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

**ANNEX III**

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the individual measure in favour of Palestine for 2021-2023

**Action Document for Promoting gender responsive policies and laws in Palestine<sup>1</sup>**

**MEASURE**

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and individual measure in the sense of Article 23(3) of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

**1. SYNOPSIS**

**1.1. Action Summary Table**

<b>1. Title</b> <b>CRIS/OPSYS</b> <b>Basic Act</b>	Promoting gender responsive policies and laws in Palestine Measure in favour of Palestine for 2021-2023 OPSYS reference : NDICI-GEO-NEAR/2022/ACT-60726 – JAD.967213 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)
<b>2. Team Europe Initiative</b>	No
<b>3. Zone benefiting from the action</b>	The action shall be carried out in Palestine.
<b>4. Programming document</b>	European Joint Strategy in support of Palestine 2021-2024 –Under preparation – to be adopted as soon as possible
<b>5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results</b>	Under preparation N/A.
<b>PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION</b>	
<b>6. Priority Area(s), sectors</b>	151 – Government and Civil Society – General
<b>7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>	Main SDG: SDG n° 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

<sup>1</sup> 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.

	Other significant SDGs: - SDG n° 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; - SDG n° 8 Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all; - SDG n°16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels;			
<b>8 a) DAC code(s)</b>	15170 - Women's rights organisations and movements, and government institutions 15160 - Human rights			
<b>8 b) Main Delivery Channel</b>	European Union Member States – central government – 11001			
<b>9. Targets</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <sup>2</sup> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
<b>10. 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Trade development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>RIO Convention markers</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Biological diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<sup>2</sup> For the Neighbourhood, activities related to education shall be marked as part of the “Social Inclusion and Human Development” target, in line with the NDICI-GE programming guidelines.

	Climate change adaptation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>11. Internal markers</b>	<b>Policy objectives</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Digitalisation Tags: digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship job creation digital skills/literacy digital services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Connectivity Tags: transport people2people energy digital connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Migration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	COVID-19	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>BUDGET INFORMATION</b>			
<b>12. Amounts concerned</b>	Budget line: 14.020110 – Southern Neighbourhood Total estimated cost: EUR 3 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 3 000 000			
<b>MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>				
<b>13. Implementation modalities (type of financing and management mode)</b>	Project Modality  <b>Indirect management</b> with the entity to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.1			

## 1.2. Summary of the Action

The objective of this action is to ensure effective gender mainstreaming in strategies, policies and laws through supporting transparent, accountable and inclusive gender mechanisms<sup>3</sup>, with a particular emphasis on respective sound strategies for public consultation on gender issues, while also enhancing female employability.

<sup>3</sup> “gender institutional mechanism/machinery” is the international definition of bodies mandated to promote gender equality and support mainstreaming of gender equality into general policies in all areas, usually consisting of the central government body complemented with an interministerial coordinating gender mainstreaming structure and contact persons or focal points responsible for gender mainstreaming in ministries (<https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1259>)

The approach of this action is three-pronged:

1. Firstly, financial and programming support will be provided to reinforce mechanisms (Ministry of Women's Affairs - MoWA and related gender units in line Ministries) for gender-responsive policy and law-making. Technical advice and support will be provided for the institutional partners (line ministries, gender units at all levels, statistic institute, etc.) to fully equip and empower them to perform their duties and responsibilities when it comes to gender mainstreaming.
2. Secondly, the action will facilitate women employability (in particular young graduated women) and access to labour market by creating connections/partnerships with potential employers through a Gender Unit within the Ministry of High Education (MoHE).
3. Thirdly, the action will aim at improving public consultation and dialogue with stakeholders on gender issues in order to address social norms that hinder women's rights and to promote the benefits for society of gender equality as a right achievement, with the support of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

The action aims at assisting the Palestinian Authority (PA) in fulfilling its commitments to gender equality as highlighted in the National Development Plan as well as in its sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies. This support will also aim at ensuring compliance with international human rights laws and norms, in particular those laid down in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

## **2. RATIONALE**

### **2.1. Context**

The gender gap in Palestine remains wide. Even though the Basic law of Palestine clearly states that women have the same rights as men, de facto gender equality remains a challenge. The situation for women continues to be challenging with patriarchal structures dominating the public sphere, a high level of socio-economic vulnerability, low level of representation in decision-making positions and discriminatory laws.

The Palestinian legal framework related to gender equality is scattered, fragmented and sometimes unclear. Furthermore, different bodies of law apply in different regions, and social and religious structures carry significant influence. In an environment where laws regulating all aspects of gender equality in the private and public sphere are missing, there is a huge legislative vacuum created by the absence of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). Over the past years, the process of designing, passing and implementing relevant new gender equality laws, policies and procedures has faced extreme challenges.

According to a recent World Bank report, West Bank and Gaza scores last, worldwide, in laws and regulations that restrict women's economic opportunities, measuring the interaction between inequality of opportunity for women and labour market dynamics. A recent analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality in the Arab World, implemented by UN WOMEN, points out that women will suffer disproportionately, as women will be most affected by the repercussions of the pandemic, not only may they lose their jobs, but they could be forced farther down the road to accept unfair work conditions.

The situation as regards women's rights and economic empowerment is worst in Gaza Strip, given that tradition and social norms are particularly strong there. The unemployment rate in the Gaza Strip has reached

52%, of whom 75% are female. The rate of unemployment among young women (15-29) is particularly stark, reaching 92%, compared to 63.2% unemployment among men in the same age group. (PCBS Sep 2020). Achieving legal gender equality proves extremely challenging in Gaza given the lack of the PA's reach in terms of legislation and the attitude of the de-facto authority towards gender issues in general.

The overall progress in integrating gender equality issues has been somewhat a mixed bag of success and missed opportunities due to the lack of consistent and coherent political will to address these issues. Deficiency in commitment and political will to prioritise gender mainstreaming is most likely the product of ignoring/underestimating the importance of gender mainstreaming to achieve gender equality. Better inter-sectoral planning and programming are seen as needed to address gender across different NDP pillars. The current lack of cross-sectoral programming, administrative statistics as well as macro analysis on gender relevant issues is seen by stakeholders as one of the key reasons for the lack of visible, sustainable/resilient results.

The PA has in recent years undertaken a number of actions that aim to address these problems in the long-term, such as ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). There is still work to be done in order to transpose CEDAW and other international Human Rights treaties and conventions into domestic legislation.

Despite the efforts of the Palestinian Authority and institutions, and notwithstanding the large support from donors for these efforts, there remain multiple challenges to promoting gender equality and gender mainstreaming in policy development and implementation in all spheres and sectors in Palestine. Furthermore, the PA has not sufficiently allocated financial resources for the implementation of its Cross-Sectoral Gender Strategy in particular and for the activities of gender institutional mechanisms in general (introduction of gender responsive budgeting in all phases of budget planning, etc.).

Despite the establishment of Gender Units in 2005 (32 in all line ministries and public authorities and 17 in the security forces), as well as women and child departments in every governorate, these structures are far from being properly institutionalised and fully functional in terms of their mandate, policy role, and visibility at organisation level, as well as access to proper financial and technical resources. Since the establishment of these Gender Units there is a common misunderstanding held among the public servants in Palestine, that such gender departments should bear the entire responsibility for gender mainstreaming. The process of an attitude change has already been initiated, but there are no laws/by-laws clearly saying that all institutions are responsible for gender mainstreaming in all policies and laws.

In this context, CSOs have a fundamental role to play, as they represent the main point of reference at community level. They are a key stakeholder in order to achieve and implement gender mainstreaming actions, specifically in the area of women's economic empowerment. Their expertise and knowledge of the context at grass-root level, particularly in areas where the PA cannot reach out, are essential to facilitate the creation of synergies between institutions and private sector. Their role is also fundamental in raising awareness about gender issues to address social norms and promote non-traditional gender roles among the population.

In light of the above, the Ministry of Women's Affairs acknowledges this fragile institutionalisation of gender equality and has requested support from donors to reinforce this machinery. In particular, MoWA has proposed to use gender mainstreaming as a strategy to reinforce good governance at the policy level and to reinforce the gender machinery within the PA to achieve sustainable development for Palestinian society.

The European Union's strong commitment to further advancing universal values for all remains at the heart of its added value and leadership globally, which is reinforced in the EU's Action Plan on Human Rights and

Democracy 2020-2024.<sup>4</sup> This commitment is also strongly reflected in the EU's Council Conclusions regarding the Middle East Peace process.<sup>5</sup> Respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights will continue to underpin all aspects of the internal and external policies of the European Union, which is strongly demonstrated in this proposed Action.

The Action is very much supportive of the objective of institutionalising gender as reflected in MoWA strategic plan (2017-2022) and its five policies as mentioned above. Also, it is fully in line with the NPA intention to institutionalize gender mainstreaming in policy-making.

The Palestinian National Development Plan is in line with the EU's values on democracy and human rights, specifically in National policy number 4: Upholding democratic principles.

The Programme will continue reinforcing synergies with actors active in the field of gender equality and gender mainstreaming such as the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Spanish Agency for Development and Cooperation (AECID), Norway, Finland and others. Under the division of labour on the ground, Italy is the EU Member State leader on gender issues and therefore chair of the Gender Working Group. AICS is currently implementing a pilot project focusing on strengthening gender mainstreaming in Palestine. This project is designed as a pilot intervention to support strengthening existing structures for an effective implementation of gender mainstreaming, in particular in the Agricultural Sector. This sector has been identified because of its historical relevance and, at the same time, unbalanced involvement of women.

Building on efforts of the new Public Finance Management strategy, supported by PEGASE programme, which includes gender sensitive budgeting, the Programme will support capacity building to gender units within ministries in order to enhance gender sectoral knowledge.

The Programme will also be complementary with the upcoming new action on "Fostering sustainable economic development in Palestine", included in the AAP 2021. This new action includes a component focused on boosting access to finance for underserved groups, particularly women and youth.

The EU as part of the Team Europe has announced a large economic assistance package in response to the COVID19 crisis, within which the bulk of interventions come in form of EIP financial instruments. This package will have particular attention to vulnerable groups, including women. The proposed action will work in complementarity with this package of actions.

Also, the programme will reinforce synergies with the ongoing projects "Supporting the PA to enhance Governance and the Rule of Law", which is to contribute to achieving a more effective, transparent and participatory policy and law-making process set in a clear normative framework, and "Implementing Palestine's Human Rights Treaty Obligations (Phase II)" which aims to strengthen Palestine's Human Rights treaty implementation and accountability through technical assistance to institutional decision-makers combined with strengthening civil society's key role in holding the government accountable on implementation of Human Rights obligations.

Furthermore, expertise - created by the ongoing project "Palestinian Youth Empowerment Programme", which focuses particularly on young women's economic empowerment by facilitating a stronger connection

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<sup>4</sup> [eu\\_action\\_plan\\_on\\_human\\_rights\\_and\\_democracy\\_2020-2024.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/06/20/fac-conclusions-mepp/?utm\\_source=dsms-auto&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Council%20conclusions%20on%20the%20Middle%20East%20Peace%20process](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/06/20/fac-conclusions-mepp/?utm_source=dsms-auto&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Council%20conclusions%20on%20the%20Middle%20East%20Peace%20process)  
<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/01/18/fac-conclusions-mepp/>

between skilled youth/promising entrepreneurs and the private sector (employers/investors) - will be utilised to feed in technical advice and support for the implementation of this programme.

## **2.2. Problem Analysis**

**Palestinian policies and legislation do not have an adequate gender perspective:** The absence of standardised definitions for gender equality and gender mainstreaming is creating a situation whereby different interpretations have led to varied levels in integration in relevant policies. This is also reflected in the lack of a functioning and standardized process for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and impact of policies on gender equality. It is felt that the sole responsibility is placed on MoWA, whilst other ministries do as much/as little depending on the individual capacities and political will among senior decision-makers.

**Gender equality principles are not properly mainstreamed across sectors:** Although there are currently 32 Gender Units in ministries and public authorities, they tend to work in isolation with regards to other departments within their respective organisations. For Gender Units to be able to promote gender equality principles across their ministries, tailored capacity enhancement is needed. Such capacity enhancement needs to address specialized gender sectoral knowledge, as well as a practice of interdepartmental cooperation between budget, planning, and legal departments.

**Women suffer from unemployment in a dis-proportionated manner:** Overall, unemployment in Palestine amounts to 27.2%, with women being more unemployed than men (respectively, 40.1% and 24.4%). The traditional role of women in the family and society is predominant in Palestine. For this reason, the progressive introduction of women into the labour market is slow and has not significantly changed the division of labour based on sex. These social norms need to be challenged from a legislative angle (pay gap, security in the workplace, social protection schemes, etc.) by supporting the capacity and influence of gender mechanisms, as well as with specific actions addressed to support women's access to the labour market.

**The gender mechanisms currently in place can only address the needs of the population in those areas under full control of PA,** given the lack of PA's reach in Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and Area C. Hence, it is extremely important that civil society and the private sector, both present and active across all geographical areas in Palestine, are seen as key partners in ensuring comprehensive country-wide gender mainstreaming. The participation of civil society will be essential to serve the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in West Bank and Gaza. The role of Civil Society is particularly needed in Gaza, where tradition and social norms are particularly strong and achievement of gender equality extremely challenging. In response of this situation, Gazan CSOs have a fundamental role as they are the voice of the opposition and represent the main point of reference at community level.

**Population growth in Palestine in the coming decade will increase pressure for the delivery of basic services, which will notably affect women and young girls in health, education and economic sectors.** The need to establish gender responsive policies in Palestine is of high importance in order to face those challenges.

**Changing conservative social norms** is essential to challenge gender inequality. The persisting Palestinian patriarchal and conservative society and the radicalisation of some political parties also exerts control over women's and girls' bodies, restrains their social, political, and economic rights, including their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and exposes them to different forms of gender-based violence (GBV), discriminations and abuses. Changing unequal power relationships among genders or challenging deeply rooted gender roles can be achieved by raising awareness and media campaigns that promote positive change.

Key cross-cutting issues:

Ensuring gender-equal representation in environmental assessments and resource management ensures that diverse experiences and knowledge systems about the environment are integrated and ecosystem conservation and sustainable use of natural resources are enhanced. In this way, increasing gender equality and women's empowerment contribute to achieving the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals.

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

The **Ministry of Women's Affairs**, and in particular the Regional and International Directorate, will be the main stakeholder, given its role to contribute to the achievement of SDG5, working at three levels: 1) At governorate level, functioning as communication centre for all governorates in Palestine; 2) At institutional level, coordinating and supervising all Gender Units of the ministries; and 3) At community level, supporting communities in Palestine. This support at community level is channelled throughout a network of "supporting groups" established by MoWA, which serves as a communication channel between the communities and the Ministry. The supporting groups are active in West Bank and in Gaza.

The **Gender Units in all line Ministries** will be equally important in the implementation of the action, as their capacities and position in the decision-making mechanisms within corresponding ministries will be reinforced.

The Gender Unit at the Ministry of Higher Education will play a key role as an intermediary between private sector/entrepreneurs and female graduates. The Gender Unit at the Ministry of Higher Education has been identified as one of the most active and effective Gender Units. Thanks to its links with private companies, this Gender Unit is able to put graduated students in contact with labour market actors, matching supply with demand. Due to this important characteristic, this Gender Unit has served as a reference for other Gender Units, currently less pro-active and efficient. In the framework of this action, this Gender unit will play an important role in promoting employability of young female graduates.

Through our action we will encourage Gender Units within related ministries to actively participate in the Higher Council and Executive Council for TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training). These bodies are composed of representatives of ministries of education, higher education, labour and economy, as well as of representatives of the private sector, NGOs and UNRWA. These bodies are responsible for approving the general policies of the TVET system, in accordance with the national priorities, and for their implementation, respectively. Reinforced Gender Units within those ministries will assure that gender issues are properly tackled at TVET level.

The **Ministry of Finance** has been identified as a key stakeholder as it has responsibilities over the national budget and investing in the overall implementation of the NPA, sector and cross sector strategies. The Ministry of Finance develops the budget in close co-ordination with the line ministries. Therefore, its role in implementing reforms that promote gender equality and investment plans that are gender responsive is crucial. The involvement of the Ministry of Finance in all Steering Committees benefits the programme's implementation and therefore it is crucial that they are part of this programme.

**Women's and Civil Society Organisations** will also contribute to the gender mainstreaming when it comes to training, design and formulation of policies as well as implementation of community-based interventions. They will play a pivotal role providing technical capacity to Gender Units, helping in designing communication strategies as well as creation of synergies between institutions and private sector.



The NPA places gender mainstreaming among the policy interventions in two Pillars: under Pillar 2. Governance Reform, National Policy 9: “Institutionalize gender mainstreaming in policy-making, planning and budgeting” there is a clear obligation for the PA institutions in terms of “assessing the impact of the government’s policies on women and girls and the ways in which they advance principles of gender equality”.

The Labour Sector Strategy (2021-2023) “The road to decent work and employment opportunities improvement” of Ministry of Labour includes increasing participation of women in the labour market with particular attention to women and youth as one of its priorities. It also includes MoWA as a partner in order to integrate gender in the labour market.

MoWA’s most recent strategic plan (2017-2022) stressed that “institutionalizing issues of gender equality and justice and the empowerment of women in all government institutions” is to be done through five policies, namely: Strengthen the role of Gender Units in government ministries and institutions; Strengthen the role of formal and informal national machineries on women’s issues and gender; Develop accountability mechanisms for gender equality issues (monitoring and evaluation, aid coordination mechanisms and gender responsive budgeting); Gender perspective integrated in all official institutions; Capacity building of MoWA in line with requirements of achieving cross-sectoral national strategy to promote gender equality and justice.

PA ministries and public authorities are currently in the process of re-drafting sectoral strategies, although their work on integrating gender equality and mainstreaming gender in all sectoral policy priorities is rather weak. There is an absence of gender analysis in most of the sectors, as well as statistics and data needed to inform policies of gender equality and gender mainstreaming. While there has been significant improvement in the collection of gender relevant and gender disaggregated data by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the capacity for the analysis and utilisation of that data is limited. Aside from few number of Gender Units, planning and budgeting departments across the PA lack capacities to utilise these statistics for policy planning, decision-making and budgeting. Further gender analysis is needed in all sectors to address and highlight the gender dynamics within the sector as they alone can help comprehensive policy-making and programming.

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

#### **3.1. Objectives and Expected Outputs**

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to enhance gender responsive socio-economic development in Palestine.

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

1. Strengthen existing national gender mechanisms with specific focus on integrating women in the labour market.
2. Increase connections between gender mechanisms and the private sector to enhance women’s access to the labour market.
3. Improve public consultation and dialogue with stakeholders on gender issues.

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) Strengthened institutional policy, planning and implementation capacities, including inter-institutional communication, of gender units in all line ministries.

2.1 Contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2) Enhanced partnerships connecting potential employers and investors to graduated young women.

3.1 Contributing to Outcome 3 (or Specific Objective 3) Strategies for public consultation on policy issues and communication on gender equality provided.

### **3.2. Indicative Activities**

#### **Indicative activities related to Output 1.1**

- Ad-hoc training about gender issues matching the different needs of every single Gender Unit and relevant departments, reinforcing skills and capabilities and exchanging expertise. Particular attention will be given to labour and employment related issues, with focus on TVET and participation of gender units in related specific governmental bodies dealing with it.
- Workshops with Gender Units in order to establish a common and standard methodology covering the three levels of the project management (policy, planning and implementation level) as well as inter-institutional communication on gender issues.

#### **Indicative activities related to Output 2.1**

- Facilitating contracts between the Gender Unit within the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) and academic institutions aimed at creating connections with employers, and to generate databases with a view to facilitating access to the labour market for women.
- Regular collection, analysis and publication of data classified by gender, geographical areas and levels of vulnerability regarding participation of women and men in the labour market and economic life, including participation in decision-making bodies, promotion in career, income, wage, indefinite/fixed term work, conditions of business contract, access to bank loans, etc.

#### **Indicative activities related to Output 3.1**

- Support to MoWA for the development of a strategy for a structured consultation with civil society/private sector to help ensuring gender responsive policy making.
- Awareness raising activities, including national campaigns and media advocacy, in close collaboration with academic institutions and civil society organizations to address social norms and promote the benefits for society of women empowerment.

### **3.3. Mainstreaming**

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

Outcomes of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening

The EIA screening classified the action as Category C (no need for further assessment) as the Action is primarily centred on support to human rights, advocacy and awareness raising activities.

Outcome of the Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening

The CRA screening concluded that this action is at no or low risk (no need for further assessment).

Nevertheless, some awareness raising activities and small-scale pilot activities focusing on environmental challenges could take place in the course of the implementation of the action.

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

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action, in view of its objectives, is labelled as G2, implying that this action directly targets human rights and gender equality issues.

### **Human Rights**

This action directly targets human rights and gender equality issues as illustrated by the whole rationale of this action, throughout all the points above.

### **Disability**

This action will address inclusion of women with disabilities, in particular when integrating women in the labour market..

### **Democracy**

As good governance is key to delivering gender equality results this programme will focus on supporting meaningful changes on the ground which require a coordinated, competent and powerful whole-of-government commitment, and clear and effective mechanisms in place within and across government institutions to be able to translate public policies, programmes, services and budgets into concrete benefits for men and women. It is therefore expected that the action could have a positive impact on the improvement of the decision-making processes and governance of the priority sectors in particular.

### **Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience**

Not applicable

### **Disaster Risk Reduction**

Not applicable

### **Other considerations if relevant**

Not applicable

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

<b>Category<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)</b>	<b>Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)</b>	<b>Mitigating measures</b>
1	Weak jurisdiction of the PA in Gaza Strip, Area C and	High	Medium	The action should, where possible, be implemented in partnership with (institutional and) non-institutional partners from the West Bank and Gaza Strip East Jerusalem and Area C.

<sup>6</sup> The risk (category) can be related 1-to the external environment; 2-to planning, processes and systems; 3-to people and the organisation; 4-to legality and regularity aspects; 5-to communication and information.

	East Jerusalem.			
1	Limited engagement by, or obstacles to, sector-wide coordination between different entities, line Ministries and agencies.	Medium	Medium	<p>The key role of the newly created Regional and International Directorate within MoWA will serve to coordinate and supervise participation of all line ministries in the programme.</p> <p>The EU will work with a variety of partners and teams involved in the implementation of programmes under other EJS/NPA pillars to ensure a buy in. This action should be referred to as much as possible within other sectoral support programmes, to ensure that line ministries are aware of the type of support this action can provide and how it fits in line with objectives of achieving an overall development goals for Palestine.</p>
1	Rekindling of conflict, elections and political impasse and overall slow progress in governance reform.	High	Medium	A flexible methodological approach, similar to the one implemented during COVID-19, will enable a high adaptability to changing socio-political realities across Palestine. The programme will allow for extension/modification of implementation period, change of location, and any other measure that allows flexible implementation.
1	Weak disbursement capacity of ministries according to annual work plans, causing delay of implementations of actions.	Medium	Low	There will be strong support and monitoring to ensure that funds will be committed and spent accordingly to work plans.
1	The volatile political situation, outbreaks of violence and clashes can lead to	Low	Low	In these cases, it will be necessary to modify accordingly the chronogram of the activities of the action. Local counterparts are used to such unrest and in many years of conflict and political uncertainty they have developed

	interruptions or slowdowns of activities due to the restrictions on movements.			considerable resilience and coping strategies.
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### **Lessons Learned:**

The proposed programme is not based on previous identical initiatives but complements other programmes with strong gender components. So far, only programme based financial assistance has been provided for individual gender equality actions. However no comprehensive assistance was provided for strengthening the institutions' capacity for gender mainstreaming. Financial assistance was mainly allocated to those projects which considered specific target groups (i.e. vulnerable groups, persons with disabilities and children, victims of gender base violence). European Development Partners concur that a project with such a strategic approach on gender mainstreaming is highly necessary (lesson learned) and pertinent. As regards the employment component of this programme this also complements other projects targeting female business/entrepreneurship with better access to finance.

The Italian Cooperation Office (AICS) however has just started implementing a pilot project aiming at supporting MoWA's implementation of good practices of gender mainstreaming with a particular focus on agriculture. The agricultural cluster has been identified because of its historical relevance and for the unbalanced involvement of women in the sector under various aspects, like power and economic autonomy

### **3.5. Intervention Logic**

The action will focus on strengthening the technical capacities of Gender Units in line ministries for implementing/monitoring gender equality policies and programmes. Other relevant/influential units and departments within ministries, specifically budget, planning and legal units will also be targeted, This will ensure that the challenge of proper gender mainstreaming is owned by influential units in ministries, which are part of the decision-making process. Coordination among all Gender Units in different ministries, under the supervision of the Regional and International Department within MoWA will assure the establishment of a standard methodology covering all levels of project implementation.

Special attention will be given to supporting the Gender Unit within the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) and academic institutions aimed at creating connections with employers. These connections will focus on facilitating employability for young female graduates. Reinforcing those linkages will contribute to increasing women's employability in a post-COVID economic context that has impacted women disproportionately.

Addressing social-cultural norms regarding gender equality and women's rights is vital to support transformative changes in society. The action will focus on improving communication channels among government partners and civil society on gender issues in order to promote non-traditional gender roles, as well as awareness raising campaigns in order to challenge traditional social norms and promote positive change.

This three-pronged support will contribute to make Palestine's policies more gender responsive, by reinforcing the concept of Gender Equality and good governance at institutional level and by advocating for a

transformative process of socio-cultural values. The enhancement of the institutional leadership of the Ministry of Women's Affairs in terms of gender mainstreaming, within its role of coordination and technical support for the line Ministries, will contribute to the achievement of equal opportunities in Palestine.

All actions under this programme are geared to be beneficial for men, women, boys and girls and LGBTQI+ in Palestine. In this respect, civil society will be involved in specific activities as a target group, and civil society organisations and women's rights organisations will be engaged for effective implementation, whenever relevant.

### 3.6. Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

Results	Results chain : Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators : (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
<b>Impact</b>	To enhance gender responsive socio-economic development in Palestine.	Number of new WEE targeted actions/policies implemented at national level	0 (zero) to be assessed at the beginning of the project)	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular assessment of the action</li> <li>Relevant UN/other international organizations reports</li> <li>CEDAW reports</li> </ul>	<i>Not applicable</i>
<b>Outcome 1</b>	1. Strengthened existing national gender mechanisms with specific focus on integrating women in labour market.	Number of specific actions taken by PA to reinforce the Gender Units within ministries	0	At least 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Reports on Implementation of Gender Cross Sectoral Strategy and Report on progress of NPA implementation (both donor and PA)</li> </ul>	Continued mutual commitment and sustained support to OPT and peace and development processes
			0	At least 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender Units Reports</li> </ul>	Sustained political commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment
<b>Outcome 2</b>	2. Increased connections between gender mechanisms and the private sector to enhance	Number of partnerships created with private sector focusing on employability of young female graduates	to be defined at project level	to be defined at project level	Gender Units Reports	Stable political situation
						Decision-makers support gender mainstreaming

	woman's access to the labour market.					
<b>Outcome 3</b>	3. Improved public consultation and dialogue with stakeholders on gender issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of local and national media that portray positive images of women and girls in political and public life</li> <li>Number of PA communication actions aimed to support to GE in general</li> </ul>	0  0	6  6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EU reports</li> <li>CBOs/INGOs reports</li> <li>MoWA web-site Information</li> </ul>	Decision-makers support gender mainstreaming
<b>Output 1 related to Outcome 1</b>	1.1 Strengthened institutional policy, planning and implementation capacities, including inter-institutional communication, of gender units in all line ministries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N. of recommendations made by Gender Units to their respective ministry</li> <li>Standardized databases operational and in use</li> </ul>	0  0	At least 20  6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statistic data, PCBS Reports</li> <li>Government reports</li> <li>Gender Units report</li> <li>CSO/INGOs/CSOs and research institutions reports</li> <li>MoWA reports</li> </ul>	Continued political support to implement the adopted revised Gender Cross Sector Strategy
<b>Output 2 related to Outcome 2</b>	1.2 Enhanced partnerships connecting potential employers and investors to graduated young women.	Number of exchanges that lead to work opportunities	to be defined at project level	to be defined at project level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender Units report</li> <li>CSO/INGOs/CSOs and research institutions reports</li> </ul>	
<b>Output 3 related to Outcome 3</b>	1.3 Strategies for public consultation on policy issues and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of awareness raising activities organised (with NGOs, CBOs, PA/Ministries,</li> </ul>	0	3 (1 per year)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government web-site, MoWA social media pages (FB, Twitter), local and national</li> </ul>	Sustained political commitment to gender equality



	on gender equality provided.	academic institutions) on gender equality to address social norms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number of structured consultations with civil society/private sector on gender policy issues</li> </ul>	0	6 (2 per year)	traditional Media (TV, newspapers),	
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## **4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

### **4.1. Financing Agreement**

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

### **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 36 months from the date of entry into force of the financing agreement.

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

### **4.3. 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>7</sup>.

#### **4.3.1. Indirect Management with a pillar-assessed entity**

This action may be implemented in indirect management with an entity which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria: (i) Thematic and management expertise in implementing gender equality programmes, with specific focus on women economic empowerment; (ii) Previous experience of assistance to the MoWA and other governmental institutions which are part of the Palestinian gender machinery; and (iii) A strong leading role in the area of gender equality and in particular gender mainstreaming in governmental institutions.

The implementation by this entity entails contributing to the overall objective focusing on enhancing gender mainstreaming in PA policies through revitalising the national gender machinery. This will be achieved by strengthening the role of the Gender Units, as well as enhancing the institutional partner's capacities to ensure effective implementation of policies and programmes for advancement of gender equality. A specific focus will be put on employment sectors and access to economic resources for women.

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

Where, due to circumstances beyond the Commission's control, the implementation of indirect management does not materialise, the alternative implementation modality in direct management.

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<sup>7</sup> [www.sanctionsmap.eu](http://www.sanctionsmap.eu) Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

#### 4.4. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

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

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

#### 4.5. Indicative Budget

<b>Indicative Budget components</b>	<b>EU contribution (amount in EUR)</b>
<b>Indirect management with entrusted entity</b> – cf. section 4.3.1.	2 750 000
<b>Evaluation</b> – cf. section 5.2	100 000
<b>Audit</b> – cf. section 5.3	75 000
<b>Communication and visibility</b> – cf. section 6	75 000
<b>Totals</b>	3 000 000

#### 4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

A specific steering committee (SC) will be set up to oversee the implementation and validate the overall direction of the project. It will meet at least twice a year and will be chaired by the Ministry of Women's Affairs on behalf of PA and will be composed by the Gender Units of the ministries involved and the EU (might include some/all members of Gender Technical Working Group). The Ministry of Finance develops the budget in close co-ordination with the line ministries and therefore, its role in implementing reforms, allocating funding for investment plans and consequently for gender equality is crucial. The involvement of the Ministry of Finance in all Steering Committees should therefore benefit implementation of the action.

The Steering Committee can invite representatives of any stakeholders whenever deemed appropriate. It can be convened whenever the action requires strategic decisions or changes. The Steering Committee will receive, discuss and revise the periodical work plans, budgets, technical and financial reports of the action.

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

### 5. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

#### 5.1. Monitoring and Reporting

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

implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (Outputs and direct Outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix (for project modality) and the partner's strategy, policy or reform action plan list (for budget support).

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

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring:

A comprehensive system of monitoring, control and audit will be applied in the framework of the implementation of this programme, to provide assurance over the use of funds, and the efficient and effective provision of support to the Palestinian governmental bodies by the selected implementing partners, while fully protecting donor interest. The programme will use as reference the logframe matrix.

## **5.2. Evaluation**

Having regard to the nature of the action, (a) final evaluation(s) will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants.

It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the fact that an action of this nature has not been financed beforehand in Palestine with EU funds.

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

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

Evaluation services may be contracted under a framework contract.

## **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. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY**

Communication and visibility is a contractual obligation for all entities implementing EU-funded external actions, to advertise the European Union's support for their work to the relevant audiences.

To that end they must comply with the instructions given in the [\*Communication and Visibility Requirements of 2018\*](#) (or any successor document), notably with regard to the use of the EU emblem and the elaboration of a dedicated communication and visibility plan, to be completed for every action at the start of implementation.

These obligations apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, the partner country (for instance, concerning the reforms supported through budget support), contractors, grant beneficiaries or entrusted entities. In each case, a reference to the relevant contractual obligations must be included in the respective financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

Communication and visibility measures may be funded from the amounts allocated to the action. 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 concerned EU Delegation/Office fully informed of the planning and implementation of specific visibility and communication activities before work starts. Implementing partners will ensure adequate visibility of EU financing and will report on visibility and communication actions as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees.

It is envisaged that a contract for communication and visibility may be contracted under a framework contract.