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ANNEX I

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the 2023 annual action plan part II in favour of the Regional South Neighbourhood
Action Document for Culture Package

ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

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

1. SYNOPSIS

1.1. Action Summary Table

1. Title OPSYS Basic Act	Culture Package 2023 annual action plan part II in favour of the Regional South Neighbourhood OPSYS business reference: ACT-61719 ABAC Commitment level 1 number: JAD.1158440 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)
2. Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)	Yes
EIP Flagship	FLAGSHIP 1: Support to social sector, education, skills and health
3. Team Europe Initiative	No
4. Beneficiary(y)/(ies) of the action	The action shall be carried out in the Southern Neighbourhood countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel ¹ , Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine ² , Syria ³ and Tunisia.
5. Programming document	Multi-annual Indicative programme for the Southern Neighbourhood (2021-2027) ⁴

¹ See Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards on http://eurlex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2013.205.01.0009.01.ENG.

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

³ Co-operation with the Government of Syria suspended since 2011.

⁴ Commission Implementing Decision C(2021)9399 of 16.12.2021 on a Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for the Southern Neighbourhood.

6. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results	<p>Priority Area 1: Human development, good governance, and rule of law</p> <p>SO2: Fight gender discrimination and gender-based violence against women and girls</p> <p>Expected results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Men and boys in the region are educated as key agents of gender change to prevent gender-based violence and advance gender equality. Women's associations and women's human rights defenders are supported to monitor gender equality progress in the region, in particular achievements and challenges to eradicate gender-based violence. <p>SO4: Support culture as a requirement for human development and better quality of life</p> <p>Expected result:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural workers are contributing to build a sense of local and regional identity and solidarity. Global issues such as green and digital transition, migration, peace and security, gender equality are addressed via cross-sectoral cooperation with cultural workers. 			
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION				
7. Priority Area(s), sectors	16066 Culture 15170 Gender Equality (Women's rights organisations and movements)			
8. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG (1 only): SDG 5 Gender equality Other significant SDGs (up to 9) and where appropriate, targets: SDG 10 - Reduced inequalities. SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth SDG 16 Peace and Justice Strong Institutions			
9. DAC code(s)	16061 Culture and recreation 55% 15170 Gender Equality (Women's rights organisations and movements) 45%			
10. Main Delivery Channel	20000 - NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (NGOs) AND CIVIL SOCIETY			
11. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
12. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, newborn 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"/>
13. Internal markers and Tags	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	EIP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	EIP Flagship	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		NO <input type="checkbox"/>
	Tags	YES		NO
	transport	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	energy	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	environment, climate resilience	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	migration and mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	agriculture, food security and rural development	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	rule of law, governance and public administration reform	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
other	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Digitalisation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Tags	YES		NO	

	digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	digital governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	digital entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	digital skills/literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	digital services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Tags	YES	NO
	digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	education and research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Migration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	COVID-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

BUDGET INFORMATION

14. Amounts concerned	Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020110 Southern Neighbourhood Total estimated cost: EUR 6 400 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 6 000 000
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MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

15. Implementation modalities (management mode and delivery methods)	Direct management through: - Grants Indirect management with the Goethe Institute
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1.2. Summary of the Action

The present action reflects the EU priorities under the *Joint Communication on a Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood*⁵ and its *Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)*⁶. The objectives of the action are also aligned with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) political framework.

This action implements the *Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for the Southern Neighbourhood (2021-2027)*⁷ under its Priority Area 1: Human development, good governance, and rule of law. It contributes to the EIP flagship FLAGSHIP 1: Support to social sector, education, skills and health.

The proposed action aims under Component 1 to specifically focus on cultural ecosystems' contribution to build a sense of local and regional community and on cultural workers positive role in upholding global issues

⁵ JOIN (2021) 2 final of 09.02.2021

⁶ SWD(2021) 23 final

⁷ C(2021) 9399 final

such as green and digital transition. It will foster the role of culture in climate action, promoting the change of mindset towards the climate crisis, promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns, circular economy and other topics. Under Component 2 the action will contribute to raising awareness on gender equality and challenge stereotypes and social norms regarding the position of women in the society via support to women focused cultural work.

The action will contribute to the realisation of the EU Gender Action Plan 2021-2025 GAP III, in particular to its thematic area of engagement “Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women” and “Addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities offered by the green transition and the digital transformation”.

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

The action shall be carried out in the Southern Neighbourhood region (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia).

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Context

European Union’s (EU) continuous commitment to culture in the Southern Neighbourhood region is based on the crucial role culture plays as a driver for achieving sustainable human development. The New European Agenda for Culture, launched by the European Commission in 2018, highlights culture and diversity as drivers of social cohesion, innovation, growth and job creation and thus acknowledges the essential role of culture both in the social and economic spheres. The New European Agenda for Culture also comprises an external dimension, which also recognizes the central role of culture as a vector of sustainable social and economic development and as a peace-building factor. This is all the more relevant with regards to the action of the EU in its Southern Neighbourhood. Well-functioning cultural ecosystems in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are paramount for supporting vivid democratic societies. This is even more so in a region faced with various global challenges due to ongoing conflicts, fragile economies, environmental and climate issues highly affected by globalisation.

Globalisation and economic growth in the MENA region also affect cultural workers, as weak economies and high unemployment rates strain the sustainability-culture nexus. In this regard, the ongoing socioeconomic crisis in the region in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian war in Ukraine as well as ongoing conflicts in the area further worsened the situation of cultural ecosystems and posed threats to artistic and cultural vitality. According to the latest UN surveys released in 2022, the Arab region registered a 12% unemployment rate in 2022, the highest in the world, with inflation rates reaching 14% (UN ESCWA Survey, 2022). Women and youth have been among the most affected categories, which calls for specific interventions prioritizing their needs.

COVID-19 pandemic has further worsened long-lasting challenges, and this has been particularly evident in the cultural sector, where artists and cultural organisations have suffered from shutdowns and lagged behind their potential in terms of serving their communities and producing and circulating art. Next to economic hardship due to the precarious nature of cultural work, cultural ecosystems have suffered from increased political crackdown and socioeconomic challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Political censorship recorded the highest violation in 14 out of 19 countries in 2020 in the region (Civicus Monitor). The 2021 Freemuse report noted 212 acts against artistic freedom in the MENA region, with the majority of them being

imprisonments of critics of government practices. Moreover, about 20% of such imprisonments concerned women and artists creating women-themed artworks. Beyond that, there has been the censorship of certain contents and forms of artistic production, the closing of cultural places, and the reduction of support and funding to the sector. This has impaired the role of cultural workers, which have also experienced the spreading of disinformation campaigns on social media affecting media independence and pluralism. At the same time, reliance on digital tools has allowed artists to explore new spaces and artistic forms, which is nowadays a trigger to use digital platforms in a more creative and inclusive fashion.

EU's action in the MENA region relies on the priorities fixed in the New Agenda for the Mediterranean and the specific regional multi-annual indicative programme (MIP) for the Southern Neighbourhood (2021-2027), where culture is defined as a requirement for human development and better quality of life in the region

The New Agenda for the Mediterranean and the specific regional multi-annual indicative programme (MIP) for the Southern Neighbourhood (2021-2027), also sets a priority to fight gender discrimination and gender-based violence against women and girls. Gender stereotyping, cultural and social barriers, and insufficient institutional protection continue to undermine women's rights in the Southern Neighbourhood. Women's economic and public participation remain the lowest in the world, as they are still mostly absent from decision-making and peace processes, not fully represented in politics and policy making, and mostly active in the informal economy.

On 29 November 2022 the Council of Culture Ministers of the EU adopted a Resolution on the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026⁸, setting out priorities to address the main challenges facing the cultural and creative sectors today and corresponding actions to address them. One of the main priorities relates to 'culture for co-creative partnerships', 'culture for the planet' and to 'strengthening the cultural dimension of the EU external relations'. Among the main actions to reach this objective, there is access to culture, cultural participation and democracy, the working conditions of artists and the sectors' green and digital transitions. Moreover, the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026 makes clear reference to the European Green Deal by claiming that culture, including cultural heritage, contributes to the sustainability transformation needed to meet the objectives of the European Green Deal and the 2030 Agenda. Thus, the enhancement of the cultural sector through EU's external relations, and in particular regarding the Southern Neighbourhood, is crucial, especially as cultural ecosystems can contribute to raising awareness on climate emergency among different groups of the population. The action is in line with the Ministerial Declaration on Women of the Union for the Mediterranean from 26 October 2022 which calls for a stronger role for women in economic and political life and also on ending the violence against women and girls. In this respect, it complements the work done in the framework of the Women Economic Empowerment programme implemented at regional level in the Southern Neighbourhood.

The current action aims to build on what has been already done in order to better tackle cultural industry's needs in the Southern Neighbourhood and to allow cultural workers to play their crucial role as democracy-builders. It aims to specifically focus on cultural ecosystems' contribution to build a sense of local and regional community and on cultural workers positive role in upholding global issues such as green and digital transition. It will foster the role of culture in climate action, promoting the change of mindset towards the climate crisis, promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns, circular economy and other topics. Cultural ecosystems will contribute to raising awareness on gender equality and challenge stereotypes and social norms regarding the position of women in the society.

⁸ [Council of Ministers agrees on new EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026 | Culture and Creativity \(europa.eu\)](#)

2.2. Problem Analysis

Short problem analysis

Culture and sustainable development is one of particular importance to the MENA, given that conflict has been a prominent presence in the region over the last few decades, impacting societies at their core and limiting opportunities in many sectors. The ongoing Syrian civil war; the increased crackdown on Palestinian creatives; Lebanon's economic collapse and August 4, 2020 blast; Tunisia's and Algeria's political upheavals; Egypt's socioeconomic and civic challenges—among other factors—exert a significant strain on cultural development in the MENA region. This claim aims to highlight the underlying links, questions, and connections between the destructive nature of conflict and the preservation of cultural practices and heritage as a mean to preserve the space for independent narratives and quality of life across the region and guarantee spaces for freedom of expression or developing fit-in solutions to urgent questions neglected by governing elites. Cultural actors in the southern Mediterranean are acting as guardians of civic participation, independent narratives producers and agents of change. They are mainstreaming less heard voices and social causes, defeating shrinking civic spaces. They are also acting as shapers of empowered voices of youth, women and less served communities, as producers of imaginaries to what the future can be, as drivers of attachments and belonging, and as savers/promoters of cultural heritage and global issues.

Component 1

The existing cultural ecosystems in the MENA (comprising the actors, networks, collaboration channels, infrastructures, engagement spaces and creative expressions) need more support to prevent them from collapsing under highly pressuring conditions. Challenges faced include a lack of good governance in selected countries; economic and financial collapse (namely Lebanon); a disorganized cultural sector; a lack of economic stability and endangered freedom of expression. Coupled with political problems in the region, precarious funding has also been at the origin of brain drain, with many cultural actors moving outside the MENA region. In fact, the sector so far has been led by donor trends, leaving minimal space for its development and making it dependent on shifting interests. Global issues such as environmental awareness, climate change, gender equality or digital transition have great impact on the populations of the MENA region yet are not present in the daily discourse of the society. Cultural actors as agents of change lack funding for mainstreaming of these issues in their work and cross-sectoral cooperation with other actors (CSOs, think tanks, media) in order to shape the debate on these topics.

Component 2

Women in the cultural sector continue to face many limitations that are systematically embedded within organisational structures to promote gender insensitivity. This is manifested in different forms including a lack of safe and inclusive spaces, limiting traditional roles and limited leadership positions, and limited access to knowledge and access to financial resources, in addition to collaborations, peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange. As such there becomes a need to shape social norms and behaviours to foster and encourage gender equality, women empowerment and equal and fair participation at the individual and community level.

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

The programme involves a wide array of actors active in the Mediterranean region. Rights-holders include:

- Cultural actors at large, including local and regional networks, organisations and operators. These may include individual artists and/or associations and other organisations. They should be understood in a broad sense, encompassing all forms of artistic works, be they material or immaterial. Cultural organisations addressed might work both on the ground in the MENA region and/or in the diaspora;
- Civil society and citizens in general involved in such networks or cooperating with them on transversal actions and priorities. These also concern women and youth CSOs, disability organisations inviting persons with disabilities to events and activities during the design and planning process (capacity building and cultural activities) those working on cross-cutting issues such as the green and the digital transition.
- The action also benefits the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) at large, including cultural hubs and incubators as well as culture entrepreneurs. Other right holders are CCIs' clients and the general population of targeted countries.
- Relevant line Ministries and government institutions in the region should be involved in coordination and policy-making, based on their mandate and respective areas of expertise.

2.3. Lessons Learned

The proposed action is based on previous phases of regional cultural programmes, namely Med Culture (2014-2018) and the current two programmes All-Around Culture (4M EUR, 2020-2024) and CREAT4MED (2M EUR, 2020-2024). All-Around Culture aims to foster a vital cultural ecosystem as an enabling environment for social and economic inclusion of young people in seven countries across the region. The recent ROM review of All-Around Culture praised the financial support to third parties which is vital for independent cultural scene with scarce funding resources; and cooperation of the consortium of EU and South based organisations. EU remains one of the few donors in the cultural field in the region and one of very few donors supporting the South-South cooperation which are vital to building a sense of regional community.

CREACT4MED aims to boost entrepreneurship and job creation for youth and women through the cultural and creative industries in the Southern Neighbourhood of the EU. Creact4Med ongoing ROM review also suggest the sub-granting to CCI hubs and start-up as a learning-by-doing component is very valuable.

The action will complement the bilateral actions (in Morocco new project on support of CCI industries is launched in 2023, in Tunisia cultural actions for youth are supported under EU4Youth programme). The regional funding complements the main EU funding source for cultural cooperation – the Creative Europe programme – which is accessible only to Tunisia and thus in the other countries the access to cooperation with European cultural actors is very limited.

Gender focused projects are mainly financed on a bilateral level where they can better target specific groups and organisations and tackle the sensitivities of the topic. Most of bilateral projects focus on gender-based violence, women economic empowerment and also women in economic and political leadership position. During consultations with Delegations the focus on awareness raising and challenging social norms on the position in women was identified as a topic missing in the cooperation.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1. Objectives and Expected Outputs

The **Overall Objective (Impact)** of this action is to improve human development and the quality of life in the Southern Neighbourhood region through culture.

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

1. Strengthened cultural ecosystems enable cultural actors to address global issues such as the green and digital transition with gender-based approach via cross-sectoral cooperation with civil society and other partners (**Component 1**)
2. Equitable social norms, attitudes and behaviours promoting equal participation by women and men are fostered at community and individual levels through culture (**Component 2**)

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):** Local cultural ecosystems and civil society working on green and digital transition are supported with gender-based approach
- 1.2 **contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1):** Public awareness is raised on global issues such as digital and green transition with gender-based approach
- 2.1 **contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2):** Women and girls are visible and portrayed as equal contributors to society in the media, literature, and cultural arenas
- 2.2 **contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2):** Public awareness on social norms and attitudes towards gender equality is raised

3.2. Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1.1:

- Financial support to third parties to cultural ecosystem via existing organisations following gender based approach and due consideration for organisation which have a positive action with regards to climate and environment
- Capacity-building and coaching activities for cultural ecosystems actors including women in all their diversity
- Networking events/activities for cultural ecosystems actors

Activities related to Output 1.2:

- Public gender-based awareness-raising activities on global issues with focus on green and digital transition and on climate and environmental issues and sustainable development
- Financial support to third parties for cross-sectoral cooperation among cultural actors and other civil society organisations with focus on green and digital transition and on climate and environmental issues and sustainable development

Activities related to Output 2.1:

- Public cultural activities which promote gender equality in a comprehensive way (e.g. gender equality is taken into consideration in the selection of artists, the organisation of the events as well as the accessibility of public events for all genders)
- Financial support to local partners in the Southern Neighbourhood region and in Brussels focused on gender-equality in cultural activities and on promotion of international cultural relations with Brussels decision-makers

Activities related to Output 2.2

- Cultural and gender roundtables which tackle the gender issues on a discursive level –with inclusive communication
- Awareness-raising public campaigns stemming from the roundtables and tackling social norms and attitudes with gender approach
- Creation of new or support to existing safe spaces for cultural cooperation for women

3.3. Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Biodiversity

Outcomes of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project).

The EIA screening classified the action as Category B: project not requiring an EIA, but for which environmental aspects will be addressed during the design of the action.

Outcome of the Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project).

The CRA screening concluded that this action is low-risk project: no further action; climate risk aspects will be addressed during the design of the action.

The action will ensure environmental and climate considerations are mainstreamed into all activities. The mainstreaming will be based on the identification and mitigation of environmental and climate risks as well as the potential inclusion of environment in the scope of the activities.

The cultural sector can play a crucial enabling role by raising awareness on climate and environmental issues and sustainable development - by motivating people to contribute personally but also by reducing its own carbon footprint, organizing and promoting low waste events. Therefore, the action will promote more environmentally friendly behaviours in all public events, inviting participants and beneficiaries to apply behaviours which do no harm to the environment in all projects related and non-project related activities. All beneficiaries and contractors will be strongly encouraged to act in line with best practice and make responsible use of office materials, travel arrangements and energy efficient principles.

The action will offer digital alternative to the beneficiaries when this is considered relevant and possible, to reduce its carbon footprint. However, since the carbon and environmental footprint of digital technologies is not negligible, the action will also promote energy efficiency, reuse and recycling of electronic devices, and circular economy principles.

The action will promote green procurement including in the calls for proposals, by seeking to procure goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycle when compared to goods, services and works with the same primary function that would otherwise be procured.

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G2. This implies that gender equality is the main objective of the action and is fundamental in its design and expected results. The action would not have been undertaken without this objective. In particular, the intervention, will go a step further across the three outcomes by addressing the gender biases and root causes of discrimination that prevent the full enjoyment of women's human rights, particularly in the cultural sphere. Therefore, the intervention fully contributes to GAP III, commitment on applying a gender transformative approach together with the Human Rights based approach (HRBA) and intersectionality approach.

Human Rights

This action will apply the working principles of the rights-based approach throughout the design and implementation of the intervention as well as an intersectionality approach. As a G2 action, promotion of women's and girls' fundamental rights will be the principal objective.

3.4. Risks and Assumptions

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/Medium/Low)	Impact (High/Medium/Low)	Mitigating measures
1,4	Access restrictions to technology and the internet, technological infrastructure problems and instability of networks, especially considering anti-COVID-19 measures.	M	M	Recognition of risk
1	The Southern Neighbourhood is the least integrated region in the world, with mobility between countries often affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of regional activities. Mobility challenges are faced at south-south and north-south levels.	M	M	Care has to be taken in selecting locations for regional events. In some cases, active intervention with the relevant authorities will be required in order to facilitate visas for participants.
1,2	Political instability or a deteriorating security situation in one or more countries may disrupt the implementation of one or more components of the project.	H	H	Monitoring of the situation and supporting democratic structures and principles. Partner countries can choose between different schemes of co-operation and actions do not necessarily concern all countries. Non-inclusion of countries in crisis will not hamper project implementation, as this is a regional project that can be flexible in the countries it targets.

2	Fund channelling restrictions prevent local actions and groundwork to be done effectively	M	M	Support different practices, not restricted to registered form of entities. Collectives (not registered) as well as individuals can be receivers of the funding to help to mitigate this risk. The scheme can support South-North collaborations, as well as allow access to Northern Mediterranean based actors. Several actors from the Southern Mediterranean, following the pressures, are now based in Europe.
1,4	Changes to the law on freedom of association or other regulations may undermine effective participation of cultural/civil society organisations and cultural workers in the programme.	H	H	The EU's bilateral co-operation documents (Partnership Priorities) foresee a requirement to engage with CSOs at the national level, and with regional entities such as the League of Arab States, and to promote a more enabling environment for the work of civil society, to counteract any unwillingness by partner countries' authorities to engage with CSOs.
1	Increasing economic pressures and uncertainty in the future increment brain drain or lack of long-term commitment of actors (especially youth) affecting engagement in funded actions/calls.	L	L	The diversification of the forms of practices and organisations to be targeted by this fund will allow the access to a wider pool of communities, especially individual and collectives who are multiple to be leading participatory community-led activities reaching out to diversified communities in a wider regional space.

External Assumptions

- The political and security situation in all countries will allow the smooth implementation of the programme;
- No big economic disruption will significantly impair the implementation of the programme (economic crisis, COVID-19 pandemic);
- The partners involved are committed to participate in all activities throughout the duration of the programme.
- National cultural ecosystems are interested in networking together and joining forces in order to better advocate their causes.
- Other CSO organisations are willing to cooperate with cultural organisations.
- Advocacy efforts lead to changes in laws and improved access to resources for cultural actors.
- Cultural actors in the Southern Neighbourhood see an added value in regional co-operation

- Sufficient commitment exists on the part of such actors to inclusive cultural dialogue, commitment to diversity and to opposing violent extremism

3.5. Intervention Logic

According to the underlying intervention logic for this action, the following correlations hold true:

As concerns **Outcome 1** (A sense of local and regional community and solidarity is built thanks to the better functioning of cultural ecosystems and this enables cultural actors to equally address global issues such as the green and digital transition via cross-sectoral cooperation with civil society and other partners), If local cultural ecosystems receive adequate gender responsive funding for cooperation on issues of regional community building, there will be larger number of opportunities for population to join such events that will increase their sense of regional community and solidarity. This will contribute to the general objective of culture as a vector for human development for the general population including women in all their diversity which will be better integrated and resilient towards socio-economic challenges. If cultural actors receive financial support for cross-sectoral cooperation and adequate capacity building on the global issues, they will produce more activities for their public that is usually not exposed to such topics climate crisis, promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns, circular economy and other topics. As an outcome larger part of population will come in contact with reflection on these global issues and it will lead to their change of perception and better involvement and understanding of such global issues.

With respect to **Outcome 2** (Equitable social norms, attitudes and behaviours promoting equal participation and leadership by women and men fostered at community and individual levels through culture) If cultural actors receive adequate capacity building and funding for projects focused on gender equality, more comprehensive awareness about social norms and attitudes towards gender will be raised among society through the action of the cultural sector and the promotion of equal participation and leadership by women and men will gain more importance in the public and political spheres alike. Through this, the action will contribute to the general objective of culture serving as a vector for human development.

The successful delivery of project's outputs by means of the envisaged activities, followed by the achievement of the three main outcomes will bring eventually to the realisation of the overall objective, that is to improve human development and the quality of life of women in all their diversity in the MENA through culture.

3.6. Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

Results	Results chain: Main expected result	Indicators [it least one indicator per expected result	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact 1	To improve human development and the quality of life including women in all their diversity in the MENA region through culture.	Human Development Index Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex	Value 2021	Improved or stable	https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index#/indicies/HDI	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 1	Strengthened cultural ecosystems enable cultural actors to address global issues such as the green and digital transition with gender-based approach via cross-sectoral cooperation with civil society	Extent to which global issues related to the green and digital transitions are effectively addressed through cultural actors and with due consideration to their gender dimension.	To be determined	To be determined during the inception phase	To be determined	National cultural ecosystems are interested in networking together and joining forces in order to better advocate their causes.
Output 1 related to Outcome 1	1.1 Local cultural ecosystems are supported with gender-based approach	1.1.1 Number of sub-granting schemes for cultural ecosystems with gender based approach 1.1.2 Number of capacity building activities for cultural ecosystems actors with gender based approach	1.1.1 zero 1.1.2 zero 1.1.3 zero	To be determined during the inception phase	1.1.1 project reports, sub-grantees website and activity reports 1.1.2 project reports, sub-grantees website and activity reports 1.1.3	The partners involved are committed to participate in all activities throughout the duration of the programme. Cultural actors in the Southern Neighbourhood see an added

		1.1.3 Number of networking activities for cultural ecosystem actors				value in regional co-operation
Output 2 related to Outcomes 1	1.2 Public awareness is raised on global issues such as digital and green transition with gender-based approach	1.2.1 Public gender-based awareness-raising campaigns/actions on climate and environmental issues, sustainable development and circular economy 1.2.2 Sub-granting for cross-sectoral cooperation among cultural actors and other civil society organisations	1.2.1 zero 1.2.2 zero	1.2.1 To be determined during the inception phase 1.2.2 To be determined during the inception phase	1.2.1.project reports, sub-grantees website and activity reports 1.2.2 project reports, sub-grantees website and activity reports	Awareness raising is received by public and authorities and not hindered by political, economic or societal conflicts.

COMPONENT 2

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact 1	To improve human development and the quality of life including women in all their diversity in the MENA region through culture/through the cultural industry	Human Development Index	Value 2021	Improved or stable	https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index#/indicies/HDI	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 2	Equitable social norms, attitudes and behaviours promoting equal participation and leadership by women and men fostered at community and individual levels through culture.	2.1 Gender Inequality Index (GII) of the UNDP 2.2 Extent to which women and girls are visible and portrayed as equal contributors to society in the media, literature, cultural arenas (GAP III Key outcome indicators)	2.1 Value of 2021 2.2	2.1 improved or unchanged 2.2	2.1 Gender Inequality Index Human Development Reports (undp.org) 2.2	Exchanges and activities carried out in the cultural ecosystems of the target countries treat gender equality and related issues as core rather than secondary matters.
Output 1 related to Outcome 2	2.1 Women and girls are visible and portrayed as equal contributors to society in the media, literature, and cultural arenas.	2.1.1 Number of public cultural activities which promote gender equality in a comprehensive way including disaggregation by sex 2.1.2 Number of sub-grants in Southern Neighbourhood region and Brussels to promote gender equality	2.1.1 zero 2.1.2 zero	2.1.1 To be determined during the inception phase 2.1.2 To be determined during the inception phase	2.1.1 project reports, sub-grantees website and activity reports 2.1.2 project reports, sub-grantees website and activity reports	The partners involved are committed to participate in all activities throughout the duration of the programme.

<p>Output 2 related to Outcomes 2</p>	<p>2.2 Awareness is raised and has impact on social norms and attitudes and gender equality through advocacy activities of cultural actors</p>	<p>2.2.1 Cultural and gender experts roundtables which tackle the gender issues on a discursive level – advocacy component 2.2.2 Number of Public awareness-raising campaigns tackling social norms and attitudes towards gender equality</p>	<p>2.2.1 zero 2.2.2 zero</p>	<p>2.2.1 To be determined during the inception phase 2.2.2 To be determined during the inception phase</p>	<p>2.2.1 project reports, sub-grantees website and activity reports 2.2.2 project reports, sub-grantees website and activity reports</p>	<p>Awareness raising is received by public and authorities and not hindered by political, economic or societal conflicts.</p>
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4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1. Financing Agreement

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

4.2. Indicative Implementation Period

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

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

4.3. Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures⁹.

4.3.1. Direct Management (Grants)

4.3.1.1. Grants

a) Purpose of the grants

The main purpose of the grants is to improve human development and the quality of life in the Southern Neighbourhood region through culture, under component 1.

The action will enable cultural actors to address global issues such as the green and digital transition via cross-sectoral cooperation with civil society and other partners.

b) Type of applicants targeted

International organisations and CSOs in line with the Communication COM(2012) 0492 'the Roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations': all non-State, not-for-profit structures, non-partisan and non-violent, through which people organise to pursue shared objectives and ideals, whether political, cultural, social or economic.

4.3.2. Indirect Management with a pillar-assessed entity

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with the Goethe Institute. This implementation entails the objectives and activities described under sections 3.1 and 3.2 (component 2). The envisaged entity has been selected using the following criteria:

⁹ 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.

- Successful implementation of a project under other EU funding (project named Halaqat financed by EU Foreign Policy Instrument in 2020-2023)
- Solid network of partners in the Southern Neighbourhood both in the area of culture and gender equality
- Good project experience in similar areas of work in the Southern Neighbourhood or other regions

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

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

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Third-party contribution (amount in EUR)
Objective/Outcome 1		
Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.1	4 000 000	400 000
Objective/Outcome 2		
Indirect management with the Goethe Institute – cf. section 4.3.2	2 000 000	N.A.
Grants – total envelope under section 4.3.1	4 000 000	N.A.
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 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	N.A.	N.A.
Totals	6 000 000	400 000

4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The action will have a common steering committee for projects financed under the 3 components which will meet once a year online in order to inform the EU representatives about the activities of the projects.

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

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

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

- Regular reporting of the project
- Common steering committee of all 3 components once per year for information and networking purposes

All monitoring and reporting shall assess how the action is considering the principle of gender equality, human rights-based approach and rights of persons with disabilities including inclusion and diversity. Indicators shall be disaggregated at least by sex and age, and disability if possible.

5.2. Evaluation

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

It will be carried out for learning purposes, in particular with respect to the intention to launch a second phase of the action.

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 partners at least 3 months in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation exercise and missions. The implementing partners shall collaborate efficiently and

effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner countries and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination¹⁰. The implementing partners and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner countries, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

In addition, all evaluations shall assess to what extent the action is taking into account the human rights-based approach as well as how it contributes to gender equality and women's empowerment and disability inclusion expertise on human rights, disability and gender equality will be ensured in the evaluation teams.

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

5.3. Audit and Verifications

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

6. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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

This obligation will apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, the partner countries, service providers, grant right holders 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.

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/Office 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.

¹⁰ See best [practice of evaluation dissemination](#)

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

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 type="checkbox"/>	Group of actions	Actions reference (CRIS#/OPSYS#):
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single contract 1	Component 1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single contract 2	Component 2
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	