



ANNEX 3

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the
Annual Action Programme 2018 in favour of Georgia

Action Document for
"Support for the Implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement"

INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL GRANT APPLICANTS

WORK PROGRAMME FOR GRANTS

This document constitutes the work programme for grants in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation No 2018/486 and the action programme/measure in the sense of Articles 2 and 3 of Regulation No 236/2014.

1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number	Support for the Implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement CRIS number: ENI/2018/041-415 financed under European Neighbourhood Instrument	
2. Zone benefiting from the action/location	Georgia The action shall be carried out at the following location: countrywide.	
3. Programming document	Single Support Framework for EU support to Georgia (2017-2020)	
4. Sector of concentration/ thematic area	Complementary support for capacity development/institution building	DEV. Aid: YES ¹
5. Amounts concerned	Total estimated cost: EUR 33 500 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 33 500 000 from which EUR 6 000 000 is specific allocation for EU programme Erasmus+	
6. Aid modality(ies) and implementation modality(ies)	Project Modality - Direct management: - grants – call for proposals (including for EU programme Erasmus+ managed and implemented by Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC), via a network of Erasmus+ National Agencies and by the Executive Agency	

¹ Official Development Aid is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective.

	for Education, Audiovisual and Culture (EACEA)) - Procurement of services - Administrative Arrangement with Joint Research Centre (JRC) Indirect management with International Organisations (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), European Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD))			
7 a) DAC code(s)	15110 Public Sector Policy and Administrative Management			
b) Main Delivery Channel	12000 Recipient Government			
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"/>	X
	Aid to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality (including Women In Development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade Development	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
	Biological diversity	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagships	Human Development			
10. SDGs	Main Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): 16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions Secondary SDGs: 3. Good Health and Well-Being 4. Quality Education 13. Climate Action			

SUMMARY

This programme will contribute to the deepening of political, economic and trade relations between the EU and Georgia, raise awareness about EU support to Georgia and enhance mobility of people between the EU and Georgia.

The main areas of support will be the following:

- Strategic Communication
- Complementary assistance to the Government and Parliament
- Support to the Georgian Higher Education System, Science and Research

Support to the implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement will pay particular attention to governance issues, especially ensuring that policies and laws are prepared, implemented and reviewed with an inclusive approach and based on evidence.

Complementary assistance focuses on sectors that were not specifically targeted under ongoing EU bilateral or regional programmes but are in line with the Association Agreement and other joint EU-Georgia documents. These interventions can be grouped in the following thematic areas:

- Economic development and market opportunities
- Institutions and good governance
- Connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate change
- Mobility and people-to-people contacts
- Health

1 CONTEXT²

1.1 Sector/Country/Regional context/Thematic area

1.1.1 Public Policy Assessment and EU Policy Framework

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) review³ conducted in 2015 set out a new framework for building more effective partnerships between the EU and its neighbours. Stabilisation was considered a top priority, as well as strengthening the EU's relations with its neighbours, while offering more differentiation and flexibility. The 2017 Report on the Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy review⁴ reiterates the importance of close working relations between the EU and its neighbours. In the "20 Deliverables for 2020"

² It should be noted that the Government, following the taking up of duties of a new Prime Minister on 19 June 2018, has reorganised its structure merging certain ministries and agencies. Whilst the new Government is fully committed to their process of political association and economic integration with the EU, individual policy areas may be subject to changes as notably reflected in a new Government Programme and as a consequence of new appointments as well as of merger and reorganisation of certain ministries and agencies. The implementation of the present Annual Action Programme will adapt to these changes while following the overall directions set out hereafter.

³ Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy, JOIN (2015) 50 final

⁴ Joint Report to the European Parliament, the council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Report on the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy Review, JOIN(2017) final

agreed at the EaP Summit in Brussels in 2017⁵, the European Union and its partners in the Eastern Neighbourhood commit to deliver tangible benefits to the lives of citizens in the region.

The EU-Georgia Association Agreement (AA), including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA)⁶, was signed in 2014 and entered into force in July 2016. It sets out the foundation for political association and enhanced economic integration between Georgia and the EU for the benefit of the citizens of Georgia, first and foremost. The EU and the Government have prepared and adopted a revised Association Agenda for 2017-2020⁷, which sets new priorities for joint work and reaffirms both sides' commitment to closer association.

Furthermore, visa-free travel to the EU for Georgian citizens holding a biometric passport entered into force on 28 March 2017, aimed at a substantial enhancement of mobility and people-to-people contacts between the two sides. In the revised Association Agenda, the EU acknowledges Georgia's achievement in fulfilling all the required benchmarks of the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan (VLAP). This was also stressed in the First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism of 2017⁸. Both sides aim at further sustaining the reforms promoting secure mobility.

Based on the priorities, defined in the "20 Deliverables for 2020", the Single Support Framework (SSF) for EU support to Georgia for 2017-2020⁹ sets out four priority areas of support, namely, (1) economic development and market opportunities, (2) strengthening institutions and good governance, (3) connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate change, and (4) mobility and people-to-people contacts. It also contains provision for complementary support outside of these key priorities, including strategic communication, assistance to the Government in light of the priorities of the Association Agenda and support for participation in EU programmes.

In terms of **strategic communication**, in order to ensure the Georgian public's awareness and understanding of EU efforts, successful reforms must be accompanied by effective communication. While polls conducted by the OPEN programme in 2017 show that the general perception of the European Union in Georgia is positive, the awareness of EU support to the country could be vastly improved. Strategic communication by the Delegation and the Georgian Government combined with support to independent media could improve the general awareness of the population about EU support to Georgia. Furthermore, ongoing disinformation efforts in the region show a need for proactive communication. The Georgian

⁵ Annex to the Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, (Brussels, 24 November 2017): <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/11/24/eastern-partnership-summit-joint-declaration/>

⁶ Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and Georgia, of the other part, OJEU, L261, 30.8.2014

⁷ https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/annex_ii_-_eu-georgia_association_agenda_text.pdf

⁸ Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: First report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism, COM(2017) 815 final

⁹ Single Support Framework for EU support to Georgia (2017-2020): https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/georgia_2017-2020_ssf_final.pdf

Government recognises hybrid threats as a major challenge in the region. Capacity building for response to hybrid warfare is needed.

As regards **complementary support**, the main strategic documents of the Government of Georgia (Government programme "For a Strong, Democratic and United Georgia", National Social-Economic Strategy "Georgia 2020" and Government Platform "Freedom, Rapid Development, Welfare") outline the country's priorities and development strategy in areas complementary to the four priority areas of the SSF and in line with the Association Agenda. In many of these priority areas, there is a need for capacity building of Georgian public institutions. It could support initial steps to extend the benefits of the DCFTA to Georgia's breakaway regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, and other trade facilitating measures as well as a mobility scheme for academics from Georgia's breakaway regions in line with the recent initiative by the State Ministry for Reconciliation. Furthermore, first steps towards preparing the transition of Georgia towards becoming a programme country for EU education and youth programmes should be undertaken.

Finally, under the ENP, particularly according to the 2015 review, the EU promotes the participation of partner countries in EU programmes. Georgia requires support in the area of higher education, where the EU has a set of well-proven tools under **Erasmus+**. Enabling Georgia's participation in the aspects of Erasmus+ focusing on higher education would also contribute to increasing people-to-people contacts and mobility.

As such, complementary support for capacity development and institution building shall be provided in the three components of this document: strategic communication, assistance to the Government in light of Association Agenda priorities and support for participation in the EU programme Erasmus+.

1.1.2 Stakeholder analysis¹⁰

The main stakeholders for this programme are the **Georgian Government and Parliament**, as the actions planned aim directly at supporting their efforts in closer approximation to the European Union.

While the **Government** maintains a strong pro-EU orientation, it often faces challenges to effectively explain its decisions to the Georgian public. Through this Action, reforms will be supported by effective communication to ensure the public's awareness and understanding of the Government's European efforts. Particular partners include the strategic communications divisions of the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence as well as the Parliament.

The capacities and needs of the **public institutions** supported under this programme have been jointly assessed by Government representatives and the Delegation of the European Union to Georgia. A key criterion for selection of intervention areas as well as potential direct beneficiaries is the presence of a sufficient capacity to receive assistance and contribute to the

¹⁰ It should be noted that the Government, following the taking up of duties of a new Prime Minister on 19 June 2018, has reorganised its structure merging certain ministries and agencies. Relevant new state institutions have been reflected in this Annual Action Programme to the extent possible in August 2018.

successful implementation of the programme. Selected institutions include but are not limited to the relevant line ministries, justice sector institutions, oversight institutions (i.e. the Parliament of Georgia) as well as independent institutions.

Cooperation with the **Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MoESCS)** will be indispensable, as participation of Georgian Higher Education Institutions in the Erasmus+ programme will go hand in hand with reform processes in these institutions. The priorities set out for higher education under this programme have been aligned with the Ministry's overarching strategy. The MoESCS is furthermore interested in launching the transitional process aimed at becoming an Erasmus+ Programme Country.

Georgian **Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)** will benefit from additional support through a special financing window of Erasmus+, as additional Erasmus+ funds can be used in capacity building projects, international mobility and Jean Monnet programmes. Their willingness to cooperate with European HEIs is instrumental for the success of this component. An increased number of academic and administrative **staff as well as students of Georgian HEIs** will benefit from Georgia's Erasmus+ special financing window and the expected improvement of the higher education sector.

Georgian **scientists and researchers** will benefit from a mobility scheme allowing them to carry out short-term networking visits to EU Member States and Associated Countries to the EU Framework Programmes for research and innovation. This reinforced mobility will contribute to furthering scientific excellence in Georgia and increase the country's competitiveness in EU Framework Programmes. This action foresees a separate mobility scheme for **academics from Georgia's breakaway regions**, which should be facilitated by the recent initiative of the **State Ministry for Reconciliation**.

The final beneficiaries of the programme are the **citizens of Georgia**, who will benefit from the improved services rendered by the public institutions supported through the "Support for the Implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement". Furthermore, as end beneficiaries of media products, the Georgian public constitutes one of the key stakeholders under this component of the action.

1.1.3 Priority areas for support/problem analysis

While the SSF 2017-2020 sets out four priority areas of support for Georgia in its implementation of the Association Agreement between Georgia and the EU, there is a need for complementary assistance. The following three components have been identified as crucial for support:

Component 1: Strategic Communication

While the Association Agreement, including the DCFTA create numerous opportunities and benefits for Georgian society and economy, OPEN surveys show that citizens' awareness of these opportunities could be improved significantly. This requires clear communication from the EU as well as the Georgian Government.

Ongoing disinformation campaigns in the region show a need for clear messaging on EU support to Georgia. Furthermore, there is a need for capacity building in media monitoring for the Government to counter disinformation and deal with hybrid and emerging threats.

Past experience of the EU Delegation to Georgia has shown that strategic communication projects in one sector are much more effective than fragmented project-based communication. A broad, statistic-based approach in close cooperation with key partners is necessary.

Component 2: Complementary Support to Government in light of Association Agenda priorities and other joint EU-GE documents

Timely and successful fulfilment of Georgia's commitments under the EU-Georgia Association Agenda requires significant efforts from national authorities in terms of efficiency, accountability and capacity. This translates into the need for institutional strengthening and support for capacity building in the areas within the remit of the Association Agenda. These interventions require a targeted approach and are generally done in the form of technical assistance or Twinning operations. In the past such assistance has been provided as "Comprehensive Institution Building" followed by two "Technical Cooperation Facilities" and has proven to be effective.

The EU Delegation and the Government of Georgia are negotiating areas for support within this programme. Potential priority areas for complementary support, whilst not being limited to, could include the following aspects not addressed in sector programmes:

– Economic development and market opportunities

Both the EU and the Government of Georgia have identified socio-economic development in all regions of the country as a priority for their cooperation. Capacity building in the respective Ministry will be needed to achieve successful **regional development**. Further support to **competition policy** and to **consumer protection** is needed, as well as on the implementation of EU **construction**-related legislation (applicable to urban planning, insurance, professional qualifications, Eurocodes etc.).

The area of **food safety** is crucial for further approximation to the EU as outlined in the DCFTA legal approximation plan covering 2015-2027. Quality management in this sector needs to be improved.

Support might be necessary to support the initiative to extend the benefits of the DCFTA to **Georgia's breakaway regions**, and to support trade facilitation for these regions following the recent initiative by the State Ministry for Reconciliation.

– Institutions and good governance¹¹

Complementary support to ongoing public administration reform (PAR) targeting **policy development** (inclusive and evidence-based legislative and strategic drafting, legal approximation) is needed beyond current support to lead institutions. Continued

¹¹ Complementary support will take into account findings and recommendations of OECD/SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management) baseline assessment (<http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Baseline-Measurement-Report-2018-Georgia.pdf>) in order to improve policy development and coordination (inclusive and evidence-based legislative development).

enhancement of public service delivery (including clarity and consistency of the legal framework on administrative procedures) is also a government priority. Focus on reinforcing oversight bodies such as the Parliament of Georgia, transparency and accountability of public institutions remains a priority for improving good governance.

Whereas recent **elections** were considered free and fair, there is some scope for further improvement of the legal framework to include recommendations of the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Council of Europe Venice Commission for higher participation of women, youth and representatives of ethnic minorities, further improvement of monitoring of elections and of media coverage thereof.

Furthermore, the **independence of the judiciary**, the High Council of Justice and the Constitutional Court, should be promoted, as required by the EU-Georgia Association Agenda as well as the national Human Rights Strategy and Action Plan. This extends to the **penitentiary system** where reform is needed, especially as regards working and training opportunities for prisoners. Furthermore, **legal aid services** providing free consultations to Georgian citizens should be supported.

Reliable **statistics**, including sex-disaggregated data are essential for measuring progress and providing essential information about the effectiveness of policies and programmes. Georgia requires support in order to fully comply with European statistical requirements.

– Connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate change

Road safety and the development of respective standards remain a problematic area in Georgia and might be considered under this programme, depending on whether the issue will be included under Neighbourhood Investment Platform (NIP).

– Mobility and people-to-people contacts

In order to reach the goals set out in the Association Agenda as well as the VLAP Georgia needs assistance in developing innovative solutions for collecting, monitoring and analysing **migration data**. Furthermore, there is a need for the Georgian Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) system to be upgraded to the functional and technical requirements of NCTS (New Computerised Transit System).

The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia has requested assistance for Georgia's **transition towards becoming an Erasmus+ Programme Country**, which would present an important step in the country's modernisation of higher education. However, there are many challenges to overcome (establishment of a National Agency, lower scholarships for students, competition with EU Member States), thus, support for the preparation of transition is necessary.

– Health

Under the Association Agreement Georgia undertakes obligations to approximate national legislation, including **health-related legislation** with EU rules and policies. While the health sector has not been in the centre of previous and ongoing EU support, there is a clear need for intervention in areas such as blood safety and transplantation legislation.

Potential beneficiaries could include, but are not limited to:

- Ministry of Finance and its agencies
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its agencies
- Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure and its agencies
- Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture and its agencies
- Competition Agency
- Ministry of Justice and its agencies (such as Public Service Development Agency, Public Service Hall)
- Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport and its agencies, National Science Foundation
- Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development and its agencies (such as those in charge of competition, consumer protection, construction legislation implementation),
- Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs and its agencies (such as National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health)
- Prime Minister's Office and Administration of Government
- Parliament of Georgia
- Public Defender Office
- Prosecution Office
- Anti-corruption Agency, State Security Service of Georgia
- High Council of Justice, High School of Justice
- Constitutional Court
- Special Penitentiary Service (former Ministry of Corrections) and its agencies
- Legal Aid Service
- Georgian National Statistics Office (GEOSTAT)
- Central Elections Commission
- Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civil Equality and its agencies
- Military Police, National Defence Academy (excluding any support to capabilities that could be used in combat circumstances).

In order to facilitate the change management processes necessary for the reforms to be implemented under the Association Agenda, this action includes a **High Level Advisors (HLAs)** programme to provide strategic advice and contribute to the implementation of Georgia's reform agenda in specific areas selected by the Georgian government. The HLAs will assist the ongoing reform process in Georgia and further facilitate policy dialogue between Georgia and the EU.

Component 3: Support to Georgia's higher education system, science and research

The Unified Strategy of Education and Science System for 2017-2021 lists the main challenges and focus areas for higher education in Georgia. Internationalisation is a clear priority, but there is a need for capacity building in this area. Furthermore, modernisation of the higher education system as well as improvement of the quality of teaching are named, which shows a direct link with higher education aspects of Erasmus+.

The EU has a set of proven tools in this area in the form of various education opportunities under Erasmus+. The additional (top-up) funding which will be available via a special

financing window of **Erasmus+ programme** will foster the modernisation of higher education through capacity building projects, Jean Monnet projects and increased international mobility of Georgian students and staff.

Following the efforts undertaken under the Technical Cooperation Facility (TCF) I and TCFII the Georgian **research sector** requires support in the modernisation of innovation and information and communication technologies (ICT) capacities as well as internationalisation and diversification of resources. Especially international mobility (outgoing and incoming) of researchers will contribute to furthering research and innovation in Georgia. The country's association to Horizon 2020 has opened up substantial new prospects for cooperation in research and innovation. In line with the priorities set out in the SSF 2017-2020 and the national strategy "Georgia 2020", there is a clear need in fostering the mobility of Georgian scientists and researchers.

2 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risks	Risk level (H/M/L)	Mitigating measures
External political tensions, social or economic in Georgia or a further downturn in the global economy divert the Government's attention and resources away from the reform agenda	M	Continued policy dialogue with the Georgian authorities; Support to implementation of EU-Georgia Association Agreement
Weakening of Government's commitment to reforms related to the EU-Georgia Association Agreement	L	Continued political and policy dialogue with the authorities; Information campaigns to the institutions and the general public
High turnover of staff in public institutions and associated loss of institutional memory	M	Continuous policy dialogue with the government; Efforts aimed at sustainable institution building rather than exclusive training measures for individuals
Limited capacity of Government to effectively perform functions of policy coordination, policy analysis and impact assessments, inter-ministerial coordination and public consultations, strategic budgeting	M	Policy dialogue and assistance to ensure effective implementation of the strategic framework on PAR, including strengthening of policy coordination function, improve inclusive and evidence-based policy and legislative development and improve monitoring and reporting on implementation of laws and policies; follow-up to SIGMA baseline assessment in the area of policy development and coordination against the Principles of Public Administration
Lack of financial and human resources of the Government to	M	Intensified dialogue with Government; Information campaign geared towards

fight disinformation		general public
Government does not pursue the course set out in the recent peace initiative for residents of Georgia's breakaway regions	H	Intensified dialogue with Government; close monitoring of developments.
Assumptions		
<p>The Government of Georgia remains committed to the fundamental values of democracy, rule of law and human rights. Georgia continues to support and pursue actions for political, economic and trade integration with the EU. Also, the Government pursues public administration reform in line with international and EU good practice.</p> <p>The EU and the Government maintain their high level of cooperation and continue to communicate and coordinate reform efforts.</p> <p>The beneficiary institutions are willing and able to implement and benefit from the proposed actions. The institutions' capacity in maintaining staff, planning and coordination is sufficient for a sustainable implementation of the actions.</p>		

3 LESSONS LEARNT, COMPLEMENTARITY AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

3.1 Lessons learnt

In terms of **communication**, experience has shown the importance of a holistic approach, focusing on large-scale communication projects rather than fragmented project-based efforts. This has been evident on national (EU4Georgia, European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD)) and regional level (OPEN). Under this programme communication support to the Delegation will be handled by one dedicated communication team that combines key issues into campaigns, rather than taking a fragmented approach with single projects conducting their own communication activities.

Institutions and key individuals within the Georgian Government have received training on strategic communication from the EU, as well as the UK, US and other donors. While there is no clear need for classic training on communication, a recent campaign on visa liberalisation, conducted in cooperation with the Government, has proven very effective. Conducting common campaigns on relevant topics together with the Government is considered to be more effective for this action than classic training measures.

Polling conducted by OPEN has provided valuable insights into the Georgian citizens' attitudes towards the EU and its support to Georgia. However, polling results that would allow the comparison between regions within Georgia would give a clearer indication of the effectiveness of EU projects as well as communication campaigns, particularly in light of the decision to focus work on two pilot regions in Georgia.

In terms of technical support to the **implementation of the Association Agreement and the Association Agenda**, this programme was designed based on the lessons learnt from the implementation of the Comprehensive Institution Building (CIB) programme as well as its predecessors, TCFI and TCFIL. Furthermore, recommendations of the Evaluation of the

European Union's cooperation with Georgia (2007-2013) as well as the Evaluation of the Twinning instrument in Georgia (2007-2014) were considered.

One of the main lessons learnt from previous EU support programmes, as highlighted in both evaluations, is the need to allow for flexibility in the implementation of the programme. This is reinforced by the European Neighbourhood Policy Review 2015, which states that "*flexibility must be sought to enable the EU and its partners to respond to changing needs and circumstances*". Under this programme, the specific amounts for individual actions will be adjusted in view of the latest developments and updated needs assessment. A needs-based approach making use of various tools, such as technical assistance, twinning and direct grants, has proven to be successful in the past and will be applied in the design of this programme.

Another lesson learnt from the implementation of CIB and the first two phases of TCF was the need for an inclusive approach. Rather than focusing support on a limited number of institutions, which are holders of Institutional Reform Plans, it is essential to cooperate with other public institutions in the same or related policy areas. This inclusive approach was already applied under TCFII and has proven effective in extending the support's reach to actors on the regional and local level. Assistance under the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument of the European Commission (TAIEX) has proven effective; however, this cooperation needs to be boosted by longer-term strategic cooperation under, for example, the Twinning instrument.

The recent experience of Neighbourhood countries (Serbia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) transitioning from **Erasmus+** Partner Country to Programme Country showed the importance of well-planned and sequenced actions aimed at a proper preparation of the entire education system before granting Programme Country status.

Under TCFI and TCFII funds were provided to Georgia to support the country's participation in the EU programme Horizon 2020. Horizon 2020 has seen a steady increase in applications from Georgia, although the overall level of Georgian exposure to EU practices and values remains limited and requires additional support, especially in the modernisation of innovation and ICT capacities as well as internationalisation and diversification of resources.

Activities in the area of innovation will be branded "EU4Innovation" (under the general branding used in the country, namely "The European Union for Georgia").

A general lesson learnt which applies to all sectors, is that policy and legislative development actions need to be evidence-based, costed and subject to appropriate internal and external stakeholder consultations. This is crucial for ensuring successful implementation and enforcement of adopted policies and legislation.

3.2 Complementarity, synergy and donor coordination

The programme is complementary to existing and foreseen EU assistance under the four priority sectors of the SSF 2017-2020. EU support within these priority sectors already helps Georgia to fulfil its commitments under the EU-Georgia Association Agreement. This programme, however, allows targeting institutions that remain outside of the main focus but are crucial for a successful implementation of the Association Agenda and other joint EU-GE documents.

Actions planned within the component on strategic communications were preceded by comprehensive communication projects at the national (EU4Georgia, ENPARD) and regional level (OPEN). This programme draws from lessons learnt during the implementation of the previously mentioned projects and will make use of established structures and relationships to guarantee sustainability. While this action will support strategic communications delivered by the Delegation as well as the Georgian Government, the third main actor, namely, independent media, will be supported through the regional Civil Society Facility (currently being programmed). Activities within that programme will be implemented by the European Endowment for Democracy and focus on support to smaller, independent media in Georgia.

The component on capacity building for public institutions represents an effective continuation of the CIB as well as the first two phases of the TCF. While TCFII prioritises energy, trade and actions supporting visa liberalisation, the priority areas for the third phase focus on sectors that were not specifically targeted under ongoing EU bilateral or regional programmes. Efforts undertaken within TAIEX and assistance provided by SIGMA can be reinforced within this programme, which will lead to more sustainable results within the partner institutions.

The Partnership for Good Governance (PGG), jointly funded by the EU and the Council of Europe, focuses on some of the identified priority areas, such as ensuring justice and addressing challenges of the information society. Other regional programmes, such as EU4Digital and EU4Innovation, shall also be taken in consideration. Wherever possible, synergies will be formed, amongst others, with the upcoming regional programmes on justice surveys regarding court user satisfaction and the Eurostat implemented regional statistics programme. Additionally, any other relevant and existing or future structures and projects will be utilised.

The Georgian Revenue Service has recently started a Twinning project focusing on the accession of Georgia to the Convention on a Common Transit Procedure and the launch of the New Computerised Transit System (NCTS). The Twinning project will prepare the technical specifications for the software and equipment to be tendered through UNCTAD under Component 2 of this action.

This programme is furthermore complementary to activities implemented or planned by other donors, such as UK Aid, the Dutch Government and USAID in the area of strategic communication. UNDP, UK Aid, GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), the Czech Development Agency and USAID are among those donors supporting public administration reform.

In addition to the EU, the main donors supporting education and the training sector in Georgia are the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), SDC (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation)/UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and GIZ. The planned actions of this programme in the fields of education, science and research will well complement ongoing and pipelined interventions of the other donors.

Donor coordination is led by the Division within the Department for Political Analysis, Strategic Planning and Coordination of the Administration of Government, which has overall responsibility for the coordination of external assistance. The coordination of EU assistance remains with the EU Assistance Coordination Department, currently undergoing structural

changes and relocating from the Office of the State Minister on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as of 1st April 2018. By the time implementation begins, these structural changes should not stand in the way of due process.

In addition, the Delegation ensures coordination with EU Member States through regular meetings, also inviting Georgian authorities to participate. As for communications, the Delegation coordinates a visibility working group including representatives of Member States embassies. The Delegation also coordinates and chairs sectorial Donor Coordination Groups in a variety of sectors, such as Governance, Human Capital Development, Rule of Law and Justice.

3.3 Cross-cutting issues

All activities under this programme will be designed and implemented in accordance with principles of good governance and human rights, gender equality and environmental sustainability, wherever these issues are of particular relevance to the institutions to be assisted.

Good governance and human rights

All efforts to further public administration reform in Georgia will be based on the principles of good governance and human rights. The capacity building aspect of this programme will focus on supporting and strengthening the commitment of the Georgian Government to the principles of public administration developed by the European Commission in close cooperation with the OECD/SIGMA¹². All activities under this programme will be designed and implemented in accordance with principles of good governance and human rights, gender equality and the inclusion of socially or economically deprived groups.

Gender equality

Gender and diversity issues will be mainstreamed into the design of reforms undertaken under this programme. The inclusion of women in decision-making processes will be one of the principles in the capacity building aspect; however, since it is designed as a demand-driven action, inclusion of gender equality related issues will be defined at a later stage, before contracting. Efforts will be made to ensure the participation of women in politics.

Furthermore, strategic communication activities will be designed to especially target women and marginalised groups, such as members of minorities living in remote areas.

It needs to be noted that Georgian women enrol in tertiary education more often than their male counterparts; however, this does not necessarily translate to a higher employment rate.

There is a big difference (15-20 percentage points) in activity and employment rates between men and women, with a high share of women among the inactive population (UNDP 2015). Support in the area of statistics will aim to contribute towards making sex disaggregated data available in Georgia.

A brief overview over the most relevant gender equality issues in the country can be found in the attached Gender Equality Assessment.

¹² http://sigmaweb.org/publications/Principles-of-Public-Administration_Edition-2017_ENG.pdf

Environmental sustainability

While the proposed areas of support do not specifically target environmental issues, the environmental impact of actions undertaken will be considered before and during implementation.

4 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

4.1 Objectives/results

The **overall objective** of the action is to contribute to the deepening of political, economic and trade relations between the EU and Georgia through support to select priority commitments between the parties, as well as improving awareness among Georgians about EU support to their country.

The **specific objectives** for each component are:

- SO1: To improve communication about the benefits of approximation to the European Union by the Delegation and the Georgian Government;
- SO2: To raise capacity of and provide assistance to Georgian institutions in implementation of the Association Agenda and other joint EU-Georgia documents;
- SO3: To foster Georgian participation in the Erasmus+ programme.

The following **main results** are expected:

Component 1: Strategic Communication

- Increased understanding of the Georgian public of the EU and EU-Georgia relations;
- Increased awareness of the Georgian public of EU programmes and their impact in Georgia;
- Regular opinion polling on Georgian attitudes at national and regional level available;
- Increased capacity of Georgian institutions in passing messages on EU support and relations;
- Increased capacity of the Georgian government to identify, monitor and counter disinformation and hostile information campaigns and to communicate pro-actively.

Component 2: Complementary Support to State institutions in light of Association Agenda priorities and other joint EU-Georgia documents

- Support to the legal approximation of Georgian legislation to the EU acquis in an inclusive and evidence-based process;
- Support to the improvement of accountability and transparency of the Georgian Government;
- Enhanced capacity of targeted state institutions.
- Support to the preparation of Georgia's transition towards becoming an Erasmus+ Programme Country.

Component 3: Support to Georgia's higher education system, science and research

- Support to improving the quality of Georgia's higher education system;

- Support to Georgian participation in Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE), International Credit Mobility (ICM), and Jean Monnet programmes;
- Increased mobility of researchers (incoming and outgoing) and networking between Georgian and European scientists.

This programme is relevant for the Agenda 2030. It contributes primarily to the progressive achievement of SDG Goal 16 "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions", but also promotes progress towards Goals 3 "Good Health and Well-Being", 4 "Quality Education" and 13 "Climate Action". This does not imply a commitment by the country benefiting from this programme.

4.2 Main activities

The activities conducted under this action can be grouped into the three components introduced in the sections above.

The main activities under *Component 1: Strategic Communication* include:

- Communication support to the Delegation of the European Union to Georgia;
- Capacity building for the Georgian Government in strategic communication and response to hybrid and emerging threats, support in media monitoring.

The main activities under *Component 2: Complementary Support to State institutions in light of Association Agenda priorities and other joint EU-Georgia documents* include:

- Demand-driven capacity building measures for state institutions chosen from the possible areas of intervention;
- Strengthening institutional capacities of the Parliament of Georgia for improved law-making, oversight and representation;
- Support to Sakpatenti through cooperation with EUIPO;
- Support to the Revenue Service of Georgia through cooperation with UNCTAD;
- Support to Georgia in the preparation of the transition towards becoming an Erasmus+ Programme Country.

The main activities under *Component 3: Support to Georgia's higher education system, science and research* include:

- Increased funding for Capacity Building in Higher Education, International Credit Mobility (exchange programmes), and Jean Monnet programmes under Erasmus+;
- Mobility scheme for Georgian researchers and scientists.

4.3 Intervention logic

The intervention logic for this action is based on the context and problem analysis described under Section 1 of this document. Georgia and the EU enjoy close relations and are both committed to further deepening and strengthening their partnership. This programme envisages interventions under three components, all contributing to the overall goal of deepening the political, economic and trade relations between the EU and Georgia.

Component 1: Strategic Communication

Output: Support will be directed towards the communication efforts by the Delegation of the European Union to Georgia and the Georgian Government's activities to improve Georgian citizens' access to reliable information about the EU.

Outcome: Access to the results of improved communication efforts will raise citizens' awareness about the benefits of approximation to the European Union and increase approval of the pro-European direction of the Georgian Government.

Impact: An increased awareness and ease of access to resources and assistance provided by the EU, will contribute to help Georgian citizens make an informed judgment about the EU and lead to a positive stance towards the European Union. More citizens will understand the EU's contribution to the improvement of their livelihoods thanks to stronger economic and trade relations between the EU and Georgia.

Component 2: Complementary Support to State institutions in light of Association Agenda priorities and other joint EU-Georgia documents

Output: Based on actual needs, capacity building measures will be conducted for state institutions.

Outcome: Georgian state institutions will be able to implement reform measures required by the Association Agenda and other joint EU-Georgia documents.

Impact: Implementation of the commitments set out in the Association Agreement and other joint EU-Georgia documents will deepen the political relations and economic integration between Georgia and the EU.

Component 3: Support to Georgia's higher education system, science and research

Output: The European Union will support Georgia's participation in the higher education aspects of the Erasmus+ programme foster mobility of Georgian scientists and researchers to EU Member States.

Outcome: Broader access to the instruments of Erasmus+ and increased mobility in research and innovations will lead to an improvement of the quality of higher education in Georgia and an increase in people-to-people contacts between the EU and Georgia.

Impact: Increased mobility will further deepen and strengthen the relationship between the EU and Georgia; while an improvement in the quality of higher education as well as reinforced cooperation in research and innovation will provide further compliance with the Association Agenda.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Financing agreement

In order to implement this action, it is foreseen to conclude a financing agreement with the partner country.

5.2 Indicative implementation period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 4.1 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 60 months from the date of entry into force of the financing agreement.

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; such amendments to this decision constitute technical amendments in the sense of point (i) of Article 2(3)(c) of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014.

5.3 Implementation modalities

The envisaged assistance to Georgia is deemed to follow the conditions and procedures set out by the restrictive measures adopted pursuant to Article 215 TFEU¹³.

5.3.1 Grants: calls for proposals for twinning projects (direct management)

In order to remain flexible and able to respond to the ever changing landscape of needs and react to the actual developments within Georgian institutions, this component will be kept flexible. While indicatively eight Twinning projects are envisioned, the final choice (twinning or services) will be defined in accordance with actual needs before contracting.

(a) Objectives of the grants, fields of intervention, priorities of the year and expected results
These projects will contribute to the specific objective defined for Component 2: *To raise capacity of and provide assistance to Georgian institutions in implementation of the Association Agenda and other joint EU-Georgia documents.*

The Twinning modality via calls for proposals will be used for actions supporting the priorities defined for Component 2 in section 1.1.3. These include, but are not limited to:

- Economic development and market opportunities;
- Institutions and good governance;
- Connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate change;
- Mobility and people-to-people contacts;
- Health.

Please see section 1.1.3 for more details.

Expected results include:

- Support to the legal approximation of Georgian legislation to the EU acquis in an inclusive and evidence-based process;
- Support to the improvement of accountability and transparency of the Georgian Government;
- Enhanced capacity of targeted state institutions.

(b) Eligibility conditions

In line with Article 4(10)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014, participation in Twinning calls for proposals is limited to public administrations of the EU Member States, being understood as central or regional authorities of a Member State as well as their bodies and administrative structures and private law bodies entrusted with a public service mission under their control provided they act for the account and under the responsibility of that Member State.

(c) Essential selection and award criteria

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

¹³ https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/8442/consolidated-list-sanctions_en

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 rate of co-financing for Twinning grant contracts is 100%¹⁴.

(e) Indicative timing to launch the call

2nd trimester 2019.

(f) Use of lump sums/flat rates/unit costs

Twinning contracts include a system of unit costs and flat rate financing, defined in the Twinning Manual, for the reimbursement of the public sector expertise provided by the selected Member State administrations. The use of this system of unit costs and flat rate financing, which exceeds the amount of EUR 60,000 per beneficiary of a Twinning contract, is authorised through the Commission decision C(2017)1122.

5.3.2 Grants: Calls for proposals through Erasmus+ (Direct Management)

Support for Georgia's participation in the Erasmus+ programme will be implemented under direct management mode. It will be managed and implemented by the Commission, namely Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC), via a network of Erasmus+ National Agencies (NA) and by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

This implementation method is justified because EAC, the NAs and EACEA are responsible for the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme (International Credit Mobility, Capacity Building in the Field of Higher Education, Jean Monnet) and this component will be implemented as a window of the Erasmus+ Programme. This will provide the fastest and most effective response, given that it combines already tested mobility and non-formal learning activities by being integrated into an already existing programme, with established sustainable structures. This includes notably DG EAC, the NAs and EACEA's experience in this field.

DG EAC, the NA and EACEA will be responsible for the management of this component under the same implementation methods as foreseen in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide¹⁵. The exact distribution per component (International Credit Mobility, Capacity Building in the Field of Higher Education, Jean Monnet) will be defined at a later stage. The implementation modalities (via EAC, NAs and/or EACEA) will be adapted accordingly.

DG EAC and EACEA will ensure appropriate visibility to beneficiaries of this specific funding window funded through ENI.

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

The projects financed under these calls will contribute to the specific objective defined for Component 2: *To foster Georgian participation in Erasmus+ programme.*

Expected results include:

- Support to improving the quality of Georgia's higher education system;

¹⁴ As defined in the Twinning Manual.

¹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/programme-guide_en

- Support to Georgian participation in Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE), International Credit Mobility (ICM), and Jean Monnet programmes;

(b) Eligibility conditions

As defined by the Erasmus+ Programme Guide.

(c) Essential selection and award criteria

As defined by the Erasmus+ Programme Guide.

(d) Maximum rate of co-financing

As defined by the Erasmus+ Programme Guide.

(e) Indicative timing to launch the call

2nd half of 2018, 2nd half of 2019

5.3.3 Procurement (direct management)

	Type (works, supplies, services)	Indicative number of contracts	Indicative trimester of launch of the procedure
Strategic Communication ¹⁶	Services	2	3 rd trimester 2019
Complementary Support to the Government	Services	5	3 rd trimester 2019
Support to Higher Education System	Services	2	3 rd trimester 2019
Evaluation and Audit	Services	2	3 rd trimester 2023

5.3.4 Indirect management with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) "Strengthening Institutional Capacities of Parliament of Georgia for Improved Law-Making, Oversight and Representation"

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with UNDP. . This implementation entails the management of technical assistance and transfer of expertise to the Parliament of Georgia in order to strengthen the institutional capacities for improved law-making, oversight and representation. This part of the action contributes to the specific objective of Component 2: *To raise capacity of and provide assistance to Georgian*

¹⁶ This includes one contract for support to the Delegation's communication efforts, and one contract dedicated to communication campaigns with the Government of Georgia.

institutions in implementation of the Association Agenda and other joint EU-Georgia documents.

This implementation is justified because of UNDP's incomparable expertise and experience in cooperating with the Parliament of Georgia. UNDP is currently the only technical and financial partner that is strategically and comprehensively involved with the Parliament of Georgia. Since 2014 UNDP has been implementing the EU's support to the Parliament of Georgia aimed to promote democratic development. The organisation will therefore be uniquely able to build upon their experience and continue systematic support to the Parliament in order to improve law-making and oversight in Georgia.

The entrusted entity would carry out the following budget-implementation tasks: management of all operations related to technical assistance and transfer of expertise, such as grants, procurement and hiring of external experts.

If negotiations with the above-mentioned entrusted entity fail, that part of this action may be implemented in direct management in accordance with the implementation modalities identified in section 5.3.8.

5.3.5 Indirect management with the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) on "Support to Sakpatenti"

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO). This implementation entails the management of technical assistance and transfer of expertise to the Georgian intellectual property centre "Sakpatenti". EUIPO will support "Sakpatenti" in the further development of the intellectual property system and efficient enforcement of intellectual property rights in Georgia.

This implementation is justified because EUIPO, as the EU agency for intellectual property is uniquely positioned to transfer expertise about intellectual property rights and registration of trademarks in the EU as well as approximation of procedures in Georgian institutions to European standards. EUIPO has furthermore been cooperating with "Sakpatenti" for years, which will facilitate the cooperation between the two entities

The entrusted entity would carry out the following budget-implementation tasks: management of all operations related to technical assistance and transfer of expertise, such as grants, procurement and hiring of external experts.

If negotiations with the above-mentioned entrusted entity fail, that part of this action may be implemented in direct management in accordance with the implementation modalities identified in section 5.3.8.

5.3.6 Indirect management with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on "Upgrade of ASYCUDA System of Georgia Revenue Service"

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). This implementation entails assistance to the Georgian Revenue Service (GRS) for the configuration and installment of the New Computerised Transit System (NCTS) prototype that is fully integrated into the operational GRS ASYCUDA World system, customised in accordance with the EU and national requirements, legislation, languages (forms, screens, report etc.) and codification.

In addition, the National Transit Application (NTA) will be ready for message exchange, and ensure that all rules and conditions applied to NCTS messages are implemented. The UNCTAD

team will also help GRS to initiate operational and/or procedural changes and train the GRS Training Team to familiarise itself with the NCTS system and be able to train the end-users in the pilot and other customs sites.

This implementation is justified as UNCTAD has developed the ASYCUDA World software used by GRS and thus has a monopoly over the development and upgrade of this system. The computerised customs management system covers most foreign trade procedures; it handles manifests and customs declarations, accounting procedures, and transit and suspense procedures. ASYCUDA World is fully operational nationwide in the Georgian Revenue Service. The modernisation of the Customs IT system will ensure the necessary conditions for the automation of procedures related to the implementation of NCTS. Implementation of these procedures is in accordance with the obligations of Chapter 5 and Annex XIII of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement.

The entrusted entity would carry out the following budget-implementation tasks: management of all operations related to technical assistance and transfer of expertise, procurement and hiring of external experts, developing/upgrading the software and equipment.

If negotiations with the above-mentioned entrusted entity fail, that part of this action may be implemented in direct management in accordance with the implementation modalities identified in section 5.3.8.

5.3.7 Administrative Arrangement with the Joint Research Centre (JRC)

Under Component 1: Strategic Communication the conclusion of an administrative arrangement with the JRC is foreseen to provide services related to media monitoring and sentiment analysis to the Georgian Government. Tasks devoted to the JRC include technical and scientific assistance as well as training to the Georgian Ministry of Defence and other stakeholders benefitting from the tool.

This action responds to the specific objective for Component 1: *To improve communication about the benefits of approximation to the European Union by the Delegation and the Georgian Government.* The JRC will implement support to the Georgian Government in the areas of sentiment analysis and media monitoring.

Indicative trimester to conclude the administrative arrangement: 2nd trimester 2019.

5.3.8 Changes from indirect to direct management mode due to exceptional circumstances

An alternative option for implementing the actions described in 5.3.4., 5.3.5. and 5.3.6 is procurement of services (direct management), if the preferred modality (indirect management) cannot be implemented due to circumstances outside of the Commission's control.

An alternative option for implementing the action described in 5.3.7 is procurement of services and supplies (direct management), if the preferred modality (indirect management) cannot be implemented due to circumstances outside of the Commission's control.

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 million EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, in currency identified
5.3.1 Grants: calls for proposals for twinning projects (direct management)	7.5	
5.3.2 Grants: Calls for proposals through Erasmus+ (Direct Management)	6	
5.3.3 Procurement of services (Direct management)	15.5	
Indirect management with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) "Strengthening Institutional Capacities of Parliament of Georgia for Improved Law-Making, Oversight and Representation"	1.5	
5.3.5 Indirect management with the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) on "Support to Sakpatenti"	1	
5.3.6 Indirect management with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on "Upgrade of ASYCUDA System"	1	
5.3.7 Administrative Arrangement with the Joint Research Centre (JRC)	0.5	
5.8 Evaluation	0.5	
5.9 Audit		
Totals	33.5	0

5.6 Organisational set-up and responsibilities

The Delegation of the European Union to Georgia will be responsible for the management of the programme and will monitor its overall implementation. It will also be the focal point for any communication with the contractors or the beneficiary institutions.

5.7 Performance monitoring and reporting

The Commission and the partner country will regularly review progress made in the overall implementation of the action through a Programme Steering Council (PSC) which meets twice a year. Apart from steering the overall process the PSC also aggregates information about progress in implementation which will be made available to relevant stakeholders.

At the level of the individual projects funded under this action, specific Steering Committees (SCs) will be convened by the beneficiary institutions involving the EU Delegation and other relevant stakeholders. These SCs will meet regularly to review progress on the basis of periodic reports.

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (outputs and direct outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix. The 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, a final evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission. It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision).

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 1 month in advance of the dates foreseen for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

Indicatively, one contract for evaluation services shall be concluded under a framework contract in the 3rd trimester of 2023.

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.

Indicatively, one contract for audit services shall be concluded under a framework contract in 3rd trimester of 2023.

5.10 Communication and visibility

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU. This obligation will be covered by the service contract included under Component 1 (*Communication Support for the Delegation of the European Union to Georgia*). The contractor will ensure effective and correct communication based on the Visibility Requirements of the European Commission.

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 within the abovementioned service contract under Component 1.

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

The Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU External Actions shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the action and the appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in the financing agreements or delegation agreements.

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) and the Delegation to Georgia 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 organisations to keep the EU Delegations and, where relevant, the Commission (DG NEAR), fully informed of the planning and implementation of the appropriate milestones specific visibility and communication activities.

The implementing organisations 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 organisations 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 EU Delegation's communication strategy under the "EU4Georgia" umbrella initiative.

APPENDIX - INDICATIVE LOGFRAME MATRIX (FOR PROJECT MODALITY)¹⁷

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: Impact	To contribute to the deepening of political, economic and trade relations between the EU and Georgia.	Progress in implementation of Association Agenda expressed in percentage of achievement and DCFTA Action Plan	Association Agenda: State of 2016 (0% in 2016 on the basis of the newly negotiated Agenda) DCFTA: 6.33% in May 2016	Association Agenda: 90% by 2020 DCFTA: 81.44% by 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Association Council (Government, EU reports) • Association Committee and relevant Sub-Committees (Government, EU reports) • Commission reports 	

¹⁷ Mark indicators aligned with the relevant programming document with '*' and indicators aligned with the EU Results Framework with (**)

Specific objective(s): Outcome(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SO1: To improve communication about the benefits of approximation to the European Union by the Delegation and the Georgian Government. 	<p>Number of Georgian citizens with positive image of EU;</p> <p>Number of Georgian citizens aware of EU's financial support</p>	<p>OPEN 2017: 59 % positive image of EU</p> <p>OPEN 2017: 58 % aware of financial support</p>	<p>OPEN 2020: 69 % positive image of EU</p> <p>OPEN 2020: 68% aware of financial support</p>	OPEN polling	<p>The Government of Georgia remains committed to the fundamental values of democracy, rule of law and human rights.</p> <p>Georgia continues to support and pursue actions for political, economic and trade integration with the EU. Also, the Government pursues public administration reform in line with international and EU good practice.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SO2: To raise capacity of and provide assistance to Georgian institutions in implementation of the Association Agenda and other joint EU-Georgia documents. 	<p>Number of measures implemented under AA, DCFTA</p>	<p>1. Quantitative references used in Monitoring reports on AA and DCFTA 2018; Reports of relevant Sub-Committees under the AA</p> <p>2. State of reforms in relevant priority areas (see section 1.1.3)</p>	<p>Progress in implementation of EU-Georgia Association Agreement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of negotiation rounds, Cooperation Committees and Councils, etc. • AA and DCFTA implementation monitoring reports by the EU and shadow reports • Final reports by institutions 	<p>The EU and the Government maintain their high level of cooperation and continue to communicate and coordinate reform efforts.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SO3: To foster Georgian participation in Erasmus+ programme. 	<p>Number of Georgian institutions participating in Erasmus+ programme</p>	N/A 2018		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports by National Erasmus+ Office and EACEA. 	

Outputs	<i>Component 1: Strategic Communication</i>					<p>The government shows progress in implementing horizontal public administration reforms.</p> <p>The beneficiary institutions are willing and able to implement and benefit from the proposed actions. The institutions' capacity in maintaining staff, planning and coordination is sufficient for a sustainable implementation of the actions.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication support to the Delegation of the European Union to Georgia; • Capacity building for the Georgian Government in strategic communication and response to hybrid and emerging threats, support in media monitoring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of persons reached with information on EU assistance • Development and access to high-quality mass-media content • Number of campaigns implemented by Government on EU integration related topics 	N/A 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 500k people reached by the end of the project • Should increase by at least 2% each year of the project • At least 2 wide-reach campaigns implemented by the end of the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project reports and opinion polls generated by the Contractor. • Media monitoring. 	
	<i>Component 2: Complementary Support to State institutions in light of Association Agenda priorities and other joint EU-Georgia documents</i>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand-driven capacity building measures for state institutions chosen from the possible areas of intervention; • Strengthening Institutional Capacities of Parliament of Georgia for Improved Law-Making, Oversight and • Representation*; • Support to Georgia in the preparation of the transition towards becoming an Erasmus+ Programme Country; • Support to Sakpatenti through cooperation with EUIPO; • Support to Revenue Service of Georgia through cooperation with UNCTAD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be updated at a later stage for each individual action under institution-building measures • Increased capacity of higher education system for implementation strategy and roadmap for claiming Erasmus+ Programme Country status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of clear understanding of the gaps and needs of education system for Erasmus+ Programme Country status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of feasible strategy and roadmap enabling country to apply for Erasmus+ programme country status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports by PAO 		

<i>Component 3: Support to Georgia's higher education system, science and research</i>						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased funding for Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE), International Credit Mobility (ICM) (exchange programmes), and Jean Monnet programmes under Erasmus+; • Mobility scheme for Georgian researchers and scientists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of CBHE projects funded in Georgia; • Number of ICM projects funded in Georgia; • Number of JM projects funded in Georgia • Number of researchers and scientists participating in mobility scheme 	<p>2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 CBHE projects • 1333 scholarships ICM • 1 JM project <p>2018: 21 Georgian researchers participated in mobility scheme within EU framework programmes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBHE - increase by 60% per call • ICM - increase by at least 150 participants per call • 4 additional JM projects per call • Minimum 400 Georgian researchers in mobility scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports by EACEA and DG EAC on number of successful projects • Reports and statistics by MoESCS, DG R&D and JRC 	