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ANNEX I

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multiannual action plan part I in favour of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) Regional South Neighbourhood for 2023-2024

Action Document for Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) for 2023-2024

MULTIANNUAL ACTION PLAN

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

1. SYNOPSIS

1.1. Action Summary Table

<p>1. Title OPSYS Basic Act</p>	<p>Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) action programme 2023-2024 for the Southern Neighbourhood under the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation. Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multiannual action plan part I in favour of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) Regional South Neighbourhood for 2023-2024.</p> <p>OPSYS business reference: ACT-61970</p> <p>ABAC Commitment level 1 number: JAD.1168428</p> <p>Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe).</p>
<p>2. Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>EIP Flagship</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>3. Team Europe Initiative</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>This action may support capacity building needs in the context of various Team Europe Initiatives.</p>

4. Beneficiar(y)/(ies) of the action	<p>The action shall be carried out mainly in the Southern Neighbourhood countries, territories and regions (Algeria, Egypt, Israel¹, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine², Syria³ and Tunisia).</p> <p>As per Article 43(1) of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation, specific activities may also involve, in duly justified cases and for reasons of efficiency and effectiveness, the following countries from the Union for the Mediterranean and countries bordering the Southern Neighbourhood countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mauritania, Montenegro, Türkiye, Chad, Mali, Niger, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Iraq.</p> <p>This is justified because the action intervenes in the fields of human and economic development which have transboundary implications and may be enhanced by cross-regional sharing of best practices.</p> <p>This is in line with the Regional South Multiannual Indicative Programme (2021-2027)⁴, which makes reference, under priority 5 (specific objective 2) to the importance of cross-regional cooperation.</p>
5. Programming document	Multi-annual Indicative Programme for the Southern Neighbourhood (MIP) 2021-2027 ⁵
6. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results	Priority Area 1: Human development, good governance, and rule of law Priority Area 2: Strengthen resilience, build prosperity and seize the digital transition Priority Area 3: Peace and Security Priority Area 4: Green Transition Priority Area 5: Support to the main drivers of regional integration
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
7. Priority Area(s), sectors	Sector: 430 – Multisector
8. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals
9. DAC code(s)	43010 – Multisector Aid – 100%.
10. Main Delivery Channel	60000 - Private sector institution

¹ Any assistance provided to Israel in the context of TAIEX will comply with the “*Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards*”.

² This designation shall not be construed as a recognition of the State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

³ Co-operation with the Government of Syria suspended since 2011.

⁴ “The future regional cooperation should have a flexible geographical and thematic scope, also allowing for interlinkages with other regions, where necessary and appropriate as highlighted in the Joint Communication on a renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood.” - 2.5 (Support to the main drivers of regional integration), specific objective 2 (To promote intra-regional and cross-regional cooperation, in particular with Sub-Saharan Africa, the Gulf and the Red Sea region).

⁵ C(2021) 9399 Commission Implementing Decision for the adoption of an Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) in favour of the Southern Neighbourhood for the period 2021-2027.

11. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
12. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	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"/>
	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"/>
13. Internal markers and Tags	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	EIP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	EIP Flagship	YES <input type="checkbox"/>		NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Tags Transport Energy Environment, climate resilience Digital Economic development (incl. private sector, trade and	YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

macroeconomic support)			
Human development (incl. human capital and youth)	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Health resilience	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Migration and mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Agriculture, food security and rural development	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rule of law, governance and public administration reform	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Digitalisation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tags	YES		NO
digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
digital governance	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
digital entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
digital skills/literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
digital services	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tags	YES		NO
digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
energy	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
transport	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
health	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
education and research	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Migration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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

14. Amounts concerned	<p>Budget line: BGUE-B2023 14.02 01 10. C 1 NEAR (Southern Neighbourhood) BGUE-B2024 14.02 01 10. C 1 NEAR (Southern Neighbourhood)</p> <p>Total estimated cost: EUR 3 000 000</p> <p>Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 3 000 000. The contribution is for an amount of EUR 2 000 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2023 and for an amount of EUR 1 000 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2024, subject to the availability of appropriations for the respective financial years following the adoption of the relevant annual budget, or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.</p>
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MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

15. Implementation modalities (management mode and delivery methods)	Direct management through: - Procurement
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1.2. Summary of the Action

Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument (TAIEX) supports the Southern Neighbourhood beneficiaries by providing peer-to-peer capacity building with regard to the alignment, application and enforcement of EU legislation and sustainable policy reform as well as advice on EU best practices in EU policy related fields. As a result, the instrument contributes to strengthening inclusive societies and good governance in beneficiary countries and supports the uptake and implementation of the EU *acquis*.

The action contributes, in line with the Regional Multiannual Indicative Programme for the Southern Neighbourhood 2021-2027, to supporting the external dimension of EU policies to share best practices, promote coherent sectoral approaches, and enhance regulatory convergence across the region and beyond to adjacent regions as appropriate, thus supporting long-term EU aid effectiveness. It further addresses overarching themes which can only be tackled through a cross-border perspective and strengthens economic integration and regional market integration for goods and services, operating in sensitive areas where regional cooperation constitutes the only possible or most efficient action.

1.3. Beneficiar(y)/(ies) of the action

The action shall be carried out in all Southern Neighbourhood partner countries, territories and regions (Algeria, Egypt, Israel⁶, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine⁷, Syria⁸ and Tunisia). The final beneficiaries of the action are the populations of the Southern Neighbourhood partner countries (possibly other countries, and territories) who will benefit from more inclusive societies and better governance.

As per Article 43(1) of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation, specific activities may also involve, in duly justified cases and for reasons of efficiency and effectiveness, the following countries from the Union for the Mediterranean and countries bordering the Southern Neighbourhood countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mauritania, Montenegro, Türkiye, Chad, Mali, Niger, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

This is justified because the action intervenes in the fields of human and economic development which have transboundary implications and may be enhanced by cross-regional sharing of best practices.

This is in line with the Regional South Multiannual Indicative Programme (2021-2027)⁹, which makes reference, under priority 5 (specific objective 2) to the importance of cross-regional cooperation.

⁶ Any assistance provided to Israel in the context of TAIEX will comply with the “*Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards*”.

⁷ This designation shall not be construed as a recognition of the State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

⁸ Co-operation with the Government of Syria suspended since 2011.

⁹ “The future regional cooperation should have a flexible geographical and thematic scope, also allowing for interlinkages with other regions, where necessary and appropriate as highlighted in the Joint Communication on a renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood.” - 2.5 (Support to the main drivers of regional integration), specific objective 2 (To promote intra-regional and cross-regional cooperation, in particular with Sub-Saharan Africa, the Gulf and the Red Sea region).

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Context

TAIEX provides short and medium-term technical assistance and peer-to-peer capacity building concerning the alignment, application and enforcement of EU legislation as well as advice about EU best practices. The instrument provides demand-driven activities and strategically oriented initiatives and facilitates the delivery of appropriate tailor-made public sector expertise to address issues at short notice and meet the EU objectives.

According to the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation, the specific objectives for the Neighbourhood area include:

- supporting the implementation of association agreements or other existing and future agreements, and jointly agreed association agendas and partnership priorities or equivalent documents, including through institutional cooperation and capacity building;
- achieving progressive integration into the Union internal market and enhanced sectoral and cross-sectoral cooperation, including through legislative approximation and regulatory convergence towards Union and other relevant international norms and standards, and improved market access, including through deep and comprehensive free trade areas, related institution building and investment.

TAIEX activities are complementary with other implementation tools to support impact, such as Twinning, budget support, procurement for infrastructure, grants or guarantees. TAIEX is flexible and builds on complementary peer learning methods involving, in specific circumstances and when most suitable, also experts from beneficiary countries to encourage triangulation and fostering a multi-stakeholder approach.

2.2. Problem Analysis

Short problem analysis

The process of implementation of the relevant cooperation agreements with the Southern Neighbourhood countries and the alignment of their frameworks with the EU legislation and standards is unique for each country and progresses according to the individual needs, and on a sector-by-sector basis. Moreover, new policies with an external dimension require further exchanges and knowledge transfer together with the sharing of best practices. TAIEX precisely facilitates this task responding to the needs identified by Southern neighbouring countries and requests for specific and targeted assistance. TAIEX also targets specific fields following the assessment and identification by the relevant Commission services and the European External Action Service (EEAS), therefore fostering strategic priorities.

The instrument's flexibility means that assistance can be adapted and tailored to a beneficiary's specific needs – whether they require an one-off expertise on a very precise policy area, or a series of assistance events in order to support them to achieve a broader and longer-term goal. Given TAIEX's assistance model, assistance actions can be put in place very swiftly in order to meet a specific and urgent beneficiary need.

In all these cases, as well as for wider public administration reforms, mobilisation of added value public sector expertise is needed with a clear benefit for beneficiaries to also exchange among themselves. Therefore, in exceptional circumstances and when relevant, participation of experts from beneficiaries will complement the core of TAIEX activities implemented by EU public sector experts, fostering regional cooperation and contributing to a more effective assistance. New forms of peer exchange will build on a multi-stakeholder approach and provide meaningful experience in tackling similar challenges and implementing similar agreements (*e.g.* in the context of Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Agreements).

The priorities and objectives targeted by TAIEX have a strong international dimension and take part in overarching EU key priorities with strategic repercussions like the Green Deal, building resilient, sustainable

and inclusive economies and influencing post-pandemic policies. In all of them, a proper and efficient functioning of strong and reliable public institutions is critical and the public expertise brought by TAIEX activities, essential.

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

TAIEX assistance is provided mainly by EU Member States' public sector experts who share their knowledge and experience with beneficiaries through workshops, expert missions and study visits. These activities target national administrations, the judiciary, parliaments, regional and local administrations, public and semi-public entities as well as representatives of trade unions and employers' associations and civil society organisations, in the event that they play a role in the transposition, implementation and enforcement of specific EU legislation. When needed and in specific cases, experts from beneficiaries will take part in TAIEX activities, contributing to a multi-stakeholder approach in the peer sharing and providing added value in relation to the implementation of certain agreements and adaptation to particular policies.

TAIEX instrument interventions are closely coordinated with EU Delegations and the relevant Commission services and the EEAS. Attention is given to the assessment of each incoming assistance request in terms of purpose and fit with bilateral and regional strategies and priorities in ongoing policy and technical cooperation. Therefore, all priorities targeted in the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation are supported, including good governance, environment, stability and partnership.

To ensure high quality expertise, a network of National Contact Points (NCPs) in the EU Member States and partner countries assists in the implementation and takes part in the vibrant institutional building community to ensure the strategic implementation of TAIEX.

2.3. Lessons Learned

Operating since 1996, TAIEX has a proven track-record in mobilising Member States' expertise. Continuous efforts are made to adapt and improve the way TAIEX assistance is implemented. Improvements in the medium-term shall include, but not be limited to, increasing an environmentally-friendly approach to TAIEX assistance, wherever appropriate, and improved knowledge management.

In countries where the demand is generally low, measures can be envisaged, together with respective TAIEX NCPs and EU Delegations, in order to increase awareness of potential beneficiary institutions about the possibilities that TAIEX can offer.

In countries where the demand is particularly high, efforts have been done to work with the EU Delegations and NCPs to select the proposals that are most likely to have an impact. Those with more anticipated impact will get priority in terms of implementation. Synergies will be sought in organising multi-country events for beneficiaries with similar interest, often through opening up digital channels for participation.

The network of NCPs will be systematically enhanced throughout the programme.

Efforts have already been done and will continue to seek synergies with other programmes with the aim to focus TAIEX on those cases where the instrument is most appropriate and the impact is greatest.

The latest evaluation of the TAIEX instrument was published in May 2022 and covered the implementation period of 2015-2020. Among the key conclusions, TAIEX has proven to be an effective, gap-filling tool for supporting reforms and strengthening administrative capacities in partner countries, which is increasing its geographical scope benefitting more than 100 countries and thus expanding the EU's external relations toolbox across the world.

After the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, TAIEX instrument adapted to the new reality and enforced new working methods and digital solutions which continue to enrich the activities offered even after the pandemic restrictions had been lifted. In this regard, the successful experience of the digital leap in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on travel and face-to-face events has confirmed the

ability of TAIEX to offer assistance via digital means. This digital leap will contribute to a more effective assistance complementing in-person activities with other digital means (such as online and hybrid activities). It results in a wider accessibility to the activities implemented and greening the instrument while maintaining the same high-quality features.

At the same time, the participation in certain circumstances of experts from partner countries will provide a new multi-stakeholder approach to TAIEX activities, while expertise from the EU Member States remains the core of the assistance. Triangulation (or “*South-South*” cooperation) of experts will complement and enrich regional peer learning among partners who face similar challenges and processes.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1. Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective(s)/Impact(s) of this action is to

Support Southern Neighbourhood beneficiaries in implementing their commitments made under the EU-related agreements through an intensified cooperation and in achieving regulatory convergence and legislative approximation towards high standards, aligning to the EU policies through a better understanding of the EU legislation, know-how and the adoption of best practices.

The Specific Objective(s) (Outcomes) of this action is to

Reinforce institutional capacity building of the beneficiary countries meeting their needs with demand-driven peer-to-peer public expertise assistance in line with the commitments and agreed priorities with the EU as well as fostered EU strategic priorities.

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

Tailor-made and peer-to-peer technical assistance delivered to the Southern Neighbourhood beneficiaries in the short and medium-term by sharing experience, know-how and information on EU policies, legislation, projects and public administration reforms and practices in the widest sense.

3.2. Indicative Activities

Mobilising sectoral experts, mainly from the EU Member States, and if relevant also regional experts, to give the beneficiaries’ public officials the possibility to learn from their peers. The experts mobilised belong to the public administration (or assimilated institutions, such as mandated bodies) of the EU Member States, and in specific circumstances of beneficiaries. In exceptional cases, when required specific expertise is not available from EU Member States’ public institutions, it can be mobilised from EU Member States’ private sector, international organisations and the EU institutions. TAIEX support is delivered through workshops, expert missions, including peer-based assessment missions, study visits, and short background research and assessments (work from home); according to the needs of the beneficiary and the scope and nature of the intervention. Assistance can be delivered in online, hybrid or in-person format. Events can take place at national and regional level.

During these events public sector experts from the EU Member States’ institutions are brought in close contact during several days with their peers in the relevant beneficiaries. The EU experts prepare an agenda for the meeting, in cooperation with the beneficiary and the Commission. After the meeting, the EU experts prepare a report with recommendations on follow up.

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

3.3. Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Biodiversity

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening classified the action as Category C (no need for further assessment) as it is not environmentally sensitive and in accordance with the applicable legislation.

The Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening concluded that this action is no or low risk (no need for further assessment) as it is not environmentally sensitive and in accordance with the applicable legislation.

The action being cross-cutting, it should ensure environmental and climate considerations are mainstreamed into all activities. This will contribute to the sustainability of the action. The mainstreaming should be based on the identification and mitigation of environmental and climate risks as well as the potential inclusion of environment in the scope of the activities.

TAIEX will continue to offer this digital alternative to the Southern Neighbourhood beneficiaries after the COVID-19 pandemic when this is considered relevant and possible, to reduce its carbon footprint. When face-to-face activities are planned, the external service provider will be instructed to consider opting for eco-friendly suppliers and supplies, as well as using other means of reducing carbon footprint e.g. use of trains instead of planes, no printing, using tap water etc. More specifically, the external service provider will be instructed to comply with the Green Public Procurement principles understood as a process whereby public authorities seek to procure goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycle when compared to goods, services and works with the same primary function that would otherwise be procured.

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 gender is not targeted directly as a principal objective, but TAIEX promotes the European public policy model and EU values including, inter alia good governance issues, promotion of human and fundamental rights, and the Gender Action Plan III¹⁰.

The promotion of gender equality is at the core of EU values, it is a fundamental right and a key principle not only of the Gender Action Plan III, but also the European Pillar of Social Rights¹¹. Through a broad and robust normative frame for gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), the instrument encourages partners to attend gender transformative policies in all external action by building alliances to achieve SGD 5.

Gender issues remain high in TAIEX activities' agenda. TAIEX will continue to effectively promote equality, inclusion and combat discrimination as well as to take measures to achieve gender equal opportunities in all aspects of its activities.

¹⁰ SWD (2020) 284 Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on EU Gender Action Plan (Gap) III – An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EU External Action.

¹¹ COM (2020) 152 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025.

Human Rights

TAIEX activities fully align with a strong support to EU fundamental values, including respect for human rights, in line with the regional priority of supporting accountable institutions, the rule of law and security. The activities contribute to the capacity building of the beneficiary institutions by strengthening and facilitating the implementation of internationally agreed human rights, and taking into account the specific needs of each beneficiary and their progress.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0. This implies that disability is not a directly targeted issue although the organisation of all TAIEX activities takes due regard to accessibility and the inclusion of participants and experts as needed. In addition, the content of the activities, when relevant for the partner countries, supports the beneficiary institutions by sharing good practices and knowledge in this area.

Democracy

TAIEX activities fully align with a strong support to EU fundamental values, especially democracy, in line with the regional priority of supporting accountable institutions, the rule of law and security. It contributes to the capacity building of the beneficiary institutions regarding participation and pluralism, taking into account the specific needs of each beneficiary and their progress.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

TAIEX activities adapt to the specific context and needs of each beneficiary, both on the content of the activities as well as concerning organisational issues, taking due regard of regional and/or local specificities. At the same time, TAIEX has a track record of bringing public administrations together, building in a common project and cooperation with beneficiaries.

Disaster Risk Reduction

TAIEX instrument fully aligns with the EU policies and priorities in which disaster risk reduction plays a significant role as part of the regional priority to foster environmental and climate resilience. Therefore, as an instrument which both responds to the demands of beneficiaries and supports the strategic priorities of the EU, this is an area which is streamlined into the content of TAIEX activities.

3.4. Risks and Assumptions

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
1-External environment	Activities disrupted and/or delayed due to COVID-19 or	Low	Medium	Online format for activities is possible in the partner countries. The flexibility of TAIEX allows to postpone events as well as to organise

	other travel restrictions or due to the ongoing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its consequences.			alternative activities prior to physical events.
1-External environment	Beneficiaries may not submit enough/high quality requests in line with the EU policies for TAIEX.	Medium	Medium	Awareness raising by Commission services and EU Delegations will target Southern Neighbourhood countries. In addition to the consultation process in Headquarters, the relevant EU Delegation is asked to agree on each TAIEX request prior to its final approval.
3-People and the organisation	Experts in the existing TAIEX database do not match the required needs for assistance.	Medium	Medium	Outreach activity will target the NCPs for TAIEX in each EU Member State or institution of origin to identify the most relevant and adequate expertise. More targeted outreach towards experts in highly-demanded and/or niche areas will be organised.

External Assumptions

The main assumptions for TAIEX are: the cooperation pace progresses, paving the way for the use of TAIEX instrument to share public expertise; a conducive environment in the Southern Neighbourhood beneficiaries exists to allow these reforms to happen; critical number and quality requests for technical assistance are submitted by the Southern Neighbourhood beneficiaries to the TAIEX instrument; relevant public experts from the EU Member States are identified and available to support Southern Neighbourhood beneficiary institutions in the field of their requests for assistance; the database of the EU Member States' public experts is kept updated with new experts registering themselves.

3.5. Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that sharing European public sector expertise through TAIEX will further support Southern Neighbourhood countries to build their institutional administrative capacity and to undertake relevant public policy reforms, thereby improving public policy, regulation and alignment of their regulatory frameworks to EU standards. Sharing knowledge and peer-to-peer experience among administrations will contribute to the institution building of the beneficiaries because TAIEX will promote a better understanding of the EU legislation and an alignment of their regulatory frameworks to the EU standards, as the track record of the instrument evidences.

This reinforced capacity and increased cooperation obtained through TAIEX will support beneficiaries in complying with their EU related compromises and in harmonising their legislations to the EU policies and standards. Therefore, TAIEX activities will keep promoting and building on the EU strategic policies and priorities in the Southern Neighbourhood area by providing a tailor-made assistance to partner countries.

3.6. Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	Support Southern Neighbourhood beneficiaries in implementing their commitments made under the EU-related agreements through an intensified cooperation and in achieving regulatory convergence and legislative approximation towards high standards, aligning to the EU policies through a better understanding of the EU legislation and the adoption of best practices.	Recognition of ongoing reform processes related to public administration in various internationally recognised composite indicators and the level of economic integration with the EU, measured by % of exports and imports going to/coming from the EU.	Baseline year 2022	2025 values	World Bank, IMF, EUROSTAT, progress reports and country analysis.	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 1	Reinforced institutional capacity building of the beneficiary countries meeting their needs with demand-driven peer-to-peer public expertise assistance in line with the commitments and agreed priorities with the EU as well as fostered EU strategic priorities.	Beneficiaries' overall satisfaction on the quality of TAIEX activities.	Baseline year 2022 (92% of experts rated "excellent" or "good")	2025 values (92% of experts rated "excellent" or "good")	Replies to feedback questionnaires sent to TAIEX participants following event conclusion, as gathered in TMS (TAIEX Management System)	EU Member States, and institutions from partner countries when applicable, continue to support the scheme and facilitating the use of

<p>Output 1</p>	<p>Tailor-made and peer-to-peer technical assistance delivered to the Southern Neighbourhood beneficiaries in the short and medium-term by sharing experience, know-how and information on EU policies, legislation, projects and public administration reforms and practices in the widest sense.</p>	<p>Number of TAIEX requests submitted by the Southern Neighbourhood partners and activities organised, both as a result of countries' requests and also driven by the European Commission services/European External Action Service initiative (<i>i.e.</i> TAIEX strategic).</p>	<p>Baseline year 2022 (TAIEX requests: 112; TAIEX activities: 51)</p>	<p>2025 values</p>	<p>TMS (TAIEX Management System)</p>	<p>public sector expertise; beneficiary countries continue to find relevant the expertise proposed.</p>
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4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1. Financing Agreement

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

4.2. Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 72 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer in duly justified cases.

4.3. Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the appropriate 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.¹²

4.3.1. Direct Management (Procurement)

The TAIEX instrument will be implemented in direct management by the Commission, from the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations Headquarters (DG NEAR).

The support services to roll out the instrument are procured. The implementation is done under the project modality and involves two service contracts (procurements). The first one is for the management of the IT platform of TAIEX (TAIEX Management System - TMS); and the second one is for the logistics of TAIEX activities that will be implemented by a service provider which has to further procure all good and services needed for events according to the relevant procedures of the Commission.

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.

In accordance with Article 28 of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation, the Commission may decide that natural and legal persons from other countries, territories or regions different to partner countries, territories and regions in the Southern Neighbourhood may be eligible for participating in procurement and grant award procedures, if and where relevant. All supplies and materials financed by this action may originate from any country.

The Commission's authorising officer responsible may also 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).

¹² www.sanctionsmap.eu 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, the OJ prevails.

Regarding procurements for TAIEX instrument (service contracts for the IT platform and for the logistics of the activities), the geographical eligibility is global.

TAIEX activities involve EU Member States public experts and potentially relevant regional or local experts if deemed necessary: they are selected by the Commission from its civil servants' expert database and receive a financial compensation, a grant, for their participation to TAIEX activities. In this regard, the procured entity executes financial transactions upon instructions of the Commission. The geographical eligibility for this compensation is the EU Member States. In exceptional cases, experts from relevant partner countries can be invited as well. They are compensated as EU experts. Private experts, when participating, are subject to compensation and selection based on procurement rules.

4.5. Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR) 2023	EU contribution (amount in EUR) 2024
TAIEX – composed of		
<i>Procurement (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.1</i>		3 000 000
Procurement – total envelope under section 4.3.1	2 000 000	1 000 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	Will be covered by another Decision	Will be covered by another Decision
Strategic communication and Public diplomacy	N.A.	N.A.
Contingencies	N.A.	N.A.
Totals	2 000 000	1 000 000

4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The Commission is the contracting authority. DG NEAR is in charge of implementation of TAIEX – and responsible for both the analysis and assessment of requests and for the content of TAIEX short and medium-term assistance, including the identification of experts from the EU Member States' public administrations and other institutions willing to engage in this type of peer-to-peer assistance. Throughout the implementation of TAIEX assistance excellent cooperation and coordination with all actors involved is key to the success of the instrument.

Requests for TAIEX actions are generated by beneficiaries and/or driven by the EU involved stakeholders. Incoming requests are reviewed on a continuous basis and decided upon following consultation with relevant Commission services and the EEAS, including EU Delegations, in order to ensure complementarity with national programmes and other technical assistance instruments are in line with the priorities set in the:

- Action Plans in the Neighbourhood area, Association Agendas, Association Agreements or Partnership and Cooperation Agreements;
- Country and regional Neighbourhood multi-annual programming documents (Single Support Frameworks and Multi-annual Indicative Programmes).

Upon confirmation of the incoming requests, the Commission is in charge of identifying the relevant public experts from the EU Member States or other institutions (if relevant) to address the requests. This is done through the existing database of public experts of TAIEX. When the pool of registered experts is not

providing the appropriate expertise, the established network of NCPs in the EU Member States is mobilised to identify the appropriate experts.

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.

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).

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).

Arrangements for monitoring and reporting, including roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring:

Monitoring is understood as a permanent ongoing process by way of receiving direct feedback from participants and experts. Following each event participants and experts receive an automatic feedback questionnaire in order to assess their overall impression of the assistance provided and of the logistics of the event. Furthermore, following expert missions, EU Member State officials are requested to submit short mission reports summarising the objective of their intervention and formulate recommendations. The beneficiary institutions also receive an evaluation form six months after the end of the TAIEX activity to comment on the impact of the intervention.

Under direct management of this action, the collection of data and analysis is carried out by the Commission. To this effect, the necessary technical arrangements are set in place to collect and aggregate data from participants of the beneficiary entities and the experts of the EU Member States as described above.

On an annual basis, DG NEAR is publishing a global annual report that is made public through its website and shares flash reports with statistics on a bi-annual basis to the network of NCPs for TAIEX in the EU Member States.

5.2. Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, an evaluation will not be carried out for this action or its components.

However, 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 a partner. When relevant, the evaluations should be carried out following the guidelines of the DG NEAR on linking planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation. The evaluation reports may be shared with the partners and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate,

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

The evaluation will 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, whenever it is deemed relevant with regards to the nature and topics covered by the evaluated action. Expertise on human rights and gender equality will be ensured in the evaluation teams.

Since 1996, the TAIEX instrument has been evaluated three times, in 2007, in 2015 and in 2021. The latest evaluation assessed the TAIEX instrument during the period 2015-2020 with satisfactory results, highlighting its flexibility, increasing geographical and topical scope as well as its adaptability. In 2021, a new evaluation process by independent consultants was launched as part of the DG NEAR's multi-annual strategic evaluation work programme 2020-2024.

When appropriate, the financing of the evaluation shall 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

All entities implementing EU-funded external actions have the contractual obligation 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. To that end they must comply with the instructions given in the 2022 guidance document [*Communicating and raising EU visibility: Guidance for external actions*](#) (or any successor document).

This obligation will apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, the partner country, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU Member States. In each case, a reference to the relevant contractual obligations must be included in the respective financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and contribution agreements.

Communication and visibility measures may be funded from the amounts allocated to the action. For the purpose of enhancing the visibility of the EU and its contribution to this action, the Commission may sign or enter into joint declarations or statements, as part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union. Visibility and communication measures should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

Effectiveness of communication activities on awareness about the action and its objectives as well as on EU funding of the action should be measured.

Implementing partners shall keep the Commission and concerned EU Delegation/Office fully informed of the planning and implementation of specific visibility and communication activities before work starts. Implementing partners will ensure adequate visibility of EU financing and will report on visibility and communication actions as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees.

For communicating on Team Europe Initiatives, the EU and its Member States can rely on the specific guidance on the Team Europe visual identity.

When relevant, the communication and visibility plan will be based on an agreed communication narrative and master messages customised for the different target audiences (stakeholders, business community, civil

society, general public, etc.). Communication actions should aim to show the link between the funds invested and the policy priorities behind them and should ensure that all relevant stakeholders, and where possible also final beneficiaries, are informed of the donor's involvement.

Appendix 1: IDENTIFICATION OF THE PRIMARY INTERVENTION LEVEL FOR REPORTING IN OPSYS

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

- ✓ Differentiating these Actions or Contracts from those that do not produce direct reportable development results, defined as support entities (i.e. audits, evaluations);
- ✓ Articulating Actions and/or Contracts according to an expected common chain of results and therefore allowing them to ensure a more efficient and aggregated monitoring and reporting of performance;
- ✓ Having a complete and exhaustive mapping of all results-bearing Actions and Contracts.

The present Action identifies as;

Group of contracts level (i.e: i) series of programme estimates, ii) cases in which an Action Document foresees many foreseen individual legal commitments (for instance four contracts and one of them being a Technical Assistance) and two of them, a technical assistance contract and a contribution agreement, aim at the same objectives and complement each other, iii) follow up contracts that share the same log frame of the original contract)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Group of contracts	
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