

**ANNEX 4****to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the annual action plan in favour of Kosovo\* for 2022****Action Document for EU for inclusive socio-economic development****ANNUAL ACTION PLAN**

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and annual and multiannual action plans and measures in the sense of Article 9 of IPA III Regulation and Article 23 of NDICI - Global Europe Regulation.

**1. SYNOPSIS****1.1. Action Summary Table**

<b>Title</b>	EU for inclusive socio-economic development Annual Action Plan in favour of Kosovo* for 2022
<b>OPSYS</b>	ACT-61332
<b>Basic Act</b>	Financed under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III)
<b>Team Europe Initiative</b>	No
<b>Zone benefiting from the action</b>	The action shall be carried out in Kosovo
<b>Programming document</b>	IPA III Programming Framework
<b>PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Window and thematic priority</b>	Window 4: Competitiveness and inclusive growth Thematic priority 1: Education, employment, social protection and inclusion policies, and health
<b>Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>	Main SDG: Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all Other significant SDGs: Goal 10. Reduce Inequalities Goal 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth Goal 5. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development
<b>DAC code(s)</b>	15160 – Human Rights 16010 – Social Protection (100%)

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

<b>Main Delivery Channel@</b>	Multilateral Organisations – 40000 International Organisation for Migration (IOM) – 47066 Council of Europe (CoE) - 47138 United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) – 4112			
<b>Markers (from DAC form)</b>	<b>General policy objective@</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>
	Trade development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>RIO Convention markers@</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Biological diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Internal markers</b>	<b>Policy objectives</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Digitalisation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Migration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	COVID-19	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET INFORMATION</b>				
<b>Amounts concerned</b>	Budget line: 15.020201 JAD.1034885 Total estimated cost: EUR 7 100 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 6 500 000 This action is co-financed in joint co-financing by: Kosovo government budget for an amount of EUR 600 000.			
<b>MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>				
<b>Implementation modalities (type of</b>	Project Modality			

<b>financing and management mode)</b>	The entities for indirect management are selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.1 <b>Indirect management with entrusted entities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International Organisation for Migration (IOM)</li> <li>- Council of Europe (CoE)</li> <li>- United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)</li> </ul>
<b>Relevant priorities and flagships from Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans [only for the Western Balkans]</b>	Priorities: Human Capital Development Flagships: X Youth Guarantee
<b>Final Date for conclusion of Financing Agreement</b>	At the latest by 31 December 2023
<b>Final date for concluding contribution / delegation agreements, procurement and grant contracts</b>	3 years following the date of conclusion of the Financing Agreement, with the exception of cases listed under Article 114(2) of the Financial Regulation
<b>Indicative operational implementation period</b>	72 months following the conclusion of the Financing Agreement
<b>Final date for implementing the Financing Agreement</b>	12 years following the conclusion of the Financing Agreement

## 1.2. Summary of the Action

This Action will address thematic priority 1: Education, employment, social protection and inclusion policies, and health of the IPA III programming framework. The overall objective of this Action is to contribute to the stabilisation of the socio-economic situation of non-majority communities in Kosovo as well as developing an inclusive and multi-cultural society through stable support to minority communities, inclusion of minority students in education at all level and the enabling environment for youth volunteering.

The specific objectives of this actions are to i) create income-generating opportunities and improve social inclusion for women and men from non-majority communities in Kosovo; ii) create equitable access of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian girls and boys to pre-primary, primary and secondary education and iii) improve the legal, policy and financial framework for volunteering in accordance with best European practices, through quality programmes and adequate support services for young women and men volunteers.

The Action focuses on support to vulnerable groups, in particular non-majority communities, women and youth. Although a multi-ethnic society, Kosovo lacks a common vision shared by all communities. While there are positive examples of peaceful cohabitation among ethnic groups, ongoing violations of the rights and interests of non-majority communities and divisive historical and political narratives continue to hinder the potential for trust and for progress in inter-ethnic dialogue and reconciliation at the community level. The divide is most prominent between the Albanian and Serbian communities and is particularly complex with regard to Serb-majority municipalities, which maintain strong financial and political links to Belgrade.

The Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities is underprivileged in Kosovo. One of the main reasons and multiplying factors of this unfavourable status in society is their low and irregular attendance in the education system. Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian girls and boys have a lower registration rate in mandatory schooling and higher drop-out rates. Lack of school texts in the Roma language, discrimination by peers and in some cases even teachers and early marriages have an impact on school drop-outs affecting girls and boys to different degrees.

Youth is another vulnerable group in Kosovo. According to the Labour Force Survey (LMS) of 2020, 112,936 of young people (aged 15 to 24) in Kosovo do not attend school, were not employed or in training, and account for 33.6% of the young population. NEET rate for females was at 33.2% in 2020 compared to a 34.0% for males. The Action will contribute to SDG 4 in particular, but also SDGs 5, 8, 10 and 16. It will also contribute to Human Rights, Social Protection, Primary Education, Secondary education, Early Childhood education and Democratic participation and civil society in a significant way. Finally this action will contribute to the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan III (GAP III)<sup>1</sup>, objective 14: “Access to decent work for women of all ages”; and objective 15: “Equal access by women to financial services, productive resources including land, trade and entrepreneurship”, among others. The existing strategic framework on volunteering is directly linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development explicitly recognises volunteer groups as stakeholders to achieve the 17 SDGs.

## **2. RATIONALE**

### **2.1. Context**

#### Area of support 1: Communities stabilisation

In 2017, 18.9% of women and 17.2% of men in Kosovo lived in poverty. The situation is particularly bad for non-majority communities. Scarcity of opportunities and ethnic divisions (among other factors) have an inhibiting effect on viable income-generation activities for non-majority community members. Reintegration support is only partially available for returnees and there is no proper referral system in place.

This action is supporting the Kosovo institutions commitment to facilitate the transfer of informal economic activities into formalised economic activities. Moreover, the Action underpins the sectorial approach defined by the Strategy for Communities and Returns targeting both returnees and members of non-majority communities in recognition of their need for extended support for inclusiveness and (re) integration.

This action is fully in line with the EU's Western Balkans Strategy<sup>2</sup>, respectively with the first concrete flagship initiative: Rule of law, fundamental rights, governance. Under this flagship the strategy puts special emphasis in “Decisive efforts needed to protect minorities and fight discrimination, notably against the Roma – for whom social inclusion should be more robustly promoted”. Furthermore, the Commission Report for Kosovo 2021<sup>3</sup> also calls for significant efforts to create the conditions for a truly multi-ethnic society.

This Action represents a continuation of previous assistance funded jointly by the Ministry of Communities and Returns and the European Union Office in Kosovo with the aim of creating conditions for non-majority communities’ socio-economic integration in Kosovo society.

#### Area of support 2: Inclusion in Education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities

The EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020–2030 points to the low participation of Roma children to higher levels of education and the absenteeism and early-school leaving rates of Roma as major challenges of Roma inclusion to education at the EU level. In Kosovo, out of the non-majority communities, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are particularly underprivileged. Since the

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<sup>1</sup> SWD(2020) 284 final

<sup>2</sup> COM(2018) 65 final

<sup>3</sup> SWD(2021) 292 final/2

first strategy for the integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo 2009-2015 numerous measures have been undertaken by the government, and to a great extent with the support of donors, to improve the living conditions of the three communities. The EU alone currently implements a joint project with the Council of Europe INCLUDE, it has implemented other projects both targeting the inclusion of communities and support to Learning Centres. The focus has been mainly on access to employment, education and better housing conditions. Some positive trends are to be noted as regards access to education.

According to the OSCE<sup>4</sup> monitoring, drop-outs are no longer a systemic problem and this is a case for both primary and secondary levels of education. A number of factors have positively contributed to these developments. Namely, the support provided by the learning centres, which play a crucial role in supporting the education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children, both in terms of after-school support as well as on sustaining school attendance, mediation between families and schools, co-operation and communication with teachers and achievement of better school results.

Scholarships provided by the Ministry of Education and Science have also played an equally important role. As regards the higher education, there are also some progressive trends, as 53 students from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities were enrolled in the universities in the academic year 2019/2020<sup>5</sup>. Despite these efforts, the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities overall continue to be socially excluded, live in poverty and face stigma and discrimination.

The government is implementing the Strategy for Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali communities 2017-2021. The strategy foresees a number of activities towards improved participation in education. The implementation of the strategy has still not been systematically evaluated and remains limited. More resources, better coordination mechanisms and greater efforts are needed to make progress in implementing the strategy and the action plan. As a result, members of Kosovo Roma and Ashkali communities remain among the most marginalised communities in Kosovo, hindered by poverty, low levels of education and high unemployment rates. The level of inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community children/students in pre-school (7.6% against an overall of 8.5%), primary (84.1% against an overall of 88.3%) and upper secondary education (31% against an overall of 88.8%)<sup>6</sup>, remains unsatisfactory. Another concern is the poor school performance of students in these communities compared to the average of the majority community students.

The Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021 sets participation and inclusion as its first strategic objective and it recognises the low participation, high school dropouts and non-enrolment of children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities as a particular concern. However, the last evaluation of the implementation of the KESP 2016-21 showed that out of 48 targeted results within the 7 strategic objectives of KESP, to date only 2 have been fully achieved as planned (4%), 16 have been achieved only partially (33.5%), while 30 results remain far from being achieved as planned (62.5%). The challenge remains the very low level of inclusion of children in preschool education, where the inclusion rate of children aged 1 to 5 is 8.5%. In addition, data on school dropout remain quite incomplete, as reports of school dropouts from schools themselves remain questionable. Currently due to lack of funds, many Learning Centers are not functioning and are not sustainable. Kosovo's Economic Reform Programme 2021-2023 recognises that the lack of inclusion of all students in Kosovo in education is a constraint for the competitiveness of Kosovo's economy.

### Area of support 3: Support to youth volunteering

In Kosovo, as in other countries of Southeast Europe, volunteering policies and practices developed along with the political and social changes in post-socialism, war and post-war reconstruction periods. The legacy of the socialist state, conflict and post-war institution building have posed opportunities and challenges for volunteering. During the 1990s, the Kosovo system of parallel institutions sustained itself through a large number of volunteers operating in different sectors, motivated by a strong sense of solidarity and cooperation between citizens and communities. In the immediate post-war period, volunteering declined considerably. Research indicated that in the post-war period, the majority of Kosovars attached relevance to volunteering only in connection with tangible short-term individual and beneficial outcomes.

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<sup>4</sup> OSCE report January 2020 – Overview of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo

<sup>5</sup> Overview of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo, OSCE report January 2020

<sup>6</sup> KEC, Report on the Evaluation of the Implementation of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (KESP) 2017 - 2021

As a strategic intervention, volunteerism programmes contribute to help young people to be engaged in their communities, learn and practice new capacities, as well as become active citizens. Key aspects of the Action are activities contributing to bridging the gap between skills acquired in education and labour market needs; the improvement of the quality of education; and the inclusion of youth and adolescents in decision making processes.

Volunteering is included in the Kosovo Youth Strategy 2019-2023 of the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports, and within the Kosovo government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society 2019-2023. A major breakthrough was the institutionalisation of volunteering through the Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth<sup>7</sup>. The law defines volunteering as beneficial to society and enabling young people to improve their social and professional skills and experiences. The development of legislation, standards and programmes for youth volunteering will be designed in the framework of the Youth Guarantee to pursue the socio-economic integration of young people. In 2016, with the support from UNICEF Kosovo Office and OSCE mission in Kosovo, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports has signed the Administrative Instruction of Voluntary Work<sup>8</sup> of youth, which recognises the voluntary engagement conducted by young people. This administrative instruction aims to regulate the rights, obligations and procedures related to youth voluntary work. UN Volunteers Kosovo is also working to enhance civil society participation, raise awareness on local community issues and sustainable human development.

## **2.2. Problem Analysis**

### Area of support 1: Communities stabilisation

#### **Short problem analysis**

Despite a GDP growth of 4.1% in the last 3 years, Kosovo remains the poorest economy in the region. High inactivity and low employment remain among the key challenges. The unemployment rate was 25.7% in 2019. Rates of unemployment are much higher within non-majority communities estimated to be above 85%. The members of non-majority communities usually work in the informal sector, holding insecure, low-skill and low-status jobs and only a few are registered as unemployed.

Members of non-majority communities, young people and children from poor households, the socially vulnerable, and people with disabilities, do not enjoy equal access to vital health and education services due to financial barriers, insufficient provision, parental disinterest, distance/transportation issues, and discrimination. Scarcity of opportunities and ethnic divisions (among other factors) also have an inhibiting effect on viable income-generation activities for non-majority community members. Reintegration support is only partially available for returnees and there is no proper referral system in place.

#### **Identification of main stakeholders**

The Ministry for Communities and Returns (MCR) of the Government of Kosovo is the main stakeholder of this project. The Ministry is mandated to develop guidance, promote as well as implement legislation for the protection of the communities and the creation of conditions for return. While the Ministry continues to expand its capacities, budgetary constraints remain a challenge. Municipalities also have specific Officers for Community and Return who are responsible for community affairs. The Ministry for Labour and Social Welfare through the Regional Employment Centres are also stakeholders in the action. This action is supporting the Kosovo institutions commitment to facilitate transfer of informal economic activities into formalised economic activities. Moreover, the Action underpins the sectorial approach defined by the Strategy for Communities and Returns targeting both returnees and members of non-majority communities in recognition of their need for extended support for inclusiveness and (re) integration.

Other stakeholders include civil society organisations, including women's organisations, community leaders and communities themselves across all 38 municipalities.

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7 2009/03-L-145 Law on empowerment and participation of youth (2009)

8 [https://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/UA\\_01-2016\\_per\\_punen\\_vullnetare\\_te\\_te\\_rinjve.pdf](https://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/UA_01-2016_per_punen_vullnetare_te_te_rinjve.pdf)

## Area of support 2: Inclusion in Education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities

### **Short problem analysis**

The full inclusion of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian girls and boys in the education system in Kosovo faces several difficulties. There is irregular attendance and late school enrolment among boys and girls. While many factors contribute to this outcome, a lack of school texts in the Roma language and discrimination by peers and in some cases even teachers are part of the problem. Early marriages contribute to the higher-than-average dropout rate of these communities, especially among girls. Roughly 12% of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian children, the majority of whom are girls marry before they turn 15.

### **Identification of main stakeholders**

The Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation is the main stakeholder and policy-making body in the area of education. The Ministry's policy decision-making is challenged by internal organisation dysfunctions as well as by low capacities in terms of human resources. In addition, as education is managed in a decentralised way in Kosovo the Ministry doesn't have a full overview and doesn't dispose of functional mechanisms to monitor the situation of education at the local / municipal level.

The project will work closely together with the Ministry and the municipal education departments and offices for communities and returns. In order to ensure the necessary support for the functioning of learning centres and the inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in mainstream education. The learning centres are very important partners in the project. School communities including parent councils are crucial actors in the project as they directly work with children and are in charge of creating welcoming environments for children. The direct beneficiaries of the Action are Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian girls and boys.

## Area of support 3: Support to youth volunteering

### **Short problem analysis**

Compared to other European countries, Kosovo continues to be a young country. 26% of the Kosovo population is between 15 and 29 years of age. The youth unemployment rate is very high at 49.4% in 2019. The general lack of social and economic opportunities constitutes a key reason why young people migrate from Kosovo. Across the Western Balkans region, Kosovo has the lowest women's labour force participation rate and the most significant gender gap in activity rates. In 2019, only 21% of women participated in the labour force compared to 60% of men. While tackling these labour market imbalances requires a multipronged approach, including support to education, entrepreneurship, employment services etc., this Action will contribute to tackle youth unemployment through enhancing human and social capital. Young people gain professional, technical, and soft skills (creativity, leadership, critical thinking) that are crucial for employability through their volunteering activities<sup>9</sup>. Participation in voluntary action promotes active citizenship, gender equality and facilitates women's empowerment by enabling them to develop their capacities, obtain new skills and increase their chances of social participation<sup>10</sup>. A study supported by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (Youth Study Kosovo, 2018-2019), highlighted that only 13% of young people in Kosovo have engaged in volunteering activities so it is an innovative approach to tackling youth engagement and youth unemployment.

### **Identification of main stakeholders**

The target group consists of adolescents, youth and young people aged 15-29 years, with a specific focus on the most marginalised: girls and young women, those coming from rural areas, those from non-majority communities and those that are not in education, employment or training (NEETs).

The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports is the primary institution responsible for overseeing volunteering programmes and policies. Over the past years, the Ministry has facilitated and promoted youth volunteering including through an online platform created jointly with UNICEF's Kosovo Office ([www.kosovovolunteers.org](http://www.kosovovolunteers.org)). However, coordination with other institutions and actors still lacks systematic

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<sup>9</sup> The [2019 ILO report](#) on *Work for a Brighter Future* states that lifelong learning, that includes social and cognitive skills through non-formal education and volunteering, offers a pathway to inclusion of labour market for youth and the unemployed.

<sup>10</sup> <https://knowledge.unv.org/theme/gender-and-volunteering>

cooperation, joint planning and clear and shared objectives. In addition, the existing institutional and normative framework for volunteering in Kosovo needs to be harmonised with clear standards, rights and obligations for all involved actors. More effective partnerships between CSOs and the public and private sectors is needed, including appropriate funding for dedicated programmes. Municipal directorates responsible for youth policies and cooperation with CSOs, youth centers and local youth action councils are also relevant stakeholders.

### **3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION**

#### **3.1. Intervention Logic**

The overall objective (impact) of this Action is to contribute to the stabilisation of the socio-economic situation of non-majority communities in Kosovo as well as developing an inclusive and multi-cultural society through stable support to minority communities, inclusion of minority students in education at all level and the enabling environment for youth volunteering.

The specific objective (outcome) of this action is to

Outcome 1) create income-generating opportunities and improve social inclusion for women and men from non-majority communities in Kosovo.

Outcome 2) ensure equitable access of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian girls and boys to pre-primary, primary and secondary education by improving enrolment, retention and attainment of children through community-based and financial support.

Outcome 3) improve the enabling legal, policy and financial framework for volunteering in accordance with best European practices, through quality programmes and adequate support services for young women and men volunteers.

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

Output 1: Non-majority and inter-ethnic business associations/cooperatives/community initiatives, and/or social enterprises are supported to address community needs and to create employment opportunities for women and men.

Output 2: Inclusion of children (boys and girls from 5 to 15) from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in pre-primary, primary and secondary education and improvement of their learning outcomes

Output 3: Increased state support and funding for volunteering programmes including for support services, communication and awareness raising initiatives.

#### **3.2. Indicative Activities**

##### Area of support 1: Communities stabilisation

In order to achieve Output 1, the action will provide support to business association/cooperatives/community initiatives and/or social enterprises to leverage economies of scale for groups of producers within non-majority areas. This activity foresees constant mobile outreach, arranging specific meetings with existing business associations and groups of individual farmers, women and men, and businesspeople to encourage cooperation and joint ventures. The action will involve efforts to reach diverse women and men with information, considering gender differences. The Action will facilitate, where needed, the formalisation of spontaneously organised groups through legal registration with the relevant authorities. The Action will also provide support to business associations/cooperatives/community initiatives and/or social enterprises, including women's farmers associations, in terms of productive assets/ business equipment as well as specialised capacity building to assist them in working more effectively and maximise their resources.

##### Area of support 2: Inclusion in education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities

In order to achieve Output 2 girls and boys of pre-primary age (5-6) will benefit from learning programmes to acquire pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills, thus creating basic pre-conditions for a successful start of compulsory education. On the other hand, children of the compulsory school age (6-15) will receive additional

education and homework support either in community-based learning centres or in public schools serving respective communities. Therefore, this result will systematically align the activities of the learning centres with those of public schools both for pre-school and after-school education activities. Special attention will be given to teacher training in terms of developing intercultural competences and interethnic diversity. Action related localities will be determined based on relevant demographic, employment, social welfare and education participation data, as well as the need for improving participation of targeted communities in the pre-school and primary education. Special attention will be given to dialogue and awareness raising with parents and teacher training concerning the additional challenges and intersectional inequalities faced by girls towards accessing education.

#### Area of support 3: Support to youth volunteering

To achieve Output 3 the Action will support the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport for the design and/or adapt sustainable models and programmes, including the financing model of volunteering programmes and support services to be implemented through civil society and public-private (non-profit) partnerships.. The implementation of volunteering programmes and related support services entails financial support through calls for proposals for civil society organisations and other relevant organizations. The programme will support approximately 20 volunteering projects entailing also cooperation between civil society and public services (social, cultural, solidarity, environmental, healthcare or other community-based services). Awareness raising campaign to promote volunteering opportunities will be conducted with the main purpose of reaching out to youth groups (particularly NEETS) and raise awareness of opportunities offered by volunteering programmes including the European Voluntary Service (EVS) and European Solidarity Corps (ESC).

### **3.3 Mainstreaming**

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

In relation to the Rio Marker on mitigation of the activities, the action qualifies as “significant” thanks to the area of support: community stabilisation, which will procure equipment to help agricultural businesses produce less greenhouse gases. The newer more technologically advanced equipment provided to the agricultural enterprises is in general more energy efficient, producing less waste materials and using less resources to operate. They also increase the efficiency of land use producing more vegetables per square meter of land and they reduce the strain on water resources using drop by drop watering technology as opposed to open field watering where water is lost through evaporation. Finally, the polyurethane plastic sheeting used in the greenhouses can be recycled when it is time for it to be replaced. Due to the production orientation of the agricultural businesses to be supported through the action, communities will be less vulnerable to external forces and better able to cope in the case of disasters.

#### **Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls**

As per the OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that gender equality is a significant objective. The Action is designed and will be implemented according to national and international gender equality standards including the Kosovo Law on Gender Equality, the Kosovo Programme on Gender Equality, and EU Gender Action Plan III.

#### Area of support 1: Community Stabilisation

This area of support will build on the already existing programme approach, which proved that women-run businesses are highly successful and sustainable. Women-run businesses do not just result in generating a regular income for the households, but it gives a chance for a woman to earn credit and respect from her customers and community at large. This result is even more meaningful in a country-wide context of Kosovo, which features the highest employment gender gap in Europe with non-majority community women with an even lower access to employment compared to men. The action aims to facilitate the participation of women in income generating activities.

#### Area of support 2: Inclusion in education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities

Equal rights and access to education are of great relevance to achieving gender equality. An audit of gender issues in the educational system in Kosovo has shown the content of school textbooks and teaching materials is gender biased and that women’s position in the education system is disadvantageous.

Boys and girls from non-majority communities face different challenges in attending education. For instance, early marriages may play a role in girls from Ashkali, Egyptian, and Roma communities dropping out of education. All supported professional development programmes and capacity building efforts will feature the integration of a gender sensitive approach. Self-reflection is a key tool in awareness building regarding gender and one’s own practice. A self-assessment checklist for teachers and care providers will be developed to support this important practice. Also, the action will make efforts to involve as many Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian woman as possible in the role of tutors in learning centres and mentors for secondary students.

### Area of support 3: Support to youth volunteering

Gender equality and minority inclusion is a cross cutting development issue and will be regarded as an important development objective and of particular relevance to Kosovo. The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports will strive to achieve gender equality, provide equal opportunities for all vulnerable groups in determining the overall success of the action outcomes. Women in Kosovo continue to comprise the majority of the unemployed and those inactive in the labour market. Additionally, women are underrepresented in public institutions at the central and local level. Supporting equitable, non-discriminatory, and gender equal volunteering programmes paves the way for women’s enhanced inclusion in the labour market and public institutions.

#### **Human Rights**

The action specifically sets out to address the needs and aspirations of non-majority community members including Serbs, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians, Goranis, Bosniaks, Turks, and Croats throughout Kosovo and Albanian Communities living in the northern municipalities of Kosovo. The action will apply intensive outreach activities to identify those most vulnerable groups, people with disabilities, and support their individual and community-based needs. Through support to community-based initiatives, the action will continue to support vulnerable groups with access to their rights to education and cultural preservation.

The action targets human rights and anti-discrimination rights and the promotion of interethnic dialogue through various forms of interethnic exchanges and business links.

On the Roma inclusion in education area of support, the action will work with schools serving children from targeted communities. Teachers and parents from schools serving action beneficiaries will be given the chance to acquire new competencies for dealing with minority integration issues through the participation in anti-bias training.

#### **Other considerations**

All action area of supports foresee the direct engagement, consultation with civil society organisations and direct participation for the implementation of activities. Local civil society organisations (CSOs) and local and international NGOs concerned with supporting returnees and non-majority communities will all be among main stakeholders of the action. At the local level local civil society organisations (managing the learning centres) will be key implementing agents with the role for supporting action activities/implementation. Moreover, in order to be effective in engaging young citizens from all over Kosovo, volunteering policies will be designed through effective partnerships between non-profit organisations and the public sector.

### **3.4 Risks and Lessons Learned**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigating measures</b>
Planning, processes and systems	Lack of willingness on behalf of central and local authorities to engage.	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	The action teams will maintain regular contacts with central and local counterparts in order to ensure their participation and ownership of the processes.

External environment	Target groups are not equipped with skills needed for new working modalities in the aftermath of COVID-19	Medium	Low	The action will work on increasing the skills of beneficiaries to adapt to online working models, promoting innovation, online businesses, etc.
External environment	Gender-based discrimination contributes to intersecting inequalities.	Medium	Medium	Action involves targeted, additional efforts to support an enabling environment that furthers gender equality, such as ensuring childcare availability.

## Lessons Learned:

### Area of support 1: Community Stabilisation

The proposed action builds on previous phases of the same programme funded by the EU (under IPA 2009, IPA 2011, IPA 2014 and IPA 2018). An external evaluation commissioned by the EU in 2018, noted that the programme rates very high on all evaluation criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. All individual business are still existing and performing while all community projects are used by the communities. This is very significant considering that these individual businesses or community-based projects very supported from 2-8 years ago. The evaluation recommended increasing the number of women-led business beneficiaries, addressing directly Kosovo's employment gender gap. The Action thus foresees to deliver an increased number (up to 50%) of women-run businesses.

### Area of support 2: Inclusion in education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities

The design of this project is based on several evaluations carried out by other organisations working in this field<sup>11</sup>. Key lessons include the need to make a link between actual needs (identified by international monitoring bodies) and the support given. There is also a need to recognise that the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities not only find themselves in a disadvantageous socio-economic situation, but they face ethno-linguistic discrimination. The action will take into account this intersectional disadvantage. There is also the need for sustainability beyond donor support. The action will seek to facilitate the process of institutionalisation and professionalisation of the learning centres through staff qualifications and trainings. Projects not designed on the premise that Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian girls face intersectional discrimination run the risk of further increasing existing inequalities. The action will therefore incorporate this.

The project will work in the direction of supporting the Kosovo relevant institutions to obtain full ownership of the required reforms in line with the relevant national strategies and, thus, it will ensure the sustainability of its activities as regards the full inclusion of the Roma and Ashkali communities to education. The current action on inclusive education for Roma and Ashkali communities should develop tailor-made actions that will take into account of the fact that: it's not only the socio-economic inequalities to which these communities are subject, but also the adverse social environment and stereotypes against them that keeps them away from full access to education.

### Area of support 3: Support to Volunteering

The Austrian Development Agency in cooperation with UNICEF has previously implemented a support programme for volunteerism called "Innovation for Generating Employment and Achieving Resilience"<sup>12</sup>. According to the mid-term evaluation of this project, although it had been appropriately designed and implemented, during the field presence young people requested more awareness raising campaigns, trainings on the platform, and involvement of the private sector. It has been confirmed that an appropriate division of

<sup>11</sup> Such evaluations have been carried out by (i) CSOs (e.g. a mid-term evaluation carried-out by KEEN project (an EU-funded project) Mid-term evaluation: Implementation of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan) and (ii) by international institutions (e.g. the 2020 OSCE's Overview of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo). In addition, the design of this project has relied on the Mapping Study prepared within the joint EU/CoE project "Building Capacity for Inclusion in Education - INCLUDE in October 2020 (IPA 2018 on-going action).

<sup>12</sup> Tommaso Balbo di Vinadio, Mid-Term Evaluation of INGEAR project (2017)

labour between stakeholders on “who does what” is very important. At the same time, the communication and visibility of youth volunteerism are crucial factors for the programme’s participation and success.

### 3.5. Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

Results	Results chain: Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (year)	Targets (year)	Sources of data (1 per indicator)	Assumptions
<b>Impact</b>	1. To stabilise the socio-economic situation of non-majority communities in Kosovo and to develop an inclusive and multi-cultural society through inclusion of minority students in education and an enhanced environment for youth volunteering.	<p>Progress made towards meeting Copenhagen criteria</p> <p>Satisfactory progress in implementing the Kosovo Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Integration Strategy and Action Plan</p> <p># of volunteering funded programmes implemented</p> <p># of revised or adopted legislation and policies related to youth volunteering</p>	<p>2019 Partial implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan</p> <p>2020 0 volunteering programs</p> <p>2020 0</p>	<p>2023 Full implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan</p> <p>2023 20 volunteering programmes implemented</p> <p>2023 8 revised or adopted legislation (laws and bylaws) and policies related to youth volunteering</p>	<p>Commission Kosovo Report MCR and project related reports</p> <p>Kosovo Report on the Implementation of RA Strategy, Commission Kosovo Report</p> <p>Reports from relevant ministries</p>	<i>Not applicable</i>
<b>Outcome 1</b>	<p>1. <i>Communities stabilisation</i></p> <p>The specific objective of this action is to create income-generating opportunities and improve social inclusion for women and men from non-majority communities in Kosovo.</p>	# of beneficiaries declaring satisfaction with generating income resulting from project assistance, disaggregated by gender and ethnicity	(2020) 604 beneficiaries	(2027) up to 1100 beneficiaries		

<b>Outcome 2</b>	<p>2. <i>Inclusion in education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities</i></p> <p>To ensure equitable access of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian girls and boys to pre-primary, primary and secondary education by improving enrolment, retention and attainment of children through community-based and financial support.</p>	<p>Gap in attendance between Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian and non-Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian girls and boys in compulsory school level in schools serving beneficiary communities is reduced, disaggregated by gender and ethnicity</p>	<p>(2019) 6.9 %</p>	<p>2027 5.50%</p>		
<b>Outcome 3</b>	<p>3. <i>Support to Volunteering</i></p> <p>Adequate support services and funding for the development of the volunteering programmes for young men and women.</p>	<p>% of population of young girls and boys participating to volunteering projects and initiatives (disaggregated by gender, age groups and ethnic groups)</p>	<p>3.1. (2020) 10% (TBC)</p>	<p>3.1. 40% (2025)</p>		
<b>Output 1 related to outcome 1</b>	<p>Non-majority and inter-ethnic business associations /cooperatives /community initiatives, and/or social enterprises are supported to address community needs and to create employment opportunities</p>	<p># of business associations (BA) created in targeted areas to establish new value-added production higher in value chain assistance</p> <p># start-up and operational businesses in the target areas established through the disbursement of assistance by the end-of-the action</p> <p># of sustainable longer-term jobs created, disaggregated by gender and ethnicity</p>	<p>11 BA</p> <p>604 Projects</p> <p>800 jobs</p>	<p>Up to 40 BA</p> <p>Up to 1100 projects</p> <p>Up to 1400 jobs</p>	<p>Business registry records; action progress reports</p> <p>Action beneficiary monitoring surveys;</p> <p>Unemployment registration records in the targeted municipalities</p>	<p>Willingness of businesspeople from all communities to establish and maintain business relationships</p> <p>Economic environment remains sufficiently stable for businesses to function maintain employment levels</p>
<b>Output 2 related to outcome 2</b>	<p>Inclusion of children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities from targeted communities in pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education and improvement of their learning outcomes</p>	<p>% of school attendance (in each community) in pre-primary and compulsory education, disaggregated by gender.</p>	<p>(2019) 85%</p>	<p>(2025) 95%</p>	<p>Statistics from schools and local partner organizations</p>	<p>Government remains committed to improving the Education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian</p>

		gap in performance difference between Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian and other children reduced	1.2	0.7	MEST Statistics Statistics from schools	communities in Kosovo  Children from targeted communities are equally treated in schools
<b>Output 3 related to outcome 3</b>	Increased state support, funding and visibility of volunteering programmes	# of programmes funded as part of volunteering programmes # of volunteer support and information and awareness raising service	(2020) 10 (2020) 1	(2025) 50 (2022) 5	Reports from relevant ministries,  Project reports by CSOs,  Reports by International organisations (OCE, UN)	Readiness of ministries, municipalities and CSOs staff to participate in capacity development activities  Political will from Institutions and particularly from the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare to initiate new legal and/or policy framework on volunteering.  CSOs actively contribute to the development of volunteering programme

## **4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

### **4.1. Financing Agreement**

In order to implement this action, it is envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with Kosovo.

### **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 entry into force of the financing agreement.

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

### **4.3. Methods of implementation**

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures<sup>13</sup>.

#### **4.3.1. Indirect Management with international organisations**

This action may be implemented in indirect management with the following international pillar-assessed organisations: International Organisation for Migration (IOM) for Area of support 1, the Council of Europe (CoE) for Area of support 2 and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) for Area of support 3. These choices are justified by the organisations' experience in similar projects and in the same sectors in Kosovo as well as in managing complex multi-stakeholders projects.

All three areas of support of this action will be carried out through Contribution Agreements with the above mentioned international organisations based on PAGO DA principles, rules and procedures.

The proposed procedure is based on the Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 Article 156 that refers to the Implementation of external actions through indirect management.

The envisaged entity for Area of support 1 of this action has been selected using the following criteria:

Area of support 1 of this action will be implemented through Indirect Management with the the International Organisations for Migration (IOM) due to its significant experience in the sector . In close cooperation with the Kosovo Ministry for Communities and Return, IOM has successfully implemented past phases of the EU Community Stabilisation Programming (IPA 2009/EU-CSP I, IPA IPA 2011/EU-CSP II; IPA 2014/EU-CSP III and an on-going IPA 2018/EU-CSP IV) as well as the EU-Return and Reintegration in Kosovo (EU-RRK phase III, phase IV and an on-going phase V). The Ministry has appreciated excellent relations with IOM throughout the implementation of joint actions ensuring programmatic coordination and maximisation of resources between the Ministry and the EU funds. The existing synergies between the EU-Community Stabilisation Programme and the EU-Return and Reintegration in Kosovo programmes will be further enhanced during this phase, creating a broader and deeper impact of both programmes on the target beneficiaries and their communities.

The organisation has significant experience with implementing this particular type of programming from the

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

initial post-conflict phases of the Community Stabilisation Programmes (2002-2008 under CARDS funding) up until a relevant IPA 2018 action.

The envisaged entity for Area of support 2 of this action has been selected using the following criteria:

Area of support 2 of this action will be implemented through Indirect Management with the Council of Europe due to its significant experience in the sector. The Council of Europe is a longstanding partner of both the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation and the EU in the field of inclusive education.

The involvement of the Council of Europe in this case is further justified considering:

(i) The Council of Europe's presence and experience in Kosovo and the fact that they have implemented both the EU and the government programme funds in the last several years in the sector 'inclusive education'. Under IPA 2011, 'Increasing Access to Education and intercultural understanding: EU/Council of Europe Support in the field of Education to forced returnees and to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo'. The EU/Council of Europe project "INCLUDE" dealing with a) support to the inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children to education; and b) support to the inclusion of children with special needs in education.

(ii) The Council of Europe's close cooperation with the Ministry and concerned municipalities on all issues of inclusive education such as: i) teacher training in multiculturalism; ii) education for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community; iii) history teaching; iv) language policies and; v) higher education reform.

Throughout the previous actions, the Council of Europe has proven to be an excellent and reliable partner ensuring programmatic coordination and maximisation of resources between government and EU funds. More specifically the overhead implementation costs are covered mostly under the EU funds allowing for the entire government envelope to be used for direct beneficiary assistance.

Therefore, it will be of crucial importance to continue the implementation of the inclusive education programme through the Council of Europe as they possess the relevant technical capacity, competence, knowledge, regional presence, institutional memory, equipment and staff. The approach would also ensure more efficient use of resources as they have already established contacts with the Ministry, respective municipal authorities, stakeholders and partner organisations.

The envisaged entity for Area of support 3 of this action has been selected using the following criteria:

Area of support 3 of this action will be implemented through Indirect Management with the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund UNICEF due to its significant experience in the sector. UNICEF was identified due to its globally recognised capacities and expertise as key actor for the rights of adolescents and young people as well as for its engagement in advocacy and projects for the protection, empowerment and employability of youth in Kosovo.

UNICEF works closely with central and local level institutions, developmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, private sector, as well with young people who are placed at the centre of action both for programme development and as the target group. On the implementation side, UNICEF partners with non-governmental organization to deploy interventions in the ground and reach to the most marginalized young people.

In Kosovo, UNICEF has been closely engaged with institutions and other stakeholders in developing sustainable initiatives in the field of youth empowerment (such as the UNICEF Innovation Lab) and for the enabling environment of youth volunteering. In close partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, UNICEF played a convening role for the adoption of the 'Administrative Instruction on Volunteerism', endorsed in 2016 by relevant institutions. To bridge the gap between volunteers and volunteer-seeking organizations, UNICEF through its programmes supported the creation of the first match-making platform designed ([www.kosovovolunteers.org](http://www.kosovovolunteers.org)). The platform provides volunteers and volunteers seeking organizations with tools and resources to help enhance their community engagement programs. The platform's scope and functionalities will be further enhanced through the present programme.

In addition, UNICEF through its implementing partners and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports

supported civil society organisations with tailor-made trainings to structure positive, rights respecting, effective, and efficient volunteer opportunities.

Implementation of the Action’s area of support by UNICEF will therefore constitute an added value in terms of sectorial experience, good practices and lessons learned with the target groups in Kosovo.

In case the envisaged entities would need to be replaced, the Commission’s services may select replacement entities using the same selection criteria given above. If the entity is replaced the decision to replace it needs to be justified.

**4.3.2. Changes from indirect to direct management (and vice versa) mode due to exceptional circumstances (one alternative second option)**

In exceptional circumstances and upon authorization of the European Commission, changes from indirect to direct management mode (and vice versa) are possible, as well as other changes in the management and procurement modes. The selection criteria, for all outputs, used in case of direct management will include operational capacity and access to expertise, as well as significant previous experience in the implementation of similar assistance in the similar sector.

**4.4 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants**

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

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

**4.5 Indicative Budget**

<b>Indicative budget components</b>	<b>EU contribution (amount in EUR)</b>	<b>Indicative third party contribution in EUR</b>
<b>Outcome 1:</b> create income-generating opportunities and improve social inclusion for women and men from non-majority communities in Kosovo, composed of	2 500 000	500 000
<i>Indirect Management with IOM – cf section 4.3.1</i>	2 500 000	500 000 <sup>14</sup>
<b>Outcome 2:</b> ensure equitable access of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian girls and boys to pre-primary, primary and secondary education by improving enrolment, retention and attainment of children through community-based and financial support, composed of	3 000 000	N.A.

<sup>14</sup> Government co-financing, Ministry of Communities and Return

<i>Indirect Management with CoE – cf section 4.3.1</i>	<i>3 000 000</i>	<i>N.A.</i>
<b>Outcome 3:</b> adequate support services and funding for the development of the volunteering programmes for young men and women, composed of	1 000 000	100 000
<i>Indirect Management with UNICEF – cf section 4.3.1</i>	<i>1 000 000</i>	<i>100 000<sup>15</sup></i>
<b>Evaluation</b> – cf. section 5.4 <b>Audit</b> – cf. section 5.5	will be covered by another Decision	
<b>Communication and visibility</b> – cf. section 6	will be covered by another Decision	
<b>Contingencies</b>	N.A.	N.A.
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6 500 000</b>	<b>600 000</b>

## 4.6 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

### Area of support 1: Community Stabilisation

At the central level the main institutional stakeholders of this action are: (i) the Ministry for Communities and Returns (has the main mandate for stabilisation of all communities living in Kosovo) and (ii) the European Union Office in Kosovo who will have the broad mandate for overseeing the action; the Ministry and the EU Office in Kosovo are the main members of the project approval committee which has the mandate of assistance approval and overall management of the action.

At the local level, the Municipal Officers for Communities and Returns will be the main stakeholders in the action and have a broad role for supporting action activities/implementation, intervention identification and initial selection in coordination with the implementing partner. As an implementing agency, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) will oversee the daily operations of the action and ensure the timely and prudent delivery of assistance to the beneficiaries.

Other stakeholders include the Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers as in line with their broad mandate the action seeks to increase employment levels. Various UN agencies and international actors in the sectors, particularly UNHCR as the activities of the action are complementary to supporting their general mandate, will be stakeholders of the action. Local civil society organisations and local and international NGOs concerned with supporting returnees and non-majority communities including but not limited to OSCE, the Danish Refugee Council, as well as locally established and developing business associations will all be stakeholders of the action.

### Area of support 2: Inclusion in education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities

At the central level, the main institutional stakeholders of this action are: (i) the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, (ii) the European Union Office in Kosovo and (iii) the Council of Europe who will have the broad mandate for overseeing the action and will represent the main representatives of the Project Steering Committee.

At the local level, the Municipal Education Departments along with Municipal Officers for Communities and Returns, public school management/staff and local Civil Society Organisations (managing the learning

<sup>15</sup> Government co-financing, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport

centres) will be the main stakeholders of the action and will have a broad role for supporting action activities/implementation and intervention identification. As an implementing agency, the Council of Europe will oversee the daily operations of the action and ensure the timely and prudent delivery of assistance to the beneficiaries.

#### Area of support 3: Support to volunteering

The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports is the primary institution responsible for overseeing and coordinating volunteering programmes. At local level, this area of support will entail coordination with the Municipal directorates responsible for youth policies in order to implement activities through youth centres and youth action councils.

Civil society organisations offering opportunities for young people will play a crucial role in implementing volunteering programmes and activities. In addition, public institutions responsible for delivering psychosocial, healthcare or community services (e.g. cultural centres or municipal centres for social work) will be direct benefitting of volunteering programmes by participating in projects and hosting motivated young volunteers within their structures for the benefit of the communities. As an implementing agency, UNICEF will establish a steering committee with main stakeholders to ensure the timely and efficient delivery of EU assistance.

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

#### **4.7 Pre-conditions**

Area of support 1: Community Stabilisation – approval of the Ministry of Communities and Returns' Draft Strategy for Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Communities and their Members 2021-2025.

### **5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT**

#### **5.4 Monitoring and Reporting**

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

#### **5.5 Evaluation**

Having regard to the nature of the action, an ex-post evaluation will be carried out for this action or areas of support 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 Action will have a direct impact on Kosovo policies in the area of minority communities, inclusive education and socio-economic inclusion of young people.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partners at least one month in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as

access to the project premises and activities .The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination<sup>16</sup>. The implementing partners 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.

## **5.6 Audit and Verifications**

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

## **6 COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY**

Visibility of EU funding and communication about objectives and impact of Actions are a legal obligation for all Actions funded by the EU, as set out in the EU communication and visibility requirements in force.

In particular, the recipients of EU funding shall acknowledge the origin of the EU funding and ensure its proper visibility by:

- providing a statement highlighting the support received from the EU in a visible manner on all documents and communication material relating to the implementation of the funds, including on an official website and social media accounts, where these exist; and
- promoting the actions and their results by providing coherent, effective and proportionate targeted information to multiple audiences, including the media.

Visibility and communication measures shall be implemented, as relevant, by the national administrations (for instance, concerning the reforms linked to EU budget support), entrusted entities, contractors and grant beneficiaries. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included, respectively, in financing agreements, delegation agreements, and procurement and grant contracts.

The measures shall be based on a specific Communication and Visibility Plan, established and implemented in line with the EU communication and visibility requirements in force. The plan shall include, inter alia, a communication narrative and master messages for the Action, customised for the various target audiences (stakeholders, civil society, general public, etc.)

Visibility and communication measures specific to this Action shall be complementary to the broader communication activities implemented directly by the European Commission services and/or the EU Delegations and Offices. The European Commission and the EU Delegations and Offices should be fully informed of the planning and implementation of the specific visibility and communication activities, notably with respect to the communication narrative and master messages.

## **7 SUSTAINABILITY**

### Area of support 1: Community Stabilisation

This area of support has been designed to support non-majority communities towards a more sustainable socio-economic integration in their respective communities. The issue of inter-ethnic relations can be sensitive and therefore particular attention will be paid regarding any incidents that could harm relations of trust between majority and non-majority communities. In this regard, the Action will work closely with municipalities and local communities in order to ensure a harmonised response to the entire community needs.

Through consultations and capacity building provided to beneficiaries and the specialised equipment delivered to selected agricultural enterprises, the action introduces new technology and techniques to the communities

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<sup>16</sup> See best [practice of evaluation dissemination](#)

upgrading their technical capacities. By doing so, the action secures economic livelihoods for individual community members. It also promotes the integration and diversification of the local and wider Kosovo economy through creating linkages and encouraging cooperation across geographic, cultural, and, ethnic boundaries. Greater economic integration coupled with concrete initiatives in the form of community initiatives that benefit both the target groups and will have a direct impact on the social environment by reducing isolation of non-majority communities and providing depoliticised opportunities for interethnic interaction.

#### Area of support 2: Inclusion in education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities

The action will work in close cooperation with public schools and the learning centres with the joint aim of increasing the number of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian boys and girls attending school, and improve their school performance. The hope is that school attendance and improved results will increase their self-confidence to continue schooling in the long term. Such an outcome feeds back to sustainability of the project outputs, because it will inevitably influence and motivate other members of the community to stay within the education system, which will eventually create adequate conditions for better employment prospects and livelihood.

#### Area of support 3: Support to youth volunteering

The action will enable the legal, policy and financial environment for sustainable youth volunteering. In this regard, activities will assist the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport to design a sustainable model (including the financing mechanism) for volunteering programmes to be implemented through civil society and public-private (non-profit) partnerships. Capacity building on quality management of volunteering will target public institutions and NGOs with the aims to establish durable partnerships and support organisations in reaching out to international partners for youth exchange programmes such as the European Solidarity Corps, Erasmus+ and other regional initiatives.