



EN

**THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**ANNEX II**

**of 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 2021-2023**

**Action Document for Civil Society Facility Southern Neighbourhood 2021**

**ANNUAL ACTION PLAN**

This document constitutes the annual 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**

<b>1. Title CRIS/OPSYS Basic Act</b>	Civil Society Facility Southern Neighbourhood 2021 Multi-annual action plan part I in favour of Southern Neighbourhood for 2021-2023 CRIS number: NDICI-GEO-NEAR/2021/043-026 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)
<b>2. Team Europe Initiative</b>	No
<b>3. Zone benefiting from the action</b>	The action shall be carried out in the following locations and/or involve citizens from the following countries, as per Art. 43(1) of the Regulation (EU) 2021/947: Algeria, Egypt, Israel <sup>1</sup> , Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine <sup>2</sup> , Syria <sup>3</sup> and Tunisia.
<b>4. Programming document</b>	Communication for a renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood JOIN (2021) 2 final of 09.02.2021 Regional South Multiannual Indicative Programme (2021-2027)
<b>5. Link with relevant MIP(s)</b>	Regional South Multiannual Indicative Programme (2021-2027)

<sup>1</sup> See 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 on [http://eurlex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C\\_.2013.205.01.0009.01.ENG](http://eurlex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2013.205.01.0009.01.ENG).

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

<sup>3</sup> Co-operation with the Government of Syria suspended since 2011.

<b>objectives/expected results</b>	Support Measure in favour of civil society			
<b>PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION</b>				
<b>6. Priority Area(s), sectors</b>	150 Government and Civil Society			
<b>7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>	Main SDG: 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.			
<b>8 a) DAC code(s)</b>	15150 - Democratic participation and civil society			
<b>8 b) Main Delivery Channel @</b>	50000 Other			
<b>9. Targets</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
<b>10. Markers (from DAC form)</b>	<b>General policy objective @</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>RIO Convention markers @</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	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"/>
<b>11. Internal markers</b>	<b>Policy objectives</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Digitalisation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tags: digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship job creation digital skills/literacy digital services		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Connectivity @</u> Tags: transport people2people energy digital connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Migration @</u>	<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

<b>12. Amounts concerned</b>	Budget line: 14 02 01 10 Total estimated cost: EUR 15 600 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 14 500 000 Total co-financing by grant beneficiaries: EUR 1 100 000
------------------------------	--

### MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

<b>13. Implementation modalities (type of financing and management mode)</b>	Project Modality <b>Direct management</b> through: - Grants - Procurement
--	--

## 1.2. Summary of the Action

This action will address challenges faced by the civil society organisations (CSOs) in the Southern Neighbourhood countries: the political context does not provide for enabling environment of civil society, restrictive legislation is affecting freedom of assembly and association augmented by measures introduced during COVID-19 pandemic. The capacity of CSOs *per se* and with a view to engaging in policy dialogue, advocacy or its watchdog role remains weak despite previous training and information campaigns.

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is **to foster and promote a functioning pluralistic and participatory democracy in the Southern Neighbourhood countries**. This will be done mainly addressing the following specific objectives:

- 1. To increase participation of CSOs in policy making process and policy dialogue, promotion of public accountability and advocacy role of civil society**
- 2. To enable CSOs in the Southern Neighbourhood to participate in structured dialogue with the European Union**

This will be done via mix of capacity building, trainings and policy dialogue between CSOs and EU, Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) and regional technical assistance for civil society.

Target groups of the action is the civil society in the Southern Mediterranean.

The action is part of the special measure for civil society outlined in Regional Multi-annual Indicative Programme for Southern Neighbourhood 2021-2027. This action is the implementation of the Flagship initiative 2 on Human rights, the rule of law, and modern, effective administrations, governance and accountability<sup>4</sup> which is part of the New Agenda for the Mediterranean outlined in the February 2021 Joint Communication<sup>5</sup> of the European Commission and the High Representative .

The Action will contribute to SGD 16 (Peace, Security and Strong Institutions), namely the targets 16.7 (Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels) and 16.10 (Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements)

## 2. RATIONALE

### 2.1. Context

The **situation of civil society** in the Southern Neighbourhood (SN) region differs from one country to another but some common features can be pointed out. In a large number of SN countries, the **political context** does not provide for enabling environment of civil society, with old and new legislation restricting its role, affecting freedom of assembly and association. The **capacity** of civil society organisations (CSOs) *per se* and with a view to engaging in policy dialogue, advocacy or its watchdog role remains weak despite training and information campaigns. Internal governance issues, lack of policy dialogue opportunities and advocacy experience are some of the challenges faced by today's CSOs. A regional cooperation and networking are recognised as possible ways to strengthen CSOs' capabilities and access to lessons-learned from other countries. Furthermore, organisations which are eager to take part in the various consultations on the EU policies and programmes in the Southern Neighbourhood often have insufficient knowledge of the **Euro-Mediterranean partnership** mechanisms. In addition, access to funds remains difficult for many CSOs due to **complex procedures of international donors** but also due to lower interest in the region as conditions for work in the Southern Neighbourhood have become more restrictive.

Focusing on the Mediterranean region, **a regional structured dialogue** started in 2013 with the aim of creating a sustainable structure for open dialogue between Civil Society, the EU and the Authorities on a regional level. Against this context, the EU is firmly committed to supporting efforts for civil society to flourish and become active and influential in the southern Neighbourhood region. To this end, promoting **an enabling environment** with partner countries is fundamental, and can be pursued via various dialogue mechanisms at regional and national level.

Promoting **active participation by CSOs** in policy making is key and hence the relevance to support **capacities at management and advocacy levels, abilities to monitor reforms and play an efficient watchdog role**. They also need support for enhancing their **internal governance, accountability and transparency, as well as networking and coordination**.

The European Commission launched in 2011 **the Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility**, with the objective to strengthen civil society's capacity to promote and monitor reform, to carry out advocacy work and to increase public accountability. This regional Civil Society Facility South was extended until 2018 and was later praised as a successful step forward in support to CSOs. It complemented bilateral and thematic programmes and focused in particular on capacity development of CSOs at regional level. The action proposed here will be a

---

<sup>4</sup> Multi-country - The EU will support civil society organisations and their inclusive involvement in the reform process. This will include actions to develop the capacity of civil society organisations, build up the leadership skills of civil society and strengthen work with civil society to, inter alia, tackle disinformation and support the green and digital transition.

<sup>5</sup> [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/92844/joint-communication-southern-neighbourhood\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/92844/joint-communication-southern-neighbourhood_en)

new phase of the Civil Society Facility for the Southern Neighbourhood which stands on the following EU policy framework.

As stated in the review of the *European Neighbourhood Policy*<sup>6</sup> from the year 2015, sub-national, national and intra-regional civil society should be supported further, both through direct means and through facilitating other organisations' involvement. The EU should support developing the capacities of civil society professionals and leadership in the neighbourhood, using programmes such as Civil Society fellowships, recognising the important role of young people in that regard. The support to civil society for is mentioned in the review.

On 9 February 2021 a new *Joint Communication* of the European Commission and the High Representative entitled "*Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood*"<sup>7</sup> was adopted outlining the major priorities for cooperation with the region for the next Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-27. This Joint Communication states that civil society organisations remain highly relevant interlocutors in the shaping and monitoring of EU cooperation. Among other it proposes to provide capacity building for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in a multi-country Flagship initiative to support civil society organisations and their inclusive involvement in the reform process.

The Civil Society Facility takes a coherent and supporting approach towards the other programmes and instruments targeting CSOs, such as the **geographic and thematic programmes**. *The EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024*<sup>8</sup> defines the priorities of the EU and its Member States in this field in relations with all third countries. The section related to promoting fundamental freedoms and strengthening civic and political space states that the EU will promote a safe and an enabling environment for civil society as actors in their own right, including long-term strategic support to capacity building and meaningful participation of civil society at country, regional and global level.

These policy orientations also represent the ground for the *Thematic Programme for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) 2021-2027* under the NDICI which will be in complementarity of the proposed regional cooperation. Its aim is to support an inclusive, participatory, empowered, and independent Civil Society and democratic space in partner countries, an inclusive and open dialogue with and between Civil Society.

According to EU's Gender Action Plan<sup>9</sup> (GAP III) women's civil society organisations are acknowledged as key partners in partnership building, policy dialogue and service delivery (i.e. support to victims/survivors of gender based violence against women). Women's active and meaningful participation in decision-making processes is essential for sustainable development, democratic state building and good governance, for which WCOs in the Southern Neighbourhood region are key interlocutors in policy and political agenda setting, acting as mediators between women of all backgrounds, especially those in risk of exclusion and vulnerability, both in rural and urban areas, and local and national authorities.

## 2.2. Problem Analysis

### *Short problem analysis*

An empowered civil society is a crucial component of any democratic system. CSOs contribute to building more accountable and legitimate states, leading to enhanced social cohesion and more open and deeper democracies. Civil society development in the SN witnessed a boom in the months following the Arab spring with opening space of civic work but also international donor interest.

---

<sup>6</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/review-european-neighbourhood-policy-enp\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/review-european-neighbourhood-policy-enp_en)

<sup>7</sup> [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/92844/joint-communication-southern-neighbourhood\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/92844/joint-communication-southern-neighbourhood_en)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/11/19/council-approves-conclusions-on-the-eu-action-plan-on-human-rights-and-democracy-2020-2024/>

<sup>9</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_20\\_2184](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_2184)

A certain level of development has been achieved since then but there are still gaps to be filled. The technical, managerial and advocacy capacities of CSOs are uneven, often with fewer, well established and active organisations in the capitals, but much weaker capacities at municipal and grass-roots level. The new context raises the issue of the representativeness and legitimacy of these new players, their internal governance, their ability to co-ordinate and network with their peers instead of competing for resources, etc. Knowledge on policy-making and effective advocacy campaign work is missing. Watchdog role has proved to be effective and more lessons learnt are to be shared among the Southern Neighbourhood (SN) countries in order to strengthen the capacities and more South-South networking and experience sharing should be supported. In a recent survey done by IEMED over a fourth of the respondents considered that helping “establish networks and platforms to link up civil society actors” was the main action the EU should pursue via its CSO programme together with involving them further in policy dialogue (almost 25 % of respondents of the survey)<sup>10</sup>.

The enabling environment for civic activism has changed since the “Arab Spring” started. Some protest ethos persists around the whole region with larger waves of protest such as Hirak movement in Algeria or 2019 protests in Lebanon. Most Arab governments have responded by trying to stifle civic politics. Regimes have introduced more severe restrictions on civil society organisations. While Egypt’s restrictive NGO laws are well known, even supposedly more open governments like those in Tunisia and Morocco have found ways of constricting civil society operations. Openness for policy dialogue from the side of government has remained only in Tunisia, in most of the Southern Neighbourhood the divide between authorities and CSO is growing.

Since 2011, the EU has emphasised the will to engage more strategically with SN civil society and has provided significant political and financial support to multi-stakeholders cooperation, notably by empowering CSOs and particularly their platforms and representative organisations active at national, regional and global levels, to participate effectively in dialogues and in all phases of policy-making. Civil Society Fora in the Neighbourhood South have taken place annually since 2014 with the objective of creating space for dialogue among all partners. Since then, events have taken place both in the Neighbourhood South and in Brussels which contributed to policy making while connecting civil society, EU institutions and other regional entities around issues of concern and interest in the regional agenda.

Under the new Civil Society Facility South, the structured dialogue will be taken forward by involving larger group of CSOs with larger scope of topics and at the same time keeping the civil society input to the Forum in the hands of CSOs.

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

The direct beneficiaries (Framework Partners) will be regionally relevant organisations based in EU or SN with long-term track record in support of independent civil society who will become partners of the EC for implementation of capacity building. Financial support to third parties, but also in policy dialogue mentioned under Specific objective 2. These are well established organisations and/or networks with good knowledge of the local situation and local partners in at least 3 countries of the region who are able to transfer knowledge and foster regional advocacy and cooperation/networking in capacity building projects.

The target groups of capacity development and FSTP provided by Framework Partners are CSOs in large sense in the Southern Mediterranean focusing on various issues (good governance, rule of law, human rights issues, women and youth organisations, think tanks focused on advocacy and policy dialogue, watchdog organisations, environmental organisations etc.)

---

<sup>10</sup> Link to EuroMeSCo IEMED survey to be added.

Local and national authorities should be involved in policy dialogue where possible. The DG NEAR Headquarters (mainly its regional SN unit B2) and the EU Delegations in the SN countries will be involved in the structured dialogue and also will benefit from a support scheme under technical assistance contract.

### 3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

#### 3.1. Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is **to foster and promote a functioning pluralistic and participatory democracy in the Southern Neighbourhood countries.**

The Specific Objectives (Outcomes) of this action are to

**1. Increase participation of CSOs in policy making process and policy dialogue, promotion of public accountability and advocacy role of civil society**

**2. Enable CSOs in the Southern Neighbourhood to participate in structured dialogue with the European Union**

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

*contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1):*

**1.1 Improved competences of local CSOs** in internal control and governance, policy-making and policy dialogue, advocacy and public accountability through capacity building (in synergy with FSTP in the next output)

**1.2 Regional actions in policy-making and policy dialogue**, advocacy and public accountability financed via Financial support to third parties (FSTP) for civil society organisations in Southern Neighbourhood (in synergy with the capacity building in the previous output)

**1.3 Next generation of civil society leaders is supported**; selecting and building capacities of young leaders who have shown great potential in civil society through the Civil Society Fellowships/Leadership and common actions developed by the leaders

**1.4 EUDs and HQ have used ad-hoc support** in their work with civil society

*contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2)*

**2.1 CSOs from Southern Neighbourhood participate in structured dialogue with the EU**

(a) Advanced regional and thematic policy dialogue between civil society and relevant stakeholders including the EU is organised, ensuring the involvement of a wide variety of CSOs, including women's organisations.

(b) Southern Neighbourhood CSOs improve knowledge about the EU and EU policies and network with other organisations involved in the structured dialogue

**2.2 CSOs representatives** (nominated by the Framework partners) **present recommendations during the CS Forum South in Brussels that are received by Commission services, EEAS, EUD representatives** (organised in cooperation with Commission services, Framework partners and logistical support by the Technical Assistance)

#### 3.2. Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1.1: Trainings, coaching, networking activities, experience sharing events, development of online tools

Activities related to Output 1.2: Financial support to third parties (FSTP) to be developed by the Framework Partners based on their long-term strategy and experience and best fitted to current conditions of the target groups.

Activities related to Output 1.3: Series of enhanced capacity building trainings for young leaders of the civil society followed by common actions carried out by the selected leaders. The 5 priorities of the Commission will be among the topics selected for the trainings.

Activities related to Output 1.4: Trainings for HQ and/or EUDs, studies, analysis based on requests of HQ and/or EUD in the field of civil society including the challenges of certain civil society organisations (i.e. women's rights organisations, LGBTQI, people with disabilities) to be included in relevant policy making processes

Activities related to Output 2.1: Preparatory policy dialogue trainings, workshops, brainstorming sessions, drafting of common documents, advocacy campaigns ensuring inclusion and participation of the less visible CSOs groups (such as: WCSOs, LGTBQI, people with disabilities)

Activities related to Output 2.2: Conference organisation in Brussels, coordination of the input from the side of the European institutions and the Framework Partners

All these dimensions will be gender sensitive in order to truly embrace good governance principles. Women's Civil Society organisations will be supported throughout, and their presence at decision-making tables ensured to the extent possible.

### **3.3. Mainstreaming**

#### **Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Biodiversity**

**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 it will mainstream gender equality and youth issues and seek to integrate, and capitalise on existing thematic, regional and bilateral programmes that are already implemented with CSOs active in the fields of gender equality and support for youth, as well as Women's CSOs active in other fields of intervention within this action.

In this respect, this action contributes to the implementation of the GAP III and the advancement of EU gender equality objectives, in dialogue with the Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood, by strengthening women's rights organisations and social movements as key strategic partners for good governance building in the region, and in our cooperation. All trainings, guidelines, evaluations, briefings and communication will be gender responsive in order to have a positive impact on women's and men's lives, making policy making processes and relevant structured dialogues with the EU inclusive and representative of women and men in all their diversity. Therefore, building WCSOs capacities and knowledge of policy making, as well as of effective advocacy campaigning among others, will be addressed in order to support WCSOs as key and legitimate partners in decision making, as well as strategic and necessary interlocutors of those who still fall outside the normative remit of citizenship (women in risk of exclusion and vulnerability, women facing multiple levels of discrimination, those with disabilities etc). Having a gender responsive approach to capacity building will also be key to build all CSOs capacities on GEWE, as they relate to the different objectives of this intervention, and across the different thematic fields covered.



Gender data will be collected in order to track progress and identify potential hubs for unconscious gender bias.

### Human Rights

The projects funded under this action will be designed and implemented according to the rights-based approach methodology, as outlined in the 2014 Tool-box "a Rights-Based Approach, encompassing all human rights, for EU development cooperation" and the respective Council Conclusions . In so doing, the projects will give due regard to the working principles of applying all rights, participation and access to the decision-making process, non-discrimination and equal access, accountability and access to the rule of law, transparency and access to information.

### Democracy

The action is in the field of Human rights, democracy and good governance target area and will focus on promoting a functioning pluralistic and participatory democracy in the Southern Neighbourhood countries as an overall objective.

### 3.4. Risks and Lessons Learned

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
Category 1 – Risks related to external environment	Risks of political instability in the region and possible changes of governments or regimes.	H	M	Monitoring of the situation and supporting democratic structures and principles.
Category 1 – Risks related to external environment	Growing restrictive environment for the civil society to work in, less possibilities to organise trainings or advocacy campaigns	M	H	Engage with state actors, local authorities and CSOs to re-build trust.
Category 2 – Risks related to planning, processes and systems	Insufficient amount of qualitative proposals for financial support to third parties.	M	M	Guidelines for financial support to third parties must be formulated in an accommodating manner; capacity building provided for grants management at all stages of the FSTP

### Lessons Learned:

In two recent **evaluations of the support to civil society in the Southern neighbourhood** the regional Civil Society Facility South was evaluated for the years 2012-2018 and praised as a successful step forward in support to CSOs. It was meant to complement bilateral and thematic programmes and focus in particular on capacity development of CSOs at regional level. It produced a concrete added value in terms of supporting regional grantees (and related sub-grantees) to empower CSOs (primarily at local/national level); and capacity development initiatives by the Technical Assistance (TA), particularly the ‘Fellows’ scheme.

There were the following **recommendations** to be taken forward.

- The use of the broadest possible range of different funding modalities, including Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP, also called sub-granting) mechanisms is strongly advised in order to diversify and enhance outreach to civil society organisations with different levels of managerial, technical and advocacy capacities.
- More sophisticated approach to capacity building in order to guarantee sustainability of its impact is recommended and promotion of such programmes based on concrete demands from the ground.
- The structured dialogue of CSOs with EU needs to be maintained and advanced in order to promote the participation of civil society in domestic policies, in the EU programming cycle and in international processes.

In recent **Euromed survey by IEMED** organised in parallel to the preparations of the Joint Communication on “Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood” respondents identified that helping “establish networks and platforms to link up civil society actors” and “to involve civil society in policy dialogue” were the two main actions the EU should pursue.

The ongoing technical assistance project “**Med Dialogue for Rights and Equality**” started with a mapping of CSOs active in regional advocacy and policy dialogue initiatives and subsequently built the whole project of various capacity building initiatives for this target group with the goal of creating long-lasting partnerships and sustainable impact. It is also showing great success with its enhanced capacity building programme for young civil society leaders (continuation of successful ‘Fellows’ programme praised in evaluation) followed by common action performed across the whole region – new component developed by the current project and highly successful also according to the EU Delegations. This technical assistance will be maintained on regional level to enable the continuation of the successes with the update of the current priorities.

The ongoing project “**EU and South Neighbourhood Civil Society: Enhancing Dialogue (MAJALAT)**” has been organising the structured dialogue of the civil society active in the Southern Neighbourhood with the European Union since 2018. Local workshops in Southern Mediterranean countries with preparatory discussions were followed by South Seminar which gathered all recommendations later presented at the Civil Society Forum in Brussels. Although ownership of the dialogue lies with the civil society there is a mismatch of expectations on the side of EU and CSOs and current evaluation is suggesting changes in the format of the dialogue.

### **3.5. The Intervention Logic**

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that the Action aims to promote CSOs’ contribution to participatory and inclusive democracy in the Southern Neighbourhood countries. It will do so by strengthening the capacities of CSOs in the SN in the areas of policy-making and policy dialogue, watchdog role and public accountability, advocacy and citizens engagement. This will be achieved by

- a series of capacity building activities,
- financial support to third parties given to local organisations and
- involvement of the CSOs into the structured dialogue with the EU.

The CSOs will improve their capacities in policy-making and policy dialogue, watchdog role and public accountability, advocacy and citizens engagement. They will create partnerships across the region and carry out activities (financed under the FSTP) in the above mentioned areas which will influence the policy-makers, citizens and other stakeholders. This will contribute to the good governance, rule of law, human rights, public accountability of the SN countries. The CSOs will improve their knowledge on the EU policies and programmes in the region and will contribute with their local knowledge of the problems into the structured dialogue with the EU.

Outputs 1.1, 1.2 and 2.1 will be done via several Framework Partnership Agreements signed with trusted organisations with long-term experience in the region in the above mentioned areas. The Framework partners

will receive funding to organise capacity building and to award grants in the areas of policy-making and policy dialogue, watchdog role and public accountability, advocacy and citizens engagement. They will also receive funding to organise and prepare input into the structured dialogue with the European Commission. All of the activities will have a networking, alliance building and multi-country approach.

Outputs 1.3, 1.4 and 2.2 will be part of a technical assistance service contract including:

- a successful Civil Society Fellowships/Leadership programme with common actions educating the next generation of civil society leaders; These will be selected in gender responsive way, so that these leaders are aware of the differential gender dimension of the questions they will address.
- ad hoc support to HQ and EUDs under the form of trainings, mappings, expert consultations and
- logistical preparation of the Civil society Forum as part of the structured dialogue with Civil society.

The structured dialogue activities will be followed from the side of the EU via a Steering committee which will include representatives of the EU Delegations in the Southern Neighbourhood countries, European External Actions Service and other line DGs where relevant and representatives of the Framework Partners and the Technical assistance. The Steering committee will oversee the preparation of the Brussels Civil Society Forum South as well as other involvement of the Framework partners and other CSOs in consultations on EU policy and programming.

The action will seek cooperation with other regional institutions and projects such as Union for the Mediterranean, Anna Lindh Foundation and others.

Framework partners (FP) will be selected so that jointly with the EU, they will strengthen and promote CSOs' contribution to participatory and inclusive democracy in the Southern Neighbourhood countries. Financial framework partnerships will be established and regulated through financial framework partnership agreements (FFPA) that will define the respective roles and responsibilities of the Commission and its partners in implementing the partnership. Potential partners will be CSOs with significant experience in providing support (including financial) to civil society organisations in at least 3 countries of the Southern Neighbourhood and/or having experience in advocacy activities in the region.

In accordance with Art. 130 of the Financial Regulation the signature of FFPA's will mark the set of common interests and objectives of the FP according to EU policies and strategic partners' strategy, covering the full duration of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027.

Framework partnerships will take into account the following aspects:

- Actions to be defined and agreed jointly between the Commission and its strategic partners, on the basis of the mutual interests and common general objectives shared by the Commission and its partners in pursuing the European Union policy on cooperation to development;
- Possible impact of actions on challenges and citizens in the Southern Neighbourhood by contributing to advancing the contribution of civil society to participatory and inclusive democracy, informing decisions, sharing best practices and engaging stakeholders.

Depending on availability of funds, specific grant agreements for the period 2021-2025 may be awarded to successful applicants, as legally binding agreements containing clear objectives, activities, results, indicators and time-bound targets to measure the performance of the action, and sustainability, to enable Framework Partners to implement the following:

- Prepare and carry out capacity development programmes to the specificities of the local communities (Output 1.3);
- Design and provide financial support to CSOs (Output 1.4)

- Advance regional and thematic policy dialogue between civil society and relevant stakeholders (Output 2.1)

The indicative maximum duration of the FFPAs will be 4 years.

### 3.6. Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

Results	Results chain: Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (value and year)	Targets (value and year)	Sources of data (1 per indicator)	Assumptions
<b>Impact</b>	To foster and promote a functioning pluralistic and participatory democracy in the Southern Neighbourhood countries via civil society support	Improved participation in political processes and better access of CSOs to decision makers	Scores in Freedom in the World report year 2021	Scores in the Freedom in the World report unchanged or improved	<i>Freedom House "Freedom in the World Report" Country Scores<sup>11</sup></i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
<b>Outcome 1</b>	1. Increased participation of CSOs in policy making process and policy dialogue, promotion of public accountability and advocacy role of civil society.	1. Evidence of strengthened technical and advocacy capacities and public dialogue skills of CSOs; Number and diversity of CSOs (including women's organisations) invited/participating in/contributing to national/local policy dialogue/strategy discussions or consultations.	CSO Sustainability Index for MENA (2019) <sup>12</sup> - Median score of Overall CSO Sustainability across SN	CSO Sustainability Index for MENA - Median score of Overall CSO Sustainability across SN unchanged or improved	CSO Sustainability Index for MENA	CSOs interested building their capacities in effective engagement in the policy-making process and policy dialogue, promotion of public accountability and advocacy role of civil society.
<b>Outcome 2</b>	2. CSOs in the Southern Neighbourhood are enabled to participate in structured dialogue with the European Union	2. Number and type (disaggregation) of CSOs involved in structured dialogue with the EU	0	500	Project reports CSOs materials	CSOs in the Southern Neighbourhood are interested to participate in structured dialogue with the EU
<b>Output 1.1 related to outcome 1</b>	1.1 Improved competences of local CSOs in internal control and governance, policy-making and policy dialogue, advocacy and public accountability through capacity building	1.1 Number of CSO representatives trained by this Action on internal control and governance, policy-making and policy dialogue, advocacy and public accountability through capacity building	0	Number of CSOs representatives receiving capacity building in output related areas in SN (to be determined during	Project reports Database of training participants	Enabling environment for organisation and participation in such programme in SN

<sup>11</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/csosi-mena-2019-report.pdf>

				<i>inception phase)</i>		
<b>Output 1.2 related to outcome 1</b>	<i>1.2 Regional actions in policy-making and policy dialogue, advocacy and public accountability financed via Financial support to third parties (FSTP) for CSOs in Southern Neighbourhood</i>	<i>1.2 Number of CSO projects benefitting from (or reached by) EU support (Result indicator 4.4.3) in policy-making and policy dialogue, advocacy and public accountability</i>		<i>Number of EU-funded projects in output related areas in SN (to be determined during inception phase)</i>	<i>Reports on FSTP awarded</i>	<i>Enabling environment for FSTP in SN</i>
<b>Output 1.3 related to outcome 1</b>	<i>1.3 Capacities of young leaders enhanced through the Civil Society Fellowships/Leadership programme and common actions</i>	<i>1.3.1 Number of young civil society leaders trained 1.3.2. Number of Common actions carried out by the leaders</i>	<i>0 0</i>	<i>100 4</i>	<i>Reports from Fellowship/Leadership programmes and common actions</i>	<i>Enabling environment for organisation and participation in such programme in SN</i>
<b>Output 1.4 related to outcome 1</b>	<i>1.4 EUDs and HQ used ad-hoc support in their work with civil society</i>	<i>1.4 Number of studies/reports and trainings/expert support provided via EU support</i>		<i>To be determined with EUDs during inception phase</i>	<i>Evaluation reports</i>	<i>Demand and interest from the side of HQ and EUDs</i>
<b>Output 2.1 related to outcome 2</b>	<i>2.1 CSOs from Southern Neighbourhood with enhanced knowledge of the EU participate in structured dialogue with the EU and formulate recommendations</i>	<i>2.1.1 Number of participants to locally held workshops/trainings as part of structured dialogue 2.1.2 Number of policy recommendations prepared by CSOs as a result of the participation in the structured dialogue</i>	<i>0 0</i>	<i>Target number of EU-funded projects in output related areas in SN (to be determined during inception phase)</i>	<i>Reports of the projects</i>	<i>Interest of CSOs in structured dialogue Openness of EU institutions for the dialogue</i>
<b>Output 2.2 related to outcome 2</b>	<i>2.2 CSOs present recommendations that are received by Commission services, EEAS, EUD representatives during the CS Forum South in Brussels</i>	<i>2.2 Percentage of participants in CS Forum South rating the event as useful or very useful (disaggregated by sex and age)</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>60 %</i>	<i>Evaluation reports of the Forum</i>	<i>Commission services, EEAS, EUD representatives are interested and actively involved in the Forum and open to recommendations</i>

## 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 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<sup>13</sup>.

#### 4.3.1. Direct Management (Grants)

##### a) Purpose of the grants

The grants will contribute to outputs 1.1 and 1.2 of the specific objective 1 and output 2.1 under specific objective 2 (section 3.1). These will be achieved via several Framework Partnership Agreements signed with trusted organisations with long-term experience in the region in the above mentioned areas. The Framework partners will receive funding to organise capacity building and to award grants in the areas of policy-making and policy dialogue, watchdog role and public accountability, advocacy and citizens engagement. They will also receive funding to organise and prepare input into the structured dialogue with the European Commission. All of the activities will have a networking, alliance building and multi-country approach.

##### b) Type of applicants targeted

The eligibility of applicants is restricted to:

- Legal entities that qualify as civil society organisations
- Originating from:
  - i. **EU partner countries** eligible for Union funding under the NDICI instrument for the Southern Neighbourhood
  - ii. **EU Member States** and contracting parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area.

The successful applicants will be trusted organisations with long-term experience in the region in the areas of policy-making and policy dialogue, watchdog role and public accountability, advocacy and citizens engagement. The applicants will have experience in at least 3 countries of the SN for the duration of at least 3 years.

#### 4.3.2. Direct Management (Procurement)

The procurement will contribute to outputs 1.3 and 1.4 under specific objective 1 and output 2.2 under specific objective 2 (section 3.1).

---

<sup>13</sup> [www.sanctionsmap.eu](http://www.sanctionsmap.eu) Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

#### 4.4. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

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

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

#### 4.5. Indicative Budget

<b>Indicative Budget components</b>	<b>EU contribution (amount in EUR)</b>	<b>Third-party contribution (amount in EUR)</b>
<b>Grants</b> – total envelope under section 4.3.1	11 000 000	1 100 000
<b>Procurement</b> – total envelope under section 4.3.2	3 500 000	N.A.
<b>Evaluation</b> – cf. section 5.2 <b>Audit</b> – cf. section 5.3	will be covered by another Decision	N.A.
<b>Communication and visibility</b> – cf. section 6	N.A.	N.A.
<b>Totals</b>	<b>14 500 000</b>	<b>1 100 000</b>

#### 4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

This action will be managed by Commission services (Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations) and, where relevant, in close collaboration with other relevant EU institutional stakeholders, in particular with the EEAS and EU Delegations.

For Objective 1 and 2 under Direct management (grants) the Framework partners will be in regular contact with DG NEAR project manager responsible for the action in order to create synergy among the FPAs activities.

For Objective 1 and 2 under Direct Management (both grants and procurement), a Joint Steering committee will be set up with participation of DG NEAR, EEAS and EU Delegations as well as Framework partners and technical assistance representative to ensure smooth cooperation on preparation of the structured dialogue of civil society with the European Union and mainly the Brussels Civil Society Forum.

For Objective 1 and 2 under Direct Management (procurement) a steering committee will be set up with representatives of DG NEAR and the technical assistance team which will meet on regular basis and discuss the progress of the report.

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.

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

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring:

- The monitoring level will be for each contract under the action. Every contract will have its own logical framework which will be completed during the inception period and updated during implementation.
- Every progress report and the final report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action.
- To ensure a closer follow-up, every implementing partner will provide a monthly Flash Report indicating the past activities, activities in the pipelines, difficulties encountered and measures taken to mitigate.

## **5.2. Evaluation**

Having regard to the nature of the action, a final evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.

It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the fact that (i) the innovative approaches fostered through numerous activities financed under this programme, and (ii) the highly expected potential for synergies and complementarity with other actions financed by the European Union in the framework of its bilateral co-operation with each country in the region.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 2 months in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner countries 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 countries, 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.

## **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. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY**

Communication and visibility is a contractual obligation for all entities implementing EU-funded external actions to advertise the European Union's support for their work to the relevant audiences.

To that end they must comply with the instructions given in the [\*Communication and Visibility Requirements of 2018\*](#) (or any successor document), notably with regard to the use of the EU emblem and the elaboration of a dedicated communication and visibility plan, to be completed for every action at the start of implementation.

These obligations apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, the partner country (for instance, concerning the reforms supported through budget support), contractors, grant beneficiaries or entrusted entities. 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.