



EN

THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX 1

to the Commission Implementing Decision amending Commission Implementing Decision C(2022) 9783 of 16.12.2022 on the financing of the multiannual action plan in favour of Sub-Saharan Africa for 2022 - 2026 Part 2

constituting ANNEX 28 of the Commission Implementing Decision C(2022) 9783

Action Document for “the Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa”

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 | Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa (MPRR) OPSYS number: ACT- 61319 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (<u>NDICI-Global Europe</u>) |
| 2. Team Europe Initiative | Yes – the Action contributes to the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean Route TEI and to the Central Mediterranean Route TEI. |
| 3. Zone benefiting from the action | The action shall be carried out in Sub-Saharan African countries of origin, transit and destination in the Atlantic/Western and Central Mediterranean routes |
| 4. Programming document | Regional Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa. |
| 5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results | The Action will contribute to Specific Objective 1 of Priority Area “Migration and Forced Displacement”: “Contribute to strengthening migration management, migration policy, and migration governance in Sub-Saharan Africa”. It will particularly contribute to Expected Result 1.1 “Improved protection and assistance to migrants stranded in destination/transit countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, including to returnees, as well as enhanced sustainable reintegration support to returnees (and their host communities) in their countries of origin in Sub-Saharan Africa in line with the EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration, including by strengthening third countries’ national systems and capacities for return, readmission and reintegration, in full respect of fundamental values and human rights”. |
| PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION | |
| 6. Priority Area(s), | Migration and Forced Displacement – Migration, DAC Code 151 |

| | | | | |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| sectors | | | | |
| 7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) | <p>Main SDG (1 only): Sustainable Development Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.</p> <p>Particularly sub-goal 10.7: Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.</p> <p>Other SDGs:</p> <p>SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.</p> <p>Particularly sub-goal 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking in human beings and sexual and other types of exploitation</p> <p>SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.</p> <p>Particularly sub-goal 8.7: Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and trafficking in human beings and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.</p> <p>SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.</p> <p>Particularly sub-goal 16.2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking in human beings and all forms of violence against and torture of children.</p> | | | |
| 8 a) DAC code(s) | DAC-code 15190 Facilitation of orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility | | | |
| 8 b) Main Delivery Channel | International Organisation for Migration – 47066 | | | |
| 9. Targets | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input 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 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"/> |
| 11. Internal markers and Tags | Policy objectives | Not targeted | Significant objective | Principal objective |
| | Digitalisation @ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship digital skills/literacy digital services | YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Connectivity @ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | digital connectivity energy transport health education and research | YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Migration @ (methodology for tagging under development) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" 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 | | | | |
| 12. Amounts concerned | Budget line(s) (article, item) ¹ : -14.020120 (West Africa) – EUR 153 250 000 -14.020121 (East Africa) – EUR 26 750 000 Total estimated cost: EUR 183 883 231.15 (including contribution from Denmark and Sweden) Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 183 883 231.15 (including contribution | | | |

¹ Given the number of affected vulnerable migrants from each region, EUR 144,5 M will be allocated to West African countries, and EUR 25,4 M to Central and East African countries.

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>from Denmark and Sweden)</p> <p>The contribution is for an amount of EUR 70 000 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2022, including EUR 59 000 000 from BGUE-B2022-14.020120-C1 and EUR 11 000 000 from BGUE-B2022-14.020121-C1.</p> <p>The contribution is for an amount of EUR 65 000 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2023, including EUR-56 000 000 from BGUE-B2023-14.020120-C1 and EUR 9 000 000 from BGUE-B2023-14.020121-C1.</p> <p>The contribution is for an amount of EUR 45 000 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2024, including EUR 38 250 000 from BGUE-B2024-14.020120-C1 and EUR 6 750 000 from BGUE-B2024-14.020121-C1, subject to the availability of appropriations for the respective financial years following the adoption of the relevant annual budget, or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.</p> <p>The Commission will be entrusted with the responsibility of managing the contribution for an amount of DKK 20 000 000 (approximately EUR 2 683 231,15²) transferred by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark and an amount of EUR 1 200 000³ transferred by the Ministry of Justice of Sweden, after the signature of the corresponding transfer agreements, in accordance with the procedures applicable to the EU budget.</p> <p>This action will contribute to the two Migration TEIs in Africa :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) A Team Europe Initiative for a Comprehensive migration approach in the Maghreb, Sahel and West African countries in the Atlantic / Western Mediterranean route, led by Spain. Participating EU MS are BE, DE, CZ, DK, ES, FR, NL, IT and CH as an associated country. (2) A Team Europe Initiative on Central Mediterranean migration route, co-led by France and Italy. Participating MS are AU, BE, CZ, DE, DK, ES, FR, NL, IT, MT. CH also contributes to this TEI. |
| MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION | |
| 13. Type of financing⁴ | Indirect management with the entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.4.1 |

1.2 Summary of the Action

The main aim of the Action is to contribute to the protection of stranded and vulnerable migrants within Sub-Saharan Africa, and support assisted voluntary return and sustainable reintegration for returnees in the region. This will be done through a rights-based and comprehensive approach that puts migrant rights and partner country ownership at the centre. The Action will take place in Sub-Saharan Africa, and in particular in countries of the Atlantic/Western and Central Mediterranean routes.

The Action thus corresponds to Expected Result 1.1 of Specific Objective 1 of Priority Area “Migration and Forced Displacement” of the regional MIP: “Improved protection and assistance to migrants stranded in destination/transit countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, including to returnees, as well as enhanced sustainable reintegration support to returnees (and their host communities) in their countries of origin in Sub-Saharan Africa in line with the EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration, including by strengthening third countries’ national systems and capacities for return, readmission and reintegration, in full respect of fundamental values and human rights”.

² Of which EUR 2 433 231.15 will be made available for the project and EUR 250 000 will be for administrative fees.

³ Of which EUR 950 000 will be made available for the project and EUR 250 000 will be for administrative fees.

⁴ Art. 27 NDICI

This action is expected to contribute to delivering on the Joint vision for 2030 set out at the latest European Union (EU)-African Union (AU) Summit held in February 2022. On this occasion, both continents' leaders agreed on an enhanced and reciprocal partnership for migration and mobility. They committed on one hand to deepen cooperation in finding durable solutions for vulnerable migrants in need of international protection, while on the other achieving effective improvements on return, readmission and reintegration, including promoting voluntary return of those in not in need of international protection.

The Action contributes to the 2030 Agenda, in particular SDG 10: "Reduce inequality within and among countries" and target 10.7 (Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people), as well as to SDGs 1 (poverty), 5.2, 8.7 and 16.2 (trafficking in human beings, violence, exploitation). The Action is aligned with the European Consensus on Development (paragraph 40). The Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa (MPRR) is also aligned with the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum⁵ and the EU Strategy on voluntary return and reintegration.⁶

The Action follows and replaces the EU-IOM Joint Initiative (JI) on Migrant Protection and Reintegration, which was running since 2016 and was funded first by the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, and then in order to facilitate transition to follow-up actions through an individual measure under the NDICI regional Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Sub-Saharan Africa.

The program will be structured along two key components:

1. Provision of protection and other essential support for migrants stranded in relevant Sub-Saharan transit countries in the Atlantic/Western and Central Mediterranean routes. This support would include search and rescue, and provision of other protection services; the possibility for assisted voluntary return; pre-departure hospitality, medical and psychological assistance and support for the travel documentation; and short-term post-arrival assistance.
2. Provision of individual reintegration support in countries of origin in Sub-Saharan Africa, with the aim to support psychosocial, social and economic reintegration for returnees whilst ensuring a gender and age sensitive approach. This component will also cover reintegration support for returnees from North-African countries. On an exceptional and case by case basis, and with prior approval of the Commission, this support could be offered to returnees from the EU, ensuring coordination and avoiding overlaps with other support that may be available.

This program will contribute to the Migration TEIs in Africa (Atlantic / Western Mediterranean Route and Central Mediterranean Route), in particular the return and reintegration component which is an integral part of both TEIs. The various components are expected to help tackle a wider range of migration-related issues. The action will generate positive impacts by contributing to better migration management, preventing irregular migration, mitigating the consequences of migrants smuggling and trafficking in human beings, addressing factors that induce irregular migration, while enhancing cooperation and dialogue.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

In recent years, countries of Sub-Saharan Africa have faced complex situations: conflicts and protracted security crisis, climate change and environmental degradation, food and nutrition crises, demographic pressure, increased competition over resources, as well as epidemic risks. All of these are a source of instability for the regions and act as a risk multiplier exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities.

⁵ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:85ff8b4f-ff13-11ea-b44f-01aa75ed71a1.0002.01/DOC_3&format=DOC

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0120&from=EN>

Since 2015, the EU and African countries have reinforced their joint approach to migration management, improving cooperation in the fight against irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings while developing at the same time a more sustainable approach to harness the potential of migration as a fundamental driver for inclusive and sustainable development in countries of origin and transit in Africa.

Yet, significant challenges remain. Both migrants and refugees face extreme risks along the migration routes, through the desert, upon arrival in Libya and while crossing the Atlantic or the Mediterranean. While the absolute number of deaths in the Mediterranean decreased between 2016 and 2020⁷, the number of deaths and disappearances increased again in 2021 (2 048 compared to 1 448 in 2020) and in 2022 (1963), making the route comparatively more deadly (75% of reported deaths and disappearances in 2021 were on this route). Despite these difficult conditions, people continued to migrate. From 2017 to 2020 the number of persons originating from West and Central Africa, arriving irregularly by sea and land in EU Member States amounted to 159 707⁸. At the same time, the migration situation and movements within Libya remain highly complex and fluid and the main nationalities of migrants identified in Libya do not correspond to the main nationalities arriving in Italy.

Notably an unprecedented influx of over 8000 vulnerable migrants arrived in the village of Assamaka in Niger from Algeria in the spring of 2023. As a result as of August 2023, 11 856 or over 85% of the migrants assisted with voluntary return from Sub-Saharan Africa through the MPRR were returned from Niger.

Criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings are taking advantage of irregular migration routes, targeting particularly vulnerable groups, predominantly women and girls. Overall, the number of women and girls registered as having arrived irregularly by sea and by land in Europe between 2018 and 2020 is about 76 615, equivalent to 20% of total arrivals⁹. An urgent lack of effective protection and sufficient assistance inside Libya but also in countries upstream, and the absence of durable solutions, including alternative pathways of admission have been flagged by national stakeholders. In 2017 the EU-AU-UN put in place a joint Task Force calling for facilitating the voluntary humanitarian returns to countries of origin, and the resettlement of those in need of international protection in order to save lives and ensure protection of migrants and refugees along the routes. The UNHCR implemented Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) in Niger and Rwanda to allow for enhanced protection, lifesaving assistance and sustainable solutions for refugees and asylum seekers in Libya, while the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration provided opportunities for the voluntary return and reintegration for migrants stranded in the country (see below).

The COVID-19 pandemic also negatively affected African migrants, with travel and movement restrictions and other requirements, stigma and xenophobia against foreigners, as well as deportation and expulsions of irregular migrants. These migrants, whether in irregular or regular situations, found themselves stranded as a result of these measures and/or faced additional challenges in sustaining an income and lacked access to basic services and health care. Although the situation has improved end 2021- early 2022, in particular as regards mobility restrictions, the long term socio-economic impact of the pandemic, in particular as it relates to migration, has yet to be assessed.

In the meantime, another global crisis poses another set of challenges. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has contributed to soaring prices of wheat, sunflower, fertilizer and oil. African countries are particularly affected as the continent is heavily reliant on imports from both Ukraine and Russia. The conflict thus impacts food security in Africa, not only through availability and pricing in some food crops, but also through rising uncertainties in global financial markets and supply chain systems. The situation may lead to further food, commodity and energy crisis and fuel political instability across the continent and further impact the situation of migrants within Africa.s. As for the COVID-19 pandemic, this crisis will also have a dramatic impact on families dependent on remittances. For instance, in 2020, the Joint Research Centre has conducted a study on the impact of COVID 19 related to restrictions on households receiving remittances. The report 'Covid-19 and Remittances in Africa' shows in which

⁷ Source: <https://missingmigrants.iom.int>

⁸ Data source : DTM Europe (IOM)

⁹ Data source: DTM Europe (IOM)

countries people depend on remittances to get by, and where this dependence intersects with existing vulnerabilities (economic hardship and digital and financial exclusion).¹⁰

The protection of stranded and vulnerable migrants and stepping up assisted voluntary returns and sustainable reintegration are key aspects of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum (2020), as also reaffirmed by the EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration (2021) and by European and African leaders at the EU-AU Summit in February 2022. An efficient and sustainable return and reintegration process is also part of a comprehensive and holistic migration policy. The need to support partner countries to meet their return obligations, ensuring proper identification processes, by providing capacity building for the management of returns, information and awareness raising campaigns and support for reintegration measures and monitoring upon return, forms part of such a balanced EU engagement. The new EU strategy on Voluntary Return and Reintegration, adopted on 27th April 2021, promotes voluntary return and reintegration as an integral part of a common EU system for returns. It sets out practical measures to strengthen the legal and operational framework for voluntary returns from Europe and from transit countries, improve the quality of return and reintegration programmes, establish better links with development initiatives and strengthen cooperation with partner countries. The aim of this strategy is to develop a more uniform and coordinated approach among Member States to unlock the full potential of voluntary return and reintegration.

Funded by the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa between 2016 and 2022, the EU-IOM Joint Initiative (JI) provided protection, assisted voluntary return, and sustainable reintegration in Africa. The JI assisted more than 81,000 individuals in search and rescue operations, supported assisted voluntary return for more than 121,000 migrants, and provided sustainable reintegration support for over 110 000 returnees. Under the NDICI regional Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Sub-Saharan Africa, the Commission mobilized EUR 103M in 2021 to further support the EU-IOM Joint Initiative, while it reviewed different options for a future programme. The JI – over EUR 594 M since 2017, including both the EUTF funded programme and the NDICI-GE individual measure – contributed to the significant results in terms of the number of voluntary returns, including reintegration support. However, the programme faced challenges in the fields of ownership and capacity building of national authorities, coordination with other actors, number of referrals, poor EU visibility, and quality of monitoring, and sustainability of the reintegration support.

Building on lessons learned, the new programme will put a stronger emphasis on the sustainability and ownership of national structures. Referral systems and coordination with other actors will be reinforced to increase the number of referrals of returnees to other development programs in the relevant sectors (job creation, education, health, etc.). The programme will also improve the timeliness of the support offered, maximise the cost-efficiency of the economic reintegration, while improving the quality of much needed social and psycho-social support.

The Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration (MPRR) Programme thus aims at continuing the most essential parts of the support provided to vulnerable migrants under the JI, while addressing shortcomings in terms of coordination with other actors, number of referrals, poor EU visibility, and quality of monitoring, sustainability of the reintegration support. The Action proposes a revised approach, including a greater focus on the core activities of migrant protection, assisted voluntary return and sustainable reintegration; innovative approaches based on lessons learnt; and the inclusion of additional partners to address past weaknesses and challenges identified in the JI.

2.2 Problem Analysis

The MPRR will help address some of the most pressing challenges relating to migration and mobility between the EU and the African continent: the dire situation of stranded migrants who find themselves trapped in dangerous situations en route (either on their way to Europe or on their way back). These migrants face significant risks along migration routes, including violence, exploitation, and abuse at the hands of smugglers, traffickers, and others. Although most do not qualify for refugee status or other forms of international protection, they may still find

¹⁰ <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC121055>

themselves in vulnerable situations.

They require protection and assistance in the areas of transit and upon return. The Action can offer them, as a durable solution, their assisted voluntary return to their country of origin – a much more appealing way out when accompanied with sustainable reintegration support. Such support also contributes to encouraging voluntary returns across the continent and beyond, by showing to returnees, that there are alternatives to irregular migration and increasing the resilience of the community of origin.

The identification of key stakeholders will be done on a case-by-base basis in the relevant countries. These will generally include:

- Direct beneficiaries: stranded and/or vulnerable migrants, returnees.
- Host communities affected by the presence of migrants and/or returnees (importance of the do-no-harm principle).
- Ministries of Foreign Affairs (in charge of supporting their nationals abroad and of the provision of travel documents – crucial in particular for ensuring assisted voluntary returns), Interior (responsible for the management of migratory movements within the country as well as of the identification of their nationals), Labour (in charge of economic development, including job opportunities for returnees and in host communities – they would have a role in terms of referrals to other national development programmes and more generally economic integration of returnees), Justice and other Ministries;
- Local authorities who have a role in hosting returnees and are the first point of contact for migrants in transit and returnees;
- Representatives of national agencies for migration and asylum issues;
- Other actors responsible for funding / managing / implementing strategies, policies and programmes in the area of migrant protection, return and reintegration – including the EU, the African Union (AU), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Non-State Actors (NSAs), and NGOs .

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to contribute to the protection of stranded and vulnerable migrants within Sub-Saharan Africa, and support assisted voluntary return and sustainable reintegration for returnees in the region. This will be done through a rights-based and comprehensive approach that puts migrant rights and the ownership of the partner countries at the centre.

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

1. Provide protection and other essential support for migrants stranded in relevant Sub-Saharan transit countries in the Atlantic/Western and Central Mediterranean routes.
2. Support individual reintegration in countries of origin in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a focus on the countries relevant for Atlantic/Western and Central Mediterranean routes, including for returnees from North-Africa.

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

Contributing to Specific Objective (Outcome) 1:

- 1.1 Stranded migrants or migrants in transit receive protection and assistance services
- 1.2 Migrants benefit from a safe and dignified voluntary return assistance
- 1.3 Migrants receive immediate post-arrival assistance

Contributing to Specific Objective (Outcome) 2:

- 2.1 Migrants benefit from sustainable individual reintegration support in their country of origin, in all aspects of reintegration (social, economic and psycho-social)

The Action will contribute to the two Migration TEIs in Africa, in particular components on return and reintegration.

This action may be complemented by funding under national MIPs and under the Flexible Mechanism for Migration and Forced Displacement AD ACT-60666. This additional funding will focus on some of the activities previously covered under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative as per below:

- Community-based reintegration programmes supporting the overall population (returnees and host communities) in areas of significant return, addressing drivers of irregular migration.
- Institution and capacity building for national and local authorities as well as other relevant stakeholders in Sub-Saharan countries to manage the return, readmission and sustainable reintegration of their nationals. This includes the establishment of national referral mechanisms, important to ensure the country's progressive ownership. Activities would be designed in a gender and age sensitive, tailor-made approach country by country, depending on existing capacities and identified needs and in synergy with existing programs.

Those additional activities will not be funded in all of the countries benefiting from this action but will be considered in specific countries of return, depending on the circumstances and on a case-by-case basis. Mobilization of funding under the Flexible Mechanism will be done according to the specific criteria and rules as laid out in the Flexible Mechanism AD, including a constructive and effective dialogue and/or cooperation on migration with the EU.

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities relating to Output 1.1: Stranded migrants or migrants in transit receive protection and assistance services

- Search and Rescue and Humanitarian Rescue operations (based on a qualitative and quantitative assessment of migratory flows) benefitting an estimated number of 45,000 migrants.
- Provision of protection and assistance to an estimated number of 35,000 migrants stranded along key migration routes or at disembarkation points, in particular vulnerable migrants such as unaccompanied minors. This includes comprehensive, quality and timely assistance and specialised protection services for vulnerable migrants.

Activities relating to Output 1.2: Migrants benefit from a safe and dignified voluntary return assistance

- Provision of pre-return counselling, with information on conditions/situation in country/place of origin as well as possible support in country of origin, to ensure a fully informed decision.
- Provision of pre-departure hospitality, medical and psychological assistance and support for the travel documentation;
- Support to the assisted voluntary return for an estimated 30 000 migrants to return to their countries of origin.

Activities relating to Output 1.3: Migrants receive immediate post-arrival assistance

- Post-arrival reception assistance provided to an estimated 60 000 returning migrants, including through transit centres in countries of origin, in the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean route. This assistance should cover essential logistical needs of the returnees, as well as immediate medical and psychological support. Such support could also be provided to complement existing support to migrants returned from EU MS by IOM, EU MS or an EU agency.

Activities relating to Output 2.1 Migrants benefit from sustainable individual reintegration support in their country of origin, in all aspects of reintegration (social, economic and psycho-social)

- Sustainable individual reintegration assistance (economic, social and psychosocial services) is provided to an estimated 60 000 beneficiaries (depending on rising inflation, the numbers may be reduced). This support will aim at addressing their psychosocial, social and economic reintegration needs. The latter will be notably in the form of fostering employment or self-employment initiatives tailored to their needs/wishes, or, depending on the case, supporting their access to existing vocational education training opportunities facilitating their employability, involving the private sector. Options for offering cash

based assistance will be explored. On an exceptional and case by case basis, and with prior approval of the European Commission, this support could be offered to returnees from other regions-, including the EU ensuring coordination and avoiding overlaps with other support that may be available.

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

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

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

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

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

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

The root causes of irregular migration – and therefore of the situation in which these vulnerable migrants find themselves in – include environmental degradation and climate change in countries of origin. Moreover, resource scarcity and other impacts of environmental degradation and climate change in countries of origin and transit make the situation more difficult for vulnerable migrants, leading to increased tensions with host communities of migrants and of returnees. Therefore, community development and reintegration activities will duly take into account ongoing environmental changes and promote community projects that support reforestation and waste management, as well as promote 'green jobs' such as beekeeping and recycling. Reintegration in some regions which are particularly vulnerable to climate change (now or in the near future) can potentially be problematic, causing re-emigration. In those cases, return to areas other than communities of origin will therefore be envisaged as a more sustainable strategy.

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per the OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that particular attention will be paid to gender concerns – and in particular all reintegration activities (individual and community based) will also aim at promoting women's empowerment and gender equality. Women and girls make up close to 50% migrants worldwide and their vulnerability to being victims of trafficking, predominantly for the purpose of sexual exploitation, is a particularly serious concern. Hence the Action will ensure that assistance provided is specifically tailored to the needs of women and girls. The different roles of women and men in community-based interventions, reintegration processes and livelihoods and development programmes are important to recognise and thus ensuring their inclusive and equitable participation in decision making processes and project implementation and monitoring will be key in this programme.

Both age and gender considerations will be mainstreamed in all activities of the project, with gender and age sensitive information campaigns, implementation and running of centres, equal participation in trainings and sex disaggregated data. Unaccompanied minors and victims of trafficking will be provided with specialised, gender specific and child sensitive assistance and protection.

Human Rights

The implementation of the Action will be done following a rights-based approach. The protection of human rights and due process will be an integral part of the activities carried out under the MPRR. Protection of human rights of particularly vulnerable categories of migrants, such as children, either accompanied, unaccompanied or separated; elderly and disabled persons; victims of trafficking or vulnerable smuggled migrants; and rejected

asylum seekers will be mainstreamed across all activities, along with the required procedural safeguards including the need to undertake best interest determination.

The Action will focus on the well-being and personal development of persons of concern, migrants and their families and communities, in full respect of their human rights. Protection and assistance mechanisms taking into account the specific situation and vulnerability of the refugees and migrants such as ensuring the best interest of the child will always be ensured and be at the forefront of all considerations. In particular, assistance and protection for victims of trafficking in human beings will take into account the gender and age of the victims and the consequences of the specific type of exploitation suffered.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0. This implies that although disability is not a key priority in the Action, the inclusion of people with disabilities will be mainstreamed through all activities.

Democracy

The Action will be based on non-discrimination principles, self-determination and participation of the migrants and refugees as well as confidentiality and right to privacy.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

Peaceful coexistence with local populations is a cross cutting issue which will be considered across all elements of the implementation of this Action. For the success of the Action, it is essential that efforts are made to maintain dialogue with local population and ensure sensitisation of the community. Conflict analysis (existing or ad hoc) will be used when relevant.

Disaster Risk Reduction

N/A

Other considerations if relevant

N/A

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

| Category | Risks | Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low) | Impact (High/ Medium/ Low) | Mitigating measures |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1 – External environment | Impact of Covid19 and other viral diseases on mobility (e.g. governments close their borders, shifting routes) with implications for the movement of returnees. | Medium | High | Flexibility will be embedded in the programme to ensure that the MPRR can respond to changing flows and routes. |
| 1 – External environment | National / regional political instability, | High | High | The MPRR will include flexible arrangements to allow for the suspension of activities in affected areas and re- |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---------------|---------------|---|
| | conflict and/or increased insecurity, as well as the global impact of the Russian aggression against Ukraine (eg. food and energy crisis) | | | allocation of funds to other areas further to an analysis of the situation on the ground by the implementing partner and relevant stakeholders, in particular EU Delegations. |
| 1 – External environment | Rising inflation, exacerbated by crisis such as COVID-19 and Russian's aggression against Ukraine, affect the costs of return flights and of reintegration support. | Medium | Medium | The MPRR will include flexible provisions allowing for reallocation of funds within the programme. Possibilities will also be explored with other potential sources of funding, including with other donors. As a last resort, flexible provisions in the MPRR will allow for reducing the number of expected beneficiaries. |
| 1 – External environment | Lack of interest / positive engagement of partner countries on return and reintegration, which would particularly impact the community-based reintegration and capacity building components. | Medium | Medium | The MPRR will be part of the EU migration dialogue with partner countries where all dimensions of migration are discussed in a balanced manner. |
| 3 – People and the organisation | Conflicts and tensions between partners / stakeholders / implementing partners (in case different partners are selected for component 3). | Medium | High | The MPRR will be part of the EU's migration dialogue with the partner country and other key stakeholders where issues of concern will be openly discussed. This will ensure that sensitive topics are handled in a constructive manner. |
| 5 – Communication and information | Negative impact of the current political debate and climate on migration. The EU could be perceived as focusing on avoiding irregular migration to Europe. | Medium | High | A communication strategy will be implemented to ensure that partner countries and the general public (both in Europe and in Africa) has a clear understanding of the activities under the MPRR, in particular as regards a human-rights centred approach and the provision of protection and other services to vulnerable migrants. |

Lessons Learnt:

Since the start of the implementation period of the EU-IOM JI, activities related to protection and direct assistance to migrants, as well as voluntary return and reintegration support, have already provided some key indications to inform the programme approach. The acute vulnerabilities of many migrants returning, particularly from Libya and Algeria, and the increased caseloads show the importance of providing additional support in countries of origin to ensure that returning migrants receive adequate and appropriate assistance and that referral and support systems are strengthened, particularly in the area of mental health and psychosocial-support and specific assistance to migrants in a vulnerable situation (including victims of trafficking, unaccompanied migrant children, victims of violence, individuals with physical or mental health needs, pregnant women).

The JI had excellent results in terms of the number of voluntary returns, including reintegration support. Nevertheless, the programme also faced some challenges, notably concerning ownership and capacity building of national authorities, coordination with other actors, number of referrals, limited EU visibility, quality of monitoring, and sustainability of the reintegration support.

In view of this and of different assessments of the JI and other return and reintegration programmes in the region, the following were identified as best practices and lessons learned for the MPRR:

- Programme flexibility is key to be able to adapt to changes in migratory flows (increased workload, change of routes), to fragile political and security environments, as well as to epidemics (COVID19, but also Ebola outbreaks among others).

Protection and AVR:

- Strengthen cooperation and improve connections between countries of origin and countries of transit and destination;
- Improve the link between the pre-departure and post-arrival stages, and between existing EUMS national voluntary return programmes of EUMS and the reintegration systems and mechanisms rolled out in countries of origin;
- Further enhancing capacities and national systems for immediate post-arrival and reception assistance and reintegration support in countries of origin;
- Carefully considering returns to fragile environments, which may require specific approaches to maintain social cohesion.
- Strengthen complementarities between protection and reintegration programmes, and other interventions, in particular development-focused interventions,

Individual Reintegration:

- Reintegration support should continue to address all dimensions of reintegration (i.e. economic, social and psychosocial).
- Need to improve referrals (currently only at 1%), in particular cost-less referrals. For this, ensuring that returnees are included as beneficiary groups (or that the criteria for selecting beneficiaries do not exclude most returnees in terms of age, level of education, etc.) and/or that regions to which returnees are returning are included in EU funded programmes will be key.
- To increase sustainability and reduce fragmentation, EU and EU Member State funded reintegration assistance should use the national reintegration mechanisms established by countries of origin.
- Strong focus on job creation and skill acquisition under development programming allows synergy with reintegration support – without focusing on entrepreneurship, but rather employment opportunities or cash for work offers.
- Consider increasing in-cash support, to complement / partially replace in-kind support.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this Action is that by providing protection and support to stranded and vulnerable migrants within Sub-Saharan Africa, and by supporting assisted voluntary return and sustainable reintegration for returnees in the region, independently from the country they return from, the Action will contribute to a better management of migration within Africa and with Europe in full respect of the rights of migrants and in line with international standards.

First, this desired impact will be realised by enhancing protection and other essential support for migrants stranded in relevant Sub-Saharan transit countries in the Atlantic/Western and Central Mediterranean routes (Specific Objective 1). This will be done by ensuring migrants stranded along migration routes receive protection and assistance services, through search and rescue operations in the desert, as well as the delivery of comprehensive, quality and timely assistance and specialised protection services (Result 1.1). In view of the high vulnerability of migrants returning, the mental health and psychosocial support components of the programme should be reinforced. Migrants should also receive sufficient counselling, notably enabling them to make informed decisions on the possibility of safe and dignified assisted voluntary return and sustainable reintegration (Result 1.2). This will enable safe, humane, dignified voluntary return of vulnerable and stranded migrants along the main migration routes. For those migrants who make that choice, the programme will support their assisted voluntary return, including by providing pre-departure hospitality, medical and psychological assistance and support for the travel documentation, as well as immediate post arrival assistance (Result 1.3). Through the provision of this support, migrants should be better equipped to make informed decisions about their migratory journeys and be less inclined to undertake dangerous and irregular movements as alternative options are made available.

Secondly, better management of migration will be achieved through the provision of sustainable reintegration support for returnees both at individual level (Specific Objective 2) and through community based programmes (Specific Objective 3) where appropriate. Indeed, when returnees receive comprehensive sustainable reintegration support, notably on social, economic and psycho-social levels (Result 2.1) they are less prone to re-migrate, in particular through irregular channels, as they see possible alternatives of finding a livelihood and mitigate the stigma of being an unsuccessful migrant.

Assumptions

- Authorities provide continuous support to protection, return and reintegration activities.
- Migration flows are steady and migrants in transit countries are in need of protection and assistance, especially return and reintegration assistance.
- EU Delegations, partners and diaspora communities support the establishment of referral pathways to provide reintegration assistance, and the development and implementation of programmes targeting returnees is coordinated to ensure adequacy between the proposed actions and returnees' needs and profiles.
- Authorities support dissemination of awareness campaigns in key areas of origin / transit/return.
- Targeted actors are willing to build capacity and contribute in the area of reintegration.
- Turnover remains low and trained staff remain in place in key institutions.

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

| Results | Results chain (e): Main expected results (maximum 10) | Indicators (e): (at least one indicator per expected result) | Baselines (values and years) | Targets (values and years) | Sources of data | Assumptions |
|------------------|--|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Impact | To contribute to the protection of stranded and vulnerable migrants within Sub-Saharan Africa, and support assisted voluntary return and sustainable reintegration for returnees in the region | <p>1. # of returning migrants in countries of origin in Sub-Saharan Africa, disaggregated by sex</p> <p>2. % of returning migrants reporting sufficient levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability, and psychosocial wellbeing in their community of return, disaggregated by sex</p> | | | <p>1.1 Database of beneficiaries</p> <p>2.1 Reintegration sustainability survey (scores above 0.5)¹</p> | <i>Not applicable</i> |
| Outcome 1 | 1. Protection and other essential support provided for migrants stranded in relevant Sub-Saharan transit countries in the Atlantic/Western and Central Mediterranean routes | <p>1.1. EURF 21 Number of migrants, or individuals from host communities protected or assisted with EU-support, disaggregated by sex</p> <p>1.2. % of migrants who report that they have been provided with sufficient and useful information to take an informed decision to return, disaggregated by sex</p> <p>1.3. % of migrants satisfied with travel arrangements made for them, disaggregated by sex</p> <p>1.4. % of returning migrants satisfied with post-arrival assistance</p> | | | <p>1.1 EU intervention monitoring and reporting systems: annual and final reports from implementing organisations, ROM reviews, and evaluations</p> <p>1.2 AVR monitoring survey</p> <p>1.3 AVR satisfaction survey</p> <p>1.4 AVR satisfaction survey</p> | <p>Security and political contexts are stable.</p> <p>Migrants and stakeholders are reachable and willing to complete surveys.</p> <p>Migrants' expectations regarding travel arrangements can be managed within scope of programme.</p> |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| Outcome 2 | 2. Individual reintegration support provided in countries of origin in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a focus on the countries relevant for Atlantic/Western and Central Mediterranean routes | 2.1 % of returning migrants who report they are satisfied with the reintegration assistance and protection received. 2.2 % of returning migrants in employment for 6 months after reintegration support | | | 2.1 AVR satisfaction survey 2.2 KIIs | Migrants continue to require and engage in voluntary return and reintegration assistance. |
| Output 1 relating to Outcome 1 | 1.1 Stranded migrants or migrants in transit received protection and assistance services | 1.1.1 # of transit centres or migrant resource and response centres (MRRC) that are built, enhanced, rehabilitated or rented 1.1.2 # of migrants in transit provided with protection and direct assistance (disaggregated by sex) | | | 1.1.1 Reports from the subcontractors, infrastructure/equipment handovers and inspection documents 1.1.2 Database of beneficiaries | Governments and local actors are engaged in efforts to provide assistance to migrants |
| Output 2 relating to Outcome 1 | 1.2 Migrants benefit from a safe and dignified voluntary return assistance | 1.2.1 30,000 of migrants assisted to return voluntarily to their countries of origin (disaggregated by sex and country of destination) | | | 1.2.1 Database of beneficiaries | Once given sufficient and reliable information, migrants opt to return voluntarily. |
| Output 3 relating to Outcome 1 | 1.3 Migrants receive immediate post-arrival assistance | 1.3.1 60,000 of returning migrants provided with post-arrival assistance with the support of EU-funded intervention, disaggregated by sex 1.3.2 % of returning migrants including victims of trafficking provided with post-arrival assistance with the support of EU-funded intervention, disaggregated by sex | | | 1.3.1 Programme records 1.3.2 Programme records | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| <p>Output 1</p> <p>relating to Outcome 2</p> | <p>2.1 Migrants benefit from sustainable individual reintegration support in their country of origin, in all aspects of reintegration (social, economic and psycho-social)</p> | <p>2.1.1 60,0000 beneficiaries who have received reintegration assistance with the support of the EU-funded intervention (disaggregated by sex)</p> <p>2.1.2 % of beneficiaries who are referred to other programmes in at least one aspect of reintegration (social, economic and/or psycho-social)</p> | | | <p>2.1.1 Programme records</p> <p>2.1.2 Programme records</p> | <p>Actors / partners exist that can provide different elements of reintegration assistance, including for referrals without financial contribution from the MPRR.</p> <p>Actors / partners remain committed and willing to provide reintegration assistance.</p> <p>Partners costs to provide reintegration assistance are not excessive or unfeasible (e.g. in complex medical cases).</p> |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|---|

4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the partner countries.

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 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 of Budget Support component

Not applicable

4.4 Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures¹¹.

4.4.1 Indirect Management with a pillar assessed entity

This action will be implemented in indirect management with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

This implementation entails the provision of migrant protection, including assisted voluntary returns (specific objective 1) and support to individual reintegration (specific objective 2). IOM has been selected using the following criteria: relevance and experience in the area of migrant protection, assisted voluntary return and sustainable reintegration; operational capacity.

Exception to the non-retroactivity of costs:

The Commission authorises that the costs incurred may be recognised as eligible as of 30 July 2022 in order to avoid a funding gap with the EU-IOM Joint Initiative and therefore avoiding that urgent needs of vulnerable migrants remain unaddressed (including through search and rescue operations and other life-saving support).

4.5 Indicative Budget

| Indicative Budget components | EU contribution (amount in EUR) Of which EUR 2 683 231.15 ¹² from | 2022 (amount in EUR) | 2023 (amount in EUR) | in | 2024 (amount in EUR) |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|----|----------------------|
| | | | | | |

¹¹ 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.

| | | | | |
|---|--|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| | Danemark and EUR 1 200 000 ¹³ from Sweden through a transfer agreement to be signed | | | |
| Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.3 | | | | |
| Objective 1: Protection and assisted voluntary return | 86 900 000 | 32 500 000 | 31 900 000 | 22 500 000 |
| Indirect management with IOM – cf. section 4.3.1 | 86 900 000 | 32 500 000 | 31 900 000 | 22 500 000 |
| Objective 2: Individual reintegration | 96 983 231.15 | 37 500 000 | 36 983 231.15 | 22 500 000 |
| Indirect management with IOM – cf. section 4.3.1 | 96 983 231.15 | 37 500 000 | 36 983 231.15 | 22 500 000 |
| Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3 | may be covered by another Decision | | | |
| Totals | 183 883 231.15 | 70 000 000 | 67 683 231.15 | 45 000 000 |

4.6 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The existing organisational structure of the previous programme, the EU-IOM Joint Initiative (with three coordination offices) will be revised and adapted to the new programme in line with the revised approach (enhanced capacity building, ownership, improved efficiency, etc.).

The previous “Coordination and Reporting Committee on migration and protection”, originally established and chaired by the EUTF in Brussels and which was also covering other programmes, will be replaced by a “MPRR Coordination Committee” which will focus on the present Action.

In addition to the implementing partners (IOM and other potential IPs), this MPRR Coordination Committee will include representatives of the European Commission, the European External Action Service, and EU Member States, in order to ensure coordination and synergies with other EU-funded programmes and initiatives. It will meet at least every six months upon request of the European Commission.

At national level, the relevance of the existing governance structures and Steering Committees in place in the relevant countries on migration management, and more specifically on return and reintegration, will be reassessed, in particular in view of improving linkages with EU political and policy dialogues on migration with third countries. Due recognition will be given to the leadership role of the EU Delegation by ensuring close collaboration in the implementation of the project, notably to address some of the risks mentioned in section 3.4 above.

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.

¹² Of which EUR 2 433 231.15 will be made available for the project and EUR 250 000 will be for administrative fees.

¹³ Of which EUR 950 000 will be made available for the project and EUR 250 000 will be for administrative fees.

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 – building on the previous different systems under the different contracts of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (Outputs and direct Outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix (for project modality) and the partner's strategy, policy or reform action plan list (for budget support).

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring:

The MPRR will include a common monitoring and evaluation framework, including the use of common indicators across the countries implementing the Action. Relevant stakeholders will be engaged as much as possible in participatory monitoring approaches to strengthen collaboration, partnership, learning and accountability.

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the importance of the action, a mid-term evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants or by the implementing partner. It will be carried out for problem solving and learning purposes, in particular with respect to the sustainability of the Action and the follow-up of the Action.

The evaluation reports may be shared with the partners and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination¹⁴. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, apply the necessary adjustments.

If conducted by the EU, the financing of the evaluation may be covered by another measure constituting a Financing Decision.

5.3 Audit and Verifications

N.B: The final text on audit/verification depends on the outcome of ongoing discussions on pooling of funding in (one or a limited number of) Decision(s) and the subsequent financial management, i.e. for the conclusion of audit contracts and payments.

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

¹⁴ See best [practice of evaluation dissemination](#)

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

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

The present Action identifies as;

| Action level | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Single action | Present action: all contracts in the present action |