



EN

THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX I

of the Commission Implementing Decision on
the financing of the multiannual action plan in favour of the NDICI Neighbourhood
East Region part 1 for 2021-2022

**Action Document for Strengthening interconnectivity through implementation of
Common Aviation Area Agreements and improved civil aviation safety**

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 CRIS/OPSYS Basic Act	Strengthening interconnectivity through implementation of Common Aviation Area Agreements and improved civil aviation safety Annual action plan CRIS number: NDICI-GEO-NEAR/2021/043-002 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)
2. Team Europe Initiative	No
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The action shall be carried out in Eastern Neighbourhood region.

4. Programming document	Programming of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI-Global Europe) 2021-2027, Regional Multiannual Indicative Programme for the Eastern neighbourhood 2021-2027 ¹			
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results	Support transport and connectivity, including for the Black Sea			
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION				
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Priority area 1: Resilient, sustainable and integrated economies			
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG (1 only): Goal 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 Other significant SDGs: Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts			
8 a) DAC code(s)	21010 - Transport policy and administrative management 100 %			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	50000 – Other (EU AGENCY)			
9. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
10. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

¹ C(2021) 9370 adopted on 15/012/2021

	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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Internal markers	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	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"/>
	Connectivity Tags: transport people2people energy digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Migration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	COVID-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
12. Amounts concerned	Budget line: BGUE-B2021-14.020111-C1-NEAR, EUR 4 500 000.00 Total estimated cost: EUR 4 500 000.00 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 4 500 000.00			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
13. Implementation modalities (type of financing and management mode)	Project Modality Indirect management with EU specialised (traditional/regulatory) agency – European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)			

1.2. Summary of the Action

The overall objective of this Action is to improve the beneficiaries' levels of regulatory harmonisation with the relevant EU aviation *acquis*, and notably to increase the level of civil aviation safety. It aims at upgrading regulations and working practices to reach compliance with the aviation regulatory requirements of the Common Aviation Area Agreements (CAAA) between the EU and Eastern Partnership countries, and with the international standards in the field of aviation safety.

The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) will be the main implementing body of the Action, in collaboration with the European national aviation authorities.

The Action builds on several regional and twinning projects that have taken place in recent years. In particular, on regional EU-funded projects, such as “Supporting the implementation of aviation agreements in the Eastern Partnership countries and upgrading civil aviation safety and security standards in Central Asia”, implemented by EASA between 2016 and 2021 and previous projects “TRACECA Civil aviation” and “TRACECA - Civil aviation safety and security II.”

The competent aviation authorities of the Eastern Partnership region (except for Belarus) have signed (Georgia Republic of Moldova², Armenia and Ukraine), or negotiating (Azerbaijan) Common Aviation Area Agreements with the EU and its Member States. These agreements have a twin-track objective of on the one hand a gradual market opening and on the other hand, a gradual regulatory alignment to a set of common rules in the form of the EU aviation *acquis* in areas such as aviation safety, security and air traffic management. These countries have also signed working arrangements with EASA. These working arrangements cover regulatory cooperation across all aviation safety domains – including technical assistance and continuous monitoring activities (and EASA standardisation inspections). These arrangements as well facilitate the understanding, transposition and implementation of the EU *acquis*. In addition to the general need to support these states to maintain and further improve their civil aviation safety, the technical assistance is also necessary to support states in order to comply with EU aviation (safety) *acquis* as per these acts³.

The action will continue to support the challenges in transposition and implementation of the EU aviation *acquis* including notably EU aviation safety regulations and further strengthening of implementation capabilities by supporting the adequate functioning of management system components, staff competence development and integration into EASA activities. Where relevant, this will also support activities to rectify safety deficiencies identified as part of the Union’s Air Safety List activities.

Activities of the Action include awareness raising activities, training, peer-to-peer and on-the-spot support. In the area of safety, dedicated initiatives on safety management and civil aviation administration management will be applied, in order to support beneficiaries in establishing functioning and effective safety regulatory and oversight systems within the countries. Partner countries will be supported in the transposition in their policies, legislation and working procedures, of recent changes in the international civil aviation framework, as well as of the EU *acquis* including notably in the field of aviation safety.

The action will build on deliverables and outcomes of the previous financing projects and in the area of aviation safety offer further support in all domains: airworthiness (AIR), flight operations (OPS), aircrew (PEL), Air Traffic Management (ATM/ANS), Accident Investigation (AIG), aerodromes (AGA), ground handling, environment and other newly emerging topics (e.g. drones, cybersecurity, etc.), as well as in Safety Management (State Safety Programme (SSP) and Safety Management System (SMS)) related aspects.

More concrete areas of intervention will be decided after consultation of the beneficiary countries and taking into account the specific needs of each of them.

² hereinafter referred to as Moldova

³https://www.easa.europa.eu/domains/international-cooperation/easa-by-country?easa_relationship%5B0%5D=field_easa_country_work_arrang_target_id&easa_relationship%5B1%5D=field_easa_country_bilateral_agr_target_id or legislation (<https://www.easa.europa.eu/regulations>)

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Context

Since its establishment in 2009, the Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) aimed at deepening and strengthening relations between the EU and its Eastern neighbours by providing necessary support to political and socio-economic reforms in partner countries and enhance sectorial cooperation. As confirmed on numerous occasions and in different formats, transport connectivity is high on the agenda of the Eastern Partnership process, as it plays a key role in achieving the partnership's objectives and further integration.

In recent years, the partner countries in the framework of the Eastern partnership started to gradually integrate their transport systems with the EU. In this respect, in 2013 the extension of Trans-European Transport Networks to the partner countries have been endorsed, accompanied with the indicative plan of the priority projects in the established networks. In the aviation area, significant progress has been made in terms of regulatory approximation, regional cooperation and capacity building actions.

The March 2020 Joint Communication on the Eastern Partnership (EaP) policy beyond 2020⁴ outlined the long-term policy objectives for future cooperation. Based on the results of an extensive consultation process, the Joint Communication put forward a vision for the EaP mid-term agenda to: (1) deliver economies that work for all; (2) strengthen the fundamentals, such as accountable institutions and rule of law; (3) boost our green transformation; (4) support the digital transformation and (5) build fair and inclusive societies. Increasing resilience was defined as the central goal for the new Eastern Partnership agenda.

In this context, the EU and Partner Countries agreed to work together to transform the region into fair and prosperous societies, with modern, resource- and energy efficient, clean, circular and competitive economies, while increasing their environmental and climate resilience.

For the upcoming period, the Eastern Partnership countries (except Belarus), expressed interest to further enhance the regional cooperation in aviation sector and implement EU aviation *acquis* – either through Common Aviation Area agreements with the EU in force (Georgia, Moldova), signed and already applied pending formal ratification (Ukraine), initialled and foreseen to be signed in November 2021 (Armenia), or in negotiating phase (Azerbaijan). Through these agreements, the Eastern Partnership countries will gradually, and when fulfilling the conditions as set in the agreements, become part of the EU's wider common aviation area and accept to implement the EU's aviation *acquis* in their internal legal system.

The competent aviation authorities of the Eastern Partnership region (except for Belarus) signed working arrangements with EASA. These working arrangements cover regulatory cooperation across all aviation safety domains – including technical assistance and continuous monitoring activities (and EASA standardisation inspections). Among others, these arrangements as well aim at facilitating the understanding, transposition and implementation of the EU *acquis*. To ensure and maintain a high level of aviation safety it is necessary to support the beneficiary countries to further improve their civil aviation safety levels and to comply with EU aviation *acquis* as per the above mentioned agreements/arrangements. In this respect, it is important to put at their disposal experience and required expertise in the form of technical assistance.

In addition, there is a direct interest of the EU and its Member States, including citizens and businesses in the aviation sector, in these states.

⁴ JOIN(2020) 7

Main problems/needs and the main challenges that need to be addressed:

National civil aviation administrations are faced with variety of challenges with respect to transposition and implementation of EU aviation *acquis*, for which the beneficiary countries expressed a need for assistance. Therefore, the action will support the partner countries in:

- overcoming governance shortcomings – through strengthening of national administrations capacity in aviation including aviation safety and simplification of the activities in the competence of the national civil aviation administrations, particularly via digitalisation and capacity building (training, increasing the number of aviation professionals with adequate skills to perform, adoption of international and EU technical standards, implementation of operational procedures, etc.);
- reforming the transport sector – particularly in terms of the correct transposition and implementation of the concluded and signed Common Aviation Area agreements and/or working arrangements, as well as addressing the administrative issues deriving from process regulatory convergence of the international and European regulatory basis and standards into the national framework;
- ensuring transport sustainability by addressing the impact of aviation activities on climate change;
- promoting regional cooperation among partner countries and with the EU;
- assisting beneficiaries on the EU Air Safety list to rectify safety deficiencies identified as part of the Union's Air Safety List activities.

Taking into consideration the outlined challenges of maintaining the capabilities of the national aviation authorities and the existing aviation sector's dynamics, the partner countries call for further support in the respective sector, which – given the different pace of progress among the beneficiaries - should be tailored carefully to specific needs.

As a result, in order to further support the beneficiary countries in fulfilling their commitments stemming out of international conventions and compliance with relevant standards (notably for safety), ensuring the long-term sustainability of national civil aviation administration structures as well as their certification and oversight capability is necessary. Additional efforts of the proposed intervention will focus on supporting the regulatory convergence and further mutual integration of the EU and Partner Countries aviation markets. The measures will be directed to overcoming the shortcomings in the administrative capacities of the national civil aviation administrations related to their structure and organisation, particularly in terms of their capacities to provide aviation oversight, while complying with the provisions of EU aviation *acquis*.

The action will reflect on the specific needs of the beneficiaries and assist inter alia in meeting among other obligations their international obligations by primarily facilitating the effective transposition and implementation of the EU aviation *acquis*.

Building on the progress already achieved in the context of the Eastern Partnership interventions and considering the novel EU regulatory solutions the support would also focus on emerging technologies addressing e.g. cybersecurity in civil aviation, drones, U-space.

2.2. Problem Analysis

Short problem analysis

The action falls under the priority area 1 of the Regional multi-annual indicative programme - Resilient, sustainable and integrated economies with an objective to promote social, cultural and economic integration by supporting regional market integration and coherent sectoral approaches in the EU and the Partner countries. As outlined in the previous section, in order to achieve the said objectives it is necessary to address the issues deriving from the existing shortcomings of the regulatory harmonisation with the EU aviation *acquis*

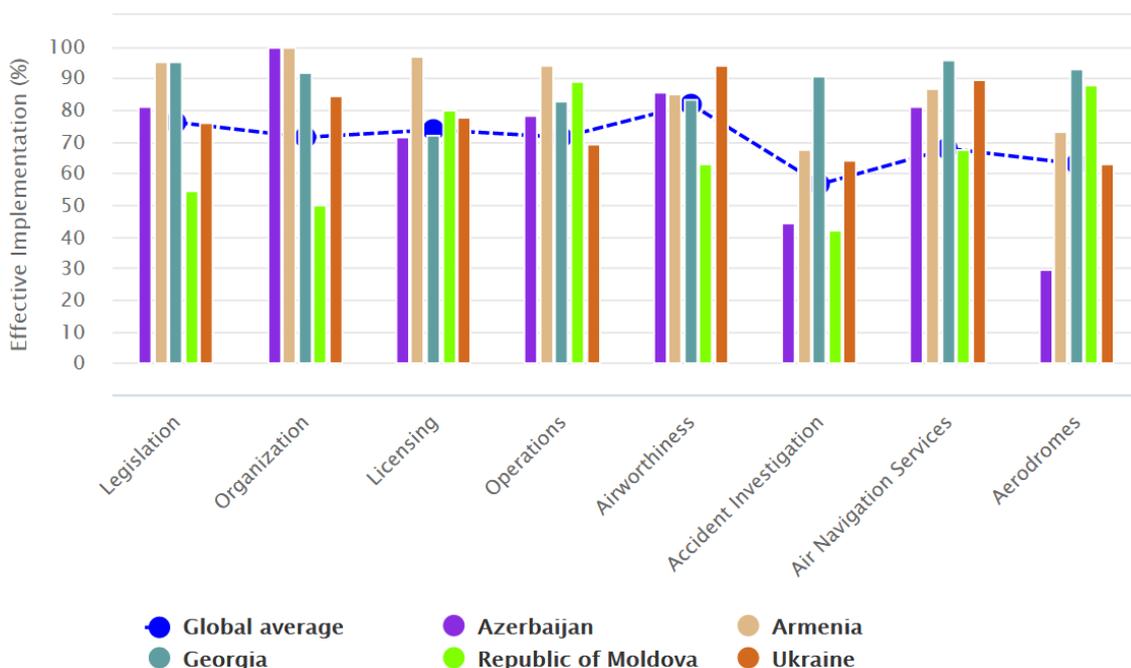
by tackling the deficiencies of the aviation regulation and oversight systems, in particular in terms of the issues outlined below.

i) *Aviation safety.*

In the field of aviation safety, all targeted countries are bound by their international obligations, i.e. stemming from the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago convention). Their compliance is verified by the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP), established by The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and by EASA for those countries, which have signed a working arrangement with EASA. The ICAO USOAP programme is used to assess the States' implementation of safety oversight, the compliance with the provisions of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARP) as contained in all ICAO Safety-related Annexes and the conformity with the provisions of ICAO guidance material. The ICAO SARPs on safety in civil aviation refer to the primary and secondary legislation, the organisational structure, the aircraft operations certification and supervision, airworthiness, personal licencing, aircraft accident and incident investigation, air navigation services and aerodromes.

Results of the latest ICAO audits/compliance assessments with regards to aviation safety have shown different levels of application of international standards and requirements by the different partner countries and in comparison with the global average (see table below).

Table 1 ‘Effective Implementation’ (EI) score presented for the various categories covered under ICAO’s Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP).⁵



The main issues identified within the assessments relate to the structure of the civil aviation organisation and lack of qualified staff, which call for further capacity building activities. In some instances, the effective implementation rate is below the global average. This demonstrates the need for additional efforts in the

⁵ <https://www.icao.int/safety/pages/usoap-results.aspx>

beneficiary countries in order to establish and ensure a sustainable civil aviation administration structure as well as certification and oversight capability.

Importantly, for some beneficiary countries (e.g. Moldova and Armenia) the data provided in Table 1 is outdated and does not reflect the current situation. As of June 2020, Armenia has been included on the EU Air Safety list, thus having an effect on the effective implementation rate. In addition, Moldova is scheduled to receive the next USOAP in September 2021. Considering that both Armenia and Moldova are included on the EU Air Safety list, both countries have developed corrective action plans to address the findings and work towards their closure. This will require targeted support to be provided to both countries to rectify safety deficiencies identified as part of the Union’s Air Safety List activities.

Considering that the ICAO USOAP assesses fulfilment of the minimum air safety requirements set up by ICAO SARPs, aiming at compliance with the EU aviation *acquis* within the implementation of the Common Aviation Area agreements will require the current signatories or soon to be signatories (at this stage all beneficiary countries except for Azerbaijan) to a Common Aviation Area agreement to improve further their safety level. For this will require targeted support in addressing the existing deficiencies to the structure and functioning of the safety regulation and oversight system. Where relevant, this will also support activities to rectify safety deficiencies identified as part of the Union’s Air Safety List activities.

- ii) *Obligations stemming from the concluded Common Aviation Area Agreements with the EU and deriving from the working arrangements with EASA.*

The current status regarding the signature of the Common aviation area agreements is presented below:

Country	Common aviation area agreement
Armenia	The negotiations have been concluded and the text was initialled at the European Partnership Summit on 24 November 2017 and has been signed on 15 November 2021.
Azerbaijan	On 6 October 2011 the European Commission obtained the authorisation from the Council to negotiate an EU-level aviation agreement with Azerbaijan. The first round of negotiations took place on 24 and 25 January 2013 in Baku, Azerbaijan, and the second round in Brussels on 4 and 5 July 2017 being followed very quickly by a successful third round on 24 and 25 of October 2017 in Baku. No negotiations took place since the third round, although exchanges have continued at the administrative level to discuss and clarify elements of the draft agreement.
Georgia	The agreement entered into force on 2 August 2020.
Moldova	The agreement entered into force on 2 August 2020.

Ukraine	The agreement was initialled on 28 November 2013 and has been signed in the margins of the 23 rd EU-Ukraine Summit on 12 October 2021
---------	--

Eastern Partnership countries have shown their interest and commitment to negotiate (Azerbaijan) or implement (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Armenia) the Common Aviation Area agreements. This means in practice that - through these legally binding international agreements - the signatory countries legally commit themselves to integrate and implement the EU's entire aviation *acquis*. This is done in a clearly described phased approach. At the end of this process, partner countries will become an integral part of a wider European common aviation area. The ultimate objective is to develop, over time, a truly integrated common aviation area evolves between the neighbouring countries themselves and with the EU Member States.

Eastern Partnership countries have already worked towards aligning their regulatory framework with EU legislation in key areas such as: aviation safety, air traffic management, security, the environment, passenger rights, economic regulation and social aspects. The EU has been supporting these processes through technical assistance regional and bilateral actions and twinning projects. Certain deficiencies in transposition and implementation of these provisions into the beneficiaries' national systems have been identified within the previous actions, while for others the process has not started yet. Further transposition and importantly implementation of the Common Aviation Area agreements provisions into the national regulatory framework requires high technical capacity of the authorised institutions and their staff to understand, plan and programme the inclusion of the EU aviation legislation into their national frameworks.

In this context it is important to provide the different beneficiary countries with tailor-made support that addresses specifically areas in which the EU's aviation *acquis* has not been properly implemented or not been implemented yet.

The action will therefore continue to support the challenges in transposition and implementation of the EU aviation *acquis* and further the strengthening of implementation capabilities by supporting the establishment of adequate management system components, staff competence development and integration into EASA activities. Implementation of the action will thus lead to strengthened economic relations, trade and transport links between the EU and the programme's participating countries and overall economic integration and market resilience.

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

On country level, the action's main stakeholders will be the State entities/authorities in charge of regulation and oversight of civil aviation, such as departments of relevant ministries, civil aviation authorities, accident and incident investigation bodies. The action will provide technical assistance, capacity building activities, tools, and service to enhance their capacity in the aviation and in transposing and implementing the EU legal framework. As it is challenging for the national civil aviation administrations to keep up with the fast-changing pace of aviation sector due to the lack of financial and human resources capacity building activities will aim at keeping these entities always up to date with the latest developments.

- i) *Actions taken or planned by the relevant national, local and traditional authorities*

The action falls into the beneficiary countries strategies and policies aimed at enhancing civil aviation oversight as it was stressed by countries' competent authorities within the virtual programming missions and outlined in the framework of 2020 Eastern Partnership Transport panel and 2020 Platform 3 "Connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate change" meeting. Importantly, Georgia Moldova, Armenia and Ukraine have signed Common Aviation Area agreements with the EU. Based on such agreements the beneficiaries are bound to implement the EU aviation *acquis* and meet the EU standards in the field of aviation safety and security. In the framework of the action the countries will be supported in delivering on their commitments under these international arrangements. All five countries have signed the working arrangements with EASA.

As the countries have expressed an interest in aligning their aviation system with EU through Common Aviation Area agreement, they are or will be obliged to transpose and implement EU aviation *acquis*. In this respect, they will have to have a plan for such transposition/implementation in place. Should this not yet be the case, the project will support them in establishing such a plan.

In December 2018 the European Commission put all air carriers certified by the authorities with responsibility for regulatory oversight of the Republic Moldova (with the exception of Air Moldova, Fly One and Aerotranscargo) on the list and in June 2020 all air carriers certified by the authorities with responsibility for regulatory oversight of Armenia. Those two countries have developed a corrective action plan to address the findings and will work towards the closure of findings and thus potentially be removed from the list.

ii) *Eastern Partnership*

Representing the Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), this initiative was launched in 2009. It aims to deepen and strengthen relations between the EU and its Eastern neighbours. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The European Neighbourhood Policy was revised in November 2015 aiming to build more effective partnerships between the EU and its neighbours towards a more stable EU Neighbourhood, in political, socio-economic and security terms. The revised policy identified four main domains: Good governance, democracy, rule of law and human rights; Economic development for stabilisation; Security and; Migration and mobility.

As confirmed on multiple occasions, transport interconnectivity is high on the agenda of the Eastern Partner Countries as it is of utmost importance to ensure regional integration and make the transport links between the EU and Eastern Partner Countries safer and more efficient by supporting among others the improvement of aviation sector. Aviation plays an important role supporting this, connecting countries and communities, supporting trade and tourism, and is a key driver for economic development and growth.

Transport connectivity is a priority of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) as provided by the Joint Communication of the Eastern partnership policy beyond 2020 – *Reinforcing Resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all*. Enhanced connectivity both within the EaP region, and between the EaP region and the EU has the potential to bolster economic growth and create job opportunities for citizens. Improved transport links will provide greater access to basic services and markets, enhancing resilience and reducing vulnerability to shocks. In the post COVID-19 period, the focus should be on "building back better" and there is high potential today for making transport infrastructure more sustainable and environmentally friendly. The joint communication sets strengthened interconnectivity as one of its key priorities. "*Strong interconnections between the EU and the EaP as well as among the partner countries are important drivers for economic development, regional integration, trade and mobility. Sustainable, rules-based and secure connectivity is key for both the EU and partner countries.*"

The Common Aviation Area agreements have been envisaged to allow gradual market opening between the EU and its neighbours linked with regulatory convergence through the gradual implementation of EU aviation rules to offer new opportunities for operators and a wider choice for consumers. The processes of market opening and regulatory convergence take place in parallel in order to promote fair competition and the implementation of common high safety, security, environmental and other standards.

It is also in the EU's interest to reduce the risk of EU operating bans (the EU Air Safety List⁶) for Eastern Partnership airlines due to concerns in the level of safety oversight in particular countries. These could potentially affect the market advances made by EU industry.

iii) Aviation Strategy for Europe

The Aviation Strategy for Europe was published on 7 December 2015. It identified three key priorities:

- Tapping into growth markets by improving services, market access and investment opportunities with third countries, whilst guaranteeing a level playing field;
- Tackling limits to growth in the air and on the ground, by reducing capacity constraints and improving efficiency and connectivity;
- Maintaining high EU safety and security standards, by shifting to a risk and performance based mindset.

The action will complement other ongoing EU initiatives, including notably in the field of aviation safety, and build on the existing structures, deliverables and mechanisms established through this regional initiative in all countries. Coordination with other EU-funded projects will ensure alignment and complementarity. Specific mechanisms to coordinate the action will be established. The action is in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal⁷ and its external dimension, as well as the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy.

In order to avoid overlapping and to create maximum synergies the coordination is necessary with the other EU-funded initiatives under NDICI or other initiatives (e.g TAIEX and TWINNING). Synergies are envisaged with other initiatives in the beneficiary countries, such as projects implemented by EU Member States (e.g. French or Lithuanian support to Armenia). Likewise, other EU financed initiatives will be consulted and synergies advanced where possible (e.g. bilateral support to Ukraine in the field of airworthiness). As some beneficiaries are subject to parallel support in the aviation domain (e.g. Ukraine, Armenia) it will affect the capability of the beneficiaries to participate in both interventions simultaneously. Therefore, the action will work in close cooperation with other actions in order to find synergies, to avoid duplication and to build on results achieved, in particular with TAIEX.

Donor coordination:

Donor coordination at country level is ensured by the respective EU Delegations. For the purpose of ensuring complementarity, synergy and coordination, the Commission may sign or enter into joint donor coordination declarations or statements and may participate in donor coordination structures, as part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union

⁶ Regulation (EC) No 2111/2005 of the European Parliament and the Council of 14 December 2005 on the establishment of a Community list of air carriers subject to an operating ban within the Community and on informing air transport passengers of the identity of the operating air carrier

⁷ COM(2019) 640 final

For the purpose of ensuring synergies and coordination of activities it is envisaged that EASA, jointly with the EC, will continue to organise a Contributors' Meeting - an annual consultative forum for the EC services, EU National Aviation Authorities and EU aviation industry to share their views and reflect on regional strategies, cooperation initiatives, priorities and future plans.

In addition, based on the experience gained in the previous action, EASA will continue organising quarterly meetings with participation of the European Commission services (DG NEAR and DG MOVE) and EU Delegations on sharing information about activities as well as existing projects and initiatives.

This action is aligned with the partner countries' policies and strategies directed at fulfilling the requirements of the Common Aviation Area agreements and enhancing aviation safety. Following the lessons learnt and the results of the previous phases each beneficiary will receive tailored support based on the scope and pace of implementation of regulatory framework.

Since the new European Commission college took office in November 2019, an ambition to create a climate-neutral continent through a European Green Deal, the creation of a Europe fit for the digital age, and building social fairness and prosperity are amongst the main new political guidelines. In this respect, the action seeks to share these priorities with the EaP countries, particularly regarding sustainability of transport system and its resilience to future crises. The action will also contribute to the overall safety, digitalisation, and sustainability of transport in the region. In addition, the action will continue to enhance the capacity of the beneficiaries in the areas of aviation safety and thus contributing to strengthened interconnectivity of the Partner countries with the EU and among themselves and thus foster regional integration of economies.

In line with the Joint Communication for the EaP policy beyond 2020, the EU will continue to provide support in regional fora, including targeted sectoral assistance, in line with the principles of inclusiveness and differentiation. In such a way the support will provide the added value in areas that are critical for strengthening economic resilience and thus improving citizens' lives.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1. Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to enhance capabilities to implement EU aviation *acquis* requirements of Common Aviation Area agreements and to increase the level of civil aviation safety in the Eastern Partner Countries.

The Specific(s) Objective(s) (Outcomes) of this action are to

1. Improve the beneficiaries' levels of regulatory harmonisation with the relevant EU aviation *acquis*, including in the areas of safety, environmental protection, economic regulation, security, ATM and passenger rights, and
2. Support the beneficiaries in establishing functioning and effective safety regulatory and oversight systems.

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) capability for the transposition of EU aviation *acquis* increased
- 1.2 contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1) capability for the implementation of EU aviation *acquis* increased
- 1.3 contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1) progress review ensured

2.1 contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2) the level of functioning safety oversight system increased

3.2. Indicative Activities

Indicative activities will comprise technical, capacity-building and training activities, will build on deliverables and outcomes of the previous projects and offer further support in all relevant aviation domains, including for aviation safety in areas such as airworthiness (AIR), flight operations (OPS), aircrew (PEL), Air Traffic Management (ATM/ANS), Accident Investigation (AIG), aerodromes (AGA), ground handling, environment and other newly emerging topics (e.g. drones, cybersecurity, etc.), Safety Management (State Safety Programme (SSP), Safety Management System (SMS)) related aspects. Other activities will comprise regulatory capacity building in areas such as security, ATM/Single European Sky aspects, economic regulation, and passenger rights regulation.

Activities related to Output 1.1 capability for the transposition of EU aviation acquis increased:

In the context of the implementation of the Common Aviation Area agreements, the beneficiaries need to be able to follow, understand and programme/plan the transposition of the applicable EU regulatory requirements into their national systems in a most efficient and effective way.

In this respect, the project will support the beneficiaries in establishing plans and prioritisation criteria in order to facilitate transposing the relevant legislation as well as in setting up a proper system to follow the new developments and keep pace with the latest updates of the relevant EU legislation. The activities will therefore be organised in a form of:

- **review of primary** (aviation acts, accident investigation acts) **and secondary legislation**, where the project will support the review of the legislation and provide recommendations to facilitate the transposition of the EU aviation *acquis*
- **workshops on EU aviation acquis**, where the project will organise different activities in view of explaining EU aviation *acquis*, its impact and transposition requirements, addressing also questions and concerns beneficiaries might have in transposing EU *acquis* into their national legal systems.
- **support in development of correlation tables and transposition roadmaps/plans**, where needed. To enable countries to follow-up the progress and/or compare the national legal texts with the corresponding EU legislation, the project will provide support in developing the transposition roadmaps/plans and correlation tables.

The beneficiaries are at a different transposition level, therefore the activities will be tailored to the situation and needs of each individual country.

Activities related to Output 1.2 capability for the implementation of EU aviation acquis increased:

Complementary to transposition is the implementation of the EU aviation *acquis*. A proper implementation requires, among other, adapted internal procedures/processes/manuals and qualified personnel. Therefore, the project will also aim at increasing the level of operational readiness and the capabilities of local experts through different activities in the form of:

- **training and workshops** addressing different domains/areas, depending on the state of play in beneficiary states and on their needs. The activities will be organised as regional or as bilateral activities.

- ***experience exchanges, study visits, on-the-job training, whether on-site and/or in an EU Member State National Aviation Authorities (NAA) and training organisations, and EU experts' shadowing local audits in the beneficiary States*** will complement and upgrade knowledge of experts and will be tailored to each beneficiary needs. These activities will allow participants from beneficiaries to gain knowledge from experience and best practice, obtain access to working methods of the EU competent authorities and establish good working relations with EU stakeholders as well as to obtain a good understanding of tasks performed at EU NAA.
- ***review of existing national internal procedures/processes/manuals***, where the project will support the review of procedures/processes/manuals and provide recommendations to facilitate the adaptation of the documents.
- ***support to participation in aviation related meetings and EASA technical meetings and working groups***. Attendance at such meetings will allow participants to discuss practical implementation of regulations with EASA and EU NAA experts and be informed about the latest changes in regulations, establish good working relations with EU stakeholders, obtain a good understanding of tasks performed at EASA etc.

Those activities will be delivered in parallel to – and based on the progress in - the transposition related activities.

Activities related to Output 1.3 progress review ensured:

The beneficiaries need to be able to follow and understand the transposition and implementation of the applicable EU regulatory requirements into their national systems. In this respect the project will support the beneficiaries in identifying and comparing the regulatory requirements and standards of EU and a beneficiary and setting out actions to be taken and by when by a beneficiary.

To establish the status and monitor the progress the following activities are envisaged:

- ***inception/initial review visits*** to establish the level of compliance with EU regulatory requirements and development of a document, which will identify and compare the regulatory requirements and standards of EU and a beneficiary, setting out actions to be taken by a beneficiary, including the timeline for their implementation. The document should serve as a tool, both for the project and for a beneficiary, to monitor the progress in the transposition and implementation.
- ***annual review visits*** to verify progress in the transposition and implementation as compared to the status identified after inception/initial visits and included in the document mentioned above
- ***final review visits***, which will in addition to verifying the progress also provide recommendations for the future

The envisaged activities to establish the status of and monitoring the progress in terms of transposition and implementation of the applicable EU regulatory requirements will feed into and be coordinated with the Commission's assessments of the level of implementation of the EU *acquis*, as foreseen under the respective common aviation area agreements.

Activities related to Output 2.1 the level of functioning safety oversight system increased.

The project will aim at increasing compliance level by supporting activities in the form of:

- ***Support to development of management system components*** with the aim of supporting the development of missing components as well as implementation. In several beneficiary authorities, a management system is not fully established as required by the domain specific authority requirements (OPS, FCL, etc.) embedded in the EU legislation. For example, this refers to the absence of a properly described and functioning compliance, state safety programme and safety management system, an undefined training policy, the oversight programmes not being risk-based, missing process descriptions and inspector guidance material and inspection tools as well as a missing assessment of competence of staff.
- ***Support in the preparation and follow-up to safety audits/inspections and implementation of activities***, with the aim of supporting beneficiaries in preparing for the audits/inspections and defining and implementing corrective actions resulting from various audits/inspections (e.g. EASA SAFA, ICAO USOAP). Implementation of inadequate corrective measures has negative impact on the compliance level as well on the capacity of the aviation authorities and results in decreased level of safety, repetitive findings and negative public perception of the aviation system in the countries.

Where necessary and in synergies with the initiatives of the same scope, the action will assist beneficiaries on the EU Air Safety list in rectifying safety deficiencies identified as part of the Union's Air Safety List activities.

3.3. Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Biodiversity

The environmental and climate change risk screenings carried out in the design stage concluded that no further action was required. The action is primarily focused on the engagement with the beneficiary countries to encourage adherence to the international conventions, approximation with the EU legislation in the field of aviation safety and security and application of international and European standards, as well as capacity building.

Based on the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) carried out during design phase, the action was classified as Category C (no need for further assessment). Based on the Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) carried out on, it can be concluded that this action is low risk.

While the EU is the strongest advocate of international action for the environment, it accounts for only 11% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Global progress, particularly in aviation, is therefore conditional on the actions and policies of the EU's strategic partners. Against a backdrop of continued, rapidly rising global aviation emissions, measures are needed to significantly reduce aviation's impact on climate. Aviation has a critical role to play in meeting the Paris Agreement objective of limiting the global temperature rise from human induced climate change to well below 2°C, to which the Union has committed.

In line with EU norms and the Commission's medium-term environmental goals for the period 2014-2020 and long-term targets for 2030, EASA will offset the carbon emissions from flights undertaken during the implementation of this Action. High quality off-setting projects can be selected in the partner countries, where they can provide social and economic benefit and can be used for strategic and diplomatic purposes, enhancing the political visibility of the intervention.

The technical activities related to cooperation on environmental issues (e.g. noise and fuel/engine emissions) have the potential to contribute to the better environmental performance of the aviation sector and have the potential to have a lasting impact beyond the lifetime of the project. The project will aim to promote ICAO's

Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSA), where offsetting phase is being implemented as of 2021, Sustainable Aviation Fuels and European regulatory framework in this area, as well as promotion of noise and engine emissions standards.

EASA is placed to make every effort to minimize the environmental impact of the project. CO2 emissions related to project travel will be off-set where possible.

In addition, one of the specific objectives (outcomes) of the action is to improve the beneficiaries' level of regulatory harmonisation with the relevant EU aviation acquis, including in the area of environmental protection. As most of the beneficiaries are signatories of the Common Aviation Area agreement, the project will support the transposition as well as the implementation of the latest versions of the EU aviation acquis. The Common Aviation Area agreements have been envisaged to allow gradual market opening between the EU and its neighbours linked with regulatory convergence and the implementation of common high safety, security, environmental and other standards. The agreement in one of its annexes include the list of acquis to be transposed and implemented, and one of the areas cover environment.

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that the gender equality is an important and deliberate objective but not the principal reason of the action, thus, it will be mainstreamed in the activities. For example, the action will support the empowerment of women in aviation on all the managing bodies and activities of the action. The action will be coherent with the EU Gender Equality Strategy⁸ and the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III⁹. The evaluation and monitoring framework of the action will consider gender-disaggregated indicators.

The integration of gender considerations throughout this Action will be important for its long-term sustainability and effectiveness. Research shows that when women are able to access entrepreneurial opportunities, they are effective at driving sustainable solutions.

In addition, ensuring the effective participation of women in decision-making processes enables women to act as agents of change and regional cooperation as well as climate change related actions considerably benefit from the insights, knowledge and other resources that women bring in creating effective and sustainable solutions.

The equitable involvement of women and men is recognised as key to driving sustainable growth of the aviation industry as a whole and is promoted as such under ICAO Gender Equality Programme Promoting the Participation of Women in the Global Aviation Sector and the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals Programme. This Action will use existing dedicated tools and guidelines to ensure gender and equitable involvement of women and men in its activities.

Human Rights

Developing sustainable transport connectivity with balanced integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions is closely linked with human rights, particularly in developing countries. An effective response to the adverse social impacts arising from transport construction and operations requires the cooperation of communities. As such, interventions that benefit people and protect their rights garner support and help to foster ambitious approaches.

Ambitious action at a local, regional and global scale also directly protects people and their rights and can deliver positive outcomes in terms of sustainable development. Decisions taken by the UN in relation to the

⁸ COM(2020) 152 final

⁹ JOIN (2020) 17 final.

participation of local communities, access to information, gender equality, gender balance and environmental and social safeguards demonstrate a commitment to human rights. This Action will contribute to upholding these commitments.

3.4. Risks and Lessons Learned

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/Medium/Low)	Impact (High/Medium/Low)	Mitigating measures
External environment	Risk 1 Political instability and security constrains	M	M	Strong existing cooperation with existing administration (i.e. notably ministries of health) to ensure continuity despite political changes. Flexibility in implementation to account for change of priorities.
External environment ; People and the organisation	Risk 2 Insufficient/sustainable human resources and technical expertise	H	H	Partner countries will be asked at the inception phase of the project to commit enough resources for the implementation of the programme.
External environment : people and the organisation	Risk 3 Fluctuation or rotations of management and expert staff	M	M	Comprehensive evaluation and discussions with beneficiaries
Legality and regularity aspects	Risk 4 Various interpretations of rules and requirements	M	M	This risk is considered as medium, but this will be mitigated by providing appropriate training and information on the experience of Member States implementing these rules and requirements.
Communication and information; Planning, processes and systems	Risk 5 Complexity of the programme	M	M	Complexity due to the participation of a larger number of countries, beneficiary institutions and administrations. This risk is considered medium, but the implementing bodies will mitigate this risk by having a strong project monitoring system established.
Communication and information	Risk 6 Lack of coordination between similar simultaneous projects and initiatives of relevant regional cooperation	M	M	To mitigate this risk a technical coordination mechanism will be integrated in the organisational set-up of the project (see below).

Lessons Learned:

A long-term cooperation approach is needed for advocacy work. The cooperation achievements and experience gained in previous project together with the trust established with partner countries is an excellent platform for a new cooperation project to build on. Achievements and lessons learned from previous project, which should be considered as important references for new project, include the following:

- There has been a great level of interest and commitment from partner countries. The partner countries have also shown clear expectations to continue providing support and are in need of further support, primarily in the field of aviation safety.
- All partner countries have limited capacity (human and financial), which, in addition to the high fluctuation and/or rotation of not only managing positions but also technical staff, have had an impact on the progress in the transposition and implementation of EU aviation *acquis* as well as on non-implementation of certain follow-up actions. Nevertheless, the participation of highly motivated staff to training sessions and other events has been observed.
- EU visibility and awareness of European aviation expertise has been increased
- A shift to a more tailored bilateral support has been seen beneficial and has a bigger effect to achieve changes in the partner states. This should continue also under the new project, unless regionally organised event proves to be more efficient and beneficial.
- Presence of the partner countries is essential not only for project's visibility but also to maintain a continuous dialogue on cooperation topics and priorities. While transposition of legislation is important, emphasis should be given to practical implementation and enforcement.

The COVID-19 world pandemic, as well as conflicts in some countries, had a profound impact on aviation, not only globally, but also in the partner countries. The pandemic has not only decreased the traffic and therefore financial resources of the partner states' civil aviation administrations, but also had an impact on shifting the focus of priorities and tasks.

3.5. The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that improving the beneficiaries' levels of regulatory harmonisation with the relevant EU aviation *acquis* and increasing the level of civil aviation safety is one of the key elements vital for strengthening the interconnectivity between the Eastern partner Countries and the EU. This can be ensured by providing the support required by the national civil aviation authorities for the transposition and implementation of the relevant EU aviation *acquis* and application of standards and in establishing functioning and effective safety regulatory and oversight systems.

The action's capacity to implement the activities within the outline priority areas will depend on and will be addressed through a combination of tailored-made technical assistance and training activities. The implementation of activities across all outputs of the action requires technical expertise, which will be coordinated by EASA.

For this purpose, the action will conduct activities aimed at improving the beneficiaries' capacities to transpose and implement the EU aviation *acquis* and application of standards and in enhancing the level of functioning safety oversight system of the relevant national administrations

3.6. Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

Results	Results chain: Main expected results [maximum 10]	Indicators [it least one indicator per expected result]	Baselines (values and years) ¹⁰	Targets (values and years) ¹¹	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	Enhance capabilities to implement EU aviation <i>acquis</i> requirements of Common Aviation Area agreements and to increase the level of civil aviation safety in the Eastern Partner Countries.	Alignment level of beneficiaries with the EU aviation <i>acquis</i>	Current EaP beneficiary status report on transposition and implementation of regulations contained in Annex I to the CAA Agreements	Status reports shows increased alignment in each EaP beneficiary country	Project reports Assessment visit reports	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 1	1 Beneficiaries' levels of regulatory harmonisation with the relevant EU aviation <i>acquis</i> , including in the areas of safety, environmental protection, economic regulation, security, ATM and passenger rights improved	1.1 Number of CAA agreement Annex I regulations with improved transposition 1.2 Number of CAA agreement Annex I regulations with improved implementation status	1.1 Current EaP beneficiary country status report on transposition of regulations contained in CAA agreements 1.2 Current EaP beneficiary country status report on implementation	1.1 Transposition status improved for at least 5 regulations contained in CAA agreement in at least 4 EaP beneficiary countries 1.2 Implementation status improved for at least 3 regulations	Project reports Assessment review reports	Political and economic stability in the countries Commitment and willingness of the governments concerned to define and implement the organisational integrity of

¹⁰ Baseline values will be inserted at a later stage in the description of the action

¹¹ Idem

			of regulations contained in CAA agreement	contained in CAA agreement in at least 4 EaP beneficiaries		national civil aviation authorities in line with European standards and practice
Outcome 2	2. Support to the beneficiaries in establishing functioning and effective safety regulatory and oversight systems provided.	1.1 Number of SSP gap analysis reviewed with actions identified	1.1 Current EaP beneficiary country status report on the SSP gap analysis	1.1 SSP gap analysis updated in at least 2 EaP Beneficiary countries with actions defined	SSP gap analysis reports Project reports	Continuous policy orientation towards closer integration into the EU, and adoption of the EU <i>acquis</i> Commitment and willingness of the civil aviation authorities to implement a sector reform process

						High level of cooperation between all levels of national authorities involved in legislative process Availability and engagement of qualified staff and resources
Output 1 related to Outcome 1	1.1 Capability for the transposition of EU aviation <i>acquis</i> is increased	1.1.1 Number of primary/secondary legislation reviewed 1.1.2 Number of participants attending legislation transposition workshops 2.1.3 Number of correlation tables and transposition roadmaps/plans	1.1.1 0 1.1.2 0 1.1.3 0	1.1.1 10 1.1.2 20 (gender disaggregated) 1.1.3 3	List of participants Correlation tables/transposition roadmaps/plans Project reports	Full commitment of all involved parties Commitment and support of EaP beneficiaries' management
Output 2 related to Outcome 1	1.2 Capability for the implementation of EU aviation <i>acquis</i> is increased	1.2.1 Total number of participants attending training/workshops (sex disaggregated data)	1.2.1 0 1.2.2 0 1.2.3 0 1.2.4 0 1.2.5 0	1.2.1 70 (gender disaggregated) 1.2.2 10	List of participants Feedback from participants	Stable management

		<p>1.2.2 Total number of participants attending experience exchanges and study visits (sex disaggregated data)</p> <p>1.2.3 Total number of participants receiving on-the-job training (sex disaggregated data)</p> <p>1.2.4 Total number of shadowing local audits</p> <p>1.2.5 Total number of reviewed national internal procedures/processes/manuals</p> <p>1.2.6 Number of EaP beneficiaries with improved internal procedures/processes/manuals</p> <p>1.2.7 Number of participants provided with travel and per diems to participate in meetings, seminars, workshops and working groups (sex disaggregated data)</p>	<p>1.2.6 0</p> <p>1.2.7 0</p>	<p>1.2.3 15</p> <p>(gender disaggregated)</p> <p>1.2.4 10</p> <p>1.2.5 5</p> <p>1.2.6 3</p> <p>1.2.7 15</p>	<p>(satisfaction survey)</p> <p>Project reports</p>	<p>structure in EaP beneficiaries</p> <p>Sufficient capacity in the respective EaP beneficiary</p> <p>Availability of staff that will participate in project activities from the beginning to project completion</p> <p>Trained staff are retained</p>
Output 3 related to Outcome 1	1.3 Progress review is ensured	1.3.1 Total number of inception/initial review visits	<p>1.3.1 0</p> <p>1.3.2 0</p>	<p>1.3.1 4</p> <p>1.3.2 8</p>	<p>Review visit reports</p>	<p>Full commitment</p>

		1.3.2 Total number of annual review visits 1.3.3 Total number of final review visits	1.3.3 0	1.3.3 4	Project reports	of all involved parties Sufficient capacity in the respective EaP beneficiary Availability of the staff that will participate in the activity
Output 1 related to Outcome 2	2.1 Level of functioning safety oversight system is increased	2.2.1 Number of support activities with relation to the development of management system components 2.2.2 Number of preparation and follow-up to safety audits/inspections activities 2.2.3 Number of EaP beneficiaries with corrective action plans drafted	2.2.1 0 2.2.2 0 2.2.3 0	2.2.1 4 2.2.2 4 2.2.3 2	Project reports	

4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1. Financing Agreement

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

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 60 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 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.

4.3.1. Indirect Management with a EU specialised (traditional/regulatory) agency

This action may be implemented in indirect management with European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). This implementation entails carrying out activities identified in section 3. EASA has been selected for attaining the objectives, outcomes and outputs specified in section 3 by the Commission's services based on the fact that the entity has strong technical expertise and knowledge of the aviation sector and managing aviation related projects both inside the EU and in the EaP countries. The envisaged entity has been selected using the following criteria: the nature of the action, its operational capacity, and value added of its experience and expertise on the EU-aviation *acquis*.

EASA is a key player in the European Union's aviation system. Its mission is among others to promote European Union aviation safety standards and rules at international level by establishing appropriate cooperation with competent authorities of third countries and international organisation

In accordance with Article 90(1) and (6) of Regulation (EC) 2018/1139 on common rules in the field of civil aviation and establishing a European Union Safety Agency (EASA Basic Regulation), the Agency assists the Commission in its management of relations with third countries and international organisations. The Agency may also engage in ad hoc technical cooperation, research and assistance projects with third countries and international organisations.

The proposed action aims at delivering a range of activities of a specific technical scope and characteristics to enhance the transposition and implementation of civil aviation safety and security standards and thus requires a particular type of entity with necessary level of experience, expertise and expertise as well as operational and technical capacity to coordinate its implementation. Furthermore, as an EU decentralised agency, EASA is conferred with competences in drafting implementing rules in most aspects in the area, certifying and approving products and organisations, in fields where EASA has exclusive competence (e.g. airworthiness), providing oversight and support to Member States in fields where EASA has shared competence (e.g. Air Operations, Air Traffic Management) as well as promoting the use of European standards. EASA is equipped to cooperate with international actors in order to achieve the highest safety level for EU citizens globally (e.g. EU safety list, Third Country Operators authorisations). Carrying out these range of tasks responsibilities are

the solid basis for execution of the proposed activities. In addition, the proposed beneficiary countries have already signed the working arrangements with EASA, thus establishing the framework for technical cooperation.

EASA is selected as implementing partner for this project as the Agency is:

1. Is a counterpart aviation authority / RSOO and as such an good interlocutor for building the bridge between projects and political views;
2. Can group regionally present EU member states and EU industry under a partnership to cover the whole spectrum of aviation safety, security and environmental protection within aviation;
3. Has developed experience, procedures and tools for channelling technical assistance in a sustainable manner as evidence by their experience in implementation of the ongoing project;
4. Is the technical source of EU aviation safety legislation and environmental protection within aviation, as well as a source of aviation intelligence;
5. Provides coordination, efficiency and visibility at EU level for the EU’s actions in the field of aviation.

The aim is to implement in cooperation with regionally present national aviation authorities of EU Member States, airlines, accident investigation bodies, airport operators, maintenance repair and overhaul organisations, training schools, Air Navigation Service Providers and EU industry to deliver a full spectrum of EU aviation expertise to the project. Cooperation will also be sought with other EU bodies (e.g. SESAR) and Eurocontrol.

In addition, EASA has proved to be effective in the implementation of the current project, establishing contacts with the civil aviation administrations. EASA was highly praised by the beneficiary countries during the final steering committee meeting of the ongoing project for its overall coordination and delivery of foreseen outputs and results. It is thus necessary to ensure that the implementation of the future action is done by EASA in order to ensure continuity of activities, preserving the gained experience and contacts in the beneficiary countries. Therefore, the Agency is the most suited to achieve the necessary results as the above elements give clear evidence of the specific experience, capacities and mandate in the fields of intervention.

If negotiations with the above-mentioned entity fail, that part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with alternative entity e.g. international organisation with expertise in aviation safety and security (ICAO – International Civil Aviation Organisation) or under the indirect management with ECAC – European Civil Aviation Conference as they are not pillar assessed. The implementation by one of these alternative entity would be justified because of the following criteria: technical expertise and capacity to ensure carrying out capacity-building activities and actions aimed at harmonising the regulatory legislation with the international standards. Should negotiations with another international organisations also fail, the action may be implemented in direct management.

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)
Indirect management with EU decentralised agency	4,500,000.00
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	will be covered by another decision
Communication and visibility – cf. section 6	N.A.
Totals	4,500,000.00

4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

A Steering Committee shall be established for the project within the action to ensure coordination and complementarity of the different project activities. It will comprise representatives of the European Commissions to ensure strategic guidance of the actions, with DG NEAR as contracting authority and DG MOVE for thematic guidance, as well as implementing partners and other stakeholders as appropriate. The steering committee will meet at least once a year and on a case-by-case basis if such a necessity arises. Performance, monitoring and reporting, including in terms of visibility obligations, of the Action will be undertaken in accordance with signed agreement and will be presented by EASA during the steering committee's meetings.

In addition, EASA will ensure that regular exchanges and consultations where relevant with International Civil Aviation Organization, the European Civil Aviation Conference, national civil aviation administrations, EUDs and other Commission services (geographical units/desks, Support Group for Ukraine, etc.) through a technical coordination mechanism. This will ensure that the implementation of the action is fully aligned with the national objectives but also strengthen project coordination processes to avoid risk of duplication of financing and overlap of activities, create synergies and complementarity between different actions and initiatives. As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the Commission will be informed and may, where relevant, participate in the abovementioned technical coordination mechanism.

EASA will also manage the action in close cooperation with the main stakeholders, counterpart institutions, national regulatory institutions and administrations. EASA shall closely coordinate with the relevant EU Delegations in consultation with DG NEAR.

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). Performance measurement will be based on the intervention logic and the log frame matrix, including its indicators.

Internal monitoring:

Each of the project activity is related to specific outcomes/outputs and equipped with quantified indicators and deliverables. Throughout the implementation, the achieved results will be checked against original activity plans and project deliverables set as milestones. Indicator-based reporting will be performed based on the Logframe. Relevant indicators will have to be disaggregated by country, geographic unit, age group, and gender. Where feasible, data specific for most vulnerable groups should be included.

EASA as the implementing partner will be responsible for the day-to-day execution and monitoring of the activities. In case of discrepancies, the project team will propose and introduce corrective measures. The normal procedure for eliminating discrepancies will be (a) recognition of discrepancy, (b) estimation of the level of discrepancy and potential impact (time, quantity and quality wise), (c) definition of reasons (internal and external), (d) preparation of a contingency plan (responsibilities, activities), (e) implementation of a contingency plan and (f) review.

DG NEAR will be regularly updated on progress made and any issues encountered. EU Delegations in beneficiary countries will be systematically informed of annual project work plans and on the progress of any bilateral activity within the project.

DG MOVE will be regularly consulted by NEAR and the EASA project team on thematic issues. They will be invited to participate in steering committee meetings.

Regular internal reporting will be established at the onset of the project with all project stakeholders and will contribute to the overall project evaluation reporting. While the monitoring will be a constant process, at the key milestones of the project, internal evaluation will be implemented.

It is foreseen that the progress and work plan of the project will be monitored and discussed by a steering committee composed of EASA and other implementing bodies if the case may be, the civil aviation authorities of the beneficiary countries, and the European Commission services.

The project will be subject to the internal monitoring procedures of EASA. The project might be object of result-oriented monitoring (ROM) by the European Commission.

5.2. Evaluation

Having regard to the importance of the action, a final evaluation 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 complexity and the various topics covered by the action.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 3 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. 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. 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. Communication activities in the partner countries shall be implemented in accordance with the country-specific guidelines issued by the respective EU Delegation.