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

**ANNEX 2**

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multi-country annual action plan in favour of the Western Balkans and Türkiye for 2024

**Action Document for “EU4 Social inclusion”**

**ANNUAL ACTION PLAN**

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and annual and multiannual action plans and measures in the sense of Article 9 of IPA III Regulation and Article 23(2) of NDICI - Global Europe Regulation.

**1. SYNOPSIS**

**1.1. Action Summary Table**

<b>Title</b>	<b>EU4 Social Inclusion</b> Multi-country annual action plan in favour of the Western Balkans and Türkiye for 2024
<b>OPSYS</b>	ACT- 61807
<b>ABAC</b>	ABAC Commitment level 1 number: JAD.1161483
<b>Basic Act</b>	Financed under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III)
<b>Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)</b>	Yes Thematic priorities: Human Development (incl. human capital and youth) (45%) Digital (10%) Environment and climate resilience (5%) Rule of law, governance and public administration reform (40%)
<b>EIP Flagship</b>	No
<b>Team Europe</b>	No
<b>Beneficiary(y)/(ies) of the action</b>	The Action shall be carried out in the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) and Türkiye.
<b>Programming document</b>	IPA III Programming Framework

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

<b>PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Window and thematic priority</b>	<p>Window 1: Rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy</p> <p>Thematic Priority 5: Fundamental rights (85%)</p> <p>Thematic Priority 7: Civil Society (15%)</p> <p>(Partially Window 3 and Window 4)</p>
<b>Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>	<p>Main SDG: 10. Reduced inequalities.</p> <p>Main target: 10.2. By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.</p> <p>Other significant SDGs:</p> <p>SDG 1. End Poverty:</p> <p>Target 1.4: By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.</p> <p>SDG 4. Quality Education:</p> <p>Target 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.</p> <p>SDG 5. Gender equality:</p> <p>Target 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.</p> <p>SDG 8. Decent work and economic growth.</p> <p>Target 8.5: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.</p>
<b>DAC code(s)</b>	<p>15160- Human Rights (50%)</p> <p>15180 – Ending violence against women and girls (40%)</p> <p>16020 - Employment creation (5%)</p> <p>16010 - Social protection (5%)</p>
<b>Main Delivery Channel</b>	<p>Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society - 20000</p> <p>United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – 41114</p> <p>United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) – 41146</p> <p>European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) - 42000</p> <p>World Bank Group – 44000</p>
<b>Targets</b>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Climate</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity</p>

<b>Markers (from DAC form)</b>	<b>General policy objective</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>RIO Convention markers</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Biological diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Internal markers and Tags</b>	<b>Policy objectives</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>
EIP		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EIP Flagship		YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Tags:		YES	NO	
Transport		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Energy		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Environment and climate resilience		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Digital		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Economic development (incl. private sector, trade and macroeconomic support)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Human Development (incl. human capital and youth)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Health resilience		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Migration and mobility		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Agriculture, food security and rural development		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Rule of law, governance and Public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Administration reform			
Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Digitalisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
digital skills/literacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
digital services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
COVID-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### BUDGET INFORMATION

<b>Amounts concerned</b>	<p>Budget line: 15 02 01 01.01</p> <p>Total estimated cost: EUR 15 706 000</p> <p>Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 15 056 000</p> <p>This Action is co-financed in joint co-financing by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Women for an amount of EUR 250 000.</li> <li>- UN Women for an amount of EUR 200 000.</li> <li>- Roma Entrepreneurship Development Initiative (REDI) for an amount of EUR 200 000.</li> </ul>
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### MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

<b>Implementation modalities (management mode and delivery methods)</b>	<p><b>Direct management</b> through grants.</p> <p><b>Indirect management</b> with the United Nations Development Programme, UN Women, the European Institute for Gender Equality, and the World Bank.</p>
<b>Final date for concluding contribution / delegation agreements, procurement and grant contracts</b>	At the latest by 31 December 2025

<b>Indicative operational implementation period</b>	72 months following the adoption of the Financing Decision
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## 1.2. Summary of the Action

The Action will support the implementation of the commitments made by the European Commission and IPA beneficiaries to leave no one behind in the enlargement process. The Action is aligned with the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP III) 2021-2025 and the IPA III Programming Framework, which both emphasise the importance of mainstreaming gender equality as a cross-cutting issue. The Action will also support the fulfilment of the Roma<sup>1</sup> inclusion commitments taken by the Western Balkans, including in the Berlin Process and the 2019 Poznan Declaration and subsequent annual Ministerial meetings. It is also directly relevant to Sustainable Development Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities), SDG 1 (End Poverty), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth). The Action is DAC gender marker 2.

The six areas of support in this Action are:

**1 - Improve women’s economic empowerment:** The Action will reinforce women’s economic potential by strengthening their access to managerial and leadership roles, entrepreneurship, specialised employment opportunities (notably in the digital labour market and green transition) as well as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education and employment.

**2 - Increase access to digital essential services for women and girls’ survivors of online and technology-facilitated violence:** The Action will strengthen referral systems and support gender-sensitive legislation on cyber violence. It will also provide women and girls with tools to protect themselves from such violence.

**3 - Integration of IPA beneficiaries into the core work areas of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE):** The Action will continue the inclusion of the IPA beneficiaries in EIGE’s Gender Statistics Database, support the development and maintenance of Gender Equality Indices and their work on standardised administrative data on violence against women. This will strengthen their capacity to monitor and mainstream gender equality and facilitate regional cooperation.

**4 - The Regional Roma Survey 2024:** The Action will build upon the data collected in the 2011 and 2017 Regional Roma Survey by exploring core development changes for Roma. Specifically, it will gather quantitative and qualitative data and it will develop diagnostic reports on Western Balkans and Turkish Roma communities’ needs in connection with the digital and green transitions.

**5 - Support to Roma entrepreneurship phase II:** The Action will provide Roma individuals, including youth and women, with technical assistance, skills and business development services, career guidance, support in the green and digital transition, and networking opportunities.

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<sup>1</sup> In line with the terminology of European institutions, the umbrella term ‘Roma’ is used here to refer to a number of different groups (e.g., Roma, Sinti, Kale, Gypsies, Romanichels, Boyash, Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom, Rom, Abdal...) without denying the specificities of these groups.

**6 - The 6<sup>th</sup> EU Roma Integration Award for the Western Balkans and Türkiye (2025):** The EU Roma Integration Award distinguishes individuals and groups that have achieved significant progress in the inclusion of Roma in their communities, combating discrimination.

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

The Action shall be carried out in the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) and Türkiye.

## **2. RATIONALE**

### **2.1. Context**

Combatting social exclusion is a continuous work stream and policy priority for the EU external action. The IPA III beneficiaries are expected to advance on gender equality and Roma inclusion as part of the chapter 23 of the EU *acquis* – Fundamental Rights.

The EU Gender Action Plan (GAP III) 2021-2025 makes gender equality a cross-cutting priority in the EU external action by aiming that 85% of all new projects will contribute to this objective by 2025<sup>2</sup>. The Action addresses three of the six thematic areas of engagement of the GAP III: ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence, promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women, and addressing the challenges and opportunities from the green and digital transformation<sup>3</sup>. Likewise, the EU Roma Strategic Framework 2020-2030<sup>4</sup> targets the promotion of Roma equality, inclusion, and participation in the EU's external policy in the Western Balkans.

The European Commission's 2022 Communication on EU Enlargement highlighted the need to translate existing frameworks on gender equality in the Western Balkans into concrete practical improvements. In addition, the most recent enlargement package annual reports reflected that the lack of gender equality and violence against women (VAW) persist across the region. The Communication also reflected the urgency to advance on gender equality in Türkiye<sup>5</sup>. The European Commission's 2023 Communication analysing Members States' and Western Balkan partners' national strategy alignment with the EU Framework for Roma Inclusion provided specific recommendations<sup>6</sup>, including the reinforcement of regular data collection and access to quality education, employment, and digital skills<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Joint Communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament and the Council No 17/2020 of 25 November 2020. *EU Gender Action plan (GAP) III – An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EU External Action*.

<sup>3</sup> Joint Staff Working Document from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy No 284/2020 of 25 November 2020. *Objectives and Indicators to frame the implementation of the Gender Action Plan III (2021-25)*. Accompanying the document Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council EU Gender Action plan (GAP) III – An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EU External Action.

<sup>4</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council No 620/2020 of 7 of October of 2020. *A Union of Equality: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation*.

<sup>5</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions No.528/2022 of 10 October 2022. *2022 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy*.

<sup>6</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions No.7/2023 of 9 January 2023. *Assessment report of the Member States' national Roma strategic frameworks*.

<sup>7</sup> Türkiye is not included in this Communication as it adopted its national Roma strategy and action plan a few weeks after the publication.

The Action is aligned with national policies and strategies fostering social inclusion, notably the National Strategies on Gender Equality, on combating Violence against Women, on Women’s Entrepreneurship and, where applicable, ICT strategies as well as the Economic Reform Programmes (ERPs) of the Western Balkans.

In the case of Roma, the Action supports the national Roma inclusion strategies and action plans in the Western Balkans. These plans target the commitments made in 2019 at the Poznan Summit and all subsequent Berlin Summits (Sofia 2020, Berlin 2021, and Berlin 2022), where the Western Balkans Heads of Government/State committed to include Roma in the EU enlargement process. On 20 of January 2023, Türkiye adopted its national Roma strategy for the period of 2023-2030 and the first action plan (2023-2025)<sup>8</sup>, which increase the relevancy of this Action in this country.

The IPA III Programming Framework<sup>9</sup> identifies gender equality as one of a number of cross cutting themes, to be mainstreamed and implemented under all five windows<sup>10</sup>. It also identifies the inclusion of Roma and the fight against Roma discrimination as a priority under window 1 (Rule of law, fundamental rights, and democracy) – thematic priority 5 (Fundamental Rights). The Action supports this aim by enhancing better understanding of women and Roma in the green and digital area, identifying economic opportunities that will lead to social inclusion, including in specialised areas such as STEM, and fighting negative stereotypes.

The Action fosters civil society partnerships both in the gender and Roma inclusion fields, contributing to an enabling environment for civil society, which means it contributes to thematic priority 7 (Civil Society) under window 1. It is also relevant to Window 3 (Green agenda and sustainable connectivity) and Window 4 (Competitiveness and Inclusive growth).

In addition, the Action contributes to the Green and Digital Agendas and the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans<sup>11</sup> through providing labour market participation, especially to women and young people, and disadvantaged groups and minorities like Roma, and disaggregated data collection on the integration of women and Roma in the twin transition. Specifically, Area of support 5 addresses the challenges identified in the ERPs in the areas of employment, education, and social inclusion. It contributes to the implementation of Policy Guidance 6 for all Beneficiaries, for the Policy Guidance 5 for Kosovo and Montenegro, by contributing to reduce the informal economy. It also contributes to the green and digital transition, in line with Policy Guidance 4 for Albania and 5 for Serbia.

The Action provides a continuation and extension in scope of three existing projects: (1) Increased capacity of EU candidate countries and potential candidates to measure and monitor impact of gender equality policies”, currently implemented by EIGE, (2) Ending Violence against Women in the Western Balkans and Turkey, Phase II, implemented by UN Women, and (3) EU Support to REDI: Advancing Roma Entrepreneurs in the Western Balkans, implemented by the Roma Entrepreneurship Development Initiative.

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<sup>8</sup> Türkiye’s Roma Strategy Document 2023 – 2030. Available at (only in Turkish): [https://www.aile.gov.tr/media/127013/yeni-roman-strateji-belgesi-20221222\\_v19.pdf](https://www.aile.gov.tr/media/127013/yeni-roman-strateji-belgesi-20221222_v19.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Commission implementing decision adopting the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III) Programming Framework for the period 2021-2027 No 8914(2021) of 10.12.2021. *Annex to the implementing decision.*

<sup>10</sup> Commission implementing decision adopting the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III) Programming Framework for the period 2021-2027 No 8914(2021) of 10.12.2021. *Annex to the implementing decision.*

<sup>11</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions No.641/2020 of 6 October 2020. *An Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans.*

## 2.2. Problem Analysis

**Area of support 1: Improving women’s economic empowerment by strengthening their access to managerial and leadership roles, entrepreneurship, specialised employment opportunities (notably in the digital labour market and green transition) as well as STEM education and employment.**

### Short problem analysis

Women’s access to social and economic rights is hindered and eroded by inequalities. The gender employment gap in the Western Balkans is almost twice that of the EU27, with male employment rates at 70.3% whereas female employment rates stand at just 49.4%<sup>12</sup>. In addition, only 27.5% of business owners in the Western Balkans region and Türkiye are women. Moreover, the proportion of women in managerial positions in the largest listed companies registered in the Western Balkans was 19% in 2021 (whereas in the EU, the target is 40%)<sup>13</sup>. When it comes to the digital gender divide, the Western Balkans are not an exception. Women make up less than 35% in ICT and related professions, and thus they are not able to shape the agendas in this field<sup>14</sup>. Among all women, those with disabilities experience unique barriers that need to be tackled as a whole rather than separately. Over the last 5 years, the share of women on corporate boards increased at an average of 1.1 percentage points per year for IPA beneficiaries and 1.6 in the EU. If these rates are maintained, the EU will achieve gender balance on boards in 2027 while the IPA beneficiaries will take another two decades (2041). The fastest growing and highest paid jobs of the future are in STEM, but women still face barriers to advance in these fields. The share of women in STEM occupations in the Western Balkans is only 14%<sup>15</sup>.

### Main stakeholders

The main stakeholders under the Action include national and regional civil society organisations (women’s organisations, youth organisations, feminist organisations, human rights and other organisations), women’s business associations, policy makers, gender advocates, trade unions, entrepreneurs, business leaders, chambers of commerce, e-commerce associations, representatives of e-industry, private sector (with focus on tech companies) and academia, all of which will benefit from increased access to information and opportunities, exchange of knowledge and enhanced networking. An estimated minimum 500 beneficiaries will be reached by the Action). Synergy will be created with EIGE in the development of tools, resources, and capacity building in the area of gender mainstreaming among partners representing different industries, as well as with the Council of Europe.

**Area of support 2: Providing increased access to digital essential services for women and girls who are survivors of violence, and tools to protect themselves from ICT facilitated and online violence.**

### Short problem analysis

Different forms of violence against women and girls remain a persistent challenge in the region<sup>16</sup>. Moreover, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, technology-facilitated or online violence against women and girls

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<sup>12</sup> Eurostat (EU 27), ESAP Platform, Kosovo Agency of Statistics

<sup>13</sup> See [Gender Equality Index in the Western Balkans and Turkey: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-indices-western-balkans-and-turkey](https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-indices-western-balkans-and-turkey)

<sup>14</sup> EQUALS Partnership and Research Group, *Taking Stock: Data and Evidence on Gender Equality in Digital Access, Skills, and Leadership*, 2019, available at: <http://itu.int/go/EqualsResearch2019m>

<sup>15</sup> Women’s Economic Empowerment in Western Balkans, UNDP, available at: <https://www.undp.org/eurasia/publications/womens-economic-empowerment-areas-joint-actions-western-balkans>

<sup>16</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions No.528/2022 of 10 October 2022. *2022 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy*.



(VAWG) rapidly escalated as women's lives shifted online for work, education, access to services and social activities. The global report of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) suggests that the prevalence of online VAWG ranges from 16 to 58% of adult women. Higher levels of online harassment and abuse are faced by people with intersecting inequality factors, such as women of colour, LGBTQ+ women and women with disabilities<sup>17</sup>. Online VAWG occurs as part of a continuum that is often connected to offline violence and can encompass many forms including sexual harassment, stalking, revenge porn, deep fakes and Zoombombing, and these forms continue to multiply in a context of rapidly expanding digitalisation. Online and technology facilitated VAWG shares the same root causes and drivers as offline forms of VAWG, reflecting systematic and structural gender inequality. The impact of online VAWG has negative effects on the health and wellbeing of women and girls as well as serious economic, social, and political impacts. Existing laws, policies, and frameworks to prevent and respond to VAWG have not kept pace with technological developments and there are significant gaps in knowledge and evidence of what works in preventing online VAWG, which is crucial to inform evidence-based prevention and response frameworks and interventions.

#### Main stakeholders

The Action's target group consists of women's organisations, civil society organisations (CSOs), including women's organisations, and CSO networks at bilateral and regional level working to end violence against women, which will both implement and benefit from the activities. The Action will coordinate and extend support to all key stakeholders in the prevention and response to violence in the referral pathway and in the protection chain, including human rights institutions, social, health, judiciary, and police sectors. The Action will engage gender equality mechanisms (legislative and executive) as well as the technology sector to promote legal and policy frameworks which address a form of violence. It will also place an emphasis on engaging the media to report on online violence. The Action will seek strategic partnerships with the Council of Europe (CoE) and GREVIO to ensure synergies and strengthen impact of actions. It will also liaise with well-established tech companies in the region and beyond with a track record of addressing the issue and feminist technology experts.

### **Area of support 3: Integration of the Western Balkans and Türkiye into the core work areas of the European Institute for Gender Equality.**

#### Short problem analysis

As part of the EU accession process, IPA III beneficiaries need to demonstrate that their legislative and policy frameworks are both harmonised with the EU and implemented effectively. In this context, accurate statistical indicators and yearly comparisons are essential tools. Yet, there is not systematically collected and regularly updated data. The collection of statistics on gender equality in the labour market needs to be improved across the region as well as sex-age disaggregated data on violence, and especially, on digital/cyber violence, which leads to poor quality of service provision and policy making.

The Action seeks to address such gaps by supporting IPA beneficiaries to collect standardised statistical data in the area of gender equality and gender-based violence, promoting the same tools, definitions and methodology as the EU Member States.

#### Main stakeholders

The primary beneficiaries of the Action include the gender equality structures of the governments in all IPA beneficiaries (either within relevant Ministries or dedicated gender equality agencies) as well as other

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<sup>17</sup> Hicks.J., *Global Evidence on the prevalence and impact of gender based-violence*. Institute of Development Studies, 2021. Available at: [Global evidence on the prevalence and impact of online gender-based violence \(OGBV\)](#).

stakeholders from relevant ministries across core areas of EIGE’s work programme, including National Statistical Offices. Non-governmental stakeholders will include representatives from civil society (women’s organisations, youth organisations, feminist organisations, human rights, and other organisations), media, and academia. Parliaments, NIPAC coordinators and information multipliers will also be targeted. These stakeholders are instrumental for transferring EIGE’s knowledge and resources to the region of the Western Balkans and Türkiye. It is estimated that around 400 beneficiaries from the region will be involved in the Action during its implementation period.

#### **Area of support 4: Roma Regional Survey 2024.**

##### Short problem analysis

The lack of robust and accurate statistical data on socio-economic status of Roma communities hampers the delivery of evidence-based policies and inclusion programmes<sup>18</sup>. Current policy monitoring and evaluation are inadequate because of the lack of official ethnically disaggregated data. A new Roma Regional Survey that builds upon the 2011 and 2017 surveys<sup>19</sup> is crucial to explore changes in core development outcomes for Roma and closing data gaps on Roma communities’ multi-dimensional vulnerabilities and deprivations experienced by Roma households, including in connection with the digital and green transitions. It is also crucial to map gender inequality to be able to devise gender-sensitive policies and programmes for Roma inclusion.

The 2017 Roma Regional Survey planned also to analyse the situation of Roma in Türkiye. However, the realisation of the survey was not approved by the national authorities. Based on this experience, there are risks related to the inclusion of Türkiye in the 2024 survey. The design, timing, and implementation of the 2024 Survey in Türkiye will remain flexible.

##### Main stakeholders

The Action will support the work of the National Roma Contact Points (NRCP)<sup>20</sup>, government contact points in relevant ministries and/or in the Offices of the Prime Minister in the Western Balkans and Türkiye. The NRCPs have a role in coordination, identification, implementation (to a limited degree) and monitoring of the relevant Roma Strategies and action plans. Equally, it is also critical that the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) are engaged at an early stage to ensure their buy-in for the survey methodology and sample. In the past, quantitative surveys implemented by the NSOs have been constrained to some extent by the interpretation of legal regulations related to collection of data based on ethnicity and by the lack of resources to implement comprehensive surveys of this type. The 2024 Survey will underscore that there are ethically and legally correct methodologies. Both the NRCPs and NSOs will be engaged in the design phase to ensure ownership of the results and full utility of the data. In addition, the Action will engage with the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA).

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<sup>18</sup> For instance, ethnicity is generally not a topic in national representative household surveys, and administrative data are not ordinarily disaggregated by ethnicity. Moreover, due to discrimination, many Roma prefer not to self-identify as Roma. As a result, there is generally undercounting in censuses and under-sampling in household surveys. In addition, lower rates of documentation and birth registration of Roma is also a cause for the lack of data.

<sup>19</sup> The 2011 and 2017 Regional Roma Survey funded by the European Commission – DG NEAR – are the most comprehensive surveys to date on living conditions and human development outcomes among Roma households in the region.

<sup>20</sup> National Roma Contact Points per IPA III beneficiary: (1) Albania - Nominated official in the Directorate of Social Inclusion Policies and Gender Equality within the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, (2) Bosnia and Herzegovina - Nominated official in the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, (3) Kosovo - Nominated official in the Office of Good Governance, (4) Montenegro – Nominated official in the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, (5) North Macedonia - Advisor for Roma Inclusion in the Office of the Prime Minister, (6) Serbia - Nominated official in the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, (7) Türkiye - Nominated official in the Ministry of the Family, Labour and Social Services.

## **Area of support 5: Support to Roma entrepreneurship Phase II.**

### Short problem analysis

There are multiple barriers that hamper the economic empowerment of Roma in the Western Balkans and Türkiye<sup>21</sup>. On the one hand, the unemployment rates within the Roma community are significantly higher compared to the general population, often reaching levels up to 50%<sup>22</sup>. This is both due to a lack of skills and education needed to secure formal employment and a persistent discrimination in the labour market. These barriers are higher for Roma women. The 2017 Regional Roma Survey shows that only 7.33% of Roma women were employed. In addition, Roma women in isolated settlements are particularly likely to find difficulties in accessing relevant information, including related to the labour market<sup>23</sup>. On the other hand, financial institutions are often not prone to grant loans or other forms of financing to Roma entrepreneurs. Only 17% of Roma entrepreneurs have access to formal financing, compared to 46% of non-Roma entrepreneurs<sup>24</sup>. In addition, Roma are often excluded from the green and digital transition as they require specific competences<sup>25</sup>.

### Main stakeholders

Main stakeholders include the governmental employment agencies and their regional offices/branches given their role in supporting Roma economic development and their capacity to include the proposed trainings in their Operational Programmes<sup>26</sup>. The project will also target micro-finance institutions and the private sector, fundamental actors in providing opportunities for Roma. Collaboration with professors from the Electro and Machinery Faculties and other industry practitioners will also be foreseen to develop customised training programmes that align with industry and national educational needs and standards. Finally, partnerships with international organisations and local CSOs supporting Roma inclusion and economic development, such as the Council of Europe, the Council of Europe Development Bank, the Open Society Foundations, and the Regional Cooperation Council will also be targeted.

## **Area of support 6: 6<sup>th</sup> EU Roma Integration Award for Western Balkans and Türkiye 2025.**

### Short problem analysis

Roma are generally socially excluded, resulting in a systemic lack of access to basic services and economic opportunities in comparison with the rest of the population. For instance, only 50% of Roma completed compulsory education and 54% cannot secure daily food<sup>27</sup>. Evidence from the Roma Regional Survey 2011 and 2017 suggests that part of the gaps between Roma and their non-Roma counterparts can be explained by discrimination and social norms, as attitudes and social norms may have a strong influence on community decisions<sup>28</sup>. Roma women are at a particular disadvantage. They face intersectional discrimination based on their gender from inside and outside their communities<sup>29</sup>. In addition, Roma women, unlike the non-Roma,

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<sup>21</sup> Robayo-Abril, M., Millan, N. *Breaking the Cycle of Roma Exclusion the Western Balkans*. The World Bank Group, 2019.

<sup>22</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Agency. *Roma in 10 European Countries - Main results*. European Union, 2022.

<sup>23</sup> Robayo-Abril, M., Millan, N. *Breaking the Cycle of Roma Exclusion the Western Balkans*. The World Bank Group, 2019.

<sup>24</sup> Roma Entrepreneurship Development Initiative NGO. Available at: [Research - Roma Entrepreneurs - Portal REDI NGO \(redi-ngo.eu\)](https://www.research-roma-entrepreneurs.eu/)

<sup>25</sup> Rankin, J. *Roma suffer under EU's 'environmental racism', report concludes*. The Guardian, 2020. Available at: [Roma suffer under EU's 'environmental racism', report concludes | Roma, Gypsies and Travellers | The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/22/roma-suffer-under-eus-environmental-racism-report-concludes)

<sup>26</sup> Operational Programs are key documents describing the employment agency's programs and measures for implementation.

<sup>27</sup> Statistics from the 2017 EU-funded regional Roma survey.

<sup>28</sup> Robayo-Abril, M., Millan, N. *Breaking the Cycle of Roma Exclusion the Western Balkans*. The World Bank Group, 2019.

<sup>29</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions No.528/2022 of 12 October 2022. *2022 Communication on EU enlargement package*.

believe that they have few role models in their community, increasing their difficulties to visualise career pathways<sup>30</sup>. The non-recognition and invisibility of Roma and Roma women perpetuate negative stereotypes and reinforce their marginalisation. The 6<sup>th</sup> EU Roma Integration Award will contribute to change this narrative, promoting Roma inclusion and recognising achievements of Roma individuals and communities.

### Main stakeholders

This area of support covers Roma communities and CSOs as they are crucial to ensure that the perspectives and needs of Roma are considered in the design and implementation of inclusive policies and programmes. CSOs working towards Roma inclusion can benefit from the increased visibility and recognition of their work, as well as the opportunity to participate in the policy roundtables and study trips. Non-Roma communities and CSOs will also be targeted as the award can promote social cohesion and cross-cultural understanding between Roma and non-Roma. Finally, this area of support covers intergovernmental bodies, essential to bring expertise, and national government institutions, given their role to ensure that policies are implemented effectively, resources are allocated appropriately, and progress is monitored and evaluated. The award can encourage governments and institutions to allocate resources and implement policies that promote Roma inclusion and improve the position of vulnerable Roma women and men in the Beneficiaries.

### **2.3. Lessons Learned**

As regards the support to increase access to digital essential services for women and girls, this area of support will build on an ongoing programme combatting violence against women that will end in 2023. The new programme will incorporate the findings from the December 2021 Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) report, which recommended to increase knowledge-sharing and project visibility. The ROM recommended focusing more attention on identifying regional “promising” practices, drawing general conclusions, and sharing interesting approaches to the implementation of the Istanbul Convention and CEDAW, as well as on presenting the complementarities between the bilateral-level and regional-level outcomes. For maximisation of project results, regional and national dialogue with and among policymakers from all IPA beneficiaries should be intensified. The project should also be more visibly presented in the EU policy context and as part of the EU integration process in IPA beneficiaries.

As regards the support to the integration of IPA beneficiaries into the core work areas of EIGE, this support will also build on the previous phase and will incorporate the recommendations from the March 2022 ROM report on “Increased capacity of EU candidate countries and potential candidates to measure and monitor impact of gender equality policies”. Key recommendations included maintaining the strong visibility of the institute and the programme in the beneficiaries and introducing new customised training curricula related to gender-based violence, to speed up the development of composite indicators for measuring violence against women.

As regards the support to the Regional Roma Survey, the implementing partners will implement the lessons learned from the previous 2011 and 2017 surveys. These include the importance of investing in ownership among key stakeholders (government ownership and stakeholder engagement). Strong communication about the survey and its clear link to the region’s EU accession perspective will help in this regard. In the case of Türkiye, an extensive consultation will be carried out to mitigate uncertainties and leverage entry points. If necessary, this survey will be disassociated from the Western Balkans survey. Another lesson is to reflect Roma diversity in the survey. The past surveys have been criticised by civil society for overemphasising poverty and deprivation among Roma, and not paying due attention to positive developments.

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<sup>30</sup> Robayo-Abril, M., Millan, N. *Breaking the Cycle of Roma Exclusion the Western Balkans*. The World Bank Group, 2019.

As regards the support to Roma entrepreneurship, lessons will be drawn from the pilot phase implemented in North Macedonia and Serbia. These include the importance of having business facilitators. These were recognised members of the Roma community trained in business development. They had a significant impact on the connection between the project and the Roma community. Another lesson was to extend support to after the trainings to ensure sustainability. This support could be small equipment investment or a constructive networking environment. Finally, constant outreach and meetings with stakeholders have proven to be effective to support the organisation's efforts, build coalitions, and remain organised.

The 6th edition of the Roma award will implement the lessons learned from the previous editions, especially the need to increase outreach before, during and after the ceremony. While the award ceremony often attracts a wide audience, the post-award outreach is low. In addition, the information period in which stakeholders can apply for the award is usually too short. A comprehensive communication and dissemination strategy (e.g., including webinars, workshops, and other interactive formats) should be developed with a timeline that will be respected.

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

#### **3.1. Intervention Logic**

The Overall Objective of this Action is to strengthen the social inclusion of women and Roma communities in the Western Balkans and Türkiye.

The Specific Objectives (Outcomes) of this Action are:

1. Women and girls participate in society, fully enjoying and exercising equal economic, labour, and social rights in a safe and secure environment.
2. The equality, inclusion and active participation of Roma in the Western Balkans and Türkiye are increased.

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

#### **1**

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

Capacity built and new and existing networks for women leaders and entrepreneurs strengthened increased understanding of the main obstacles and challenges creating gender disparities in STEM and ICT education and employment and increased opportunities for digital and entrepreneurial upskilling of women and girls.

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

Strengthened referral systems for survivors of online and technology-facilitated violence and increased awareness and ability of women and girls to recognise and report online and technology-facilitated violence.

##### **1.3 contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1):**

IPA III beneficiaries are further integrated into core areas of EIGE's work programme and have increased ability to monitor and mainstream gender equality and continue regional coordination in the field.

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

Policymakers and other stakeholders influencing and implementing Roma inclusion policies are provided with robust analysis on the multi-dimensional vulnerabilities of Roma women and men.

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

Improved access to finance, jobs, training, and labour market measures for Roma women and men, with special focus on the green and digital sectors.

### **2.3 contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2):**

An award for positive examples of Roma integration activism is organised, including a ceremony that will host local and international stakeholders.

The intervention logic of the Action is that by building capacities, strengthening leadership and entrepreneurship networks in the region and increasing the opportunities for digital upskilling of women, by increasing the awareness and ability of women and girls to recognise and report online violence, and by further integrating the IPA III beneficiaries in the core work of EIGE, we ensure that women and girls participate in society, fully enjoying and exercising equal economic, labour and social rights in a safe and secure environment.

Furthermore, by providing policymakers with robust data on the vulnerabilities of Roma communities, by improving access to finance, jobs, training, and labour market measures for Roma women and men and by giving an award for positive achievements of Roma integration, then the equality, inclusion, and active participation of Roma in the region are increased.

## **3.2. Indicative Activities**

Activities related to Area of support 1 include capacity building by setting up a Gender Equality Leadership Academy (developing advanced training programmes for women leaders in different sectors, as well as training for both young female and male leaders on gender equality and gender mainstreaming); the regional Gender Equality Alliance; and the Western Balkan Women in STEM Network. A further focus will be on digital mentorships and capacity building of CSOs, business and industry associations and networks.

Activities related to Area of support 2 include strengthening referral systems for delivery of online and offline services for women and girl survivors of violence, including through training of providers and better coordination of relevant state actors (police, justice sector, social services, and health care). It also aims to advocate and provide technical assistance for the introduction of specific gender-sensitive legislation on cyber violence and abuse as well as awareness raising initiatives among youth about the topic, the available services and how to react to incidents.

Activities related to Area of support 3 include providing technical assistance on data collection on gender equality and gender mainstreaming, foster coordination among institutions, and facilitate the use of EIGE's tools.

Activities related to Area of support 4 include designing and fielding the quantitative and qualitative Regional Roma Surveys and preparing the diagnostic reports on key areas for policy actions and investments in Roma empowerment and inclusion.

Activities related to Area of support 5 include conducting research on the economic situation and needs of Roma entrepreneurs and job seekers, and creation of green and digital training and business opportunities (e.g., training centre, Green and Digital Innovation Labs, Business Clubs).

Activities related to Area of support 6 include organising the award selection in the IPA III beneficiaries establishing a competent jury and organising the award ceremony in Brussels.

### **3.3. Mainstreaming**

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

Area of support 1 and 5 incorporates the green transition as a new theme into the skills development and creation of job opportunities for women and Roma communities, contributing to the environmental protection and the EU Green Deal. In addition, area of support 1 aims to contribute to improving women's economic participation in sectors such as STEM, allowing them to benefit from and influence investments made to pursue low carbon and climate resilient development. Area of support 4 will gather data on the environmental situation of Roma settlements, including water quality, air and soil pollution, and disaster vulnerability. It will also enquire on the use of sources of heating and access to electricity.

Across the Action, caution will be taken to reduce any associated environmental impact where possible (e.g., methods of transport used by staff, eco-friendly materials where possible.).

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

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this Action is labelled as G2. This implies that gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment, including Roma women and girls, is the principal objective of the Action. Gender mainstreaming will be promoted throughout the implementation of the Action, both through activities specifically targeting gender equality, women's economic empowerment and ending violence against women; and through targeted efforts to enhance gender mainstreaming across CSO and private sector networks. Also, when financial support to third parties will be provided under its components, projects that favour gender-equality and women will be of special consideration. Attention will be given to mainstreaming the gender perspective during the execution of the Calls for CSO proposals and their evaluations, and when establishing project and monitoring teams.

#### **Human Rights**

The underlying principle of this Action is that social exclusion of women and Roma communities is a major developmental and Human Rights issue in the Western Balkans and Türkiye. Advancing economic and social rights of women and Roma communities and combating and preventing violence against women and girls are at the core of the Action. The Action addresses multiple forms of discrimination from an intersectional approach. In the long term, it contributes to remove barriers and to create a better enabling environment to advance rights-based systems across the beneficiaries. Moreover, the Action will ensure that Roma communities and Roma-based organisations are included in the implementation of the activities to the maximum extent possible.

#### **Disability**

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this Action is labelled as D0. This implies that the individual measures do not contribute themselves to disability. However, the need to consider disabilities will be considered when identifying possible future actions. The Action will ensure that rights of persons with disabilities will be respected, and the planned activities related with formulation of projects, evaluations and others are disability inclusive.

#### **Democracy**

Among the challenges in the area of democracy and the rule of law are the empowerment of civil society, the safeguarding of fundamental rights and rights of people belonging to minority groups and vulnerable groups, which the Action has the potential to positively influence. Gender equality is a crucial feature of democratic societies. The Action will directly contribute to expanding diversity in public and private sectors with a view to advance women's and Roma's economic empowerment as a contributing factor to equality,

sustainable economic and human capital development as cornerstones of democratic, rule-based, and just societies.

### 3.4. Risks and Assumptions

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/Medium/Low)	Impact (High/Medium/Low)	Mitigating measures
External environment (Area of support 1, 2 and 3)	Current gender equality backlash in the Western Balkans and Türkiye, which can lead to lack of political support and/or understanding on the importance of addressing women's challenges.	Low - Medium	Medium - High	The Action will closely work with public and private sector stakeholders to advance positive narratives and co-benefits to human capital development as well as engage men to champion women's economic empowerment. Implementing partners will further leverage ongoing collaboration with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and establish new partnerships where necessary.
External environment (Area of support 4)	Lack of cooperation on the part of the diverse partners involved in survey and methodology preparation.	Medium for Western Balkans, and High for Türkiye	Medium	Regular discussions with partner-government, CSOs and experts in the Thematic Working Group and in National Steering Committees and a joint letter from UNDP, World Bank and DG NEAR announcing survey and seeking cooperation.
External environment (Area of support 5)	Low interest of Roma communities joins the educational programmes.	Medium	Low	Regular communication with the communities, creation of a pool of young Roma women and men, cooperation with high schools and universities, organisation of info-sessions.
External environment (Area of support 6)	Lack of interest from the authorities and the civil society in Roma inclusion.	Low	Medium	Strong outreach strategy in each IPA III beneficiary, providing technical support during the application process.

#### External Assumptions

The key external assumption of Areas of support 1, 2 and 3 is that key public and private sector stakeholders support the introduction of gender mainstreaming across policies and their operations, and that there is political will and sufficient resources to address the challenges of women, such as digital violence. Area of support 4 assumes that all relevant governments and all non-government partners will cooperate and actively participate in the Roma survey. Area of support 5 assumes that enough Roma women and men are interested in pursuing certifications in green energy and digital skills, and companies are willing to hire them. Area of support 6 assumes that all stakeholders collaborate in the implementation.



### 3.5. Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
<b>Impact</b>	The social inclusion of women and Roma communities in the Western Balkans and Türkiye is strengthened.	Qualitative assessments of the impact.	IPA beneficiaries have adopted several strategies to foster gender equality and Roma inclusion. However, their implementation should be further strengthened. (2023).	Improvement (2027).	European Commission Communication on EU Enlargement (published every year).  European Commission Communication on assessments report of the Member States national strategic frameworks (published every year) <sup>31</sup> .	
<b>Outcome 1</b>	1. Women and girls participate in society, fully enjoying and exercising equal economic, labour, and social rights in a safe and secure environment.	1.1. Percentage distribution of employed population by sector, disaggregated at least by sex (GAP III).  1.2. Extent to which quality, disaggregated data on different forms of gender based- violence (including online) is collected, analysed, and published.	Authorities in the Western Balkans have enhanced their strategic frameworks on gender equality. However, it needs to be translated into practical improvements. In Türkiye backsliding in the area of gender equality and regression of the rights of women and girls has continued. (2022)	Improvement. (2027)	Programme reports.  Commission annual reports.	There is enough political will, understanding and resources to address the economic and social exclusion of women and Roma communities in the Western Balkans and Türkiye.

<sup>31</sup> The Communication also includes the Western Balkans.

<b>Outcome 2</b>	2. The equality, inclusion, and active participation of Roma in Western Balkans and Türkiye is increased.	Qualitative assessments of the impact.	Roma action plan and National Strategies are in place, but implementation should be reinforced in different areas, including data collection, employment, and combatting anti-gypsyism and stereotypes. (2022)	Improvement. (2027)	Commission annual reports.	
<b>Output 1 related to Outcome 1</b>	1.1. The capacity to build new networks for women leaders and to strengthen the existing ones is increased. The understanding of the main obstacles and challenges creating disparities in STEM and ICT education and employment, and opportunities for digital and entrepreneurial upskilling of women and girls are increased.	<p>1.1.1 Number of collaborative partnerships created among women in regional networks and their partners from academia, private sector, and VET schools.</p> <p>1.1.2 Number of policies/legal reforms and strategies initiated by the regional networks, supported by the Action, to improve women’s economic activity.</p> <p>1.1.3 Number of government programmes implemented to improve women’s ability to benefit from employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, including social entrepreneurship, offered by the digital transformation (GAP III).</p>	<p>1.1.1. 0 (2023)</p> <p>1.1.2 0 (2023)</p> <p>1.1.3 0 (2023)</p>	<p>1.1.1 Targets: 2024: 100 2025: 300 2026: 600</p> <p>1.1.2 Targets: 2024: 0 2025: 5 2026: 10</p> <p>1.1.3 Targets: 2024: 0 2025: 5 2026: 10</p>	<p>1.1.1. UNDP reports, media reports.</p> <p>1.1.2 Programme Reports.</p> <p>1.1.3. Programme Reports.</p>	<p>Women in STEM highly motivated to co-design and participate in capacity development and mentorship programmes, and follow-through on further development of identified solutions.</p>

<b>Output 2 related to Outcome 1</b>	1.2. The referral systems for survivors of online and technology-facilitated violence are strengthened, and awareness and ability of women and girls to recognise and report online and technology-facilitated violence is increased.	1.2.1 Number of actions taken by programme partners that contribute to the development of legal or regulatory frameworks governing online and technology-facilitated violence including gender-based discrimination.	1.2.1. 0 (2023)	1.2.1 Targets: 2024: 2 2025: 10 2026: 15	1.2.1 Programme Reports	<p>Service providers commit the necessary time and resources to provide safe and comprehensive package of digital essential services and integrate them into existing referral systems, and to undertake to undertake revisions of legal frameworks and strategies to include ICT facilitated and digital violence.</p> <p>CSOs have knowledge, expertise, and capacities to address technology-facilitated violence.</p> <p>Advocacy actions are translated into policy and legal measures.</p>
		1.2.2. Number of legislative actions taken in the IPA beneficiaries to criminalise online gender-based violence, and to prosecute perpetrators, in line with international standards (GAP III).	1.2.2. 0 (2023)	1.2.2 Target: 2026: At least 5	1.2.2 Programme progress Reports	
		1.2.3 Number of women and girls who gained knowledge on their rights and available services on ICT-facilitated and online violence.	1.2.3. N/A (2023)	1.2.3 Targets: 2024: 2000 2025: 100,000 2026: 500,000	1.2.3 Programme Reports	
		1.2.4 Number of self-regulatory standards developed and/or adopted by media or in cooperation with the media.	1.2.4. N/A (2023)	1.2.4 Targets: 2024: 5 2025: 10 2026: 20	1.2.4 Programme Reports	

<b>Output 3 related to Outcome 1</b>	<p>1.3. IPA III beneficiaries are further integrated into core areas of EIGE’s work programme and have increased ability to monitor and mainstream gender equality and continue regional coordination in the field.</p>	<p>1.3.1 Number of annual data collection cycles on women and men in decision making for IPA beneficiaries in EIGE’s Gender Statistics Database.</p> <p>1.3.2 Number Gender Equality Index releases by IPA beneficiaries.</p> <p>1.3.3 Number of meetings of Regional Coordination Platform.</p>	<p>1.3.1 4 annual cycles (2022)</p> <p>1.3.2 7 indices (2023)</p> <p>1.3.3 8 (2019)</p>	<p>1.3.1 4 cycles of annual data collection (2027)</p> <p>1.3.2 Up to 7 new Index releases (partial / full) (2027)</p> <p>1.3.3 Up to 8 meetings (2027)</p>	<p>1.3.1 EIGE Gender Statistics Database.</p> <p>1.3.2 National Gender Equality Index reports.</p> <p>1.3.3 meeting reports, lists of participants.</p>	<p>There is political will and interest, and national human resources are available to develop Gender Equality Index and to participate actively in the Action activities.</p>
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<b>Output 1 related to Outcome 2</b>	<p>2.1. Policymakers and other stakeholders influencing and implementing Roma inclusion policies are provided with robust quantitative and qualitative analysis on the multi-dimensional vulnerabilities of Roma women and men.</p>	<p>2.1.1 Quantitative datasets with core socio-economic vulnerability indicators disaggregated by sex and by IPA beneficiary available online (yes/no)</p> <p>2.1.2 Qualitative gender-sensitive data analysis on Roma socio-economic vulnerability for IPA beneficiary available (yes/no)</p>	<p>2.1.1 No (2023)</p> <p>2.1.2 No (2023)</p>	<p>2.1.1 Yes (2026)</p> <p>2.1.2 Yes (2026)</p>	<p>1.1.1. Data from the quantitative Regional Roma Survey 2024, UNDP and the World Bank records, and some online posting, as applicable.</p> <p>1.1.2. Data from the qualitative Regional Roma Survey 2024, UNDP and the World Bank records, and some online posting, as applicable.</p>	<p>Commitments for cooperation, active participation and for providing required resources from governments and NGOs in all the Western Balkans and Türkiye are in place for successful data collection.</p>
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<b>Output 2 related to Outcome 2</b>	2.2. Improved access to funding, jobs, Roma-owned business, and labour market measures, with special focus on the green and digital sectors.	<p>2.2.1. Number of developed businesses, disaggregated by the sex of the owner.</p> <p>2.2.2. Established agreements with stakeholders to facilitate access to jobs and Business Development Services.</p> <p>2.2.3. Number of people attending the career guidance activities, disaggregated by the sex of the owner.</p>	<p>2.2.1. 50 (2023)</p> <p>2.2.2. 15 (2023)</p> <p>2.2.3. 10 (2023)</p>	<p>2.2.1. 350 (2027)</p> <p>2.2.2. 30 (2027)</p> <p>2.2.3. 900 (2027)</p>	<p>2.2.1 Business plans developed, business documentation.</p> <p>2.2.2 Meeting minutes, agreements</p> <p>2.2.3. Activity report and documentation, list of participants, photo.</p>	<p>The project is able to generate innovative and successful business models that are relevant and accessible to Roma entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Supportive policies and regulatory frameworks in the Beneficiaries where the project operates, which facilitate the inclusion of Roma individuals in the labour market.</p>
<b>Output 3 related to Outcome 2</b>	2.3. An award ceremony organised.	2.3.1. Number of prizes awarded, disaggregated by the sex of the awardees.	<p>2.3.1. 14 award prizes delivered (2021)</p> <p>2.3.2. 14 examples shared in the five award ceremonies (2021)</p>	<p>2.3.1. 14 award prizes delivered (2025)</p> <p>2.3.2. 14 initiatives are promoted in the award ceremony, 76 in total (2025)</p>	<p>2.3.1. Application form and Awardee lists.</p> <p>2.3.2. Award ceremony video.</p>	<p>Authorities, civil society organisations, private sector actors, and other stakeholders collaborate in the implementation and that the public is aware about the award and supportive policies are in place.</p>

## **4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

### **4.1. Financing Agreement**

In order to implement this Action, it is not envisaged to conclude financing agreements with the relevant IPA III beneficiaries.

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

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

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

### **4.3. Implementation Modalities**

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the Action with EU restrictive measures<sup>32</sup>.

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

### **Area of support 5: EU Advancing Roma Entrepreneurs in the Western Balkans and Türkiye Phase II**

#### **a) Purpose of the grant**

The grant will contribute to achieving Specific Objective 2 and to Output 2.2. It will contribute to increase the equality, inclusion and active participation of Roma in the Western Balkans and Türkiye by improving access to finance, jobs, training, and labour market measures for Roma women and men, with special focus on the green and digital sectors.

#### **b) 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 NGO Roma Entrepreneurship Development Initiative (REDI).

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified based on Article 195 (f) of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, i.e. "for activities with specific characteristics that require a particular type of body on account of its technical competence, its high degree of specialisation or its administrative powers, on condition that the activities concerned do not fall within the scope of a call for proposal". " More

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<sup>32</sup> [EU Sanctions Map](#). Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

concretely, the recourse to an award of a grant to the REDI is justified due to its high degree of specialisation, technical competence, and experience.

Area of support 5 will continue with the EU support on advancing Roma Entrepreneurs in the IPA III beneficiaries. Activities will target the elimination of barriers that Roma entrepreneurs face when accessing to the formal labour market, while at the same time supporting the entrance of Roma entrepreneurs in non-traditional formal sectors, such as the green and digital economy. REDI is highly specialised in working with Roma entrepreneurs, and has demonstrated expertise and ability to create an enabling environment for Roma entrepreneurs (e.g. building trust within the communities in the field and different stakeholders, such as financial intermediaries). It also has demonstrated ability and experience in delivering innovative solutions to foster the inclusion of Roma in the formal labour market through the green and digital agendas.

## **Area of support 6: 6<sup>th</sup> Roma Inclusion Award in the Western Balkans and Türkiye**

### **a) Purpose of the grant**

The grant will contribute to achieving Specific Objective 2 and to Output 2.3. It will contribute to increase the equality, inclusion and active participation of Roma in the Western Balkans and Türkiye by organising an award for positive examples of Roma integration activism.

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

The types of applicants targeted should:

- be a legal person and:
- be a civil society organisation, or a consortium of civil society organisations, and/or:
- be an international organisation.

The part of the Action under the budgetary envelope reserved for grants may, partially or totally and including where an entity is designated for receiving a grant without a call for proposals, be implemented in indirect management with an entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the criteria defined in section 4.3.1 b) related to the Area of support 5: demonstrated expertise in building human capacity to work with Roma entrepreneurs in the field, and ability to deliver innovative solutions to foster the inclusion of Roma communities in the labour market through the green and digital agendas in the Western Balkans and Türkiye. For Area of support 6 the following criteria will be used: demonstrated expertise in working in the field of Roma inclusion in the Western Balkans and Türkiye, and ability to organise events at large scale.

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

A part of this Action may be implemented in indirect management with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). This implementation entails delivering activities contributing to the achievement of the output 1.1. and the output 1.2<sup>33</sup> for improving women's economic empowerment (area of support 1); and for providing increased access to digital essential services for women and girls who are survivors of violence,

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<sup>33</sup> A contribution agreement may be signed with the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office representing UNDP and UN Women as implementing agencies.



and tools to protect themselves from ICT facilitated and online violence (area of support 2). The envisaged entities have been selected using the following criteria: important policy and strategic interlocutor, key implementer for the delivery of the EU's development assistance, presence in and cooperation with targeted IPA III beneficiaries, operational and financial capacity, strong practical experience in women's economic empowerment and gender mainstreaming, and strong practical experience working with governments, CSOs, business/industry associations and private sector in the areas of system-wide reforms to drive social transformations.

A part of this Action may be implemented in indirect management with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). This implementation entails delivering activities contributing to the achievement of the output 1.3 for the integration of IPA beneficiaries into the core work areas of the EU agency (area of support 3). The envisaged entity has been selected using the following criteria: holder of important normative and standard setting mandates related to EU *acquis*, including contributing and strengthening the promotion of gender equality, gender mainstreaming in EU- and resulting national policies, providing information to EU institutions on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the Western Balkans and Türkiye, and strong practical experience in working with national authorities for gender equality.

A part of this Action may be implemented in indirect management with UNDP. This implementation entails delivering activities contributing to the achievement of the output 2.1 for undertaking the Regional Roma Survey 2024 (area of support 4). The envisaged entity has been selected using the following criteria: important policy and strategic interlocutor, key implementer for the delivery of the EU's development assistance, presence in and cooperation with targeted IPA III beneficiaries, including with Roma communities, thematic expertise in data collection, and experience building sub-national partnerships in the targeted beneficiaries, which is essential for data-collection.

A part of this Action may be implemented in indirect management with the World Bank. This implementation entails delivering activities contributing to achievement of the output 2.1 for undertaking the Regional Roma Survey 2024 (area of support 4). The envisaged entity has been selected using the following criteria: important policy and strategic interlocutor, key implementer for the delivery of the EU's development assistance, presence in and cooperation with targeted IPA III beneficiaries, including with Roma communities, operational and financial capacity, thematic expertise in data analysis and development of knowledge products and diagnostics, and experience in engagement with national authorities.

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

If negotiations with the above-mentioned entities fail, that part of this action may be implemented in direct management in accordance with the implementation modalities identified in section 4.3.3.

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

If the implementation modality under indirect management as defined in section 4.3.2 cannot be implemented due to circumstances beyond the control of the Commission, the modality of implementation by grants under direct management would be used according to the following:

(a) Subject matter of the grants:

- To support output 1.1 by building and strengthening new and existing networks for women leaders and entrepreneurs, increasing the understanding of the main obstacles and challenges creating gender disparities in STEM and ICT education and employment, and increasing opportunities for digital and entrepreneurial upskilling of women and girls in the Western Balkans.

- To support output 1.2 by strengthening referral systems for survivors of online and technology-facilitated violence and increasing awareness and ability of women and girls to recognise and report online and technology-facilitated violence.
- To support output 1.3 by further integrating IPA III beneficiaries into core areas of EIGE’s work programme and increasing their ability to monitor and mainstream gender equality and continue regional coordination in the field.
- To support output 2.1 by providing policymakers and other stakeholders influencing and implementing Roma inclusion policies with robust analysis on the multi-dimensional vulnerabilities of Roma women and men in the Western-Balkans and Türkiye.

(b) Type of applicants targeted:

- be a legal person and:
- be a civil society organisation, or a consortium of civil society organisations, and/or:
- be an international organisation.

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

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

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

#### 4.5. Indicative Budget

<b>Indicative Budget components</b>	<b>EU contribution (amount in EUR)</b>	<b>Indicative third-party contribution, (amount in EUR)</b>
<b>Methods of implementation</b> – cf. section 4.3		
<b>Women’s economic empowerment</b> (Outcome 1/Output 1.1) and <b>Inclusive and safe digital essential services for survivors of VAW</b> (Outcome 1/Output 1.2) <sup>34</sup>	<b>6 300 000</b>	<b>450 000</b>
Indirect management with UNDP and UN Women – cf. section 4.3.2	Output 1.1- Total: 3 470 000 UNDP: 3 000 000 UN Women: 470 000  Output 2.1- Total: 2 830 000 UN Women: 2 830 000	Output 1.1- 250 000    Output 2.1- 200 000
<b>Collection and monitoring of statistics on gender equality and GBV</b> (Outcome 1/Output 1.3)	<b>1 500 000</b>	
Indirect management with EIGE – cf. section 4.3.2	1 500 000	
<b>Roma Regional Survey 2024</b> (Outcome 2/Output 2.1)	<b>2 856 000</b>	
Indirect management with UNDP – cf. section 4.3.2	1 756 000	
Indirect management with the World Bank – cf. section 4.3.2	1 100 000	
<b>Support to Roma entrepreneurship Phase II</b> (Outcome 2/Output 2.2)	<b>4 000 000</b>	<b>200 000</b>
Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.1	4 000 000 <sup>35</sup>	200 000
<b>6<sup>th</sup> EU Roma Integration Award for Western Balkans and Türkiye 2025</b> (Outcome 2/Output 2.3)	<b>400 000</b>	
Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.1	400 000	
<b>Grants</b> – total envelope under section 4.3.1	<b>4 400 000</b>	N. A
<b>Evaluation</b> – cf. section 5.2 <b>Audit</b> – cf. section 5.3	N.A.	N.A.
<b>Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy</b> – cf. section 6	N.A.	N.A.
<b>Totals</b>	<b>15 056 000</b>	<b>650 000</b>

<sup>34</sup> One contribution agreement.

<sup>35</sup> EUR 2 000 000 from this amount originate from the yearly allocation of the bilateral envelope for Türkiye and is envisaged to cover activities only in Türkiye.

## 4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The main institutional stakeholder involved in the management and implementation process of the Action is DG NEAR, Unit D.5 as the contracting authority. Unit D.5 will manage all contracting foreseen, including by facilitating synergies and coordination among the implementing partners involved in the Action. As a regular practice, Unit D.5 will exchange information and coordinate with the relevant EU Delegations/EU Office to strengthen synergies among the different EU funded actions. In addition, a high-level Advisory Board will be established among implementing partners (EIGE, UNDP, UN Women) to foster strategic policy dialogue with the EU (DG NEAR) on the implementation of areas of support 1-3 and the contribution to the EU Gender Equality Strategy. It will meet at least once a year.

The specific organisational set-up and responsibilities for the areas of support with the implementation modalities of indirect management and direct award is:

**Area of support 1 and 2 – Women’s economic empowerment and inclusive and safe digital essential services for survivors of VAW:** The UN implementing partners will set up a Programme Steering Committee to provide strategic direction, advice, and oversight during the project implementation toward the successful implementation. The Steering Committee will also serve as a coordination mechanism to ensure that all Action activities are harmonised to achieve synergies across its outputs. It will include at minimum a representative of each implementing partner and the EU (DG NEAR) and meet at a minimum once a year. As relevant, the Steering Committee will agree to extend participation to other stakeholders to its meetings, such as main counterparts from public, private and CSO sectors in the Western Balkans and Türkiye targeted by the Action.

UNDP and UN Women will be responsible and accountable for achieving action results and completing all activities finalised during the inception phase of the project. UNDP and UN Women may enter into agreements with other entities in the capacity of ‘responsible parties’, both government and non-government. The exact staffing composition of respective project implementation structure, reporting lines, accountabilities and management budgets will be defined in the Action and in line with participating UN agency rules and procedures.

The Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO) will perform the role of administrative agent ‘AA’. The MPTF Office will assist in establishing and administering a pooled financing mechanism for the Joint Program of UNDP and UN Women. The ‘AA’ will be accountable for effective and impartial fiduciary management and financial reporting to the EU. The ‘AA’ will perform financial and administrative management functions, including the receipt of donor contributions and the disbursement of funds to participating UN organisations (UNDP and UN Women) as per their agreed annual budgets and Steering Committee decisions. The ‘AA’ is also responsible for the consolidation of periodic financial reports and final financial reports. Each participating UN organisation shall assume full programmatic and financial accountability for the funds disbursed to it by the ‘AA’. Such funds will be administered by each UN agency in accordance with its own regulations, rules, directives, and procedures. Each participating organisation shall establish separate ledger account for the receipt and administration of the funds disbursed to it by the ‘AA’.

**Area of support 3 - Collection and monitoring of statistics on gender equality and GBV:** EIGE will ensure the necessary staff composition needed to ensure the delivery of the Action, to cooperate with Action beneficiaries, implementing parties and other Action stakeholders. Regular meetings and progress checks on the Action will be carried out internally by EIGE to ensure that the outcome and outputs of the Action under EIGE responsibility are being achieved as planned.

**Area of support 4 - Roma Regional Survey 2024:** UNDP will implement the activities focused on the design, fielding and documentation of the regional quantitative survey coupled with specific thematic qualitative studies. The World Bank will be responsible for a separate set of qualitative studies as well as the production of set of diagnostic reports with recommendations. The Survey will set (1) a Thematic Working

Group with representatives from UNDP, the World Bank, and EU agencies such as the Fundamental Right Agency, and other UN agencies based on relevance, and (2) national consultative mechanisms with representatives from the governments, Roma associations, national CSOs and international organisations working with Roma populations. National Statistical offices will be involved in the project.

**Area of support 5- Support to Roma entrepreneurship Phase II:** The project will be implemented by REDI International ASBL (BE0787330885) with key support from the other two members of the network to enable REDI's outreach locally in North Macedonia (Zdruzenie Inicijativa za Ekonomski Razvoj na Romite) and Serbia (Inicijativa Za Razvoj Romskog Preduzetnistva). In the rest of the IPA beneficiaries, REDI will either establish formal partnerships with experienced organisations present in the Roma communities and with field officers who have previously cooperated with REDI or will establish brand new organisations which will be aligned with the mission of the organisation. Field activities will be managed by the Field Operations Director based in Skopje/Belgrade and project managers for each project IPA III beneficiary. The project management will be ensured from the REDI Brussels office, who will keep inform the European Commission on the progress of the project.

## **5. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT**

### **5.1. Monitoring and Reporting**

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

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

Contract execution will be monitored through regular reports (indicatively: inception, 6-monthly, final), with clearly identified results indicators linked to each output as well as updates on the overall logical framework. Regular meetings/video conferences between the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (Headquarters and EU Delegations/EU Office) and the implementing partners will further ensure that any issues are addressed in a timely manner so that results are achieved in due time. Additional tools include ad hoc and on-the-spot visits will ensure monitoring of progress and a Result Oriented Assessment will be undertaken approximately mid-term.

The implementing partners will establish an effective structure at the central and IPA III beneficiary level for collecting and consolidating the data that are gathered throughout based on the indicators of the results framework.

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

### **5.2. Evaluation**

Having regard to the importance of the Action, a mid-term or final evaluation will be carried out for this Action or its components via independent consultants hired by the implementing partners. It may be carried out for problem solving, learning purposes or accountability at various levels (including for policy revision).

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the Beneficiaries 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 Beneficiaries, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

The Commission shall form a Reference Group (RG) composed by representatives from the main stakeholders at both EU and national (representatives from the government, from civil society organisations (private sector, NGOs, etc.), etc.) levels. If deemed necessary, other donors will be invited to join. The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 1 month in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation exercise and 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.

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

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the Beneficiaries 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 Beneficiaries, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

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

### **5.3. Audit and Verifications**

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

## **6. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

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

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

For the purpose of enhancing the visibility of the EU and its contribution to this Action, the Commission may sign or enter into joint declarations or statements, as part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union. Visibility and communication measures should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds. Effectiveness of communication activities on awareness about the Action and its objectives as well as on EU funding of the Action should be measured.

Implementing partners shall keep the Commission and the EU Delegation/EU 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.

## **7. SUSTAINABILITY**

The Action will ensure strong ownership among the targeted beneficiaries, through proactive consultations and engagement throughout its implementation. It will provide various approaches and modalities for effective capacity development and learning, thereby ensuring that the targeted beneficiaries will be able to sustain and apply the expertise and knowledge that will be generated and introduced throughout the Action. Efforts will be made to conduct the activities, like mentorship programmes, trainings, networks etc. within existing networks such as public universities, local incubators etc. to ensure sustainability beyond the lifetime of the Action.

A strong focus of the Programme is on the establishment of networks and dialogue mechanisms, the alignment of national policies and legislation with international instruments and standards on gender equality and elimination of violence against women and girls, Roma inclusion, as well as the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans. The change of policies, the institutionalisation of rules and standards, and the establishment of regional mechanisms all contribute to the sustainability of the Action. The intended research, mapping of good practices and investment in what works to address harmful gender stereotypes and thus collect and disseminate valuable knowledge and lessons learnt that can be applied beyond the end of the Action also contribute to its sustainability. In addition, the intended Roma Regional Survey will generate robust data for evidence-based policy making and investment decisions at IPA III beneficiary-level, including concrete guidance for the EU's programming of upcoming rounds of pre-accession assistance. It will also enhance the capacity for future survey design and implementation for IPA beneficiaries and civil society stakeholders.

Another important area of intervention is the development of capacities. Capacity development interventions will include training, technical assistance, exchange of experiences, etc., and be directed at the individual and the institutional level, which is both an expected result and a strategy for ensuring sustainability of gains achieved through the programme. Special care will be taken to select end beneficiaries that show commitment to the overall goal and intention to carry their training forwards.

Raising awareness on harmful gender and Roma stereotypes can contribute, increase, and sustain public awareness of violence against women and discrimination against Roma.

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

A Primary intervention (project/programme) is a coherent set of results structured in a logical framework aiming at delivering development change or progress. Identifying the level of the primary intervention will allow for:

- ✓ Differentiating these Actions or Contracts from those that do not produce direct reportable development results, defined as support entities (i.e. audits, evaluations);
- ✓ Articulating Actions and/or Contracts according to an expected common chain of results and therefore allowing them to ensure a more efficient and aggregated monitoring and reporting of performance;
- ✓ Having a complete and exhaustive mapping of all results-bearing Actions and Contracts

The present Action identifies as

<b>Contract level</b> (i.e. Grants, Contribution Agreements, any case in which foreseen individual legal commitments identified in the budget will have different log frames, even if part of the same Action Document)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	Improve women's economic empowerment (Output 1.1) and Increase access to digital essential services for women and girls' survivors of online and technology-facilitated violence (Output 1.2)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 2	Integration of IPA beneficiaries into the core work areas of the European Institute for Gender Equality (Output 1.3)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 3	The Regional Roma Survey 2024 (Output 2.1 - UNDP)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 4	The Regional Roma Survey 2024 (Output 2.1 – The World Bank)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 5	Support to Roma entrepreneurship phase II (Output 2.2)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 6	The 6 <sup>th</sup> EU Roma Integration Award for the Western Balkans and Türkiye (Output 2.3)