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ANNEX II

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the annual action plan in favour of Central Asia for 2024

Action Document for Securing Connectivity in Central Asia

ANNUAL PLAN

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	Securing Connectivity in Central Asia OPSYS number: ACT-62829 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)
2. Team Europe Initiative	No
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The action shall be carried out in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan)
4. Programming document	Asia and the Pacific Regional Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results	Priority Area 1 – Regional Integration and Cooperation - sub-regional programme for Central Asia Sector 1: Partnering for Resilience SO 5 – Continued cooperation on integrated border management, the fight against drugs trafficking and drug demand reduction. ER 5: Finding common solutions to cross-border threats, including through information sharing and best practices.
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Regional Integration and Cooperation - sub-regional programme for Central Asia 123 Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) 152 Conflict, Peace & Security
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG: Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions Other significant SDGs; Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being

	Goal 5: Gender equality Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth Goal 17: Partnerships for the goals				
8 a) DAC code(s)	12330 Control of harmful use of alcohol and drugs 15% 12250 Infectious disease control 15% 16063 Narcotics control (30%) 15210 Security system management and reform (25%) 15220 Civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution 15%				
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	13000 Third Country Government				
9. Targets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance				
10. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective @	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective	
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>	
	11. Internal markers and Tags:	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
		Digitalisation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
digital connectivity		YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>		

	digital governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	digital entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	digital skills/literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	digital services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Connectivity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital connectivity	YES	NO	
	energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	education and research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Migration @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
12. Amounts concerned	Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020130 Total estimated cost: EUR 30 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 30 000 000			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
13. Type of financing	Indirect management with the entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.1			

1.2 Summary of the Action

The Overall Objective of this Action is to contribute to increased overall security and stability in Central Asia, in particular as concerns cross-border connectivity.

The Specifics Objectives of this action are to

1. Advance regional cross-border cooperation, tackle organised crime and improve living conditions for people living in border areas.
2. Reduce drug supply and demand in the region to promote regional stability and advance public safety.

Each of the Action's Specific Objectives will concretely materialise through an independent programme, which will respectively constitute the next phases of the long-standing EU-funded programmes BOMCA (Border Management in Central Asia, phase 11) and CADAP (Central Asia Drug Action Programme, phase 8). This will be ensured by the implementation of a set of comprehensive and balanced national and regional activities, taking into consideration security challenges, corruption, and the necessity to promote human rights and gender equality. The Action will implement an integrated border management approach with a focus on security, as a way to ensure that authorities in Central Asian countries have the instruments to deal with increased international flows of goods and people while containing and reducing illicit flows, through both training and capacity-building activities as well as the provision of necessary equipment, including new technological solutions. The action will also support the capacity of beneficiary states and communities to develop integrated, balanced and human rights-based national drug policies covering both drug demand and supply reduction efforts, in line with the principle of co-responsibility. Expected results are an increased capacity to monitor drug issues and to formulate integrated, balanced and evidence-based drug policies at national level; reduced drug production, reduced demand and harm of drugs and reduced levels of drug trafficking;

strengthened action against illicit financial flows and money laundering deriving from drug trafficking; increased control of precursors.

Compared to previous phases of BOMCA and CADAP, the newly adopted programmes will focus more specifically on the security aspects of border management and fighting drug trafficking. In the case of BOMCA, this will mean removing previously covered components on trade facilitation and customs, which will instead be covered by other programmes on trade and transport. For CADAP, this will be represented by the addition of an Output on fighting drug supply and trafficking, in addition to continuing the work done on drug demand reduction.

1.3 Zone benefitting from the Action

The action will be implemented in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, all included in the list of ODA recipients.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

Central Asia is in a unique geopolitical situation due to its strategic geographical position and vast natural resources. Its pivotal location serves as a critical bridge between Asia and Europe, thereby underscoring its importance for the European Union in establishing strong partnerships for connectivity in the European Neighbourhood and the Asia-Pacific region. Central Asia has been strongly impacted by recent international developments, including the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, Russia's unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine, and the proliferation of new synthetic drugs. These shifts are significantly endangering the overall security and stability of Central Asia.

The Taliban takeover in Afghanistan in 2021 has halted the gradually developing cooperation in the security domain, particularly concerning drugs and joint border management. It has raised serious concerns, particularly in Tajikistan (with the longest border with Afghanistan of any Central Asian country), about the possible spread of radical Islamism, arms trafficking, and terrorism, and prompted a re-evaluation of border control capacities of Central Asian countries. Following Russia's unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine starting in February 2022, Russian influence in the security area has been affected. The unsuccessful military campaign in Ukraine, the impact of sanctions and the need for Moscow to prioritise support for the battlefield, have encouraged Central Asian countries to diversify their international partners in the security sector. With regards to drug use, the shift towards new drugs (already observed in the past years) has further developed in urban areas, with methamphetamines, new psychoactive substances, and misuse of pharmaceuticals spreading. Furthermore, drug availability has been influenced by the apparent shift of production in Afghanistan (from opium derivatives, the production of which is currently banned by the Taliban, towards methamphetamines) and the appearance of illegal laboratories for synthetic drugs in Central Asia. The shift from the traffic and use of drugs such as heroin (well known to law enforcement and health sector) towards proliferation of new psychoactive substances in the region requires completely different responses for detection and treatment. Since 2015, there has been an increase in sales of new psychoactive substance (NPS) in the region (with the exclusion of Turkmenistan for which data is not available), including online sales. A sustained trend has been observed involving the influx of synthetic drugs and controlled pharmaceuticals. The region has experienced a surge in seizures of various substances, including hashish, poppy straw, marijuana, new psychoactive substances, and synthetic drugs, during the first half of 2020, this upward seizure trend continued into 2022.

In parallel, new EU policies and programmes, most notably the Global Gateway strategy of 2021, make cooperation in the fields of border security and fighting drugs more timely than ever. As the EU is looking to foster connectivity between Europe and Central Asia, notably in the fields of transport and people-to-people contacts, it is essential to ensure that the new connections established do not contribute to the spread of dangerous goods, criminal groups, or ideologies. The current Action therefore proposes to secure connectivity in Central Asia, building on and refocusing previous phases of security-focused programmes.

These complex developments require effective responses to contribute to the overall security and stability in the region via improved border management and strengthened efforts to combat illicit trafficking, particularly with

regards to drug smuggling and trafficking. Such efforts can be implemented by updating and adapting the traditional interventions implemented in the past years by Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA) and Central Asia Drug Action Programme (CADAP) that have long been flagship EU programmes in the region. Both initiatives are consistently highlighted with appreciation and praise by the Central Asian governments, underscoring the importance of their continuation as a vital EU brand in the region. Moreover, their activities and reputation have allowed for cooperation in politically delicate sectors such as security agencies and prisons, in full cooperation and openness with partner country governments. Such cooperation is instrumental for enhanced EU cooperation with the region, considering that the countries have demonstrated a significant interest in European/Western working methods and technology. This effort is conducive to an enhanced dialogue leading to sectoral dialogue and reforms.

Despite limited integration and exchanges with regards to illicit substances amongst the beneficiary countries, the intervention can benefit from the strong relations built by the previous phases of the projects with authorities, the leadership and the commitment of stakeholders and decision-makers by the previous BOMCA and CADAP actions. There is a sufficient level of coordination for a continuous engagement, and requests have been received from beneficiary countries to support in the preparation and finalisation of key documents.

The Central Asian states have acceded to all the major instruments of international human rights law but when it comes to implementation, much work remains to be done, in particular, as far as the freedom of the press, rule of law, independence of the judiciary, corruption perception, and gender inequality are concerned.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Three of the five Central Asian countries share borders with Afghanistan, thereby any developments there have a big potential to influence and destabilise the whole region. Tajikistan is likely to be particularly affected, due to an extremely long shared border that is extremely difficult to control due to the terrain, as well as traditional ethno-cultural linkages with Afghanistan.

Due to its strategic location on the international drug trafficking route, Central Asia is a major transit area for drugs produced in Afghanistan that consequently transported to Europe and other regions. In recent years, there is a new trend in drug use, i.e. increase of new drugs, particularly methamphetamines in Central Asia. Despite the fact that the De Facto Authorities (DFA) in Afghanistan banned opium production, including methamphetamines that produced in industrial quantities in Afghanistan, narcotics are still smuggled via the Northern or Silk Road route. Recent data demonstrates an increase of 5.8% in 2023 as compared to 2022. In addition, despite insufficient evidence showing the direct link between drugs trafficking and terrorism, a number of sources depicts some groups' involvement in production and trafficking in Afghanistan. Finally, there are new methods of drug smuggling appearing in the region. For instance, some Central Asian border agencies report the use of drones for drug trafficking. Therefore, the support of the EU in facilitating the fight against drug trafficking and smuggling in the region plays a key role in increasing the overall security and stability in Central Asia. This rationale for these efforts is also directly linked to the provisions outlined in the EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025, that is "strengthening international cooperation with third countries and regions" (strategic priority 9). It includes 15 actions, among which action 57 referring to the need to continue and reinforce, as appropriate, established drug dialogues including those with Central Asia.

The current Action also seeks to remedy potential negative externalities of increased transport connections within the region. In line with the Study on Sustainable Transport Connections between Europe and Central Asia (published in June 2023), the EU and other international partners have gathered over EUR 10 billion in financing intended for additional transport connections between Central Asian countries and with other regions across the Central Trans-Caspian Transport Network extending from Europe to the Far East. While these new transport connections constitute an exceptional economic opportunity for Central Asia, they also raise the possibility that illicit trafficking and smuggling may happen along the newly established routes, profiting from the remaining fragilities in Central Asian border management systems. It is therefore necessary to take an integrated border management approach, both enabling smooth and seamless transport for licit flows while stopping illicit ones. The trade facilitation aspect of this approach is covered by other EU regional Actions on regional trade and transport, while the current one focuses on upgrading the security capacities of Central Asian states.

The Action will also strengthen the capacity of the Countries bordering Afghanistan (particularly Tajikistan) to manage the shared border with their southern neighbour against the risks linked to the spreading of violent extremism or the challenges due to influxes of refugees. Trafficking of human beings, weapons and narcotics and organised crime negatively impact the security along the border. The lack of stability in Northern Afghanistan also has a direct impact due to geographical proximity and due to the close links between the populations on both sides of the border. If the situation in Afghanistan were to deteriorate, there may be an increase in terrorist activities and organised crime also on the northern side of the border, as well as the risk that an influx of refugees could further undermine stability in the area.

Cross-border populations continue to face challenges in their daily lives: they are sometimes forced to cross borders regularly, for economic, educational or health reasons (educational infrastructures and health services may be more accessible and of better quality on the other side of the border). Unfortunately, this crossing is at times rendered difficult, as there are sometimes obstacles such as security checks, customs controls, health checks, visa requirements, instability, conflicts, etc., which do not affect people in the same way. These vulnerable populations, such as women, unaccompanied children or the elderly, are more exposed to the risks of violence, exploitation or human trafficking when crossing borders. They need targeted measures to ensure their well-being and safety.

As the action aims to contribute to security in Central Asia via improved border management and enhanced fight against illicit trafficking focusing on drugs, the main stakeholders are as duty-bearers: national border guard services, migration services, state drug agencies, ministries of interior/police authorities, ministries of social affairs and human rights (including national gender equality mechanisms), prosecutors' offices, and local authorities. In some countries, NGOs can also serve an important role in these efforts, for example, by providing assistance to drug users and their children.

Rights-holders: border communities, migrants and refugees, drug users and their dependents, persons in situation of vulnerability in the countries that could benefit from the action and the population in general.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The **Overall Objective** of this action is to contribute to increased overall security and stability in Central Asia, in particular as concerns cross-border connectivity.

The **Specifics Objectives** of this action are to

1. Advance regional cross-border cooperation, tackle organised crime and improve living conditions for people living in border areas.
2. Reduce drug supply and demand in the region to promote regional stability and advance public safety.

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

- 1.1 Develop and strengthen institutional capacities of border control agencies in achieving international standards and best practices to ensure national, regional and global security.
- 1.2 Facilitate the cooperation between law enforcement agencies and border guards agencies, and support law enforcement agencies and evidence-based investigations, specifically in dealing with detection and investigation of cross-border crime.
- 1.3 Improve the living conditions in border areas through local economic development, with a focus on human rights, gender equality and groups in vulnerable situations.
- 2.1 Support Central Asian countries in countering illicit drug trafficking.

2.2 Mitigate demand and address consumption of drugs across Central Asian countries.

3.2 Indicative Activities

- 1.1.1 Peer-to peer activities, bilateral, trilateral and regional cooperation meetings and exchanges of information.
- 1.1.2 Ad hoc interventions provided by EU and Member State agencies to deliver technical Assistance facilitating the modernisation of border checks procedures in line with the international standards and best practices (e-gates, joint border checks/border crossing points, one stop control, introduction of advance passenger information).
- 1.1.3 Technical Assistance on document security (e.g. detection of forged and fraudulent travel documents), risk analysis capacities and profiling activities.
- 1.1.4 Exchanges or trainers, trainees, academic exchanges to further strengthen cooperation between Central Asian and European Border Guard training institutions.
- 1.1.5 Ad hoc interventions, peer-to-peer activities upon demand, to facilitate demarcation processes and to facilitate border guard agencies in establishing an effective border check process within the newly established Border Control Posts.
- 1.1.6 Equipment of Border Control Posts/Observation Points, possibly focusing on joint Border Control Posts.
- 1.2.1 Peer-to-peer activities with EU Member State specialised agencies on new investigation methods.
- 1.2.2 Technical assistance, peer-to-peer activities and facilitation of cooperation activities and information exchange on cross-border crime.
- 1.2.3 Exchange of experience on inland law enforcement controls aimed at detection of cross-border crime, law enforcement risk analysis, profiling and use of advanced IT analytical tools/software.
- 1.2.4 Training of law enforcement investigation staff, exchange of best practices and state of the art investigative methods in pre-trial law enforcement investigations on cross-border crime.
- 1.2.5 Operational support in delivering border screening, voluntary investigative interviewing, and production of a strategic border vulnerability assessment for the region.
- 1.2.6 Provision of high-tech equipment to facilitate new investigation methods on cross-border crime.
- 1.3.1 Organisation of seminars facilitating cross-border cooperation at local level (support to local cross-border markets, promotion of conflict prevention, establishing complaint procedures accessible for all actors conducting joint border events, facilitation of community meetings, development of inclusive and accessible contingency plans for emergencies and natural disasters).
- 1.3.2 Provision of small/medium size grants to Civil Society Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations to perform awareness raising activities on gender equality, anti-corruption, trafficking of human beings, human rights and specific rights of migrant persons and refugees, and disability rights in border areas.
- 1.3.3 Provision of grants to CSOs and NSA to reduce economic and social disparities and to develop sustainable micro and small businesses for enhanced resilience and economic integration
- 1.3.4 Provision of equipment/hard component provisions to Civil Society Organisations, Non-State Actors and local authorities using sustainable procurement practices to meet environmental sustainability goals making sure that distributed items don't cause resource overuse or pollution.
- 2.1.1 Assessment of existing legislation to identify legal and practical obstacles to regional and international police and judicial cooperation, improvement of capacities and knowledge by law enforcement agencies.
- 2.1.2 Provision of state of the art expertise (including on use of new technologies) for the identification of sources of supply and manufacture of illicit drugs.
- 2.1.3 Technical assistance, peer-to-peer activities and facilitation of cooperation activities and information exchange on drug crime investigations.
- 2.1.4 Provision of high-tech equipment to facilitate new investigation methods on drug trafficking.

- 2.2.1 Support to the implementation and drafting of drug legislation based on evidence-based drug policies
- 2.2.2 Provision of technical assistance to national institutions to improve systems of data collection, for the obtainment of comparable, gender/sex disaggregated and harmonised data .
- 2.2.3 Support to drug prevention programmes and strategies addressing women and groups in vulnerable situations. They will take into account accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- 2.2.4 Establishment and strengthening of (national and regional) networks of professionals involved in drug use prevention.
- 2.2.5 Provision of support (know-how transfer as well as targetted procurement) for the establishment, strengthening and training of rehabilitation centres.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

This action is no or low risk. However, particular attention would be paid to the environmental impact of synthetic drug production as well as environmentally sound practices for the disposal of seized precursors and drugs.

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 a gender analysis will be conducted at the inception phase and it will inform the final design of the activities. special attention will be paid to gender-related issues, applying a gender-responsive approaches to practices and procedures, in particular as concerns reduction of harassment of persons crossing borders and sexual harassment at work. Special attention will be paid to gender-related repercussions originating from drug use: drug-related diseases and health risks, domestic violence, decreased social capital and workforce, maternity and child mortality, and related issues. The action will contribute to the implementation of GAP III¹ by addressing gender-based violence, supporting access to preventive, curative and rehabilitative health services that address women's specific needs, and supporting women's peace and security initiatives.

Human Rights

The interventions will help minimise and prevent the risk of security services' interference with fundamental rights. It will review legislation to ensure compliance with international commitments and human rights standards; monitor and help strengthen executive, judicial, legislative and law enforcement institutions; share best practices; support efforts to ensure international human rights standards are met; and support civil society organisations working on human rights. The action will also ensure consultation and participation of all the actors involved, including migrants, border communities, and drug users, with a specific attention to consulting with women and girls who may be both victims of human trafficking and used against their will in drug trafficking.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0. This implies that it does not directly target disability inclusion, but the specific needs of persons with disabilities will be taken into account in the implementation of the action. Consultation and participation of persons with disabilities and their organisations will be considered, together with accessibility, when designing and implementing the activities. Drug users may develop long-term impairments, particularly mental health conditions or neurological problems which can lead to disability.

Reduction of inequalities

As per Inequality Marker, this action is labelled as I-0 (not considered relevant for inequality reduction).

¹ The Gender Action Plan III is a Joint communication by the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy which was welcomed through EU Presidency Conclusions of 16 December 2020 endorsed by 24 Member States.

Democracy

The intervention will support, whenever feasible, beneficiary countries' efforts to strengthen their police oversight mechanisms to effectively collect, manage and investigate complaints or, in some cases, to proactively carry out monitoring of police actions deriving from international requirements and obligations. Particular focus will be paid to internal and external checks and balances aimed at ensuring that the police performs the functions expected of them to a high standard and are held accountable when they fail to do so. All interventions in these areas will be closely coordinated with partner governments to ensure their full buy-in into any possible interventions into these politically sensitive areas.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

Activities under Specific Objective 1.3 will contribute to help defuse tensions that might arise in border regions, by increasing cooperation and providing joint platforms for discussions and negotiations. Furthermore, work with communities based in the border areas will provide work opportunities and income for the population, thus reducing the risk of conflict between communities.

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Risks	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating measures
Governments' and Partners' low project ownership	Low	High	Link programme activities to international conventions, national strategies and new opportunities for regional cooperation which bring clear benefits (quick wins).
Increased security risks from Afghanistan causing inability to effectively deliver activities in border areas or spillover effect to the region	Medium	High	<p>Risks concerning the overall security situation cannot be easily mitigated, though constant vigilance and assessment of the situation and flexible approach to activities will be important.</p> <p>The programme's contract documents and budget should be kept flexible, which, in agreement with project beneficiaries and donors, will allow re-programming of activities and funds to those areas where the security situation most easily permits project activities or those where a highest impact is possible and needed. Regular dialogue with the relevant authorities will facilitate adjustments in the activities and the deployment of personnel and resources.</p>
Heightened tensions within the Central Asian	Low	High	Provide space and platforms for technical discussions between expert-level

countries causing unwillingness to cooperate with each other			participants, particularly on the topics where mutual interest to cooperate exists. Foster more collaboration and dialogues between the countries. Support ongoing dialogues in regional and multilateral fora, including under the initiatives developed for the implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia.
Central Asian states' national provisions and internal procedures undermine the effectiveness of the programme	Low	Medium	Increase comprehensive engagement and confidence building, while advocating with the actors involved to ensure faster internal processes and effective management, as well as a review of the policies and procedures jeopardising the achievement of shared objectives.
Potential issues in the legislative framework, cultural-social norms and attitudes perpetuating gender inequalities and hindering the rights of people in most marginalised situations	Low	Medium	Support the adoption of gender-responsive and human rights-based approach in the policies and legislations. Awareness raising and capacity building on human rights and gender issues for the institutional and non-institutional actors involved. Ensure consultation and participation of the target population (border communities, male and female migrants and drug users, victims and survivors of human trafficking).

Lessons Learnt:

In the past phases the regional approach has enabled the beneficiaries to exchange, deepen and enhance their own capacities with the knowledge and experience of other Central Asian countries.

Compared to previous phases of BOMCA and CADAP, the newly adopted programmes will focus more specifically on the security aspects of border management and fighting drugs. In the case of BOMCA, this will mean removing previously covered components on trade facilitation and customs, which will instead be covered by other programmes on trade and transport. For CADAP, this will be represented by the addition of an Output on fighting drug supply and trafficking, in addition to continuing the work done on drug demand reduction.

EU support shall, to a much greater extent, consider the different needs of the countries and thus apply country-specific, tailor-made and demand-driven approaches.

It is necessary to retain flexibility to cancel or amend activities that are not anymore in the interest of countries or have been performed by other donors.

Support should try to focus on the engagement of Central Asian national trainers and training institutions willing to cooperate and provide know-how to other states, contributing to the increase and strengthening of internal cooperation and regional integration.

EU support should increase its hard component (in previous phases 15-20%) in order to more adequately address the technical needs of the beneficiaries. However, to avoid the dispersion of such funds, these funds will be specifically allocated to border regions with high needs, notably those with contested borders, high inter-border tensions between local populations, or bordering states within which potentially hostile groups are active (e.g. Afghanistan).

EU support should consider the cost efficiency and value for money, particularly in hard component investments.

Complementarity will be sought with all relevant interventions funded by the EU in Central Asia, and in particular with those funded by the Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI) of the European Commission.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

This programme will contribute to the implementation of EU strategic interests and policy priorities in Central Asia. The programme will build upon and complement the results achieved under the previous BOMCA and CADAP phases. The programme is envisaged to further develop border management in Central Asia, to strengthen detection capacities of border and law enforcement agencies, enhance drug harm reduction and ensure better fight against corruption, gender equality and respect for human rights. It is expected that with the programme's support, Central Asian states will achieve greater compliance with the international standards and EU best practices (including European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats, EMPACT), which will lead to better regional integration and connectivity and improvement of detection and reduction of crime.

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 (a): Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (a): (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (Year: 2022 unless otherwise specified)	Targets (Year: 2029 unless otherwise specified)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	Contribute to increased overall security and stability in Central Asia, in particular as concerns cross-border connectivity.	1 Number of state institutions and non-state actors supported on security, border management, and fight against drugs	0	15	Government and institutions reports	Not applicable
Outcome 1	1 Advance regional cross-border cooperation, tackle organised crime and improve living conditions for people living in border areas	1.1 Integrated Border Management strategies approved/updated	2	At least 3	Government and institutions reports	Necessary political and institutional will at the national and regional level to engage with the EU and the programme
		1.2 New Border Management Inter-Agency Working Groups established	0	At least 4 national and 1 regional		
		1.3 MoUs on information exchange and early warning signed	0	At least 3		
		1.4 Average family income in the border region increased	To be identified during inception phase	To be identified during inception phase		
Outcome 2	2 Reduce drug supply and demand in the region to promote regional stability and advance public safety	2.1 Amount of drug (opium, heroin) and lab seizures	1200 (drugs) 16 (labs)	+10% (drugs) +33% (labs)	Government and institutions reports	Effective cooperation and coordination between all relevant institutions in the region and in the countries
		2.2 Number of drug (supply) prosecutions	9000 (Partial data due to different legislations and lack of publication)	+10%		

		2.3 Number of drug (use) offences	To be identified during inception phase	-10%		
		2.4 Kilograms of precursors seized	To be identified during inception phase	+25%		
		2.5 Drug related deaths and mortality (per sex and age per country)	To be identified during inception phase	-10%		
Output 1.1 relating to Outcome 1	1.1 Develop and strengthen institutional capacities of border control agencies in achieving international standards and best practices to ensure national, regional and global security.	1.1.1 Number of refused entries at the border points	To be identified during inception phase	+5%	Government and institutions reports	Countries maintain continued interest in the implementation of IBM models, principles, elements and best practices
		1.1.2 Number of confiscated forged passports at the border posts	To be identified during inception phase	+5%		
		1.1.3 Number of referrals of vulnerable migrants to relevant service providers (disaggregated by sex and disability as feasible)	To be identified during inception phase	+10%		
Output 1.2 relating to Outcome 1	1.2 Facilitate the cooperation between law enforcement agencies and border guards agencies, and support law enforcement agencies and evidence-based investigations, specifically in dealing with	1.2.1 Number of country representatives in bilateral, regional and international meetings on exchange of information on border crime and modus operandi	0	200	Government and institutions reports	states willing to share information/intelligence and introduce new technical and regulatory measures

	detection and investigation of cross-border crime.	1.2.2 Adoption of improved law enforcement procedures and tools on detection of cross border crime.	0	10		
		1.2.3 Number of professionals with strengthened capacities in detection of illicit goods. (Disaggregated by sex)	0	450		
		1.2.4 Number of laws/policies adopted with EU standard investigation methods.	0	4		
Output 1.3 relating to Outcome 1	1.3 Improve the living conditions in border areas through local economic development, with a focus on human rights, gender equality and vulnerable groups.	1.3.1 Number of individuals directly benefiting from Union supported interventions that specifically aim to support civilian post-conflict peace building or conflict prevention.(disaggregated by sex)	0	2000	Government and institutions reports	Local authorities, NGOs, women associations, local civil society associations cooperate and coordinate, especially in the border areas.
		1.3.2 Percentage of increase of employed people in border area (disaggregated by sex and disability as feasible)	N/A	To be identified during inception phase, including as concerns identification of eligible border areas		
		1.3.3 Percentage of decrease of emigrants from border areas (disaggregated by sex)	N/A	-2%		
Output 2.1	2.1 Support Central Asian countries in countering illicit drug trafficking.	2.1.1 Number of officers trained (disaggregated by sex)	0	1000	Government and institutions reports	Government support enhanced cooperation

relating to Outcome 2						amongst various agencies (in and between countries)
		2.1.2 Number of cooperation agreements signed	0	5 (at least 1 regional/multi- country)		
Output 2.2 relating to Outcome 2	2.2 Mitigate demand and address consumption of drugs across Central Asian countries.	2.2.1 Number of persons attending drug demand reduction programmes (treatment and prevention) disaggregated by sex and age GAP III	6500 ²	7000	Government and institutions reports	Effective cooperation and coordination between all relevant institutions in the region and in the countries

² Estimate based on 2022 data.

4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with any of the partner countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan).

4.2 Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 84 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.

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

4.3 Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU 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.³

4.3.1 Indirect Management with an entrusted entity

Each objective may be implemented in indirect management with entrusted entities, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- previous specific experience in border management/drug policies programmes.
- previous specific experience in Central Asia
- operational experience in similar interventions
- capacity to respond efficiently to political and institutional changes and/or unforeseen requirements of another nature, which may arise during the implementation phase of the contract.

Based on the experience under previous phases of BOMCA and CADAP, the European Commission will seek to establish consortia of relevant entities from EU Member States fulfilling the above criteria.

The implementation entails to advance regional cross-border cooperation, tackle organised crime and improve living conditions for people living in border areas, reduce drug supply and demand in the region to promote regional stability and advance public safety.

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

If indirect management mode cannot be implemented due to circumstances outside of the Commission's control, whole or part of the action could be implemented through grant(s) in direct management mode.

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

To provide the activities under Specific Objectives 1 and/or 2, as listed in section 3.2.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

³ 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.

Public bodies, non-pillar assessed organisations, NGOs, and private sector organisations would be able to benefit from these grants.

4.4. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

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

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

4.5. Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
Specific Objective 1	12 000 000
Indirect management with an entrusted entity- cf. section 4.3.1	12 000 000
Specific Objective 2	18 000 000
Indirect management with an entrusted entity- cf. section 4.3.1	18 000 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	covered by another Decision
Totals	30 000 000

4.6 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The main regional programme offices will be located in Bishkek and will be supported by country offices in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The country offices will closely liaise with the national stakeholders and coordinate activities with other donors and implementing partners in each beneficiary country.

Regional and national Steering Committees will provide policy guidance to ensure the accomplishment of the programme objectives and expected results. Regional and national Steering Committees will analyse planning documents and provide recommendations and orientations if deemed necessary. They will convene at least once per year. The internal rules of procedures of the Steering Committees will be defined within the first three months of implementation of the programme. Steering Committees will be chaired by EU Delegations and composed of representatives of each participating country.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the Commission may participate in the above governance structures set up for governing the implementation of the action and may sign or enter into joint declarations or statements, for the purpose of enhancing the visibility of the EU and its contribution to this action and ensuring effective coordination.

5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1 Monitoring and Reporting

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

Likewise, all monitoring and reporting shall assess how the action is considering gender equality, human rights-based approach, and rights of persons with disabilities, including inclusion and diversity. Indicators shall be disaggregated at least by sex.

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:

Data will be collected by the implementing partner and shared with the Commission for joint analysis and assessment. Implementing partners and the Commission will both be responsible for the monitoring of the activities, jointly with the government representatives of the five beneficiary countries.

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a(n) evaluation(s) will not be carried out for this action or its components.

The Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner.

The evaluation reports may be shared with the partners and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination⁴. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, apply the necessary adjustments.

In addition, any eventual evaluation shall assess to what extent the action is taking into account the human rights-based approach as well as how it contributes to gender equality and women's empowerment and disability inclusion. Expertise on human rights, disability and gender equality will be ensured in the evaluation teams.

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

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

⁴ See best [practice of evaluation dissemination](#)

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

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