further developed and piloted in HEIs across the regions and there will also be an increase of support to the use and implementation of the ASG-QA in HEI and QAA across Africa, the aim being to reference ASG-QA in at least 35 African national QA systems.

The European experience demonstrates that the existence and implementation of such a system creates a sense of "commonness" that greatly promotes intra-regional cooperation, both bottom-up and top-down, even in the access of centralized legislation.

HAQAA-3 is designed and must be implemented in a multi-tiered manner, to ultimately build, further develop and connect quality assurance accreditation systems, which are not only the gatekeepers with regards to higher education provision, but also are increasingly relevant for all higher education dimensions and outputs, not only those framing and favouring intra-regional student mobility and employability but also those more directly oriented to deal with the horizontal, cross-cutting issues that must be mainstreamed in accordance with article 8.8 of the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation: climate change, environmental protection, human rights, democracy and gender equality.

Following up the development that has already taken place in the implementation of HAQAA-2, HAQAA-3 must also strengthen the initiative's policy dimension. First, it must consolidate the setting-up of a mechanism of policy design and data collection able to contribute to the improvement of the continental, regional and national processes. Second, it must continue the support offered by HAQAA-2 to the implementation of the African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) and the process of launching a new initiative when CESA will come to an end in 2025. Thirdly, as the legal and institutional framework of African becomes more complex and richer, HAQAA-3 must also build capacities, both in the HE sector and in public Administrations, in order to further a better understanding of the interaction between the overlapping regional and continental frameworks and the treatment of Higher Education in all of them.

HAQAA-3 must also reinforce synergies with projects in other EU-funded projects. This will of course be the case with continental projects like the ones on the African Continental Qualifications Framework and Intra-African Mobility but should also be the case with projects under the new Erasmus programme. It must also consolidate a permanent set of academic networks able to give sustainability to its outcomes; these networks must be regional and inter-regional, and be built in collaboration with already existing organizations, in particular regional associations of Universities able to interact with their respective regional economic communities. EU Delegations must be able to access these networks to help support bilateral efforts that they are undertaking in partner countries, be it in the field of education but also in specific sectors of support.

The creation of these synergies and the promotion of these networks can be the best way to guarantee that the implementation and outcomes of HAQAA-3 are coherent and synergetic also with interventions at national level, a fundamental condition for its success.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Short problem analysis:

In Africa, the governance of higher education has undergone a long evolution. Governance of the higher education

system takes place at the international, continental, regional and national (central and institutional) levels. At the national level, several countries, because of their linguistic, regional and organizational proximities, have adopted a certain uniformity with a ministry in charge of this sub-sector and governance bodies for public higher education institutions (HEIs). This model, however, has evolved for some with the creation of additional institutional advisories, decision-making and/or coordinating bodies attached to the central structures. Many of the study countries set up an additional quality assurance body whose tasks include the licensing of public and private HEIs and the accreditation of their courses. The oldest bodies were created in certain English-speaking countries¹. Other countries are in the process of setting up national agencies². Countries such as Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and Togo, among others, do not yet have a structure in charge of quality assurance in higher education.

The governance frameworks for educational provision vary according to the level of education (academic and professional) and differ from one region to another, and even from one country to another. Further diversification exists as regards the governance of National Qualifications Frameworks and their implementation currently under development across the regions. In most Francophone countries, the regulatory frameworks and standards for degrees, the length of training courses, and evaluation procedures are generally determined and set at the central level by laws and decrees applicable to all public and private HEIs, whilst in some Anglophone countries, the determination of degree equivalencies is entrusted to the National Accreditation Board. 19 mainly French-speaking countries³ from ECOWAS, SADC and ECCAS are members of the Conseil Africain et Malgache de l'Enseignement supérieur (CAMES). In North Africa, the universities are members of several regional and international networks such as the Association of Arab Universities, the Association of Francophone Universities, the Association of Universities of the Mediterranean, the International Association of Universities and in some cases the African Association of Universities. At regional level, the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), the Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE) all play a role in quality assurance and accreditation also.

The ambition of the African Union is primarily to build an integrated continent through a harmonised education system where intra-African mobility and skills portability are essential. Furthermore, the "*Continental education strategy for Africa*" (CESA 2016-2025) calls for a paradigm shift towards transformative education and training systems to meet the knowledge, competencies, skills, research, innovation and creativity required to nurture African core values and promote sustainable development. The AU calls for mechanisms for harmonisation and quality assurance to ensure comparable higher education in Africa, and for the establishment of a continental Accreditation and Quality Agency as a means to develop and monitor educational quality standards across the continent and which should serve as a guardian body for the Panafrican Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF) actions lines and tools, including notably ACQF.

In this respect, the original problem analysis of HAQAA was sound and the initiative is able to contribute to the long term tasks of improving the quality and effectiveness of African Higher Education in the framework of regional and continental integration and giving content and impact to the EU cooperation with Africa.

A first triennial stage of the initiative was implemented in 2016-2018, and a second one is currently being implemented (2020 – 2022), both successfully. The initiative is able to contribute to the long term tasks of improving the quality and effectiveness of African Higher Education in the framework of regional and continental integration and giving content and impact to the EU cooperation with Africa. Furthermore, HAQAA-2 has demonstrated a remarkable capacity to adapt to new circumstances (both at the political level in the African Union Commission as well as those derived from the COVID pandemic). Therefore, it is justifiable to proceed with an enlarged third stage (2023 – 2028).

In the third stage, while remaining focused on education and youth -student mobility- as two main global challenges, the policy dimension will be strengthened in order to follow the approach of the NDICI-Global Europe regulation and enhance its capacity of mainstreaming the issues such as climate change, environmental protection and gender, it will also take into account the very recent operationalization (January 2021) of the African

¹ Nigeria, South Africa, Namibia, Seychelles, Libya, Egypt, Lesotho, Botswana followed then by RDC, Malawi, Zambia, Eswatini, Senegal, Tunisia, Cameroon, Morocco and finally Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania and Zimbabwe.

² Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger

³ Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo

Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) and the signature in January 2018 of the Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community relating to Free Movements of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (Protocol on Free Movement). Therefore, it will give a greater emphasis to the issue of workers and professional mobility and the underlying one of recognition of professional qualifications.

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

At the national level, the initiative targets national quality assurance and qualifications authorities as well higher education institutions (HEI): HEI leadership, professionals working in quality assurance departments and units, teaching and research staff and HE students. This makes it very apt to complement and create synergies with projects implemented at national level.

At the continental level, it targets directly the African Union Commission and the Coordinators of the CESA (Continental Strategy for Education in Africa), as well as public officials from all member states which manage issues related to continental integration frameworks for economic and social development.

But HAQAA-3 will also be rooted in the four Sub-Saharan regions and their higher education stakeholder organisations as a) intermediary steps for the advance towards African Continental harmonisation goals, as outlined in CESA 2025 and Agenda 2063, as well as b) as a framework for integration that has proved successful in some cases. The main regional organizations to be addressed for their representative and operational capacity are: IUCEA (East Africa), CAMES (francophone Africa), ANAQ Sup/RAFANAQ (network for quality assurance of QA agencies in francophone Africa) and SARUA (SADC). Other selected university associations and QA networks can be addressed in order to reach the targeted stakeholders at the higher education institution and QA body level.

The variety and complexity of the targeted stakeholders requires a strong organizational set-up and putting into place a strong Advisory Board (see section 4.7).

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to provide African countries with the skilled workers, managers and administrators they need to foster sustainable development and encourage the trade and investment as well as to enhance citizenship and democratic values..

The Specific Objectives (Outcomes) of this action are:

1. quality assurance (QA) culture and quality enhancement in HE institutions and capacities of quality assurance agencies and national/regional authorities are strengthened to develop, implement and use transparency tools such as the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA) and African Credit Transfer System (ACTS);
2. the capacities of quality assurance agencies and national/regional authorities are strengthened to promote mutual recognition of accreditation, use of transparency tools and further engage in the set-up of the PAQAA (Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework);
3. the capacity of the higher education sector (including policy makers) on issues related to regional integration and to carryout evidence-based and informed policy making are built with a view to regional and continental integration, enhancing the sector's responsiveness and contribution to socio-economic challenges.

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

Contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1):

- 1.1 The African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA) are implemented at QAA and HEIs and capacity to promote the ASG-QA is built in Regional Associations of the four Sub-Saharan regions;
- 1.2 The ACTS (proposed by TUNING II and promoted in HAQAA2) is finalized and promoted to higher

education authorities and HEI in the four Sub-Saharan regions, through regional university associations and qualifications/QA networks.

Contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2):

2.1 The AUC is assisted in the set-up of the PAQAA, including in drafting statutes, communications measures and facilitating meetings of its incipient governance structure;

2.2 Capacity to understand and exploit the interrelation between continental, regional and national frameworks for QA across the Continent are built.

Contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2):

3.1 contributing to Outcome 3 (or Specific Objective 3): Based on the results of HAQAA2, regional platforms for HE data collection for policy design are set-up and capacitated and regional integration academic networks are supported;

3.2 contributing to Outcome 3 (or Specific Objective 3): Capacity to develop and implement policies on topics of interest for regional integration and harmonisation, linked to continental frameworks including AfCFTA and the revision/extension of the CESA 2016-2025, are built at regional and national level.

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1.1 (3) A HAQAA3 ASG-QA Task Force is set up, comprised of representative institutions of the African regions to undertake the following activities:

- a) To propose minor revisions and improvements for re-publication of the ASG-QA;
- b) To launch a targeted communications and promotion campaign at regional and national level on the ASG-QA and its application;
- c) To produce regional and country profiles on the QA development;
- d) Organization of agencies reviews and consultancy visits.

Activities related to Output 1.2 A HAQAA3 ACTS Team is set with the involvement of representative institutions of the African regions to carry out the following:

- a) To finalize the definition of the system based on consultation of relevant national and regional authorities and HEI;
- b) To produce the ACTS User Guide including a particular emphasis on calculating workload and allocation of credits);
- c) To produce and promote training materials on its application;
- d) To promote a pilot in a selected sample of universities.

Activities related to Output 2.1.:

- a) A technical assistance mechanism regarding the set-up of the PAQAA is designed in close collaboration with the AUC, with the precise mandate of drafting statutes and core establishment documents and supporting the planned roll out of its first functions towards stakeholders;
- b) A programme of meetings, studies and consultations is launched on the relationship between PAQAA and regional and national agencies;
- c) Comparative studies and intra-regional dialogue between PAQAA and other mechanism of Regional QA in the world are carried out;
- d) First meetings of the governance structure of the PAQAA are facilitated.

Activities related to Output 2.2 Trainings for public officials across the continent are designed and implemented through the regional entities and associations

- a) The training programme on EQA launched by HAQAA-2 is continued taking into account the work on PAQAA;
- b) The training programme on IQA launched by HAQAA-2 is continued taking into account the work on PAQAA.

Activities related to Output 3.1.

- a) to d) Four separate processes are set-up/agreed in each of four Sub-Saharan African regions, based on the

proposed work plan for Policy-Data produced in HAQAA2

Activities related to Output 3.2.

- a) A Capacity building programme on evidence based HE policy making, adapted to each of the four sub-Saharan regions, is implemented;
- b) Activities and linkages with the ACQF are supported;
- c) The research, teaching and mobility activities of regional networks created by/recognised by HAQAA3 are promoted.

Transversal Activities:

- a) Following HAQAA2, HAQAA3 will produce the studies necessary in order to better place African and EU-African cooperation on Higher Education within the framework of Regional and Continental Integration in Africa;
- b) HAQAA will promote regional networks for regional integration at the 4 sub-Saharan regions;
- c) A HAQAA bi-regional Team on Mainstreaming of relevant cross-cutting issues is set up in order to promote their treatment in the materials developed by the project.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

Given the nature of the Action, there is no need to undertake an SEA screening, EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) screening or a CRA (Climate Risk Assessment) screening. However, a special attention will be paid to environmental protection in the training of quality assurance agencies and HEIs, in particular in the user guidelines of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA), notably in relation to EIAs and environmental health in higher education institutions.

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 HAQAA-1 and HAQAA-2 addressed mainly issues of Quality Assurance in Higher Education, understood as a process of establishing stakeholder confidence that provision (input, processes, outcomes) fulfils expectations or measures up to threshold minimum requirements. Under this perspective, the HAQAA initiative remained circumscribed to the promotion of human development through education. Policy issues like the ones for which mainstreaming is required in terms of the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation were not focused, even if it could be argued that an improvement in the quality of Higher Education constitutes a “horizontal input” for the advance in the treatment of those issues in terms of knowledge and expertise.

However, the HAQAA-2’ workplan has been revised in order to strengthen its policy dimension, and HAQAA-3 will go further into this direction. This will allow HAQAA-3 to tackle also issues like the fight against climate change, environmental protection, human rights, democracy, gender equality.

HAQAA-3 will also promote innovative approaches to curricula design and teaching that are now making ground in Europe and that can no longer be left aside when the quality of HE is evaluated. These innovative approaches facilitate the mainstreaming of most of the issues underlined by the NDICI regulation: a) the generalization of online and blended learning opens new avenues for women empowerment and can revolutionize access to HE by disadvantaged populations (provided the problem of access to Internet is solved); b) flexibilization of curricula and modularization can allow for the mandatory introduction in most of them of horizontal modules of a few credits that could address those NDICI issues (on awareness to climate change, or environmental protection, or democracy and human rights, for example); c) these modules can be produced in the HEIs that have more expertise in these topics and be offered to HEIs in a lower stage of development, favouring, as a result, the regional and continental integration as well as the development of specific fragile countries and LDCs. And work in this direction can also create synergies with other EU-funded initiatives, for example as a way of projecting towards the world, and in particular towards Africa, some of the initiatives in the same direction that are being developed by the “European Universities” (in the restricted sense under Erasmus+).

In order to avoid a dispersion of efforts, the focus will be mainly on issues of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, and of environment and climate change. To achieve this, the support to the activities of the CESA HE Subclusters (already initiated in the framework of HAQAA-2) must concentrate in the Subclusters on Gender Inclusivity, Equity and Diversity (subcluster 7), Student affairs (subcluster 8) and Curriculum, Teaching and Learning (subcluster 11). Linkages with the other clusters of CESA, notable TVET will be developed.

First, some previous work was already done in the framework of TUNING 1 and 2 in order to contextualize environment and sustainability: when the learner profiles were discussed under TUNING, environmental sustainability and ethics were included; so, graduates were expected to have developed attention/awareness to environment competencies in engineering for instance. This approach must be extended to most of other learning programmes and must be revisited by HAQAA-3 in its work on the ACTS.

Second, the ASG-QA and their User Guide will be revised and reinterpreted in the framework of HAQAA-3; and this creates an opportunity for the introduction of awareness on those issues as a sort of horizontal competence or learning outcome or quality standard. But, already in its current form, the ASG-QA includes a number of standards and guidelines that address access, inclusion and gender equity in African HEI, as an important object of quality assessment. These elements are further accentuated in a User's Guide developed by HAQAA2, which provides clear examples of how HEI can build mechanisms to promote and assess gender equity in their internal QA systems.

Thirdly, the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2025) adopted by the African Union and to whose implementation HAQAA-3 will be contributing (as HAQAA-2 has already done) is supposed to contribute to Agenda 2063 and refers to the Common African Position on the post 2015 SDGs which is based on 7 pillars, one of which is environmental sustainability.

At all stages gender-responsive human rights-based approach principles participation, non-discrimination/equality, accountability and transparency applying to all rights will guide the planning and implementation of the Action.

Human Rights

At all stages gender-responsive human rights-based approach principles participation, non-discrimination/equality, accountability and transparency applying to all rights will guide the planning and implementation of the Action.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0. This implies that no specific action targeting disability is foreseen.

Democracy

The action does not tackle democratic processes. However, it will contribute to build better institutions (e.g. HEIs and public authorities). By enhancing quality assurance the action supports good governance and the environment that facilitates improved quality and transparency of qualifications, education and training programmes.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

NA

Disaster Risk Reduction

N/A

Other considerations if relevant

NA

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
1 and 3	Risk 1: Differing levels of capacity of the bodies in charge of higher education (national and regional) for the roll-out of harmonised QAA and recognition tools.	High	Medium	Working with Regional Communities with a proven track record. A robust management mechanism is to be designed.
1 and 3	Risk 2: Strained level of resources and transition phase at the Association of African Universities.	High	Low	Working with the more consolidated Regional University Associations and some African specialised Networks.
1 and 4	Risk 3: Possible blockages and eventual lack of decisive action by the different Departments of the AUC .	Medium	Medium	Possible high impact for specific objective 2 (setting up of the PAQAA). As in HAQAA-1 and 2, action by the EUDEL may be required. Creation of a prestigious high level advisory team can help.
2 and 5	Risk 4: Possible missing, contradictory, overlapping and duplication of efforts due to different bodies collecting data on HE in Africa in a disjointed manner.	Medium	Low	Some groundwork already done by HAQAA-2. Continue its work. Rely on the more advanced regional organizations to emphasize the need to avoid duplications and fill voids.

Lessons Learnt:

HAQAA1 and 2 have provided considerable lessons in terms of how best to facilitate and structure African collaboration in HE: a) The need for a coordinating institution in the consortium able to adapt to changing circumstances, play a facilitating role between all the actors and provide strategic lines of innovative thinking; b) The importance of working with strategic regional partners; c) The need for a very robust internal communication and consultation strategy, essential to the policy component; d) The need for a Steering Committee bringing together the EC, the AUC and the leader of the implementing consortium.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that HAQAA-3 builds on the successful results of HAQAA-1 (2015-2018) and the very positive implementation of HAQAA-2 (2020 – 2022). The revision of HAQAA-2's workplan integrates already the work carried out by TUNING-1 and TUNING-2 concerning the setting up of an African Credit Transfer System (ACTS) that takes its inspiration from the European Credit Transfer System. The essential output of HAQAA-1 (the definition of African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance -ASG-QA-) has been endorsed by the African Union, which has also adopted the decisions that are needed to give the adequate institutional foundation of HAQAA-2' implementation, mainly as far as the preliminary work for the setting-up of a Pan-African Continental Quality Assurance Agency (PAQAA) is concerned. Therefore, HAQAA-2 has proved to be a very valuable platform for relationships with the African Union and, in particular, the African Union Commission in the area of education and youth. HAQAA-2 has also established a fruitful framework to work with the four Sub-Saharan regions and their Regional Associations of Universities. HAQAA-3 assumes that this positive dynamic will continue and can serve the objectives defined by the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation and the Joint Communication "Towards a Comprehensive Strategy for Africa".

On this assumption, a detailed set of activities (section 3.2) will lead to six main outputs (section 3.1) that are defined with precision in order to allow their monitoring (as explained in section 4.7, a Project Steering Committee will be set up to this effect, comprising a representative of the European Commission, one of the African Union Commission and the leader of the implementing consortium: this has already proved very effective in the framework of HAQAA-2). The envisaged outputs go much further than the area of Quality Assurance as they include building the capacity of the higher education sector (including policy makers) on issues related to regional integration and to carry out evidence-based and informed policy making with a view to regional and continental integration, enhancing the sector's responsiveness and contribution to socio-economic challenges.

However, the three outcomes/specific objectives as well as the overall objective/impact (section 3.1) are not overambitious. The project does not intend to solve by itself the enormous problems of the education sector in Africa nor have a magical key for mainstreaming the transversal, cross-cutting issues that must underlie all EU external actions. The logic of the intervention is to make a meaningful regional contribution that a) complements the actions at national level, which will always remain essential, b) favours regional and continental integration processes and the progressive enlargement of their scope to the area of education, and c) increases the impact and visibility of EU cooperation with Sub-Saharan Africa.

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

Results	Results chain (@): Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (@): (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (values and years) ⁴	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	To support institutional and external quality assurance practices, strengthen the capacities at continental (AU) level and other relevant regional organizations to facilitate the implementation of the Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF) and build the capacity of the higher education sector for informed and evidence-based policy making at continental level.	1.1 Level of implementation of Transparency tools for QA 1.2 Level of development and stakeholder consensus regarding the set-up and governance structure of the PAQAA 1.3 Level of capacity to apply a HE data collection strategy in the 4 sub-Saharan regions 1.4 Number of experts/officials and QA agency staff trained in the use of African Transparency tools (ASG-QA/ACTS) 1.5 Number of higher education institutions using African Transparency tools (ACTS and ASG-QA) 1.6 Level of coordination of associations and bodies at the 4 sub-Saharan regions in	The different elements of the PAQAF are either partially or fully developed: -A proposal for ACTS has been tabled as a result of HAQAA2; Scenarios for the set-up of PAQAA have been consulted to stakeholders and recommendations made to the AUC on its set-up; The ASG-QA have been published in 4 African languages, widely promoted and used as a baseline for the development of approximately 20 African QA systems; The AQCF has been developed (ETF/SIFA	The ACTS proposal is further developed, agreed across stakeholders and piloted in HEI in the 4 sub-Saharan regions. High level of understanding of and implementation of the ASG-QA in HEI and QAA across Africa: ASG-QA referenced in at least 35 African national QA systems An approach to data collection for policy design is agreed across 4 African sub-regions and capacity of HEI and officials to implement it is generated	1. African Union Commission reports from CESA Clusters. 2. Regional Organizations in Africa (Work plans, annual reports and strategy documents) 3. International organizations. 4. Reports and documents produced by stakeholders such as national QAA (national standards, national QA regulations) 5. Reports from regional data units/centres	<i>Not applicable</i>

⁴ To be confirmed at the end of the HAQAA2 project.

		<p>promoting a continental approach to data collection on HE</p> <p>project) with the AUC; A steering committee for the the Addis Recognition convention is operational (UNESCO).</p> <p>Very few capacities for data collection at HEI and national in Africa. Data collection strategy piloted in SADC/Data collected on faculty profiles in EAC</p> <p>No comprehensive assessment of the CESA higher education objectives</p> <p>Non-articulated data collection for policy making strategy between African countries and regions</p>				
Outcome 1	Quality assurance (QA) culture in HE institutions strengthened and	1.1 Level of implementation and acceptance of the ACTS in the four	1.1 ACTS proposal is unknown 1.2 Some	1.1 100 HEI piloted ACTS and regional and national	1.1 Strategy documents and work plans at Regional University	Universities have sufficient resources available to assess and implement a

	capacities of quality assurance agencies and national/regional authorities to develop, implement and use transparency tools such as the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA) and African Credit Transfer System (ACTS) are built	<p>1.2 Level of implementation of gender equality-environment-inclusion sensitive ASG-QA at QAAs and HEIs in the four sub-Saharan regions.</p> <p>1.3 Dissemination of Regional and country profiles on the implementation of the ASG-QA</p>	<p>agencies implementing ASG-QA and/or comparing their own standards to them (20 countries)</p> <p>1.3 Selected HEIs in Africa are aware of the ASG-QA and have applied them (approx. 15 per country)</p> <p>1.4 Regional associations promote the ASG-QA to regional authorities</p>	<p>authorities endorse the final ACTS proposal</p> <p>1.2 All QAA agencies (and countries setting up agencies) are aware of the ASG-QA and at least 35 countries are implementing</p> <p>1.3 At least 30 HEI (average) per country aware of an applying or referencing the ASG_QA</p> <p>1.4 Regional associations and QA networks/agencies all reference and promote ASG-QA</p>	<p>Associations</p> <p>1.2 HEI QA protocols</p> <p>1.3 Reports from regional authorities</p>	credit system.
Outcome 2	Capacities of quality assurance agencies and national/regional authorities to promote mutual recognition of accreditation strengthen, transparency tools and further engage in the set-up of the PAQAA (Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework) are	<p>2.1 Level of acceptance and promotion of mutual recognition mechanisms at the national, regional and continental level (the different elements of the PAQAF, including the ASG_QA, the ACQF and ACTS).</p> <p>2.2 Level of engagement of QAA and qualifications authorities in setting up the PAQAA and consensus on</p>	<p>Scenarios for the set-up of PAQAA have been consulted to stakeholders and recommendations made to the AUC on its set-up;</p> <p>ACTS proposal has been discussed in HAQAA2 but is little known (2022)</p>	<p>Wide stakeholder (national authority agreement on ACTS proposal, across 4 regions)</p> <p>QAA agencies (and countries setting up agencies) are aware of the ASG-QA and at least 35 countries are implementing them</p>	<p>2.1 Guidelines and protocols of QAA agencies</p> <p>2.2 National qualifications authorities reference ACTS is curricula manuals and related protocols</p> <p>2.3 Plans and protocols of QA Units at HEI as well as policies related to credits</p>	QAA Agencies and HEI have the capacity to implement recognition mechanism and to align their practices towards PAQAA

	implemented	governance structure	Some agencies implementing ASG-QA and/or comparing their own standards to them (20 countries)		2.4 Reports from consultancy visits and agency reviews that HAQAA2 conducts	
Outcome 3	Capacities of the higher education sector (including policy makers) on issues related to regional integration and to carryout evidence-based and informed policy making with a view to regional and continental integration, enhancing the sector's responsiveness and contribution to socio-economic challenges, including the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment, are built.	2.1 Level of development of regional centres for Data collection and policy analysis in the four sub-Saharan regions 2.2 Extent of coordination between the supported regional centres for data collection 2.3 Extent of piloted data collection approaches in select African countries supported by regional data units 2.4 Level of analysis of regional and continental inclusive and gender-equal HE policy goals	Only some initial development at regional level on data collection for policy making, as accounted for in the HAQAA2 action plan.work plan for data for policy in African HE (2022) : Small data pilots conducted in SADC and EAC	4 regional centres/platforms operating – data collection mechanisms at the 4 sub-Saharan regions level in place. Methodologies developed and piloted and staff is trained in data collection for evidenced policy making (2025)	2.1 Regional Associations work plans: engagement in data collection 2.3 Work Plans of Regional Economic Communities 2.4 Data reports of the AUC and the CESA Clusters which are informed by regional data units 2.5 Reports on trends in African HE and assessment of regional and continental HE goals, as produced by the regional data units in collaboration	Sub-Saharan regional associations have the capacities to work with regional economic communities in a common approach towards data collection for policy making

Output 1 related to Outcome 1	1.1 African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA) implemented and capacities at QAA, HEIs and Regional Associations representing the four Sub-Saharan regions are built	<p>1.1.1 Number of people trained for the implementation of the ASGs</p> <p>1.1.2 Number of people trained to review implementation at QAA and HEI levels</p> <p>Number of experts/officials and QA agency staff trained by the Intervention with increased knowledge on the use of African Transparency tools (ASG-QA/ACTS)</p> <p>1.1.3 Number of institutions reached by a regional, national, and continental campaign on the use of ASG-QA, by country and type of institutions</p> <p>1.1.4 number of consultancy visits</p> <p>1.1.5 number of agency reviews conducted and stakeholders engaged.</p>	1.1.1 200 1.1.3/4: 10 (2022)	1.1.1: 500 1.1.3/4: 30 (2028)	1.1..1 QAA agencies and experts 1.1.2 Regional associations and HEI	Universities have sufficient resources available to implement African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA)
Output 2 related to Outcome 1	1.2 The ACTS (proposed by TUNING II and promoted in HAQAA2) is finalized and promoted to higher education authorities and HEI in the four Sub-Saharan regions, through regional university associations and qualifications/QA networks.	<p>1.2.1 Number of ACTS pilots conducted at HEIs, by country</p> <p>1.2.2 Number of ACTS pilots conducted at HEIs</p> <p>1.1.3 level of engagements of stakeholders in promoting transparency tools -ACTS</p>	1.2.1: 5 1.2.2: 0 (2022)	1.2.: 150 1.2.2: 90 (2028)	1.2.1 HEI 1.2.2 Regional associations 1.2.3: Reports	Universities have sufficient resources available to assess and implement a credit system.

Output 1 related to Outcome 2	2.1 The AUC is assisted in the set-up of the PAQAA, including in drafting statutes, communications measures and facilitating meetings of its incipient governance structure	2.1.1 Number of participants in meetings and consultations on the relationship between PAQAA and regional and national agencies 2.1.3 level of engagement at the sub-regional level on the implementation of PAQAA 2.1.3 Feedback given by regional associations to the comparative studies on PAQAA and regional QA mechanisms in the word	2.1.1: Scenarios set by HAQAA2	2.1.1: Statues and implementation plan ready (2025)	2.1.1 QAA 2.1.2 Regional associations 2.1.3 Reports 2.1.4 PAQAA documents	QAA Agencies and HEI have the capacity to align their practices towards PAQAA
Output 2 related to Outcome 2	2.2 Capacity to understand and exploit the interrelation between continental, regional and national frameworks for QA across the Continent are built .	2.2.1 Number of public officials trained. 2.2.2 Number of IQA experts trained	2.2.1: 200 (2022)	2.2.1: 400 (2028)	2.2.1 Regional associations and QAA 2.2.2 HEIs	
Output 1 related to Outcome 3	Functional gender and population sensitive Policy Data systems for regional integration established in four sub-Saharan regions and their HE academic networks	3.1.1 Number of platforms set -up with the support of the Intervention in the sub-saharian regions with a gender, age, disability and ethnic sensitive design 3.1.2 Number of regional networks promoted with the support of the intervention 3.1.3 Level of capacity to apply a gender equality and inclusive HE data collection strategy in the 4 sub-Saharan regions	3.1.1 0 (2022)	3.1.1: 4	3.1.1 Regional associations and QAA 3.1.2 HEIs 3.1.3 reports	Regional and economic communities buy in a common approach towards data collection for policy making Origins of sources of data are gender and population sensitive

Output 2 related to Outcome 3	<p>3.2 Increased inclusive capacities in four sub-Saharan regions and their HE academic networks on topics of interest for regional integration and harmonisation, linked to continental frameworks including AfCFTA and the revision/extension of the CESA 2016-2025. Participation of women experts in capacity building measures is encouraged. Training materials will address innovative approaches to curricula design and teaching for the promotion of gender quality and women empowerment,</p>	<p>3.2.1 Number of experts trained who demonstrate increased levels of knowledge on the topics, by sex, disability status and country</p> <p>3.2.2 Extent to which the training materials developed are used for developing policy research on regional integration in the four sub-Saharan regions.</p>	<p>3.2.1: 4</p> <p>3.2.2 at some level</p>	<p>3.2.1: 50</p> <p>3.2.2: highly used</p>	<p>3.2.1 Regional associations and QAA</p> <p>3.2.2 HEIs</p> <p>3.2.3 reports</p>	
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4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the African Union or other AU Member States.

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 84 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.

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

4.3 Implementation modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures.⁴

The entire action will be implemented by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) through cross-sub-delegation transformed into co-delegation type II as from 2023. EAC will detail its commitments in a Service Level Agreement (SLA) will to be signed between the Directorate General for Education, Youth, Culture and Sport and with the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA).

DG EAC will be the contracting authority for the procurement procedures. A service contract will be signed with an implementing consortium to achieve all objectives and outcomes foreseen in section 3.

4.4 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

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)
Implementation modalities – cross-sub-delegation to DG EAC	
All Objective/Outputs	10 000 000
Procurement (direct management) – cf. section 4.3	10 000 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	will be covered by another Decision
Contingencies	N.A.
Totals	10 000 000

4.6 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

HAQAA-3 will be implemented by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) through cross-sub-delegation. A Service Level Agreement (SLA) will be signed between the General-Directorate for Education, Youth, Culture and Sport and the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA). As in HAQAA-2, the European Commission DG EAC will participate in a Steering Committee with the contracted implementing consortium and the African Union Commission. The Steering Committee will be a means to actively engage in the strategic and political oversight of the Action, providing guidance to the implementing consortium and ensure congruency with other comparable actions.

The implementing consortium will also organize, manage and convene an Advisory Board (AB) for HAQAA-3, based on the successful precedent of HAQAA-1 and 2. This AB will comprise key stakeholder organisations, donors and partners who not only support higher education harmonization, quality assurance, recognition, qualifications and mobility across the African continent but are also committed to work in the areas that should be mainstreamed in conformity with Regulation NDICI-Global Europe. The AB will not have decision making power over the work plan of the Action. It is nonetheless deemed critical for African stakeholder buy-in and ownership and is seen as a means to coordinate with the workplans of the relevant agencies, associations, networks and international organisations financing and supporting higher education harmonisation and quality assurance in Africa as well as to promote synergies with actions implemented at national level. This is why the European Commission must retain oversight and approval rights over the AB composition.

As HAQAA-3 includes an important policy dimension, policy dialogue actions must be built into the HAQAA-3 work plan, to both complement and further the already existing regional and bi-regional policy dialogues. And a mechanism must be established to promote coherence and synergies with actions implemented at national level as well as with other EU-funded projects, in particular those funded also in the framework of the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation

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).

The implementing partner will be responsible for monitoring and reporting on indicators of the logframe matrix, including the collection of baselines and data collection in the inception phase of the action.

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a mid-term and final evaluation(s) will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants or through a joint mission via an implementing partner

It will be carried out for problem solving, accountability and learning purposes at various levels, taking into account in particular the fact that several innovative approaches will be tested in the evolving landscape of African qualifications framework which will produce valuable lessons learnt for the way forward. This evaluation will be undertaken in close collaboration with participating organizations.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with partner countries and other key stakeholders. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate,

in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

The evaluation will be gender and human rights sensitive, assess gender equality and human rights results and implementation of rights-based approach working principles (participation, non-discrimination, accountability and transparency).

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.

Appendix 1 REPORTING IN OPSYS

An Intervention⁵ (also generally called project/programme) is the operational entity associated to a coherent set of activities and results structured in a logical framework aiming at delivering development change or progress. Interventions are the most effective (hence optimal) entities for the operational follow-up by the Commission of its external development operations. As such, Interventions constitute the base unit for managing operational implementations, assessing performance, monitoring, evaluation, internal and external communication, reporting and aggregation.

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

The present Action identifies as:

Action level		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single action	Present action: all contracts in the present action
Group of actions level		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of actions	Actions reference (CRIS#/OPSYS#): <Present action> <Other action>
Contract level		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	<foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract)>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 2	<foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract)>
	(...)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of contracts 1	<foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract) 1> <foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract) 2> <foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract) #>

⁵ [Ares\(2021\)4450449](#) - For the purpose of consistency between terms in OPSYS, DG INTPA, DG NEAR and FPI have harmonised 5 key terms, including ‘action’ and ‘Intervention’ where an ‘action’ is the content (or part of the content) of a Commission Financing Decision and ‘Intervention’ is a coherent set of activities and results which constitutes an effective level for the operational follow-up by the EC of its operations on the ground. See more on the [concept of intervention](#).