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THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX VII

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the Multiannual Action Plan in favour of Lebanon 2024 and 2025

Action Document for EU support to Blue economy and Green sustainability

MULTIANNUAL ACTION PLAN

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

1. SYNOPSIS

1.1. Action Summary Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Title OPSYS Basic Act</th>
<th>EU support to Blue economy and Green sustainability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiannual Action Plan in favour of Lebanon 2024 and 2025</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OPSYS business reference: ACT-62528</td>
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<td>Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe).</td>
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2. Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)  No

3. Team Europe Initiative  No

4. Beneficiary of the action  The action shall be carried out in Lebanon

5. Programming document  Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027

6. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Area(s), sectors</th>
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<tr>
<td>DAC code 110, 120, 140, 160, 220, 230, 310, 320, 410</td>
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</table>

1 C(2022)8363 final of 24/11/2022
### 8. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

**Main SDGs:**
- 3 - Good health and well-being
- 8 - Decent work and economic growth
- 13 - Climate Action

**Other significant SDGs:**
- 2 – Zero hunger
- 6 – Clean water and sanitation
- 10 – Reduced inequalities
- 12 – responsible consumption and production
- 14 – Life below water
- 15 – Life on land

### 9. DAC code(s)

DAC 310, 320
- Sub-code 1 - 312 – Forestry – 50%
- Sub-code 2 – 313 – Fishing sector 50%

### 10. Main Delivery Channel @

International NGO 21000
- United Nations agency 41000
- Local NGOs

### 11. Targets

- ☐ Migration
- ☑ Climate
- ☐ Social inclusion and Human Development
- ☐ Gender
- ☑ Biodiversity
- ☐ Human Rights, Democracy and Governance

### 12. Markers (from DAC form)

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<th>Principal objective</th>
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<td>Gender equality and women’s and girl’s empowerment</td>
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<td>13. Internal markers and Tags</td>
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14. Amounts concerned

Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020110 – Southern Neighbourhood

Total estimated cost: EUR 10 000 000.00

Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 10 000 000.00

The contribution is for an amount of EUR 10 000 000.00 from the general budget of the European Union for 2025, subject to the availability of appropriations for the respective financial years following the adoption of the relevant annual budget, or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.

**MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION**

15. Implementation modalities (management mode and delivery methods)

Direct management through:
- Grants

1.2. Summary of the Action

The Action aims to enhance Lebanon's blue economy and green sustainability by promoting economic growth, job creation, climate resilience and environmental conservation, aligning protection efforts with economic development through integrated strategies and value chains across blue and green sectors.

**Component 1** focuses on the blue economy, an economic system that centres on the sustainable use of aquatic resources, encompassing activities like fisheries, aquaculture, salinas, and tourism. The action will support marine preservation initiatives to ensure the long-term viability of both inland and coastal fisheries and aquaculture and their businesses, aiming to balance economic benefits with ecosystem preservation.

**Component 2** outlines a strategy to foster green sustainability in Lebanon while addressing critical challenges related to forest firefighting and biodiversity protection, aiming to promote sustainable development, adapt to and mitigate the impact of climate change, and safeguard Lebanon's unique ecosystems.

The Action will foster collaboration among relevant stakeholders (from communities to the private sector and central and local authorities) to ensure long-term sustainability and inclusivity. It will identify regulatory gaps and support the improvement, endorsement and enforcement of relevant laws. The action will also include targeted activities on awareness-raising to encourage behavioural changes within local communities, promoting biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation/mitigation practices. Furthermore, circular economy principles will be prioritised, with an emphasis on reducing and preventing land pollution and marine litter, maximising resource efficiency, and promoting sustainability across the traditional as well as industrial production cycle.
1.3. Beneficiary of the action

The action shall be carried out in Lebanon, which is included in the list of ODA recipients.

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Context

Since late 2019, Lebanon has been facing an unprecedented crisis, which has led to a dramatic economic contraction, a large increase in poverty, unemployment and brain drain. In March 2020, Lebanon defaulted on its Eurobonds which was followed by a deep recession, a dramatic fall in the value of the Lebanese currency and triple digit inflation. The deteriorating economic situation has hit the public sector to an extent that it is visibly disintegrating. Public authorities lack the necessary funds to maintain operations and to pay their staff more than symbolic salaries. The COVID-19 pandemic and the August 2020 Port of Beirut explosion have compounded the crisis.

The crisis has had devastating effects on the country's economy and its people, resulting in a massive impoverishment of the middle classes. The public sector has been particularly hard hit with the bulk of the labour force still paid in Lebanese lira, suffering from plummeting purchasing power. Thousands of highly qualified civil servants are leaving for better paid jobs in the private sector or migrating in search of better opportunities.

The current economic crisis in Lebanon is a result of a complex set of factors, including political instability, corruption, and mismanagement of public finances. The economic contraction has resulted in a sharp increase in unemployment, poverty, and inflation, making it difficult for the government to deliver essential services and for the people to access basic necessities. In addition, the 2020 default on public debt cut Lebanon’s access to financial markets. In 2021, the devaluation of the national currency against the US dollar accelerated, affecting dramatically an economy highly dependent on imports. The Central Bank and the banking sector severely restricted access to people’s savings and limited cash withdrawals. Subsidies (food, gasoline, medications) were lifted abruptly. Inflation, which reached 230.4% in 2023, exacerbated by currency depreciation and rapid dollarisation, is expected to decrease in the coming years. Although, the World Bank has refrained from a 2024 forecast, citing high uncertainty, the economy is nonetheless expected to recover modestly, amidst a global economic slowdown and protracted regional conflict. Essential reforms, including those agreed upon with the IMF in the April 2022 Staff-Level Agreement (aimed to address inter alia banking sector restructuring and fiscal deficits), have largely not been implemented. The banking system is dysfunctional, and the economy relies on cash.

Lebanon's leadership has inadequately addressed the crises due to a lack of consensus. The Council of Ministers operates in a caretaker capacity since May 2022, with no consensus on a presidential candidate since November 2022. The absence of a Head of State hinders government formation, causing a political vacuum. It also hinders legislative process. Some of the political parties consider that until a President is appointed, the Parliament is only an electoral body and can only legislate in emergency cases. Since November 2022, there have been only five legislative sessions with twelve unsuccessful electoral sessions to elect a President.

Lebanon has already started to feel the impact of the Israel-Hamas war in terms of hostilities at the southern border. The World Bank assesses that Lebanon is the hardest hit among the neighbouring countries by the conflict. It is estimated that the real GDP growth will contract by 0.6 percent to 0.9 percent in 2023, depending on the extent of the tourism contraction, reversing the positive pre-conflict baseline. Military operations unfolding along Lebanon’s southern border have already caused the internal displacement of 93,040 persons as of May 2024.

Lebanon is also characterised by a diverse and ecologically significant landscape, comprising mountains, forests, and coastal areas. The country is increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including rising temperatures, altered precipitation patterns, and extreme weather events, posing risks to ecosystems, agriculture, and overall environmental resilience. Lebanon is highly urbanised, with over 87% of its population residing in urban areas, notably in large urban centres (Beirut, Tripoli, Saida, Zahle, and Tyre).
The 225 km coastline of Lebanon is a hub of economic activity, hosting industrial, commercial, and financial centers, with 44 fishing ports and 3,000 all-artisanal, small-scale fishing vessels, which produce about 4 thousand tons. Lebanon’s large hydrological network includes a dozen of rivers running through the coast, which consequently plays an important role in the quality of marine coastal waters. As of 2019, total aqua farming production was strong, reaching 4,343 tonnes (an increase of 57 percent since 2011), with 364 farms operating. Employment in the Blue economy sector ranges from 3.7 to 5.7 thousand people.

Lebanon occupies only 0.007% of the world’s land surface area and is home to 1.11% of the world’s plant species and 2.63% of reptile, bird and mammal species. The country counts about 2,600 terrestrial plant species. The country notably boasts one of the highest densities of floral diversity in the Mediterranean basin which is one of the most biologically-diverse regions in the world\(^2\).

Benefits derived from ecosystems are essential to the Lebanese economy. For example, the economic value of forest systems is estimated at USD 131.5 million, with approximately USD 23.5 million/year derived from the harvest of medicinal and aromatic plants from forests. Lebanese laws, decrees, ministerial decisions and resolutions protect most of the nature sites in the country. The sites are classified and protected to a varying degree at the national level, and include nature reserves, protected forests, protected natural sites/landscapes, Hima (local community-based conservation practice). Some of these sites have acquired one or more international designations.

This Action holds significant relevance within the framework of the EU Green Deal and Lebanon’s sustainable development strategies, resonating with initiatives like the Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Declaration for a Sustainable Blue Economy and the Barcelona Convention also known as the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean, and the Blue Mediterranean Partnership. The Green Deal’s underlying strategies such as Biodiversity, Climate Adaptation, Circular Economy, Farm-to-Fork, and the Zero-Deforestation Regulation, also demonstrate a shared commitment to fostering environmental sustainability and resilience across regions. As a Party to the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the UN Compliance Agreement since 1995, Lebanon actively participates in regional organisations such as the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM).

In 2015, Lebanon updated its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), outlining seven adaptation priorities, three of which will be supported through this action.

- **Adaptation priority 2**: Promote the sustainable use of natural resources, restore degraded landscapes, and increase Lebanon’s forest cover while meeting the ecological, social and economic needs of sustainable forest management
- **Adaptation priority 4**: Value and sustainably manage Lebanon’s terrestrial and marine biodiversity for the preservation and conservation of its ecosystems and habitats and the species they harbour in order to adequately respond to anthropogenic and natural pressures and to ensure Lebanese citizens equal access to ecosystem goods and service
- **Adaptation priority 5**: Reduce the vulnerability of climate change impacts on coastal zones, especially in cities

The actions align with Priority 2 of the EU-Lebanon Multiannual Indicative Programme to strengthen the economy by enhancing market access for MSMEs and mainstreaming circular economy practices to reduce the environmental impact of food system, as well as to Priority 3 to promote a green and sustainable recovery, contributing to the national target of conserving natural resources by protecting at least 20% of terrestrial and marine ecosystems. The action aligns with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 13 (Climate Action), as well as the principles set forth in DAC 310 (Agriculture) and DAC 320 (Forestry), demonstrating a comprehensive approach to sustainable economic growth and environmental conservation.

\(^2\) Convention on Biological Diversity: [https://www.cbd.int/](https://www.cbd.int/)
2.2. Problem Analysis

Short problem analysis

Lebanon’s coastal areas, encompassing significant urban, industrial, and commercial activities, are crucial yet vulnerable zones. Urbanisation, agro-industry pollution, and inadequate sanitation networks threaten marine and land ecosystems. For instance, in Beirut, rapid urbanisation has led to the infringement of informal settlements onto coastal areas, exacerbating pollution and habitat destruction.

Intense pressure from urbanisation and fishing has also led to the overexploitation of coastal species. Harmful practices, such as the use of small mesh nets and explosives, persist due to outdated legislation and enforcement gaps. For example, in Tyre, traditional fishing methods like the use of small mesh nets continue despite their harmful impact on marine biodiversity.

Limited understanding of market trends and aquatic consumption, coupled with a lack of strategic vision to set priorities, restricts job creation and hinders sectoral growth by depending on imports and limiting value-added product development.

Lebanon heavily relies on imported aquatic food due to high prices similar to Europe and limited local production. Around 90% of the aquatic food market is made up of imports, with approximately 35,000 tons imported each year, while local aquatic food production is only around 8,000 tons. In Tripoli, the lack of investment in processing facilities limits the diversification of aquaculture products, leading to a reliance on imported aquatic food. In Byblos, the dominance of imported aquatic food in local markets reflects challenges in domestic production and distribution.

The fisheries and aquaculture industry lacks interconnectivity among small businesses and support from public authorities. In Batroun, fragmented fishery MSMEs struggle to integrate and diversify due to limited support from governmental institutions.

Gender disparities persist in aquatic food production with women's participation remaining low, and informal employment lacking proper regulation and training. Women are significantly underrepresented in the sectors’ workforce, experiencing a wage gap of around 10% and encountering obstacles in accessing training opportunities.

13.3% or about 136,000 hectares of Lebanon’s territory is forested. Deforestation, driven by urbanisation and unsustainable land-use practices, poses a significant threat to Lebanon's environment, leading to the loss of critical habitats, biodiversity, and the overall ecological balance. Linked to that, are the recurrent wildfires, exacerbated by climate change, results in a serious risk to Lebanon's forests and natural landscapes, contributing to ecological degradation, soil erosion, and the loss of valuable biodiversity.

In 2019, the cost of environmental degradation in Lebanon was estimated between 3.1% and 5.5% of the 2018 GDP with a mean equivalent to about US$ 2.35 billion, as compared to a mean estimate of 3.4% of GDP (equivalent to US$ 0.56 billion) in 2000.

Ongoing efforts by the Ministry of Environment and environmental organisations include the development and implementation of policies to integrate sustainable practices. These policies aim to address issues such as illegal logging, promote responsible forest management, and incentivise the adoption of green and eco-friendly practices. However, the authorities’ slow pace in adopting and implementing reforms, as well as weak low enforcement capacity, pose additional challenges to Lebanon’s environment.

The spill over of the Israel-Hamas war on Lebanon has also been dramatically impacting its natural resources. Based on satellite imagery, the total agricultural area (olive grove) and forestland affected by fires due to shelling in southern Lebanon reached 1,897 hectares. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 63% of
farmers faced challenges reaching their fields, with 26% forced to abandon their agricultural fields due to displacement. Additionally, 23% experienced decreased harvest yields, and 85% encountered difficulties in transporting their agricultural products, leading to 72% reporting income losses.

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

The Ministry of Environment (MoE) sets the basic principles and general provisions to regulate environmental protection and management, preservation and maintenance of environmental basins, and assessment of environmental impact assessment of projects. The ministry also establishes strategies, plans, programmes, and general studies for the integrated management of various types of solid waste, as well as with setting and monitoring standards and regulations. The MoE is responsible for developing policies and enforcing laws and regulations related to marine conservation. This may include measures to control pollution, regulate fishing practices, and establish marine protected areas.

The Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) plays a central role in the management of Lebanese fisheries and aquaculture, housing the Department of Fisheries & Wildlife responsible for governing the sector. This department is supported by regional decentralised Departments of Rural Development. Through international technical support, MOA have proposed amendments to the fishing and aquaculture law in order to better regulate aquatic food production into more sustainable practices which preserve aquatic life.

Additionally, collaboration and coordination with other key ministries such as Tourism, Industry, Energy and Water, Interiors and Municipalities, and Public Works and Transports, are crucial for integrated management, which involves establishing task forces and/or conducting stakeholders consultations to adopt planning and decision making processes that consider social, economic and environmental aspects.

The National Council for Scientific Research (CNRS-L), a governmental institution in Lebanon is responsible for coordinating and promoting scientific research in various fields, including marine biodiversity.

Law enforcement agencies, such as the Coast Guard, are responsible of protecting marine resources. Concurrently, border protection entities like the Lebanese Armed Forces, Internal Security Forces, General Security, Customs, and Civil Defense prevent illegal activities such as smuggling and illegal fishing. The Civil Defense also plays a critical role, particularly in forest firefighting and marine rescue operations and fire prevention.

Local authorities such as Municipalities and Unions of Municipalities, the Tripoli Special Economic Zone Authority, are instrumental in ensuring compliance with regulations and fostering sustainable fishing and aquaculture practices. Municipalities are an important part of forest management plans that are normally developed to contribute to a collective and effective forest monitoring and development.

The Chambers of Commerce (Saida and Tripoli) also serve as a key stakeholder, facilitating market access and economic development opportunities for various economic stakeholders such as touristic operators, resort establishments and social enterprises.

Furthermore, partnerships with international organisations, environmental associations and NGOs are essential for capacity-building, research, and community engagement. These entities aim at enhancing the sustainability of land and marine biodiversity conservation while playing a role in advocating for policies and regulations.

Some of the notable natural land and marine reserves in Lebanon include Al-Shouf Cedar, Horsh Ehden, Ammiq Wetland and Tannourine Cedars Forest as well as Tyre Coast Nature Reserve and Palm Islands Nature Reserve.
At the grassroots level, aquatic food production and agricultural sector is represented by numerous cooperatives and syndicates, which play essential roles in advocating for the interests of fishers and farmers as well as implementing industry regulations.

The fisheries and aquaculture sector (and the downstream market/final consumer market) in Lebanon involves a diverse range of stakeholders, including 1200 small-scale fishers, 150 fishmongers, 400 street vendors, 364 family owned aquaculture farms, restaurants and salinas as well as medium and large-scale entities such as auctioneers, wholesalers, importers, distributors. Farmers and carpenters around environmentally sensitive areas could also be targeted.

### 2.3. Lessons Learned

The EU has been supporting a number of initiatives in the green and blue sectors in Lebanon. Evidence from consultations with relevant stakeholders, specific reports, ongoing and past projects (both EU- and non-EU funded, at bilateral, regional and cross-border level), as well as the thematic evaluation of the EU’s support to agriculture and livelihoods over the period 2008-2023, have highlighted a number of key lessons learnt on which this Action is built.

The EU thematic evaluation on agriculture and livelihood in Lebanon underlined the necessity to emphasise the interconnectedness of terrestrial and marine ecosystems, highlighting the need for policies and projects that address this connection to achieve sustainable outcomes. The Action will follow a comprehensive approach to ecosystem integration, area-based programming, community engagement, policy alignment, capacity building, and tourism and conservation balancing.

In previous projects, limiting factors included sustainable resource management practices, supportive policy frameworks, private sector cooperation, and investment in research and development. Efforts to promote sustainable management and development of aquaculture, and coastal tourism must be accompanied by regulatory frameworks, stakeholder engagement, and capacity-building initiatives.

Additionally, investing in research and data collection to better understand marine ecosystems and market dynamics is crucial for informed decision-making. It is imperative to provide coaching for fisheries and aquaculture MSMEs, cultivate business partnerships within blue value chains. Collaboration among government agencies, local communities, and industry stakeholders is vital to overcoming challenges such as overfishing, pollution, and habitat degradation.

To mitigate the risk of wildfires and preserving forest ecosystems, proactive measures such as robust monitoring systems and early warning mechanisms are critical in forest management and fire prevention. Educating local communities and stakeholders about the risks of wildfires, as well as promoting responsible behavior and fire prevention practices, can help foster a culture of fire safety and resilience.

In coastal and inland areas, the challenge also lies in balancing tourism development with conservation efforts. Lessons from previous CBC MED projects suggest that sustainable tourism practices, such as eco-friendly infrastructure and responsible tourism guidelines, are crucial for preserving land and marine environments.

In the context of blue economy and green sustainability, stakeholders emphasise the use of vertical integration/area-based programming, which allows for a comprehensive approach to sustainable development. By considering the mutual dependence of environmental, social, and economic factors within a specific area, it enables the development of comprehensive and integrated solutions.

Area based programming also encourages community engagement, which is a critical aspect of fostering sustainable practices and initiatives. Meaningful involvement of local communities, including their participation in decision-making processes and the incorporation of their knowledge, plays a pivotal role in the success and acceptance of blue and green initiatives.
Moreover, building the capacity of individuals, MSMEs and institutions through educational campaigns, engagement activities and training programmes is vital for empowering small scales fishers, farmers and carpenters as well as professionals, policymakers, and the general public to contribute to green and blue economies.

Finally, it is essential to establish and align policies that support blue and green practices, coupled with effective enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance and prevent activities that could undermine environmental goals. Despite current challenges posed by the prevailing governmental situation, this initiative must persist in laying the groundwork for future policies/reforms when a conducive political climate emerges. The Cooperation Facility that is part of this Financing Decision provides the opportunity to also support reforms pertaining to marine and environmental protection.

Partnership and coordination among diverse stakeholders such as UNIDO, EBRD and UNDP, will be a priority in the Action’s implementation, facilitating the leveraging of resources and expertise. Aligning with ongoing bilateral projects, synergies will be sought with the EU-funded projects on Innovation (AAP2021) implemented by EBRD and Berytech, and on Circular Economy (AAP2022) with UNIDO. The green sustainability component will build on the ongoing EU-funded biodiversity projects led by Al-Chouf Cedar Society, Lebanon Environment Forum and Terre Liban.

Moreover, this Action will complement and learn from regional endeavours such as the GFCM, Mediterranean marine Biodiversity protection (IMAP-MPA), Water and Environment Support - Plastic & Marine Litters (WES-BECA), Maritime Safety (SAFEMED) and SwitchMed II (Blue Economy Component), fostering a coordinated approach to sustainable blue economy investments in the Mediterranean. The action builds upon regional project such as UNIDO’s SWITCH MED project and CBC MED initiatives like FISH MED NET (Fishery Mediterranean Network), COMMON PROJECT (Coastal Management and Monitoring Network for tackling Marine Litter), YEP MED (Youth Employment in Ports of the Mediterranean) and MedArtSal (Mediterranean Artisanal Salinas), which enhance socio-economic resilience and promote sustainable coastal management and CLUSTER4GREEN, CROSSDEV, GIMED and GREENLAND (under CBC MED programme) contributing to an inclusive green economy and combating climate change.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective/Impact of this action is to:

Enhance Lebanon's blue economy and green sustainability for a climate resilient recovery.

The Specific Objective(s) (Outcomes) of this action are:

1. Improved sustainable practices among local stakeholders to support the conservation of aquatic ecosystems and livelihoods.
2. Enhanced sustainable management and protection of terrestrial natural ecosystems, including conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity protection

The Outputs to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objective (Outcomes) 1 are:

1.1 Strengthening support measures for the establishment of community-driven strategies and initiatives, ensuring gender equal participation and benefits.
1.2 Empowering local fishermen/fishermen/farmers, cooperatives, social enterprises, and MSMEs, with a gender-sensitive approach, to enhance their capacities in advancing blue business models.
1.3 Improved capacities, tools and resources for raising the quality and safety of aquatic food products.

The Outputs to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objective (Outcomes) 2 are:

2.1 Enhanced capacities of local communities and organisations and/or other stakeholders to protect forests and conserve biodiversity.

2.2 Implementation of sustainable ecosystems and land management practices.

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1.1:
- Organisation of workshops and training sessions for communities to enhance local engagement, knowledge sharing and collaborative planning to take ownership of bottom-up strategies and initiatives
- Provision of technical training and capacity building for community members on sustainable aquatic ecosystem management and conservation practices
- Establishment or rehabilitation of protected marine areas with financial and technical support.

Activities related to Output 1.2:
- Developing and implementing locally tailored sustainable aquaculture techniques and capacity-building programs, focusing on minimising environmental impact (i.e. waste recycling and the use of eco-friendly feed)
- Providing SMEs with tailored mentorships and networking opportunities to improve their knowledge of environmental sustainability (i.e. energy efficiency, waste management, eco-certifications, and sustainable sourcing)
- Financial and/or in-kind support to SMEs, cooperatives, and social enterprises to promote sustainable economic growth, inclusive employment, and the adoption of environmentally friendly practices.

Activities related to Output 1.3:
- Conducting research and development initiatives focused on quality of aquatic food products
- Providing comprehensive training and coaching for fishers and aquaculture workers to ensure adoption of healthy and safe practices, as well as proper aquatic food handling, storage techniques
- Increase access to capital to adopt modern technology and improve sustainable processing and packaging methods.

Activities related to Output 2.1:
- Building capacities of the management structures of the protected areas and natural reserves
- Organising and/or improving management plans for the protected areas
- Developing and updating plans for responding to wildfires, including evacuation procedures and resource allocation
- Conducting training for firefighting personnel and building capacity for effective response to wildfires
- Educating local communities about sustainable forest management practices and the importance of fire prevention
- Training farmers, including female farmers, and agricultural cooperatives and MSMEs to adopt sustainable and environmentally-friendly practices in agricultural production.

Activities related to Output 2.2:
- Regular monitoring and evaluation of key biodiversity and pressures for forest ecosystems
- Implementing practices to maintain and regenerate forests, such as planting, cleaning and pruning in direct coordination with Ministry of Agriculture
- Creation of new protected areas in line with environmental regulations
- Improvement of landscape connectivity and networking among the protected areas
- Implementing measures with the Civil Defense in Lebanon to reduce the risk of wildfires, such as creating firebreaks and enforcing fire restrictions
- Implementing measures to safeguard high mountain water sources, including watershed protection and sustainable water use practices
- Rehabilitation and restoration of abandoned agricultural lands in environmentally-friendly methods
- In-kind support to farmers, women and agricultural cooperatives and MSMEs to adopt sustainable and environmentally-friendly practices in agricultural production.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Biodiversity

Outcomes of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening (relevant for budget support and strategic-level interventions)
The SEA screening concluded that key environmental and climate-related aspects need be addressed during design.

Outcomes of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project).
The EIA screening classified the action as Category C (no need for further assessment).

Outcome of the Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project).
The CRA screening concluded that this action is no or low risk (no need for further assessment).

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that gender equality is a significant objective, indicators will be disaggregated by sex. The action contributes to GAP III’s thematic area “Economic empowerment: Enhancing women's economic opportunities, promoting entrepreneurship, and addressing gender disparities in the labor market, including access to decent work, financial resources, and economic decision-making”.

Human Rights

The proposed action is fully aligned to the existing EU human rights strategies and action plans. Human rights concerns are mainstreamed throughout the action and will be taken into consideration in all activities to be drawn up during implementation stage. The action has been designed following a “rights-based “and “leave-no-one behind” approach.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0. This implies that the action is not considered relevant for inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Democracy

In line with EU commitment to promote legally binding international standards to the fundamental rights and the rule of law, the action will promote Lebanon commitment to international conventions.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

This action applies conflict-sensitivity and a do-no harm approach throughout the planning and implementation of the action, and addresses related priorities and recommendations.
**Disaster Risk Reduction**

The action will focus on Disaster Risk Reduction, with a particular emphasis on restoring natural habitats and biodiversity to enhance readiness and resilience to potential disasters. Through targeted efforts, the action aims to mitigate disaster risks by restoring and preserving natural ecosystems and biodiversity.

### 3.4 Risks and Assumptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Risks</th>
<th>Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)</th>
<th>Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)</th>
<th>Mitigating measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>External Environment</strong></td>
<td>The escalation of hostilities along the Southern Border of Lebanon intensifies and extends to a nationwide scale</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Activities will be adjusted to identified needs through an ongoing monitoring and maintain on stand-by the components that cannot be implemented until adequate conditions are in place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>External Environment</strong></td>
<td>Political instability and social tensions</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Promote inclusive governance that represents diverse communities and ensures fair participation and reducing feelings of marginalisation  Promote inclusive governance that represents diverse communities and ensures fair participation and reducing feelings of marginalisation  Focus on sustainable economic development to address issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>External Environment</strong></td>
<td>Regional conflicts affecting Lebanon</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Divert funds to the most vulnerable and affected communities keeping into consideration our programme objectives and priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>People and the organisation</strong></td>
<td>Stakeholder opposition</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Stakeholder engagement in the planning process through workshops and meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>External environment</strong></td>
<td>Inadequate human resources of line ministries and authorities to follow up on programme activities</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Engagement of line ministries in priority areas and strategic topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>External Environment</strong></td>
<td>Climate change leading to forest fires: Rising temperatures can lead to fires that destroy forest ecosystems</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Support to civil defence’s forest fire fighting and establish firefighting plans with local communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>External Environment</strong></td>
<td>Climate change leading to land</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Support to restoration of agricultural lands and promote sustainable land management practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
 degradation and soil erosion

External Assumptions

**Stability of the political and security situation in Lebanon:** The effective implementation of the Action depends on a stable political and security environment in the country. In the absence of stability, the implementation of reforms may be hampered, and progress may be slow or ineffective.

**Public Awareness and Engagement:** Basic public awareness and interest in environmental issues, with an expectation that community members are willing to participate in and support environmental programs

**Partnerships:** The importance of forming effective collaborations and partnerships with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international agencies and local communities.

**Livelihood considerations:** Understanding of the socio-economic factors that may influence the success of the program, such as the economic well-being of communities and the potential impact of environmental initiatives on livelihoods.

**Climate Resilience:** An awareness of climate change impacts and a commitment to integrating climate resilience strategies into environmental programs

Regular monitoring and evaluation should be integrated into the program to assess the validity of these assumptions and adjust strategies accordingly.

### 3.5 Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for Component 1 is that:

IF the activities aimed at promoting the sustainable management and restoration of marine ecosystems, as well as strengthening fisheries and aquaculture, are undertaken AND the assumptions such as stakeholder engagement and the stability and security situation surrounding these activities remains valid, THEN ecosystem resilience, sustainable productivity, and socio-economic benefit for the local population will increase.

IF these Outputs, such as community-driven strategies for ecosystem management, enhanced institutional capacities for advocacy, increased adoption of sustainable practices, and improved product quality and competitiveness, are delivered AND the assumptions at the level of Outputs hold true, THEN the Outcome(s) of improved ecosystem health, sustainable resource use, economic growth, and employment will be realised.

This is BECAUSE evidence from past experiences and observed trends suggests that implementing sustainable management practices and circular economy approaches in fisheries and aquaculture can lead to enhanced ecosystem resilience, increased productivity, and socio-economic benefits. By aligning actions with these outcomes and ensuring that the necessary conditions are met, the desired Impact of promoting sustainability and economic prosperity in marine ecosystems can be achieved.

The underlying intervention logic for Component 2 is that:

IF the activities are undertaken AND the assumptions at this level are held true, THEN environmental strategies would be implemented to protect biodiversity, policies and regulations would be developed to strengthen sustainable forest management, forest areas would be expanded or regenerated through reforestation and empowerment of forest managers and local communities and capacities of MSMEs, farmer and cooperatives would be improved to promote environmental circular economy models aiming at enhancing livelihoods.
IF outputs are delivered and the assumptions at the level of the outputs held true, THEN environmental sustainability would be improved including reduced pollution, enhanced biodiversity conservation, and the protection of natural ecosystems.

IF this is achieved and the assumptions at this level held true, THEN Lebanon's blue economy and green sustainability would be enhanced while promoting inclusive economic growth and biodiversity conservation.
3.6 Indicative Logical Framework Matrix
## Results

### Results chain:

#### Main expected results

- **Impact 1**
  - To enhance Lebanon’s blue economy and green sustainability for a climate resilient recovery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Baselines (values and years)</th>
<th>Targets (values and years)</th>
<th>Sources of data</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. National target of protecting at least 20% of national terrestrial and marine ecosystems</td>
<td>1. At least 4% of total protected areas.</td>
<td>Baseline Assessment, data sources from CNRS, UNEP and others such as International organisation data portals and reports (Global SDG Indicators Database, <a href="https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/">https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/</a>) and Environmental Performance Index (EPI)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Number of (a) jobs, (b) green jobs supported/ sustained by the EU(GERF 2.13 and MIP indicator)</td>
<td>2. At least 20% of jobs supported</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Number of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises applying Sustainable Consumption and Production practices with EU support (GERF 2.6 and MIP indicator)</td>
<td>3. at least 10% of economic entities supported in the sector</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Outcome 1

1. Improved sustainable practices among local stakeholders to support the conservation of aquatic ecosystems and livelihoods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Baselines (values and years)</th>
<th>Targets (values and years)</th>
<th>Sources of data</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1. Marine areas under a) protection, b) sustainable management with EU support (km2) (GERF 2.8 and MIP indicator)</td>
<td>1.1 Baseline values to be defined at inception phase</td>
<td>EU intervention monitoring and reporting systems (Progress and final reports for the EU-funded intervention; Baseline and end line studies conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention; Baseline and end line surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention; ROM reviews)</td>
<td>Local stakeholders are willing to adopt sustainable practices. Cultural acceptance and integration of sustainable practices. Resilience to external pressures and shocks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes and Outputs</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 2</strong></td>
<td>2. Enhanced sustainable management and protection of natural ecosystems, including biodiversity protection and terrestrial management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Areas of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems under a) protection, b) sustainable management with EU support (ha)</td>
<td>2.1 15 Nature reserves covering 1.89% or 195 km² of total country land area</td>
<td>2.1 at least +5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Output 1 related to Outcome 1</strong></td>
<td>1.1 Strengthening support measures for the establishment of community-driven strategies and initiatives, ensuring gender equal participation and benefits.</td>
<td>EU intervention monitoring and reporting systems (Progress and final reports for the EU-funded intervention; Baseline and end line studies conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention; Baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention; ROM reviews) World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1 Number of women, men, acting as agents of change on fighting climate change and pursuing environmental justice, at local level. <em>Disaggregated by sex and region</em></td>
<td>1.1.1: 0</td>
<td>1.1.1: at least 50% women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Output 2 related to Outcome 1</strong></td>
<td>1.2 Empower local fishers/farmers, cooperatives, social enterprises, and</td>
<td>EU intervention monitoring and reporting systems (Progress and final reports for the EU-funded intervention; Baseline and end line studies conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention; Baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention; ROM reviews)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1 Number of smallholders reached with EU supported</td>
<td>1.2.1: 0</td>
<td>1.2.1: at least 10% of economic entities in the sector</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Empower local fishers/farmers,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output 3 related to Outcome 1</th>
<th>1.3 Improved capacities, tools and resources for raising the quality and safety of aquatic food products</th>
<th>1.3.1. Number of MSMEs and cooperatives that have increased their technical and financial capacities to increase the quality and safety of aquatic food products</th>
<th>EU intervention monitoring and reporting systems (Progress and final reports for the EU-funded intervention; Baseline and endline studies conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention; Baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention; ROM reviews)</th>
<th>cooperatives, social enterprises, and MSMEs, with a gender-sensitive approach, to enhance their capacities in advancing blue business models.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Output 1 related to outcome 2</td>
<td>2.1 Enhanced capacities of local communities and organisations and/or other stakeholders to protect forests and conserve biodiversity</td>
<td>2.1.1. Number of protected areas that have created or improved their management structures with the support of the EU</td>
<td>2.1.1 at least 2 protected areas</td>
<td>EU intervention monitoring and reporting systems (Progress and final reports for the EU-funded intervention; Baseline and endline studies conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention; Baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention; ROM reviews)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 2 related to outcome 2</td>
<td>2.1.3 Number of people with increased knowledge on forest management, environmentally-friendly practices and fire prevention</td>
<td>2.1.3 at least 1000 people</td>
<td>surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention; ROM reviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Implementation of sustainable ecosystems and land management practices</td>
<td>2.2.1 Number of reforestation, forest cleaning and/or land protection initiatives developed with EU support</td>
<td>2.2.1 0</td>
<td>EU intervention monitoring and reporting systems (Progress and final reports for the EU-funded intervention; Baseline and endline studies conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention; Baseline and endline surveys conducted and budgeted by the EU-funded intervention; ROM reviews)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2.2 Area of abandoned agricultural lands restored with EU support</td>
<td>2.2.2 TBD at inception phase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2.3 Number of local economic actors that have received in-kind support to adopt sustainable and environmentally-friendly practices. Disaggregated by sex and region</td>
<td>2.2.3 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2.3 at least 10% of economic actors in the sector</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the Government of Lebanon.

4.2 Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3.2 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 60 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this financing Decision.

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

4.3 Implementation 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 measures.  

4.3.1 Direct Management (Grants)

4.3.1.1 Grants

a) Purpose of the grant(s)

The grant(s) will contribute to achieving the overall objective described in section 3.1 which is to enhance Lebanon’s blue economy and green sustainability for a climate resilient recovery. Contracts will be awarded via a call for proposals presenting two lots: one for Component 1 and another for Component 2.

b) Type of applicants targeted

Applicants targeted are NGOs, CSOs, research institutions, universities, public and private sector operators in Lebanon, International organisations.

(c) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission’s authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to the type of applicant referred under Section 4.3.1.1b) selected using the following criteria:

1) technical knowledge and proven special technical expertise in blue economy and green sustainability and biodiversity;
2) proven experience in managing EU funds for the delivery of development assistance;
3) knowledge of the country and positive track record on co-operation with relevant Lebanese authorities;
4) demonstrated ability in multi-stakeholder collaboration and to close cooperation with EU Member States.

Under the responsibility of the Commission’s authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because the country is in a crisis situation (category (b) “in other

The part of the action under the budgetary envelope reserved for grants may, partially or totally and including where an entity is designated for receiving a grant without a call for proposals, be implemented in indirect management with an entity, which will be selected by the Commission’s services using the criteria defined in section 4.3.1.1.c above.

4.4 Changes from indirect to direct management (and vice versa) mode due to exceptional circumstances

If the implementation modality under direct management as defined in section ‘4.3.1.1 (grants)” cannot be implemented due to circumstances beyond the control of the Commission, the modality of implementation by indirect management with a pillar-assessed entity would be used according to the following criteria:

a) Proven technical expertise and capacity to monitor activities related to the blue economy and green sustainability.

b) Positive track record of working with government institutions, NGOs, cooperatives, social businesses and SMEs implementing in the protection of the environment.

c) Operational presence in Lebanon and proven experience in managing EU funds for the delivery of development assistance

4.5 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

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

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

4.6 Indicative Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicative Budget components</th>
<th>EU contribution in 2025 (amount in EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.3.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 1- Blue economy and Outcome 2 – Green Sustainability</strong>, composed of</td>
<td>10 000 000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grants total envelope under section 4.3.1</strong></td>
<td>10 000 000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation – cf. section 5.2</strong></td>
<td>will be covered by another Decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audit – cf. section 5.3</strong></td>
<td>will be covered by another Decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic communication and Public diplomacy – cf. section 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>10 000 000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.7 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

For each component or, if more relevant, sub-component, a project steering committee (PSC) shall be set up to oversee and validate the overall direction and policy of the projects. It will also provide guidance for the programme activities and oversight of implementation, provide co-ordination to ensure overall coherency. The PSC shall meet at least twice a year.
The implementing partners will assist the PSC by fulfilling a technical secretariat functioning jointly and ensuring an active and meaningful participation of right holders as applicable (i.e. representatives of the relevant Ministries, beneficiaries, public and private sector organisations…) in each of the programme activities and in the decision making.

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 Outputs and contribution to the achievement of its Outcomes, and if possible at the time of reporting, contribution to the achievement of its Impacts, as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix.

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

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

Implementing partners will be requested to identify clear baselines setting and targets and specify whether additional surveys are needed in case data are not yet available and/or should be refined during the inception phase. If needed, additional survey can be funded at contract level and budget lines to this aim to be clearly identified in the contract.

- Implementing partners will set in place a robust system to monitor the impact of the actions (in terms of energy savings, GHG emissions reduction…).
- Collection of data will be the responsibility of the implementing partners and baselines data must be available at the latest at the end of the inception phase while results data must be collected on time for the submission of the final report.
- Analysis of sex-disaggregated data will be encouraged whenever relevant and possible.
- Implementing partners will be requested to identify yearly milestones/targets to ensure a proper monitoring of the achievements at the time of the submission of the annual report. Grants contracts (or relevant agreements with final beneficiaries) logical framework will be developed based on the logical framework for each of the Outcomes to promote coherent data collection and reporting.
- To promote the measurement of the impact of the action, the programme will make use of and possible participate in surveys done by others (i.e. national authorities or other donors). Peer review mechanisms will be favoured, alongside with the engagement of relevant national stakeholders in order to promote stronger national M&E capacities.

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

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the importance of the action, a mid-term evaluation(s) will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.
It will be carried out for problem solving, learning purposes, in particular with respect to with respect to the overall strategic approach to the EU in Lebanon in supporting the external dimension of the Green Deal 4.

The Commission shall form a Reference Group (RG) composed by representatives from the main stakeholders at both EU and national (representatives from the government, from civil society organisations (private sector, NGOs, etc.), etc.) levels. If deemed necessary, other donors will be invited to join.

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

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country 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 financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing Decision.

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

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.

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 the EU Delegation fully informed of the planning and implementation of specific visibility and communication activities before the implementation. 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.

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:

| Contract level (i.e. Grants, Contribution Agreements, any case in which foreseen individual legal commitments identified in the budget will have different log frames, even if part of the same Action Document) |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| ☐              | PC-37177 Grants (direct management)             |
| ☐              | PC-41117 Grants (direct management)             |