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ANNEX II

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the Annual action plan in favour of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2024

Action Document for EU Integration Facility

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(2) of NDICI - Global Europe Regulation.

1. SYNOPSIS

1.1. Action Summary Table

Title	EU Integration Facility Annual action plan in favour of North Macedonia for 2024
OPSYS	OPSYS business reference: ACT-62395
ABAC	ABAC Commitment level 1 number: JAD.1354913
Basic Act	Financed under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III)
Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)	No
EIP Flagship	No
Team Europe	No
Beneficiary(y)/(ies) of the action	The Action shall be carried out in North Macedonia
Programming document	IPA III Programming Framework
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
Window and thematic priority	Window 2: Good governance, EU <i>acquis</i> alignment, good neighbourly relations and strategic communication (100%) Thematic Priority 2: Administrative capacity and <i>EU acquis</i> alignment (70%) Thematic Priority 4. Strategic communication, monitoring, evaluation and communication activities (30%)

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG: 17 - Partnership for the Goals Other significant SDG: 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions			
DAC code(s)	151: Government & Civil Society-general (100%) 15110: Public sector policy and administrative management (100%)			
Main Delivery Channel	12000 - Recipient government			
Targets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity			
Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal 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 and 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	
digital governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
digital entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
digital skills/literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
digital services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tags	YES	NO	
digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
education and research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Migration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduction of Inequalities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
COVID-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

BUDGET INFORMATION

Amounts concerned	Budget line: 15.020101.01 Total estimated cost: EUR 15 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 15 000 000
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MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation modalities (management mode and delivery methods)	Direct management through: - Grants - Procurement
Final Date for conclusion of Financing Agreement	At the latest by 31 December 2025
Final date for concluding contribution / delegation agreements, procurement and grant contracts	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
Indicative operational implementation period	72 months following the conclusion of the Financing Agreement
Final date for implementing the Financing Agreement	12 years following the conclusion of the Financing Agreement

1.2. Summary of the Action

The EU Integration Facility (EUIF) is a flexible mechanism for financing smaller-scale projects of democratic institutions and public administration in North Macedonia focused on aligning the legislation, standards, methodologies, and practices to those of the EU and building a solid implementation capacity in the country in line with the priorities of the IPA III Programming Framework. The objectives of the EUIF are:

- To back up the accession process in its entirety, to enhance the alignment with the EU *acquis* and EU/international standards, to ensure the implementation of the legal framework in practice, to successfully manage the preparation and implementation of the overall EU pre-accession assistance, and to increase public support for the EU accession process.
- To improve the effectiveness and visibility of the EU funds invested in the country, upscale the sector approach, and ensure that EU funding and policy create a sustainable and visible development change.

The EU Integration Facility will result in strengthened coordination, management, visibility, and transparency of the accession process and in a high level of national legislation alignment with the EU *acquis*. The EU investments will improve the country's enforcement capacity and support the national efforts to manage EU funds and deliver on reforms. This is expected to raise public support for the reforms and the EU accession path for the country.

The EUIF finances capacity-building interventions complementing the regular annual and multi-annual programmes, thus bringing the needed flexibility in managing the EU funds to support the country's reforms and EU accession. It allows the European Commission to provide fast-track, specific and

targeted financial support to North Macedonia for emerging, short-term needs within the EU accession negotiation process or in a crisis situation.

The Action is contributing to priorities foreseen under the IPA III Programming Framework¹, under Window 2 **Thematic priority 2: Administrative capacity and EU *acquis* alignment** with the objective of bringing North Macedonia's policies and legislation in line with the EU policies and the EU *acquis*, and building administrative capacity to fully and effectively implement sector policies and adopted legislation, as well as taking on the obligations of future EU membership. The Action is also contributing to the **Thematic Priority 4: Strategic communication, monitoring, evaluation and communication activities** under the same Window by raising awareness and informing citizens on the benefits of the accession process, EU membership and the necessary reforms.

1.3 Beneficiary of the Action

The Action shall be carried out in North Macedonia.

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Context

The first Intergovernmental Conference on accession negotiations with North Macedonia took place on 19 July 2022, following the approval by the Council of the Negotiating Framework. The Commission immediately started the screening exercise. North Macedonia progresses on the fundamental reforms in crucial areas such as the judiciary, the fight against corruption and organised crime, public administration, public finance, security, social support system, health care, education and the labour market. The country is committed to advancing democracy and the rule of law, implementing the human rights agenda in practice, strengthening the principles of good governance, and ensuring macro-economic stability and a favourable and level playing field for businesses. This ambitious reform plan is complemented by a gradual shift to greening the economy and life, decreasing pollution and human impact on the environment, and ensuring the connections of the regional transport and energy systems with the ones of the European Union. Strategic sector-based policymaking and coordination are gradually improving and becoming an evidence-based and inclusive process.

In addition, the country has engaged in an intensive accession negotiation process. This process is led by the Secretariat for European Affairs, which needs to develop the capacity to steer and coordinate the overall negotiation process and provide support and guidance to the established negotiation structures.

The EU is the leading donor supporting North Macedonia to achieve progress on these priorities. The EU funding involves a considerable size and scope of actions, which are expected to impact all country systems significantly. This systemic and strategically targeted support needs to be coupled with a more flexible funding tool able to quickly mobilise resources addressing issues in particular circumstances, often as a matter of urgency. This need was also outlined by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) in the Special Report on strengthening administrative capacity in North Macedonia².

¹ *Commission Implementing Decision C(2021)8914 of 10 December 2021 on the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III) Programming Framework for the period 2021-2027.*

² http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR16_11/SR16_11_EN.pdf

The EU Integration Facility (EUIF) was established under IPA II to address this need and reached an envelope of EUR 30.25 million for 2014-2020³. The EU Delegation manages the Facility in close coordination with the NIPAC office and is a recognised funding instrument across the administration. The EUIF is designed to provide continuous support during the whole financial perspective 2021-2027. It keeps the same objectives and is replenished through different annual programmes, depending on the implementation dynamics.

2.2. Problem Analysis

Area of support #1: EU accession process

In March 2020, the EU Member States decided to open accession negotiations with North Macedonia. The European Commission presented to the Council a proposal for the Negotiation Framework in July 2020, laying out the guidelines and principles for the accession negotiations, reflecting the revised enlargement methodology. The first Intergovernmental Conference with North Macedonia took place on 19 July 2022, following the approval by the Council of the Negotiating Framework. The Commission immediately started the screening exercise. The screening meetings proceeded smoothly and were finalised in December 2023.

Since 2023, North Macedonia has also been participating as an observer in pilot for enlargement countries under the Technical Support Instrument⁴. North Macedonia observes a multi-country project in the Netherlands and Lithuania on accelerating permitting for renewable energy projects. The aim of the pilot is to accelerate enlargement countries' EU accession by establishing connections between enlargement countries and EU Member States and introducing enlargement countries to the types of reforms and projects done by EU Member States post-accession.

The bilateral dialogue between the EU and the country encompasses the alignment with the EU *acquis* and implementation and the progress on the fundamental reforms. The capacities of the institutions to push these reforms forward need to be further strengthened to allow the country to assume the EU membership obligations. North Macedonia should also progress in sound governance principles and an inclusive and evidence-based approach in strategic planning, policy-making, and legislative processes.

The accession negotiations require the country to establish appropriate negotiation structures, and ensure the capacity to lead effectively and efficiently the policy dialogue with the EU. This also implies the need to strengthen the capabilities of the Secretariat for European Affairs as the vital pillar of the accession process that ensures coordination and conformation of the work of the state authorities and other bodies and institutions during negotiations. The focus will be primarily on the 'Fundamentals' Cluster' and will gradually expand to cover all areas of the EU *acquis*. The screening meetings of the Fundamentals clusters have been finalised during 2022 and the screening report was submitted to the Council. In November 2023, the Presidency of the Council sent the letter to North Macedonia, informing about the outcome of the screening on Cluster 1 and the two opening benchmarks. The country is invited to submit the roadmaps on public administration reform and on the rule of law which will be accompanied by the action plan on the protection of minorities. Currently North Macedonia is working on the roadmaps for Rule of law, PAR and functioning of the democratic institutions and the action plan on the protection of minorities. Extending the bilateral dialogue's scope and including more actors in it will increase the need for flexible and *ad hoc* support. This *ad hoc* support will provide concrete high-

³ By the end of 2020, 60% of the allocated envelope was contracted and 26% -paid. The EUIF supported in total 55 projects involving 41 beneficiaries.

⁴ https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/technical-support-instrument/technical-support-instrument-tsi_en

value outputs for aligning and implementing different legislation pieces needed for accession. In addition, the citizens do not easily grasp the complexity and scope of the undertaken reforms on the EU accession path. The reforms must be clearly explained and communicated to obtain citizens' support. The information must be credible and systematically shared with the media. Social media channels and other information and communication lines will also be prioritised, including more frequent communication with the journalists. This is even more important in the background of the global, regional and national strategies for curbing the negative influence of disinformation.

Finally, promoting the EU policies and the Team Europe approach in North Macedonia needs substantial support. The capacities and tools of the authorities need to be improved to make strategic communication on the accession process more targeted and effective. Improved visibility and strengthened communication strategy on the side of the national authorities in relation to EU assistance and the accession process is needed, contributing to increased transparency of the EU process and accountability towards the citizens in relation to implementation of EU assistance.

Addressing these needs is at the heart of the EUIF.

Management of unforeseen crises situations as part of the country's readiness to join the EU. In the previous financial framework (2014-2020), the EUIF was very efficient in delivering ad-hoc, urgent, and much-needed help for the country, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic and the migration crises. During the COVID-19 pandemic, EUR 4 million were mobilised in record time to ensure emergency medical supplies, such as respirators, spare parts, masks, disinfectants, etc. This allowed the authorities of North Macedonia to implement the recommendations of the World Health Organisation (WHO) related to medical protocols. The pandemic showed the fragility of the health system to cope with the high pressure caused by a pandemic outbreak of this nature and magnitude. The assessment in May-June 2020 demonstrated that the health care system is not only missing essential medical and protection supplies but needs a serious upgrade of the protection and prevention procedures and the capacities for monitoring, early warning and response to health threats. This included revising the national policy on antimicrobial resistance, and vaccination, joint procurement of medical countermeasures to health threats, such as vaccines and anti-toxins, and better coordination with the EU systems. To address these needs, a second package of EUR 5 million, again in the scope of the EUIF, was allocated to support the alignment with the EU standards and legislation on communicable diseases, in line with the weaknesses identified by the European Centre for Communicable Diseases during their peer review in 2018, and enshrined further in the two national action plans for strengthening the communicable diseases surveillance, prevention and control system and for the secondary and tertiary health care system. Even if prepared in an emergency, this package supports the country in the EU accession process. It ensures the approximation to the EU standards under Chapter 28, which had not previously been a subject of enhanced EU financial support. Without a defined health sector approach under IPA II, the EUIF became a key tool to address the health risks of COVID-19 and possible future outbreaks.

This role of the EUIF as an emergency funding tool should be extended to allow the Commission to be flexible in its partnership approach and react quickly to emerging needs that could not have been foreseen through the regular programming exercises. Moreover, in addition to migration, climate change, the economic consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the energy crisis, other critical situations may arise, demanding swift and targeted actions by the EU to support North Macedonia.

Area of support #2: Management of the EU funds

The new Instrument for Pre-accession (IPA III) promotes some important novelties in using EU funds. Notably, there is a greater focus on the maturity of projects and a more robust competition based on quality and results among enlargement countries. This would require more upfront investments for project preparation and the establishment of solid sector project pipelines.

North Macedonia successfully established a robust policy dialogue based on sector working groups chaired by the relevant Ministers, coordinated by the NIPAC, and involved authorities, donors and civil society in discussing the sector policy priorities. Significant progress was made on building a sector performance framework based on indicators and targets and centring the country's assessment of the outcomes and impacts of sector policies and reforms. This dynamic needs to be maintained and close coordination with upcoming technical assistance actions on capacity building and the partnership principle in North Macedonia should be ensured under this Action. Along with strengthening strategic planning capacities and promoting results-oriented culture across the public administration, North Macedonia must improve sector financing, budgeting, and the country's aid/donor coordination structures.

In parallel, the opportunities created by the EU funds and the achievements must be communicated to the citizens; this approach builds social support and commitment to the reforms and familiarises the general public with the EU efforts to contribute to the country's advancement. This is even more important on the background of a significant regional envelope focused on connectivity and economic growth. The government has to develop the capacities and tools to make the citizens of North Macedonia aware of the region's unprecedented EU investment drive, which is expected to create a development perspective and improve living conditions.

The EUIF is the right instrument to address these needs.

This Action will further replenish the EUIF, established under IPA 2021 and covering the whole of IPA III (2021-2027). This flexible funding tool will allow the European Commission to mobilise resources at short notice to support urgent policy priorities or provide emergency response to critical situations, which, although in line with the objectives of IPA III and the accession process, are not covered by the annual and multi-annual sector support programmes.

The Action will involve various stakeholders:

- The **Sector for coordination of EU funds and other foreign assistance** within the Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA) acts as the National IPA Coordinator (NIPAC) Office, responsible for the programming and overall monitoring and evaluation of the EU funds. It is also the main counterpart for all other donors in the country. On the other hand, SEA develops and facilitates the implementation of the National Programme for the Adoption of the *Acquis* (NPAA) and is responsible for organising the accession process.
- The **Sector Working Groups** are the sector policy dialogue structures that bring together relevant national institutions, donors, and civil society actors. They are co-chaired by the corresponding ministers and the NIPAC, methodologically guided by the NIPAC office and supported technically by the IPA Structures in each line ministry. The SWGs have been working effectively since 2015 and are a good channel for the EU to deliver solid and streamlined messages to guide the sectoral policy dialogue. They have a broad mandate from identifying priorities to coordinating and reviewing the progress of sector reform. The EU Delegation, the donors and the foreign partners support SWGs through advice, knowledge sharing and information. This is the platform that also incorporates donor coordination.
- The **national operational structures responsible for the implementation of the EU funds** across the national public administration, i.e. the National Authorising Officer (NAO), the NAO support office and Management structure, the Central Contract and Finance Unit, future Managing authorities and implementing bodies, IPA structures in line ministries, Audit authority, AFCOS and other related bodies.
- **Line ministries** are responsible for sector policy-making and **agencies and bodies** established to implement and report on sector policies.
- The **negotiation teams and established working groups**.

2.3. Lessons Learned

The alignment with the EU *acquis* and European and international standards is a resource and time-intensive process, which goes beyond the adoption of legal documents, also encompassing the implementation of the new rules in practice. This requires that the country doubles its efforts to ensure full consistency in the legal and institutional systems and prepare all stakeholders to understand and abide by the new laws. Thus, the accession process is embedded in the country's sector reform. In this sense, a significant part of the legal alignment will be implemented through sector-based reform programmes in line with the sector approach. The EUIF will complement these programmes by:

- Strengthening the strategic governance of the accession and reform process and ensuring a strong coordination function, which will allow North Macedonia to make use of all available resources.
- Providing flexible and limited-in-size assistance for specific accession-related needs at the right moment. This approach aligns well with the European Court of Auditors' recommendations on EU support for North Macedonia (2015 ECA report).

The implementation of IPA II has highlighted the benefits of the non-allocated envelope, allowing quick and flexible deployment of EU assistance in times of crisis. The EUIF proved its effectiveness in quickly responding to the floods, the migration crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the consequences following Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine when the facility mobilised specific urgent expertise and even implemented small-scale relief measures.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1. Intervention Logic

The Action will impact the country's progress in addressing the accession criteria by 2027.

The **Overall Objective (Impact)** of this Action is *to enhance the EU accession process of North Macedonia*.

The **Specific Objectives (Outcomes)** of this Action are:

1. *Accession process backed up in its entirety (enhanced alignment with the EU acquis and EU/international standards, improved implementation of the legal framework in practice, and increased public support for the EU accession process).*
2. *Improved effectiveness and visibility of the EU funds invested in the country (sector approach up-scaled, EU funding and policy created a sustainable and visible development change).*

These Outcomes will be achieved through the delivery of the following outputs.

Outputs linked to Outcome 1

Output 1.1 Strengthened management of the EU accession process.

Output 1.2 Increased level of alignment of the national legislation with the EU *acquis*.

Output 1.3 Improved capacity of the national institutions to implement the legislation aligned with the EU *acquis* and progress on the fundamental and structural reforms in support of the country's accession.

Output 1.4 Increased support of the citizens of North Macedonia for the country's accession to the EU.

Output linked to Outcome 2

Output 2.1 Strengthened national capacity for management of the EU funds.

Output 2.2 Improved awareness of the citizens of North Macedonia on the EU funds invested in the country.

3.2. Indicative Activities

The EUIF provides ad hoc financing to smaller-scale projects supporting fundamental reforms and priorities outside the regular annual and multi-annual programming.

Various beneficiaries can propose projects by submitting a project concept to the EU Delegation and the NIPAC office. The EUIF can fund democratic and independent judicial institutions (Parliament, Ombudsman, Judicial Council, etc.), public administration at the central and local level, local authorities, and other bodies serving the public interests. Proposals are approved based on available funds under the EUIF.

All funded projects must address precise and well-identified needs corresponding to the priorities identified in the relevant strategic documents and support the achievement of the EUIF outcomes and outputs.

Outcome 1: Accession process backed-up in its entirety (enhanced alignment with the EU *acquis* and EU/international standards, improved implementation of the legal framework in practice, and increased public support for the EU accession process), which is to be achieved through:

Output 1.1: Strengthened management of the EU accession process – which will be implemented through the following activities, inter alia:

- Supporting the accession negotiation process, including preparing key documents, roadmaps, and action plans to align and implement the EU *acquis*, drafting guidelines, instructions, rules of procedure and methodological tools for effective coordination and negotiation.
- Research, analysis and assessment of needs, challenges or processes linked to the EU accession process and the relations with the EU.
- Capacity-building measures, including training, mentoring and coaching of the participants in the negotiation structures, and exchange of know-how with others with similar experience.
- Digitalisation of the negotiation process encompassing documents and process management tools, EU *acquis* translation software, and e-learning software on various EU topics.
- Measures to ensure an inclusive accession process and involving various stakeholders such as civil society and the private sector.
- Measures to ensure transparency and to raise the awareness of the citizens of North Macedonia on the benefits and obligations stemming from the EU accession process.

Output 1.2: Increased level of alignment of the national legislation with the EU *acquis* – which will be implemented through the following activities, inter alia:

- Preparation of primary and secondary legislation in support of the harmonisation with the EU *acquis*, including, *inter alia*, analysis, benchmarking, legal drafting, organisation of consultation process and communication measures.

Output 1.3: Improved capacity of the national institutions to implement the legislation aligned with the EU *acquis* and progress on the fundamental and structural reforms in support of the country's accession – which will be implemented through the following activities, inter alia:

- Strengthening the national capacities for political and policy analysis, responsible political participation, representation, transparency, and accountability, strengthening the electoral process, and raising the awareness of the political elites on key democracy-related concepts.
- Based on the *Better Regulation* approach, measures to improve the general legislative processes and transparency encompassing drafting capabilities, implementation of the national legislation in practice, monitoring, and analysis of the legal implementation.

- Research, analysis and assessment of needs, challenges, or processes, designing and implementing effective solutions linked to the democratic system and its functioning, the accession process, and the relations with the EU.
- Support measures to improve the effectiveness and transparency of governance encompassing development, budgeting, and monitoring of sector policies, strategies, programmes and measures.
- Measures to increase the effectiveness of sector and donor aid coordination.
- Support measures that increase the knowledge and capacities in relation to climate change, mitigation and adaptation measures, green financing facilities and Rio markers.
- Promote effective coordination mechanisms to facilitate communication and cooperation.
- Support measures to enhance the systematic use of Environmental Impact, Strategic Environmental, and Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessments in the formulation of new sector policies, programmes or interventions.
- Support measures to enhance the capacities of preparing and analysing Feasibility Studies and Cost Benefit Analysis.
- Assessment of *ad hoc* needs, designing and implementing effective solutions to challenges, threats, and crisis situations of national, regional, European or global importance.
- Upgrading the national information and IT systems to the operating standards of the EU allowing for interoperability of the information and solid and inclusive decision-making procedures.
- Enhancing the participation of women, minorities and non-majority communities, and vulnerable groups in democratic processes and policy dialogue.
- Effective management of unforeseen crises, including but not limited to health, environment, climate and socio-economic crisis.
- Emergency response to threats such as COVID-19 and other communicable diseases, challenges arising from irregular migration, environmental threats, gender-based violence, child protection, fight against organised crime, etc.

Output 1.4: Increased support of the citizens of North Macedonia for the country's accession to the EU – which will be implemented through the following activities, inter alia:

- Preparation, adoption, and implementation of a comprehensive Communication Strategy for EU accession.
- Support measures for training national institutions' spokespersons and public relations personnel on various EU-related matters such as the EU Green Deal and climate commitments.
- Capacity-building measures, including training and mentoring journalists on EU affairs.
- Communication and visibility measures and events on various topics related to the promotion of EU policies (including the EU Green Deal), EU accession and the use of EU funds.

Outcome 2: Improved effectiveness and visibility of the EU funds invested in the country (sector approach up-scaled, EU funding and policy created a sustainable and visible development change), which is to be achieved through:

Output 2.1: Strengthened national capacity for management of the EU funds – The Action will be implemented through the following activities, inter alia:

- Preparing project pipelines, maturing projects, handling procurement processes, managing contracts, and ensuring ongoing monitoring, audits, and evaluations.
- Technical support for capacity building on EIA, SEA, FS, CBA, Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment.

- (Re)organisation and strengthening of the institutional set-up, the operational capacities and the financial management and control systems of North Macedonia for the sound management of the EU funds.
- Measures to strengthen the evidence-based and results-oriented approach, including enhanced use of data, improved information exchange between institutions, and stronger national monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems at sector, policy, and programme levels.

Output 2.2: Improved awareness of the citizens of North Macedonia on the EU funds invested in the country – which will be implemented through the following activities, inter alia:

- Communication and visibility measures and events on various topics related to the management and absorption of EU funds.

3.3. Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Biodiversity

The EUIF reflects the European Union's longstanding commitment to address environmental and climate change concerns and enhance sustainable development by supporting the harmonisation with the EU *acquis* and implementation of the new legislation under Chapter 27, as well as the alignment with the EU *acquis* in other linked chapters, which in the context of the European Green Deal, will require mainstreaming of the EU Green Agenda. Some examples include Chapter 5 on public procurement introducing quality criteria such as respect to the environment in the public purchase; Chapter 11, under which the greening of agriculture will need to be addressed through the national policy on subsidies; Chapter 8 on competition and state aid, encouraging state aid for green investments, and Chapter 20 on enterprise and industrial policy, supporting a significant shift to renewable energy, less polluting technologies, transition mechanisms, etc.

Overall, the EUIF, by promoting strategic and responsible governance which addresses the global challenges of today and by supporting the fundamental reforms of the public administration/digitalisation, public finance, and judiciary system, will contribute to an administrative, cultural and policy shift that puts the protection of the environment and a responsible attitude towards the natural resources in the heart of governance. The focus of EUIF on legal enforcement will contribute to changing practices, building capacities, and applying corrective measures when necessary.

By promoting the sector policy dialogues, the sector approach and inclusiveness, EUIF is expected to enhance environmental democracy. It will contribute to policy coordination and interaction between decision-makers and civil society, which will support the mainstreaming of the environmental topic across all sectors and the better response of the authorities to the environmental requirements of civil society.

Finally, the EUIF will also invest in the preparation of mature projects in all sectors, which includes an analysis of each project's environmental and climate impact, ensuring that all EU investments in the country will support the achievement of the European green targets.

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 gender equality constitutes a fundamental principle of international human rights instruments the country has signed and ratified. The Action will promote equal opportunities for men and women through all projects supported under EUIF. This implies an analysis of the gender impact of the major projects as well as inclusion, where possible, of sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive indicators for measuring the success of projects, i.e., the number of women and the number of men benefiting from the Action (absolute number and percentage of all final beneficiaries). EUIF supports an inclusive legislative and political process that supports women's participation in political decision-making. In

addition, projects promoting gender equality are selected with preference. In principle, EUIF will not support gender-blind projects.

Human Rights

The country has a well-developed legislative framework compliant with the EU and international standards on equal opportunities. EUIF will support projects that will ensure law enforcement and the implementation of established rules. The activities under EUIF will help shape a well-functioning, efficient, all-inclusive and impartial civil service. The expected EUIF investments in better harmonisation with the EU standards, more efficient public administration and justice system, and a well-functioning democratic structure will only positively affect the internalisation of the equal opportunity concept in legislative documents and administrative culture. EUIF will support state bodies and democratic institutions to be more effective in implementing international commitments and the national legislation harmonised with the EU *acquis*. The improved rule of law will impact how the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups are addressed in the country.

The selection of EUIF projects implies an analysis of the impact of any project on vulnerable groups. Funding is only possible for projects with a negative impact on vulnerable groups with the necessary mitigation measures being agreed upon. The EU Delegation will ensure that EUIF project beneficiaries observe the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination. In case of a breach, the necessary measures will be taken, including project suspension or cancellation.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0. While not focused on addressing challenges related to disability, the Action will enhance democratic governance and the rule of law, which will impact on the implementation of the rights of all people with disabilities and vulnerable people. It will also support North Macedonia in a crisis and enhance its resilience to challenging developments. This will also contribute to protecting vulnerable groups who disproportionately suffer in crisis.

Civil Society

North Macedonia, with solid support from the EU Delegation, established intense and regular consultation and communication lines with the civil society organisations, channelled through the Sector Working Groups (involving authorities, donors and civil society and discussing sector priorities), the IPA Monitoring Committee (the highest bilateral EU-North Macedonia platform for dialogue on EU financial assistance), the Sector Monitoring Committees and the EU consultation platform (involving EU Delegation and civil society organisations in discussions on the use of the EU funds). The national system for consultation on strategic and legislative documents (ENER) needs to operate more effectively, allowing civil society to express an opinion on crucial reforms, significantly when reforms may directly affect civil society organisations. The Government is committed to pursuing inclusive and participatory dialogue with civil society organisations under established cooperation mechanisms, such as the Council for Cooperation and Development of Civil Society. It is willing to include civil society representatives in the EU accession negotiation process. The coordination framework is well established to allow effective and intensive consultation with civil society. Civil society organisations will be encouraged to participate in the decision-making and monitoring of the reforms at the sector level. To address this issue, EU funds – Civil Society Facility, EIDHR, targeted grant schemes - are allocated to strengthen the Council for cooperation with civil society, to improve the capacity of the civil society organisations to collect feedback from their constituencies, analyse the problems, voice concerns, defend their rights, propose solutions, and provide services in support of the reforms. The EUIF will encourage this process further; it will upscale the sector policy dialogue, promote the good governance approach, which forcefully considers the voice of the citizens, stimulate the transparency of the public

administration and ensure the access of citizens to quality and updated information on the reforms and the accession process of North Macedonia.

3.4. Risks and Assumptions

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
Planning, process and system	Risk 1: State of public administration EUIF primarily focuses on the public bodies, which makes the challenges in the functioning of the public administration a vector of risk. While North Macedonia has achieved some progress on the public administration reform (PAR) over the last years, there are still significant challenges ahead. The responsibilities and mandate of the public bodies need to be streamlined, the coordination among public institutions - significantly enhanced, the motivation and capacity of the public servants – improved, along with the efficiency.	M	H	The main mitigating factors are the ongoing public administration reform (PAR), public finance management reform, and the investments of the EU and other donors in up scaling the administrative capacity. Policy dialogue takes place regularly, yet it needs to yield results. PAR is among the most challenging and long-term reform in the country. By itself, the EUIF Integration PAR in addition to the flagship EU initiatives funded under the annual IPA programmes.
People and the organisation	Risk 2: Political process The political context is marked by the launch of accession negotiation process, including through the screening. There are debates on specific issues between the government and the opposition, including on the next steps in the EU accession process.	M	M	The launch of the screening process has significantly mitigated this risk. Other essential tools involve an enhanced high-level political dialogue between decision-makers and the EU, enlarging the spectrum of institutions supported by the EU, reinforcing the public administration and civil society and strengthening their role in the reform process and in the negotiation process.
Planning, process and system	Risk 3: Crisis and Force majeure	M	H	The Government will continuously apply the EU guidance in overcoming

	<p>After COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine provoked an energy crisis and high inflation and undermined the capacity of the country to maintain the macroeconomic stability, continue the reform processes and provide adequate protection of the citizens. The fiscal, economic, and social impact of the current crisis is considerable, covers all spheres of life, and demands more ambitious governmental engagement in a situation of shrinking the state resources. Addressing this dichotomy will require new working methods and approaches to problems, new processes and routines, new forms of social and economic solidarity.</p>			<p>the fiscal and macroeconomic weaknesses, restoring the viability of the economic life and labour market, and turning the challenge into an opportunity. The Commission recommendations on the Economic Reform Programme and the considerable financial support (2023 energy package, MFA) decrease the pressure of the crisis on the state systems and allow the country to continue delivering.</p>
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External Assumptions

The following assumptions should hold true to guarantee the success of the intervention:

- Strong support for the accession to the European Union on behalf of the public administration, authorities, civil society, media and business, and general population;
- The fundamental reforms (such as Public Finance Management, Public Administration Reform, Judiciary, and anti-corruption) are well progressing and create a favourable environment for the alignment with the EU *acquis* and the implementation in practice of the new legislation; and
- Macroeconomic and political stability is maintained.

3.5. Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines [values and years]	Target [values and years]	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	Enhanced EU accession process of North Macedonia	Progress made in the EU accession process	Decision to open accession negotiations (2020)	Further progress in the EU accession path (2027)	Commission Reports ⁵ ; decisions by the Member States;	
Outcome 1	Accession process backed-up in its entirety (enhanced alignment with the EU <i>acquis</i> and EU/International standards, improved implementation of the legal framework in practice, and increased public support for the EU accession process)	Number of open/closed chapters	0 (2020)	>5 (2027)	Commission Reports; decision by Member States	EU integration remains a government priority, which entails a continuous high-level political commitment to EU accession, support for the reforms and active participation in the sector policy dialogue
		Societal support for the accession process/ Eurobarometer / Positive attitude	52% (11/2019)	> 80% (2027)	Eurobarometer	
Outcome 2	Improved effectiveness and visibility of the EU funds invested in the country (sector approach up-scaled, EU funding and policy created a sustainable and visible development change)	Level of absorption of EU funds: IPA II - Programming rate / value - Contracting rate - Disbursement rate	IPA II - 104% (MEUR 633) - 26% (end 2019) - 12% (end 2019)	No change 95% (2026) 85% (2026)	Commission report on implementation of IPA	
		Level of absorption of EU funds: IPA III - Value of programmed funds - Contracting rate - Disbursement rate	IPA III (2020) MEUR 200 0% 0%	IPA III (2027) > MEUR 600 100% 90%	Annual IPA Report on Implementation Financing agreement	
Output 1.1 related to Outcome 1	Strengthened management of the EU accession process	Number of adopted key documents (roadmaps, guidelines, instructions, rules of procedure)	0 (2020)	>30	Government reports	Strong support for the accession to the European Union on behalf of the public administration, authorities, civil
		Number of civil servants and other participants in negotiation structures trained	0 (2020)	> 5000 (2027)	Project report	
		Digitalised Accession process measured as a number of logs process– number of logs	0 (2020)	>10,000/year (2027)	e-Accession on-line	

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/strategy-and-reports_en

Output 1.2 related to Outcome 1	Increased level of alignment of the national legislation with the EU <i>acquis</i>	Number of adopted laws ensuring the harmonisation with the EU <i>acquis</i>	0 (2020)	> 180 laws (2027)	NPAA monitoring reports	society, media and business.
Output 1.3 related to Outcome 1	Improved capacity of the national institutions to implement the legislation aligned with the EU <i>acquis</i> and progress on the fundamental and structural reforms in support of the country's accession	Number of people trained on the new laws	0 (2020)	20 000 (2027)	NPAA monitoring reports	
		Number of institutions with enhanced administrative capacity to implement the harmonised legislation	0 (2020)	> 300 (2027)	NPAA monitoring reports	
Output 1.4 related to Outcome 1	Increased support of the citizens of North Macedonia for the country's accession to the EU	Number of stakeholders reached through the implementation of the communication strategy	0 (2020)	>300,000/year	Project report Media	
		Number of EU-specific spokespersons in national institutions trained	0 (2020)	50 (2027)		
		Number of journalists on EU affairs trained	0 (2020)	> 100 (2027)		
		Number of outreach events and communication products produced	5 (2020)	> 500 (2027)		
		Number of entities involved in communication activities on EU accession	TBD	>200 (2027)		
Output 2.1 related to Outcome 2	Strengthened national capacity for management of the EU funds	IPA III - Value of funds under indirect management	0% (2020)	>50% (2027)	Financing Agreement	
		Financial management and control systems operate smoothly (number of critical audit findings)	AA: 10 (2020) EC: 5 (2020)	Max AA: 5 EC: 1	Audit authority report Commission report	
Output 2.2 related to Outcome 2	Improved awareness of the citizens of North Macedonia on the EU funds invested in the country	Percentage of citizens considering themselves informed about the EU financing	78% (2022)	> 90% (2027)>90%	EUD Opinion poll	

4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1. Financing Agreement

In order to implement this Action, it is envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with North Macedonia.

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 conclusion 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. 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 measures⁶.

4.3.1. Direct Management (Grants)

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

To support the implementation of the two outcomes of the EUIF, identified in Section 3:

- Outcome 1: To back up the accession process in its entirety, enhance the alignment with the *EU acquis* and EU/International standards and the implementation of the legal framework in practice, and increase the public support for the EU accession process; and
- Outcome 2: to improve the effectiveness and visibility of the EU funds invested in the country, to upscale the sector approach, and ensure that EU funding and policy create a sustainable and visible development change.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

For twinning contracts, the applicants must be EU Member State administrations or mandated bodies.

For grant contracts, the applicants must be 1) EU and Member State organisations or mandated bodies or national agencies or international organisations; or 2) legal entities, local authorities, public bodies, economic actors, non-profit organisations, chambers, associations.

4.3.2. Direct Management (Procurement)

Procurement will contribute to achieving the outcomes and outputs, identified in Section 3.

⁶ [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.

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 the 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 the 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

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, (EUR)
Methods of implementation, cf section 4.3		
Outcome 1: Accession process backed-up in its entirety (enhanced alignment with the <i>EU acquis</i> and EU/International standards, improved implementation of the legal framework in practice, and increased public support for the EU accession process), and Outcome 2: Improved effectiveness and visibility of the EU funds invested in the country (sector approach up-scaled, EU funding and policy created a sustainable and visible development change), composed of:	15 000 000	N.A.
Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.1	6 000 000	N.A.
Procurement (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.2	9 000 000	N.A.
Grants – total envelope as per section 4.3.1	6 000 000	N.A.
Procurement – total envelope as per section 4.3.2	9 000 000	N.A.
Evaluation (cf. section 5.2)	Will be covered by another decision	N.A.
Audit (cf. section 5.3)	Will be covered by another decision	N.A.
Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy (cf. section 6)	Will be covered by another decision	N.A.
Contingencies	0	N.A.
TOTAL	15 000 000	N.A.

4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The EU Delegation to North Macedonia will manage the EUIF in close coordination with the National IPA Coordinator (NIPAC) and the NIPAC office and in line with the EU principles of sound financial management, transparency, and accountability.

The following general procedure will apply:

Any public body or state institution may submit a proposal under the EUIF. Proposals are sent to either National IPA Coordinator (NIPAC) office or the EU Delegation, *ad hoc*, depending on the needs of the potential beneficiaries. The EU Delegation and the NIPAC office can also launch calls for expressions of interest to invite potential beneficiaries to prepare project proposals to address a specifically identified challenge, meeting the EUIF objectives. Proposals should describe the objectives, activities and expected results; define the necessary budget and preferred type of contract.

The proposals will be assessed based on their relevance to the objectives of the EUIF, maturity, compliance with the existing EU assistance in the sector, and other donor funding. The selection of projects is the responsibility of the EU Delegation, acting in close cooperation with the NIPAC office. The EU Delegation may conduct further discussions with the potential beneficiaries to clarify the scope of the projects or the implementation arrangements.

Once the projects are selected for funding, the EU Delegation will be responsible for (1) organisation of the necessary procurement procedures (in case of service, supply or works contracts), call for proposals or direct awards (in case of twinning and grants) and, for (2) signing and managing the respective contracts. The final beneficiaries of the projects are involved in preparing the necessary contracting documentation (terms of reference, technical specifications, guidelines for applicants, and additional technical documents). They participate in the project implementation and work with relevant contractors/grantees. Whenever and wherever possible, a project steering committee is established (for example, for twinning and TA) to ensure proper monitoring of the EUIF projects. They benefit directly from the project outputs and are also the entities ensuring the sustainability of the results.

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

5. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1. Monitoring and Reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partners shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of the 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 log-frame 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 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:

The relevant data will be collected, processed and analysed by the EU Delegation, working closely with the NIPAC office/Secretariat for European Affairs. The beneficiaries and contractors will have the obligation to collect, organise, process and submit the relevant data to the EU Delegation and the NIPAC office.

5.2. Evaluation

Having regard to the importance of the Action, a final (or ex-post) evaluation will be carried out for the whole IPA III EUIF (2021-2027)⁷ via independent consultants. 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 EUIF is a complementary, flexible tool for funding ad hoc needs related to the accession process or crises.

The Commission shall form a Reference Group (RG) composed by representatives from the main stakeholders at both EU and national (representatives from the government, from civil society organisations (private sector, NGOs, etc.), etc.) levels. If deemed necessary, other donors will be invited to join. The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 2 months in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation exercise and 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. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

In addition, the EUIF itself can fund sector or thematic evaluations at *ad hoc* basis, provided that the focus of the evaluations falls within the thematic scope of the EUIF.

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 country, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities 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.

⁷ The budget for this evaluation will be secured through the EU Integration Facility, but with a follow-up action, either with the financing agreement for 2026 or 2027.

For the purpose of enhancing the visibility of the EU and its contribution to this action, the Commission may sign or enter into joint declarations or statements, as part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union. Visibility and communication measures should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds. Effectiveness of communication activities on awareness about the action and its objectives as well as on EU funding of the action should be measured. Implementing partners shall keep the Commission and the EU Delegation fully informed of the planning and implementation of specific visibility and communication activities before the implementation. Implementing partners will ensure adequate visibility of EU financing and will report on visibility and communication actions as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees.

7. SUSTAINABILITY

The EUIF invests in a new legislative framework, which would allow easier integration of North Macedonia into the political, economic, and social systems of the European Union when accession will be achieved. Ensuring the compatibility of the legal systems is at the heart of the accession process and is the main vector of sustainability in this action.

Other sustainability factors are the targeted improvement in the decision-making process and the management capacity across the public administration and democratic institutions. By improving the legislative framework, aligning it with the *acquis*, and streamlining the strategic planning and budgeting, the Action will enhance key processes in the administrative environment. It will strengthen the ability of the public administration to address challenges efficiently and effectively. Upgraded administrative capacity along with mainstreaming the "Better Regulation" approach will improve the quality of decisions made and the decision-making process itself. From a longer-term perspective, this will affect all sectors and country systems.

Finally, the improved transparency and inclusiveness of the decision-making is a long-term asset of every administrative system, which guarantees higher societal support and decreases the risks for the reform process.

Appendix 1: IDENTIFICATION OF THE PRIMARY INTERVENTION LEVEL FOR REPORTING IN OPSYS

A Primary intervention⁸ (project/programme) is a coherent set of results structured in a logical framework aiming at delivering development change or progress. Identifying the level of the primary intervention will allow for:

- ✓ Differentiating these Actions or Contracts from those that do not produce direct reportable development results, defined as support entities (i.e. audits, evaluations);
- ✓ Articulating Actions and/or Contracts according to an expected common chain of results and therefore allowing them to ensure a more efficient and aggregated monitoring and reporting of performance;
- ✓ Having a complete and exhaustive mapping of all results-bearing Actions and Contracts.

The present Action identifies as

Action level (i.e. Budget support, Blending)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single action	Present action: all contracts in the present action
Group of actions level (i.e: i) top-up cases, ii) second, third, etc. phases of a programme)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Group of actions	Actions reference (CRIS#/OPSYS#): INTV-17970
Contract level (i.e. Grants, Contribution Agreements, any case in which foreseen individual legal commitments identified in the budget will have different log frames, even if part of the same Action Document)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	N/A
Group of contracts level (i.e: i) series of programme estimates, ii) cases in which an Action Document foresees many foreseen individual legal commitments (for instance four contracts and one of them being a Technical Assistance) and two of them, a technical assistance contract and a contribution agreement, aim at the same objectives and complement each other, iii) follow up contracts that share the same log frame of the original contract)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of contracts	N/A

⁸ For the purpose of consistency between terms in OPSYS, DG INTPA, DG NEAR and FPI have harmonised 5 key terms, including 'Action' and 'Intervention' where an 'Action' is the content (or part of the content) of a Commission financing Decision and 'Intervention' is a coherent set of activities and results which constitutes an effective level for the operational follow-up by the EC of its operations on the ground. See more on the [concept of intervention \[to access the link an EU Login is needed\]](#).