



EN

THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX 1

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the individual measure in favour of West Africa for 2025

Action Document for “Managing migration better in Western Africa”

ANNUAL MEASURE

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

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act	Managing migration better in Western Africa OPSYS number: 62804 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)
2. Team Europe Initiative	Yes Team Europe Initiatives on the Atlantic and Western Mediterranean Route and on the Central Mediterranean Route.
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The action shall be carried out in Western Africa.
4. Programming document	Multi-annual Indicative Programme for Sub-Sahara Africa 2021-2027
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results	The Action contributes to: Priority Area 6: Migration and Forced Displacement (Section 2.6 of the regional MIP) Specific Objective 1: Contribute to strengthening migration management, migration policy, and migration governance in Sub-Saharan Africa 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. Result 1.5: Combating trafficking in human beings and fighting against smuggling of migrants within and from the African continent is strengthened.
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Migration and Forced Displacement
7. Sustainable	Main SDG: SDG 10 Reduced inequalities (sub goal 10.7)

Development Goals (SDGs)	Other significant SDGs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SDG 5: Gender Equality (sub goal 5.1 and 5.2) - SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth - SDG 16: Peace justice and strong institutions (sub goal 16.2 and 16.3) 			
8 a) DAC code(s)	15190 (Facilitation of orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility) – 100%			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	Public sector institutions – 10000 Multilateral organisations – 40000 Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society – 20000			
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
10. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective @	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>
	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"/>
	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Digitalisation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Internal markers and Tags:	digital connectivity	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	/
	digital governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	digital entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	digital skills/literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

	digital services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Connectivity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital connectivity	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	education and research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Migration @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

BUDGET INFORMATION

12. Amounts concerned	<p>Budget line: 14.020120</p> <p>Total estimated cost: EUR 100 000 000</p> <p>Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 100 000 000</p> <p>The contribution is for an amount of EUR 100 000 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2025 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 Action will contribute to the two Migration Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs) in Western Africa:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Team Europe Initiative on the Atlantic and Western Mediterranean route, co-chaired with Spain: participation of Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, and Switzerland as an associated country; • The Team Europe Initiative on the Central Mediterranean route, co-chaired with Italy and France: participation of Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Spain, and Switzerland as an associated country.
------------------------------	---

MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

13. Type of financing	<p>Direct management through grants;</p> <p>Indirect management with the entities to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.4.2.</p>
------------------------------	--

1.2 Summary of the Action

Western Africa continues to face significant migration challenges. Although the root causes of irregular migration within/from Western Africa are comprised of a wide set of interrelated factors, the preponderant weight of poverty, insecurity and insufficient economic opportunities in the decision to migrate have largely been confirmed. Increases in irregular migration have been exacerbated by persistent insecurity in the Sahel and economic struggles worsened by climate impacts and COVID-19 disruptions. The expansion of transnational criminal activities, including trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of migrants, is tightly intertwined with these social, economic and migration dynamics. Recent studies indicate that the proportion of people using smugglers and facilitators along the Central Mediterranean and Atlantic/Western Mediterranean routes has recently increased (along with associated risks of

trafficking in human beings), particularly since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2023 was marked by a significant increase in the number of irregular border crossings at the EU's external borders (+50% between 2022 and 2023). Large numbers of West African migrants are currently located in North African countries along the Central Mediterranean and Atlantic/Western Mediterranean Routes. Needs for assisted voluntary returns from Europe and along migratory routes, as well as needs for reintegration in the context of all types of returns, will thus likely remain high in the coming years and will require the implementation of robust and sustainable reintegration mechanisms within countries of origin, taking also into account a gender, a human rights-based approach and a disability-inclusive perspective. In parallel, the expansion, in rapidly evolving political contexts, of transnational criminal activities, including trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, calls for the development of more targeted approaches to improve capacities at local, national and regional levels to tackle these issues more effectively.

This initiative follows a structured and gradual approach aiming to support relevant West African countries in building more sustainable systems of migration management, by strengthening governmental capacities and fostering national and political ownership over key migration management priority areas. Migrants' rights will be placed at the centre of the approach¹.

In line with the 2021 EU Strategy on Voluntary Return and Reintegration and building on lessons learned from previous and ongoing support, the action will seek to contribute to the sustainable reintegration of all types of returnees through the development of inclusive nationally owned referral systems and social cohesion measures in receiving communities (Specific Objective 1). As such, it will contribute to the transition from the current regional response to reintegration to a more strategic, long-term, and inclusive programmatic approach managed by countries of origin, while voluntary returns will continue to be operated by IOM under separate EU funding. Implementation of Specific Objective 1 will take full advantage of employment and economic development efforts in the sub-region (including by building on synergies with Action 2 of this Individual Measure).

Complementarily, the action will seek to improve capacities to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants in the Western African region as well as to protect and assist the victims of trafficking and migrants in vulnerable situations by strengthening capacities (prevention, prosecution and protection) at the national level, and developing/supporting transnational cooperation mechanism to fight those crimes (Specific Objective 2).

This action will contribute to the two Migration Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs) in Western Africa (Atlantic/Western Mediterranean and Central Mediterranean routes), in particular the return & reintegration and the anti-trafficking/anti-smuggling components, which are integral parts of both TEIs and help ensuring safe, regular and orderly migration. This initiative focuses on Western Africa countries (whether countries of origin or transit for irregular migration) covered by the Team Europe Initiatives on the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean² and Central Mediterranean routes³. For reintegration, the action puts a specific emphasis on Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and The Gambia. Within this group, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, and Senegal have already developed, to a certain extent, national capacities, structures and referral systems for reintegration and it is expected that referral systems for reintegration in these five countries would be operational at a mid-term horizon enabling these countries to manage the sustainable reintegration of all returnees.

The anticipated outcomes align closely with several Sustainable Development Goals, notably SDG 10.7, which emphasises facilitating orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility. The action will also contribute to the EU Gender Action Plan III (2021-2025)⁴.

¹ The approach will also take into account gender equality and disability-inclusion.

² The Team Europe Initiative on Atlantic/Western Mediterranean route covers the following Western African countries: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and The Gambia.

³ The Team Europe Initiative on Central Mediterranean migration route covers the following Western African countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger, Nigeria.

⁴ [EU Gender Action Plan III - An ambitious agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment in EU External Action, Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, 25.11.2020.](#)

1.3 Zone benefitting from the Action

The Action shall be carried out in Western Africa, indicatively in the countries covered by the Migration Team Europe Initiatives on Atlantic/Western Mediterranean and Central Mediterranean routes, namely Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, The Gambia, as well as Sierra Leone⁵. All of these countries are included in the list of Official Development Assistance recipients. Whenever possible and feasible, links with North African countries in a whole-of-route approach will be established. Each component has its specific target countries, for more details see section 3.1.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

Migration and political context

West Africa is, and will likely remain, a pivotal origin and transit region for migrants making irregular journeys to the EU through the Central Mediterranean Route and the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean Route. Although irregular arrivals in the EU have decreased since the peak of the migration crisis in 2015, irregular border crossings at the EU's external borders and associated death tolls continue to be of key concern. Although the 'root causes' of irregular migration from West Africa are comprised of a wide set of interrelated factors⁶, the preponderant weight of poverty, insecurity and insufficient economic opportunities in the decision to migrate have largely been confirmed⁷. Pervasive underemployment and the multiplication of precarious jobs constitute major drivers of social disgruntlement and internal and international migration from (and within⁸) West Africa⁹. This deteriorated socio-economic context is exacerbated by the spread of insecurity, demographic pressure, environmental degradation and a growing political instability across the region. This instability is illustrated by recent coups (Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Niger) and attempted ones, protracted security crises and the geographic expansion of terrorist activities (including the threat of their spillover into coastal countries).

The expansion of transnational criminal activities, including trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, is tightly intertwined with these security, socio-economic and migration dynamics. Recent studies indicate that the proportion of people using smugglers and facilitators along the Central Mediterranean and the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean routes has increased, particularly since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic¹⁰. This is also the case within the ECOWAS region, mainly due to issues of corruption at border crossings¹¹. Recent political developments in the Sahel countries are likely to further expand the migrant smuggling market. Whilst the abrogation of Nigerien Law 2015-36 (which criminalised smuggling of migrants in Niger) has created a legal vacuum, the announced withdrawal of Central Sahel countries from ECOWAS, the termination of the Algiers Peace Agreement as well as the tightening of controls at the Malian/Algerian border may further impact migration trends, increase the offer of smuggling services, and associated risks of trafficking in human beings.

Year 2023 was marked by a significant increase of irregular border crossings at the EU's external borders (from 189,600 in 2022 to 293,000 in 2023), particularly from the Central Mediterranean and the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean routes¹². Among the top five nationalities arriving in Europe in 2023, three were West African, namely Senegalese, Guinean and Ivorian¹³; Gambians and Malians also irregularly arrived in significant numbers.

⁵ Sierra Leone has been included, even if the country is not part of the Atlantic Western Mediterranean and Central Mediterranean TEIs countries, due to the prevalence of returns to the country.

⁶ Migration Policy Institute, "Europe's tackling of root causes of African migration has a mixed record", 2021, accessible [here](#).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The vast majority (>80%) of international migration flows remain in the sub-region.

⁹ Agence Française de Développement, "By 2050, more than half of Africa's population will be under 25 years old", 2019, accessible [here](#).

¹⁰ According to research by the UNODC Observatory on Smuggling of Migrants, 106 out of 126 people (84%) surveyed in Niger in the first quarter of 2021 used a smuggler or facilitator at some point during their journey, and 50 out of 87 people (57%) surveyed in Mali had done so.

¹¹ UNODC Observatory on Smuggling of Migrants (2021). Key Findings on the Characteristics of Migrant Smuggling to Morocco and the Western Mediterranean. First Edition, 8 December 2021. accessible [here](#).

¹² IOM, Europe - Mixed Migration Flows to Europe Yearly Overview (2023), accessible [here](#).

In addition, available data show that large numbers of West African migrants are currently in North African countries, along the Central Mediterranean Route and the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean Route. For example, in Libya, IOM recorded large numbers of migrants originating from Western Africa. In December 2023, Nigeriens constituted the largest community of migrants in Libya (183,706), followed by Chadians (81,078), Nigerians (31,163), Ghanaians (13,414), Malians (12,907), Burkinabés (4,676), Ivoirians (2,320); and Guineans (1,220)¹⁴.

Returns from Europe, North Africa and transit countries in Sub-Saharan Africa will thus likely remain high in the coming years triggering continued needs for reintegration in the context of all types of returns. Against this backdrop, fostering nationally owned, effective and sustainable reintegration mechanisms within countries of origin, as well as enhanced cooperation with relevant international organisations, EU member states' agencies and EU agencies and enhanced coordination among these, is imperative. In parallel, the expansion, in rapidly changing political contexts, of transnational criminal activities, including trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, calls for the development of targeted approaches to improve national and multilateral capacities to tackle these issues more effectively.

Policy context

Since 2015, the EU, ECOWAS and West African countries have worked towards protecting stranded and vulnerable migrants, leveraging migration as a catalyst for development and enhancing their cooperation to combat irregular migration, migrant smuggling, and trafficking in human beings. These issues were reaffirmed by European and African leaders at the EU-AU Summit in February 2022 and are at the core of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum and several key EU and ECOWAS sectoral strategies. Specifically, for the EU, the following are relevant:

- The EU Strategy on Voluntary Return and Reintegration (2021) sets out practical measures to strengthen the legal and operational framework for voluntary returns from Europe and transit countries, improve the quality of return and reintegration programming whilst strengthening coherence with youth employment and development initiatives. Building on lessons learnt from past experiences, it defines a way forward to return and reintegration based on the implementation of more sustainable, long-term approaches and enhanced ownership of countries of origin over reintegration processes;
- The EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings (2021-2025) stresses the importance of promoting closer cooperation between EU Member States and the countries of origin and transit of victims of trafficking¹⁵. In particular, it aims to support the efforts of these countries to effectively implement the United Nations Convention against organised crime and its Protocol on trafficking in human beings;
- The Global Alliance to counter migrant smuggling, launched by the European Commission on 28 November 2023, with a call to action supporting strengthened international cooperation along migratory routes to prevent and respond to migrant smuggling and provide alternatives for irregular migration¹⁶, as well as the renewed EU action plan against migrant smuggling (2021-2025);
- The Lampedusa 10-point plan¹⁷ (September 2023) which lays out a set of actions including 'the step up of returns by undertaking a renewed, concerted outreach to the main countries of the new arrivals, namely Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Burkina Faso' and 'the prevention of departures by establishing operational partnerships on anti-smuggling with countries of origin and transit';
- The EU Action Plan for the Central Mediterranean Route and the EU Action Plan for the Western Mediterranean and Atlantic Route, which both outline proposals on improved return/reintegration processes and anti-smuggling measures.

The key ECOWAS sectoral strategies are:

- The ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration, which aims to establish orientation and support centres for returning migrants, strengthen measures to combat irregular migration and human trafficking, and enhance dialogue frameworks between ECOWAS, host countries, and transit countries;

¹³ IOM, Europe - Mixed Migration Flows to Europe Yearly Overview/Arrival, accessible [here](#).

¹⁴ IOM Libya – Migrant Report 50 (October – December 2023), accessible [here](#).

¹⁵ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the regions on the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2021 - 2025 accessible [here](#).

¹⁶ See https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_6081.

¹⁷ 10-Point Plan for Lampedusa, accessible [here](#).

- The ECOWAS Gender Policy and the ECOWAS Youth Policy, which address pivotal migration challenges through a comprehensive and inclusive approach;
- The ECOWAS Humanitarian Policy, which prioritizes the protection and assistance of vulnerable populations, including migrants.

EU ongoing and planned programming support

Concerning reintegration assistance, building on the achievements of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration and thanks to the current support provided by the Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa (MPRR-SSA) and by complementary EU-funded programmes at national level, a number of countries in Western Africa are currently creating the foundations of national referral systems. This is the case in particular in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Guinea where cooperation and ownership on reintegration assistance have grown appreciably over recent years thanks to regional and national initiatives¹⁸.

However, the operationalisation of those systems remains unequal and limited. Through this action and complementary EU-funded programmes at national level¹⁹, significant additional support will be provided to enhance national ownership over reintegration assistance and catalyse receiving communities' support to returnees. As national referrals pathways become operational, close coordination with IOM will be ensured in order to guarantee that the assisted voluntary returns supported via the Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration Programmes for Sub-Saharan Africa and for North of Africa will be supported in their reintegration path (including post-arrival assistance) by their country of origin through national referral systems.

This action will also build and complement past²⁰, current²¹ and planned programmes²² aiming to prevent and fight trafficking in human beings, smuggling of migrants and irregular migration, including the common operational partnership projects (COPs) and joint investigation teams, the Network of Common Operational Partnerships in West Africa (NET-COP phase II), interconnecting all the COPs in the region, as well as the regional programme Support to Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa Phase II (FMM II). Based on key lessons learnt from past initiatives, it will develop and scale up best practices and address key programmatic gaps at the national and regional levels in the Western African region. It will also look at building strong synergies with existing mechanisms in the region²³.

In addition to the above-mentioned ongoing and planned projects, multi-thematic initiatives²⁴ and dialogue

¹⁸ In these five countries, there is an ongoing migration dialogue with the government. It has been reinforced in the framework of the formulation of the national migration management programmes funded by the EU, which also aim to strengthen national ownership on reintegration assistance. The dialogue will be further enhanced in this regard.

¹⁹ Such as "Gestion des Migrations in Côte d'Ivoire; "Support to Migration Governance" in Nigeria; "ATUU - A Ghanaian-European safe and prosperous people's mobility project" in Ghana and other envisaged actions in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mauritania, and The Gambia.

²⁰ From 2017 to 2023, Interpol implemented two large EU projects in the Western Africa region: the "West Africa Police Information System (WAPIS)" and the "Combating human trafficking in West Africa" project (2020-2023); "Programme d'appui à la lutte contre la traite des personnes dans les pays du Golfe de Guinée (ALTP)" EUTF project that ended in April 2024; in 2010, Frontex set up the Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community (AFIC) to provide a framework for regular information exchange on migrant smuggling and other border security threats affecting the EU and African countries.

²¹ The main projects in West Africa include (non-exhaustive list of EU funded projects and projects funded by EU MS): "Gestion des frontières maritimes et terrestres en Mauritanie"; "PROMIS II: Protection of Migrants: Justice, Human Rights and Migrant smuggling"; Common Operational Partnerships in Guinea, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, The Gambia, NET-COP II supporting regional cooperation between Common Operational Partnerships; "Action Against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (A-TIPSOM)" in Nigeria; "School anti-Trafficking Education and Advocacy Project (STEAP)" in Nigeria; "Migration Governance" in Nigeria; "Gestion des Migrations" in Côte d'Ivoire.

²² In particular, at the regional level, "Support to Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa (FMM II)", "Multidimensional Security and Stabilisation Programme in West and Central Africa (SECSTA)".

²³ Other regional networks include, among others, the West African Network of Central Authorities and Prosecutors- WACAP; the Liaison Magistrate Initiative (as part of PROMIS mentioned above).

²⁴ Such as the newly launched global Technical Assistance Facility on Migration and Forced Displacement (EU Funded), and "Promoting Action and Cooperation among countries at global level against Trafficking in Human Beings and the Smuggling of Migrants" (PACTS).

frameworks²⁵ have contributed, and for some will continue to contribute to the overall objective of this action. Synergies and cross-fertilisation will be sought.

Finally, in line with the objective of the Migration TEIs, the action will be coherent and complementary to actions funded by EU member states on reintegration and anti-trafficking/anti-smuggling, along the Central Mediterranean and the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean routes.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Problem analysis related to reintegration

1. **A fragmentation of approaches:** the different mandates, programmes, methods and budgets of organisations handling returns (whether forced or voluntary) have created various reintegration pathways and procedures and cooperation and coordination among these is often missing. The management of reintegration by EU implementing partners relies on Standard Operating Procedures for assisted voluntary returns and reintegration, which primarily target project beneficiaries and do not apply to all returnees (like forced returnees or, migrants returning independently). Other organisations dealing with returns rarely use these Standard Operating Procedures, resulting in a lack of coordination and fragmented initiatives. This project-based approach limits the applicability of Standard Operating Procedures beyond the EU-funded project(s) within the framework of which they are designed;
2. **Limited reintegration support options:** Most returnees are directed to entrepreneurship projects managed by EU implementing partners, or NGOs and TVET centres contracted under EU programmes. This has saturated the case management capacity of implementing partners and limited economic reintegration options²⁶, insufficient to meet the diverse profiles and aspirations of returnees. In addition, reintegration support often overlooks social and psychosocial needs, which are critical;
3. **Strategic gaps between migration management and employment policies, with non-inclusive reintegration programmes failing to address the main drivers of irregular migration:** State and non-state actors have been unequally involved in the reintegration process. Coordination deficits, in particular among employment and migration strategies, lead to: I. Inefficiencies 1) Lack of geographic complementarity: Certain areas host numerous projects while major departure or return areas are neglected²⁷, 2) Insufficient mainstreaming of migrants' needs, including returnees, into economic development and employment strategies; II. Discontent and stigmatisation of returnees due to non-inclusive return and reintegration programmes and the perception that returnees receive more opportunities; and III. Missed opportunities to prevent irregular migration and support the economic reintegration of returnees, with reintegration programmes potentially acting as a pull factor of migration. Better coordination and more inclusion and comprehensive approach to reintegration would provide more opportunities to returnees and receiving communities, improve social cohesion at community level, increase political ownership over reintegration (see below) and reduce reliance on EU funding. *This issue shall be addressed in complementarity with Action 2 of this Individual Measure;*
4. **Limited political ownership over reintegration structures and processes:** Despite past efforts to involve national authorities in developing assisted voluntary returns and reintegration Standard Operating Procedures, national involvement throughout the reintegration process remains uneven, and most governments of third countries do not fund any reintegration activities²⁸;

²⁵ In particular the Niamey Process or the Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development (the Rabat Process).

²⁶ See, Altai Consulting, Third Party Monitoring and Learning (TPML) Mechanism for Sahel and Lake Chad, final synthesis report (2021), available here: https://trust-fund-for-africa.europa.eu/results/monitoring-and-learning_en.

²⁷ In Western Africa, Mali and Guinea boast the highest numbers of returns but host much less youth employment programmes than Nigeria, Ghana, or Senegal for example. Similarly, in Sierra Leone and Guinea, the lack of youth employment and reintegration programmes in areas of origin may explain why most returnees stay in or around capital cities upon arrival, even though employment options are limited there too.

²⁸ Altai Consulting, "Regional synthesis report: European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa Third party monitoring and learning (TPML) mechanism for Sahel and Lake Chad", 2021.

5. Gender: Reintegration programmes have not been sufficiently gender-sensitive, failing to fully address the specific needs of female returning migrants²⁹.

Problem analysis related to the fight against trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of migrants

Despite efforts to address trafficking in human beings, migrant smuggling, and related human rights violations and gender issues, common gaps and needs persist, affecting both States and migrants. This situation is mainly due to:

1. Weaknesses and shortcomings at the national level:

- Criminal response gap and limited prosecution capacities: ineffective investigations and prosecutions prevent authorities from targeting high-level organisers of trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants. Law enforcement agencies face challenges due to insufficient training, experience, and resources. Recent laws on smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings lack the necessary expertise for effective enforcement. Additionally, limited knowledge of relevant legislation among judiciary and police, low investigation and prosecution capacities and insufficient victim protection have led to few trafficking and smuggling cases being adjudicated. Weak law enforcement, deficiencies in the criminal justice chain, and insufficient police/judiciary cooperation continue to plague the system. Financial constraints and corruption further exacerbate these challenges, with corruption identified as a key facilitator of trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants.
- Limited inter-institutional coordination: national plans and frameworks, such as national referral mechanisms for victims of trafficking, Standard Operating Procedures for investigation, are inadequately implemented. Despite recent progress and EU support³⁰, national committees and/or agencies in charge of combating trafficking in human beings and/or migrant smuggling lack capacity. Coordination among police, judiciary, immigration services and protection mechanisms remain weak, with limited geographic coverage and/or overreliance on donor support. Incomplete implementation of action plans or Standard Operating Procedures due to insufficient funding and monitoring further limits the effectiveness of anti-trafficking and anti-smuggling strategies.
- Insufficient protection structures: West African countries lack specialised centres for trafficking victims. Victims often stay in structures for domestic violence victims (in particular women, persons with disabilities or children). There are fewer resources for adult victims. Coordination between government and NGOs is insufficient. Emerging good practices include Standard Operating Procedures the exploitation indicators, which allow state and non-state actors to identify trafficking victims and refer them to the appropriate channels. In transit countries, protection of smuggled migrants and trafficking victims is weak, with migrants facing extreme abuse and arbitrary detention.³¹ Gender, disability-inclusive, human rights-based approaches and community engagement are crucial for improving victim support and crime prevention.
- Limited data collection: Challenges in collecting and analysing data on migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings lead to limited information on trends, methods, root causes, prosecution rates, and related crimes. There is also a lack of data on assistance provided to victims, and on the victims themselves (including women and people with disabilities). Few court decisions on smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings are available, complicating accurate assessment of these crimes.
- Lack of targeted prevention campaigns: Several awareness-raising campaigns have been funded under EU support³² but often lack in-depth studies on trafficking forms, recruiter profiles, and at-risk individuals. Awareness-raising campaigns need to be built on improved data collection and analysis to better target

²⁹ See for example the joint BMZ-IOM study entitled “Gendered Reintegration Experiences and Gender-Sensitive/Responsive/Transformative Approaches to Reintegration Assistance” (2023).

³⁰ EU support such as: “Projet d’Appui à la Lutte contre la Traite des Personnes – ALTP” (Support to the fight against Trafficking in Persons) (2018-2024).

³¹ UNODC, ‘Abused and Neglected’, (2021), accessible [here](#).

³² Notably under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative, or the EU “Projet d’Appui à la Lutte contre la Traite des Personnes – ALTP” (Support to the fight against Trafficking in Persons).

priority cases of exploitation, associated audiences and areas concerned. Effective communication should involve social networks, victims, civil society, religious and traditional authorities, women and youth associations, and potentially migration information/resources centres, and prevention campaigns should distinguish between trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling.

2. Weak transnational cooperation mechanisms:

- Disparities in laws and regulatory frameworks: Variations in laws across the region hamper effective combat against smuggling, trafficking, and related offences, as well as support for victims. Harmonising legal frameworks and developing regional action plans can streamline procedures and promote cooperation to effectively prevent and combat these crimes.
- Limited enforcement of bilateral agreements: Although more than 20 bilateral cooperation agreements to combat trafficking in human beings have been signed between West African countries since 2000³³, they lack follow-up mechanisms for effective monitoring and implementation³⁴. A report on cooperation and anti-trafficking mechanisms in the Gulf of Guinea shows that most agreements are not implemented due to insufficient staff, budget political prioritisation, or outdated provisions³⁵. Cooperation mechanisms between West African and North African countries also lack implementation data. Enhanced cooperation requires promoting mutual legal assistance using frameworks like the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and building capacity for key actors to engage with counterparts in other affected countries.
- Lack of evaluation and capitalisation of good practices: Establishing cooperation with countries along the route, especially those in a conflict or fragile situations like the Central Sahel, is challenging, particularly in the context of criminal investigations. There is a need to evaluate and capitalise on good practices to improve transnational cooperation.
- Difficult access to information on criminal activities: Data protection rules make accessing information on criminal activities along the route challenging. Efforts should be made to explore solutions to these challenges and contribute to a more open attitude and mutual trust between countries and partners.

2.3 Main stakeholders

The final beneficiaries of this action are: potential migrants, returning migrants, victims of trafficking and smuggled migrants (from different origins, with different profiles and levels of vulnerabilities and with different migration histories, including IOM-referred returnees, voluntary returnees assisted or not in their return, forced returnees, etc.); the local communities in return/migration-prone areas of the target countries of origin (local areas of intervention to be selected during the inception phase), with a particular focus on children, youth, women and persons with vulnerabilities (with migration intentions or not).

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

1. National and local government institutions and officials who play a role in migration management, the fight against trafficking in human being and smuggling of migrants, reintegration, job creation, youth employment, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and skills, and in particular:
 - a. Ministries of Interior (responsible for the management of migratory movements within the country, the identification of their nationals and the fight against trafficking in human beings) including their specific departments;
 - b. Ministries of Foreign Affairs;
 - c. Ministries of Labour (in charge of economic development, including job opportunities for returnees and host communities – they will have a role in terms of referrals to other national development

³³ International Centre for Migration Policy and Development, “Assessment of Anti-Trafficking Gaps, Needs and Transferrable Practices in the ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania”, (2020), accessible [here](#).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ International Centre for Migration Policy and Development, “Assessment of Transnational Cooperation Practices and Mechanisms in the Gulf of Guinea Countries in the Fight against Trafficking in Persons” (2023).

programmes and more generally economic reintegration of returnees), including their specific departments;

- d. Ministries of Justice, including their specific departments;
 - e. Ministries of Budget/Finance;
 - f. Ministries of Women and Social Affairs;
 - g. Ministries of Health;
 - h. National law enforcement agencies;
 - i. National bodies in charge of migration management, including interministerial committees/agencies dedicated to combating trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants;
 - j. National agencies for job, employment and skills;
2. Local authorities and municipalities (who are often the first point of contact for migrants in transit and returnees and have a major role in hosting returnees);
 3. Local communities and local CSOs (in particular those representing migrants, women and youth);
 4. Other actors responsible for funding/managing/implementing strategies, policies and programmes in the areas of migrant protection, return, reintegration and anti-smuggling/anti-trafficking – including the EU, the African Union (AU), ECOWAS, the EU Member States agencies, International organisations (IOM³⁶, UNODC and other relevant UN agencies), Frontex, Non-State Actors, local and international Civil Society Organisations, community organisations and the private sector, that are working or could work with returnees and vulnerable and/or potential migrants.

Local authorities, civil society and communities (in particular representing migrants, women and youth) will be involved throughout the design of the action, in particular at the identification phase and potentially as implementing partners and/or recipients of assistance (where applicable). The EU will seek to include civil society, communities in all levels of dialogue including with national authorities.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The **Overall Objective** of this action is to improve the sustainability of the migration management systems in relevant West African countries, while placing migrants' rights at the centre.

The **Specific Objectives** of this action are to:

Specific Objective 1: Build and/or reinforce effective and inclusive nationally owned referral systems for returnees, with a particular attention to women, children and young people, and enhance social cohesion measures in receiving communities.

Specific Objective 2: Strengthen prevention and combatting of trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, as well as protection of and assistance to the victims of trafficking and the smuggled migrants, particularly those belonging to vulnerable groups.

Zone benefitting from the action:

- Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and The Gambia have been indicatively selected for **Specific Objective 1**³⁷, on the basis of specific criteria.³⁸

³⁶ Strong coordination with IOM will be needed to ensure that voluntary returnees supported by IOM through the EU-funded MPRR programmes are then reintegrated at national level (for countries where reintegration will be operated at national level).

³⁷ The other Western African countries of return (including Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso), that are not envisaged in this specific objective, will continue to be covered (for return and reintegration) through regional programming.

³⁸ For Specific Objective 1, the selection of the target countries is informed by the combination of the following criteria:

- Prevalence of returns to the country;
- Previous work done to develop national capacities, structures and referral systems for reintegration;
- Complementarity with previous, ongoing and planned programmes (funded by EU/TEI and other donors);
- Level of cooperation with the EU and EU Member States on migration management;

Within this group, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, and Senegal have already developed, to a certain extent, national capacities, structures and referral systems for reintegration and benefit from specific additional national projects to foster national ownership on reintegration. It is expected that national referral systems for reintegration in these five countries would be operational and able to provide, to all returnees, reintegration assistance adapted to their needs at a mid-term horizon, enabling these countries to ensure the sustainable reintegration of their nationals. In Chad, Sierra Leone and The Gambia, such results would likely require a longer period of time.

- Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone have been indicatively selected **for Specific Objective 2 Output 2.1**³⁹, while all Western African countries are considered **for Output 2.2**.

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

Contributing to Specific Objective 1:

Output 1.1 Strengthened capacities of the national and local authorities to sustainably manage the reintegration of returnees and to offer them reintegration assistance adapted to their needs, in relevant West African countries.

Output 1.2 Enhanced preparedness of communities of return to facilitate the sustainable reintegration of returnees, implement social cohesion measures and promote de-stigmatisation of returnees.

Contributing to Specific Objective 2:

Output 2.1 Strengthened national capacities of relevant West African countries to effectively counter trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, as well as protect and assist the victims and smuggled migrants, in line with the obligations set under the relevant international agreements.

Output 2.2 Improved transnational cooperation mechanisms countering trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, in particular along the Central Mediterranean and/or Atlantic/Western Mediterranean routes.

3.2 Indicative Activities

The lists below define the main blocks of indicative activities. A tailor-made approach will be followed in each target country for both components. This means that the exact entry points for each activity will be specified and tailored at country level during the inception phase, in coherence and complementarity with national development plans, existing EU/TEI initiatives, as well as actions supported by other development partners.

- Origin and/or transit countries covered by the Team Europe Initiatives on the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean and the Central Mediterranean routes.

³⁹ For Specific Objective 2, the selection of the target countries is informed by the combination of the following criteria:

- Prevalence of criminality and trafficking and smuggling networks;
- Prevalence of smuggling business and hubs (with transportation, accommodation, etc.);
- Previous work done to develop national and regional capacities to combat trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants;
- Complementarity with previous, ongoing and planned programmes (funded by EU/TEI and other donors);
- Level of cooperation with the EU and EU Member States on migration management;
- Origin and/or transit countries covered by the Team Europe Initiatives on the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean and the Central Mediterranean routes.

Activities relating to Output 1.1⁴⁰

To be conducted as part of the inception phase at country level when deemed relevant:

1.1.1 Conduct an analysis of current migratory flows⁴¹ as well the main points of entries and return areas, socio-economic profile of returnees, with a particular attention to women and vulnerable returnees (including children and persons with disabilities), and analysis of local labour markets⁴²;

1.1.2 Undertake an analysis of existing frameworks governing post-arrival and reintegration assistance and evaluate their coherence, level of dissemination amongst relevant actors (social workers, NGOs, law-enforcement officials etc.) and assess the needs for their revision and/or needs for further dissemination through trainings, in cooperation with the national authorities;

1.1.3 Conduct an operational assessment of capacity building needs and develop mid- to long-term capacity building roadmaps for: i) reception and post-arrival services both in capital cities and in the regions (staff, budget, equipment, training needs etc.); ii) social and psychosocial services providers (housing/ shelter, medical assistance, psychosocial assistance, legal assistance for victims of trafficking etc.) in the main areas of return; iii) State employment agencies' capacities to support the economic reintegration of returnees.

Main blocks of indicative activities:

1.1.4 Support/advocate for the inclusion of sustainable reintegration of returnees (including post-arrival assistance) in national and territorial plans and strategies as well as for the development of earmarked and predictable government budget for the operationalisation of nationally owned reintegration mechanisms;

1.1.5 Contribute to the development/revision/update of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on reintegration in coordination with all key stakeholders;

1.1.6 In line with revised/newly developed SOPs, facilitate cross-sectoral coordination and partnerships among state and non-state actors;

1.1.7 Put in place where feasible, digital tools/platforms enabling to map (ideally in real time) available social and psychosocial services (shelters, medical/psychosocial service providers etc.) and employment/TVET opportunities (state employment agencies, TVET providers, incubators, microfinance institutions etc.);

1.1.8 Provide multi-dimensional support to national and local authorities, including capacity building, administration twinning and financial support:

- to relevant national authorities to define, coordinate and activate referral mechanisms in line with the SOPs, including, where needed, a one-stop shop;
- to relevant national authorities to develop and/or strengthen reception and post-arrival services in the main ports of entry;
- to enhance multi-sectoral service delivery by national and local state and non-state actors so they can adapt to the specificities of returnees in terms of providing services.
- to social and psychosocial actors (social government structures and/or international/national CSOs) to address the protection/assistance/social reinsertion needs of vulnerable returnees, including victims of trafficking, women and children, and participate in the provision of information, assistance and referrals;
- to state employment agencies to enable them to provide integrated services to returnees, particularly in the main areas of return/departure and to improve coordination between State employment agencies and employment programmes and support the building of linkages with international donors by encouraging international employment actors to inform public/youth employment agencies of the programmes they are implementing, the profile of beneficiaries they will be enrolling, etc.

1.1.9 Develop specific coordination mechanisms with IOM to ensure continuity and correspondence between pre-departure counselling and voluntary returns operated by the UN agency and reintegration services offered at national level.

⁴⁰ Action 2 of the Individual Measure for Western Africa will complement Action 1 output 1.1 with the following activities:

- Support the development of partnerships between training institutions and entrepreneurship support services and State employment agencies and/or nationally owned reintegration structures so that existing TVET, entrepreneurship and (green) jobs opportunities are readily available to returnees (Action 2 outputs 1.1, 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3);
- Fund information campaigns to increase the attractiveness of TVET, entrepreneurship and jobs (including in the agriculture sector) among the youth, including returnees, particularly at the information / orientation / referral stages (Action 2 outputs 1.1, 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3).

⁴¹ Synergies with the regional EU-funded programmes on data and research will be sought.

⁴² Altai Consulting, "Returning migrants' economic reintegration: key stakeholders and potential partnerships across West Africa & Ethiopia".

1.1.10 Support the development of national monitoring and evaluation schemes to track progress and contribute to the continuous improvement of systems and services at national and local levels.

Activities relating to Output 1.2⁴³

To be conducted as part of the inception phase at country level when deemed relevant:

1.2.1 Conduct an analysis of needs and challenges to foster social cohesion and understand sociocultural norms that influence migration choices and positive attitudes towards returnees.

Main blocks of indicative activities:

1.2.2 Foster the local associative environment to prevent stigmatisation of returnees and tensions between community members, including through the development of peer support mechanisms and community networks;

1.2.3 Improve the psychosocial support to returnees through dedicated community mobilisation and sensitisation activities, peer support mechanisms and groups and the creation of community networks;

1.2.4 Support innovative CSOs and local authorities' ideas for strengthening social cohesion and communication between local authorities, returnees and resident population, in order to foster a positive attitude towards returnees. The initiatives shall seek to engage returnees and their families in the design and implementation of the community cohesion initiatives, and where feasible by sharing their technical knowledge, experience and skills obtained during their stay abroad;

1.2.5 Conduct awareness-raising and communication activities to share information about local services and opportunities and gather support around the approach, including by using mass media, social media campaigns, counselling and community outreach, as well as involving the local authorities and religious and traditional leaders.

Activities relating to Output 2.1

To be conducted as part of the inception phase:

2.1.1 A more precise assessment of the needs to be covered as part of Output 2.1 will be carried out in order to confirm target countries and/or add additional ones. This assessment will be based on additional research related to existing national capacities and gaps to combat trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants (including in relation to maritime border management), and capacities and gaps to protect victims.

Main blocks of indicative activities:

Data collection:

2.1.2 Support existing efforts to improve the annual collection, compilation, analysis, and dissemination of statistical and qualitative data on trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants (disaggregated by sex and taking into account a disability-inclusive perspective), in order to continue refining intervention strategies in all areas (prevention, law enforcement, prosecution, protection, partnerships etc.).

National Frameworks:

2.1.3 Support the revision/development, where needed, of national strategic, policy and legal frameworks (and the elaboration of action plans) addressing trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, including to fulfil the obligations set under the relevant international agreements;

2.1.4 Support the implementation of national frameworks at national and local levels.

Prosecution and law enforcement:

2.1.5 Strengthen and build up the capacities of national structures and actors of the criminal justice chain (law enforcement, judicial authorities, inter-ministerial committees, permanent agencies, anti-trafficking units and financial investigation units within the police, and anti-trafficking cells within Ministries of Justice and their local

⁴³ Action 2 of the Individual Measure will complement Action 1, Output 1.2 with the following activities:

- Young women and men (including returnees and members of communities of return) will acquire skills according to private sector needs and identified economic potentials, ensuring to avoid maladaptation in areas affected by climate change or environmental degradation (Action 2, Output 1.1);
- Entrepreneurship and diaspora investments in informal and formal sectors will be promoted (notably in green areas aligned with EU Green Deal), with a specific focus on the main departure/return areas (Action 2, Output 2.1.);
- Access to finance and support to business growth will be enhanced, with a specific focus on the main departure/return areas (Action 2, Output 2.2);
- Through value chains development (with a focus on the main departure/return areas), green jobs will be created and accessible to returnees and other members of communities of return (Action 2, Output 2.3).

branches) to effectively detect, investigate, prosecute, and prevent trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling;

2.1.6 Support the implementation of country tailored mechanisms based on the model of common operational partnership projects, as well as complement existing national common operational partnership projects where needed (including in specific areas such as document fraud and maritime border management).

2.1.7 Strengthen in each country collaboration between the law enforcement and judicial authorities. Build-up the operational capacities of relevant national authorities on maritime border management to enhance the fight against migrant smugglers and traffickers of human beings and the search and rescue operations at sea.

Protection:

2.1.7 Strengthen and implement national referral mechanisms for victims of trafficking as well as for smuggled migrants (including specific measures targeting the most vulnerable, such as women, children and persons with disabilities) with all relevant actors (social workers, NGOs, law enforcement and justice actors etc.), including at the decentralised level;

2.1.8 Support the enhanced participation of victims of trafficking and smuggled migrants in criminal proceedings;

2.1.9 Increase the quantity and quality of care and assistance available to victims of trafficking and smuggled migrants – protection services, psychosocial support (in complementarity with Output 1.1 and 1.2 of this action);

2.1.10 Support the development/operationalisation of toll-free numbers for victims of trafficking, including in local languages.

Prevention:

2.1.11 Support awareness-raising activities at the community level with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

Activities relating to Output 2.2

To be conducted as part of the inception phase:

2.2.1 Update and enrich an analysis of key corridors along the Central Mediterranean and Atlantic/Western Mediterranean routes and existing transnational agreements/mechanisms aiming to address trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants within these corridors (or the need for their development) and operational needs to boost their implementation;

2.2.2 Clarify relationships between existing actors and initiatives (in particular funded by the two Team Europe Initiatives), identify potential overlaps as well as institutional and operational gaps, so as to develop precisely targeted activities aiming to strengthen the overall coherence of efforts countering trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants at the regional level, replicate and/or upscale good practices/experiences across windows and more systematically institutionalise cooperation mechanisms between West and North African countries;

2.2.3 Explore the needs/gaps in terms of transnational cooperation on border management, particularly as concerns search and rescue operations at sea.

Main blocks of indicative activities:

2.2.4 In so far as necessary, and in full complementarity with the activities carried out under NETCOP (phase 1, 2 and possibly phase 3), facilitate the exchange of information, intelligence and investigative strategies between competent law enforcement agencies along identified corridors: this could be done through an information-sharing/intelligence platform bringing together liaison officers from the partner countries in one location to effectively exchange information on trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling⁴⁴;

2.2.5 Expand cooperation on investigations, including financial investigations (such as coaching and immersion activities, joint actions/operations) among competent law enforcement authorities and between competent law enforcement and justice authorities;

2.2.6 Further develop operational capacities, information management, networking, risk analysis capabilities, consolidating and enhancing inter-agency and inter-regional information sharing structures, while ensuring compliance with human rights and the rule of law;

2.2.7 Strengthen transnational coordination between border security authorities including through joint exercises and operations, particularly as concerns search and rescue at sea.

⁴⁴ One interesting model to explore could be the Regional operational center in Karthoum (ROCK) or NET-COP.

The commitment of the EU's contribution to the Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs) to which this action refers, will be complemented by other contributions from other Team Europe members. 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

The action will integrate to the extent possible environmental and climate change considerations in the planning of activities. Actions on support to receiving communities and economic reintegration will notably consider ongoing environmental changes, linked (or not) to the impact of climate change, and promote community initiatives that support a sustainable use of natural resources, reforestation and waste management, as well as promote "green jobs".

Outcomes of the Environmental Impact Assessment screening

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

Outcome of the Climate Risk Assessment screening

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

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per 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 protection and reintegration activities will also aim at promoting women's empowerment and gender equality. Women and girls' 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.

The action will contribute to the EU Gender Action Plan III (2021-2025).

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 this action. Protection of human rights of particularly vulnerable categories of migrants, such as children, whether accompanied, unaccompanied or separated; women and girls; elderly and disabled persons; victims of trafficking or vulnerable smuggled migrants will be mainstreamed across all activities, along with the required procedural safeguards including the need to undertake best interest determination.

Smuggled migrants are particularly vulnerable due to their irregular status. They are susceptible to various human rights abuses during their journey perpetrated by smugglers and other actors. The proposed action seeks to promote a human rights-based response to trafficking in human beings, smuggling of migrants and related offences, focusing on enhancing protection and assistance for smuggled migrants and victims of trafficking, and promoting access to justice. Gender-responsive and rights-based principles of participation, non-discrimination, equality, accountability, and transparency will guide all stages of planning and implementation. The project will adopt a trauma-informed and survivor-centred approach, placing the needs of rights-holders (victims, migrants, and local communities) at the forefront.

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 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 and vulnerable smuggled migrants 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. Although disability is not a key priority in the action, the inclusion of people with disabilities will be mainstreamed through all activities. Moreover, the action would take into account aspects of protection, accessibility, and inclusivity for vulnerable migrants with disabilities.

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

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating measures
External environment	Risk 1 Emerging crises, conflicts and deteriorating insecurity with consequent restrictions on mobility and changes of migratory flows or displacement patterns during the project implementation.	M	M	The action will adopt a conflict-sensitive approach and include continuous monitoring of migratory flows and displacement patterns to allow for early detection of changes in the migration patterns.
Communication and information	Risk 2 Reputational risk	H	H	The EU, through its Delegations, will engage with relevant authorities at the highest level possible to mitigate misuse of EU funds and ensure protection of human rights. The EU will also engage with civil society actors to explain the purpose of the action and human rights safeguards supported; specific lines to take for the press will also be developed.
People and the organisation	Risk 3 Lack of political will and commitment from national authorities to cooperate on reintegration, engage on migration management and/or limited interest from national governments and/or partners.	H	H	The action is developed in alignment with partner countries' relevant policies and is meant to ensure ownership. The EU will closely coordinate with partner countries through the leadership of its Delegations to ensure that proper communication pathways are put in place, that the design and implementation of activities under this action is well adapted to the national context and agreed by the Government. The EU Delegations will promote dialogue and continued information exchange among key stakeholders, and the action will include capacity building.

People and the organisation	Risk 4 Structural changes in key government stakeholders (at national and/or local level) and high turnover of staff.	M	M	From the outset, the EU and partners will ensure close cooperation with stakeholders, highlighting the importance of dedicated resources (financial and personal) and, if necessary, convene meetings at high level to address the issue – in close coordination with EU stakeholders. Close monitoring and regular policy dialogue with the governments to ensure continuous political buy-in.
People and the organisation	Risk 5 Limited capacity of national and local authorities to engage in the proposed activities.	M	H	Support to the governments at national and local level through multi-dimensional support, including capacity building, twinning, financial support and technical assistance, is a critical strand of work of the action.
People and the organisation	Risk 6 Fraud, corruption and vested interests from some state and non-state actors in illegal migration, smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings.	L	H	Monitoring mechanisms are put in place to avoid the risk of corruption and fraud. Enhanced cooperation with EU agencies such as FRONTEX so to enhance cooperation on data exchanges and comparable risk analysis.
External Environment	Risk 7 Increasing costs – supply chains, more time spent in reception centres, security costs.	M	M	Flexible implementing modalities that also incentivise efficient use of resources, stronger linkages with other development programmes.
Communication and information	Risk 8 Tensions (including conflicts and competition over limited resources) between returning migrants, forcibly displaced and host communities prevent progress towards an integrated approach.	M	M	The action adopts an inclusive and integrated approach targeting migrant/forcibly displaced and host communities, applying conflict sensitivity principles and implementing economic and social development initiatives to the benefit of both populations to foster social cohesion. In addition, specific social cohesion activities, as well as sensitisation activities, will be integrated, and efforts will be made to ensure planning is a participatory process where the voices of the migrants/forcibly displaced and host communities can be heard.
People and the organisation	Risk 9 Human rights abuses.	M	H	To avoid that EU funding indirectly contributes to human rights abuses – through activities such as the ones involving the security sector – adequate mitigating measures will be put in place. These could include, depending on the projects: independent monitoring on human rights; prevention of refoulement, exclusion of human rights abusers in the activities funded under the action, standard operating procedures that ensure the respect for human rights, adequate human rights training for the authorities, specifically law enforcement corps including, with the aim to only allow fully trained and examined security personnel to participate in EU-financed activities.
Assumptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorities provide continuous support to the action, ensure ownership and leadership. • Return migration flows are steady. • The socio-economic and security situation in the countries of return does not deteriorate. • National dialogues on migration are encouraged and lead to improved procedures and policies based on updated data collection and analysis. 				

- Targeted actors are willing to build capacity and continue to cooperate on all facets of migration management.

Lessons Learnt:

The lessons learnt listed below are largely coming from the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) experience. In addition, the recommendations of the European Court of Auditors' special report 17/2024 on the EUTF⁴⁵ are being taken into account, e.g. with evidence-based targeting of geographical areas and beneficiaries, with a monitoring and evaluation system and through adequate mitigating measures to avoid EU funding indirectly contributing to human rights abuses.

Lessons learnt on reintegration assistance:

- Reintegration must be enshrined in the national policy framework and be prioritised by national authorities. According to insights gathered as part of the Migration Governance Indicator Data Bulletins, "The sustainable reintegration of migrants that fled the country during a crisis is more likely to be promoted in countries that have a migration strategy defined in a programmatic document"⁴⁶. Moreover, connecting national-level policies with community-level actions is a prerequisite to impactful local reintegration.
- The most promising initiatives are those that bring together and facilitate partnerships among a large array of actors (combining policy and operational stakeholders in conjunction with a range of development partners). It is fundamental to secure the active participation of local and regional authorities.
- Effective national and local referral systems are critical in delivering cost-effective comprehensive services and care. Referral schemes must include skills assessment procedures to individually orient beneficiaries towards relevant pathways and services.
- The approach must be inclusive (i.e. benefitting migrants and locals, and not limited to project beneficiaries), hence responding to local development priorities and reducing social tensions between returnees and the local population.
- The individual reintegration package approach does not address the structural problems that originally drove migrants to leave their country of origin. As a result, the long-term sustainability of reintegration can be limited due to external factors that persist⁴⁷. Moreover, this individual approach may create tensions within communities if returnees benefit from specific socio-economic assistance while other groups with similar needs do not.
- Partner countries favour structural approaches that aim to strengthen systems of service provision overall and for all citizens⁴⁸.
- An inclusive model of local reintegration prioritises a gender-inclusive⁴⁹ and youth-inclusive agenda.
- Supporting the capacity of national and local stakeholders (both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders) to work together across these levels is critical to develop national ownership and coordination. Empowering local authorities is particularly important to shape sustainable reintegration.
- Country-specific and areas-based approaches are required to incorporate local knowledge about local systems and the connections between communities and to grasp factors that contribute to the success of local reintegration, ranging from the need to assess the returnees' profiles to the importance of understanding local markets, and how these factors can be addressed in an integrated manner.

⁴⁵ [Special report 17/2024: The EU trust fund for Africa | European Court of Auditors \(europa.eu\)](https://www.migrationdataportal.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd1251/files/2024-02/MGI-GCM-21.pdf)

⁴⁶ <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd1251/files/2024-02/MGI-GCM-21.pdf>

⁴⁷ Feedback gathered by an overwhelming majority of key informants and migrants interviewed as part of a research prepared by Altai Consulting for IOM Morocco: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/voluntary_return_and_reintegration.pdf

⁴⁸ This is evidenced in a comparative analysis of EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) projects INTEGRA, DURAZINDER and RIEC/"Make it in The Gambia" implemented by Enabel in Guinea, Niger and The Gambia: <file://net1.cec.eu.int/offline/08/sgrosau/Desktop/R&R%20Reading/Building-systems-for-migration-return-and-reintegration-ECDPM-briefing-note-161-2023.pdf>

⁴⁹ Policy recommendations in relation to gender sensitive reintegration programming are provided by the EU-IOM Knowledge Management Hub study of 2021: [Research Study #2 - Comparative Reintegration Outcomes between | Migrant Protection Platform \(iom.int\)](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/voluntary_return_and_reintegration.pdf). See also the Talk2connect webinar "Support female migrants in the return process" and the MPI webinar "Working Towards a More Gender-Responsive Reintegration Process for Returned Migrants".

- To facilitate the re-insertion of returnees into societies, specific efforts should be dedicated to avoiding the stigmatisation of returnees and promoting the inclusive approach at community level. It is difficult for returnees to reintegrate in a hostile environment.
- A deep investment in continuous monitoring and evaluation is needed to improve system performance and set realistic policy ambitions.

Lessons learnt on capacity building:

- Under the EU IOM Joint Initiative, strengthening migration governance went hand in hand with the provision of protection, return and reintegration services. These two elements must continue to be closely interlinked to ensure that lessons learned from direct implementation lead to the integration of appropriate measures into national laws and policies;
- The EU IOM Joint Initiative has played a key role in developing partnerships and synergies with multiple programmes and actors to foster the reintegration of migrants. The development of these synergies presents challenges linked to the objectives, targets and resources of each programme and actor, but it is essential to maintain and develop these guidance opportunities in order to provide holistic services to returning migrants;
- The role of multilateral platforms, coordination mechanisms and technical groups is essential to ensure national ownership and gather local expertise for better management of reintegration assistance. Such mechanisms need to be further strengthened, taking into account the difficulties encountered (e.g. changes in staff of government agencies).

Overall, the following key principles of engagement (borrowed from *FAO's Global lessons learned on sustainable reintegration in rural areas*) must guide the action:

1. Reinforce – not replace – national and local systems;
2. Localise – from the outset – opportunities for local actors that strengthen local capacities;
3. Scale up – to expand national systems so that they meet the needs of (rural) populations.

Lessons learnt on trafficking in human beings at the national level:

- Inter-ministerial committees dedicated to combatting trafficking in human beings (or smuggling of migrants, where applicable) play a key role in coordinating operations carried out by law enforcement and protection actors but need to be further strengthened to effectively implement national strategies and dedicated action plans (along with robust M&E systems);
- The lack of precise knowledge about the different forms of trafficking in human beings (most critical locations, profiles of perpetrators and victims etc.) make it difficult to define sufficiently precise strategies and priorities (at national and cross-country levels); there is need to further improve the collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of statistical and qualitative data on trafficking in human beings in order to refine and deepen existing diagnoses and intervention strategies in all areas and to support the dissemination of this data to the relevant actors (inter-ministerial committees, law enforcement agencies, protection actors, etc.);
- Law enforcement and protection actors usually share few or no working habits and their collaboration needs to be strengthened, even at the national level across agencies/actors (e.g. improve the training of law enforcement and judicial actors in victim support (integrating a gender and inclusive perspective), and interview techniques at all the key stages of legal proceedings; strengthen mechanisms in order to provide legal support to victims during the initial stages of investigations, in collaboration with protection actors etc.);
- Standard operating procedures and national referral mechanisms are key to organise and mainstream the work of all actors involved in the fight against trafficking in human beings; there is thus need to develop these tools where they do not exist and/ or continue providing regular training to all actors involved in their implementation (law enforcement and protection actors) and continue efforts to institutionalise them to reach more categories of actors (including teachers, religious and community leaders, local associations, etc.) and create a critical mass at all levels, including decentralised levels;
- Theoretical short-term training courses are insufficient for specialised law-enforcement units; practical trainings through concrete support in detecting cases and implementing in-depth procedural techniques are more effective. Previous experiences of in-situ coaching (through common operational partnerships, joint

investigation teams etc.) were particularly promising and appreciated and should be replicated on a wider scale;

- Despite previous EU support and improvements, shelters/protection structures are lacking in priority countries and, where they exist, lack infrastructures, equipment and training; existing structures should thus be strengthened and additional ones should be set up in areas of departure and at the borders with neighbouring transit countries, ensuring that there are sufficient facilities, and that reception, care and referral procedures are adapted to the different target groups (like women, children, youth and persons with disabilities).

Lessons learnt on smuggling of migrants at the national level:

- Although most countries in West Africa have ratified/acceded to the Smuggling of Migrants Protocol, only a few have enacted dedicated legislation or action plans to combat the smuggling of migrants. This can be explained by the fact that within the ECOWAS area, most smuggled individuals travelling overland start their journey as regular migrants under the Free Movement Protocol and only violate immigration laws after exiting the ECOWAS area⁵⁰. It is therefore usually in Mauritania, northern Mali or Niger that smugglers start to operate. The presence of *coxeurs*⁵¹ has however been reported in many countries of departure but, so far, limited action has been undertaken to curtail the development of these networks. Support is therefore needed to support the domestication of the Smuggling of Migrants Protocol and develop capacities to appropriately address smuggling of migrants related activities.
- For a number of young and unemployed people, smuggling is considered a form of employment, highlighting the need for the development of multi-dimensional strategies including socio-economic development. In Niger, until 2015 and the passing of anti-smuggling of migrants legislation, smuggling activities in the northern part of the country generated substantial revenues as well as a number of indirect jobs (through food, transport, etc.). As a result, in addition to law-enforcement efforts, multi-dimensional strategies that address the economic and social aspects of smuggling are needed to effectively curb the phenomenon. To this end, the EU funded PAIERA project (*Plan d'Actions à Impact Economique Rapide à Agadez – EU Trust Fund*) aimed at developing a complementary approach to law-enforcement through sensitisation and the development of alternative economic opportunities for actors who had directly or indirectly benefitted from irregular migration networks in the Agadez area⁵². The recent abrogation of law 2015-36 may have for consequences revive the economic ecosystem around migration and lead to a significant increase of migration towards North African countries⁵³. In the meantime, smuggling of migrants via the maritime routes is becoming a growing concern in coastal states such as The Gambia, Senegal and Mauritania.

The protection of smuggled migrants remains a major weakness of national and international protection schemes. While the Smuggling of Migrants Protocol provides that smuggled migrants should be shielded from prosecutions arising from the fact that they have been smuggled and extends its scope to the protection of smuggled persons, these provisions are rarely implemented in practice. Research suggests that the lack of adequate protection is aggravated by the extreme vulnerability of migrants to physical abuse, torture or sexual violence and arbitrary detention while under the control of their smugglers ('aggravated smuggling')⁵⁴.

Lessons learnt at the bilateral/multilateral levels, on trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants:

- Strengthening cross-border/regional cooperation is most efficient at the technical level and should focus on a limited number of trafficking/smuggling corridors and/or target pre-identified trafficking/smuggling networks;
- Activities aiming to strengthen cooperation (including informal) between law enforcement and judicial actors should be continued and reinforced to contribute to the establishment and sustainability of

⁵⁰ D'Orsi C., 'Migrant Smuggling in Africa: Challenges Yet to Be Overcome', African Journal of Legal Studies, (2021), accessible [here](#).

⁵¹ 'Coxeurs' are referred to as intermediaries between migrants and smugglers.

⁵² However, a number of factors limited the overall impact of the project: insufficient funding to accompany all eligible individuals, limited number of economically viable options, selection of candidates perceived as arbitrary, insufficient follow-up, time lags between key parts of the project, etc.

⁵³ Frederic Ebert Stiftung, 'Niger after the Coup: new migration patterns in the Sahel', (2024) accessible [here](#).

⁵⁴ UNODC, 'Abused and Neglected', (2021), accessible [here](#).

communication flows between countries. Similarly, immersion and coaching activities for specialised anti-trafficking/anti-smuggling units (with law enforcement officers from one country being ‘immersed’ for a limited period of time within a specialised unit of another country) should be continued and stepped up to help institutionalise cross-border cooperation;

- Bilateral agreements facilitating movements between Western African countries and North African States, such as the ones existing between Algeria and Mali, or between Côte d’Ivoire and Tunisia (whereby entry visas are not required) have led to an increase in falsification of identity documents. There is thus a significant need to strengthen control procedures at international airports⁵⁵.
- Lessons learnt from the common operational partnerships/joint investigation teams projects show that there is a need to invest in strengthening the relationship between the police and the judiciary⁵⁶, ensure that referral mechanisms are in place for migrants and support long-term investment in institutional capacity building;
- NET-COP II project supports cooperation and exchange of information between the police investigation units of countries involved in the Common Operational Partnership / Joint Investigation Team projects in Western Africa with a view to enhance the exchange and analysis of operational information between the teams in the region. Within a third phase the creation of a Regional Coordination Office is being considered as well as opening also the participation to new countries in the region.
- The Regional Operational Centre in Khartoum supported in the Horn of Africa represents an innovative and relevant approach. This model involved the set-up of a facility where liaison officers seconded from national law enforcement agencies, could facilitate the exchange of information from their own countries with other liaison officers in the facility. Research showed that liaison officers are an effective way to complement traditional information sharing agreements (the implementation of which remains complex and characterised by a high degree of protectiveness) and to encourage international collaboration and synergies to fight criminal organisations. We could explore which best practices from the Regional Operational Centre in Khartoum model could be replicated in West Africa. Personal relations were highlighted as a key solution to mitigate a country’s reluctance to cooperate. In this sense, liaison officers are seen as an effective way to complement traditional information sharing agreements and to encourage international collaboration and synergies to fight criminal organisations. The fact that the Regional Operational Centre in Khartoum concentrated on a specific, limited geographical scope that was relevant to all participating countries also helped it get buy-in from them.

⁵⁵ For example, in Côte d’Ivoire, the government has set up in 2015 an anti-traffic airport unit (CAAT) at the Abidjan airport, whose role is to detect fraudulent documents;

⁵⁶ This was identified as a gap in the Joint Investigation Team project in Niger, where a police team was supported by the project but a strengthened relationship with the prosecuting office was not prioritised, resulting in prosecutors/judges not systematically applying the requested sentences to traffickers/smugglers because they were not sensitised on the importance of the issue. The final evaluation of the Joint Investigation Team noted increased number of arrests for smuggling over the years but challenges in monitoring whether those arrested were sentenced.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that:

IF effective and inclusive national referral systems for returnees are built and/or reinforced, **AND** if receiving communities are better prepared to facilitate the sustainable reintegration of returnees through social cohesion measures and the promotion of de-stigmatisation of returnees, **AND** if returning migrants benefit from holistic psychosocial, social and economic support conducive to their successful reintegration, **THEN** countries of origin will be empowered to directly manage more sustainable, long-term, and inclusive reintegration and returnees will benefit from more qualitative, diversified and sustainable reintegration options (with a specific focus on women, children, and young people).

IF national capacities to effectively combat trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants are strengthened, **AND** if transnational cooperation mechanisms countering trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants and protecting victims/smuggled migrants are improved, in particular along the Central Mediterranean and the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean routes **AND** if the overall coherence of efforts at the regional and cross-regional levels is promoted, **THEN** the fight against trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants will be more comprehensive and better adapted to constantly evolving routes and the needs of rights-holders (victims, migrants, and local communities) will be placed at the centre of the fight against trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants.

IF the EU, in the context of its partnerships and migration dialogues, supports priority countries to directly manage more strategic, long-term, and inclusive reintegration systems enabling returnees to benefit from more qualitative, diversified and sustainable reintegration options, **AND** if the fight against trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants is made more comprehensive and better adapted to constantly evolving routes whilst bilateral and multilateral coordination efforts along the Central Mediterranean and Atlantic/Western Mediterranean routes are strengthened and the needs of rights-holders are placed at the centre of the fight against trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, **THEN** West African priority countries' technical capacities and overall national and political ownership over key migration management priority areas will be enhanced and these countries will be in a position to implement more efficient and sustainable migration management systems whilst placing migrants' needs at the forefront, in line with international standards, as well as key EU policies and strategies.

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

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

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

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

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

Results	Results chain (@): Main expected results	Indicators (@)	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	To improve the sustainability of the migration management systems in relevant West African countries, while placing migrants' rights at the centre.	<p>1. Number of migrants or individuals from host communities protected or assisted by national systems in place (disaggregated by sex, age, disability, country, province, type of service, and profile: returnee v. non-returnee) (<i>OPSYS core indicator</i>)</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, age, country</p>	<p>1. TBD during inception phase</p> <p>2. TBD during inception phase</p>	<p>1. TBD during inception phase</p> <p>2. TBD during inception phase</p>	<p>1. National statistics; IOM data; Database of beneficiaries/participants</p> <p>2. Baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention</p>	<i>Not applicable</i>

Outcome 1	1. Effective and inclusive nationally owned referral systems for returnees built and/or reinforced, with a particular attention to women, children and young people and social cohesion measures in receiving communities enhanced.	<p>1.1 Number of functional and inclusive state-led referral mechanisms and subsequent sectoral services (disaggregated by country, province, type of service)</p> <p>1.2 Number of returnees and members of the receiving community accessing national and local socio-economic services and opportunities (disaggregated by returnee/host community status, sex, age, country, province, type of services)</p>	<p>1.1 TBD during inception phase</p> <p>1.2 TBD during inception phase</p>	<p>1.1 TBD during inception phase</p> <p>1.2 TBD during inception phase</p>	<p>1.1 Baseline and endline studies conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention.</p> <p>1.2 Baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention</p>	The governments and the communities provide continuous support to migration measures. National and local authorities ensure ownership and leadership over reintegration of returnees.
Outcome 2	2. The prevention and the combatting of trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants are strengthened, as well as the protection of the victims of trafficking and the smuggled migrants, particularly those belonging to vulnerable groups.	<p>2.2.1. Number of national action plans related to combating trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants revised and budgeted into national planning disaggregated by type (THB vs SOM)</p> <p>2.2.2 Number of victims of trafficking and smuggled migrants assisted and protected.</p>	<p>2.1 TBD during inception phase</p> <p>2.2 TBD during inception phase</p>	<p>2.1 TBD during inception phase</p> <p>2.2 TBD during inception phase</p>	<p>2.1 Baseline and endline studies conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention; Policy/framework/manuals discussed and validated.</p> <p>2.2 Baseline and endline studies conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention</p>	The authorities provide continuous support to the implementation of the national, regional and international frameworks, they ensure ownership and leadership over the fight against trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants.

Output 1.1	1.1. National and local authorities' capacities to sustainably manage the reintegration of returnees and to offer them an assistance adapted to their needs are strengthened, in relevant West African countries.	<p>1.1.1 Number of national / local budgeted development plans incorporating reintegration support developed with support of the EU-funded intervention (including the operationalisation of nationally owned reintegration mechanisms), disaggregated by country, province</p> <p>1.1.2 Number of Standard Operating Procedures related to sustainable reintegration revised with support of the EU-funded intervention, disaggregated by country</p> <p><i>These are examples to be refined / detailed during inception phase.</i></p>	1.1.1 TBD during inception phase	1.1.1 TBD during inception phase	1.1.1 Baseline and endline studies conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	The flows of returnees are steady. The socio-economic and security situation in the countries of return does not deteriorate.
Output 1.2	1.2. Communities of return are better prepared to facilitate the sustainable reintegration of returnees, through social cohesion measures and the promotion of de-stigmatisation of returnees	<p>1.2.1 Number of returnees and community members participating in community-based reintegration initiatives in areas of return in targeted countries with support of the EU-funded intervention, disaggregated by sex, age, displacement status</p> <p>1.2.2 Number of peer support mechanisms and community networks established and/or strengthened with support of the EU-funded intervention in areas of return, disaggregated by country</p> <p><i>These are examples to be refined / detailed during inception phase.</i></p>	1.2.1 TBD during inception phase	1.2.1 TBD during inception phase	1.2.1 Baseline and endline studies conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	The flows of returnees are steady. The socio-economic and security situation in the countries of return does not deteriorate.

Output 2.1	2.1 National capacities of relevant West African countries to effectively counter trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, as well as to protect the victims and smuggled migrants are strengthened, in line with the obligations set under the relevant international agreements.	<p>2.1.1 Number of national frameworks on trafficking in human beings/smuggling of migrants developed, revised and/or operationalised through the development of dedicated action plans, memorandum of understandings etc with support of the EU-funded intervention, disaggregated by migration areas, country</p> <p>2.1.2 Number of victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants referred to protection support structures, in line with national Standard Operating Procedures*. disaggregated by sex, age, country</p> <p><i>These are examples to be refined / detailed during inception phase.</i></p>	2.1.1 TBD during inception phase	2.1.1 TBD during inception phase	2.1.1 Baseline and endline studies conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	Targeted actors are willing to build their capacities and to continue to cooperate on all facets of migration management, including the fight against trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of migrants
Output 2.2	2.2 Transnational cooperation mechanisms countering smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings are improved in particular along the Central Mediterranean and/or Atlantic/Western Mediterranean routes.	<p>2.2.1 Number of jointly conducted police operations related to cases of trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants by country, locality, operation category, sex</p> <p>2.2.2 Number of information sharing mechanisms, set up between target countries with support of the EU-funded intervention, disaggregated by country and type of mechanism (bilateral, multilateral), institutions</p> <p><i>These are examples to be refined / detailed during inception phase.</i></p>	2.2.1 TBD during inception phase	2.2.1 TBD during inception phase	2.2.1 Baseline and endline studies conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention	Targeted actors are willing to cooperate with their regional counterparts on countering trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants

4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the region / 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 72 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 the Budget Support Component

Not applicable

4.4 Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures.⁵⁷

4.4.1 Direct management (grants)

4.4.1.1 Part of output 2.1

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

The grants will contribute to achieving part of output 2.1 of this action ("In relevant countries, national capacities to effectively implement dedicated frameworks countering trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants are strengthened in all their dimensions (prevention, prosecution, protection, partnerships), including to fulfil the obligations set under the relevant international agreements").

(b) Type of applicants targeted

Civil society organisations and/or local authorities, or their platforms

The part of the action under the budgetary envelope reserved for grants may, partially or totally be implemented in indirect management with an entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria: (i) geographical coverage and relevant experience in implementing similar actions in local contexts, (ii) technical, financial and operational capacities and (iii) proven experience in the anti-trafficking and anti-smuggling field.

4.4.2 Indirect Management with entrusted entities

Outputs 1.1 ("Strengthened capacities of the national and local authorities to sustainably manage the reintegration of returnees and to offer them reintegration assistance adapted to their needs, in relevant West African countries") and **1.2** ("Enhanced preparedness of communities of return to facilitate the sustainable

⁵⁷ 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.

reintegration of returnees, implement social cohesion measures and promote de-stigmatisation of returnees”) of this action may be implemented in indirect management with one or several entrusted entity/ies, which will be selected by the Commission’s services using the following criteria: (i) geographical coverage and relevant experience in implementing similar actions in local contexts, (ii) technical, financial and operational capacities and (iii) proven experience in the field of sustainable reintegration of returnees, including building authorities’ capacities, offering reintegration assistance services, working at community level.

Part of output 2.1 of this action (“Strengthened national capacities of relevant West African countries to effectively counter trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, as well as protect and assist the victims and smuggled migrants, in line with the obligations set under the relevant international agreements”) may be implemented in indirect management with an entrusted entity, which will be selected by the Commission’s services using the following criteria: (i) geographical coverage and relevant experience in implementing similar actions in local contexts, (ii) technical, financial and operational capacities and (iii) proven experience in the field of anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking, including in building national capacities.

Output 2.2 of this action (“Improved transnational cooperation mechanisms countering trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, in particular along the Central Mediterranean and/or Atlantic/Western Mediterranean routes”) may be implemented in indirect management with an entrusted entity, which will be selected by the Commission’s services using the following criteria: (i) technical, financial and operational capacities and (ii) proven experience in the field of anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking, including in building transnational cooperation mechanisms.

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

4.4.3.1 Output 2.1 (“Strengthened national capacities of relevant West African countries to effectively counter trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, as well as protect and assist the victims and smuggled migrants, in line with the obligations set under the relevant international agreements”)

The part of the action under the budgetary envelope reserved for direct management (grants) for output 2.1 described above may, partially or totally be implemented in indirect management with one or several entrusted entity/ies, which will be selected by the Commission’s services using the following criteria: (i) geographical coverage and relevant experience in implementing similar actions in local contexts, (ii) technical, financial and operational capacities and (iii) proven experience in the field of anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking, including in building national capacities.

4.4.3.2 The part of the action under the budgetary envelope reserved for indirect management to implement:

Output 1.1 (“Strengthened capacities of the national and local authorities to sustainably manage the reintegration of returnees and to offer them reintegration assistance adapted to their needs, in relevant West African countries”), **Output 1.2** (“Enhanced preparedness of communities of return to facilitate the sustainable reintegration of returnees, implement social cohesion measures and promote de-stigmatisation of returnees”), **Output 2.1** (“Strengthened national capacities of relevant West African countries to effectively counter trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, as well as protect and assist the victims and smuggled migrants, in line with the obligations set under the relevant international agreements”) and **Output 2.2** (“Improved transnational cooperation mechanisms countering trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, in particular along the Central Mediterranean and/or Atlantic/Western Mediterranean routes”), may, partially or totally be implemented in direct management (grants).

Type of applicants targeted: non-governmental organisations, non-profit organisations, civil society organisations and/or local authorities, or their platforms.

4.5 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

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

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

4.6 Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
Implementation modalities - cf. section 4.4	
Output 1.1 Strengthened capacities of the national and local authorities to sustainably manage the reintegration of returnees and to offer them reintegration assistance adapted to their needs, in relevant West African countries. composed of Indirect management with entrusted entities - cf. section 4.4.2	75 000 000
Output 1.2 Enhanced preparedness of communities of return to facilitate the sustainable reintegration of returnees, implement social cohesion measures and promote de-stigmatisation of returnees. composed of Indirect management with entrusted entities - cf. section 4.4.2	10 000 000
Output 2.1 Strengthened national capacities of relevant West African countries to effectively counter trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, as well as protect and assist the victims and smuggled migrants, in line with the obligations set under the relevant international agreements. composed of Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.4.1 Indirect management with entrusted entities - cf. section 4.4.2	5 000 000 7 000 000
Output 2.2 Improved transnational cooperation mechanisms countering trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, in particular along the Central Mediterranean and/or Atlantic/Western Mediterranean routes. composed of Indirect management with entrusted entities - cf. section 4.4.2	3 000 000
Grants – total envelope under section 4.4.1	5 000 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	may be covered by another Decision
Totals	100 000 000

4.7 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The action will be implemented through several contracts, some may be managed at HQ level/regional EU Delegation level and some at country level.

Due to the nature of the intervention, the organisational set-up will need to be done at three levels:

Steering Committee

To ensure an adequate, decision-making process and technical follow-up (including active participation of the EU - HQ and EU Delegations) and to seek synergies with the other action entitled “Unleashing the potential of the Youth in West Africa” under this Individual Measure, a Steering Committee will be set up to discuss the implementation and validate the overall direction and policy of the programme in all its activities.

- The EU will chair the Steering Committee meetings with representatives of the partner countries and lead implementing partners. Other relevant stakeholders (duty-bearers) will be invited to participate as observers.
- The Steering Committee will ensure the strategic overview of both actions of the Individual Measure, oversee and validate the overall direction and strategy of the programme (for the target countries, and for the components) and ensure adequate institutional coordination between all organisations involved.
- Additional roles and responsibilities are to: monitor the progress of the action to ensure that objectives are met in a measurable and verifiable manner; oversee the synergies between all partners globally, with other existing programmes (cf. mapping); review and approve reports, work plans and monitoring and evaluation; address and settle strategic issues (policy, administrative, coordination and financial matters) related to the implementation of the action; issue meeting minutes with details of attendees, an overview of outputs/arbitrations, a summary of progress, constraints and outstanding issues.
- The Steering Committee will meet at least twice a year (every six months). Additional meetings can be called if unforeseen circumstances necessitate.

Country Coordination Committees

These committees, co-chaired by the EU Delegation and wherever possible the partner country, will provide a forum to discuss workplans and progress on results at the national level as well as policy development, collaboration and information-sharing in line with the decisions of the Steering Committee. It may cover the two actions of the Individual Measure: “Unlocking the potential of youth in West Africa” and “Managing migration better in Western Africa” and will ensure that the programme remains on track and on time and within budget. The country coordination meetings would need to ensure adequate synergies with all actors (including EUMS and EU Agencies) involved in migration management. The partner country (relevant national institutions), the implementing partners and the EU Delegation will meet twice a year at country level – prior to the meeting of the Steering Committee.

Project Implementation Unit managed at country level

Some components of this action may be implemented using country-specific contracts. For such country specific intervention, a country specific steering sub-committee can be envisaged and will be co-chaired by the EU Delegation and the partner country as well as the lead implementing partner.

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 this action and may sign or enter into joint declarations or statements, for the purpose of enhancing the visibility of the EU and its contribution to this action and ensuring effective coordination.

5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1 Monitoring and Reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partners’ responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partners shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and produce regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (outputs and direct outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix.

The 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 implementing partners will have specific responsibilities for monitoring and reporting under this action. Common indicators will be used as much as possible in order to allow wide reporting. Indicator values will be measured at regional or on a country-by-country basis depending on the nature of the activities, including gender and age disaggregation.

Monitoring and evaluation will assess gender equality results, and the impact on the rights of the groups living in the most vulnerable situations and the implementation of the human rights-based approach working principles (applying all human rights for all; meaningful and inclusive participation and access to decision-making; non-discrimination and equality; accountability and rule of law for all; and transparency and access to information supported by disaggregated data). Human rights and gender equality competence is ensured in the monitoring and evaluation teams.

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the importance of the action, a mid-term and an ex-post evaluation(s) may be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants.

The mid-term evaluation will be carried out for problem solving and learning purposes, in particular with respect to optimising the delivery of services in view of beneficiaries' needs.

The ex-post evaluation will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account, in particular, the complexity of the action and the fact that the action seeks to support a paradigm shift.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partners at least two months in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports may be shared with the partners and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination⁷. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, apply the necessary adjustments.

The financing of the evaluation may be covered by another measure constituting a Financing Decision.

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

In the 2021-2027 programming cycle, a new approach has been adopted to pooling, programming and deploying strategic communication and public diplomacy resources.

In line with the 2022 “[Communicating and Raising EU Visibility: Guidance for External Actions](#)”, it remains 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 continues to apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, partner countries, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU member states.

However, action documents for specific sector programmes are in principle no longer required to include a provision for communication and visibility actions promoting the programmes concerned. These resources are instead consolidated in 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

A Primary Intervention (project/programme) is a coherent set of activities and results structured in a logical framework aiming at delivering development change or progress. Identifying the level of the primary intervention will allow for:

Articulating actions or contracts according to an expected chain of results and therefore allowing them to ensure efficient monitoring and reporting of performance;

Differentiating these actions or contracts from those that do not produce direct reportable development results, defined as support entities (i.e. audits, evaluations);

Having a complete and exhaustive mapping of all results-bearing actions and contracts.

Primary Interventions are identified during the design of each action by the responsible service (Delegation or Headquarters operational Unit).

The level of the Primary Intervention chosen can be modified (directly in OPSYS) and the modification does not constitute an amendment of the action document.

The intervention level for the present action identifies as (tick one of the 4 following options):

Contract level		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	<foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract)>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 2	<foreseen individual legal commitment (or contract)>
	(...)	