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THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX VII

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the 2023 action plan part II in favour of the Regional South Neighbourhood

Action Document for Civil Society's Engagement in the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) – EU Peacebuilding Initiative (EUPI) 2023

ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

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

1. SYNOPSIS

1.1. Action Summary Table

1. Title OPSYS Basic Act	Civil Society's Engagement in the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) – EU Peacebuilding Initiative (EUPI) 2023 2023 annual action plan part II in favour of the Regional South Neighbourhood OPSYS business reference ACT-60819 ABAC Commitment level 1 number: JAD.1249036 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe).
2. Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)	No
EIP Flagship	No.
3. Team Europe Initiative	No.
4. Beneficiar(y)/(ies) of the action	The action shall be carried out in Israel ¹ and Palestine ² . Activities may take place in EU Member States.

¹ The eligibility criteria formulated in Commission Notice Nr. 2013/C-205/05 (OJEU C-205 of 19.07.2013) shall apply to the implementing modalities linked to this Action Programme. This notice, entitled "Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards", can be consulted here: http://eurlex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2013.205.01.0009.01.ENG.

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

5. Programming document	Multi-annual Indicative programme for the Southern Neighbourhood (2021-2027) ³ The action is also in line with European Joint Strategy in support of Palestine 2021-2024 “Towards a democratic, accountable and sustainable Palestinian state” as well as EU-Israel Action Plan.			
6. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results	This action contributes to human development, good governance, and rule of law and to support the main drivers of regional integration.			
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION				
7. Priority Area(s), sectors	Priority area 1: Human development, good governance, and rule of law 15150 Democratic participation and civil society (youth empowerment) 16066 Culture 15160 Human Rights (Democratisation) Priority area 5: Support to the main drivers of regional integration 151 Government and Civil Society - general			
8. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG (1 only): Main Sustainable Development Goal (SDG): Goal 16 - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies Other significant SDGs: Goal 5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls			
9. DAC code(s)	15220 - Civilian peace building, conflict prevention and resolution: 100%			
10. Main Delivery Channel	20000 - Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society			
11. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
12. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women’s and girl’s empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

³ Commission Implementing Decision C(2021)9399 of 16.12.2021 on a Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for the Southern Neighbourhood.

Disaster Risk Reduction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inclusion of persons with Disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
Biological diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change mitigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change adaptation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Internal markers and Tags	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective
EIP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EIP Flagship	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Tags	YES	NO	
transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
environment, climate resilience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
digital	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
economic development (incl. private sector, trade and macroeconomic support)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
human development (incl. human capital and youth)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
health resilience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
migration and mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
agriculture, food security and rural development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
rule of law, governance and public administration reform	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Digitalisation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tags	YES	NO	
digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
digital governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
digital entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
digital skills/literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

	digital services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Tags	YES	NO
	digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	education and research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Migration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	COVID-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION			
14. Amounts concerned	Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020110 Southern Neighbourhood		
	Total estimated cost: EUR 5 000 000		
	Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 5 000 000		
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION			
15. Implementation modalities (management mode and delivery methods)	Direct management through:		
	- Grants		

1.2. Summary of Action

The present action is the new generation of a programme supporting People-to-People (P2P) initiatives in the framework of the MEPP since 1998. The action aims to leverage the positive role that civil society can play in reviving the MEPP. Focusing directly on the Israeli-Palestinian context, the action seeks to preserve from further erosion and possibly reverse the negative public perception of the prospect for peace and a two-state solution.

The action builds on lessons learned from the previous programming cycles, the recommendations of the most recent Mid-term evaluation of the EU Peacebuilding Initiative and takes into account recent developments affecting the viability of a two-state solution. It addresses Civil Society in its broadest meaning (all non-State, not-for-profit, independent and non-violent structures). Compared to the previous EU funded peace building programmes, this action is more ambitious and targeted in terms of support to Civil Society's engagement in the peace process. The Programme will also have a strong focus on women, supporting their meaningful participation in efforts to maintain and promote peace and security and will also strongly support youth, the largest segment of society both in Israel and Palestine. In particular youth engagement in decision making and contribution in conflict prevention and peacebuilding will be encouraged, with a specific attention to counter ideological radicalisation.

The proposed action supports the implementation of the European Joint Strategy in support of Palestine 2021-2024 "Towards a democratic, accountable and sustainable Palestinian State" and the EU-Israel Action Plan.

It also contributes to the New Agenda for the Mediterranean and United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 5.

The action reflects the EU priorities under the Joint Communication on a Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood⁴ and its Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)⁵. The objectives of the action are also aligned with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) political framework.

This action also implements the Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for the Southern Neighbourhood (2021-2027) under its Priority Area 3: Peace and Security.

1.3 Beneficiar(y)/(ies) of the action

The action will target both Israelis and Palestinians as beneficiaries.

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Context

The central objective of the EU in the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) is a just and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on the two-state solution, with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, and viable Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza, living side by side in peace and security, with borders negotiated on the basis of the 1967 lines and mutually agreed land swaps, with Jerusalem as the future capital of both states, with security arrangements and with a just, fair and realistic solution to the refugee issue⁶. This position is based on the framework set by the Oslo Accords, agreed upon by both parties, and on the international consensus embodied in the relevant United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolutions. The EU has consistently maintained also in the Conclusions of the Council that this is the only viable path towards a final status agreement and end of the conflict.

The long cycle of violence, with the outbreak in spring 2021 and an increase of violence throughout 2022, makes clear that “only a political solution will bring sustainable peace and end once for all the Palestinian-Israeli conflict” and that “restoring a political horizon towards a two-state solution now remains of utmost importance.”⁷ This confirms the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of 18 January 2016 stating that “only the re-establishment of a political horizon and the resumption of dialogue can stop the violence” and that “the underlying causes of the conflict need to be addressed”⁸. This action seeks to contribute to address the underlying causes and to re-build the conditions for dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians.

In order to restore the political environment for the two-state solution, “the EU is renewing its engagement with key international partners, including the US, and other partners in the region (...)”⁹. The Arab Peace Initiative (API) is important for relaunching negotiations, and the EU will continue to work with its international and Arab partners to renew the multilateral approach to the peace process and recreate the space for meaningful negotiations towards the two-state solution. The EU's efforts in this respect are led by the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy and the Vice- President of the European Commission (HR/VP) with the support of the EU Special Representative for the MEPP and are to revive Middle East peace efforts given that the process has been stalled for a number of years with no direct negotiations between the parties since 2014.

⁴ JOIN (2021) 2 final of 09.02.2021

⁵ SWD (2021) 23 final

⁶ The FAC Conclusions provide the political basis for implementing EU policy on MEPP through direct support for actions on the ground by civil society and other actors.

⁷ High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy (HRVP) Josep Borrell, Statement of 21 May 2021.

⁸ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/22873/st05304en16.pdf>

⁹ High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy (HRVP) Josep Borrell, Statement of 21 May 2021.

On the ground, the situation has continued to deteriorate and a number of developments pose a threat to the feasibility of a two-state solution, while prospects for an early return to meaningful negotiations are very limited. The continuation of settlement expansion, and repeating waves of escalatory violence have widened the gap between the parties. The deterioration of the situation on the ground has continued with increased settlement expansion, demolitions and evictions, forced transfers and record high settler violence across the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem.

The Palestinian Authority is faced with increased financial and fiscal concerns, while its popular support is at an all-time low. Israel's continuing occupation, the failure to bring about genuine intra-Palestinian reconciliation and growing democratic deficit in the absence of overdue national elections have contributed to strengthening authoritarian tendencies of the PA. More broadly, the failure of reconciliation between intra-Palestinian factions and the lack of a credible political horizon have contributed to increase tensions and worsen an already fragile situation on the ground. In this respect, incitement to violence and hatred has continued on both sides, with increasing divisions between the two societies and even greater levels of frustration and despair, particularly on the Palestinian side¹⁰.

At regional level, in September 2020, leaders from Bahrain, Israel and the United Arab Emirates signed agreements to normalise their diplomatic relations (the so called "Abraham Accords"). A few months later, on 10 December 2020, Israel and Morocco also signed a similar normalisation agreement. These series of agreements, improving relations between Israel and four Arab states, are contributing to an important shift in the region, in which these Arab states cooperate more closely with Israel on various topics such as security, trade, energy and environmental issues. While the benefits of this regional normalisation are still to materialise for the MEPP, the first agreement with the UAE coincided with the indefinite postponement of Israel's plan to annex parts of the West Bank.

An underlying factor of these agreements is the paradigm shift by these Arab countries which have normalised their relations with Israel, while they state that they are keeping a principled position on the MEPP. From a Palestinian perspective, those same agreements, however, also reversed the logic of the Arab Peace Initiative (API), which conditioned regional peace on Israeli-Palestinian peace, and was based on the assumption that normalisation of diplomatic ties would happen in exchange for full withdrawal from all the territories occupied since 1967. This development has been perceived by the Palestinian public and leadership as a major blow to attempts to resume negotiations towards the establishment of a Palestinian State, as in their eyes it is likely to remove the main incentive for an Israeli government to make the necessary compromises in view of achieving the two-state solution.

In this context, the New Agenda for the Mediterranean¹¹ has established a link between the MEPP and Israel's normalisation with Arab States: *"The EU and its Member States and partners should renew efforts to reach a settlement in the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP). In this regard, the EU will seek to encourage and build upon the recent establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and a number of Arab countries, with a view to enhancing the prospects for a negotiated two-State Solution based on the internationally agreed parameters as well as regional peace and security"*. In parallel, the EU, under the leadership of the EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process, is working together with Saudi Arabia and the League of Arab States, to revive the Middle East peace efforts. On 13 February, the HRVP met with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal and with Arab League Secretary-General Aboul Gheit. They agreed to revive and build on the Arab Peace Initiative, and the EU reaffirmed its proposal of an unprecedented package of economic,

¹⁰According to a recent joint poll, "The Palestine/Israel Pulse" conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Research (PSR) in Ramallah and the International Program in Conflict Resolution and Mediation at Tel Aviv University in December 2022 the support for the two-state solution has significantly dropped among Palestinian and Israeli Jews, with only 33% of Palestinian public and 34% of Israeli Jews (and 39% of all Israeli - Jews and Arab) still supporting the solution. (<http://pcpsr.org/en/node/928>)

political and security support in the context of a final status agreement as endorsed in the Council conclusions of December 2013.

This action also implements the *Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for the Southern Neighbourhood (2021-2027)* under its Priority Area 3: Peace and Security.

The proposed action complements joint EU efforts under the European Joint Strategy in support of Palestine 2021-2024 “Towards a democratic, accountable and sustainable Palestinian state” and the EU-Israel Action Plan and aims at contributing to the New Agenda for the Mediterranean. The action will also seek to ensure complementarities with and avoid duplication of bilateral and regional actions, in particular under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI) thematic programmes on Human Rights and Democracy and Civil Society Organisations, the NDICI Rapid Response pillar and the East Jerusalem Programme¹². Importantly, despite the fact that several other actions work to enhance the capacity of civil society in Israel and Palestine or at developing people-to-people connections at regional level¹³, the proposed action is the sole EU programme that aims specifically at maintaining the two-state solution and potential for peace with both sides and at regional level. In this sense, EUPI's specific focus is on supporting and promoting the conditions for a sustainable resolution of the Israeli-Arab conflict through civil society engagement.

This action builds on a longstanding, reliable and continued funding mechanism that has enabled pro-peace civil society in Palestine and Israel to plan strategically and to sustain their initiatives over time. Furthermore, it provides pro-peace civil society with much needed political and/or ethical backing, which is derived from the fact that the EU policy on the MEPP has constantly remained focused on the two-state solution and consistent with international law.

To date, there is no formal mechanism for donors' co-ordination on peacebuilding and conflict resolution programmes neither in Israel nor in Palestine. Informal ad-hoc co-ordination efforts among donors have occasionally been stepped up in recent years, but have remained limited to information sharing. The proposed action complements peacebuilding programmes funded by other governments¹⁴. For instance, while new US funding of up to USD 250 million for the period 2021-2025 in support for peacebuilding¹⁵ will be directed toward the development of the Palestinian private sector and economy in the West Bank and Gaza and are likely to emphasise functional cross-border activities, the EU action is unique in focusing on projects that have a strong peacebuilding rationale and are designed to have an impact at the level of policy and decision-making.

2.2. Problem Analysis

Short problem analysis

The outburst experienced in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in April-May 2021, spreading from occupied East Jerusalem to the rest of the occupied West Bank, Israel's mixed cities, and Gaza - where Israel and Hamas fought an eleven-day confrontation, their fourth in fourteen years, exacting a high human and physical toll -

¹² The specific objective of the Programme is to strengthen the resilience of Palestinian East Jerusalem residents and to preserve the Palestinian character of the city. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/20160517_ejp9-webpage_final_en.pdf#:~:text=The%20East%20Jerusalem%20Programme%20is%20a%20multi-sectoral%20investment,private%20sector%20development%3B%20community%20empowerment%20to%20human%20rights.

¹³ Such as the Thematic Programme for Civil Society Organisations and at regional level Med Dialogue, Erasmus +, Horizon Europe, etc.

¹⁴ Such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Switzerland and the Netherlands.

¹⁵ Following the enactment of the Nita M. Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act of 2020. See full information here: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=334793>

highlighted the increasing gaps between Israelis and Palestinians, lack of opportunity for cooperation and a growing lack of trust. This continued with an increase in violence through 2022 and into 2023.

With the continuing conflict and the situation on the ground deteriorating further over the past years, support for the two-state solution continues to decrease among both Palestinians and Israelis. A majority of Israelis and Palestinians believe that settlements have expanded so much that the two-state solution is no longer viable.¹⁶ At the same time, the debate in the Israeli political arena on a possible annexation of the Jordan Valley - and, after the presentation of the US Peace initiative in January 2020, of large areas of West Bank - has also significantly increased the percentage of those who believe that the two-state solution is no longer feasible. The recent Israeli governments have chosen to focus on conflict mitigation while avoiding any discussion of a final status agreement - a trend that is increasingly affecting the Israeli public. Moreover, each side continues to view the intentions of the other as posing an existential threat and large majorities on both sides believe that the other side is untrustworthy and does not want peace.

Furthermore, while people-to-people (P2P) interactions between the Palestinian and Israeli sides are largely absent, trends towards systemic de-humanisation of the other have been worsening and Palestinian and Israeli peace-oriented CSOs' efforts to promote peace and non-violence have faced a setback in recent years. The ability of civil society, both in Israel and Palestine, to affect the political agenda and push the peace process forward has to be seen in a context of increasing pressure from all duty bearers and politically motivated campaigns aimed at delegitimising their reputation and/or work. Israel is increasingly putting pressure especially on the CSOs present in East Jerusalem, CSOs involved in "non-violent resistance", human rights defence - as well as the Israeli Human Rights and anti-occupation CSOs. In Gaza, the movement and access restrictions imposed by Israel for almost two decades make it extremely difficult for CSOs to engage in P2P activities. At the same time, the strict control exercised by Hamas *de facto* authorities over civil society poses a threat to those involved.

Furthermore, engagement in the MEPP and peacebuilding in general is often understood differently by Israelis and Palestinians. The differing goals and needs of the two sides as well as the asymmetry in power relation that exist between the parties influence perceptions of the impact and legitimacy of peacebuilding efforts. Within their own societies, those who actively support peacebuilding struggle for legitimacy against campaigns of de-legitimation. In the Palestinian community, there is a growing unwillingness to work with Israeli organisations that do not recognise essential human rights of Palestinians, including the right to self-determination, and do not subscribe to ending the occupation.

Furthermore, those who view any form of cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis as a way of normalising the occupation, and therefore oppose it, are increasingly vocal. This opposition negatively impacts both the perception and the participation of CSOs and their target groups in people-to-people programmes, delegitimising the partners and their work and posing security concerns for the implementing partners and their target groups. On the other end, there is a growing demand in Palestine for intra-Palestinian reconciliation to reduce internal conflicts and strengthen a unified position for negotiation. Israeli society, in turn, has experienced a polarisation of political positions, resulting in a de-legitimation for the general public of moderate opinions, including those that support peace. Israel's peace-camp, whether measured in individuals, organisations, or political representation, has shrunk in recent years and increasingly finds itself framed as undermining Israel's national interests.

Despite all difficulties identified above, amid the current political impasse between Palestinian and Israeli leaders, CSOs are among the few players on the ground still able to maintain open channels of communication

¹⁶ According to a poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Research in March 2022 in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, support for the Two-State Solution amongst Palestinian public stands at 40% and opposition stands at 58% (<https://pcpsr.org/en/node/902>).

and opportunities for meaningful engagement between the two sides. They play a crucial role in engaging with their communities to transform perceptions and policies, as well as structural and socio-political relationships between and within their communities, and to contribute to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. In working to achieve greater public and political support for the two-state solution, one of the key challenges faced by CSOs in Israel and Palestine is to engage more **youth** and **women** in the process. UN Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted in 2000, underlines “the necessity of women's full and meaningful participation in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security and to prevent conflict”. UN Security Council Resolution 2250, adopted in 2015, acknowledges that a “large youth population presents a unique demographic dividend that can contribute to lasting peace and economic prosperity”¹⁷ and calls upon member states to promote the engagement of youth in decision-making processes. Unfortunately, despite the approval of these two Resolutions by both the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Government, the inclusion of women and youth in the political aspects of the MEPP continues to remain minimal. As a result, the potential of women and youth in both Israel and Palestine to engage in peacebuilding and to help affect positive change in this context, remains entirely unrealised.

In Gaza, taking into account the existing impediments to P2P/cross territorial peacebuilding work, CSOs can contribute to create an environment conducive to peace and the two-state solution by promoting peace values and a culture of peace inside the society.

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

The main stakeholders for this action are civil society organisations (CSOs). Civil Society is considered in its broader sense¹⁸.

Main stakeholders

The main stakeholders are non-governmental, not-for-profit CSOs in line with the NDICI Regulation. In the general framework of support to CSOs and in order to maximise the impact of the EU assistance and take stock of lessons learnt, a specific attention will be given to civil society platforms, networks or coalitions as they have proven to be effective not only in promoting coordination between members, but also in providing increased leverage in relation to public authorities and other actors. In addition to add capacity, synergy, and voice to efforts of their members, helping reaching out to a wider public— locally and internationally-, they may serve as a shield for activists and organisations (particularly at grassroots level) in highly politicised contexts.

Specific attention will also be given to women and youth organisations to enhance women and youth meaningful participation in and contribution to conflict prevention, transformation and peacebuilding.

Youth represents the largest segment of the society both in Palestine and in Israel: in Palestine, two thirds of the population is younger than 30 and in Israel, their share of the population is close to 50%. The young generations in Palestine and Israel have never seen any progress in the peace process, and are increasingly exposed to political, religious or ideological radicalisation. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Palestinian and Israeli youth tend to be more hawkish toward the ‘other side’ and less optimistic concerning the prospect of reaching a negotiated settlement to the conflict, compared to their parents and grandparents. The absence of democratic processes, accountability, and reconciliation in Palestine, in addition to the Israeli occupation, the high rate of unemployment in the West Bank and especially the Gaza Strip, and the decline in economic opportunities have amplified young Palestinians’ hopelessness toward politics.

¹⁷ The United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250

¹⁸ Definition from COM(2012) 492 final: The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in External Actions – Brussels 12/09/2012

Youth participation in politics is much more developed in Israel. However, annual surveys conducted by research centres such as the Israel Democracy Institute¹⁹ repeatedly find that younger Israelis tend to be far more conservative on social and political issues than their parents and grandparents, and vote in much larger percentages for parties affiliated with the political right. Expectedly, when it comes to the conflict with the Palestinians, younger Israelis are less likely to support the two-state solution compared to their parents' generation.

The low level of participation of youth in the MEPP is particularly striking in light of a growing body of evidence which suggests that young women and men can and do play active and valuable roles as agents of positive and constructive change. According to such research, if young people are invested in building their capacity and understanding of peace and sustainable development in society, they are able to effectively engage as active citizens. By undertaking activities that equip them with the relevant knowledge, attitudes, skills and practices, they are able to create positive change at all levels in their community and society.²⁰ Therefore, Israeli and Palestinian youth-led movements taking place at the local and national level have enormous potential to help build a more peaceful society and catalyse more democratic, inclusive governance.

Similarly, **women's** participation, empowerment and gender mainstreaming in the MEPP and in the overall peacebuilding field in Israel and Palestine remain clearly insufficient, despite the fact that women constitute about half of the population. This owes to different aspects such as the influence of patriarchal societies on both sides (but especially in Palestine), the absence of a thorough approach to gender transformation, and the spread of religious radicalism.

2.3 Lessons Learned

A mid-term evaluation of the EUPI programme - covering the period 2015-2019 - was conducted in 2020. Overall, the evaluation concluded that the "EUPI programme has remained relevant and fitting to the context" and that the "*programme's bottom-up approach to engaging a wide range of civil society actors and other stakeholders has remained vital to the widening of support for the MEPP and two-state solution objectives among civil society organisations and the wider population in Israel and Palestine.*"²¹ Regarding the effectiveness of the programme, the evaluation found that the functional cross-border cooperation projects have failed to do so "*mainly due to the lack of a clear connection to peacebuilding objectives and the failure to influence policy arrangements in key areas of mutual interest as intended*". It therefore recommended increasing support for the so-called "political dimension" due to its proven relevance to the programme while discontinuing support to the *functional* cross-border cooperation component for its limited relevance to peacebuilding and the two-state solution in the current context and its risk of perpetrating conflict dynamics. While discontinuing the so called "functional cross-border dimension", the programme should nevertheless keep valuing projects implemented jointly by Israelis and Palestinian organisations or that promote joint activities at the level of civil society as long as based on a strong peacebuilding dimension and support for the two-state solution.

The evaluation made also a number of other recommendations most of which are integrated into the design of the current programme:

¹⁹ Israel Democracy Institute - <https://en.idi.org.il/tags-en/1465>

²¹ Mid-term evaluation of the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) – EU Peacebuilding initiative (EUPI) implemented by GFA Consulting Group GmbH [Specific contract no. 2019/411440]

- The EUPI should continue to focus on strengthening the positive role civil society organisations have in their own societies in creating and enhancing a civic and political environment conducive to peace negotiations and dialogue.
- The programme should focus on the dimensions that proved more effective, namely the political dimension (focusing on civic and political engagement in peacebuilding) and the trust-building dimension (focusing on attitudinal changes).
- Targeting the political sphere and engaging with sceptical and unconvinced publics, particularly, but not limited to youth (young men and women), remain priorities of the EUPI as well as further focusing, and mainstreaming, the role of youth and women in peacebuilding and conflict transformation.
- In order to ensure no one is left behind or harmed, a pragmatic tailor-made approach for CSOs' and citizens' engagement in Gaza is necessary focusing on peacebuilding inside the society.

In the Middle East context, the EU recognises that cultural heritage can be both a driver of conflict and a vector of peace and development. As such, this action will take into account the “EU Approach to Cultural Heritage in conflicts and crises”²².

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

From the problem analysis, it is clear that given the current circumstances it is of utmost importance to continue preserving the viability and social acceptance of a two-state solution on the ground, building mutual trust and encouraging dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians, as well as social cohesion within both societies, pending the emergence of a more favourable bilateral, regional and international context.

Taking into account the complex social and political environment described in the section above and the absence of a political horizon leading to a two-state solution, while also taking stock of lessons learnt from previous phases of the Programme, the EUPI will leverage the positive role that CSOs in Israel and Palestine can play in creating greater public and political support for the two-state solution. It will do so by tackling two reinforcing specific objectives aiming to create an environment favourable to peacebuilding and to the resumption of negotiation between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

Accordingly, EUPI will aim: 1) to enhance CSO's engagement vis a vis the political arena and the broader society in support of a just and negotiated two-state solution; and 2) to enhance their capacity to contribute to produce societal changes favourable to peacebuilding and supportive of a just and negotiated two-state solution. In doing so, the programme will pay particular attention in prioritising groups that have not played a significant and/or constructive role in the MEPP thus far, such as, but not limited to, youth and women.

3.1. Objectives and Expected Outputs

The **Overall Objective/Impact** of this action is to preserve the viability of a just and negotiated two-state solution in the context of the Middle East Peace Process.

The **Intermediate Objective** (Intermediate Impact) of this action is to achieve greater public and political support for the two-state solution among specific constituencies and groups through civil society's positive engagement.

²² Council of the EU, Conclusions 9837/21 and 9962/21. Building peace by cultural heritage – a new EU approach in conflicts and crises, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/100345/building-peace-cultural-heritage-%E2%80%93-new-eu-approach-conflicts-and-crises_en

The action aims specifically at contributing to the following **Specific Objectives (SO) /outcomes (O)**:

1. **SO/O1:** Civil society's leverage on decision-makers and broader society in support of a just and negotiated two-state solution in Israel and Palestine is increased
2. **SO/O2:** Societal changes in Israel and Palestine conducive to a climate favourable to peacebuilding and supportive of a just and negotiated two-state solution are promoted by civil society

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

SO/O 1 Civil society's leverage on decision-makers and broader society in support of a just and negotiated two-state solution in Israel and Palestine is increased

OO 1.1 Civil society's national and transnational cooperation in favour of a negotiated and just two-state solution is fostered

OO 1.2 Civil society's advocacy efforts in the local and international arena in favour of a negotiated and just two-state solution are enhanced

OO 1.3 Inter-group and intra-groups participation in dialogue on policy /advocacy issues both at national and transnational level is fostered particularly with constituencies/groups who oppose or are not supportive of a negotiated and just two-state solution

SO/O 2 Societal changes in Israel and Palestine conducive to a climate favourable to peacebuilding and supportive of a just and negotiated two-state solution are promoted by civil society

OO 2.1 A culture of peace and human rights (including mutual understanding, tolerance, and trust) as a set of values conducive to peaceful societies and co-existence is fostered

OO 2.2 Inter-group and intra-groups dialogue aimed at building trust both at national and transnational level is fostered

3.2. Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1 and Output 2:

- The evaluation of the previous phase of EUPI has demonstrated that supporting projects through grants was an effective way to implement the EUPI objectives. The type of activities that maybe funded under the grants include production and dissemination of research based information and other knowledge products (studies, reports, etc.), advocacy and awareness raising campaigns, meetings, events, networking, workshops and seminars, training and dialogues, etc.

3.3. Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Biodiversity

Outcomes of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening and of the Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening

The environmental and climate change risk screenings carried out while designing the programme concluded that no further action was required as the action is primarily centred on support to peacebuilding efforts and conflict transformation in Israeli and Palestinian societies, creating favourable conditions for a negotiated

settlement of the conflict and ultimately a two-state solution. Most activities expected to be funded do fall in the “category C – interventions for which an EIA is not required” (p. 68) of the mainstreaming guidelines²³. Nevertheless, as environmental and climate change issues are both a global concern and potential drivers of conflict and fragility, their potential for peacebuilding interactions across conflict divides will be taken into due account during the action’s implementation by encouraging applicants to adopt a mainstreamed approach and raising their awareness on environmentally friendly operations; supporting initiatives that leverage the transnational and transboundary nature of environmental issues to advance peacebuilding efforts in the context of the MEPP and the two-state solution.

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this Action is labelled as G1. This implies that this action directly targets gender equality issues.

In line with the EU commitments on the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820, this action seeks to prepare women to take part in the formal peace process, once it will resume, and to include them, from now, in peacebuilding processes from which they are currently largely underrepresented or excluded. Including women in peace processes adds a broader range of perspectives and enhances the ability of peacemakers to address the concerns of a wider range of stakeholders, which has been proven to lead to more sustainable peace. Mediation strategies that systematically include women, and civil society more broadly, are more likely to generate broader ownership and support for a negotiated settlement. Peace agreements that are responsive to the specific needs of women and girls, men and boys are more likely to contribute to sustainable peace.

For these reasons, the action will prioritise initiatives promoting women’s meaningful participation and gender responsiveness in conflict transformation efforts and peacebuilding going beyond promoting the participation and the protection of women in peacebuilding. Practically, this means that initiatives funded under this action will be required to go beyond gender mainstreaming; they will have to adapt to the varying threats and opportunities of different stages of conflict.

Human Rights

The Human Right Based Approach (HRBA) will be at the core of this action and their resulting interventions (projects). The action will be implemented following a right-based and value-based approach, encompassing all human rights, which will be particularly relevant for people in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations and those living in rural and marginalised areas. The values of solidarity, connection, non-violence, tolerance, understanding the other, good neighbouring relations, reconciliation, justice, equity, local leadership, empowerment and democratisation, just and sustainable peace, respect of human rights as a set of values supportive of peaceful coexistence will be promoted throughout the programme and in the resulting projects. Projects should be designed taking into account the following working principles: (i) legality, universality and indivisibility of human rights, (ii) participation, (iii) non-discrimination and equal access, (iv) accountability, (v) transparency and access to information.²⁴

Disability

²³ <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-environment-climate/documents/new-guidelines-integrating-environment-and-climate-change-eu-international-cooperation-0>

²⁴Council conclusions on a rights-based approach to development and Tool-box – a rights-based approach encompassing all human rights for EU development co-operation: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/rights-based-approach-development-co-operation_en

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0. While this implies that disability is not directly targeted under the action, disability should be mainstreamed in the resulting interventions. This action will ensure that resulting interventions demonstrate the capacity to mainstream the disability dimension (giving voice to people with disabilities, design activities allowing people with disabilities to be part of these activities etc...).

Democracy

The Commission’s 2012 Communication “The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe’s engagement with Civil Society in external relations”²⁵ acknowledges the crucial role of civil society in fostering democracy, peace and conflict resolution, and recognises the tight link between democracy and peace as two mutually reinforcing pillars of resilient societies. Against this backdrop, this action is centred on the role of CSOs which are central in vibrant democracies and are at the heart of the action. Enhancing their role and voice in the MEPP is a way to ensure participatory democracy in the MEPP. The action will support initiatives that uphold democratic values, in line with international human rights law, domestic laws, as well as the rule of law and principles of good governance more generally.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience are at the core of this action. The action will ensure that the complexity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the existing asymmetry and related power imbalance between the parties in conflict are thoroughly assessed and taken into consideration, by applying a stringent conflict-sensitive approach, thus increasing its adherence to the “Do No Harm” principle. This means that, to the best of its abilities, this action avoids having a negative impact and maximise the positive impact on conflict dynamics, thereby contributing to conflict prevention, structural stability and peace building²⁶.

Disaster Risk Reduction

Not applicable

3.4. Risks and Assumptions

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
1 – external environment	Risk 1 Negative political developments leading to increased violence	H	M	Flexibility in implementation, for example using flexible procedures for crisis and emergency situations; suspension of project’s implementation
1 – external environment	Risk 2 Disruption of activities linked to instability of the political situation	M/H	M/H	Flexibility in implementation, for example using flexible procedures for crisis and emergency situations

²⁵ 2012 Communication “The Roots of Democracy” (EC, 2012)

²⁶ EU External Service guidance note on the use of conflict analysis in support of EU external action, 2013.

1 – external environment	Risk 3 Joint activities lack participation due to social/political pressure (including anti normalisation sentiments)	M	M	Whenever necessary due to sensitivity and security, beneficiaries and implementers should be granted confidentiality and the visibility of their activities could be kept low; whenever possible joint activities to take place or be re-located outside the region (ex: Cyprus, Brussels, Jordanian Dead sea, etc...)
1 – external environment	Risk 4 Disruption of activities linked to public health restrictions	M/H	H	Encourage partners to continue working on mitigation measures and alternative plans for implementation of activities; suspension of project's implementation until end of lockdowns
1 – external environment	Risk 5 mobility restrictions (i.e. lack of permits, closure of check points etc.) for Palestinians from West Bank and Gaza, and for Israelis to enter each other's territories	H	M	Contingency planning to allow for alternative options to ensure participation of beneficiaries/target groups including through new technologies (on-line meetings, events, etc...). Delegations to facilitate permits requests also through direct coordination with relevant Israeli authorities

External Assumptions

Main assumptions are:

- no major events affect current trends in terms of support for the two-state solution in Israel, Palestine but also in other relevant countries;
- Palestinian leadership continue supporting a two-state solution;
- Whereas some members of the Israeli government will continue rejecting the two-state solution, the Israeli government, notably the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, do not overtly reject the two state solution;
- instability of the political situation as well as escalation of violence will not prevent activities from being carried out and reverse positive effects of projects;

3.5. Intervention Logic

In complementarity of political and diplomatic activities of the High Representative/Vice- President of the Commission, the European Union Special Representative (EUSR) for MEPP²⁷ and the Quartet²⁸, whose work is temporarily suspended, as well as the EU political instances on the ground related to of the EU in the Middle East Peace Process, the regional programme “Civil Society’s Engagement in the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) - EU Peacebuilding Initiative (EUPI)” focuses its core objective on the recognition of the unique role of civil society (CSOs) in helping to mitigate, manage, and resolve protracted conflicts.

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that:

²⁷ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/410735_fr The mandate of the EUSR for the Middle East Peace Process is to provide an active contribution to the final settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on a two-state solution, in line with the UNSCR 2334 (2016). The EUSR maintains to this end close contacts with all parties in the peace process as well as with the United Nations and other relevant organisations such as the League of Arab States.

²⁸ The Quartet, set up in 2002, consists of the United Nations, the European Union, the United States and Russia. Its mandate is to help mediate Middle East peace negotiations and to support Palestinian economic development and institution-building in preparation for eventual statehood.

IF this action

- Fosters a culture of peace and human rights (including mutual understanding, tolerance, and trust) as a set of values conducive to peaceful societies and co-existence; and
- Fosters inter-group and intra-groups dialogue aimed at building trust both at national and transnational level, contributing to the prevention and settlement of conflicts and favourable to a negotiated and just two-state solution;

and IF it

- Fosters civil society's national and transnational cooperation in favour of a negotiated and just two-state solution; and
- Enhances civil society's advocacy efforts, in the local and international arena, in favour of a negotiated and just two-state solution; and
- Fosters inter-group and intra-groups participation in dialogue on policy /advocacy issues both at national and transnational level, particularly with constituencies/groups who oppose or are not supportive of a negotiated and just two-state solution;

THEN

- Civil society will produce societal changes in Israel and Palestine conducive to a climate favourable to peacebuilding and supportive of a just and negotiated two-state solution; and
- Civil society in Israel and Palestine will have increased leverage in relation to both decision-makers and the broader society in support of a just and negotiated two-state solution,

Which all will contribute to

Greater public and political support for the two-state solution among specific constituencies and groups through civil society's positive engagement;

Leading to

Preserving the viability of a just and negotiated two-state solution in the context of a Middle East Peace Process.

3.6. Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	To preserve the viability of a just and negotiated two-state solution in the context of the Middle East Peace Process	I1. Official peace processes/ Initiatives brokered/led by third parties started and/or ongoing	Number of processes in 2021	I1. To be determined (Year: End of program)	Media reports of political statements	<i>Not applicable</i>
		I1. Exchanges between Israel and neighbours on medium/long terms solution	Number of Exchanges in 2021	I2. 5 percent increase over baseline (Year: End of program)		
Intermediate Impact	To achieve greater public and political support for the for the two-state solution through civil society positive engagement	III1. Degree to which support and/or confidence for a two-state-solution increases among relevant constituencies as a result of EU funded projects, disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity and location	Baseline will be assessed at the beginning of implementation	III1. To be determined (Year: End of program)	II2. Relevant polls, surveys, and/or indexes	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 1	O1 Civil society's leverage on decision-makers and broader society in support of a just and negotiated two-state solution in Israel and Palestine is increased	1.1. Extent to which CSOs publicly advocate for peace and two state solution	Baseline will be assessed at the beginning of implementation	1.1 100 instances of public advocacy (Year: End of program)	1.1. Project reports (with advocacy component funded by this instrument)	No major events affect current trends in terms of support for the two-state solution
		1.2. Decision-makers (in Israel, Palestine, and abroad) take on suggestions by CSO community)	Baseline will be assessed at the beginning of implementation	1.2 Decision-makers (in Israel, Palestine, and abroad) take on	1.2. Public positioning of relevant authorities,	PAL leadership continue supporting a two-state solution

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
				suggestions by CSO community at least 10 times (Year: End of program)	especially in the media	IL government does not overtly reject the two-state solution
Outcome 2	O2 Societal changes in Israel and Palestine conducive to a climate favourable to peacebuilding and supportive of a just and negotiated two-state solution are promoted by civil society	2.1.Public perceptions regarding the utility of violence vs. peaceful methods as the most effective path to achieving a two-state solution (disaggregated by ethnicity, sex, and location (IL-WB-GS)). 2.2.Number of youth and women engaged in support of peace and against violence (disaggregated by ethnicity, sex, and location (IL-WB-GS)).	To be determined based on available public opinion surveys at the beginning of implementation Baseline will be assessed at the beginning of implementation	2.1.5 % decrease in support for violence; 5 % increase in support for peaceful measures (Year: End of program) 2.2.To be determined (Year: End of program)	2.1.Available annual public opinion survey 2.2.Project reports, logframe reports in OPSYS	No major event affects trends in terms of support for the two-state solution Instability of the political situation as well as escalation of violence will not prevent activities from being carried out and reverse positive effects of projects.
Opt 1.1 (related to Outcome 1)	CSO's national and transnational cooperation in favour of a negotiated and just two-state solution is fostered	1.1.1. Number of cooperation mechanisms established (formal or informal, national or transnational)	Baseline will be assessed at the beginning of implementation	To be set at a later stage (Year: End of program)	Project reports, project log frames projects	Space for CSOs' engagement in peacebuilding is maintained at national and transnational level

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
						Anti-normalisation pressure within Palestinian society do not impede stakeholders engagement
Opt 1.2 (related to Outcome 1)	Civil society and non-state actors' advocacy efforts, in the local and international arena, in favour of a negotiated and just two-state solution are enhanced;	1.2.1 Number of EUPI? implementing partners (IPs) with increased capacity and quality to conduct advocacy interventions	To be established based on 2021 EUPI projects results	1.2.1 At least 5 CSOs (Year: End of program)	Projects Progress report	CSOs are willing to engage in capacity building processes and allocate necessary human resources
Opt 1.3 (related to Outcome 1)	Inter-group and intra-groups participation in dialogue on policy /advocacy issues both at national and transnational level is fostered, particularly with constituencies/groups who oppose or are not supportive of a negotiated and just two-state solution	1.3.1. Number of ongoing dialogues and/or relevant processes 1.3.2. Number of non-supportive constituencies/groups engaged in dialogue	Baseline will be assessed at the beginning of implementation	To be set at a later stage (Year: End of program)	Projects Progress report	Instability of the political situation as well as escalation of violence do not prevent stakeholders engagement and/or reverse positive effects of interventions Space for CSOs' engagement in policy dialogue is maintained at

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
						national and transnational level
Opt 2.1 (related to Outcome 2)	A culture of peace and human rights (including mutual understanding, tolerance, and trust) as a set of values conducive to peaceful societies and co-existence is fostered	2.1.1 Number of activities held within the framework of this instrument conducive to peace 2.1.2 Number of direct and indirect beneficiaries	2.1.1 Zero (0) 2.1.2 Zero (0)	2.1.1 At least 10 (Year: End of program) 2.1.2 To be set at a later stage (Year: End of program)	Projects Progress report	Continued commitment of Partner organisations to non-violence as the preferred mean to solve conflicts
Opt 2.2 (related to Outcome 2)	Inter-group and intra-groups dialogue aimed at building trust both at national and transnational level is fostered	2.2.1 Number of ongoing dialogues and/or relevant processes 2.2.2 Number of stakeholders contributing to said dialogues/relevant processes (disaggregated by type of dialogue and when possible by sex)	To be set at a later stage	To be set at a later stage (Year: End of program)	Project progress reports	Instability of the political situation as well as escalation of violence do not prevent stakeholders engagement and/or reverse positive effects of interventions Space for CSOs' engagement in inter-group or intra-group

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
		2.2.3 Number of positive developments as a result of said dialogues/processes 2.2.4 Number of stakeholders traditionally excluded from these type of dialogue/processes active herein as a result of this initiative				dialogue is maintained at national and transnational level

4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1. Financing Agreement

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

4.2. Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 72 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this financing Decision.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer in duly justified cases.

4.3. Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures²⁹.

4.3.1. Direct Management (Grants)

a) Purpose of the grants

Grants will support initiatives in line with the specific objectives 1 and 2 described in section 3. While those initiatives have their own objectives and expected results in line with the specific situation they aim to address, they will collectively contribute to the following objectives and results described in section 3:

- **SO/O1:** Civil society's leverage on decision-makers and the broader society in support of a just and negotiated two-state solution in Israel and Palestine is increased.
- **SO/O2:** Societal changes in Israel and Palestine conducive to a climate favourable to peacebuilding and supportive of a just and negotiated two-state solution are promoted by civil society.

Furthermore, particular attention will be given to:

- ensuring youth (young men and young women) mainstreaming
- empowering women and enhancing their meaningful participation;
- engaging stakeholders and constituencies that are traditionally less exposed or less, or not at all, committed to the MEPP and the two-state solution vision.

Initiatives must be designed according to: 1) a right-based approach, taking into account the following working principles: (i) legality, universality and indivisibility of human rights, (ii) participation, (iii) non-discrimination and equal access, (iv) accountability, (v) transparency and access to information; 2) a conflict sensitive/do no harm approach; 3) an approach that takes into account and aims to reduce the existing power asymmetry among Israeli and Palestinians, particularly when cross-territorial and/or joint activities are

²⁹ [EU Sanctions Map](#). 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.

envisaged. Furthermore, they must be consistent with EU foreign policies on a just and negotiated two-state solution.

Finally, implementation of this action will be in line with the intent of the EU Framework Decision on racism and xenophobia. Attention will be paid to prevent that EU-supported activities contribute to incitement to hatred and/or violence.

b) Type of applicants targeted

The potential applicants shall be legal persons and non-profit making. They shall be a specific type of organisation, namely non-governmental organisations. In addition, education and training institutions (schools, universities, research centres), think tanks, not-for-profit media can also participate.

4.4. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

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

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

This action will be implemented in accordance with the Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards³⁰. The Guidelines - published by the European Commission in 2013 – clarify the EU policy with regard to the territorial applicability of EU legislation and bilateral EU-Israel agreements. The Guidelines make a specific exception (section 15) for activities which are carried out by Israeli entities over the Green Line which aim at promoting the Middle East Peace Process in line with EU policy, provided that they are registered within pre-1967 border.

4.5. Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.3	
Grants – total envelope under section 4.3.1	5 000 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2	will be covered by another Decision
Audit – cf. section 5.3	
Strategic communication and Public diplomacy – cf. section 6	will be covered by another Decision
Contingencies	N.A.
Totals	5 000 000

³⁰ Official Journal of the European Union C205/9 19 July 2013 at: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/20130719_guidelines_on_eligibility_of_israeli_entities_en.pdf
https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/20130719_guidelines_on_eligibility_of_israeli_entities_en.pdf

4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

Steering Committee – Action level

Taking stock of lessons learnt under the previous EUPI programme, a Steering Committee will be set up to oversee the action's implementation and provide political orientation in view of enhancing its contribution to the overall EU policy on the MEPP. The Steering Committee will have a critical role to play in increasing the visibility of the action within the EU, and particularly linking it to the higher political level. It will meet at least once per year and will be co-chaired by EUREP and DELTA. It will be composed of representatives of the two Delegations (EUREP and DELTA), DG NEAR, EEAS, and EUSR at senior level. The Steering Committee can invite representatives of any stakeholder whenever deemed appropriate. It can be convened whenever the action requires strategic decisions or changes.

Management, implementation and coordination mechanisms

The EUPI will continue to be co-managed by the Office of the EU Representative to West Bank and Gaza, UNRWA (EUREP) located in East Jerusalem and the EU Delegation to Israel (DELTA) located in Tel Aviv. Coordination meetings between the two delegations will take place at least on quarterly basis at technical level (Operations level) to follow up implementation status and enhance flow of information.

Implementation tasks will be divided between the two delegations as follows:

- Call for proposals will continue to be administered by EUREP as Contracting Authority.
- EUREP and DELTA services will continue working jointly in the process of project selection as well as for the organisation of joint events, if any. They will also attend events, meetings and monitoring visits together when relevant and keep each other regularly informed on the projects progress.
- The distribution between the two Delegations in terms of grant contracts' management will continue to be made on the grounds of the nationality of the lead applicant as follows: contracts with Palestinian and European lead-beneficiaries will be processed and managed by EUREP whereas contracts with Israeli lead-beneficiaries will be processed and managed by DELTA.

5. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1. Monitoring and Reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partners' responsibilities. To this aim, each implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its Outputs and contribution to the achievement of its Outcomes, and if possible at the time of reporting, contribution to the achievement of its Impacts, as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix.

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

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

At project level, responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring are with the implanting partners. When it comes to the two delegations, responsibilities are divided as follows:

At action level, EUREP and DELTA are jointly responsible for the monitoring of programme level indicators including data collection and analysis. Each delegation will feed the system, with data and analysis from the interventions under its direct responsibility as Contracting Authority. Data will be as a minimum disaggregated by sex, age and geographical location.

At project level, the two delegations will enhance joint project monitoring either directly or through independent consultants.

5.2. Evaluation

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

It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the fact that the EUPI is a recurrent action highly dependent on the political context.

The Commission shall form a Reference Group (RG) composed by representatives from the main stakeholders. If deemed necessary, other donors will be invited to join.

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

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner countries and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination³¹. The implementing partners and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner countries, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

The financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing Decision.

5.3. Audit and Verifications

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

6. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

All entities implementing EU-funded external actions have the contractual obligation to inform the relevant audiences of the Union's support for their work by displaying the EU emblem and a short funding statement as appropriate on all communication materials related to the actions concerned. To that end they must comply with the instructions given in the 2022 guidance document [*Communicating and raising EU visibility: Guidance for external actions*](#) (or any successor document).

This obligation will apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, the partner countries, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities

³¹ See best practice of evaluation dissemination.

such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU Member States. In each case, a reference to the relevant contractual obligations must be included in the respective financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and contribution agreements.

In view of the sensitive context in which implementing partners do operate in the frame of this action and in order to ensure no one is harmed by its implementation, contract's confidentiality or derogation from the rules of communication and visibility may be granted to implementing partners by the two contracting authorities, as required.

At programme level, the two EU delegations will pay particular attention to coordinate, design and implement a conflict sensitive communication strategy that takes into account local specificities and constraints in Israel and Palestine.

EU Press and communication services of EUREP and DELTA will remain involved in the delivery of trainings to implementing partners on EU communication and visibility requirements and provision of guidance on any communication related activity.