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THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX II

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multiannual action plan in favour of the NDICI Neighbourhood East Region part 2 for 2021

Action Document Support to Public Administration Capacity Building in EaP

REGIONAL 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 of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

1. SYNOPSIS

1.1. Action Summary Table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS Basic Act	Support to Public Administration Capacity Building in EaP Regional Action Plan 2021 CRIS number: 2021/042-999 / OPSYS ACT-60642 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)
2. Team Europe Initiative	No
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The action shall be carried out in the Eastern Neighbourhood Region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine)
4. Programming document	Multiannual indicative programme for the Eastern neighbourhood 2021-2027 ¹
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results	Priority area 2: Accountable institutions, the rule of law and security, specifically 2.2.1.2. 2. Supporting partners' efforts for a modern, accountable and effective public administration.
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Priority area 2: Accountable institutions, the rule of law and security
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG (1 only): SDG 16. Promote peaceful & inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

¹ C(2021)9370 final - Multiannual indicative programme for the Eastern neighbourhood for the period 2021-2027

	Other significant SDGs (up to 9) and where appropriate, targets: SDG 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.			
8 a) DAC code(s)	15110 Public sector policy and administrative management			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	61000 – Private sector in provider country			
9. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
10. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Internal markers	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Digitalisation Tags: digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship job creation digital skills/literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

digital services		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Connectivity</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tags: transport		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
people2people		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
energy		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
digital connectivity		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Migration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduction of Inequalities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
COVID-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

BUDGET INFORMATION

12. Amounts concerned	Budget line: BGUE-B2021-14.020111-C1-NEAR Total estimated cost: EUR 4 000 000.00 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 4 000 000.00
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MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

13. Implementation modalities (type of financing and management mode)	Project Modality Direct management through: - Procurement
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1.2. Summary of the Action

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that peer-to-peer learning within the region and with the European Union bears tremendous potential, and is therefore strongly reflected in the entire programme.

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to provide better public services in the Eastern Partnership region. A well-functioning and modern administration is a key element of any democracy and good governance. At the same time, an accountable, transparent and efficient public administration at all levels of government is not only a democratic right of citizens but also a key driver of economic growth. To ensure that the benefits of growth are shared equally and that the priorities and needs of all members of society is adequately reflected, women's equal participation in decision-making and gender-responsive policy making is crucial.

The programme proposes two main components to achieve the overall objective. Firstly, to better align Public Administration Reform related processes to EU and international standards. This component aims to better train civil servants particularly in matters of accountability, ethics, public administration efficiency and European values such as human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and human rights including gender equality and minority rights– through a scaled-up job shadowing in EU Member States and possibly EU Institutions. The exchange seeks to deepen knowledge, transfer of competences and expertise in the field of European affairs, EU, policies, EU institutions, decision-making processes and integration mechanisms.

Secondly, the action aims to increase knowledge of European values and principles of good administration leading to more transparency. As a first step towards achieving the desired result, a scoping study will research, propose and widely consult options of establishing a regional network of public administration

reform capacity building institutions and assess possible formats and implementation modalities. There is an evident need for additional capacity building and training but further research is needed to identify the added benefits of a regional initiative, organisation and coordination mechanisms with existing initiatives. The priority will be focusing on changing the administrative culture towards a values-based and citizen-centred administration in line with international standards. Furthermore, this component seeks to foster engagement and local ownership through a series of multi-stakeholder conferences.

This intervention is relevant for the Agenda 2030. It contributes primarily to the progressive achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16: promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. It also actively contributes make societies more gender-equal, fair and inclusive by improving the functioning of public administrations in the long-term.²

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Context

This intervention actively contributes to pillar 5 Governance, Peace and Security, Human Development of the Commission's policy priorities and international partnerships. Despite the countries' individual differences, similar challenges and gaps exist in the domestic governance systems across the six Eastern Partnership countries. While progress may differ from partner country to partner country, the consolidation of deep and sustainable democracy, respect for the rule of law and responsive public administrations is still to be achieved across the region. Poor governance and in particular corruption are closely interlinked, while the administration of justice and public sector reform do not always meet European standards.

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative supports the delivery of many global policy objectives, including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the UN 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. This programme contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 16, which is specifically about the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels.

Over the years, the Eastern Partnership has been instrumental in bringing the EU and the partner countries closer together. A dedicated EaP Panel for Public Administration Reform has created a community of practitioners and fostered peer-to-peer learning. The Joint Communication "Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020 - Reinforcing Resilience - an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all"³ builds on the work under the 20 Deliverables for 2020. It specifically confirms the importance of Public Administration Reform to foster resilient, gender-equal, fair and inclusive societies as well as economic growth. The EU's incentive-based approach ('more for more' and 'less for less') will continue to benefit those partner countries most engaged in reforms. Based on these objectives, a set of concrete post-2020 priorities have been identified in the Joint Staff Working Document issued on 2 July 2021⁴ focusing on recovery, resilience and reform. One of the two pillars upon which the new agenda is structured is Governance which stresses the need for partner countries to work towards an accountable, transparent and efficient public administration at all levels, including through establishing a virtual EaP Academy for Public Administration to train civil servants and establishing a job-

² Joint Staff Working Document SWD(2021) 186 final) of 02.07.2021 "Recovery, resilience and reform: post 2020 Eastern Partnership priorities"

³ Joint Communication JOIN(2020) 7 final of 18.03.2020 "Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020 "Reinforcing Resilience - an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all"

⁴ Joint Staff Working Document SWD(2021) 186 final of 02.07.2021 "Recovery, resilience and reform: post 2020 Eastern Partnership priorities"

shadowing scheme with EU Member States. Public Administration Reform remains a key priority in strengthening states' capacity to govern in a context of fragility. Transparent, accountable and efficient administrations are crucial to respond to crisis situations like the global COVID-19 pandemic. It is a cross-cutting issue of fundamental importance for success in political and economic reforms and building a basis for implementing good governance standards. The quality of administration directly impacts governments' ability to provide public services, to prevent and fight against corruption, and to foster competitiveness and growth.

Modern, efficient, accountable, transparent and participatory governance will make administrations fit for the challenges of the 21st century. Making administrations, economies and societies resilient to climate change, migration challenges, digitalisation and social change can bear significant opportunities. Investments and genuine political commitment for reform now can prevent costly future interventions and leverage future growth. Another bottleneck to modernise administrations and governance systems is to become citizen-centred, inclusive and participatory. The structural inclusion of civil society and interested citizens in decision-making increases public trust, accountability and fosters more equal and just societies. Furthermore, participatory governance also renders government actions more relevant to the actual needs of citizens. Achieving the joint political and climate targets require further capacity building, restructuring and training of civil servants across the region.

During the consultations about the future of the Eastern Partnership since the Partnership's 10 year anniversary in 2019, there has been a strong call for continuing public administration reform across the region. Several key stakeholders expressed a strong demand in deepening regional cooperation of public administration reform around European values. Innovative ideas with varying scope and ambition including the creation of a regional network of administration academies, capacity building and exchange programmes were proposed. Another element emphasised by stakeholders was the need to take an inclusive approach and to cooperate closely with civil society and to follow international standards for public administration reform. While there was evidently a strong demand to intensify regional cooperation in this area of cooperation, further research on the most effective instruments is needed.

The action will seek complementarity with other institution building tools available in the EU Neighbourhood, notably Twinning, Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX), technical assistance and budget support operations. Such complementarity will be ensured through co-ordination with the Partner countries and relevant EU Delegations, particularly when the country benefits from assistance in the domains of Public Administration Reform and Public Financial Management. This proposed intervention builds on bilateral public administration reform support provided by the EU and its Member States in the region. There are also existing training facilities in the Eastern Neighbourhood and in the EU that instruct civil servants from the Eastern Neighbourhood. The programme complements these existing initiatives and places public administration capacity building into a European setting based on common values. Further technical capacity building will remain necessary to complement this regional programme.

2.1. Problem Analysis

The implementation and political commitment to genuine Public Administration Reform following international standards varies across the Eastern Neighbourhood region.

There is a difficult context for a professional, meritocratic, de-politicised, reliable public administration to emerge. The understanding of the rule of law has not yet been wholly established in institutions or in people's behaviours and mentalities. Civil service reform efforts have not yet had the desired effect of reducing politicisation and other distortions such as personalisation of power and patronage. A professional class of permanent civil servants, upon which holders of public office rely and which can exercise a check on power,

has not emerged yet. Talent retention and merit-based career progression of well-trained civil servants is a challenge. Corruption remains a problem in both the political sphere and public administration.

The majority of Eastern Neighbourhood countries have a legalistic administrative culture, whereby the adoption of legislation is perceived as an objective in itself rather than an option to reach a desired policy objective. Implementation of adopted legislation, including the EU *acquis*, has often faced difficulties, mainly due to a lack of systematic application of impact assessments and stakeholder consultations that would help to ensure the best possible legal option. European values of transparency, accountability and citizen-centricity are not yet fully implemented in daily practice. There is limited data on the adherence of public officials in the region to European values. Further research is also needed in how prepared civil servants are for major challenges such as climate change, environmental protection and digitalisation.

The overly-legalistic administrative culture contributes to the fact that generating credible and relevant policy options remains a challenge in partner countries. The main shortcomings relate to the lack of proper policy analysis capacities, poor quality of legislative drafting and policy development, poor inter-ministerial co-ordination, inadequate public consultation and weak fiscal and regulatory impact assessments. In addition, costs for implementation of policies are not systematically calculated and budgeted. These elements largely explain why the beneficiaries continue to suffer from poor implementation and enforcement record of laws and policies.

The overall administrative architecture is fragmented, leading to a proliferation of agencies with various accountability lines and other dysfunctions. Often, basic functions of the state are not fully assured, severe co-ordination problems are frequent and administrative procedures tend to be sector or law specific, although there are increasing initiatives to introduce general laws on administrative procedures.

Resource allocation lacks transparency, ministries have very limited capacities to plan and contribute to this. National budgets are not understood as policy instruments and sound, effective management of public finances is not always seen as an important part of public administration. The system of managerial responsibility and delegation of authority, a core principle of sound financial management, has not been properly developed. In most policy domains, financial impact assessments are not carried out yet.

Armenia

In spring 2019, OECD-SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management) presented the findings of its first full assessment of the public administration in Armenia based on “The Principles of Public Administration: A Framework for ENP Countries.” The quality of the strategic framework related to Public Administration Reform (PAR) is weak - they often lack clarity in setting reform objectives with corresponding outcome level indicators and targets, and do not sufficiently provide costings nor monitoring and reporting arrangements. Responsibility for PAR is assigned at the political but not organisational level. The legal framework for policy development and co-ordination is in place, but is not comprehensively supported with guidance from the centre of government. The quality of strategic planning and monitoring is poor and lacks well-defined policy objectives, outcome-level indicators or detailed cost estimates. While the transparency of the Government’s decision-making is commendable, internal enforcement is not consistent. As measured by a SIGMA-commissioned survey, the perception of businesses regarding the clarity and stability of government policy making is not wholly favourable.

The new Law on the Civil Service has significantly expanded the scope of the civil service but certain special groups of public servants and top-level positions are still excluded. The wide use of discretionary bonuses compromises the fairness of remuneration. Although recent institutional and legislative framework changes promote integrity and prevent corruption their implementation has not begun. In terms of accountability, the structure of the state administration does not have a consistent and rational design. The serious imbalances between agencies’ autonomy and ministerial guidance are an obstacle in executing Government policies. The

legal framework and institutional set-up for administrative justice is adequate. However, the efficiency of the administrative courts is a key concern, as indicated by a significant backlog of cases.

Azerbaijan

The presidential decree of 11 April 2016, abolished the Civil Service Commission and the State Student Admission Commission. In its place, a single organisation called the State Examination Center (SEC) was established as a public legal entity performing the duties and functions of both institutions. Although a public legal entity is not a state body, it is engaged in the policies and activities of national and public importance and serves public interest.

The “Strategy for Civil Service in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2019-2025” was approved by Presidential Decree in 2018. The key objective of the strategy is to increase the efficiency of the state bodies, developing staff potential, and forming a corpus of civil servants with high ethical values, knowledge and skills. The implementation of the Strategy is governed by two action plans covering the periods 2019-2021 and 2022-2025. The action plans define activities, targets, indicators of achievement and corresponding sources of evidence for the targets defined in the Strategy. The strategy identifies relevant state bodies for each action with the State Examination Centre being the main executing organisation.

The EU has been supporting the SEC in the last years through TAIEX and SIGMA projects. A new project to support the implementation of the Strategy is to start in December 2021 and will focus inter alia on competency models in civil service, professional development of civil servants, e-civil service development and Improving and monitoring of implementation of legislation.

Belarus

With regard to the participation of Belarus, and in line with the Council Conclusions of 12 October 2020, the EU will focus on intensifying cooperation with non-state stakeholders, including notably civil society, independent media, and youth.

Georgia

Georgia remains committed to Public Administration Reform (PAR) in line with the EU Principles of Public Administration. The 2018 SIGMA baseline assessment on policy development showed the need to further strengthen policy planning, coordination, monitoring and reporting. In line with these recommendations, a Government decree was adopted at the end of 2019, which lays the regulatory and procedural foundation for evidence-based policy development. Nevertheless, its implementation requires comprehensive training and support.

Some key issues in the area are inter- and intra-institutional coordination, capacities in data analysis, policy oriented budgeting, gender budgeting and results monitoring. Latest and forthcoming assessments in the area of Public Financial Management demonstrate that continued progress is needed for more inclusive policy development and medium-term budgeting, performance oriented external audit and follow up of audit recommendations by the Parliament, managerial and internal control mechanisms for policy monitoring, public investment and assets management and public procurement.

The introduction of a mandatory Regulatory Impact Assessment for specific legislation in January 2020 is also an important milestone. At the same time it requires extensive training for proper implementation. In February 2020, amendments to the Law on Public Service (LPS) allowed for internal competitions to fill civil service vacancies, aimed at increasing career development opportunities and staff retention within each public institution. Separation of civil service from political influence is a long process, and more needs to be done with regards to professional development of civil servants, remuneration and appraisal system.. Applying PAR to regional and local governance is the next step and challenge.

Moldova

The AA/DCFTA⁵ signed by Moldova and the EU provides a framework for the gradual integration of Moldova into the EU. Among other undertakings, Moldova committed to pursue reforms of the public administration to develop, consolidate and increase the stability and effectiveness of democratic institutions and the rule of law, to ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, to ensure effectiveness in the fight against corruption and to contribute to building an accountable, efficient, transparent and professional civil service. Some important building blocks of good public administration are already in place in Moldova, but several serious challenges remain, in particular concerning the implementation of policies and laws which have already been adopted. The Government of Moldova acknowledges PAR as a priority in central policy documents, although not in a coherent way. The Government's focus is on improving service delivery and public financial management. The policy framework is fragmented, as the PAR agenda is implemented through seven sector planning documents in the areas of service delivery, e-government, PFM, regulatory reform and civil society development. The legal framework for policy development and co-ordination, and for European integration, is in place but is fragmented.

Ukraine

Ukraine has clearly demonstrated a commitment to modernise public governance and establish closer links with the EU in recent years. Among other results, this commitment led to the signing in 2014 of an Association Agreement (AA), which included the establishment of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. Overall, Ukraine has already made considerable progress. New legislation improving the professionalisation of the civil service has been implemented and administrative justice improved. In other areas such as remuneration of civil servants, reform has begun, but it is still far from being aligned with the Principles of Public Administration. Important legal changes have also been introduced in the area of civil servants' recruitment, but further steps are needed to improve both the legislative and practice-related aspects of the process. The service delivery area is similar: many initiatives to modernise public services have been undertaken with considerable donor support, but most of them have not yet produced the desired results (one exception is the establishment of an administrative service centre network). A general shortcoming across all areas is that draft laws, strategies and reform initiatives are rarely costed properly. Because the majority of draft laws are initiated by Members of Parliament rather than the Government, they do not go through the usual quality control mechanisms that drafts prepared by the Government do. In addition, significant carrying forward of the commitments of Government plans to the next period indicates that the plans are generally too ambitious.

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

The main stakeholders are the state institutions responsible for reforms of public administration, as well as the state structures in charge of co-ordination among institutions, independent bodies and the Parliament within the scope of their scrutiny and oversight powers. The actual organisation varies according to the assignment of responsibilities at the level of each NDICI-GE beneficiary. An illustrative list is provided hereafter:

- Ministries and offices of the minister responsible for co-ordination of reforms of public administration and public administration development, such as: Ministry of Public Administration, Ministry of Interior, Office of the Minister for Public Administration; Civil service commissions/offices; Government Offices/General Secretariats; Legal Secretariats; Ministries of Justice, Ministries of Finance, oversight bodies, Supreme Audit Institutions, Public Procurement Authorities, Parliaments.

⁵ Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Moldova, of the other part *OJ L 260, 30.8.2014, p. 4–738 (BG, ES, CS, DA, DE, ET, EL, EN, FR, HR, IT, LV, LT, HU, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SK, SL, FI, SV)*

- Civil servants and administrators across the entire civil service, at both central and local level
- Line Ministries may also be involved as beneficiaries.
- Relevant local authorities may also be involved as beneficiaries
- Schools and training entities including academia and think tanks.

Indirect stakeholders are the public as a whole.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1. Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to provide better public services in the Eastern Partnership region.

The Specific Objectives (Outcomes) of this action are to

1. Better align Public Administration Reform related processes to EU and international standards
2. Increase knowledge of European values and principles of good administration leading to more transparency

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

- 1.1 Contributing to Outcome 1 and 2: On a pilot basis, support some of the EaP and European civil servants in deepening knowledge, transfer of competencies and expertise in the field of European affairs, EU institutions, decision-making processes, policies and integration mechanisms.
- 1.2 Contributing to Outcome 1 and 2: To prepare a widely consulted scoping study on establishing an EaP Public Administration Academy.

3.2. Indicative Activities

Indicative activities related to Output 1.1:

- An up-scaled pilot job-shadowing programme has been established.
- Provide technical assistance to facilitate the posting and exchange of the scheme participants.
- Organise networking events for alumni and alumna of job shadowing scheme.
- Provide logistical support for events and placements.

Indicative activities related to Output 1.1 and Output 1.2:

- Conduct desk research and data collection including mapping existing international support in the area, training facilities, training needs etc. in the Eastern Neighbourhood and the relevant EU countries.
- Conduct interviews with relevant stakeholders to identify training needs and gaps, opportunities, bottlenecks and challenges.
- Prepare efficient, costed and financial sustainable proposals for a regional network of training facilities/EaP School for Public Administration. This should include:
 - Sequence of establishing the school (including possible links or further development of already existing initiatives) including cost estimates
 - Selection of participants and long-term talent retention. Propose best practices around selection procedures and optimal number of targeted civil servants
 - Language of instructions, survey language skills in Eastern Partnership administrations (incl. local levels)
 - Identify thematic needs and corresponding existing curricula, including addressing the issue of keeping such curricula up to date and inclusivity of agenda setting to support domestic reform

- agendas (reflecting EU values and priorities) while ensuring that training content and focus are determined by all actors concerned (not only by government)
 - Explore possibility for a modular, hybrid approach with mostly online trainings and rotational in-person workshops
 - Explore the possibility of a degree, certificate
 - Develop technical specifications of any potential IT procurement
- Organise a series of workshops to consult expert practitioners on possible proposals as part of a participatory consultation to build consensus and build solutions in preparation of next stages at national and regional level.

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 no further action was required.

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).

Public administrations have a strong impact on environmental protection and climate change through setting horizontal policy and legislative development processes as well as direct actions such as provision of government services and public procurement. The utilisation of climate risk assessments across all public decision-making and training staff on potential implications has not yet been fully adopted. Environmental protection and climate change often remain restricted to respective line ministries and are not mainstreamed.

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 improving gender equality is significant objective.

Gender equality is a core value for the European Union. Through the EU's Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Action 2021–2025 (GAP III)⁶, the EU has made strong commitments to accelerate progress on empowering women and girls and push for more and faster progress toward gender equality in the partner countries, including increasing the level of women participation, representation and leadership in politics and governance, via support for democracy and governance programmes and public administration reforms.

In line with the OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life, gender equality in public administration covers the following aspects⁷:

- Mainstreaming gender equality in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of relevant public policies and budgets to deliver gender equality results
- Strengthen accountability and oversight mechanisms for gender equality and mainstreaming initiatives across and within government bodies
- Achieving a balanced representation of women and men in public decision making positions
- Improve gender equality in public employment

⁶ EU Gender Action Plan III: An ambitious agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment in EU external action, 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/join-2020-17-final_en.pdf

⁷ [2015 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life](#)

- Strengthen international co-operation through continuously sharing knowledge, lessons learned and good practices on gender equality and mainstreaming initiatives in public institutions

These aspect should be addressed in the actions covered by this programme, related to output 1 and 2.

The EU has a long-term commitment to assist its partners to improve public policy outcomes and services for all citizens. Strengthening public governance is key to delivering gender equality results. Meaningful changes on the ground require a coordinated, competent and powerful whole-of-government approach, and clear and effective mechanisms in place within and across government institutions to be able to translate public policies, programmes, services and budgets into concrete benefits for both men and women.

Making public administrations more efficient, accountable and inclusive are key priorities to be supported through this action. Partner countries are not yet sufficiently applying gender mainstreaming in their procedures. Gender mainstreaming involves assessing the different implications of public policies on both men and women. A commitment to gender mainstreaming is one of the most effective ways in which governments can support and promote gender equality. A lack of good governance and public administration reform hamper equal opportunities for women and men. Both components of this intervention directly promote gender equality by choosing gender balanced participants and make it part of the capacity building curricula. A key element of the peer to peer capacity building is to transfer knowledge of European values and how they can be implemented in administrations in practice. Gender equality is a core European value.

Human Rights

The actions will be implemented following a rights-based approach, encompassing all human rights, which will be particularly relevant for people in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations and those living in rural areas. The five working principles below will be applied at all stages of implementation: legality, universality and indivisibility of human rights; participation and access to decision-making processes; non-discrimination and equal access; accountability and access to the rule of law; transparency and access to information. The Steering Committees co-chaired by the European Commission and the implementing partners will ensure that this approach is taken across all projects implemented throughout the different policy areas identified. Efforts will be made to promote accessibility, equality, environmental sustainability and climate change adaptation as well as to identify opportunities for change in these areas

Democracy

This proposed intervention complements existing public administration reform efforts by the Partner countries to make them more efficient, transparent and accountable. Co-creation processes involving civil society and academia through consultation and close cooperation is a core element of components 1 and 2, and critical to ensuring inclusive and responsive processes and sustainable results on the ground. Establishing a pro-democratic and genuinely participatory administration is directly targeted in all activities.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

Unresolved protracted conflicts continue to hamper development in the region and have already caused numerous casualties, damages and displacement of the local population. In this regard, the action takes into account the conflict sensitivity, in particular by raising awareness about the needs of people affected by conflicts and providing adequate support. In line with the humanitarian-development and peace nexus, the Action should promote stronger involvement of the public administration in the concerned countries in providing sustainable solutions to conflict affected people, internally displaced people and refugees, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable individuals.

3.4. Risks and Lessons Learned

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/Medium/Low)	Impact (High/Medium/Low)	Mitigating measures
2 – people and organisation	Limited interest by EU/Eastern Neighbourhood public administrations in dedicating sufficient resources	M	M	Consultative design of the programme aims at increasing ownership and commitment. Inclusive bilateral and regional policy dialogue.
1 – external environment	Lack of commitment of political and administrative leaders within national administrations to good governance and PAR	H	H	The EU will continue to raise awareness of the importance of PAR, will target broader range of stakeholders (including civil society) that can support and encourage/add pressure for reform to take effect, and will support more structured and better informed policy dialogue.
1 – external environment	Inadequate co-ordination between different national stakeholders involved in reforms of public administration	M	M	The Commission and relevant stakeholders such as OECD-SIGMA will ensure involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the design and implementation and implementation of Work Programmes (including non-state actors).
1 – external environment	Low capacity of the (now NDICI-GE for the Eastern Neighbourhood) beneficiaries to absorb and integrate advice and recommendations	M	M	The Commission and relevant stakeholders such as OECD-SIGMA will design the Work Programmes by involving the partner administrations so that their absorptive capacities of are taken into account; the action will pursue realistic results.

Lessons Learned:

The proposed interventions complements ongoing public administration reform support programmes across the region and relevant political dialogues.

Due to the lack of regional programmes in public administration reform in the Eastern Neighbourhood up to date there is limited data about the overall receptiveness of regional cooperation in the sector. Further research

is needed to substantiate an evidence-based intervention based on real needs on the ground. There is limited data on a regional needs assessment of thematic shortcomings of existing training facilities for civil servants. Moreover, further research is needed to outline all existing support from international donors in this subject area to the partner countries.

The COVID-19 pandemic has radically altered professional life including public administrations. From the daily work of officials in telework to additional services being delivered digitally to citizens. While the long-term impact of this shift require further analysis, preliminary conclusions indicate that remote work, or a hybrid model of remote work and physical presence, can be efficient and bears possibilities for this intervention. Meetings including trainings can be conducted fully virtually with low or no costs to increase the number of participants. This approach can be cost-effective to reach a larger number of people and if well-coordinated can reduce the time costs for participants.

Previous pilot projects to implement job shadowing between European, EU and administrations in the Eastern Neighbourhood illustrated that a long-term commitment to invest the necessary resources is paramount for its success. This starts with political commitments at the highest level but has to trickle down to the technical level as well. Both the receiving and sending administrations have to demonstrate willingness to invest resources for the placement to be meaningful. Furthermore, initial lessons learnt from the pilot job shadowing programme funded by the TAIEX instrument indicate that placements beyond a two week period are outside of the scope of the instrument. Demanding human resource requirements for the European Commission should also be noted.

Past experience has shown that while specific actions to build administrative capacities in different sectors may have temporarily improved capacities, the results may not have been sustainable and in fact may have only further fragmented public administrations. The risk for fragmentation can be effectively reduced by ensuring that the key cross-cutting elements applicable to whole administration (e.g. inclusive and evidence-based policy and legislative development, merit-based human resources management, managerial accountability, administration values etc.) are addressed in EU funded sectoral projects.

Experience gained from the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) in Danilovgrad, Montenegro, have been integrated thoroughly into the consultation on and design of this programme. Close attention has been paid to both the success and challenges in establishing ReSPA as a recognised knowledge hub for public administration reform in the Western Balkans region. ReSPA started as a virtual school and functioned as such for several years under the guidance of a Steering Committee chaired by the Commission and with the support of the European Institute of Public Administration and OECD/SIGMA. This allowed for a smooth establishment of the organisation while raising the interest of the participating institutions. The political commitment and ownership by ReSPA members is crucial for the good functioning and sustainability of the organisation, including annual budgetary commitments by partner countries.

3.5. Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that peer-to-peer learning within the region and with the European Union bears tremendous potential, and is therefore strongly reflected in the entire programme.

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to provide better public services in the Eastern Partnership region. A well-functioning and modern administration is a key element of any democracy and good governance. At the same time, an accountable, transparent and efficient public administration at all levels of government is not only a democratic right of citizens but also a key driver of economic growth.

The programme proposes two main components to achieve the overall objective. Firstly, to better align Public Administration Reform related processes to EU and international standards. This component aims to better

train civil servants particularly in matters of accountability, ethics, public administration efficiency and European values such as gender equality – through a scaled-up job shadowing in EU Member States and possibly EU Institutions. The exchange seeks to deepen knowledge, transfer of competencies and expertise in the field of European affairs, EU, policies, EU institutions, decision-making processes and integration mechanisms.

Secondly, to increase knowledge of European values and principles of good administration leading to more transparency. As a first step into achieving the desired result, a scoping study that will research, propose and widely consult options of establishing a regional network of public administration reform capacity building institutions and assess the possible formats and modalities of doing so will be prepared. Further research is needed to identify the added benefits of a regional initiative, organisation and coordination with existing initiatives. Currently, the implementation of adopted legislation, including, where appropriate, that aligning with the EU acquis, has often faced difficulties, mainly due to a lack of systematic application of impact assessments and stakeholder consultations that would help to ensure the best possible legal option. This action will contribute to building capacity for impact assessments and consultations. The priority will be focusing on changing the administrative culture towards a values-based and citizen-centred administration. Furthermore, this component seeks to foster engagement and local ownership through a series of multi-stakeholder conferences. A legalistic administrative culture, whereby the adoption of legislation is perceived as an objective in itself rather than an option to reach a desired policy objective, remains a challenge across the region.

3.6. Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	Better provision of public services in the Eastern Partnership region	World Bank World Wide Governance Indicator on Government Effectiveness*	AM: 50 (Percentile rank in 2019) AZ: 46.15 BY: 44.23 GE: 76.92 MD: 37.98 UA: 39.90	Improvement in all six countries by at least 1%-point	World Bank World Wide Governance Indicators	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 1	Better aligned Public Administration Reform related processes to EU and international standards	1.1 OECD SIGMA Public service delivery indicator* 1.2 E-Government Development Index 1.3 Comprehensive gender-responsive Public Financial Management (GRPFM) baseline assessment (9 Performance Indicators) published, and subsequent action plans implemented*;	1.1 2020: UA: 1,5/5 AM: 2,5 ⁸ 1.3 AM: 0.71 AZ: 0.71 BY: 0.81 GE: 0.72 MD: 0.69 UA: 0.71 1.2 2020: No GRPFM published in EaP countries.	1.1 Improvement in all measured countries. 1.2 Improvement by 0.2 in all countries 1.2 GRPFM-based Action Plans published and implemented in at least 4 countries.	1.1 OECD-SIGMA baseline measurement reports ⁹ 1.2 Gender-responsive PFM: PEFA assessments and Action Plan progress reports	
Outcome 2	Increased knowledge of European values and principles of good administration leading to more transparency	2.1 Corruption index perception (CPI) in public sector 2.2 Mapping of existing programme support and	2.1: AM: 49/100 (year 2020) AZ: 30 BY: 47 GE: 56 MD: 34	2.1: improvement in all countries by 2 2.2 1	2.1: Corruption Perception Index 2.2 project progress reports	

		training facilities, bottlenecks and opportunities	UA: 33 2.2: 0			
Output 1.1	On a pilot basis, support some of the EaP and European civil servants in deepening knowledge, transfer of competencies and expertise in the field of European affairs, EU institutions, decision-making processes, policies and integration mechanisms.	1.1.1 Number of EaP partner countries and EU member states public administrations participating in peer-to-peer exchanges 1.1.2 Number of civil servants who have participated in a tailor-made job shadowing scheme 1.1.3 % of participants satisfied with the job-shadowing scheme	1.2.1: N/A 1.1.2: 0 1.1.3: n/a	1.2.1: at least 10 1.1.2: 60 1.1.3: at least 70% of participants are satisfied	1.2.1: Progress reports 1.1.2: Progress reports 1.1.3: Feedback surveys of the participants of the scheme	
Output 2.1	A widely consulted scoping study on establishing an EaP Public Administration Academy has been prepared.	2.1.1 Number of consultative workshops 2.1.2 Proposal for EaP School for Public Administration	2.1.1 0 2.1.2: 0	2.1.1 At least 6 2.1.2: 1	2.1.1 Progress reports; meeting minutes from the workshops 2.1.2 Progress reports; proposal	

⁸ Only available in some countries.

⁹ Not available for Azerbaijan and Belarus

4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1. Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with a partner country/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 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 measures¹⁰.

4.3.1. Direct Management (Procurement)

The proposed procurements of services links to the achievement of Specific Objective 1 and Specific Objective 2.

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 realization of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult (Article 28(10) NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

4.5. Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.4	
Specific Objective 1: Facilitate knowledge transfer, exchange of experience and networking between EU and EaP civil servants to ensure the delivery of high	

¹⁰ 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.

quality public services in line with the European Principles of Public Administration.	
Procurement (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.1	3 000 000.00
Specific Objective: Enhance professionalization, effectiveness and accountability of the civil service through a more modern training and capacity development	
Procurement (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.1	1 000 000.00
Procurement – total envelope under section 4.3.1	4 000 000.00
Budgetary guarantee – amount of annual provisioning cf. section 4.4.8	n/a
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	will be covered by another Decision
Communication and visibility – cf. section 6	n/a
Contingencies	n/a
Totals	4 000 000.00

4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The responsibility of the programme lies with the Commission. The steering of the projects will be led by Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations.

Each contract will have a Steering Committee meeting which will be chaired by the Commission and will include representatives of other concerned EU institutional stakeholders (e.g. EEAS and the EU Delegations). For the different components of the programme, a back to back steering committee can be envisaged. The steering committee shall meet regularly, at least once per year to provide an update on the annual activities and for the monitoring of the implementation. Each implementing partner will provide the Secretariat of the Steering Committee for their respective components.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the Commission may participate in the above governance structures set up for governing the implementation of the action.

5. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1. Monitoring and Reporting

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

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).

5.2. Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a final evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components 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 this is the first regional democracy support programme.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 30 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 report 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](#) (as updated by the communication and visibility requirements in force under the 2021-2027 programming period), 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 delegation agreements.

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

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

Implementing partners shall keep the Commission and concerned EU Delegation/Office fully informed of the planning and implementation of specific visibility and communication activities before work starts. Implementing partners will ensure adequate visibility of EU financing and will report on visibility and communication actions as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees. For communicating on Team Europe Initiatives, the EU and its Member States can rely on the specific guidance on the Team Europe visual identity.