



EN

THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the 2023 action plan part III in favour of the Regional South Neighbourhood

Action Document for “Regional EU-Israel cooperation in support of the Abraham Accords, and fight against antisemitism and fostering Jewish life”

ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

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

1. SYNOPSIS

1.1. Action Summary Table

1. Title OPSYS Basic Act	“Regional EU-Israel cooperation in support of the Abraham Accords, and fight against antisemitism and fostering Jewish life” 2023 annual action plan part III in favour of the Regional South Neighbourhood OPSYS business reference: ACT-62420 ABAC Commitment level 1 number: JAD.1365188 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe).
2. Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)	No
EIP Flagship	No
3. Team Europe Initiative	No
4. Beneficiar(y)/(ies) of the action	The Action shall be carried out in Israel and in the Middle East and Northern Africa region ¹

¹ See [NDICI regulation, Annex 1](#), list of countries and territories in the Neighbourhood Area. With regards to Israel, the eligibility criteria formulated in Commission Notice Nr. 2013/C-205/05 (OJEU C-205 of 19.07.2013) shall apply to the implementing modalities linked to this Action Programme. This notice, entitled "Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards." Entities established in Member States of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf which have normalised relations with Israel (including Bahrein and the United Arab Emirates) should also be eligible to apply.

5. Programming document	Multiannual Indicative Programme for the Southern Neighbourhood for the period 2021-2027 ²			
6. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results	Priority Area 5: Support to the main drivers of regional integration.			
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION				
7. Priority Area(s), sectors	N.A.			
8. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	<p>Main Sustainable Development Goal (SDG):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SDG 16 – Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice <p>Other significant SDGs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all - SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all - SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all - SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts - SDG 17 – Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development 			
9. DAC code(s)	43010 – Multisector Aid – 100%			
10. Main Delivery Channel	Public sector institutions – 1000 Non-governmental organisations and civil society – 2000 Private sector institution – 60000			
11. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
12. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

² Commission Implementing Decision C(2021)9399 of 16.12.2021 on a Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for the Southern Neighbourhood.

	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Internal markers and Tags	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	EIP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	EIP Flagship	YES <input type="checkbox"/>		NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Tags	YES		NO
	transport	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	energy	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	environment, climate resilience	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	digital	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	economic development (incl. private sector, trade and macroeconomic support)	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	human development (incl. human capital and youth)	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	health resilience	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	migration and mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	agriculture, food security and rural development	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
rule of law, governance and public administration reform	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
other	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Digitalisation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Tags	YES		NO	
digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
digital governance	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
digital entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
digital skills/literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
digital services	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tags	YES		NO
digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
energy	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
transport	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
health	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
education and research	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Migration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<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			
14. Amounts concerned	Budget lines: 14.020110 – Southern Neighbourhood Total estimated cost: EUR 18 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 18 000 000 The contribution is for an amount of EUR 18 000 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2023.		
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION			
15. Implementation modalities (management mode and delivery methods)	Direct management through: - Grants - Twinning grants - Procurement		

1.2. Summary of the Action

This Action aims to reinforce EU-Israel bilateral relations, in a wider effort to strengthen regional stability in support of the Abraham Accords, in particular in light of the Hamas attack on Israel on 7 October and the subsequent escalation which is exacerbating regional tensions and risks serious spill overs in the neighbouring countries. The Action is structured along three objectives contributing to different strands of EU-Israel cooperation:

1. Support to the normalisation process between Israel and some Arab countries;³
2. Support to the global fight against antisemitism;
3. Support to strategic policy dialogues and exchanges between the EU and Israel, including the development of technical capabilities and approximation of EU-Israel legislation.

It aims at deepening the EU-Israel relations by framing interactions and collaborations at three different levels. First, the Action aims at building on the EU's involvement in the region in order to explore opportunities for regional and trilateral cooperation, and facilitate and accompany the framing interactions, and development of joint initiatives between Israel and countries in the region in support of the Abraham Accords, thus opening up new perspectives for business, people, trade (in particular trade facilitation), investment, transport,

³ See NDICI regulation, Annex 1, list of countries and territories in the Neighbourhood Area; Member States of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf which have normalised relations with Israel (including Bahrein and the United Arab Emirates).

research, energy, addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation, environmental protection, disaster preparedness as well as in a number of other areas, with a view to leveraging the broader regional context. Second, the Action seeks to support the global fight against antisemitism, given the unprecedented increase of antisemitic incidents since the attack by Hamas against Israel on 7 October. Third, the Action aims at strengthening the existing EU-Israel cooperation by exploring opportunities to strengthen the sustainability of policy approximations.

The Action aims to support Israel with the implementation of regional cooperation; specifically by:

- 1) Supporting policy/cooperation dialogue between Israel and the countries of the region including Arab countries, in particular those that have normalised diplomatic relations with Israel;
- 2) Supporting the identification, formulation and implementation of pilot actions of regional cooperation;
- 3) Supporting the identification and implementation of twinning projects to capitalise on the experience that Israel could bring to the region;
- 4) Support policy/cooperation dialogue between the EU and the government of Israel, and;
- 5) Supporting strategic communication and public diplomacy.

The Action supports the EU-Israel Action Plan. The whole action is in line with the new Agenda for the Mediterranean⁴ (February 2021), the statement on the EU position at the EU-Israel Association Council (October 2022)⁵, and with subsequent statements on the EU position agreed by Member States since October 2023. The Action also aims at improving the prospects for the resumption of the Middle East Peace Process. The Action is also compatible with the objectives of the EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life (2021-2030)⁶.

It also contributes to the implementation of the European Science Diplomacy Agenda⁷.

This action will also address SDGs 16, 6, 7, 8, 13 and 17 by contributing to stronger public and political support for regional cooperation, stability, Arab-Israeli peace and reconciliation, and by addressing a number of common regional challenges including adaptation to climate change, transition to renewable energy and energy efficiency, water management or food security.

1.3. Beneficiaries of the action

Whilst Israel is maintaining the central beneficiary role of the first component of the Action, the overarching goal is to strengthen regional stability and integration.

The Action is of a global, trans-regional or regional nature, fostering regional cooperation. Due to the project's nature and the importance to ensure extended regional coverage, the eligibility of the Action extends exceptionally to the countries or territories in the Middle East, Gulf region and North Africa, as their participation constitutes a substantial element to ensure the coherence and effectiveness of Union financing. Regarding the Gulf region it is expected that the stakeholders will be predominantly non-State actors.

RATIONALE

1.4. Context

On 7 October, Hamas carried out an unprecedented attack against Israel, killing 1,200 Israelis, wounding at least 3,000 and taking civilians and soldiers as hostages into the Gaza Strip. Following the attack, Israel has started military action against Hamas in the Gaza strip, which is still ongoing.

⁴ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint_communication_renewed_partnership_southern_neighbourhood.pdf

⁵ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/59337/st13103-en22.pdf>

⁶ https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2021-10/eu-strategy-on-combating-antisemitism-and-fostering-jewish-life_october2021_en.pdf

⁷ <https://www.science-diplomacy.eu/library/era-policy-agenda/>

The European Council on 26-27 October 2023 reiterated its condemnation in the strongest possible terms of Hamas for its brutal and indiscriminate terrorist attacks across Israel. The European Council strongly emphasises Israel's right to defend itself in line with international law and international humanitarian law.⁸

In September 2020, leaders from Bahrain, Israel, and the United Arab Emirates signed **Abraham Accords**. A few months later, on 10 December 2020, Israel and Morocco also signed a normalisation agreement. These series of agreements have contributed to an important policy shift in the region in which these Arab states have chosen to cooperate more closely with Israel on various topics such as security, trade, and environmental issues. These agreements have in fact an open character, allowing for cooperation in multiple areas, including on a people-to-people level. Israel's commitment to strengthen its relations with its new partners further materialised through the adoption of a formal framework for regional cooperation: **the Negev Forum** in September 2022, with the participation of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Morocco, the United States of America and the State of Israel. The Forum includes six working groups (Food Security and Water Technology, Clean Energy, tourism, healthcare, education and Co-existence and regional security) expected to advance initiatives and projects in furtherance of the core objectives of the Forum.

The EU welcomed the announcement of the normalisation of relations between Israel and Arab countries and considered the process as beneficial both for the countries directly involved as well as for the stabilisation of the region as a whole.⁹ Building on this, the “new Agenda for the Mediterranean”,¹⁰ published in February 2021 and endorsed by the European Council in April 2021, states that “the EU will also be ready to explore and support further regional, sub-regional or trilateral cooperation and joint initiatives between partner countries across the board in light of the recent normalisation of relations between Israel and a number of Arab countries”. The EU reiterated this position at the 12th meeting of the EU-Israel Association Council of 3 October 2022 and, in its Statement,¹¹ declared that it will seek to encourage and build upon the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and a number of Arab countries with a view to enhancing the prospects to reach a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East Peace Process.

In that context, the EU adopted in December 2022 the Special Measure for Israel 2022 for an initial envelope of EUR 2 million, to provide technical assistance “to support Israel on regional cooperation and joint initiatives”.¹² This subsequent initiative will identify and support the formulation of concrete projects, as well as liaise with key stakeholders and relevant partner countries in support of the normalisation agenda as well as to facilitate/coordinate the preparatory work and mobilise support and ownership among relevant stakeholders. In this sense, it will also play a role in allowing outreach to Gulf countries, including UAE, to further explore synergies and to see ownership for any potential undertaking.

On 5 October 2021, the European Commission adopted an EU strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life. It expressed its commitment therein to lead the global fight against antisemitism and fostering Jewish life, and to cooperate with Israel to that end.¹³ It also underlined the need to contribute to Holocaust remembrance, education and research as well as to preserve and honour the legacy of Holocaust survivors to make sure that their stories are not forgotten and are retold accurately.

The European Green Deal¹⁴ will offer important guidance on ways to engage more strategically on topics linked to environment, climate change adaptation and mitigation. And Israel, due to its recent policy

⁸ EUCO 14/23 [20241027-european-council-conclusions.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁹ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/08/15/declaration-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-european-union-on-the-announcement-of-a-normalisation-of-relations-between-israel-and-the-uae/>

¹⁰ Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, “Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood A new Agenda for the Mediterranean”, JOIN(2021) 2 final

¹¹ Statement of the European Union, Twelfth Meeting of the EU-Israel Association Council, 3 October 2022)

¹² C(2022) 9946 final

¹³ COM (2021) 615 final

¹⁴ COM(2019) 640 final

commitment to advance on the green transition agenda, is an important partner to revert global challenges into new avenues to boost resilience and competitiveness.

1.5. Problem Analysis

Short problem analysis

The re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and some neighbourhood countries has opened new possibilities of increased regional cooperation. Since August 2020, Israel has opened diplomatic representative offices in each of the countries with which it has normalised relations: UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco. Direct air routes and flights operate between Israel and Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Manama, Casablanca and Marrakesh. Ministers and leading figures from all the countries have conducted reciprocal official visits and have signed cooperation agreements in a wide range of areas. In addition, businesspeople have mapped opportunities and formulated joint models, dozens of civilian initiatives have been launched, while the security ties have also been tightened. While significant progress has been achieved, there is still a long way to go before the potential of the Agreements is fully realised. The agreements enjoy high-level political support, however, public attitudes across the board are slower to change. A lot of potential is therefore to be found in the promotion of regional projects that can show the population the benefits of regional cooperation.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is key in the complex regional scenario. The relaunch of the Middle East Peace Process is a priority for the EU. The conflict affects Israeli relations with Arab countries in the region. For instance, it is part of the discussions between Israel and Saudi Arabia on a possible normalisation of their relations. On one side, it is therefore important that the normalisation process brings benefits in the context of Israeli-Palestinian relations. On the other side, an improvement of Israeli-Palestinian relations would facilitate the fulfilment of the Agreements overall potential.

In this context, this Action intends to exploit opportunities for closer regional cooperation to address a number of common regional challenges that require a shared international effort, including the transition to renewable energy and energy efficiency, (transboundary) water management, food security, disaster preparedness, transnational health and social issues, and adaptation to climate change, also in the form of trilateral or multilateral cooperation with other partners in the Mediterranean. The Action could also benefit from the synergies with Science Diplomacy initiative initiated by the EU Delegation to Israel, in the wake of the Abraham Accords.

At the same time, the normalisation agreements could create new opportunities to leverage the broader regional context, including in relation to the Middle East Peace Process.

In full association with the Council, the action contributes to associating the EU to the work of the Negev Forum Working Groups. The Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs announced in a briefing to the diplomatic community that the different working groups will be open for other states and financial institutions to act as observers or to promote a concrete project to address a regional challenge; the EU could follow up further developments and spot potential opportunities for cooperation with this new format. This will allow to bring EU political objectives to the discussions of the forum.

At the same time, this Action seeks to capitalise on the extensive experience Israel has gained in the alignment with the EU legislative framework using Twinning and TAIEX in areas such as, i.e.: market regulation, statistics, agriculture policy, transport, justice, health, welfare services and environment. This could further benefit the design of regional cooperation activities.

Furthermore, this Action focuses on the issue of antisemitism, which is worryingly on the rise worldwide, including online on social media. The action aims also to contribute to Holocaust remembrance, education and research. Currently, one European in 20 has never heard of the Holocaust, and less than half of Europeans

think it is sufficiently taught in schools. Every second European considers antisemitism as a problem. Nine out of ten Jews consider that antisemitism has increased in their country. 85% Jews consider antisemitism to be a serious problem¹⁵.

The persistence of antisemitism requires a strong response at EU level and globally. Telling the story of Jewish life in Europe before the Holocaust could contribute to counterbalance pervasive negative stereotypes that foster contemporary antisemitism.

Identification of main stakeholders and corresponding institutional

The main beneficiaries of the Action will be the Israeli and relevant Arab countries' public administrations, public institutions, Civil Society organisations and groups in the broadest sense possible, including think tanks, academia, religious groups, journalists, opinion-formers, representatives of professional associations, private sector representatives, trade associations, cultural organisations, gender organisations, and their relevant counterparts in the countries of the region.

1.6. Lessons Learned

The cross-border cooperation programme¹⁶ (CBC Med) and earlier regional Civil Society programmes (e.g. Anna Lindh Foundation, Net Med Youth) have shown that cooperation at technical level can be helpful to foster cooperation at policy level. As part of these programmes, Israeli participants were invited to technical or professional meetings together with their counterparts from European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Arab countries. This has resulted in the establishment of several Arab-Israeli professional networks, showing that discussion and dialogue is feasible at a technical and professional level. These programmes have also shown that caution needs to be exercised in relation to communication. Participants of these programmes, especially citizens from Arab ENP countries, were willing to participate, on the condition that their participation was not publicised, particularly on social networks.

One of the lessons learnt from the implementation of previous peace agreements between Israel, Egypt and Jordan has been that the inclusion of civil society actors is essential to attain a greater improvement of relations and build sustainable peace. People-to-people interactions at the non-governmental level can positively contribute to facilitate a change in attitudes. Civil society organisations (CSO) can broaden both formal and informal cooperation in ways that touch the everyday lives of citizens, creating the legitimacy needed to sustain the agreements.

This action builds on the existing institutional cooperation between the EU and Israeli ministries through Twinning interventions in the context of increased approximation of Israel's legal framework with the EU acquis and/or EU good practices while also contributing to strengthening sectorial dialogues.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

2.1. Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this Action is to create a conducive environment for sustainable regional peace in line with the priorities defined in the EU-Israel Association Council.

¹⁵ Eurobarometer 484: Perceptions of antisemitism, January 2019 and Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU, 2018

¹⁶ Cross border cooperation within the European Neighbourhood Instrument, Mediterranean Sea Basin programme 2024-2020, https://www.enicbmed.eu/sites/default/files/Documents/ENI%20CBC%20MED_%20JOP_Mod.%20July%202021_C_2021_4327_1.PDF.

Specific Objectives (SO) /outcomes (O):

Specific Objective 1: The cooperation between Israel and the countries in the region is improved;

Specific Objective 2: Contribute to fighting antisemitism.

Specific Objective 3: The strategic policy dialogues and exchanges between the EU and Israel are enhanced at political, administrative and economic levels, including legislative and regulatory approximation.

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

Contributing to Outcome 1:

- 1.1 Sectoral dialogues both at national and transnational level, and at both institutional and non-governmental levels are fostered;
- 1.2 Joint regional/multi-country initiatives are launched.

Contributing to Outcome 2:

- 2.1 The EU is involved in joint initiatives with Israel to combat antisemitism.

Contributing to Outcome 3:

- 3.1 Mechanisms for policy cooperation in sectors of mutual EU-Israel interests are fostered;
- 3.2 Sustainability of institutional cooperation instruments (TAIEX and TWINNING) is reinforced.

Indicative Activities

The Action will be implemented through a number of activities that can be grouped in three clusters:

1. Operationalisation of pilot projects aimed to enhance cooperative relations between Israel and Arab countries (Specific Objective 1);
2. Support to the Valley of the Communities initiatives of Yad Vashem – the World Holocaust Remembrance Centre as a testimony of Jewish life in Europe before the Holocaust (Specific Objective 2).
3. Identification of priority sectors of mutual EU-Israel interests and enhancement of policy exchanges. (Specific Objective 3).

The activities in the first two clusters will include (but will not be limited to): policy advice, analyses and studies to help the design of relevant and impactful programmes, the development of knowledge (studies, reports, strategic plans, roadmaps, tools, databases), and the identification of obstacles and opportunities to the regional cooperation, networking activities (workshops, seminars, sharing of information, etc.), implementation of pilot projects, implementation of twinning projects, identification of financial sources as well as monitoring and evaluation.

The pilot projects will address several regional challenges that require a shared international effort, including the transition to renewable energy, electricity interconnections and energy efficiency, (transboundary) water management, food security, disaster preparedness, transnational health issues and adaptation to climate change.

Indicative activities will support the identification and formulation of strategies and pilot actions both at the institutional level and at the level of people-to-people interaction.

The activities under objective three will contribute to development of knowledge, awareness raising and information sharing, creation of digital resources etc.

Furthermore, activities will include strategic communication and public diplomacy (campaigns, social media, etc.) covering the whole action.

2.2. Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Biodiversity

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

The EIA screening classified the action as Category C, therefore there is no need for further assessment).

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

The CRA screening concluded that this action is no or low risk, therefore there is no need for further assessment).

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this Action is labelled as G0. This implies that this Action does not directly targets gender equality issues.

Nevertheless, in line with the EU commitments on the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820, this Action seeks to support women to actively take part in the normalisation between Israel and the Arab countries as well as in closer relations between Israel and the EU.

For these reasons, the Action will give specific attention to the promotion of women's participation and gender responsiveness in Israel's normalisation and regional cooperation efforts.

Human Rights

All activities under the Action will apply the Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) in line with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the EU's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals and to reducing all forms of inequalities. The renewed EU HRBA¹⁷ will help make activities more inclusive and sustainable. The design and implementation of activities will support the realisation of human rights for all, directly or indirectly, whenever relevant.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this Action is labelled as D0. While this implies that disability is not directly targeted under the Action, the application of the HRBA will ensure that rights of persons with disability will be mainstreamed whenever relevant.

Democracy

The Commission's 2012 Communication "The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations"¹⁸ acknowledges the crucial role of civil society in fostering democracy, peace and conflict resolution, and recognises the tight link between democracy and peace as two mutually reinforcing pillars of resilient societies. Against this backdrop, this Action promotes inclusion of all civil society actors in the different components of the Action. Enhancing their role and voice in the context of bilateral relations and regional cooperation is a way to ensure participatory democracy. The Action

¹⁷ EU updated Toolbox on the rights-based approach is available [here](#).

¹⁸ [2012 Communication "The Roots of Democracy" \(EC, 2012\)](#)

will support initiatives that uphold democratic values, in line with international human rights law, domestic laws, as well as the rule of law and principles of good governance more generally.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience are at the core of this Action. The Action will ensure that the complexity of Israeli-Arab relations is thoroughly assessed and taken into consideration, by applying a stringent conflict-sensitive approach, thus increasing its adherence to the “Do No Harm” principle. The Action will in particular be designed with a maximum of attention to conflict sensitivity, especially through the direct involvement of all EU delegations of countries impacted by the programme.

Furthermore, at programme level, particular attention will be paid to design a conflict sensitive communication strategy that differentiate within publics of diverse age groups and different socio-economic backgrounds from Arab countries, Israel and the EU, taking into due account local constraints as well as security considerations of the implementing partners and target groups.

Disaster Risk Reduction

Co-operation with the Neighbourhood aims not only to prevent, prepare and respond to disasters in these partner countries and the EU, but also to contribute to social and political stability. Climate change adaptation will be factored into the projects, as it will have a strong emphasis on disaster risk reduction and preparedness.

2.3. Risks and Assumptions

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
1 – external environment	Unfavourable political developments	M	H	C2: Ensure ex-ante consultation with all relevant actors and during implementation, make use of flexibility within relevant contractual frameworks whenever needed
1 – external environment	Joint activities lack participation due to social/political pressure	M	H	C2: Whenever necessary due to sensitivity and security, beneficiaries and implementers should be granted confidentiality and the visibility of their activities should be kept low; whenever needed, joint activities could be re-located outside the region
1 – external environment	Disruption of activities linked to public health restrictions or visa issues	M	H	C2: Encourage partners to continue working on mitigation measures and alternative plans for implementation of activities; suspension of project’s implementation until end of potential future lockdowns

External Assumptions

Main assumptions are:

- The normalisation of relations between Israel and Arab countries will resume after the end of the war between Israel and Hamas, in particular those involved in the programme;
- Instability of the political situation as well as escalation of violence will end;
- Arab and Israeli civil society would want to be part in these initiatives.

2.4. Intervention Logic

The Action aims to strengthen the relations between the EU and Israel by supporting Israel in the operationalisation of agreements with neighbouring countries and the creation of an environment conducive to sustainable regional peace, in line with the priorities defined at the EU-Israel Association Council; the action also builds on EU-Israel relations and the alignment of legislative frameworks to foster interactions between Israel and its neighbours. Finally, education and knowledge on the Holocaust could support the fight of antisemitism, in context where antisemitic incidents have increased following the attack by Hamas against Israel on 7 October.

Hence, the underlying intervention logic for this Action is as follows:

IF this Action

- Fosters sectoral dialogues aimed at building trust both at national and transnational level, and at both institutional and non-governmental levels; and
- Fosters a culture of cooperation (including mutual understanding, tolerance, and trust) as a set of values conducive to peaceful societies and co-existence; and
- Proposes and implements concrete actions and identifies sectoral opportunities for stronger EU-Israel relations;
- Supports education and knowledge on the Holocaust.

THEN

- It will harness the momentum created by the normalisation of diplomatic relations between Israel and some Arab countries to promote prosperity and stability, and strengthen conditions favourable to improved regional cooperation, including also for the Middle East Peace Process, and
- Civil society actors will fuel societal changes in Israel and Arab countries conducive to a climate favourable to cooperation; and
- Governmental and institutional relationships between Israel and the EU will be reinforced; and
- It will contribute to the fight against antisemitism.

Which all will contribute to

Stronger public and political support for regional cooperation and stability;

Leading to

Greater cooperation between Israel and Arab Countries enhancing the prospects for regional peace and security.

Strengthened strategic policy dialogues and exchanges between the EU and Israel at political, administrative and economic levels.

2.5. 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
Impact 1	To reinforce EU-Israel bilateral relations in a regional environment increasingly conducive to sustainable regional peace	<p>1. Number of sectors/areas in which meaningful bilateral cooperation between the EU and Israel exists</p> <p>2. Exchanges between Israel and neighbours (both at institutional level and between CSO) on medium/long terms cooperation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of political dialogues/statements in 2023 • Number of Exchanges in 2023 	To be defined in the inception phase of the Action	To be defined in the inception phase of the Action	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 1	1. Cooperation between Israel and the countries in the region is enhanced	<p>1.1 Number of concrete follow up to policy dialogues (disaggregated by country and thematic)</p> <p>1.2 Number of Pilot Actions initiated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and nature of policy dialogues in 2022 • Number of sectors with existing cooperation in 2022 	To be defined in the inception phase of the Action	To be defined in the inception phase of the Action	The relations between IL and the countries having normalised relations with, will resume after the war
Outcome 2	2. Contribute to fighting antisemitism	<p>2.1 Number of visitors in the Yad Vashem – the World Holocaust Remembrance Centre</p> <p>2.2 Development of digital resources</p>	To be defined during inception phase of the Action	To be defined during inception phase of the Action		
Outcome 3	3. Sustainable strategic policy dialogues and exchanges between the EU and Israel are strengthened at political,	3.1 Number of regular peer-to-peer policy dialogues (disaggregated by sector)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature of policy dialogue follow up in 2022 	To be defined during policy dialogues	Minutes of sectoral subcommittees	At least stable Israeli political and administrative interest in the EU acquis

	legislative, administrative and economic levels		• Number of mechanisms in place for sustained policy exchanges in 2022		Minutes of policy dialogues Reports on legislative activities	
Outputs related to Outcome 1	1.1 Sectoral dialogues both at national and transnational level, and at both institutional and non-governmental levels are fostered 1.2 A culture of cooperation (including mutual understanding, tolerance, and trust) as a set of values conducive to peaceful societies and co-existence is fostered	1.1.1 Number of joint initiatives identified in regional/multi-country policy dialogues 1.1.2. Level of participation/engagement of civil society in regional/multi-country policy forums	Values in 2022	To be defined during inception phase of the Action	To be defined during inception phase of the Action	The relations between IL and the countries having normalised relations with, will resume after the end of the war
Outputs related to Outcome 2	2.1. The EU is involved in joint initiatives with Israel to combat antisemitism	2.1.1. Number of initiatives 2.1.2. Level of EU involvement in said initiatives		To be defined in the inception phase of the Action	To be defined in the inception phase of the Action	Government and sectoral institutions in Israel remain committed to further cooperation with the EU fighting antisemitism

<p>Outputs related to Outcome 3</p>	<p>3.1 Sustainability of institutional cooperation instruments (TAIEX and TWINNING) is reinforced</p> <p>3.2 Mechanisms for policy cooperation in priority sectors of mutual EU-Israel interests are fostered</p>	<p>3.1.1 Number of EU policy forum accessible to Israeli experts after a TAIEX/TWINNING</p> <p>3.2.1 Number of Israeli participation to EU and/or Member States policy mechanisms</p>	<p>Values in 2022</p>	<p>To be defined during the inception phase of the Action</p>	<p>Reports from Israel Central Bureau of Statistics</p> <p>Reports from Twinning projects and Twinning Review Mission</p>	<p>Government and sectoral institutions in Israel remain committed to further cooperation with the EU</p> <p>EU Member States remain interested in Twinning projects</p> <p>Changes in management of relevant ministries do not impact the implementation of the Twinning activities.</p>
--	---	---	-----------------------	---	---	---

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

3.1. Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the State of Israel.

3.2. 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 48 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.

3.3. 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.

3.3.1. Direct Management (Grants)

3.3.1.1. Grants

a) Purpose of the grant(s)

Grants may be awarded to support the achievement of the Specific Objective 1.

b) Type of applicants targeted

Potential grant applicants may be public administration or public bodies, civil society organisations, local authorities.

3.3.1.2. Twinning grants

a) Purpose of the grant(s)

Grants may be awarded to support the achievement of the Specific Objective 3.

b) Type of applicants targeted

Applicants must be EU Member State administrations or their mandated bodies.

3.3.1.3. Grants

a) Purpose of the grant

Grants could be awarded to support the achievement of the Specific Objective 2.

b) Type of applicants targeted

Potential grant applicants could be public administration or public bodies, local authorities, civil society organisations.

c) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to the non-governmental organization, Yad Vashem - the World Holocaust Remembrance Center.

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals to is justified under Article 195(f) of the Financial Regulation because the action has specific characteristics requiring a particular type of technical competence and specialisation.

Yad Vashem presents a high degree of specialisation and technical competence, illustrated by the following characteristics:

- It is the body entrusted by Israeli law with the mission to perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust;
- It has a world-wide recognised expertise in the fight against antisemitism;
- It has a leading role in Holocaust documentation, research, education and remembrance.

3.3.2. Direct Management (Procurement)

Procurement will contribute to achieving specific objective 1 and 3 of the action by supporting the preparation of the Pilot projects and Twinning grants and TAIEX interventions.

3.3.3. Changes from indirect to direct management (and vice versa) mode due to exceptional circumstances

If the implementation modality under direct management as defined in section '4.3.1. (grants)' or '4.3.2 (procurements)' cannot be implemented due to circumstances beyond the control of the Commission, the modality of implementation by indirect management with a pillar-assed entity will be used and will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- experience in the relevant areas
- experience in organising regional programmes
- experience in setting up online and face to face multilingual meetings
- experience in managing grants and contracts
- experience in setting-up e-learning platforms

3.4. 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).

For this multi-country action, natural persons who are nationals of, and legal persons who are effectively established in the Middle East and Northern Africa region¹⁹ are eligible.

This Action will be implemented in accordance with the Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards²⁰.

¹⁹ See NDICI regulation, Annex 1, list of countries and territories in the Neighbourhood Area. Entities established in Member States of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf which have normalised relations with Israel (including Bahrein and the United Arab Emirates) should also be eligible to apply.

²⁰ O.J., 9.07.2013, C205/9.

3.5. Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.3	
Specific objectives 1, 2 and 3 composed of:	
Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.1	17 100 000
Procurement (direct management) – cf section 4.3.2	300 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2	300 000
Audit – cf. section 5.3	
Strategic communication and public diplomacy – cf. section 6	200 000
Contingencies	100 000
Total	18 000 000

3.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

This Action will be managed by the EU Delegation to Israel (DELTA) located in Tel Aviv and for specific objectives 1 and 2 with the support of other Delegations of countries involved in the programme (especially located in countries that have normalised diplomatic relations with Israel).

Procurement(s) will be administered by DELTA as the Contracting Authority. DELTA services will work jointly with other Delegations in the region as well as Headquarters services in the process of projects' selection as well as for the organisation of any events, taking place in the MENA region. DELTA Operations section will attend events, meetings, and monitoring visits together with representatives of the relevant Delegation where the TA activities will be organised.

A dedicated Facility Steering Committee (FSC) will be set up co-chaired by DELTA and the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs to focus on specific objective 1.

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.

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

4.1. 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 log frame matrix.

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

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring

At project(s) level, responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring are with the implementing partners.

The EU Delegation to Israel is responsible for the monitoring of programme level indicators including data collection and analysis, with the support of the TA.

4.2. 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 contracted by the Commission.

It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the pilot initiatives launched.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner countries 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 countries, 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.

4.3. 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.

5. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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

This obligation will apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, the partner country, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU Member States. In each case, a reference to the relevant contractual obligations must be included in the respective financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

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

Visibility and communication measures should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds. Effectiveness of communication activities on awareness about the action and its objectives as well as on EU funding of the action should be measured.

Implementing partners shall keep the Commission and the EU Delegation/Office fully informed of the planning and implementation of specific visibility and communication activities before the implementation. Implementing partners will ensure adequate visibility of EU financing and will report on visibility and communication actions as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees.

EU Press and communication services from the Contracting Authority and all involved EU delegations will be involved in guiding on any communication related activity under this Action.