



ANNEX 2

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the Neighbourhood East Regional Action Programme 2018 Part II (including one action on the 2019 budget)

Action Document for the Regional East Civil Society Facility 2018

ANNUAL PROGRAMME

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation and action programme/measure in the sense of Articles 2 and 3 of Regulation N° 236/2014.

1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number	Regional East Civil Society Facility 2018 CRIS number: ENI/2018/041-232 financed under European Neighbourhood Instrument	
2. Zone benefiting from the action/location	Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine), Turkey and the Russian Federation The action shall be carried out at the following location: Eastern Partnership (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine), Turkey and the Russian Federation	
3. Programming document	Regional East Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2017 – 2020 Single Support Framework 2018 – 2020 in the favour of Ukraine/ Annual Action Programme for Ukraine 2018 Single Support Framework 2017 – 2020 in the favour of Georgia/ Annual Action Programme for Georgia 2018	
4. SDGs	Primary SDG Goal(s) 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	
5. Sector of intervention / thematic area	Civil society	DEV. Aid: YES
6. Amounts concerned	Total estimated cost: EUR 17 636 111 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 16 000 000 This action is co-financed by potential grant beneficiaries for an indicative amount of EUR 1 636 111	
7. Aid modality(ies) and	Project Modality Direct management	

implementation modality(ies)	Grants – call for proposals/direct award; Procurement of services			
8 a) DAC code(s)	15150 – Democratic participation and civil society			
b) Main Delivery Channel	21000 – International NGO 23000 – Developing country-based NGO			
8. Markers (from CRIS DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	■
	Aid to environment	■	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality (including Women In Development)	■	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade Development	■	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	■	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
	Biological diversity	■	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	■	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	■	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change adaptation	■	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagships	N/A			

SUMMARY

The Joint Declaration adopted by the EU Member States and all six EaP countries at the 5th Eastern Partnership Summit in 2017¹ acknowledged the role of civil society in achieving the 20 Deliverables for 2020² and recognised that 'broadened outreach and targeted support to grassroots civil society organisations (CSOs) and social partners, remains an integral part of this [*the Eastern*] Partnership'.

The 14 March 2016 Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) confirmed the five principles guiding the EU's policy towards Russia, most recently re-confirmed by the FAC meeting of 16 April 2018. The fifth of these principles reaffirms the "need to engage in people-to-people contacts and support Russian civil society". In view of the worsening operating environment for human rights and independent civil society organisations in Russia, there is a vital need to sustain, and where possible, step up EU and Member States' action and cooperation in support of Russian civil society, particularly in the area of human rights.

¹ Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit (Brussels, 24 November 2017), <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/31758/final-statement-st14821en17.pdf>

² ' Eastern Partnership - 20 Deliverables for 2020 Focusing on key priorities and tangible results', Joint staff Working Document, https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/swd_2017_300_f1_joint_staff_working_paper_en_v5_p1_940530.pdf

While substantial civil society support packages aiming to diversify and expand outreach to various civil society actors are being implemented and rolled out in each of the countries, the regional component of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Facility 2018 – hereby presented – aims to underpin existing support and ensure continuity of relevant support. The action proposes a series of measures relevant across countries or regionally, that together with ongoing actions are meant to increase the regional visibility of civil society work and advance the role of civil society as a promoter of democratic values across the wider Eastern Neighbourhood³. The Action proposes:

1. Support to the European Endowment for Democracy
2. Set up of Framework Partnership Agreements on capacity building, community engagement and CSO constituency building
3. A "Rapid Response Mechanism" to enable fast reaction to changes in the policy debate and/or political landscape.
4. Support to the Black Sea Trust, for financial support to third parties towards regional projects covering minimum three countries in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood
5. Support to organisations of trainings and events (services)

1 CONTEXT

1.1 Context Description

The Joint Declaration adopted by the EU Member States and all six EaP countries at the 5th Eastern Partnership Summit in 2017 acknowledged the role of civil society in achieving the 20 Deliverables for 2020 and recognised that 'broadened outreach and targeted support to grassroots CSOs and social partners, remains an integral part of this [*the Eastern*] Partnership'. Based on this Declaration, 'Civil society support for better governance' was one of the eight priority sectors put forward by the EU until 2020. This came with ambitious goals to maximise the impact of the link between CSOs and citizens and to reaffirm the role of CSOs in democratic processes in partner countries. The 20 Deliverables for 2020 pursue an intensified policy dialogue with CSOs and a new tailor-made approach to capacity development⁴.

Space for civil society has been either shrinking or is under threat in almost all Eastern Partnership countries (except for Georgia). Either restrictions to civil society work are legally in place (Belarus), or governments intended to issue legislation that would de facto curtail the work of CSOs on public accountability issues (Ukraine and Moldova), or foreign funding to CSOs is heavily regulated (Azerbaijan).

The level of trust in CSOs is relatively low. Out of all non-government actors the Orthodox Church enjoys a high level of credibility, as the most trusted CSOs in 5 out of the 6 Eastern

³ The term 'Wider Eastern Neighbourhood' refers in the context of this Action Document for the Regional East Civil Society Facility 2018 to the following countries: the six Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine), Turkey and the Russian Federation.

⁴ 'Eastern Partnership - Focusing on key priorities and deliverables', Joint Staff Working Document, 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/near-eeas_joint_swd_2016467_0.pdf.

Partnership⁵ countries, overall trust in CSOs and their agendas has been decreasing over time⁶. Drawing on various polling sources (wherever possible), the level of trust in CSOs seems to be linked with a general perception that CSOs are directly addressing citizen needs⁷.

Disbelief that a pluralistic debate is a crucial element of democracy has left room for vilifying political dissent across the Eastern Partnership. According to the World Values Survey⁸, on average, more than half of the respondents surveyed in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova⁹ and Ukraine between 2006 and 2014 believed that a strong leader who does not have to go through election cycles and Parliaments is a good thing. Only 30% agreed with this statement in Azerbaijan. While this opinion can be a consequence of transition fatigue, it has also laid fertile ground for civil society groups critical to the government to be portrayed as enemies of the state and their work to be depicted as heavily politicised, despite of the fact that transition from civic activism to seeking a political office is exceptional.

In Russia, despite the increasingly difficult environment, especially concerning the freedoms of association, assembly and expression, media freedoms and the rights of persons belonging to minorities (including LGBTI), Russian civil society is still functioning and able to achieve positive results. As to EU support, there are functioning forms of cooperation in which it is still possible to reach out to independent civil society organisations, including in the framework of regional cooperation or through intermediary organisations. These forms of cooperation should be preserved and, where possible, they should be adapted to reflect the evolving nature of the challenges for independent civil society and human rights work in Russia.

1.2 Policy Framework (Global, EU)

EU's commitment to support civil society is global. Support to the development of capacities of CSOs, engagement in policy dialogue and protection of participation space are the three areas towards which the European Commission has committed its work through the 2012 Communication 'Roots of Democracy and Sustainable Development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations'¹⁰. The 2012 Communication brought the recognition – shared unanimously by EU Member States – that CSOs are governance actors in their own right. They should therefore receive an opportunity to become equal partners in EU assistance to partner governments. Since 2012, the EU has repeatedly stated its commitment through a

⁵ Public opinion in all 5 Orthodox EaP countries seems to be highly supportive of providing public funding for Churches: Georgia – 82%, Moldova – 68%, Armenia – 62%, Belarus – 44%, Ukraine – 38%.

'Religious Believe and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe'. Pew Research, 2017.

See page 102 <http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2017/05/15120244/CEUP-FULL-REPORT.pdf>.

⁶ Survey data shows in Georgia a decrease from 41% in 2007 to 20% in 2011

(http://www.ipseng.techtone.info/files/6213/6724/4357/SUMBADZE_-_Book.pdf), 'The Caucasus Barometer' 2015 USAID CSO Sustainability Index,

https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1861/Europe_Eurasia_CSOSIReport_2015_Update8-29-16.pdf.

⁷ 2016 Survey data from the Public Attitudes Survey in Georgia indicates that 24% of Georgian respondents believe that NGOs address issues of their concerns.

⁸ World Values Survey Wave 6 2010-2014 Official Aggregate v.20150418. World Values Survey Association (www.worldvaluessurvey.org). Aggregate File Producer: Asep/JDS, Madrid, Spain.

⁹ Hereinafter referred to as Moldova.

¹⁰ COM(2012)492, 12.09.2012

<https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2012-communication-roots-of-democracy-and-sustainable-development.pdf>.

series of policies that have externalities on civil society policy. The Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy¹¹ and the Gender Action Plan¹² in particular, have generated both expectations and opportunities for civil society engagement.

The fast pace of change in the political environment in the EU's wider Eastern Neighbourhood¹³ has brought a need to re-define the narrative surrounding civil society engagement. It has also demanded from CSOs in the region to become better communicators of their work and assume a more assertive governance role. The EU reaction to a number of those changes and crises in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood since 2014 has been reflecting the EU's policy to civil society engagement and support: A number of political commitments came as a response to the 2014 crisis in Ukraine, political changes in Moldova throughout 2015, the possible opening to engage more in Belarus, and shrinking space in Azerbaijan. This part of 'living policy' requires accurate and timely input from CSOs that need to have the capacity to adequately and appropriately communicate their results. As stated above, supporting Russian independent civil society and people-to-people contacts is a key element of the EU's strategy for relations with Russia.

1.3 Public Policy Analysis of the partner country/region

Civil society engagement is key to the achievement of the objectives of the Neighbourhood Policy. The revised EU Neighbourhood Policy¹⁴ of 2015 commits to a higher diversification of the range of civil society actors which the EU engages with. As a reflection of these commitments, the 'Eastern Partnership – Focusing on key priorities and deliverables' Staff Working Document¹⁵ aims not only at civil society engagement in all priority sectors of cooperation between the EU and partner countries, but also sets targets for the outreach of the capacity development programmes in partner countries. As expressed in these documents, the EU seeks meaningful engagement with relevant civil society equally on all the 20 Deliverables in the EaP countries.

1.4 Stakeholder analysis

The structure of the civil society landscape across the region after the fall of the Berlin wall has been fluid. Certain categories of critical civil society actors stand out: grant-making international civil society organisations, established local (country-level CSOs) and new civic actors. The dynamics between the three has been changing in the past almost 30 years, however organisations that have been specialising in capacity development of local CSOs, have been much better at adapting to the local political changes, than the EU was able to do directly. This includes their ability to identify and support new civic actors, as well as monitor the impact of this support. Some of these organisations are drawing funds from business and

¹¹ 'Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy', http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf

¹² 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020', SWD(2015) 182 final, 21 January 2015

¹³ The term 'Wider Eastern Neighbourhood' refers in the context of this Action Document for the Regional East Civil Society Facility 2018 to the following countries: the six Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine), Turkey and the Russian Federation.

¹⁴ 'Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy', Joint Communication, JOIN(2015) 50 final, http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/documents/2015/151118_joint-communication_review-of-the-enp_en.pdf.

¹⁵ SWD(2016)467 of 15.12.2016.

philanthropy, as well as from public sources. For the past 10 years, new actors in this category are CSOs from the EU that have been slowly building a similar profile, using EU (or other) funds that they implement through grant-making mechanisms. This has also facilitated some sort of transition sharing and has had an impact on the landscape of civil society in some of the EU Member States. The European Endowment for Democracy, as one of the organisations that works closest with the EU on these topics, is part of this category, along with organisations such as the Prague Civil Society Centre, the Open Society Foundations, East Europe Foundations or other private funds (e.g. Black Sea Trust or Polish Solidarity).

The European Endowment for Democracy (EED) is a private Belgian foundation established in 2013 through a decision of the EU Council. Its mandate is to fill in gaps in civil society support wherever EU instruments are not able to support entities or actions. With the shrinking space for civil society increasing, the EU has decided that in addition to covering operating costs, it will start granting to the EED project funding, dedicated exclusively to financial support to third parties. This decision was also motivated by the capacity of the EED to work in restrictive environments, which speaks to the technical capacity of this organisation. In addition, the operating grants made available for 2019 – 2021 take into account the increased number of projects that the EED will conduct in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood. Therefore, the EED has the financial capacity to handle a higher amount of support to third parties.

The Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation (BST) has been strengthening regional cooperation, civil society, and democratic foundations in the countries of the Black Sea region. BST also operates a broad definition of what a regional project in the EU's wider Eastern Neighbourhood is – namely, they reflect societal links despite national boundaries, considering CSOs in the EU, as well as Russian and Turkish civil society as critical to identifying and proposing solutions to regional problems. In particular, BST is focused on building trust among citizens and in the public institutions, affirming the value of citizen participation in the democratic process, promoting the involvement of civil society in conflict resolution, and fostering regional cross-border ties in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. In this regard, it supports both regional projects involving CSOs in at least three countries in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood (under their Cross-Border Programme), while working on building stronger links between CSOs in EU Member States in Central and Eastern Europe and those in countries surrounding the Black Sea. Their operating costs for the next 5 years are covered by USAID.

The 2015 Civil Society Facility – Regional East Actions provided EUR 4 million for a Regional Technical Assistance (TA) for capacity development of CSOs. In addition to the four main components, this project allows for marginal activities (foreseen to take up a small part of the budget) related to organisation of events, consultations and trainings with civil society at the demand of EU Delegations. The volume of demand during 2017 was outstanding. The last Project Steering Committee Meeting (13 March, 2018) reached the conclusion that the project is not able to meet the extensive demand from this type of services.

At regional level, the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum is the entity that provides CSOs across the region a vehicle to push their agenda onto the regional debates in the framework of the Eastern Partnership. An action covered by the 2017 Regional Civil Society Facility is dedicated to supporting the Forum reaffirm itself as a relevant actor for regional policy dialogue with civil society, help it overcome the issues that undermine its credibility and increase the appeal for new (and more technical) organisations to see it as a vehicle of promoting their agendas.

Eastern Partnership governments continue to declare their commitment to engage with civil society in policymaking. Despite discrepancies in how open civic space is from one country to the other, the 2017 EaP Summit Declaration – endorsed by all EU and EaP governments – still brings a consensus on the role of civil society as promoting better governance. At the same time, Belarus and Azerbaijan maintain restrictive legislation on the work of CSOs, while Moldova and Ukraine attempted to pass restrictive legislation targeting CSOs operating in the field of public accountability in the past year. In addition, even where there is willingness to work with civil society, governments have low capacity to deal with structured civil society consultations.

The EU (through a grant of the Partnership Instrument) also supports the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum (CSF), which brings together more than 150 EU and Russian NGOs.

All major civil society donors are present in the region, including implementing agencies of EU Member States. The past years have seen some fluctuations in the level and type of their involvement, that have had an impact also on the demand for civil society support from the European Union – namely that EU support should be better adjusted to the needs of newer civil society actors, that it should be mobilised faster and be more aligned to local agendas, much rather than EU priorities.

1.5 Problem analysis/ priority areas for support

The freedom in the world index points to **backsliding in the area of democracy**. Between citizen and state, the role of CSOs to advance the democracy agenda is undeniable. Despite the significant evidence on the link between a strong civil society and good institutions, the current wave of contestation of work conducted by CSOs is forcing the redefinition of a new narrative around civil society work and foreign funding of CSOs. In addition, practical adaptation solutions include:

- bringing CSOs closer to citizens (non-political constituency building)
- supporting formalisation of civic groups and
- legitimising minority views that reflect fundamental values, but would not necessarily have popular support.

Together with links to media organisations, these elements are critical to building more resilient societies.

Lacking platforms for joint regional work – except for the EaP Civil Society Forum - **CSOs in partner countries are relatively isolated**. Although linked by shared societal problems and a comparable institutional history, funding for purely regional projects has been decreasing. The last Call for Proposals for regional projects with EU funds was launched in 2014. The projects funded as a result of that Call are ending in 2018. The EaP Civil Society Forum funds a maximum 20 projects per year, for an average of EUR 20,000, on issues linked to the policy advocacy of the Forum. Links between CSOs are crucial for common problem identification, sharing and developing joint solutions to regional policy issues, fostering learning and innovation, as well as building a common identity. CSOs need to be supported in forming regional networks, developing joint projects on similar issues of regional importance, as well as learning from the experience of CSOs in neighbouring countries (including the EU).

The low technical and financial capacity of CSOs persists. This is impeding CSOs from achieving higher credibility across the region. Organisation of face-to-face trainings and

support to CSOs that understand their role in sector governance to be more engaged in the definition of EU programmes is still in high demand from both CSOs and EU policy makers.

To answer these problems, this action proposes:

- To **reinforce the role of CSOs in the democratisation process** by working closer with the European Endowment for Democracy and by continuing the Rapid Response Mechanism for CSOs; setting-up Framework Partnership Agreements with organisations at regional and local levels who can take on this task for the years to come as well;
- To **encourage regional civil society exchanges within the EaP** and the wider region by making available funding for financial support to third parties specifically for projects covering at least three countries; this will have an EU – Eastern Partnership transition sharing component;
- To **increase the capacity of CSOs to manage projects and engage in EU projects' definition.**

2 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risks	Risk level (H/M/L)	Mitigating measures
Deteriorating security situations	M	Continue to monitor the situation in areas with frozen or ongoing conflicts
Environment for public participation significantly deteriorates in EaP countries	M	Engage in dialogue with the government, case by case
Recipients of financial support to third parties receive extensive pressure	L	The EU is making available an extensive array of mechanisms to support human rights defenders and protect the rights of human rights workers (at risk or not). These instruments can be activated as a mitigating measure
Assumptions		
Possible restrictions to civil society work in EaP countries will still allow for some sort of financial support from foreign donors.		

3 LESSONS LEARNT AND COMPLEMENTARITY

3.1 Lessons learnt

The implementation of higher amounts of targeted civil society support in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood, combined with the new policy to diversify the range of actors the EU engages with (and appropriate methods to do so), have rendered a number of lessons learnt. Here are those that laid the ground for the design of the 2018 Regional Eastern Partnership Civil Society Facility.

The European Endowment for Democracy was able to intervene flexibly and with speed in situations where the EU did not have the ability to do so directly. The support that the EED

makes available has a lot of impact on the ground and goes primarily to CSOs and non-political civic groups. The EU could rely more on the EED to step up its support in the wider Neighbourhood by making available more project funding for democracy building activities of CSOs. Beyond the EED, the increased outreach policy of the EU has generated a number of capacity building projects that have a financial support to third parties component (for example sub-granting). In a recent consultation with the recipients of this support, it became clear that financial support to third parties allows reaching out to CSOs that are not able to directly apply for EU grants and that support made available by CSOs for CSOs is more tailored to their needs. The EU would need to have a long standing and politically recognised relation with these CSOs, which is why framework partnership agreements would be best suited for this. The pilot Rapid Response Mechanism in the 2017 Civil Society Facility is already seeing a lot of demand, which is why support will be made available for it to continue. The implementation of the 2017 RRM is meant to be closely monitored. In case it is proven that the pilot phase is not efficient, the funds foreseen in this action will be reallocated to other components.

The current Technical Assistance component of the Civil Society Facility foresees limited budget for face-to-face trainings with CSOs. Given the demand for support from EU Delegations, a reinforcement of this programme could be foreseen to allow the TA project to support this type of activities across the six EaP countries.

3.2 Complementarity, synergy and donor coordination

Regular coordination exchanges are carried out with USAID, which is the other major donor in the region for regional programmes. A joint effort to work with the German Marshall Fund (GMF) Black Sea Trust would be welcomed by USAID.

DG DEVCO has already selected and signed a number of Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs), but they do not cover the Neighbourhood East.

A new operating grant is foreseen for the EED. To ensure adequate human resources within EED, the size of the operating grant needs to be proportional to the project related funding that this action will make available – so the timing to commit funds in this regard is appropriate.

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Facility technical assistance makes available a range of services for civil society support, targeting generally civil society actors, as well as specifically aiming at better engagement with strategic civil society partners of the EU. This has become a critical tool for the EU to be able to respond to immediate needs and try more innovative means to support CSOs (i.e. development of IT tools).

Significant funds are now being made available for large scale capacity development programmes managed by EU Delegations; however they all focus on reaching out to civil society outside capital cities of EaP countries. Currently there is a major gap in funding regional projects. A new multi-annual programme will be proposed beginning of 2019 covering the complementary support to civil society foreseen in the Single Support Frameworks.

4 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

4.1 Overall objective, specific objective(s), expected outputs and indicative activities

General objective: Strengthen the role of CSOs as governance actors in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood.

Specific objectives:

SO 1: To reinforce the role of CSOs in the democratisation process in Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation.

Result 1. Increased capacity of CSOs, civic groups and independent media to participate in democratic processes.

Result 2. Non-political constituency building of CSOs and civic groups.

Result 3: A "Rapid Response Mechanism" to sudden policy changes.

SO 2: To strengthen intra-regional sharing of transition experience and practice.

Result 4. Approximately 35 regional projects for CSOs from the wider Eastern Neighbourhood have been implemented and strengthened regional links and networks of CSOs.

Result 5. A transition sharing channel has been set up and allows CSOs in new EU Member States and CSOs in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood to share experiences and transfer knowledge.

SO3: To increase the capacity of CSOs to access and manage EU funds.

Result 6. CSOs have increased their capacities through in-country and/or sub-regional face-to-face trainings, based on civil society demands channelled through EU Delegations and Services.

Result 7. CSOs have increased their capacities through participation of selected CSO representatives in relevant regional, European and international events.

Result 8. The visibility of EU funded activities, projects and entities has increased.

This programme is relevant for the Agenda 2030. It contributes primarily to the progressive achievement of SDG Goal(s) 16. This does not imply a commitment by the countries benefiting from this programme.

Main indicative activities

Activity cluster 1 (linked to Results 1 and 2)

A 1.1. The EED identifies critical actors that support the democracy agenda in partner countries.

A 1.2. The EED provides financial support to CSOs and non-political civic groups (including independent media outlets) to enable them to drive the democratisation agenda.

A 1.3. The EED (and other selected strategic partners) conducts capacity development activities to help civil society organisations become better communicators of their work.

A 1.4. The EED (and other selected strategic partners) provide step-by-step support in the implementation of the funding, coupled with oversight of the organisation's own development strategy and ambitions.

A 1.5. The EED (and other selected strategic partners) coordinate appropriately with EU Delegations and relevant donors on the monitoring of the roll out support.

Activity 2 (linked to Result 2 only, in addition to the above). Strategic partners are selected with the outlook to:

- design and test new ways (financing tools) to fund CSOs.
- adjust capacity development programmes to the specificities of the local communities.
- support CSOs in their own outreach and engagement with citizens and communities.
- support the development of professional not-for-profit management.
- provide financial support to third parties to other CSOs.

Activity cluster 3 (linked to Result 3)

A 3.1. Support the elaboration of at least 30 policy briefs.

A 3.2. Support the organisation of policy roundtables, small projects, visits or advocacy campaigns on niche policy issues relevant to cooperation within the Eastern Partnership.

A 3.3. Support ad-hoc policy advocacy and monitoring, based on evolving policy priorities in the EaP countries.

A 3.4. Other activities that may enable CSOs to better respond to sudden policy shifts.

Support will be given in the form of small grants, of up to 60 000 EUR.

Activity cluster 4 (linked to Results 4 and 5):

A 4.1. The Black Sea Trust (BST) provides support to approximately 35 regional projects (i.e. involving CSOs in at least three countries) on topics of regional relevance (energy governance, health, research and education, transition justice etc).

A 4.2. The BST ensures synergies with the Black Sea NGO Forum in order to support the creation of regional networks in this regard.

A 4.3. The BST provides support for projects encouraging sharing of experience between CSOs in countries who have recently reached a higher level of democracy consolidation and those in the EaP, with a focus on reform and public accountability.

A 4.4. Conduct capacity development activities to help civil society organisations become better communicators of their work.

A 4.5. Provide step-by-step support in the implementation of the funding, couple with oversight of the organisation's own development strategy and ambitions.

A 4.6. Monitor impact of support.

Activity cluster 5 (linked to results 6 through 8)

A 5.1. Make available upon request services for organisation of face-to-face trainings and other relevant events under the umbrella of the ongoing technical assistance project foreseen in the EaP Civil Society Facility 2015.

A 5.2. Make logistical arrangements for the participation of relevant CS representatives to relevant meetings, events and/ or visits.

A 5.3. Support – upon request, in the form of services – participation of CSOs in mainstreaming of civil society within EU programmes.

A 5.4. Conduct local gap analysis of funding to CSOs, as well as in fields relevant to CSO engagement (i.e. media, human rights etc.)

4.2 Intervention logic

The trend of shrinking civic space across the wider Eastern Neighbourhood is changing the traditional foreign funding infrastructure. Major donors are withdrawing from some countries and EU Member States are expecting the EU to take leadership in terms of civil society support. This translates into further pressure on the EU to fill in eventual gaps. In addition, civil society expects this support to be more flexible, disbursed faster and more politically aware to reach more impact.

The EaP Summit pledge offers a results structure built on four priority tracks for engagement with civil society: active citizenship, better governance, socio-economic reforms and building young leaders. Implicitly, this is also a shift from general engagement with civil society to a results oriented approach. The increased amounts of funding and the need for constituency building make engagement with strategic partners a more sustainable approach for capacity development of CSOs in the EaP. The EED has gained already this status. The BST is currently the only organisation financing (with USAID funds) regional projects covering all 6 EaP countries, Russia and Turkey. The Rapid Response Mechanism piloted in 2017 is continued in order to allow the EU fast direct intervention with small grants, if need be. Should ongoing monitoring reveal that the 2017 Rapid Response Mechanism (pilot phase) is inefficient, the funds foreseen in this action will be reallocated to other components.

All East Delegations will need to renew their Roadmaps for Engagement with Civil Society. These contain the priorities for civil society support in each country for 2018 – 2020, including financial support, which is why it is crucial that bilateral priorities and the regional policy on civil society are transposed into the discussions leading to the elaboration of the new Roadmaps. The allocations and priorities to be made available by thematic programmes (DCI's Civil Society Organisations and the European instrument for Democracy and Human Rights) are now being finalised in parallel to 2018 ENI programming. EU Delegations will need further support to carry out training of CSOs, information sessions, consultations and mobilise civil society expertise to mainstream their engagement into sector programmes.

The purpose of this programme is to increase the role of Eastern Partnership actors at regional level. Therefore, actions that are meant to advance their role in the local democratisation processes (through the EED), actions meant to boost links between CSOs around the Black Sea and with CSOs in EU member states (through the BST) and increasing the capacity of CSOs, are supposed to allow the EU to support region wide CSOs to achieve that role (through the Rapid Response Mechanism and additional capacity development services).

4.3 Mainstreaming

Issues related to gender, transport, energy, environment and culture are considered to be cross-cutting. The "Rapid Response Mechanism" (Result 3) is meant to make available support on multiple areas, including gender and environment issues, as well as enable a fast reaction in case of sudden closure of space to exercise certain categories of 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 Conclusions¹⁶. 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.

4.4 Contribution to SDGs

This intervention is relevant for the 2030 Agenda. It contributes primarily to the progressive achievement of 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'.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Financing agreement

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

5.2 Indicative implementation period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 4.2 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 60 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.

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

¹⁶ Tool-box "A Rights-Based Approach, encompassing all human rights, for EU development cooperation" and the respective Council Conclusions of 19 May 2014, available here: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/rights-based-approach-development-cooperation_en

5.3 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 measures¹⁷.

5.3.1 Grants: call for proposals to conclude Framework partnership agreements: 'Strategic partnerships for capacity development of civil society organisations in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood' (direct management)

a) Objectives of the grants, fields of intervention, priorities of the year and expected results

Strategic partners will be selected so that jointly with the EU, they will advance the role of civil society as governance actors in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood, either through country or regional actions. Strategic Partnerships will be established and regulated through Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) 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, either in one of the EaP countries, or across the wider Eastern Neighbourhood.

In accordance with Art 178 of the Rules of Application (RAP) and Art. 121 of the Financial Regulation the signature of FPAs will mark the set of common interests and objectives of the SP according to EU policies and strategic partners' strategy, covering the full duration of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020.

Strategic 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 wider Eastern Neighbourhood by contributing to advancing the role of civil society as a governance actor, informing decisions, sharing best practices and engaging stakeholders.

Depending on availability of funds, specific Grant Agreements for the period 2018-2020 may be awarded to successful applicants, as legally binding contracts 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 financial support to third parties in order to:

- design and test new ways (financing tools) to fund CSOs.
- adjust capacity development programmes to the specificities of the local communities.
- support CSOs in their own outreach and engagement with citizens and communities.
- support the development of professional not-for-profit management.

¹⁷ 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.

- advance regional and thematic policy dialogue between civil society and relevant stakeholders.

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

b) Eligibility conditions

As applicant: the eligibility of applicants is restricted to:

- Legal entities that qualify as civil society organisations
- Originating from:
 - EU partner countries** eligible for Union funding under the European Neighbourhood Instrument established by Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council (the ‘European Neighbourhood Instrument’) and the Russian Federation;
 - EU Member States** and contracting parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area.

Subject to information to be published in the call for proposals, the indicative amount of the EU contribution per grant will, in principle, fall between the following indicative amounts: a minimum of EUR 1 000 000 and a maximum of EUR 8 000 000.

c) Essential selection and award criteria

The essential selection criteria are financial and operational capacity of the applicant.

The essential award criteria are relevance of the proposed action to the objectives of the call; design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action.

d) Maximum rate of co-financing

The maximum possible rate of co-financing for grants under this call is 90%.

In accordance with Articles 192 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, if full funding is essential for the action to be carried out, the maximum possible rate of co-financing may be increased up to 100 %. The essentiality of full funding will be justified by the Commission’s authorising officer responsible in the award decision, in respect of the principles of equal treatment and sound financial management.

e) Indicative timing to launch the call

This call is planned to be in the 3rd quarter of 2018.

The Framework Partnership Agreements are meant to prepare the implementation of the envisaged bi-annual programming exercise for civil society support for 2019 – 2020. In order to allow for a smooth implementation of these future actions, the latest when they have to be concluded is the first half of 2019, which is why the Call must be launched the earliest possible.

5.3.2 Grant: direct award to the European Endowment for Democracy 'Enhancing civil society's role in democratisation processes in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood' (direct management)

a) Objectives of the grant, fields of intervention, priorities of the year and expected results

The specific objective of this grant is to reinforce the role of CSOs in the democratisation process in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood. The following results will be pursued:

- Increased capacity of civic groups, independent media and other relevant types of CSOs to participate in democratic processes.
- Non-political constituency building of CSOs and civic groups.

In order to reach these results, the EED will be awarded an action grant to conduct the following activities:

A 1.1. Identification of critical actors that support the democracy agenda in partner countries.

A 1.2. Making available financial support to CSOs and non-political civic groups (including independent media outlets) to enable them to drive the democratisation agenda.

A 1.3. Conducting capacity development activities to help civil society organisations become better communicators of their work.

A 1.4. Providing step-by-step support in the implementation of project funding received, coupled with oversight of the organisations' own development strategies and ambitions.

A 1.5. Coordinating appropriately with EU Delegations and relevant donors on the monitoring of the roll out support.

The concluded grant agreement is complementary to the ongoing operating grant to the EED. At the end of the implementation period at least 42% of eligible costs will have to have been incurred in relation to activities carried out in Ukraine.

b) Justification of a direct grant

Article 190(1) (f) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 authorises that grants be awarded without a call for proposals for actions with specific characteristics that require a particular type of body on account of its technical competence, its high degree of specialisation, on condition that the actions concerned do not fall within the scope of a call for proposals. On this basis and under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to a specialised entity having relevant specific experience and capacities in the fields of intervention. For the reasons detailed below, the EED has been identified as the most suitable entity.

The European Endowment for Democracy is a private Belgian foundation established in 2013 through a decision of the EU Council. Its mandate is to fill in gaps in civil society support wherever EU instruments are not able to support entities or actions.

Although operating for only 5 years, the EED already gained status as one of a limited number of organisations able to provide financial support to CSOs and non-political civic groups in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood, despite many challenges that may exist in some of these countries. These challenges may stem from either the adverse environment in which CSOs have to operate, or from the size and nature of the targeted CSOs or legal status (e.g. non-registered entities or individuals). The specificity and sensitivity of supporting independent civil society and democracy related work in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood requires a body with appropriate competence and mandate. In this respect, the EED offers

credibility and reliability thanks to their particular institutional set-up, being steered by representatives of the European Parliament, of the EU Member States, of the European External Action Service and of the civil society of the Neighbourhood countries. On this basis, the EED will receive a direct award of a grant due to its technical competence, specialisation or administrative power, in accordance with Art 190(1)(f) of the RAP.

c) Essential selection and award criteria

The essential selection criteria are the financial and operational capacity of the applicant.

The essential award criteria are relevance of the proposed action to the objectives of the call; design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action.

d) Maximum rate of co-financing

The maximum possible rate of co-financing for this grant is up to 90%.

In accordance with Articles 192 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, if full funding is essential for the action to be carried out, the maximum possible rate of co-financing may be increased up to 100 %. The essentiality of full funding will be justified by the Commission's authorising officer responsible in the award decision, in respect of the principles of equal treatment and sound financial management.

e) Indicative trimester to conclude the grant agreement

Trimester 3 of 2018

The Commission authorises that the costs incurred may be recognised as eligible as of 1 April 2018 in order to permit an appropriate response to the changing situations on the ground, and preparation of the roll-out of support.

5.3.3 Grant: direct award to the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation 'Strengthening regional links and transition sharing in the wider Black Sea Region'

a) Objectives of the grant, fields of intervention, priorities of the year and expected results

The specific objective this grant is to strengthen intra-regional sharing of transition experience and practice. As a result:

- Approximately 35 regional projects for CSOs from EaP and the wider Black Sea region, including the Russian Federation, (involving CSOs in at least three countries) will have been implemented; regional links and networks of CSOs will have been strengthened.
- A transition sharing channel will have been set up to allow CSOs in new EU Member States and CSOs in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood to share experiences and transfer knowledge related to their processes of transitioning to democracy.

b) Justification of a direct grant

Article 190(1) (f) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 authorises that grants be awarded without a call for proposals for actions with specific characteristics that require a particular type of body on account of its technical competence, its high degree of specialisation, on condition that the actions concerned do not fall within the scope of a call for proposals. On this basis and under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to a specialised entity

having relevant specific experience and capacities in the fields of intervention. For the reasons detailed below, the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation (BST) has been identified as the most suitable entity.

The BST has been strengthening regional cooperation, civil society, and democratic foundations in the countries of the Black Sea region. BST also operates a broad definition of what a regional project in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood is – namely, they reflect societal links despite national boundaries, considering EU Central and Eastern European CSOs, as well as Russian and Turkish civil society as critical to identifying and proposing solutions to regional problems. In particular, BST is focused on building trust among citizens and in the public institutions, affirming the value of citizen participation in the democratic process, promoting the involvement of civil society in conflict resolution, and fostering regional cross-border ties in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. In this regard, it supports both regional projects involving CSOs in at least three countries in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood (under their Cross-Border Programme), while working on building stronger links between CSOs in EU Member States in Central and Eastern Europe and those in countries surrounding the Black Sea. Their operating costs for the next 5 years are covered by USAID.

The Black Sea Trust is the only organisation that offers this type of support to CSOs in the region.

c) Essential selection and award criteria

The essential selection criteria are the financial and operational capacity of the applicant.

The essential award criteria are relevance of the proposed action to the objectives of the call; design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action.

d) Maximum rate of co-financing

The maximum possible rate of co-financing for this grant is up to 90%.

In accordance with Articles 192 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, if full funding is essential for the action to be carried out, the maximum possible rate of co-financing may be increased up to 100 %. The essentiality of full funding will be justified by the Commission's authorising officer responsible in the award decision, in respect of the principles of equal treatment and sound financial management.

e) Indicative trimester to conclude the grant agreement

Trimester 4 of 2018

5.3.4 Grant: direct awards under the 'Eastern Partnership Rapid Response Mechanism' (direct management)

a) Objectives of the grant, fields of intervention, priorities of the year and expected results

The **overarching objective** is to increase the reaction capacity of CSOs to participate in partner countries' policy debates on critical governance issues (see Activity cluster 3).

The political developments in the last years in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood showed that CSOs need to be enabled to react rapidly to unexpected changes, including sudden restrictions on civil society space. In order to respond to these threats to civil society, under the Civil Society Facility 2017 the EU set-up a pilot for a reactive mechanism allowing to make rapidly available reasonable support in the form of grants for policy-oriented CSOs to react to sudden shifts in the policy agenda and enable them to contribute effectively to public debates, in all

policy areas, in particular those identified in Riga. This "Rapid Response Mechanism" will be continued with this action, to swiftly provide on an ad hoc basis support to CSOs through the direct award of grants of little to medium size in terms of EU funding. It is expected that a maximum of 20 grants would be awarded under this Rapid Response Mechanism.

b) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the authorising officer by delegation, grants may be awarded without a call for proposals to CSOs in order to respond to immediate and isolated needs arising from sudden changes in their environment as described above. The recourse to such an award is subject to fulfilling the conditions defined in Article 190 of Commission Delegation Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 and must be in line with the achievement of the objectives of the present action. Such award will be considered on a case-by-case basis in the light of these requirements.

It is expected that priority will be given to organisations that demonstrate to have a proven track record of engaging in dialogue with the government or extensive advocacy on a particular governance issue, ad-hoc coalitions of CSOs (or particular extensions of advocacy work conducted by established coalitions, networks and platforms), CSOs having proven citizen support for a particular advocacy idea and public policy think tanks based either in the European Union or in one of the countries of the wider Eastern Neighbourhood, with a track record on policy work aimed at EU policy in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood.

The support will be focused on enabling the grant beneficiary to carry out advocacy work that would pursue a narrow policy issue, in response to a sudden change of circumstances and on topics driven by changes on either government policy agenda or public debate in a particular country in general.

c) Eligibility conditions

The applicants, co-applicants and affiliated entities are restricted to all types of CSOs. They must be legal entities registered in one of the Eastern Partnership countries, in the EU, in one of the IPA beneficiary countries or in the European Economic Area or the Russian Federation.

d) Essential selection and award criteria

The essential selection criteria are financial and operational capacity of the applicant.

The essential award criteria are relevance of the proposed action to the objectives of the call; design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action.

e) Maximum rate of co-financing

The maximum possible rate of co-financing for this grant is 95%.

In accordance with Article 192 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, if full funding is essential for the action to be carried out, the maximum possible rate of co-financing may be increased up to 100 %. The essentiality of full funding will be justified by the Commission's authorising officer responsible in the award decision, in respect of the principles of equal treatment and sound financial management.

f) Indicative trimester to conclude the grant agreement

All throughout 2019.

5.3.5 Procurement (direct management)

Subject in generic terms, if possible	Type (works, supplies, services)	Indicative number of contracts	Indicative trimester of launch of the procedure
Technical assistance for CSOs	Services	1	Trimester 4 of 2018

5.4 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 in accordance with Article 9(2)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of products and services in the markets of the countries concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult.

5.5 Indicative budget

	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, in currency identified
5.3.1. Call for proposals to conclude Framework partnership agreements: 'Strategic partnerships for capacity development of civil society organisations in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood'	5 000 000	555 556
5.3.2. Grant: direct award to the EED 'Enhancing civil society's role in democratisation processes in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood'	7 000 000	777 778
5.3.3. Grant: direct award to the BST 'Strengthening regional links and transition sharing in the wider Black Sea Region'	2 500 000	277 777
5.3.4. Grant: direct awards 'Eastern Partnership Rapid Response Mechanism' (direct management)	500 000	25 000
5.3.5. Procurement (direct management) – Regional technical assistance for CSOs	1 000 000	NA
Totals	16 000 000	1 636 111

5.6 Organisational set-up and responsibilities

Each of the five implementation methods will have its own governance structure.

The '**Strategic partnerships for capacity development of civil society organisations in the Eastern Partnership**' will mark the mutual interests of the partners, and define the respective roles and responsibilities of the Commission and its partners in implementing the partnership at the signature of the Partnership Agreements. The specific grant contracts will foresee additional governance arrangements.

The specific grant contract for the project 'Enhancing civil society's role in democratisation processes in the Eastern Partnership' will have its own coordination and monitoring system. Given the bilateral nature of the activities, EU Delegations will be highly involved in the monitoring of the actions. In relation to the Rapid Response Mechanism, working arrangements within the EU have been developed in the pilot phase in order to guide the decision making process for the awards it would make available.

5.7 Performance monitoring and reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action and projects resulting from a call for proposals will be a continuous process and part of the implementing partners' responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partners 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) or the list of result indicators (for budget support). The report shall be laid out in such a way as to allow monitoring of the means envisaged and employed and of the budget details for the action. The final report, narrative and financial, will cover the entire period of the action implementation.

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).

5.8 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, an evaluation will not be carried out for this action or its components. An EU strategic evaluation of civil society support is foreseen. It will have a focus on the Neighbourhood East.

Since an evaluation is not foreseen, the Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation of certain components for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner.

The financing of such an evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

5.9 Audit

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audits or expenditure verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

The financing of any audits shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

5.10 Communication and visibility

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU.

This action shall contain communication and visibility measures which shall be based on a specific Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action, to be elaborated at the start of implementation.

In terms of legal obligations on communication and visibility, the measures shall be implemented by the Commission, contractors, grant beneficiaries and/or entrusted entities. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, the procurement and grant contracts.

The Communication and Visibility Requirements for European Union External Action (or any succeeding document) shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

With regards to the Neighbourhood East, all EU-supported actions shall be aimed at increasing the awareness level of the target audiences on the connections, the outcome, and the final practical benefits for citizens of EU assistance provided in the framework of this action. Visibility actions should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

Outreaching/awareness raising activities will play a crucial part in the implementation of the action, in the case of budget support the national government shall ensure that the visibility of the EU contribution is given appropriate media coverage. The implementation of the communication activities shall be the responsibility of the implementing organisations, and shall be funded from the amounts allocated to the Action.

All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the action has received funding from the EU in line with the Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU External Actions. Additional Visibility Guidelines developed by the Commission (European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations) will be strictly adhered to.

Where relevant, the provisions of the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement concluded between the European Union and the selected international organisations shall apply.

It is the responsibility of the implementing organisation to keep the EU Delegations and, where relevant, DG NEAR, fully informed of the planning and implementation of the appropriate milestones specific visibility and communication activities.

The implementing organisation shall report on its visibility and communication actions, as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees.

This action will be communicated externally as part of a wider context of EU support to the country, and where relevant to the Eastern Partnership region in order to enhance the

effectiveness of communication activities and to reduce fragmentation in the area of EU communication.

The implementing organisation shall coordinate all communication activities with EU Delegations as well as regional communication initiatives funded by the European Commission to the extent possible. All communication strategies developed as part of this action shall ensure they are in line with the priorities and objectives of regional communication initiatives supported by the European Commission and in line with the relevant EU Delegation's communication strategy under the "EU4Country" umbrella initiative.

APPENDIX - INDICATIVE LOGFRAME MATRIX (FOR PROJECT MODALITY)

The activities, the expected outputs and all the indicators, targets and baselines included in the logframe matrix are indicative and may be updated during the implementation of the action, no amendment being required to the financing decision. When it is not possible to determine the outputs of an action at formulation stage, intermediary outcomes should be presented and the outputs defined during inception of the overall programme and its components. The indicative logframe matrix will evolve during the lifetime of the action: new lines will be added for including the activities as well as new columns for intermediary targets (milestones) for the output and outcome indicators whenever it is relevant for monitoring and reporting purposes. Note also that indicators should be disaggregated by sex whenever relevant.

	Results chain	Indicators	Baselines (incl. reference year)	Targets (incl. reference year)	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Overall objective	To support increased technical expertise and credibility of CSOs across the EaP.	Percentage of surveyed CSOs declaring they believe to have a meaningful impact on policy change	30% (rough average based on country surveys) (2014 – 2015)	50% (2020)	Mapping studies on CSOs	
Specific objectives	To reinforce the role of CSOs in the democratisation process in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood'.	Percentage of population (within statistically representative national level samples) declaring a positive opinion on CS work	18% (2011 – 2016, based on compiled data from multiple sources, counting proxy indicators)	30% (2020)	Public opinion Barometers/ surveys	
	To strengthen intra-regional sharing of transition experience and practice.	The number of women who participate in politics	10% (2015/6)	20% (2020)		
	To increase the capacity of CSOs to access and manage EU funds.	The number of ongoing EU funded regional projects involving EaP and EU civil society	24/ year (2017)	45/ year (2019)	EU reporting	
		The number of women and men who receive training on issues related to EU project management	250 (2017)	2000 (2020)	CSO Sustainability Index, Central and Eastern Europe	
Results	Rapid Response Mechanism to sudden policy changes.	Number of civil society work references in televised debates on top policy issues in a country	0% (2014 – 2015)	5% (2020)	Media monitoring reports Projects reports	

		at a given moment				
	Strategic partnerships for capacity development of civil society organisations in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood'	Number of EaP – specific Partnerships signed	0 (2018)	Min 12 (2019)	EU Official Journal	
	Enhancing civil society's role in democratisation processes in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood'	Number of CSOs supported	86 (2017)	300 (2021)	Project reports	
	Strengthening regional links and transition sharing in the wider Black Sea Region, incl. the Russian Federation'	Number of regional CS projects supported	1 (2018)	At least 50 (2021)	Project reports	
	Regional technical assistance for CSOs	Number of trainings and events conducted	8 (2017)	Up to 60 (2020)	Project reports	