

ANNEX 2

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the annual action plan in favour of Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2021

Action Document for “EU4 Electoral Process”

1. SYNOPSIS

1.1. Action Summary Table

Title	Action 02 - EU 4 Electoral Process Annual Action Plan in favour of Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2021			
CRIS number	043-667/2			
Basic Act	Financed under the Instrument for Pre-accession assistance (IPA III)			
Team Europe Initiative	No			
Zone benefiting from the action	Bosnia and Herzegovina			
Programming document	IPA III Programming Framework			
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION				
Window and thematic priority	Window1: Rule of Law, Fundamental Rights and Democracy Thematic Priority 6: Democracy			
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels 16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels			
DAC code(s)	150 Government and Civil Society 15151 Elections			
Aid modality(ies) and implementation modality(ies)	Project Approach Direct Management, Procurement			
Main Delivery Channel¹	Bilateral			
Markers (from CRIS DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective

¹ <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/annex2.htm>.

	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and Women's and Girl's Empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internal markers	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Digitalisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Migration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	COVID-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Social inclusion and human development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
Amounts concerned	Budget line 15.020101.01 Total estimated cost: EUR 2 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 2 000 000			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
Type of financing and method(s) of implementation	Project Modality Direct management through Procurement			
Relevant priorities and flagships from Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans	Human Capital Development			
Final Date for conclusion of Financing Agreement	At the latest by 31 December 2022			
Final date for concluding contribution / delegation agreements, procurement and grant contracts	3 years following the date of conclusion of the Financing Agreement, with the exception of cases listed under Article 114(2) of the Financial Regulation			

Indicative operational implementation period	6 years following the conclusion of the Financing Agreement
Final date for implementing the Financing Agreement (date by which this programme should be de-committed and closed)	12 years following the conclusion of the Financing Agreement

1.2. Summary of the Action

This Action will support the Central Election Commission (CEC), as the sole body tasked with managing and superintending the entire electoral process, to improve the integrity, transparency, and efficiency of the electoral process in line with international standards and recommendations of Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Venice Commission. More specifically, the proposed action will complement the regional action to support electoral reforms in the Western Balkans by building upon the recommendations and technical assistance provided under two key, out of a total of five, thematic areas that are the CEC's competences. In addition, it will significantly contribute to seven key ODIHR recommendations: ensuring unbiased electoral administration, ensuring transparency, improving voter education programmes, improving vote counting accuracy, improving voting list accuracy, improving the communication system, and reducing pressure on voters. The proposed Action will also support the implementation of the Central Election Commission Communications Strategy, as a significant component of the Action.

This will contribute to the BiH's EU integrations path and the fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria, the requirements from the Political Criteria, and a key priority from the Commission Opinion².

Furthermore, this Action will build on previous assistance to the CEC, primarily that from the EU-funded technical assistance project in 2020 that developed for the CEC a Strategy (and Action Plan) to Improve the Integrity, Transparency, and Efficiency of the Electoral Process in BiH. This Strategy and the Action Plan were adopted by the CEC in late 2020.

This Action will contribute to the start of the implementation of the Electoral Strategy and its Action Plan, as well as a related Communications Strategy, by supporting the CEC in establishing an HR planning, resource allocation, staff management, and performance monitoring system, increasing the efficient management and organisation of the electoral process, developing an information system to improve transparency, and improving the quality of the election database. This implies both a TA component and a supply component, in order to enable the CEC to perform its functions better and lower the disenfranchisement of potential out-of-country voters.

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Context Analysis

Elections, in addition to being an intrinsic good as they instil a sense of ownership over policy by citizens and allow citizens to express their policy preferences to be translated into actual policy, are part and parcel of one of the three Copenhagen criteria Bosnia and Herzegovina must meet in order to accede to the European Union. Additionally, holding elections in line with EU standards are the essence of the first priority from the Commission's Opinion. Elections have been and are of the utmost importance to BiH authorities, i.e., to all political parties, to all administrative units, and from to competent institutions, as well as to other donors and especially the EU.

In BiH, an independent, collegial body of seven members appointed by House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly – the Central Election Commission – is tasked with managing and superintending the entire electoral process, from setting the precise date of elections to adjudicating on post-election disputes. This makes the CEC central in the electoral process and the principal actor through which the electoral process may be improved.

² COM(2019) 261 final

Despite the importance of the electoral process and the relatively good track record the CEC has of implementing elections, the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights regularly reports problems with the electoral process and the Venice Commission has long-standing recommendations to structurally improve the electoral process. Most problems are yet to be addressed and recommendations implemented.

Therefore, the CEC was supported in 2020 with an EU-funded technical project to develop a strategic framework for improving the integrity, transparency, and efficiency of the electoral process. The project outputs – a Strategy, the relevant Action Plan, and a Communication Strategy – were adopted in late 2020 by the CEC, which made them the most relevant and only actionable policy documents in the field of elections. In order to maintain the independence of the electoral process while simultaneously respecting parliamentary oversight, the aforementioned documents were submitted to the BiH Parliamentary Assembly for consideration and possible adoption.

The Strategy and Action Plan view the CEC as an essential contributor to the enhancement of democracy and promotion of democratic values in BiH, which is facing four identified challenging areas: organisational framework, quality of human resources, quality of provided services, and continuous improvement. The focus is on transforming operations, digitalisation for service improvement, and managing changes in a sustainable way. The Communication Strategy aims to gain citizens' trust in the electoral process and, inter alia, public institutions at all levels of government by leveraging mass and social media to uphold its reputation as a trustworthy electoral management body in the face of various organisational and procedural changes.

BiH authorities place the utmost importance on electoral reforms, especially the implementation of the aforementioned Strategy and Action Plan, both as a way to improve democracy in BiH and to meet the necessary preconditions for EU accession, with emphasis on fulfilling the first of the 14 key priorities from the Opinion. This is evident in the three-year budget, which foresees up to 8 million euros for the CEC and in which an additional half million euros were allocated for capital projects and over 1.5 million EUR for completing the Single Electoral Information System. Although obviously inadequate, the trend is one of growth, demonstrating the will of both the CEC to justify greater budgetary allocations and of politicians to approve them for specific project activities and general increase in capacities resulting from greater means. The CEC relies on funding from the state level of government for regular operations and joint funding between the state level and lower levels (i.e., entity or district level) for elections, so the lack of a unified or country-wide approach to public financial management is acutely affecting the CEC. Program budget exists, but is still inadequate for electoral processes since it is only applied in budget preparation.

The Strategy and Action Plan strive to achieve progress in the four identified challenging areas: organisational framework, quality of human resources, quality of provided services, and continuous improvement. The Action with its four intervention lines and results thereof: developing capacities of CEC staff, improving CEC organisational framework, improving public relations and external communications as well as CEC's IT and technical capacities - clearly and directly contributes to that strategic vision.

2.2. Problem analysis by areas of support

AREA OF SUPPORT: Democracy

Short problem analysis

There are four groups of problems the CEC faces, as identified by the Strategy and Action-plan to Improve the Integrity, transparency and efficiency of the Election Process in Bosnia and Herzegovina: capacities of CEC staff, the organisational framework of the CEC, communication with relevant stakeholders, and IT matters. These problems are obviously intertwined and compound each other and are **linked to poor integrity, transparency, and efficiency of the electoral process in BiH**. These issues contribute to voters and political parties questioning the validity of the electoral process and, ultimately, cause a lack of legitimacy in both the CEC and other public institutions, which adversely impacts BiH's EU integration process. Due to outdated internal management and based on pertinent documents from the Council of Europe's Venice Commission and the OSCE's ODIHR, the CEC has ample room to improve and faces a need to communicate to its stakeholders, especially voters.

Since the CEC has fewer staff than foreseen by the Rulebook on Systematisation, the existing staff is overburdened and, in addition, has too few training opportunities to continuously professionally develop. The Civil Service Agency **does not offer specialised trainings throughout the year to civil servants employed by the CEC and the CEC's trainings for temporarily employed staff has proven inadequate**. Of particular significance is the **lack of qualified staff versed in IT matters** that is able to provide maintenance and upkeep services to demanding software and hardware.

There is **poor communication and cooperation among the various units within the CEC**, especially in key tasks such as political party and candidate registration and out-of-country voter registration. This is further exacerbated by the fact that CEC does not have a developed system for human resource management, including planning and monitoring components thereof. This leads to the untimely execution of tasks, which are also often of unsatisfactory quality.

Despite the fact that the CEC has a website, livestreams its sessions, operates an interactive system for voters, and is present on social media channels, communication activities and voter outreach, especially abroad, remains inadequate as voters often complain that the content is scattered, not systematised, and does not contain key answers that would make participation easier. In addition to inadequate human resources for communications, **there is no specific framework for conducting communication activities and there is no way of measuring users' satisfaction**. This leads to voters submitting additional requests for information, which further exacerbates other problems in the quality of the electoral process.

The CEC faces further problems in terms of hardware and software available to it, its employees, and the voters. The **hardware is outdated, as well as complex and insufficient to support the growing scope of requirements**. The **software is also outdated, prone to errors, and requires updating**. Both the hardware and software were inherited from the OSCE in 2001, when responsibility over the electoral process was transferred to CEC. Since then, CEC has been partially upgrading it and improving it. High fragmentation due to existence of different modules that are incompatible and makes communication between modules impossible. Furthermore, **the Document Management System (DMS) established in 2016 is not functioning properly and is slow due to the lack of IT upgrades**. The CEC lacks an integrated IT system that would connect different phases and activities of electoral process. Manuals and procedures do not exist to allow less skilled staff to operate the two. A particular shortcoming is the lack of a tool to allow out-of-country voters to register online and automatically check the correctness thereof. Developing such a tool and modernising the process of out-of-country voter registration will prevent voters from becoming inadvertently or by mistake disenfranchised.

The problems were identified in an evaluation of the CEC and the electoral process as a part of an EU-funded project and form the core axis of the developed Strategy to Improve the Integrity, Transparency, and Efficiency of the Electoral Process, alongside its Action Plan. This Strategy and Action Plan were adopted by the CEC in late 2020 and, therefore, comprise the strategic framework of BiH for improving the electoral process. Therefore, addressing these problems will mean the implementation of the aforementioned Strategy and will in large part contribute to improve the integrity, transparency, and efficiency of BiH's electoral process.

EU support in this domain has clear and particular added value, both financial and political. The facts that electoral reform in BiH is a common objective of all actors within BiH and a requirement stemming from BiH's EU integration path, besides being a good in its own right, makes EU financial and expert support in improving the electoral process the clear choice. In addition, such an Action would usher in additional donor assistance and encourage domestic authorities to further invest in new reforms and their sustainability. Continuity from the previous EU-funded project to develop the aforementioned Strategy and Action Plan to this Action aimed at implementing said Strategy and Action Plan is an additional added value from EU financing.

Description of main stakeholders

The main stakeholders of this Actions are: Central Electoral Commission of BiH;

Beside institutional stakeholders, the other two main groups of stakeholders are the participants of the electoral process and civil society. Citizens are, of course, the overarching group in which both are include and which includes elements of both. Voters and political parties are the participants of the electoral process, while the academic community, non-governmental organisations including election observers and political parties in that capacity, and the media are the elements of civil society particularly emphasized in the BiH context. Other stakeholders usually partaking in the electoral process, including businesses and special interest groups, are not particularly relevant in the BiH context due to structural uniqueness and agency-related issues present in the BiH context. Two additional stakeholders are the Council of Europe and the OSCE, as the two premier international institutions specialising in elections and electoral processes, which possess highly specialised, comparative knowledge of the topic and also act as a quality control actor.

By the virtue of their existence, participants of the electoral process reflect the entire citizenry and, therefore, are very diverse and hard to generalise about; however, as a matter of principle, all are committed to the democratic process, free and fair elections, and to improving the integrity, transparency, and efficiency of the electoral process. The academic community, both in BiH and abroad, is very interested in studying the conduct of elections as expressions of

citizens' policy preferences, the behaviour of electoral actors, and the effects of elections. There are several non-governmental organisations dedicated to and specialising in electoral processes and election monitoring, with significant experience in the field and international support. Political parties may also name their representatives to monitor the electoral process on the day of the elections and are, therefore, key stakeholders in this regard, as well. The nature of their work is such that they support the improvement of the electoral process by preventing electoral fraud, contribute to fair and free elections, and reporting to the public about the electoral process. The media, as a key disseminator of information, is virtually the only medium for communication between the CEC and the voters, relays news about the electoral processes, and serves an educational purpose to inform voters.

Complementarity with national strategies

Beside supporting the implementation of the **Strategy and Action-plan to Improve the Integrity, transparency and efficiency of the Election Process in Bosnia and Herzegovina**, proposed interventions and its design was influenced by various strategic documents and will contribute to the implementation thereof. These include the Strategic Framework for Public Administration Reform, the Gender Action Plan, the Development Policy of Information Society of BiH 2017-2021, and the Communication Strategy of the Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Process of Accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the European Union – from candidate status to membership. By improving its internal organisation, including human capacities and organisational framework, CEC will contribute to the fulfilment of the goals of the **Strategic Framework for Public Administration Reform**, especially those related to human resources, administrative procedures, institutional communication, and information technologies. Furthermore, this Action will empower women voters, aggregate electoral data by sex, and take account of gender issues when designing internal policies, thereby contributing to the fulfilment of establishment and strengthening of systems, mechanisms, and instruments to achieve gender equality, **per the Gender Action Plan III**. This Action will also contribute to the digitalisation of the CEC and improve its digital outreach to voters, based on the **Development Policy of Information Society of BiH** and its seven pillars. Since electoral reform is one of the fourteen priorities from the Opinion and an integral part of the Copenhagen criteria, both of which are requirements for BiH to accede to the EU, this Action will also address communicating about electoral reform in the context of EU integrations per the **Communication Strategy of the Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Process of Accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the European Union – from candidate status to membership**.

2.3. Relevance and complementarity with strategies supported by key national stakeholders

By developing the CEC's human capacities through trainings and on the job coaching, the present CEC employees will be better suited to complete more tasks by virtue of completing them more efficiently and will be able to deliver better quality results. Improving the CEC organisational framework through a functional review and the adoption new management documents will lead to optimisation of processes, reduction of unneeded work, and better employee deliverables, as well as better processes by CEC as a unit. A primary task of the CEC – communicating information to relevant stakeholders in a timely manner – will be significantly improved through a revision of the systematisation and integration of communication activities in more employees' regular work. Development of the CEC's IT capacities, both in terms of hardware and software, and training its employees to use them proficiently will enable a smoother operating of processes and greater efficiency. This all will lead to a better organised, a better implemented, and a better communicated electoral process, which will over time regain voters' trust in the electoral process and, by minimising or eliminating fraud, lead to better electoral outcomes, i.e., those that better reflect the voters' will. In addition, such a reform of the CEC will contribute to public administration reform, including digitalisation of public services, advance anti-corruption efforts, improve gender equality, and strengthen the role of civil society in policy-making. An improved electoral process will also contribute to BiH's EU integration process.

Effective management is necessary for the BiH CEC. Presently, neither unified guidelines for the election process nor the quality of the policymaking exist. Sectoral coordination is in place but is unsatisfactory in terms of quality and timeliness. The implementation of the Strategy will also ensure the setup of an appropriate monitoring and reporting system, since it includes measures to set relevant monitoring indicators, indicative action plan and a budget framework.

This will provide CEC with the tools for assessing procedures and activities in Polling Station Committees (PSCs) and Municipal Election Commissions (MECs), helping them to achieve the performance standards by sharing best practices and serving as a CEC proxy at different levels of the electoral administration. This line will also establish procedures for monitoring staff, both permanent and temporary, performance.

2.4. Relevance and complementarity with EU policy and EU and other donors' assistance

This Action will contribute to the realisation of the overall objective of **Window 1 – rule of law, fundamental rights, and democracy** – and the specific objective of the **Thematic Priority 6 – Democracy**. It will contribute to the

establishment of a functioning democracy in BiH, one of the three Copenhagen criteria and the first of the 14 priorities from the Opinion, by improving the electoral process, and indirectly ensuring democratic institutions are properly resourced and function in line with the constitution, principles of effective government, and the recommendations of the Venice Commission and the OSCE's ODIHR.

Furthermore, this Action will support the realisation of main objectives of the four major instruments of EU enlargement policy: **Western Balkans Strategy**³, **the Stabilisation and Association Agreement**, **the Commission Opinion**, and **the 2021 Commission BiH Report**⁴. Improving the quality of democracy, a basic pillar of which is the electoral process, and thereby fulfilling accession criteria stemming from the Copenhagen criteria and the political criteria of the EU *acquis*, underpins both the Western Balkans Strategy and the SAA since both focus on eventual EU accession in general and on improving democracy in specific. The first and only partially filled priority from the Opinion, provides that BiH, among others, must ensure that elections are conducted in line with EU standards by implementing the OSCE's ODIHR and relevant Venice Commission recommendations.

The 2021 Report requests of BiH to ensure the transparency and integrity of the election process, in line with OSCE/ODIHR and GRECO recommendations, including as regards political party financing.

2.5. Lessons learned and links with previous financial assistance

There are four recent actions that have informed the design of this Action: a 2015 project funded by Norway that assessed possible technical improvements to the BiH electoral system, a 2019 USAID-funded and IFES-implemented project about voter registration, a 2020 SIDA-funded project to strengthen the capacities of CEC to ensure institutionalisation of gender equality principles, and a 2020 EU-funded project to develop a strategy for improving the integrity, transparency, and efficiency of the electoral process. Each built on the previous and are integral parts of this Action.

The first project aimed to assess potential technical improvements to the electoral process in order to ensure the transparency and efficiency of future elections, while reducing the possibility for electoral fraud. Its recommendations focused on simplifying communications channels between the electoral administration, developing IT systems and applications for the electoral process, and developing a quality control system that matches reality and with the authority to actually effect change. These three key recommendations are reflected in two strategic lines of the present Strategy and two outcomes of this Action.

The second project aimed to assess voter registration practices, with an emphasis on out-of-country voter registration, in order to minimise the potential for fraud, a motif of the 2015 project. Its recommendations focused on establishing an online portal to allow eligible voters temporarily resident abroad to fill out a complete application for out-of-country voting. This is a further elaboration of the previous project and was incorporated by the next project, and subsequently in the relevant strategy. It is also one of the strategic lines of the present Strategy and an outcome of this Action.

The third project aimed to strengthen CEC's capacities to ensure institutionalisation of gender equality principles by organising exchanges with Swedish counterparts, developing a Toolkit for Gender Mainstreaming Laws and Policies, organising training sessions for civil servants, and supporting the CEC in developing an online resource center and digital library.

The fourth and most recent project is the most comprehensive assessment of the situation of the area of the electoral process. It produced the present Strategy, which takes into account the results of the previous projects, and this Action is based on implementation of the strategy. The Strategy focuses on improving the integrity, transparency, and efficiency of the electoral process.

This Action, therefore, is a continuation of previous projects aiming to improve the electoral process. It reflects the recommendations of the previous projects and will contribute to fulfilling them, in part or in full.

³ COM(2018) 65 final

⁴ SWD(2021) 291 final /2

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1. Planned results and intervention logic (describing causal links between impact, outcome(s) and output(s) and including assumptions)

If the capacities of CEC staff are developed (**Output 1**), while CEC staff becomes or remains dedicated to internal reforms, then CEC human resource planning, resource allocation, staff management, and performance monitoring system will be established (**Outcome 1**) because staff capacities are part and parcel of the aforementioned systems and framework.

If CEC HR planning, resource allocation, staff management and performance monitoring system is established (**Outcome 1**) and CEC staff becomes or remain dedicated to internal reform processes then integrity, transparency and efficiency of the BiH electoral process will be ensured in line with international standards and recommendations of Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Venice Commission (**Impact**).

If the CEC organisational framework improved (**Output 2**) and CEC staff becomes or remain dedicated to internal reform processes, then efficient management and organisation of the electoral process will be established (**Outcome 2**) because organisational framework are part and parcel of the aforementioned systems and framework.

If efficient management and organisation of the electoral process is established (**Outcome 2**) and OCV remain interested in participating in the electoral process, then integrity, transparency and efficiency of the BiH electoral process will be ensured in line with international standards and recommendations of Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Venice Commission (**Impact**).

If the public relations and external communications of CEC are improved (**Output 3**) and OCV remain interested in participating in the electoral process, then information system to improve transparency will be developed (**Outcome 3**) because systemic reforms and improvements contribute to an improvement of transparency and accessibility of information to interested stakeholders.

If information system to improve transparency is developed (**Outcome 3**) and OCV remain interested in participating in the electoral process, then then integrity, transparency and efficiency of the BiH electoral process will be ensured in line with international standards and recommendations of Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Venice Commission (**Impact**).

If CEC's IT and technical capacities are developed (**Output 4**), while out-of-country voters remain or become interested in participating in the electoral process and CEC staff becomes or remains dedicated to internal reforms, then the quality of the election data will be improved (**Outcome 4**) because systemic reforms and improvements contribute to an improvement of transparency and accessibility of information to interested stakeholders.

If quality of election database is improved (**Outcome 4**) and OCV remain interested in participating in the electoral process and CEC staff becomes or remain dedicated to internal reform processes, then then integrity, transparency and efficiency of the BiH electoral process will be ensured in line with international standards and recommendations of Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Venice Commission (**Impact**).

These improvements will contribute to ensuring the integrity, transparency and efficiency of the BiH electoral process in line with international standards and recommendations of Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Venice Commission, which will contribute to BiH's EU accession path. This action is complementary to the ODIHR regional action to support electoral reforms in the Western Balkans, in terms that it does not overlap but in parallel fulfils the purpose of some of the ODIHR recommendations listed in the reports of ODIHR election observation missions in BiH.

3.2. Indicative type of activities

Outcome 1: CEC HR planning, resource allocation, staff management and performance monitoring system established

Output 1: Capacities of CEC staff developed

Activity 1.1. Create a staffing capabilities and skills development roadmap

Sub-Activity 1.1.1. Develop a road map of human resources, roles and skills currently in the organisation (*The sub-activity will address undocumented processes, unsatisfactory staff roles and better understanding of tasks.*)

Sub-Activity 1.1.2. Develop talent retention plans and knowledge transfer initiatives including development of a map of electoral processes to ensure knowledge transfer *(The sub-activity will address the ways in which the organisation should motivate talented staff.)*

Sub-Activity 1.1.3. Map of electoral processes to ensure knowledge transfer *(The activity will enable a detailed description of the business process stages and their transfer to others in order to ensure institutional memory.)*

Activity 1.2. Further develop the current training program and methods considering all staff groups in CEC *(Design training and methods specific to the electoral process in accordance with the needs of the CEC BiH.)*

Outcome 2: Efficient management and organisation of the electoral process established

Output 2: The CEC organisational framework improved

Activity 2.1. Conduct the staff and CEC departments' performance analysis *(The activity will address the lack of a human resources management system (HRIS) and the lack of data on the organisation's employees for recruitment, performance measurement, learning and development.)*

Activity 2.2. Develop a concept of a new, more effective and efficient organisational framework

Sub-Activity 2.2.1. Review the organisational design, structure and governance to allow increased agility in response to changes in the BiH elections environment *(The activity will address the lack of ability of staff to more easily adapt to new changes in a short period of time.)*

Sub-Activity 2.2.2. More adequate schedule of tasks according to the competencies *(The activity addresses the issue of optimal distribution of tasks according to the abilities of employees.)*

Sub-Activity 2.2.3. Change communication systems with election stakeholders and ways of exchanging information *(The activity addresses a more efficient and faster flow of information and services to the election stakeholders.)*

Activity 2.3. Outline the process of continuous improvement of election delivery

Sub-Activity 2.3.1. Analyses of the process for out of country voter registration *(The activity addresses the shortcomings and abuses of the registration process of out-of-country voters.)*

Sub-Activity 2.3.2. Analyses counting process, forms, consolidation of results and reporting in order to draft clear and simple procedures. Further improvements will be based on pilot test. *(The activity addresses the shortcomings in the counting process, forms and procedures and allows for the verification of novelties through pilot projects.)*

Outcome 3: Information system to improve transparency developed

Output 3. Public relations and external communications of CEC improved

Activity 3.1. Improvement of Internet based services

Sub-Activity 3.1.1. Website enhancement that will among others, include the tools for the analysis of election data and the generating of post-elections statistics available publicly *(The activity addresses the shortcomings of systematised contents and their inaccessible format on the CEC BiH website.)*

Sub-Activity 3.1.2. Establish more interactive communication channels with electoral stakeholders through Q&A *(The activity addresses the lack of a Q&A list for all stages of the electoral process and their regular updating and publication on the website.)*

Outcome 4: Quality of election database improved

Output 1. CEC's IT and technical capacities are developed

Activity 4.1. IT system reconstruction

Sub-Activity 4.1.1. Procurement of IT equipment (*including blade servers and chassis, storage area network system, Core network switches, security equipment, Next Generation Firewall, Web application firewall, multi-factor authentication (MFA) and mobile work stations*) (*The activity addresses the issue of insufficient space for the requirements of a complex operating IT system.*)

Sub-Activity 4.1.2. Upgrade of the Document Management System (DMS) through hardware adaptation and OS upgrade (*The activity addresses the problem of slow and inefficient flow of documents in the organisation and archiving.*)

Sub-Activity 4.1.3. Develop new application for out-of-country voters’ registration (*The activity addresses the issue of the lack of functional processing of the OCV applications.*)

Sub-Activity 4.1.4. Develop a Human Resources Information System (HRIS) to support CEC in the administration of their staff performance (*The activity addresses the issue of systematic management of human resources data in a digital form.*)

Indicative types of activities

Activities 1.1., 1.2., 2.1., 2.2., 2.3., and 3.1. – technical assistance

Activity 4.1. – investments (supply)

3.3. Risks and assumptions

Risks	Risk level (H/M/L)	Mitigating measures
The Council of Ministers will not have a high level of willingness to constructively interact with the CEC.	L	Activities will be undertaken to consult and otherwise engage actors in order to develop a sense of inclusiveness and ownership throughout the transformation.
CEC staff will not be committed and dedicated to organisational and procedural transformation.	M	CEC staff will be consulted and otherwise engaged throughout the process of organisation and procedural transformation, with an emphasis on highlighting the benefits of said transformations, in order to develop a sense of ownership of transformations among the staff.

Assumptions (to be reflected in the Logical Framework Matrix above) – grouped by outputs and outcomes

Outcome level:

- OCV remain interested in participating in the electoral process
- CEC staff becomes or remain dedicated to internal reform processes

Output level:

- CEC staff are committed to organisational and procedural transformations and are able to implement them
- OCV remain interested in participating in the electoral process

3.4. Mainstreaming

How does this Action contribute to Gender Equality and Women’s and Girls’ Empowerment (in line with the EU gender equality strategy 2020-2025)?

This Action will contribute to addressing gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment in line with the EU’s Gender Action Plan III by challenging gender stereotypes and achieving gender balance in decision-making in politics. It is also in line with the Statement on Commitment to Gender Equality the CEC signed and which was officially adopted and published in July, 2020. Furthermore, this Action is in line with the dual approach of gender mainstreaming

combined with targeted activities. It also takes into account intersectionality as a horizontal principle in its implementation. More specifically, men and women will equally participate in the design and implementation of all Action activities, trainings will also be gender inclusive and sensitive, and all data will be disaggregated by gender, especially those regarding monitoring matters. Digitalised data on the electoral process, including those particularly relevant for gender matters, will also contribute to highlighting gender equality and will make data more easily accessible. Lastly, this Action will leverage male allies, increase visibility of women experts, contribute to building of networks and synergies among women, and aim toward an equitable gender balance.

How does this Action address Environment and Climate change?

This Action will contribute to addressing environmental and climate change issues in line with the Green Deal and digitalisation strategies by increasing sustainable production and consumption, fostering resource efficiency, preventing and minimising pollution, and making the internal workflow more sustainable. A green procurement policy will also be adopted to ensure environment-friendly goods are used by the CEC. Throughout the implementation of the Action and thereafter, digitalisation of processes shall be ensured and renewable goods will be used for those that cannot be fully digitalised. In addition to digitalising internal processes, digitalisation of the electoral process will reduce the need for paper and eliminate the use services for transporting electoral documentations for out-of-country voters.

How does this Action address the Rights Based Approach?

This Action will contribute to addressing the rights-based approach by strengthening the capacity of the government to ensure citizens' rights are being respected and the capacity of citizens to demand their government work to ensure their rights, both through improving the integrity, transparency, and efficiency of the electoral process. A better electoral process will support domestic actors in overcoming obstacles blocking their rights and securing their rights in an inclusive and sustainable way. Since the right to participate in elections is guaranteed internationally by, among others, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Taking into account intersectionality of various groups and their specific needs regarding the power relations within society will be a paramount concern during the implementation of the Action.

How does this Action promote the systematic engagement with Civil Society?

This Action will contribute to promoting system engagement with civil society by improving the role of civil society in the electoral process, both as electoral monitors and as direct participants in the electoral process. Activities to provide constructive assistance to civil society, both established organisations and grassroots or thematic groups, will be undertaken since increased participation of civil society in the electoral process is an intrinsic good, promoting a more democratic society with a more transparent and accountable government. Civil society will be engaged in policy discussions and will be invited to partake in the implementation and monitoring of undertaken policies, both as a check on the CEC and to create an enabling environment for civil society in the sector. Dedicated trainings, in addition to the ones ordinarily organised by the CEC for the electoral process, will also improve system engagement with civil society. OSCE and Venice Commission recommendations will be significant importance in this respect.

Others (such as Resilience and Conflict Sensitivity, Roma, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups)

This Action will contribute to reducing conflict, both internal within the CEC as a result of unclear work divisions and external by improving the integrity, transparency, and efficiency of the electoral process. Existing conflicts will be mitigated and new ones will be prevented by the production of clear and timely data.

This Action will contribute to improving socio-economic integration of Roma by ensuring their equality, inclusion, and participation in the electoral process. Special attention will be given to particularly disadvantaged Roma, including women Roma and Roma with disabilities. Roma civil society will also be engaged as a matter of particular importance.

This Action will contribute to increasing the quality and quantity of opportunities for people with disabilities, both in the electoral process and following elections. They will have equitable opportunities compared to people without disability. Civil society working on matters related to people with disabilities will also be engaged as a matter of particular importance. Action outputs will be adjusted as necessary to accommodate people with disabilities.

3.5. Conditions for implementation

There are no specific conditions for an effective and timely implementation of the Action.

3.6. Logical Framework

Results	Results chain: Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (2020)	Targets (2024)	Sources of data (1 per indicator)	Assumptions
Impact	To ensure integrity, transparency and efficiency of the BiH electoral process in line with international standards and recommendations of Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Venice Commission	1. Degree of readiness in the political criteria, including Opinion priority 1	1. early stage (deduced)	1. some level of preparation	1. Commission BiH Reports	<i>Not applicable</i>
		2. OSCE's, ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations fulfilled	2. no recommendations fulfilled	2. 1/3 of recommendations fulfilled	2. OSCE's ODIHR reports	
Outcome 1	CEC HR planning, resource allocation, staff management and performance monitoring system established	1. Achievement of performance criteria for the relevant reporting period	1. Not exist	1. 75% performance criteria achieved	1. CEC's Internal records	CEC staff becomes or remain dedicated to internal reform processes
		2. Number of days spent on processing of out of country votes applications	2. Around 90 days to process OCV applications	2. 60 days to process applications	2. Duration of service contracts for temporary staff	
Outcome 2	Efficient management and organisation of the electoral process established	1. Number of rejected applications for out of country voters	1. 21,55 % OCV applications rejected	1. Less than 10% of OVC applications rejected	1. BiH CEC decisions on rejections of registration	OCV remain interested in participating in the electoral process
		2. Percentage of error reports in the processing of out of country voter applications	2. 30% applications with errors	2. Less than 10% of OCV applications with an error	2. Internal report	
Outcome 3	Information system to improve transparency developed	1. Number of questions on info line during the electoral period decreased	1. 1.879 calls	1. less than 600 calls	1. CEC's Internal records	OCV remain interested in participating in the electoral process

		2. Number of emails request for information during the electoral period decreased	2. 90.553 emails	2. less than 30.000 emails	2. CEC's Internal records	
Outcome 4	Quality of election database improved	1. Out of country voters registration application available and used	1. does not exist	1. 75% of out of country voters using it	1. CEC Internal Report	OCV remain interested in participating in the electoral process CEC staff becomes or remain dedicated to internal reform processes
		2. HRIS leveraged to improve HR management	2. not used	2. Human resources processes are manageable and easy to access	2. CEC Internal Report	
		3. Efficiency of DMS in document / task management	3. low	3. high	3. CEC Internal Report	
Output 1 (Outcome 1)	Capacities of CEC staff developed	1. Number of staff trained (sex-disaggregated)	1. 25% of staff attending at least 1 relevant training annually	1. 80% of staff attending at least 1 relevant training annually	1. CEC internal reports	CEC staff becomes or remain dedicated to internal reform processes
		2. Development of capacity building program for CEC staff	2. Annual Training plan for staff in the CEC Secretariat as per their needs <i>(officially approved by the BiH CEC)</i>	2. Multiyear Annual Training Program tailored per specific post requirements adopted by CEC	2. CSA annual data	
Output 2 (Outcome 2)	The CEC organisational framework improved	1. Range of assigned tasks per employee, per month	1. 11	1. 2	BiH CEC data	CEC staff becomes or remain dedicated to

		2. Work processes map	2. Early stage	Map of processes completed	BiH CEC annual report	internal reform processes
Output 3 (Outcome 3)	Public relations and external communications of CEC improved	1. Number of unique visits to the CEC web site, per month	1. 94.071	1. 120.000	1. Analytical reports from the BiH CEC's website and social media	OCV remain interested in participating in the electoral process
		2. Duration of average unique visits to the CEC web site	2. 3min, 20sec	2. 6min	2. Analytical reports from the BiH CEC's website and social media	
		3. Number of engagement on CEC social media channels, per months	3. 500	3. 10,000	3. 1. Analytical reports from the BiH CEC's website and social media	
Output 4 (Outcome 4)	CEC's IT and technical capacities developed	1. Application for out-of-country voters' registration developed and functional	1. does not exist	1. developed and functional application	1. Report on delivery of goods and services	OCV remain interested in participating in the electoral process
		2. HRIS developed and functional	2. early stage	2. improved and functional HRIS	2. Report on delivery of goods and services	CEC staff becomes or remain dedicated to internal reform processes
		3. DMS upgraded and functional	3. early stage	3. improved and functional DMS	3. Report on delivery of goods and services	

4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1. Financing agreement

In order to implement this action, it is foreseen to conclude a financing agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina.

4.2. Implementation modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures⁵.

4.2.1. Direct Management (Procurement)

The planned technical assistance and procurement of equipment will support CEC in strengthening of human (Output 1), organisational (Output 2) and IT capacities (Output 4) in order to improve the efficiency, transparency, integrity and quality of electoral processes in BiH (Impact). Furthermore, implementation of the Action will contribute to improvement of the transparency of electoral reforms and processes (Output 3).

The action will be implemented through service and supply contracts.

Subject	Indicative type (works, supplies, services)	Indicative trimester of launch of the procedure
Technical Assistance to CEC	Services	T1, 2022
Supply of IT Equipment and Software	Supplies	T1, 2022

4.3. 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 the origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply.

4.4. Indicative budget

Implementation modalities	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, in EUR
OUTCOME 1: CEC HR planning, resource allocation, staff management and performance monitoring system established		
OUTCOME 2: Efficient management and organisation of the electoral process established		
OUTCOME 3: Information system to improve transparency developed		
OUTCOME 4: Quality of election database improved,		
Composed of		
Direct management (Procurement), cf section 4.3.3.	N/A	N/A
Procurement – total envelope under section 4.3.3	2 000 000	N/A
Evaluation, (cf. section 5.3)	will be covered by another decision	N.A
Audit/Expenditure verification(cf. section 6)	will be covered by another decision	N.A
Communication and visibility (cf. section 7)	N.A	N.A
Contingencies	N.A.	N.A
TOTAL	EUR 2 000 000	

4.5. Organisational set-up and responsibilities

Since the Action will support the CEC as the sole beneficiary, due to the fact that competences for conducting the electoral process is a sole competence of the CEC, the responsibilities will fall under the CEC. In addition to the Steering Committee that will be established for the implementation of the project, a project management group consisting of CEC staff from all five sectors will be formed to work with the envisioned TA project. A working group will also be

⁵ 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.

established, composed of CEC members and civil servants, in order to connect the projects with the results achieved under the previous EU-funded technical assistance. CEC members and the the secretary general will also be constantly involved in project implementation.

5. PERFORMANCE/RESULTS MONITORING AND REPORTING

5.1. Internal monitoring

The project management group will work with the envisioned Technical Assistance to implement the project. The working group will interact with the project management group in order to connect the results achieved in the previous EU-funded project with the Technical Assistance foreseen. The implementation of the project will be regularly assessed by the Steering Committee whose exact composition will be established in the Terms of Reference of the project. CEC members and the secretary general will also be constantly involved in project implementation.

5.2. Roles & responsibilities for data collection, analysis & reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (Outputs and direct Outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix (for project modality) and the partner's strategy, policy or reform action plan list (for budget support). The outcomes will be monitored by the structures established (see 5.1. Internal monitoring). 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:

A Sector Steering Committee will be established (or adhered to ongoing Steering Committee monitoring) to monitor implementation of the Action and will be composed of the main beneficiaries and relevant institutions in BiH. The Action will be regularly monitored by the EU Delegation to BiH.

5.3. Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a mid-term, final and ex-post evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components.

In case an evaluation is not foreseen for some action's 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.

Evaluation services may be contracted under a framework contract.

The financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing Decision

6. AUDIT

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 audits or expenditure verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

It is foreseen that audit services may be contracted under a framework contract.

7. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Visibility of EU funding and communication about objectives and impact of Actions are a legal obligation for all Actions funded by the EU, as set out in the EU communication and visibility requirements in force.

In particular, the recipients of EU funding shall acknowledge the origin of the EU funding and ensure its proper visibility by:

- providing a statement highlighting the support received from the EU in a visible manner on all documents and communication material relating to the implementation of the funds, including on an official website and social media accounts, where these exist; and
- promoting the actions and their results by providing coherent, effective and proportionate targeted information to multiple audiences, including the media.

Visibility and communication measures shall be implemented, as relevant, by the national administrations (for instance, concerning the reforms linked to EU budget support), entrusted entities, contractors and grant beneficiaries. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included, respectively, in financing agreements, delegation agreements, and procurement and grant contracts.

The measures shall be based on a specific Communication and Visibility Plan, established and implemented in line with the EU communication and visibility requirements in force. The plan shall include, inter alia, a communication narrative and master messages for the Action, customised for the various target audiences (stakeholders, civil society, general public, etc.)

Visibility and communication measures specific to this Action shall be complementary to the broader communication activities implemented directly by the European Commission services and/or the EU Delegations and Offices. The European Commission and the EU Delegations and Offices should be fully informed of the planning and implementation of the specific visibility and communication activities, notably with respect to the communication narrative and master messages.

8. SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability of the Action will be ensured by the continued ownership of the procured hardware and software and otherwise maximised through trainings organised for CEC staff in order to capacitate them to use the hardware and software and the development of documentation aimed at improving the integrity, transparency, and efficiency of the electoral process. Other institutions, and specifically the CoM's General Secretariat, will be closely consulted throughout the process of software development to ensure interoperability between the new software and existing software. Additional budgetary funds for systems maintenance and upkeep will be ensured.

Since the CEC will identify priorities and prioritise, staff will be involved in the development of documents, and staff will be trained to continue implementing the adopted documents, the CEC will be able to maintain Action results and continue adapting them to new circumstances. Capacity building processes will be continued through continuous education and training, with the acquired knowledge and skills being used to further improve the work processes. The continuous improvement model and the continuous engagement plans are of particular importance in this respect. Civil servants will act as information multipliers and an implicit quality check on temporary staff employed for specific electoral processes.