



EN

**THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**ANNEX 4**

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multi-country multiannual action plan on an EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme in favour of the Western Balkans and Türkiye for 2024-2025

**Action Document for “EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for Kosovo\* for 2024-2025”**

**MULTIANNUAL ACTION PLAN**

This document constitutes the multiannual 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**

<b>Title</b>	<b>EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme for Kosovo for 2024-2025</b> Multi-country multiannual action plan on an EU Civil Society Facility and Media Programme in favour of the Western Balkans and Türkiye for 2024-2025
<b>OPSYS</b>	OPSYS business reference: ACT-62282
<b>ABAC</b>	ABAC Commitment level 1 number: JAD.1299145 (allocation 2024) JAD.1299146 (allocation 2025)
<b>Basic Act</b>	Financed under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III)
<b>Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)</b>	No
<b>EIP Flagship</b>	No
<b>Team Europe</b>	No
<b>Beneficiary(y)/(ies) of 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>	

\* 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>Window and thematic priority</b>	Window 1. Rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy Thematic Priority 5: Fundamental rights (with reference to media - freedom of expression) – 25% Thematic Priority 7: Civil Society – 75% (Partially also window 3 and window 4)			
<b>Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>	Main SDG: SDG 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions Other significant SDGs: SDG 01: No Poverty SDG 03: Good health and Well-being SDG 05: Gender Equality SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy SDG 08: Decent Work and Economic Growth SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities			
<b>DAC code(s)</b>	15150 Democratic participation and civil society – 50% 15153 Media and free flow of information – 50%			
<b>Main Delivery Channel</b>	20000 - Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society 62000 – Private sector in recipient country			
<b>Targets</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity			
<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 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 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Climate change adaptation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Internal markers and Tags</b>	<b>Policy objectives</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	EIP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Environment and climate resilience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Digital	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Economic development (incl. private sector, trade and macroeconomic support)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Human Development (incl. human capital and youth)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Health resilience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Migration and mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Agriculture, food security and rural development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Rule of law, governance and Public Administration reform	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Digitalisation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Tags	YES	NO		
digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
digital governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
digital entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
digital skills/literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
digital services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Tags	YES	NO		
digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
education and research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>
<b>BUDGET INFORMATION</b>			
<b>Amounts concerned</b>	<p>Budget line: 15.020101.01</p> <p>Total estimated cost: <b>EUR 7 090 000</b></p> <p>Total amount of EU budget contribution <b>EUR 6 500 000</b></p> <p>The contribution is for an amount of <b>EUR 2 000 000</b> from the general budget of the European Union <b>for 2024</b> and for an amount of <b>EUR 4 500 000</b> from the general budget of the European Union <b>for 2025</b>, subject to the availability of appropriations for the respective financial years following the adoption of the relevant annual budget, or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.</p> <p>This action is co-financed in joint co-financing by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- civil society organisations for an amount of <b>EUR 590 000</b>.</li> </ul>		
<b>MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>			
<b>Implementation modalities (management mode and delivery methods)</b>	<p><b>Direct management</b> through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grants</li> <li>- Procurement</li> </ul>		
<b>Final date for concluding contribution / delegation agreements, procurement and grant contracts</b>	<p>For 2024 Budget: At the latest by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025</p> <p>For 2025 Budget: At the latest by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2026</p>		
<b>Indicative operational implementation period</b>	<p>For 2024 Budget: 72 months following the adoption of the Financing Decision</p> <p>For 2025 Budget: 84 months following the adoption of the Financing Decision</p>		

## 1.2. Summary of the Action

The overall objective of the action is to strengthen participatory democracy, social inclusion and cohesion as well as the EU integration and approximation process in Kosovo, through an enhanced contribution by civil society and media at local and central levels. It will foster participatory democracy and inclusion of Kosovo civic actors in decision and policy-making through a mix of funding modalities (operating grants, action grants, small grant schemes and support measures). It will strengthen the capacities of civil society and media to play the role of holding the institutions of Kosovo accountable and in raising awareness on issues relevant for the public.

The programme will support civil society participation in sectors which are not adequately supported by public institutions or other donors, where technical or organisational capacities are still developing, and/or that are

not adequately represented in dialogue and consultation platforms. It will also contribute to enhance civil society cooperation with institutions working on governance, economic development and inclusion programmes. Furthermore, the programme will strengthen media literacy and support initiatives dealing with media professionalism and media literacy, and countering disinformation.

The Programme is in line with the IPA III Programming framework - thematic Window (1) Rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy, Window (3) Green agenda and sustainable connectivity and Window (4) Competitiveness and inclusive growth. It also is in line with the objectives and priorities of the Economic and Investment Plan (EIP), and the “*DG NEAR Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in the enlargement region 2021-2027*”.

### **1.3 Beneficiaries of the Action**

The action shall be carried out in Kosovo.

## **2. RATIONALE**

### **2.1. Context**

Civil society (CS) and media organisations in Kosovo play an important role in the democratic debate, promoting fundamental rights, equality, information and awareness, innovation and contributing to sectoral reforms which are necessary for Kosovo’s progress on the European path. The significant donor support provided to Kosovo civil society organisations (CSOs) over the last two decades has enabled many civil society actors to expand, diversify and strengthen their competence and capacities while filling institutional gaps, complementing government action in areas prioritised by donors and the EU integration agenda. They have also contributed to improve public policy formulation, policy implementation and to enhance social cohesion, particularly at local level.

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) between the European Union and Kosovo and the resulting National Programme for the Implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (NPISAA) 2022–2026 determine the objectives, formal mechanisms and timeframes for the implementation of reforms aimed at progressively aligning Kosovo with the EU in all policy fields until they meet the EU standards. The European Reform Agenda (ERA), agreed between the EU and the Kosovo government, aims at guiding Kosovo’s efforts under the SAA through short-term priorities in key areas such as good governance, the rule of law, education and employment, competitiveness and investment climate. Likewise the Economic Reform Programme (ERP) for Kosovo aims to support economic recovery and improve employment prospects. It foresees a set of priority structural reforms that address the key obstacles to economic growth, support the development of competitive economic sectors, and assure that economic growth is inclusive and welfare enhanced. The Growth Plan for the Western Balkans<sup>1</sup> will contribute to accelerate key reforms stimulating economic growth and regional integration. Civil society can play a decisive role in designing, implementing and monitoring such reforms.

The IPA Programming framework foresees IPA assistance to civil society within thematic priority 7 under Window 1: *Rule of Law, Fundamental rights and democracy*. In this regard, civil society organisations have two main functions that require support. Firstly, as a democratic watchdog, CSOs and grass root organisations hold governments to account where fundamental rights, democratic principles and the rule of law are brought into question. Secondly, they contribute to the alignment with and implementation of the EU acquis by bringing innovative ideas to the table and by bridging the gap with real needs of the people in the decision-

---

<sup>1</sup> COM (2023) 691 final. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS “New growth plan for the Western Balkans”, Brussels, 8.11.2023

making process and by monitoring the implementation of governments' commitments. The IPA Programming framework also identifies civil society action as cross-cutting, closely interlinked with and therefore relevant for more than one window.

Ensuring gender equality, preventing discrimination (against non-majority communities, women and girls belonging to non-majority communities, children, persons with disabilities and others in vulnerable situations) fighting gender-based violence as well as protecting children rights are also key priorities under the thematic priority 5 of IPA Window 1 and in the EU Gender Action Plan III on external relations.

The *DG NEAR Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in the enlargement region 2021-2027*<sup>2</sup> further explains how the EU will support civil society in the Western Balkans and Türkiye in the context of the enlargement agenda. The current civil society and media programme for Kosovo will contribute to achieve 2 of the Guidelines' objectives related to the increased partnership and cooperation between CSOs and the authorities and the reinforcement of CSO capacity and resilience.

The media sector is also mentioned under IPA Window 1, as part of the thematic priority 5 'Fundamental rights'. It is recalled that promoting and protecting media pluralism, freedom of expression and the independence of media as a pillar of democracy remains a priority and that the fight against disinformation is fundamental to maintain a democratic and open society.

Kosovo was hit hard by the pandemic, which deprived many already poor households from needed income and increased unemployment. While the COVID-19 pandemic is finally behind us, its long-lasting impact has further deepened the existing socio-economic vulnerabilities and disparities in Kosovo society and shed the light on policy target shortcomings and underfunded areas. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and consequent energy crisis and inflation have shifted the policy agenda and economic reforms and reduced the government prioritisation towards social sectors which see a decline in budgetary allocation. At the same time, they have reminded state and non-state actors that alternative sustainable economic transitions and participatory local governance are increasingly needed in order to mitigate and buffer endogenous crises. In this context, the EU partnerships with media and civil society are crucial to maintain social cohesion and accelerate a more sustainable economic recovery toward a more inclusive, gender responsive and environmentally friendly society.

The EU Office in Kosovo regularly coordinates its assistance with EU Member States agencies and other international and bilateral donors supporting civil society in Kosovo (United States Agency for International Development, the Swiss Cooperation Office, the British Embassy, the United Nations Development Programme, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, the Japan International Cooperation Agency). Since 2016, the EU Office in Kosovo and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) have intensified the donor coordination through regular meetings, information sharing, and an on-line joint donor platform<sup>3</sup> of projects in Kosovo which synergises donors' efforts, project planning and sector monitoring.

## **2.2. Problem Analysis**

### **Area of support 1: Civil society, local democracy and socio-economic inclusion and cohesion**

The civic space in Kosovo has gradually expanded over the years and civil society continues to operate in an enabling environment. Civil society and media engagement in the dialogue between Kosovo and the European

---

<sup>2</sup> DG NEAR Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in the Enlargement Region 2021-2027 (europa.eu)

<sup>3</sup> <https://csdonorskosovo.com/#/>

Union and in the design, implementation and monitoring of EU-related reforms continues being essential to ensure that commitments are not just institutional, government-led exercises, but based on accurate situation assessments resulting from grassroots consultations and genuine civic participation, and that they translate into concrete benefits for the citizens. In this regard, efforts need to be consolidated on both sides: on the one hand, consultations must be extended in particular to the local level as highlighted in the 2023 Report<sup>4</sup> and must be used as an opportunity to enrich the policy and reform agenda; on the other hand, CS shall have the means to keep stimulating innovative and inclusive practices, awareness-raising, education, and behavioural changes and make the public better understand the EU integration agenda and ultimately hold the elected people accountable for the reforms Kosovo needs and to which it committed.

Sectors like the social protection one, heavily rely on the presence and expertise of CSOs to widen and deliver the services offered at community level for vulnerable children, women and families in need of social protection to prevent further exclusion. The lockdowns and isolation applied in prevention from the COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic consequences exacerbated difficulties for people in vulnerable situations but also for people who were not primarily concerned with mental health problems, such as children, parents and young women and men. Inter-familial violence increased during the confinement period and as a result of the economic crisis, with long-standing effects on women and children. The continuous tense situation in the North of Kosovo adds a layer of vulnerability for the population living there. Social care services struggle to meet the increased social and mental health related demand caused by the pandemic, revealing wide gaps in access, services and treatment available. In addition, voices from the education sector have increasingly alerted on different types of addiction, as well as violence and bullying from an early age while pointing out at the lack of psychological support services at school level. The institutions are not able to address all those issues on their own, and complementary support from CSOs is needed.

When it comes to policy dialogue related to the European path of Kosovo, CSOs with technical knowledge and advocacy, advisory or watchdog experience are increasingly required to actively seek for genuine citizens' engagement in several sectors linked to EU acquis. The EU and Kosovo will benefit from a wider range of specialised CS partners who can contribute to key policies and reforms and help implement the EU agenda with the different key stakeholders.

This is particularly the case in relation to the EU Green Agenda and the *Green Agenda in the Western Balkans*<sup>5</sup>: Kosovo is facing enormous challenges in the energy, environment and natural resources management sector. Some reforms are overshadowed and delayed due to the effects of the energy crisis and concerns over the security of energy supply. Successfully adapting and mitigating the consequences climate change (for instance in the agriculture / rural development sector), transitioning to clean energy and energy efficiency as well as promoting a circular economy and sustainable value/waste management, involve significant social and behavioural transformations and new strategies for facilitating these complex multi-stakeholders processes. Citizens in Kosovo lack awareness and credible information on the necessary changes, and the benefits of the transition in a long-term, their impact on their daily life, and may be reluctant to support costly yet necessary reforms. Insufficient environmental education and energy transition awareness at all levels (citizens, SMEs and institutions), limited research and data, little understanding of climate change causes, effects (on men and women, and on natural resources) and possible mitigation efforts, poor practices of solid waste management, lack of awareness of the public at large about the consequences of their actions aggravate substantially an already critical situation. CSOs could bridge those gaps, by for instance providing policy gender-responsive

---

<sup>4</sup> SWD (2023) 692 final. COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT “Kosovo\* 2023 Report Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2023 Communication on EU Enlargement policy”, Brussels, 8.11.2023

<sup>5</sup> SWD (2020) 223 final. COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT “Guidelines for the Implementation of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans Accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – An Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans”, Brussels, 6.10.2020

recommendations to local and national governments, facilitating communication between the government and local actors, and improving the design and enforcement of the environmental governance framework.

### Main stakeholders

The programme will involve Civil Society Organisations<sup>6</sup> as implementing partners and target groups of the activities funded under this action. An effort will be made to prioritize CSOs who are not adequately or sufficiently (i) supported by public institutions or other donors, including CSOs working in the North (ii) represented in dialogue, policy-making and consultation platforms or (iii) who work in (sub)-sectors where technical or organisational capacities are still developing and where there is a need for additional expertise and viewpoints.

In all their actions, CSOs will partner and/or target central government, executive, regulatory and independent agencies, local authorities, universities in order to influence decision and policy-making and implementation, mutually strengthen capacities, and make governments more accountable and responsive to people and nature's needs.

### **Area of support 2: Media**

Kosovo has a pluralistic and lively media environment, including broadcast, print and online media. The media environment in Kosovo is lively and diverse, and in general, has a space to play its role as acknowledged by the 2023 Report. Several media outlets, established in the last years, have enriched the media environment, by providing more space for public discourse. However, Kosovo still lacks the legal basis for some crucial elements concerning the work of the media. The Law on the Independent Media Commission (IMC) - crucial for the regulation of media in Kosovo - and the Law on Public Broadcaster (RTK)<sup>7</sup> are still pending. The sector needs to address the issue of transparency, in particular in relation to media funding and ownership, so that market monopoly and domination are prevented, and editorial and journalists' professionalism and independence can be sustained.

Several media outlets have focused on developing their online products, and numerous digital tools are flourishing as the Kosovo population are heavy users of the internet (penetration at 96.1%) and social media. Other media are being revived such as audio journalism, through podcasts. As such, numerous podcasts are being created in different languages in Kosovo, as an alternative to reaching younger audiences online, and offering an easy and quick way to gather information on a specific topic. However, Kosovo is challenged with foreign and domestic disinformation and fake news, which spread at a high speed<sup>8</sup>. Findings from Hibrid.info, a fact-checking platform in Kosovo, conclude that disinformation is the most used malinformation method of the second half of 2022<sup>9</sup>. The lack of ownership transparency, financial disclosures, and regulation of online media operations, are factors contributing to this situation. The National Democratic Institute's April 2021

---

<sup>6</sup> Civil society is highly heterogeneous and encompasses a wide range of actors and aims. The EU considers civil society organisations to embrace a wide range of actors with multiple roles and mandates which includes all non-State, not-for-profit, independent and non-violent structures, through which people organise to pursue shared objectives and ideals, whether political, cultural, religious, environmental, social or economic or related to health [...] They include, but are not limited to: Nongovernmental organisations, organisations representing indigenous peoples, women's and youth organisations, diaspora organisations, migrants' organisations, local traders' associations and citizens' groups, cooperatives, employers' associations and trade unions (social partners), organisations representing economic and social interests, organisations fighting corruption and fraud and promoting good governance, civil rights organisations and organisations combating discrimination, local organisations (including networks) involved in decentralised regional cooperation and integration, consumer organisations, environmental, teaching, cultural, research and scientific organisations, universities, churches and religious associations and communities, philosophical and non-confessional organisations, the not-for-profit media and any non-governmental associations and independent foundations, including independent political foundations. This definition is established in the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) Thematic Programme for Civil Society Organisations - Multi Annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027.

<sup>7</sup> The Law on RTK would regulate the funding of the public television, as well as other issues such as transparency, accountability, operations, and competences

<sup>8</sup> NDI, *Information Integrity in Kosovo, Assessment of the Political Economy of Disinformation*, July 2022

<sup>9</sup> Hibrid.info, *Çrregullimi informativ në periudhën e dytë të vitit 2022, 2023*



public opinion research shows that 38% of Kosovo's population believe that various media outlets publish false information for financial gains and interest<sup>10</sup>.

One of the ways to tackle this issue is media literacy education. Even though education experts, civil society organisations and similar have proposed numerous times to have media literacy included in the education system in Kosovo, this has still not taken place. Moreover, hate speech, harsh public discourse, and misogynistic language need to be tackled and condemned as there are several cases of those in Kosovo, especially during election campaigns. Finally, given a general fatigue of the enlargement process as well as the perception that the EU is not supporting Kosovo enough, there is a need to build capacities of journalists on how to report on the EU/ European integrations related activities or EU reforms as well as their consequences.

### Main stakeholders

Main regulatory bodies are the IMC and the Press Media Council. The monitoring of media falls under the responsibility of the IMC (which establishes and implements policy and regulates broadcasting rights, obligations and responsibilities of individuals and entities who provide audio and audio-visual media services), and the Press Media Council, that aims to protect citizens from untrue articles, and protect journalists from ungrounded complaints.

Media CSOs can be a driving force for more awareness of the problems and opportunities arising in different sectors and in relation to the EU agenda, for holding institutions accountable. Unfortunately, only few media have a non-profit statute and those have benefited largely from EU support in the past. Local and non-majority media exist but have much less access to donor funding or advertisement income. There is a need to diversify partners and support profit-making media<sup>11</sup>, especially local and non-majority ones, based on targeted activities that support the priority areas of this action, namely qualitative and trustworthy investigative journalism covering culture, social cohesion, environmental, human rights issues, the promotion of inter-ethnic cooperation and cross-border journalism as well as a more inclusive language in the media. We should come up with innovative approaches in that sense. The MESTI and education actors could be involved in relation to media literacy education work.

## **2.3. Lessons Learned**

Experiences from the implementation of previous programmes in Kosovo, including the mid-term evaluation of the Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2014-2020, can be summarised as follows:

- Support to civil society actors requires an efficient mix of funding modalities based on the real needs and absorption capacity of diverse beneficiary organisations, as well as on their management resources to address those needs. The typical project intervention approach needs to be complemented with a more strategic relationship to engage civil actors in the long-term. Support programmes should also seek to facilitate the access to EU support for small, local organisations and activist groups and provide targeted assistance for thematic coalitions and networks.
- The use of operating grants to support civil society actors have proved to be a useful tool to strengthen and consolidate their capacities to work in sectors/areas of strategic importance, but require a long-term approach in order to achieve durable impact and results. This is particularly relevant for Kosovo, where a continuous cooperation with civil society partners for a more structured dialogue with public authorities

---

<sup>10</sup> NDI, *Information Integrity in Kosovo, Assessment of the Political Economy of Disinformation*, July 2022

<sup>11</sup> Privately-registered media are an important source of information here, as they have well-established audiences

(both central and municipal level) and vis-à-vis the EU, is a precondition to advance the European perspective of Kosovo.

- Based on this, in 2019, the EU Office in Kosovo established long term (4 years) partnerships with CSOs through Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs) and associated operating grants for implementation. The first phase of FPAs and related strategic plans is finishing in 2023 and a new phase will be supported by the present programme, as recommended by the FPA evaluation carried out in Q2 2023 and which confirmed the relevance and effectiveness of the scheme.
- It is important to encourage and strengthen creative synergies between civil society and media to ensure effective communication, particularly to young women and men regarding the European perspective, gender equality, social inclusion, inter-cultural dialogue and green transition.
- Regarding financial resources, civil society relies substantially on donors, public subsidies and short-term, project-based funding. Coordination with donors and CSOs will ensure the calls for proposals respond to uncovered or partially covered needs, complement ongoing actions and foment sustainable interventions.
- The EU has recognised the importance of funding civil society in the Western Balkans, including human rights organizations and women's organizations. The role of women CSOs (WCSOs) and movements in contributing to transformative changes has been documented, yet WCSOs tend to be under-resourced; insufficient human resources make it difficult for them to engage in democracy and governance processes. Despite some improvements, several WCSOs, particularly in rural areas, still lack expertise and understanding of these processes. Very few WCSOs have institutional support, such as through operating grants. Most WCSOs have short-term grants that contribute to poor sequencing and piecemeal interventions, which hinder long-term impact in transforming gender norms and relations. Sustainable policy and social change require time. Also, time spent with fundraising and reporting takes time away from their advocacy work and other activities.<sup>12</sup>

### 3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

#### 3.1. Intervention Logic

The overall objective of the Action is to strengthen participatory democracy, social cohesion and the EU integration and approximation process in Kosovo, through an enhanced contribution by civil society and media.

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

1. Strengthened cooperation and partnerships between CSOs and public institutions
2. Reinforced capacity and resilience of CSOs to carry out their activities effectively and promote gender responsive and inclusive policies
3. Fostered enabling environment for media freedom and pluralism

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

#### 1.1 contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1):

---

<sup>12</sup> Gender Analysis for Kosovo (2018)

Increased awareness of institutions and targeted groups on social, gender-sensitive, environmental and sustainable development issues linked to this action

1.2 *contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1):*

Increased participation of CSOs in policy-making and partnership initiatives with public entities

2.1 *contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2):*

Strengthened capacities, increased transparency and accountability of CSOs

2.2 *contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2):*

Enhanced capacities of CSOs to make gender-responsive and inclusive contributions

3.1 *contributing to Outcome 3 (or Specific Objective 3):*

Enhanced professional capacity of journalists, specifically women journalists, working in non-profit and local profit-making media

3.2 *contributing to Outcome 3 (or Specific Objective 3):*

Increased media literacy and disinformation resilience in young girls and boys

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that:

- If adequate resources are provided to make civil society knowledgeable and expert in EU-prioritized policy area reforms, and if the commitment of the authorities and civil society to partner and engage in dialogue is maintained in the next 5 years, CSOs will have increased citizens' and institutions' awareness on key social, gender-sensitive, environmental and sustainable development issues linked to this action and in relation to that, CSOs will have increased their participation in policy-making and partnership initiatives with public entities (output 1). In the long term, the action will contribute to strengthen the cooperation and partnership between CSOs and public institutions (outcome 1).
- Similarly, if capacities of the civil society organisations, including small and grassroots groups, are built (output 1 and output 2) and they are provided with appropriate resources, this action will lead to increased opportunities for regular civil society inclusion and participation in local democracy, more effective monitoring of the government's commitments related to the agenda for the European perspective, more influential civil society advocacy for the enforcement of legislations and/or implementation of policies and reforms, notably in areas related to social inclusion, gender equality, youth, green transition, sustainable development (outcome 1 and 2).
- If the professional and ethical standards and capacities of journalists and media outlets are improved, and if they are able to collaborate and cooperate through networks and are unrestricted by the regulatory, political and economic pressure in their daily work, this will be a strong contributing factor for participatory society and the consolidation of democracy, and thus will further facilitate the EU integration process in Kosovo.

### 3.2. Indicative Activities

#### Activities contributing to Output 1.1, Output 1.2, output 2.1

- Framework Partnership Agreements. Operating grants will fund the operationalisation of the annual strategic plans of the new framework partners who will be selected end 2023<sup>13</sup>. The FPAs will aim at enhancing the expertise, oversight and advocacy of CSOs in sectors important for the EU integration

---

<sup>13</sup> A call for Framework partnerships and associated grants for implementation will be launched at the end of 2023 from the CSF 21-23 Action (specific sector/themes will be determined during the preparation of the call)

and/or in underfunded sectors/areas, and increase their relevance and legitimacy towards institutional partners and the EU.

### **Activities contributing to Output 1.1, Output 1.2 and output 2.2**

- Civil society relevance, resilience and sustainability. One or two calls for proposals will be launched to support the work of organisations in various sectors not adequately supported by public institutions or other donors (e.g. mental health and mental well-being, social inclusion/protection, with a special attention to supporting CSOs working in the North of Kosovo) and sectors essential for Kosovo's progress in EU Approximation agenda (e.g. green agenda and rural development). The assistance will contribute to increase the relevance and sustainability of civil society through innovative approaches and partnerships that promote participatory democracy and increased awareness of institutions and citizens.

### **Activities contributing to output 2.1 and output 2.2 and output 3.1**

- Support measures: A tender will be launched to contract an entity which will provide specific, needs-based support to CSOs that receive EU grants and to their sub-grantees. The scope of the support will likely be based on the outcome 2 (also the specific objective 3 of “*DG NEAR Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in the enlargement region 2021-2027*”), making sure that the support does not overlap with the National Resource Centre work. Most likely, it will target better gender mainstreaming in all actions with a view of obtaining a greater and more inclusive impact in all projects (through for instance tailor-made trainings in their areas of work, support for gender needs and problems analyses and better gender-responsive advocacy strategies), support to achieve a better sustainability of the actions, strategic advocacy and efficient communication (especially for local and grassroots organisations), human-centred media coverage of the topics prioritised within the programme, fostering interaction between CSOs and the media, and projects' impact monitoring and visibility.

### **Activities contributing to Output 3.1 and output 3.2**

- Media literacy, disinformation resilience, media professionalism and partnerships promotion: A call for proposals will be launched to support initiatives dealing with information integrity, media literacy and the disinformation resilience. Qualitative and alternative journalism will be supported through capacity building, innovative partnerships and training of journalists to investigate governance issues as well as socio-economic topics of general interest and reach new audiences, while ensuring a proper covering of these topics through the gender and non-majority communities lenses. The assistance may also support local and non-majority communities focused media, especially encouraging interethnic cooperation among Kosovo-Albanian- and Kosovo-Serbs journalists in Kosovo but also increasing capacities on how to report on matters relating to non-majority communities to raise public awareness and to change the negative narrative. The call will also target media literacy education, as an alternative to training the youth in particular to think critically when absorbing online information.

## **3.3. Mainstreaming**

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

The programme foresees activities directly targeting environment, natural resources protection, climate change and transition to green and circular economy. Activities will increase the public and institutions awareness on climate change, environmental issues and impact on the eco-system and public health, as well as will advocate for more environmental-friendly development practices, all very relevant in the context of

Kosovo. At the same time, the programme will promote civil society activism and participation in decision making in those sectors. All programme's activities will be environmentally friendly and sensitive to specific challenges that communities face in terms of environment protection.

### **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 is mainstreamed throughout the action and will be mainstreamed throughout all the contracts, in line with the approach outlined in the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP III) 2021-2025.

The EU support to civil society and media will enhance the capacities of civic actors to engage diverse women and girls, enhance the meaningful and equal participation of women in policy dialogue, and adopt a gender responsive approach throughout their activities. Besides ensuring the mainstreaming of gender across the targeted sectors, the calls for proposals will reward projects which directly target women and girls and/or work on improving the (power, social, economic) relations between men and women. Financial support to third parties will have a special focus on skills development and women empowerment by activating young women not in employment, education or training.

The Programme will also contribute to the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan III<sup>14</sup> and all contracts will include gender analysis and gender sensitive and sex disaggregated indicators to the extent possible. At least one specific objective and one indicator in each contract will be aimed at gender equality. Support measures will be deployed to help with that and improve gender mainstreaming across all actions. At least one Financial Partnership Agreement will be linked to a priority issue of the GAP III. Further, the Programme will contribute to several Sustainable Development Goals<sup>15</sup> related to gender equality and women's empowerment, including SDG 1, SDG 5, and SDG 8.

A new gender analysis and probably sectoral gender analysis on energy will be carried out in 2023 and their results will feed into the preparation of calls for proposals.

### **Human Rights**

The programme will contribute to enhance the capacities of civil society to promote, protect, fulfil and advocate for human rights, needs and positions of their constituencies within policy and decision making. In this regard, all civil society and media activities will put an emphasis on engaging, representing and reporting on the rights of most vulnerable groups, including people living in poverty, women and children in vulnerable situations, persons with mental and/or physical disabilities, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities as well as other non-majority communities. The Action will contribute to improve the social inclusion of the above-mentioned disadvantaged groups and fight racism and all forms of discrimination, including antigypsyism. At project level, the Rights Based Approach will be included in the design of the Guidelines for individual calls, assessed during the evaluation of proposals, and implemented throughout the programme including through specific capacity building activities (e.g. in the framework of the national resource centre, support measures, TACSO). The programme will also promote principles of good governance, rule of law, active citizenship, and freedom of expression and media freedom.

### **Disability**

---

<sup>14</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/swd\\_2020\\_284\\_en\\_final.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/swd_2020_284_en_final.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/about-us/sustainable-development-goals-sdgs-and-disability.html>

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. The call in 2024 will support a better access to social services for people with disability and mental illness. In addition, most likely, one Financial Partnership Agreement will focus on disability.

## Democracy

The Programme will support media pluralism as key component of a functioning and resilient democracy. By enhancing the role and capacities of civil society, the programme in itself contributes to improving democracy.

### 3.4. Risks and Assumptions

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
1 External environment	<u>Risk 1</u> Lack of or limited political will for further progress; challenges in the work of the Assembly when it comes to legislative and policy reforms related to the work of civil society and media organisations	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	Close monitoring of the political environment and project action plan prior to contracting.  Linking the concerned areas to the European integration activities/ needed reforms  Revision of the priority actions if need be.  Revision of strategies to advocate for policy changes
1 External environment	<u>Risk 2</u> Emerging of new disruptive emergencies/crises in the region	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	Adoption of flexible approaches; Capitalisation on resilience/sustainability elements when building capacities of partners and beneficiaries.
2. Planning, processes and systems	<u>Risk 3</u> Insufficient quality proposals received in the calls, not allowing to fully use the allocation	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	The calls should allow for resources to be transferred from one lot to the other. The eligibility criteria will be defined carefully to allow proposals from diverse horizons, promoting meaningful partnerships. Calls should be launched early enough in the year to ensure the funds can be used in the subsequent year if not allocated fully.
3 People and organisations	<u>Risk 4</u> Beneficiaries of the operating grants and framework partnership agreements lack understanding of	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	Info sessions prior to the call for proposals and induction meetings with grants to clearly explain the logic of FPAs/operating grants. Use of support measures to train FPA grantees on EU rules.

	the applicable rules and do not deliver on the expected results.			Close monitoring by programme manager and Finance and contracts colleagues.
3 People and organisations	<u>Risk 5</u> Financial support to third parties may generate a fragmentation of the assistance into a large number of small grants, thus increasing risks of mismanagement and overlapping	<b>L</b>	<b>L</b>	The Calls for proposals will detail the scope for financial support to third parties. The technical support for the monitoring of operations will facilitate the oversight of programme implementation, including the sub-grants. Internal coordination, recording of sub-grants and donor coordination system will mitigate risk of overlapping.
1 External environment	<u>Risk 6</u> Restrictive environments/ lack of safety of journalists	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	Closely monitor the situation with other partners; Deepen dialogue with the government.

### External Assumptions

The below assumptions are applicable to all outcomes and outputs related to civil society and media:

- The commitment of the authorities and civil society to partner, engage in dialogue and work towards common goals is maintained.
- The enabling environment for civil society and media to fulfil their role remains favourable.
- The government makes available relevant financial and human resources for the implementation of strategies in which civil society has contributed directly or indirectly.
- The consolidation of democratic institutions and processes continues and violent conflict is avoided.

The below assumptions is applicable to all outcomes and outputs related to media:

- The pluralistic media environment does not deteriorate.
- Freedom of expression is not restricted or limited by new restrictive measures/legal acts/regulations.
- The media sector in Kosovo operates without political or other influences and its regulation keeps improving.
- Access to information publicly available is maintained.
- There are no threats towards journalists.

### **3.5. Indicative Logical Framework Matrix**



Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (2027)	Sources of data	Assumptions
<b>Impact</b>	To strengthen participatory democracy, social cohesion and the EU integration and approximation process in Kosovo	0.1 Kosovo score on the Freedom House Index  0.2 Voter turnout in latest elections  0.3 Deliberative Democracy Index developed by V-Dem	0.1 Freedom House Index: 60/100 (2023)  0.2 Parliamentary election in 2021: 48,78%  0.3 V-Dem Deliberative Democracy score: 0,46 (2023)	0.1 Freedom House Index (2025): at least 65/100  0.2 Parliamentary election in 2025: At least 53%  0.3 V-Dem Deliberative Democracy score (2025): > 0.5	Annual reports published by Freedom House International; IDEA Voter Turnout Website; The V-Dem website;  European Commission Annual Reports	<i>Not applicable</i>
<b>Outcome 1</b>	Strengthened cooperation and partnerships between CSOs and public institutions	1.1 Number of government policies, acts, strategies or laws developed or revised with civil society inputs, through IPA support (Ind. 1.6.1.2 - IPA programming)	1.1 Period 2018-2022: 10	1.1 Period 2023-2025: at least 12	Commission reports, project reports, TACSO annual monitoring report; CIVICUS Monitoring report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The commitment of the authorities and civil society to partner, engage in dialogue and work towards common goals is maintained.</li> <li>The enabling environment for civil society and media to fulfil their role remains favourable.</li> <li>The government makes available relevant financial and human resources for the implementation of strategies in which civil society has contributed directly or indirectly.</li> <li>The consolidation of democratic institutions and processes continues and violent conflict is avoided.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome 2</b>	Reinforced capacity and resilience of CSOs to carry out their activities effectively and promote gender responsive and inclusive policies	2.1 Number of civil society organisations benefitting from (or reached by) EU support (Ind. 1.7.1.6 - IPA programming)	2.1 CSOs (central and local-level CSOs) benefitting from EU support from 2018 to 2022: Over 70	2.1 CSOs benefitting from EU support between 2023-2025: At least 90	Commission reports, project reports, implementation of GAP III, TACSO annual monitoring report; CIVICUS Monitoring report,	

					National Resource Centre reports Surveys	
<b>Outcome 3</b>	Fostered enabling environment for media freedom and pluralism	<p>3.1 Status of media pluralism</p> <p>3.2 Vibrancy of information produced, spread, consumed, and used.</p> <p>3.3 Level of perception of disinformation penetration</p>	<p>3.1 2023 ranking of reporters without borders: 56/180 (score: 61)</p> <p>3.2 Vibrant Information Barometer (VIBE) ranking in 2022: 23</p> <p>3.3 Democracy Plus Vulnerability Index of Disinformation (2022): 41/100</p>	<p>3.1 Ranking of reporters without borders (2025): 50/180</p> <p>3.2 VIBE ranking (2025): &gt;25</p> <p>3.3 Democracy Plus Vulnerability Index of Disinformation (2025): &gt; 45/100</p>	Reporters without Borders Annual Press; Freedom Index; CoE reports on freedom of expression; other experts' analysis; Democracy Plus publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The pluralistic media environment does not deteriorate.</li> <li>Freedom of expression is not restricted or limited by new restrictive measures/legal acts/regulations.</li> <li>The media sector in Kosovo operates without political or other influences and its regulation keeps improving.</li> <li>Access to information publicly available is maintained.</li> <li>There are no threats towards journalists</li> </ul>
<b>Output 1 related to Outcome 1</b>	1.1 Increased awareness of institutions and targeted groups on social, gender-sensitive, environmental and sustainable development issues linked to this action	<p>1.1.1 Extent to which public entities in municipalities where EU provides support to CSOs receive relevant, gender sensitive and timely information from CSOs</p> <p>1.1.2 Extent to which citizens from the projects' target groups in municipalities where EU provides support to CSOs receive gender sensitive information on matters of public interest</p>	<p>1.1.1. Through the 2018-2022 period, 28% of CSOs were not sharing information to local authorities.</p> <p>1.1.2. Through the 2018-2022 period, 35% of CSOs were not providing gender-sensitive information to citizens.</p>	<p>1.1.1 Reduction by 10%</p> <p>1.1.2 Reduction by 10%</p>	Project monitoring, support measures surveys / analysis, TACSO	

<b>Output 2 related to Outcome 1</b>	1.2 Increased participation of CSOs in policy-making and partnership initiatives with public entities	1.2.1 Extent to which CSOs assess the attitude of public officials towards civil society as supportive  1.2.2 Proportion of CSOs engaged in partnerships with authorities through EU support	1.2.1 – TACSO 2021 Assessment against the EUCSG, Analysis Kosovo <sup>16</sup> : <a href="#">56% of CSOs assess public officials as ‘not at all supportive’ or ‘insufficiently supportive’</a>  1.2.2 - TACSO 2021 Assessment: 53.8% of CSOs assess the national strategy for working with civil society as ‘sufficiently effective’	TACSO 2026 assessment:  1.2.1: Less than 50% of CSOs share this assessment  1.2.2. More than 55% of CSOs	Project monitoring, support measures surveys / analysis, TACSO  Evaluation of Government – Civil society strategy implementation (2023 and 2027)	
<b>Output 1 related to Outcome 2</b>	2.1 Strengthened capacities, increased transparency and accountability of CSOs	2.1.1 Proportion of CSOs whose work is based on evidence generated through research (Guidelines Ind 3.5a)  2.1.2 Proportion of CSOs whose work is informed through consultation with people who have a stake in their current or future work (Guidelines Ind 3.5b)  2.1.3 Proportion of CSOs that have an organisational strategy, including vision, mission and goals (Guidelines Ind 3.1e)  2.1.4 Proportion of CSOs that cooperate with the media (Guidelines ind 3.2c)	2.1.1. TACSO 2021 Assessment: 95% of CSOs responded that they used some kind of research to inform their work, however, only 19% were general opinion surveys. (Guidelines Ind 3.5a)  2.1.2. TACSO 2021 Assessment: 63% of CSOs responded that they consulted their local communities and partners for purposes of informing their work. (Guidelines Ind 3.5b)  2.1.3. TACSO 2021 Assessment: 58% of CSOs have organisational strategies that stated their organisational vision, mission, and goals. (Guidelines Ind 3.1e)  2.1.4: TACSO 2021 Assessment: 34% engaged with the media.	TACSO 2026 assessment:  2.1.1. Maintain the same level  2.1.2. Increase by 5%  2.1.3. Increase by 5%  2.1.4. Increase by 5%	Project monitoring, support measures surveys / analysis, TACSO assessments	
<b>Output 2 related to Outcome 2</b>	2.2 Enhanced capacities of CSOs to make gender-responsive and inclusive contributions	2.2.1 # of gender-responsive and	2.2.1 Over 180 contributions	2.2.1 Increase by 10%.		

increased capacity only. TACSO 2021 Assessment

		inclusive contributions made by EU-supported CSOs				
<b>Output 1 related to Outcome 3</b>	3.1 Enhanced professional capacity of journalists, specifically women journalists, working in non-profit and local profit-making media	3.1.1 Number of media initiatives and collaborations between journalists and CSOs per year  3.1.2 Number of local media and non-majority media collaborating with or reporting on the projects	3.1.1. Through the 2018-2022 period, an average of 3 collaborations per CSO per year  3.1.2. Through the 2018-2022 period, at least 10 local media or non-majority media	3.1.1. At least 3 collaborations per CSO / year throughout the period  3.1.2. At least 15 collaborations	Publication links/prints  Online surveys  Project reports	Political environment in Kosovo allows tackling investigative topics, access to information publicly available, no threats toward journalists  Political environment between Kosovo and Serbia allows the cooperation, involving travel to non-majority communities, and cooperation with them
<b>Output 2 related to Outcome 3</b>	3.2 Increased media literacy and disinformation resilience	3.2.1 Number of key stakeholders (youth, students, teachers, etc) benefitting from activities targeting MIL or fight against disinformation through our projects  3.2.2 Level of media freedom, media education and trust in society	3.2.1. Through the 2018-2022 period, 100 stakeholders reached  3.2.2 Kosovo ranking in the Media Literacy Index (2022): 23	3.2.1. At least 200 key stakeholders reached.  3.2.2. Kosovo ranking in the Media Literacy Index (2025): at least 25	SBASHK reports, beneficiaries, CSOs, municipalities,  School reports, beneficiary reports	Excellent collaboration with the directorate of education in targeted municipalities;  Teachers are interested to participate and gain more knowledge to share with their students;  Students are willing to actively participate

## **4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

### **4.1. Financing Agreement**

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

### **4.2. Indicative Implementation Period**

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

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

### **4.3. Implementation Modalities**

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures<sup>17</sup>.

#### **4.3.1. Direct Management (Grants)**

##### **4.3.1.1. Grants**

###### Framework Partnership Agreements

#### **(a) Purpose of the grants**

Operating grants will support the annual work programmes of the organisations that will have signed the Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs) resulting from a new call for FPA which will be launched end 2023 (under the CSF 2021-2023)

This activity will contribute to Outcome 1: Strengthened cooperation and partnerships between CSOs and public institutions are strengthened and Outcome 2: Reinforced capacity and resilience of CSOs to carry out their activities effectively and promote gender responsive and inclusive policies.

#### **(b) Type of applicants targeted**

The applicants targeted are non-profit civil society organisation with legal personality.

###### Civil society relevance, resilience and sustainability

#### **(a) Purpose of the grants**

---

<sup>17</sup> [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.

The purpose of the grants is to support social cohesion and social inclusion as well as the green agenda, climate change, energy transition and sustainable rural development, thanks to the pro-active, future-looking, gender-sensitive and human-rights based involvement of civil society organisations. Most likely, CSOs grantees will be encouraged to engage smaller CSOs through small grant schemes. These grants will contribute to Outcome 1: Cooperation and partnerships between CSOs and public institutions are strengthened and Outcome 2: The capacity and resilience of CSOs to carry out their activities effectively and promote gender responsive and inclusive policies is reinforced.

#### **(b) Type of applicants targeted**

The applicants targeted should have a legal personality and be non-profit civil society organisations.

#### *Media literacy, disinformation resilience, media professionalism and partnerships promotion*

#### **(a) Purpose of the grants**

The purpose of the grants is to increase media literacy, reduce disinformation, support quality journalism and strengthen the resilience and sustainability of non-mainstream media representing non-majority people and/or groups in vulnerable situations with a focus on investigative, human-centred reporting, and enhanced access to information on social, environmental and human rights issues.

These grants will contribute to Outcome 3: Fostered enabling environment for media freedom and pluralism.

#### **(b) Type of applicants targeted**

The applicants targeted should have legal personality and be non-profit civil society and/or media organisations.

The part of the action under the budgetary envelope reserved for grants may, partially or totally and including where an entity is designated for receiving a grant without a call for proposals, be implemented in indirect management with an entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- relevant and multi-year technical experience in working with CSOs/media organisations and in supporting the civil society and media sectors;
- demonstrated operational capacity to manage projects of similar size, and to ensure a proper implementation of FSTP schemes.

#### **4.3.2. Direct Management (Procurement)**

The procurement will contribute to the achievement of all outcomes.

#### **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) 2024</b>	<b>EU contribution (amount in EUR) 2025</b>	<b>Indicative third-party contribution (amount in EUR)<sup>18</sup></b>
<b>Methods of implementation</b> – cf. section 4.4			
<b>Outcome 1 and 2: Strengthened cooperation and partnerships between CSOs and public institutions and Reinforced capacity and resilience of CSOs to carry out their activities effectively</b> composed of	<b>2 000 000</b>	<b>3 000 000</b>	<b>440 000</b>
<i>Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.1</i>			
- Civil society relevance, resilience and sustainability	1 800 000	2 520 000	440 000
- Framework Partnership Agreements	-	480 000	
<i>Procurement (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.2</i>			
- Support measures	200 000	-	
<b>Outcome 3: enabling environment for media freedom and pluralism</b> composed of	-	<b>1 500 000</b>	<b>150 000</b>
<i>Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.1</i>			
- Media literacy, disinformation resilience, media professionalism and partnerships promotion	-	1 500 000	
<b>Grants</b> – total envelope under section 4.3.1	1 800 000	4 500 000	
<b>Procurement</b> – total envelope under section 4.3.2	200 000	N.A	
<b>Evaluation</b> – c.f. section 5.2 <b>Audit</b> – c.f. section 5.3 <b>Strategic Communication</b> – c.f. section 6	N.A.	To be covered by another Decision	N.A.
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2 000 000</b>	<b>4 500 000</b>	<b>590 000</b>

<sup>18</sup> This is an indicative amount based on the assumption that co-funding from CSOs is around 10% of total EU contribution.

## 4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

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.

### EU Office in Kosovo

All contracts awarded under this action will be managed by the EU Office in Kosovo as Contracting Authority. Regular donor coordination meetings organised jointly by the EU Office in Kosovo and Sida will continue to function as a platform for exchange of information, feedbacks related to the activities of the programme and exchange of good practices. This will contribute to foment synergies during and after implementation.

### Civil society and media organisations

Civil society and media organisations will be the main beneficiaries of the financial assistance provided through this action. The EU Office in Kosovo maintains regular contact with CSOs throughout the year through a calendar of consultations with civil society published on the EUOK website. Consultations are held in preparation of the sub-committees in the framework of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, to discuss and gather inputs for the Kosovo Annual Report and for the monitoring of the European Reform Programme as well as punctually to discuss policy progress or setbacks. In addition, the EUOK liaises regularly with the CS Resource Centre, TACSO as well as with the members of the Kosovo government-civil society Council.

### Resources Centres and TACSO

The *Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations (TACSO 3) in the Western Balkans and Türkiye* is a multi-country project that started in December 2018 with the general objective to strengthen participatory democracies and the EU approximation process in the Western Balkans and Turkey by strengthening the capacity of CSOs to actively take part in the democratic processes and to stimulate an enabling environment for civil society and pluralistic media development. The regional scope of TACSO is complemented by the civil society resource centres managed by local CSOs identified through calls for proposals. The resource Centre (funded under CSF 2019 + CSF 2023 with new call with contracting in 2024) supports the development of the sector in Kosovo and enhances cooperation between civil society organisations, donor community, Kosovo institutions and other relevant stakeholders.

### Office of Good Governance/Prime Minister's Office

The programme contributes to the Kosovo Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society 2019-2023 and forthcoming strategy. The government body responsible for coordinating, monitoring and reporting on the strategy is the Office for Good Governance (OGG), within the Office of Prime Minister. Technical assistance is currently provided through TACSO to the OGG as well as to the joint CS–Government Cooperation Council for the implementation of the strategy.

### The Council for Government Cooperation with Civil Society

The *Council for Government Cooperation with Civil Society* is the main mechanism that coordinates the cooperation between government and civil society, in particular the *Strategy for cooperation with Civil Society 2019-2023*<sup>[2]</sup> and its action plan. The *strategy* is expiring this year and is subject to reformulation and evaluation from that Council and the OGG. A new strategy for the next five years is expected to be developed whereby the priorities for creating a more favourable environment for civil society in Kosovo will be revised<sup>19</sup>.

---

<sup>[2]</sup> [http://www.civikos.net/repository/docs/Strategy\\_eng\\_291507.pdf](http://www.civikos.net/repository/docs/Strategy_eng_291507.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> The current strategy's main objectives are:

1. Increase civil society participation in policy-making;
2. Improvement of the regulatory and institutional framework for financing sustainability of programmes and projects of CSOs in public interest;
3. Develop practices and procedures of contracting of CSOs for the provision of public services; and
4. Increase volunteering in public benefit program



The Council consists of 29 of which 14 representatives from institutions and 15 representatives from civil society. Thematic working groups regularly monitor the implementation of different pillars of the cooperation strategy while the mechanism is co-chaired by the Secretary General at the Office of Prime Minister by the Executive Director of Civikos platform, which is the largest network of civil society organisations in Kosovo. The mandate of the Council includes advisory and consultative functions in relations to draft legal acts, strategies and other documents affecting the work and development of CSOs, with the aim of creating more enabling environment for civil society in Kosovo all aspects of cooperation between government and civil society including. The Council also provides opinion on the annual reports of Kosovo government on distribution of public funds for supporting sustainability of CSOs programs and project. Council members as well as other CSOs will be invited to public consultations during the preparation of calls for proposals.

## **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 their action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its Outputs and contribution to the achievement of its Outcomes, and if possible at the time of reporting, contribution to the achievement of its Impacts, as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix.

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

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

Performance will be measured against the indicators set out in the logframe matrix and the specific indicators laid out in the *DG NEAR Guidelines for EU support to civil society in the enlargement region 2021-2027*, GAP III and IPA III indicators whenever relevant.

The main means of measurement is the level of compliance with the European standards in the area of fundamental freedoms and civil society by the IPA beneficiary. Apart from the compliance level indicator, other sources of monitoring can also give a qualitative assessment of the progress made. Such sources include the enlargement package, Peer Reviews, reports from the contracts and grants.

In addition, the Action might be subject to external monitoring in line with the European Commission rules and procedures set in the Financing Agreement.

Other related technical assistance teams, if possible, could provide pre and post-grant implementation-related training to beneficiaries. TACSO and the Resource Centre could also support the EU in monitoring the execution of the project by monitoring of the implementation of individual grants. Monitoring of sub-grant schemes for civil society organisations will be assisted with inputs from on-site visits conducted by external consultants, including monitoring services that will be contracted in 2023. Experts contracted through support measures may also help organisations ensure increased visibility and sustainability of the actions.

The impact of the Programme will be monitored also against the indicators related to the implementation of the new Kosovo government strategy for cooperation with civil society. So far, the Strategy and its action plan pursued enabling environment for CSOs, civic participation and engagement of civil society for better governance particularly at local level. The strategy was supported by a roadmap, a detailed budget and a performance measurement matrix.

## 5.2. Evaluation

Having regard to the importance of the action, an ex-post evaluation(s) will be carried out for this action or its components 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 progress from Kosovo in the sectors supported in the action will improve its approximation process to the EU path.

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 evaluation reports shall be shared with the Beneficiary and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination<sup>20</sup>. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the Beneficiary, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

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

## 5.3. Audit and Verifications

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

## 6. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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

This obligation will apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, the Beneficiary, 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.

---

<sup>20</sup> See best [practice of evaluation dissemination](#)

## **7. SUSTAINABILITY**

In order to achieve sustainability beyond the implementation period, the design of the action will take into account the following:

The financial assistance will be delivered in an appropriate mix of funding instruments to respond to different types of civil society and media organisations in a flexible, transparent, cost-effective and results focused manner which takes into account the administrative capacity of the EU Office in Kosovo. This approach will entail action grants to civil society and media organisations through project type interventions; support to CSO-public partnerships based on mission and shared objectives; more efforts to strengthen the voice and advocacy of organisations working on key EU integration sectors, making them legitimate partners for the EU and KS institutions. Operating grants will additionally strengthen the core mission and work of selected organisations so that they can continue to grow.

The sustainability of the programme's output will be achieved also through capacity building aiming to develop skills for long-term strategic planning and management, including fundraising strategies, partnerships with businesses and income generation; progress with the strategy for cooperation between civil society and Kosovo government will entail more favourable taxation for donations to NGOs and better and more transparent management of public funding available for civil society and media; strengthened civil society and media coalitions with capacities to implement long-term advocacy actions based on shared goals and results; cooperation between media, civil society and other actors, such as academia and business to promote innovative and sustainable approaches to advocacy and participatory democracy; capacities for more effective engagement of citizens including through communication, provision of services, volunteering and facilitated access to public information.

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

A Primary intervention (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:

<b>Group of contracts level</b> (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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Group of contracts